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ABSTRACT

The Tartessian Building of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain)

2015–2022 Campaigns

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This paper brings together the results achieved during the excavation campaigns carried out at the Tartessian building of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain) between 2015 and 2022. Along with the presentation of the documented spaces, some results from the study and analysis of objects discovered during the excavation are presented. The article delves into two main aspects of the study of the site: the analysis of its architecture and the study of the imported materials documented through the archaeological work. All this documentation updates the readings and interpretations that, to date, have been made of the Casas del Turuñuelo building and the final stage of Tartessus in the Central Guadiana Valley.

KEYWORDS

Protohistory, Early Iron Age, Tartessus, Central Guadiana Valley, buildings hidden under tumuli, earthen architecture

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1 Introduction

1 In the spring of 2014, a stratigraphic survey was carried out in the artificial mound located on the Casas del Turuñuelo estate and belonging to the municipality of Guareña, in the province of Badajoz, Extremadura. The choice of the burial mound was not arbitrary, as it was one of the 13 sites documented in the Central Guadiana Valley and included in the category of settlement known as a ›Tartessian building hidden under a burial mound‹[1], a pattern which is characteristic of the protohistoric occupation of this region.

2 Until 2014, only two of these buildings had been fully excavated: Cancho Roano (Zalamea de la Serena, Badajoz)[2] and La Mata (Campanario, Badajoz)[3], while the rest of the tumuli were classified in this category thanks to archaeological surveys carried out around the Guadiana Valley[4]. These surveys have made it possible to study and classify interesting groups of materials that today allow us to attribute these mounds to the same cultural horizon. Some of them, as in the case of Turuñuelo de Mérida[5], have also yielded significant materials that allow us to broaden our knowledge of the Early Iron Age in this region.

3 The archaeological work carried out on the buildings at Cancho Roano and La Mata shows the existence of a similar architectural model, no doubt inherited from the constructions in the Guadalquivir Valley. Despite this, both buildings had different functions. While Cancho Roano had an eminently religious function, comparable to that of the sanctuary of El Carambolo[6], La Mata was more similar to the storehouse-type buildings documented in coastal Phoenician sites, such as Toscanos[7]. Its structure can

1 Rodríguez González 2018, with bibliography.
2 Celestino 2022, with bibliography.
3 Rodríguez Díaz 2004.
4 Rodríguez Díaz – Ortiz 1998; Duque 2001; Celestino – Rodríguez González 2017.
5 Jiménez Ávila – Domínguez de la Concha 1995.
6 Fernández Flores – Rodríguez Azogue 2022.
7 Niemeyer 1979; Niemeyer 1985.

also be seen in other parts of the southern Iberian Peninsula, such as the SE-M building[8] next to the Las Cruces copper mine (Seville)[9], whose layout is similar to that of the monument in Extremadura.

4 Despite the major transformations that the landscape of the Middle Guadiana has undergone over the last century, the tireless archaeological work conducted around its basin has allowed us to add two more categories of settlement to the ›Guadiana burial mounds‹. The first category is high-altitude enclaves, a category for which, to date, we only have the example of Cerro del Tamborrio (Villanueva de la Serena, Badajoz)[10]. This site occupies an excellent position in the landscape as it controls an area of high ground precisely at the point where the Guadiana and Zújar rivers meet. It also has a walled system that surrounds the entire town. The second category is of sites located on the plains, including settlements such as El Palomar (Oliva de Mérida, Badajoz)[11], and small village or farm type enclaves, among which we can highlight the example of Cerro Manzanillo[12]. Many details about El Palomar are still unknown, as the materials associated with it have yet to be published more than twenty years after its excavation; however, as far as Manzanillo is concerned, its extensive excavation and the publication of the results allow us to explore the role that the peasantry played in the exploitation of the territory between the 6th and 5th centuries BC.

5 The enclave of Medellín has recently been added to this categorization, traditionally identified as an *oppidum* and incorporated into the category of high-altitude settlements[13]. The archaeological work carried out in the last decade confirms a hypothesis formulated some time ago in which we proposed the existence of a protohistoric settlement located on the plain, below the present-day town, and not on the Cerro del Castillo as had traditionally been suggested[14]. This is demonstrated both by the absence of building remains in the numerous test pits dug at various points on the hill and by the publication of the first protohistoric levels resulting from the emergency work conducted on various buildings in the area[15].

6 The detailed analysis of all the settlements belonging to the settlement pattern of the Middle Guadiana during the Early Iron Age allows us to consider the existence of a stage of the Tartessian culture within this territory[16]. The excellent state of conservation of many of the sites in the Guadiana and the research work carried out on them are proving fundamental to understanding the origin, development, and rise of the Tartessian culture in this area from its origins in the beginning of the 7th century BC, which we can identify in the stratigraphic sequences of sites such as Cerro Borreguero (Zalamea de la Serena, Badajoz, Spain)[17] or the necropolis of El Pozo (Medellín, Badajoz)[18].

7 The splendour of Tartessus in the Middle Guadiana Valley can be detected from the 5th century BC. When a territorial system was consolidated with the buildings under the tumulus or ›Cancho Roano type‹ (Fig. 1), whose excellent state of preservation now provides us with abundant and outstanding archaeological evidence. The causes of its demise, dated to the beginning of the 4th century BC., are still a subject of intense debate. Thus, in addition to the traditional view about the possible arrival of a popula-

8 Vera 2012.
9 Hunt 2012, 71.
10 Walid – Pulido 2013.
11 Jiménez Ávila – Ortega 2004.
12 Rodríguez Díaz et al. 2009.
13 Almagro-Gorbea 2008a.
14 Celestino 2005, 771; Celestino – Rodríguez González 2017, 141; Rodríguez González 2022, 120–122.
15 Guerra et al. 2022.
16 Rodríguez González 2022.
17 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2018.
18 Almagro-Gorbea et al. 2008.

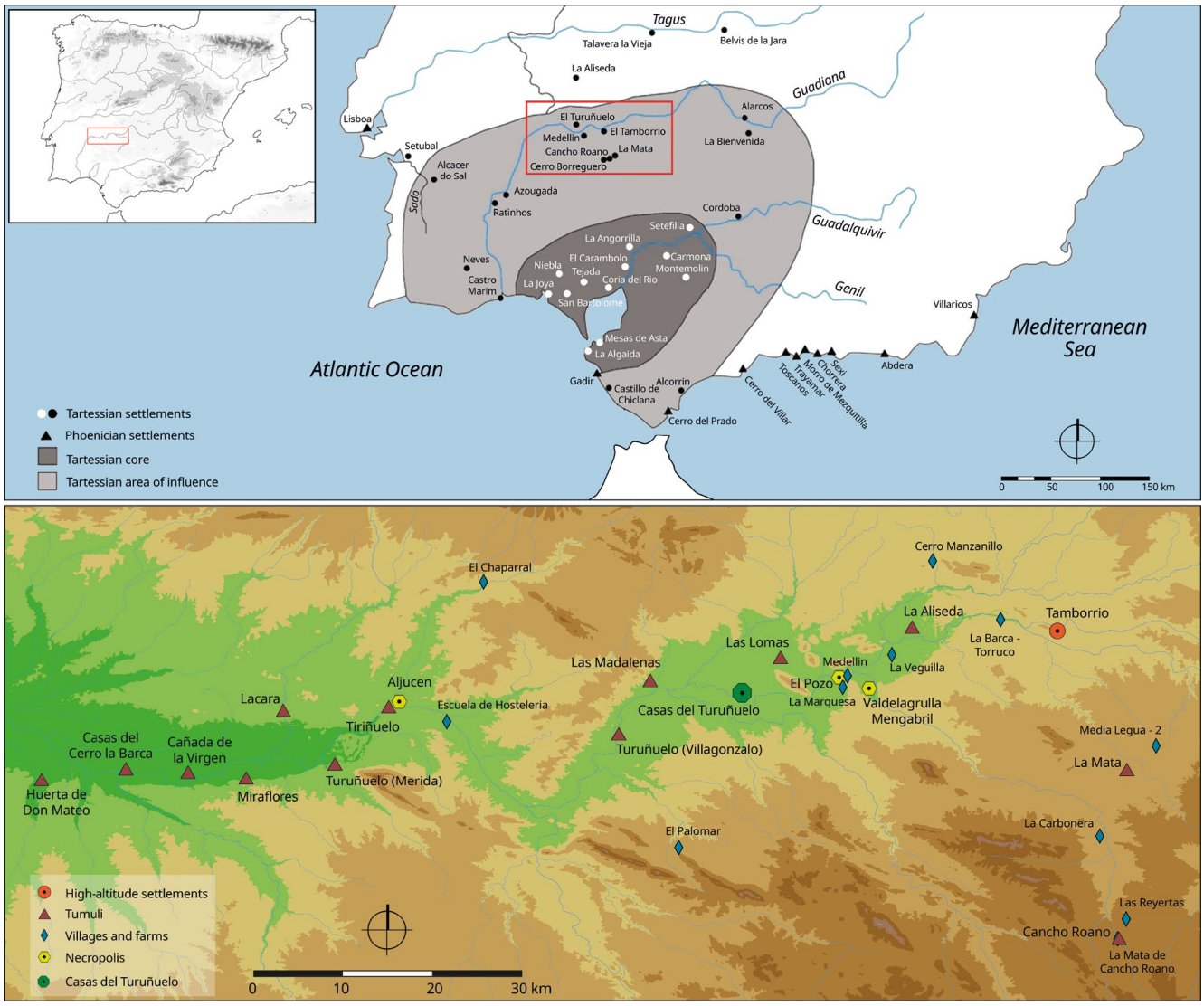

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Fig. 1: Location of the Central Guadiana Valley, map of the Tartessian territory, and map of the settlement of the Central Guadiana Valley during the Early Iron Age.

tion from the Northern Plateau[19] which forced the inhabitants of the Guadiana to move to other parts of the Iberian Peninsula, we have added the hypothesis that a change in the climate was a possible cause of the abandonment and concealment of the monumental buildings of the Guadiana[20].

8 In order to understand the development of the final stage of Tartessus in Central Guadiana, the archaeological results achieved in the excavations at Casas del Turuñuelo are fundamental. That is why in this paper we offer a step-by-step review of the excavations carried out at the site to date. We would like to take this opportunity to update many of the data already published and to reinterpret some of the hypotheses made so far, as the succession of findings and the execution of new analyses now allow us to propose new interpretations that are fundamental for the correct interpretation of the site. Together with these conclusions, we present the first advances in the architectural study of the building, its techniques and main construction elements, as well as a synthesis that brings together the imported materials found in this location.

19 Rodríguez Díaz 1994.

20 Rodríguez González et al. 2021.

2 The Building of Casas del Turuñuelo in Its Territorial Context

9 The site of Casas del Turuñuelo is located in the Vegas Altas del Guadiana, an area that has undergone a major transformation over the last century as a result of intensive agricultural work. The arrival of the Badajoz Plan in the 1950s brought with it the re-division of a large part of the middle basin of the Guadiana, the construction of reservoirs, and the layout of new irrigation channels and canals, work that has affected the conservation of the archaeological heritage in this area.

10 The apparent circular shape that the tumulus of Casas del Turuñuelo retains today is a consequence of these works. An aerial photograph from an American flight in 1945 shows how the mound originally occupied much more land than it does today (Fig. 2), with the elevation now covering a surface area of less than one hectare.

11 With the archaeological data available to us today, as a result of four excavation campaigns at the site, it seems that the agricultural work conducted around the monument must have only affected the areas corresponding to its production zones. This can be deduced from an examination of the artefacts found after the cleaning of the western section of the mound, where a group of amphorae were recovered which

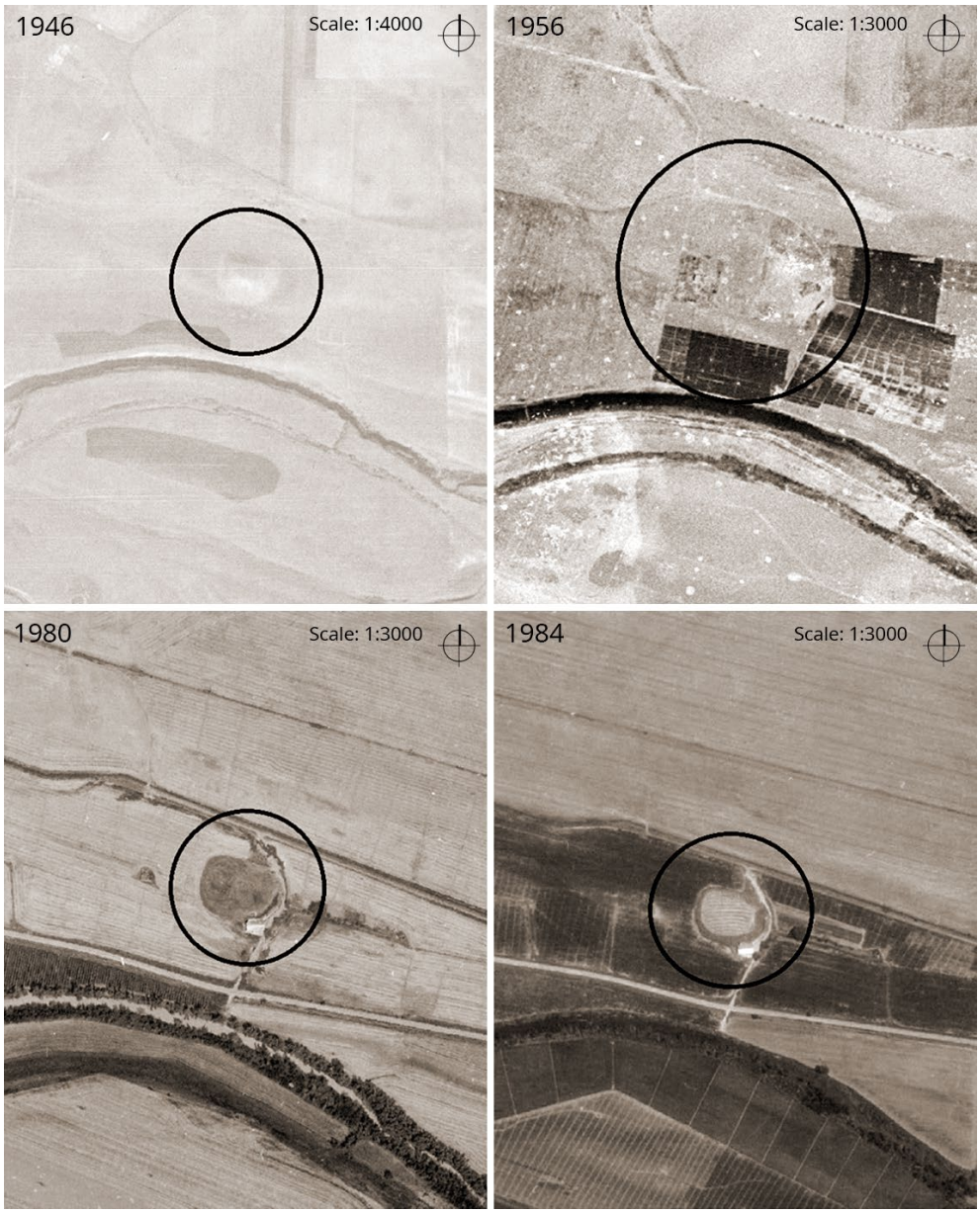

Fig. 2: Topographical evolution of the tumulus of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain) between 1946 and 1984.

2

seem to have occupied one of the storage areas of the building. The sheer size of the main building, whose latest developments are described in this article, saved it from total destruction, a fact that now allows us to examine the best-preserved protohistoric building in the Western Mediterranean.

12 The landscape in which the Casas del Turuñuelo building is located now differs greatly from its original appearance; however, there is one aspect that has not changed. This is the proximity of the Guadiana and Búrdalo rivers. One of the characteristics that the Tartessian buildings hidden under tumuli have in common is their location next to the Guadiana and at the confluence with one of its main tributaries. The exception is Cancho Roano, which is camouflaged deep in the pastureland, although next to the river Ortigas, the tributary of the Guadiana that flows into the Medellín area, in the vicinity of its protohistoric settlement. This location allowed these large buildings to effectively control the watercourses, the main communication routes in this area, and over the fertile lands along their banks.

13 Fortunately, structures as monumental as Casas del Turuñuelo or the nearby Turuñuelo de Villagonzalo (Badajoz) have managed to survive the aggressive agricultural activity in the area. A worse fate has befallen the small enclaves, such as farmsteads or villages, which are now virtually undetectable on the surface[21] in spite of intensive prospecting campaigns along the Central Guadiana River basin[22]. Despite this, it can be assumed that there was dense settlement around these monumental buildings, whose architecture and position in the landscape determine the important political and territorial role they must have played in the settlement structure.

3 Archaeological Excavations at the Site of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz). 2014–2021 Campaigns

14 Within the framework of the study of the settlement of the Central Guadiana during the Early Iron Age, we proposed a stratigraphic survey in the burial mound of Casas del Turuñuelo. The aim of the survey was to confirm its dating, as well as to reconstruct the paleolandscape of the area through pollen columns and carpological analysis. At the same time, we cleaned the profiles of the western side of the mound in order to evaluate the damage that the tumulus may have suffered as a result of the agricultural work carried out in the surrounding area, and to detect the remaining architectural structures that could confirm the existence of a building under the ›Cancho Roano-type‹ tumulus. The results were excellent, as not only was it possible to identify several walls in the profiles, but the survey also uncovered an imposing adobe wall, a significant number of ceramic plates, and the remains of bronze vessels, attesting to the outstanding quality of the site.

15 With these results, we modified the initial strategy, which focused on the study of the territory, and incorporated architectural analysis into the objectives of the project. We managed to provide analyses beyond a spatial description of the buildings and their traditional functional characterisation, for the first time analysing their designs, their materials, their techniques, and the areas from where they obtained resources. In doing so, we have added another factor to studies of Tartessus, based mainly on the analysis of material objects: the conception of its architecture as a social product, transformed into an exceptional tool for acquiring a deeper knowledge of past societies.

16 To date, a total of five excavation campaigns have been carried out in the Casas del Turuñuelo building. The systematic work, which began in 2015, was interrupted

21 Rodríguez González 2020.

22 Rodríguez Díaz et al. 2009; Mayoral et al. 2011; Sevillano et al. 2013.

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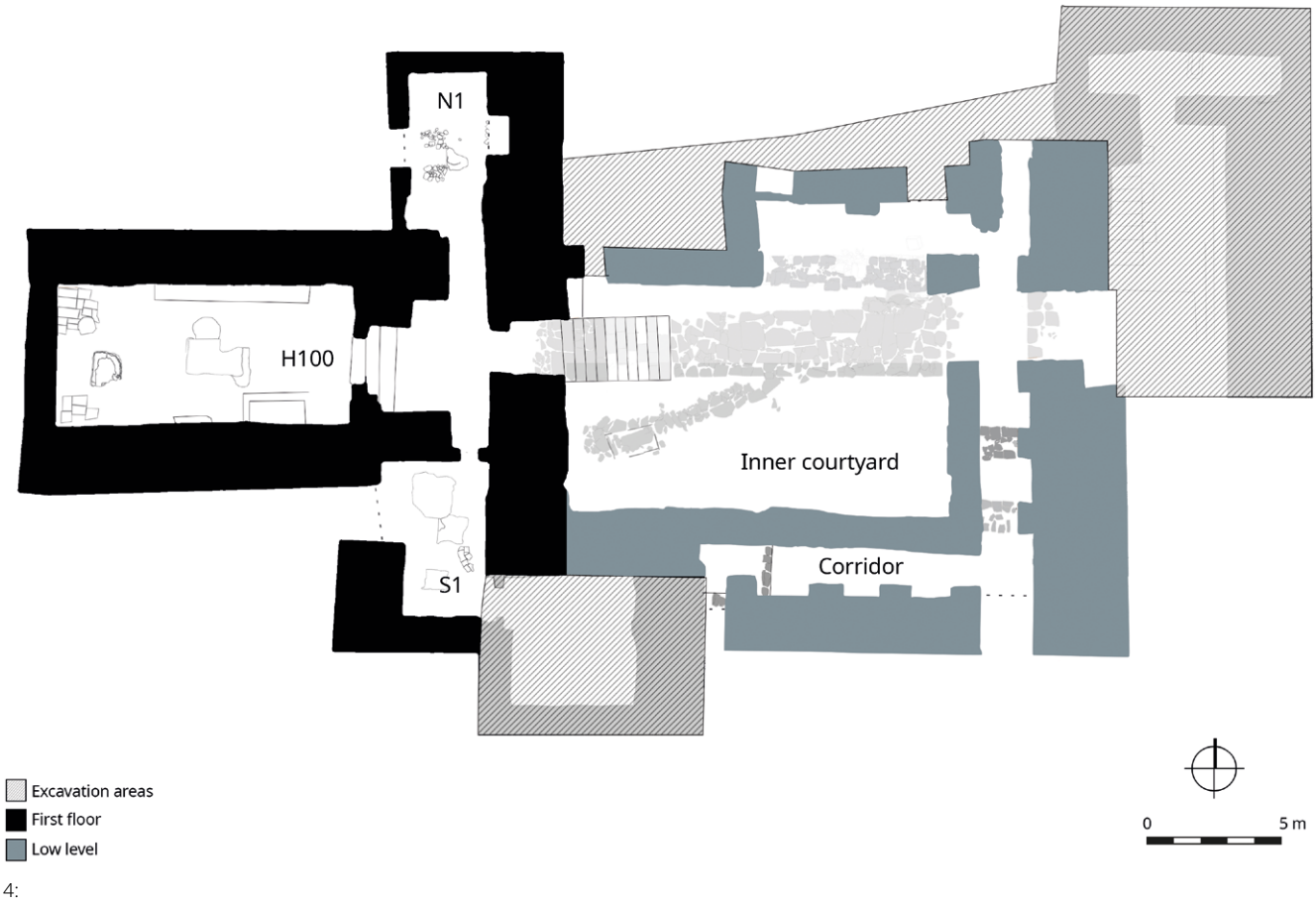
Fig. 3: Photogrammetric view of the building at Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain). September 2022.



4:

Fig. 4: Planimetry of the building of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

between 2019 and 2022 due to problems connected with the acquisition of the land by the regional authorities, who are now supervising activities at the site. Excavation resumed in 2022.

17 As a result of the archaeological work from 2015 through 2022, approximately 30 % of the surface area of the tumulus has now been excavated. This work has made it possible to document a monumental building with two floors still standing, which makes this construction a unique example from the protohistory of the Iberian Peninsula (Fig. 3). The existence of an upper floor doubles the excavation surface area and presents us with a methodological challenge, as in the near future we will have to design a working system that will allow us to document the rooms corresponding to the lower floor, without having to alter the floors and structures that comprise the upper floors (Fig. 4).

3.1 The Upper Floor

18 So far, only three excavation campaigns have focused on documenting the rooms on the upper floor of the building. These were carried out in 2015, 2016, and 2017, as a part of which rooms H100, S1 or ›the Banqueting Room‹, and N1 were documented, although work on the latter is still ongoing.

3.1.1 Room H100

19 The 2014 survey was conducted in the centre of the tumulus, where one of the walls enclosing the so-called room H100 was found. This room enclosed a space covering 60 m^2 which makes it one of the largest rooms known from the Tartessian period[23]

23 Rodríguez González – Celestino 2017.

5

Fig. 5: Aerial view of room 100 of the building at Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

Fig. 6: View of the entrance to room 100 showing the imposing dimensions of the doorway.

Fig. 7: Structure in the shape of a bovid skin found in the centre of room 100 at the site of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

(Fig. 5). The north and south walls that delimit this space are 1.5 m high and almost 2 m wide, an unusual dimension for this type of construction. All of them were covered with an earth mortar that was subsequently painted using reddish and white tones, sometimes preserving wavy decorations resulting from having been applied directly by hand.

20 The entrance to the room is on the east side, towards which the whole building is oriented, following the general trend of the religious constructions of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula in the Early Iron Age[24]. The opening, with a span of 1.70 m, is flanked by two quadrangular pillars made of adobe and rendered in white. To access this space, three adobe steps were built with slate-lined risers that lead to a threshold where the imprint of the door's timberwork is preserved. The entire entrance structure would have been 3.75 m high (Fig. 6).

21 The room is divided into three very clearly defined areas, connected by a long bench that runs along the north wall. The first, or area 1, occupies the western third of the space and is characterised by an adobe slab floor on which several fragments of a mat have been documented. The centre of this area is occupied by a semi-circular basin made of lime mortar, almost 1 m deep, embedded in the floor, whose function is still unknown.

22 Area 2 occupies the centre of the room and is dominated by a yellow adobe structure, measuring 2.30 m × 1.31 m, in the shape of an extended bovine skin[25], at the west end of which a small rectangle was carved in relief that seems to imitate the neck of the bovid, very similar to the one that crowned the altar of the sanctuary of Coria del Río and which is also reflected in the two bull skin sculptures from El Carambolo (Camas, Seville)[26]. The uniqueness of the altar of Casas del Turuñuelo lies in the fact that the circular area where the sacrifices were made is not on the altar, but next to its north side, while on top of the adobe altar the stretched skin of a small new-born herbivore was deposited, which we have not been able to identify as only the burnt imprint of the hide remains (Fig. 7).

24 Esteban – Escacena 2013.

25 Escacena – Coto 2010; Gómez Peña 2010.

26 Escacena 2011.

6

7

23 The third area has had perhaps the greatest impact due to the discovery of a large vessel in the form of a bath or sarcophagus. This area is characterised by its rammed-earth floor covered with small slate slabs, today very altered and fragmented as a result of a destructive fire in the building. The element in question, whose internal measurements are 1.56 m × 0.46 m, rests on a U-shaped adobe pedestal measuring 2 m × 1 m, which retains a small step for better access to the vessel and several fragments of slate, the material used to line it. Although at first we thought it was a block made of limestone, recent analyses carried out at the Institute of Applied Geology in Almadén (Ciudad Real, Spain) have shown that it is a block of calcarenite, a limestone rock that is very easy to work, as can be seen in the chisel marks that can still be seen on the inside of the block. The piece, which could have come from the Alcores in Seville, would have arrived at Turuñuelo already elaborated, or at least that is what can be deduced from the decoration found, paradoxically, on the side that is attached to the wall, consisting of a five-pointed star and a triangle, simple motifs that are well attested in ceramics from the Early Iron Age, as is the case of the nearby necropolis of Medellín[27]. The vessel was deliberately destroyed before the building was demolished and its remains have been found in different areas, so we gradually reconstructed its final form as the excavation progressed. Here it is worth noting that in the 2017 campaign two completely flat fragments were found that would correspond to the lid of the container, and we are sure that in the unexcavated rooms adjoining H100 we will be able to recover the rest of this unique container. This type of vessel is unknown in the Iberian Peninsula in the Early Iron Age; we have only been able to compare it to the small basin found at El Carambolo during the Carriazo excavations, which was subsequently interpreted as a possible votive offering from the sanctuary[28].

24 One of the problems of H100 is the characterisation of its soils, which have only been very partially detected in some places, such as the slates in area 3. However, remnants of mats have been discovered in several places in the room, such as the one mentioned above in area 1, which would explain why the floor was not finished with a layer of red clay as is usual in other Tartessian buildings, such as Cerro Borreguero or Cancho Roano, but also in other unique buildings in the Guadalquivir Valley, such as the Carambolo itself. The presence of textiles at Turuñuelo de Guareña, documented in other environments, is undoubtedly one of the distinctive features of this building[29]. In part, the exceptional state of preservation of the organic materials within the site, in the case of the textiles, is due to the constant humidity to which they have been subjected, both because of their proximity to the river and also because of the irrigated agriculture that today surrounds the mound that conceals the building.

25 The biggest problem of room H100 lies in determining its roofing system. It seems, as we have already pointed out in previous publications[30], that we are faced with a different solution to the use of slabs as a roofing strategy; an aspect that we will deal with in depth in the section dedicated to the architectural analysis of the building.

26 Despite the dimensions of H100, the materials recovered in the levels of use are not particularly abundant, highlighting the representative presence of more than a hundred ceramic plates and bowls that seem to be the result of the celebration of a banquet prior to the destruction of the building. According to X-ray diffraction analyses carried out at the Archaeometry Laboratory of the University of Granada on a selection of the documented specimens, most of them were made with raw materials from the

27 Almagro-Gorbea 2008b.

28 Belén – Escacena 1997, 111.

29 Marín Aguilera et al. 2019; Berrocal et al. 2020.

30 Celestino et al. 2016; Rodríguez González – Celestino 2017.

immediate surroundings of the site[31]. Furthermore, the study of the clays from this group has determined that some of the dishes could have come from the contemporary sites of La Mata and Cancho Roano, a fact that has been confirmed after the analysis of the amphorae from these sites, which has allowed us to prove that products were exchanged between them[32]. The amphorae, found in all the different areas of the building, are absent in H100, where, however, some urns were recovered. Also, most of the bronze metals, more than 4 kg in a very poor state of preservation, were found in area 3, although it was possible to identify some cast elements such as spherical rivets, fragments of rims and omega-shaped handles belonging to at least three braziers.

3.1.2 Room S1 or the ›Banquet Room‹

27 Following the excavation of H100, in 2016 it was decided to open the vestibule, a room of 12.5 m^2, that distributed the different spaces on the upper floor of the building. In this small space, three amphorae were found, one on each of the steps that connect this vestibule with H100. The amphorae were very damaged and even had vitrified fragments due to the fire that affected the entire building. A total of 43 loom weights with circular and trapezoidal cross-sections were found leaning against the south wall of this small area, the study of which made it possible to identify different weaving processes[33]. In addition to H100, there were three more openings from the vestibule, one to the south, one to the north, and another to the east. On the southern side of the vestibule a tripod with lion's claws was found, belonging to a *thymiatérion* of which the shaft for holding the bowl is also preserved, reminiscent of the specimens from tomb 17 at La Joya[34] and that of Villagarcía de la Torre, the latter coming from the province of Badajoz[35]. Next to the incense burner, the charred but complete woodwork of a door with all its ironwork was found, which led us to excavate first what we call the Banqueting Room because of the numerous elements related to social dining activity.

28 The charred timber of the door frame, made of pine (*pinus Sylvestri*), of the opening of this room, which measures 1.68 m, is still preserved over the threshold. The opening leads to a space measuring 20.4 m^2 with another two openings that have still not been excavated; one to the west with a span of 2.37 m which would connect to a large room parallel to H100, and another smaller one to the east with a span of 1.45 m. The fact that the room has three entrances suggests that it is not a reserved area, but rather a passageway, and the main space would undoubtedly be the room that it communicates with to the west. The room has the same construction parameters as room H100: adobe walls with a thick layer of plaster, here predominantly white. The walls of the room are irregularly high: barely 0.90 m on the south side, while on the other three sides they are 2 m high, as is the case of the walls that enclose the room on the west side. Like H100, the floor of the South Room is very deteriorated, sunken in its central area and lacking any finish other than simple rammed earth. Given this context, the secondary architectural elements, such as the two documented fireplaces and the two benches that run along the east and west sides of the room, have been badly preserved. A thick charred wooden post was found in the centre of the room, which must have served as a support pillar for the roof slab (Fig. 8).

29 The two documented fireplaces were made by joining two slabs of orange clay and differ in shape: one representing the stretched skin of a bovine (Fig. 33 a), while the second has a quadrangular cross-section (Fig. 33 b). It is difficult to draw conclusions

31 Celestino et al. 2018.

32 Rodríguez González et al. 2021.

33 Marín Aguilera et al. 2019; Berrocal et al. 2020.

34 Garrido – Orta 1970.

35 De la Bandera – Ferrer 1994.

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Fig. 8: Aerial view of room S1 of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

from this finding, but it could relate to two different activities: one of the tables, the one in the south, prepared for cooking, and the other in the shape of a cowhide, intended for slaughtering small animals[36]. The micromorphological analysis of the successive floors of the room has allowed us to identify different activities that were carried out in different phases of the occupation of the space. The most notable are those composed of rhomboidal crystals of calcitic ash, charcoal, and carbonised animal or vegetable fat; in other words, it is clear that the space was used for cooking food[37].

30 In the centre of the east wall of the room, at a height of 1.40 m, a quadrangular opening 1.25 m wide and 1 m deep was built as a cupboard, with a base lined with clay slabs. Inside, a collection of iron implements was found, including several knives with curved blades and a pickaxe, as well as a bronze funnel-footed jug like those found at Cancho Roano[38] and a ceramic vessel with lug handles from inside which a spindle whorl was recovered.

31 An interesting feature is the presence in the northern part of the room of a very irregular and rounded pit that even fractured part of the structure of the hearth. It measures 1.07 m on its smaller side and 1.76 m wide on its larger side, but we do not know its depth, as we abandoned its excavation after reaching a depth of 1.5 m for fear of mixing the fill material of the pit with the fill of the room below. The materials recovered in this pit are a clear example of the activity carried out in the room, as it was filled with iron tools and a significant number of fragments of plates, bowls, pots, and lids that must have been used in the banquet; in addition to these materials, there is a huge quantity of bone, mainly from goats and sheep, related to hunting activity and the consumption of meat.

32 Despite its small size, the room contained a large amount of material directly related to the cooking process and the subsequent banquet; a paper covering this aspect has already been published, although we are awaiting the completion of the restoration process before undertaking a more exhaustive analysis. Two levels were identified, corresponding respectively to the two activities mentioned above: storage and kitchen ceramics were found on the floors, while luxury objects were grouped in the southwest corner of the room, associated with the bench and the ›service table‹ where the food

36 Rodríguez González – Celestino 2019, 187.

37 The micromorphological analyses of the site are being carried out under the direction of Mario Gutiérrez Rodríguez, from the University Institute for Research in Iberian Archaeology at the University of Jaén.

38 Celestino 2022, 255–257.

was prepared. The kitchen ceramics included globular pots made by reductive firing of types inherited from previous phases, as are commonly found in other contemporary sites in the area, as well as urns, which are also common in the Central Guadiana, as in the case of La Mata de Campanario, from where a large number of pieces originate[39]. The ›tableware‹ ceramic items include those intended for the consumption of liquids and foodstuffs, including plates, bowls, cups, dishes, and lids. This collection was documented on an upper level, on the floor of the room, associated with the long bench on the northern side of the room. In addition to the variety of shapes within the group, it is interesting to note their high quality, with vessels made of very refined clays with very fine degreasing agents, fired in oxidising environments, and with very meticulous finishes; there are also vessels with surfaces painted with red bands, very similar to those known as ›turdetanas‹, which are documented at this time in the Lower Guadalquivir[40], but which are also found in the Central Guadiana in locations such as Cancho Roano[41]. Particularly striking are the spherical dishes and bowls that are directly connected with the final banquet. Three of the most outstanding dishes have a carinated profile of between 22 and 24 cm in diameter, decorated with red bands, which some authors have interpreted as imitations of Attic dishes which were also present in the Cádiz area in the 5th century BC[42]. Four red glazed dishes in a clearly Phoenician style were also documented, which correspond to shape 2B from the nearby necropolis of Medellín[43]. Although it is clear from the analysis of the ceramics that most of them were made with clays from the area around the site[44], the analysis of the clays and typology leads us to consider that both those with red glaze and those decorated with bands seem to come from the Andalusian area. Also significant are the conical lids with a stepped profile intended to cover plates and bowls, as seen in Iberian lekánes, which they resemble and which are well documented in the eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula, as in the case of El Oral[45], Puig d'Alcoy[46], or La Albufereta[47].

33 The ceramic collection includes the largest group of imitation Greek goblets in the Guadiana Valley[48]. Until now, only three specimens from Cancho Roano were known[49] , even though many original Attic goblets have been found. It is possible that the imitations from Casas del Turuñuelo are due to a last-minute need to provide this type of cup for those attending the final banquet. Despite the fact that only 30 % of the site has been excavated, a significant number of Attic vessels have already been documented. They tend to appear in the upper level, where the building was sealed, which has led us to attribute a symbolic meaning to them as a part of the ritual destruction of the building (Fig. 9).

34 But perhaps the most outstanding materials, both for their abundance and their quality, are the bronzes, which were subjected to an in-depth metallographic analysis together with the iron pieces found in this room[50]. Reference has already been made to the *thymiatérion* (Fig. 10 a) which was found next to the entrance to the room, but the objects related to the banquet are particularly outstanding, such as a cauldron with a diameter of 85 cm, hitherto unknown on the Iberian Peninsula. The cauldron

39 Rodríguez Díaz 2004.
40 Ferrer – García Fernández 2008.
41 Zulueta (in press).
42 García Fernández 2014, 214.
43 Almagro-Gorbea et al. 2008, 602. 612.
44 Celestino et al. 2017, 243.
45 Sala 1994, 187.
46 Grau 2000–2001, 37 fig. 4.
47 Verdú Parra 2009, 99.
48 Celestino et al. 2017.
49 Gracia 2003, pl. 70, 1–3.
50 Donate et al. 2022.

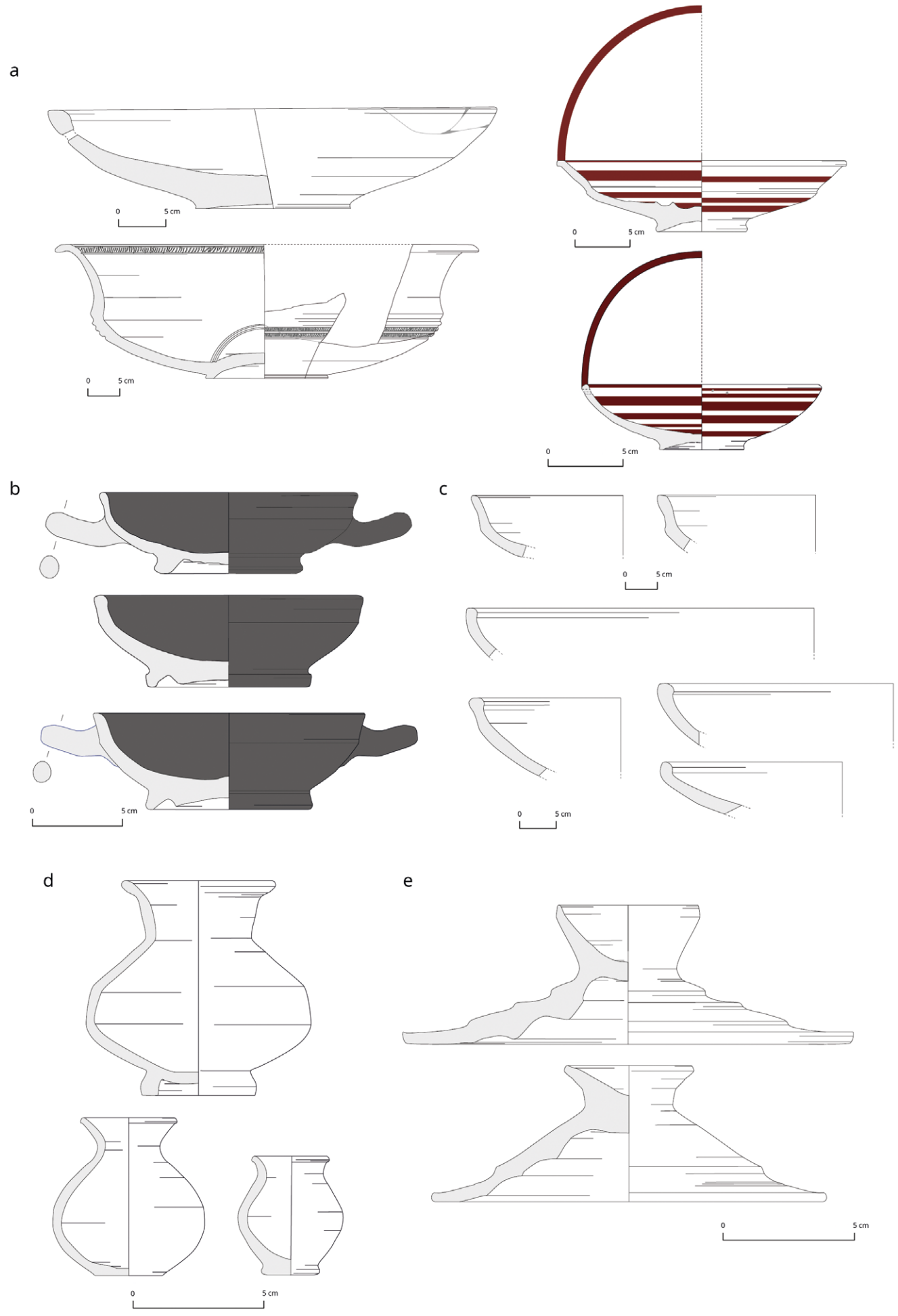


Fig. 9: Batch of ceramic materials from the infill of room S1 linked to the banqueting event.

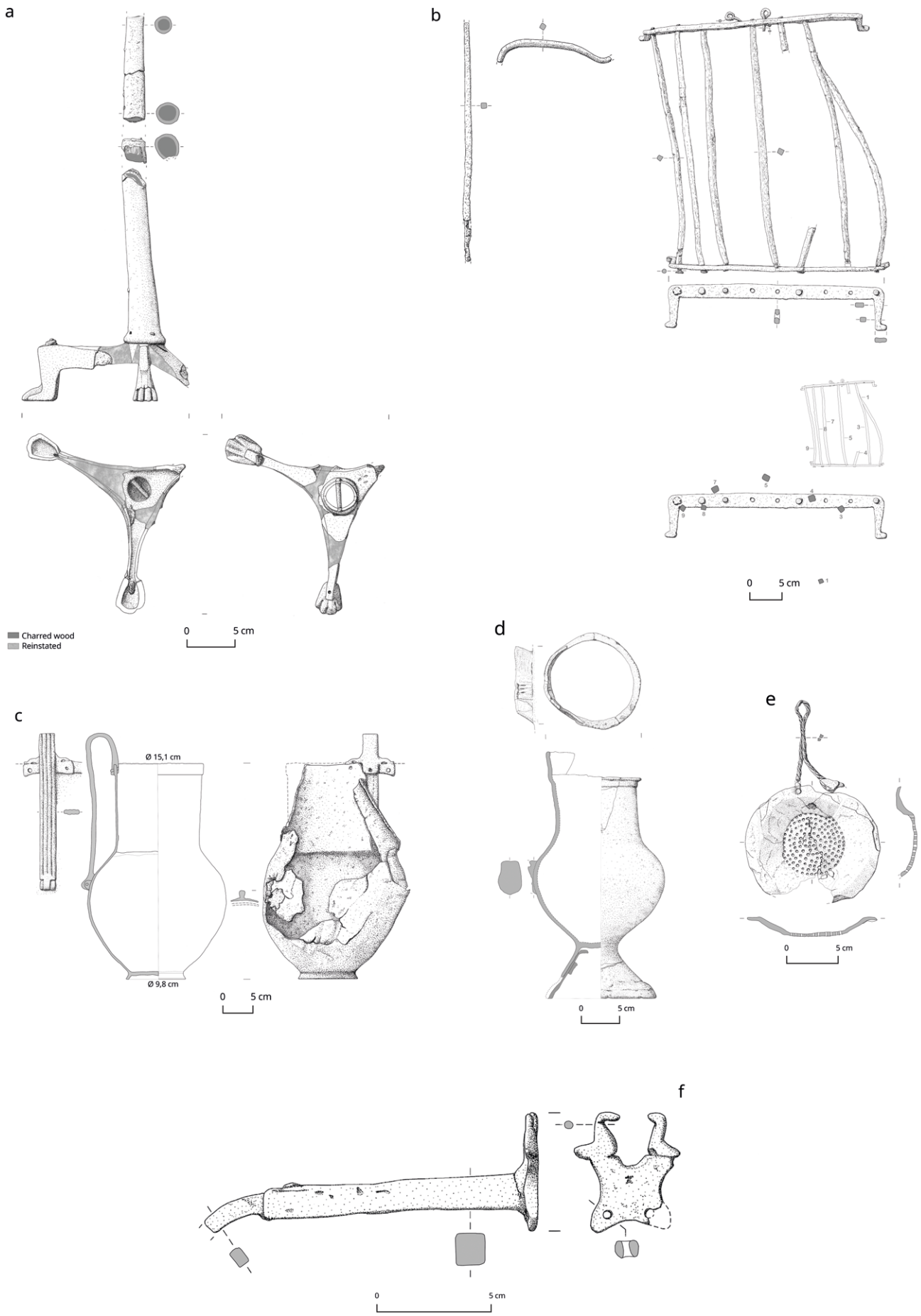


Fig. 10: Bronze items found in room S1 from the site of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

contained a bronze bowl. It is made of beaten bronze, while the triangular-shaped rim and the omega-shaped handles, which are topped with lotus blossom motifs, were cast. The upper rim has a rectangular ribbon-like reinforcement attached to the vessel by spherical rivets, also made of bronze. This type must not have been uncommon in the area, as fragments of possible cauldrons of this type, although smaller, have been found in Cancho Roano[51]. They have been found previously in the Atlantic area, although most authors associate them with Mediterranean imports[52]. There seems to be no dispute about their function, as they are always closely related to the ritual of feasting and meat consumption[53].

35 Another informative element is a bronze grill (Fig. 10 b). It is rectangular in shape, measuring 44 cm × 38 cm × 18 cm, and is made from two rectangular plates, the shorter sides of which have seven square rods embedded in them; the two at the ends have L-shaped extensions to prevent direct contact with the embers. One of the rods still has two circular rings that would have been used to hang the grill when not in use. These grills, although always made of iron, are common in funerary environments of the Early Iron Age of the central plateau[54]. In any case, the grills known and related to the funerary sphere or ritual banquets, as in the case of Castrejón de Capote[55], are more recent than those documented in Casas del Turuñuelo, dating from the Late Iron Age, similar to those documented in the Iberian area. Despite these findings, no spit was found in this space, which is unexpected given the context of the room, closely related to the consumption of meat as demonstrated by the numerous skeletal remains of animals found in the pit. Finally, it is also interesting to note the large number of river mollusc (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) shells, which would have been part of the final banquet, collected on and around the hearth in the southern part of the room.

36 Two bronze jugs from this area (Fig. 10 c. d), as well as another vessel of which only part of the rim and the tip of the handle have survived, are related to the consumption of liquids, probably wine in view of the numerous imitation Attic cups found. Both jugs have an ovoid body, a tall cylindrical neck, and a flat rim. They differ at the base, as while one of them has a conical foot similar to that of the Espartinas jug or to the half-dozen pieces recovered at Cancho Roano[56], the second pitcher has a flat base and the handle slightly overhangs the cylindrical neck, similar to the Villanueva de la Vera jug, although with a simpler decoration. Due to their respective types, they could be dated to different periods: the one with the conical foot being the most modern due to its similarity to the examples from Cancho Roano, while the second pitcher could be dated to the same period as the Villanueva pitcher, around the end of the 7th century BC[57]. It could therefore be possible that the latter specimen was a relic preserved until the 5th century BC and that it would have existed alongside the more recent types.

37 A bronze strainer with a handle was found next to one of the jugs, which still preserves the bowl with the holes for decanting the liquids, probably wine, contained in the jug (Fig. 10 e). Its diameter of 12.7 cm fits perfectly into the mouth of the jug, so there seems to be little doubt about its functionality. We only know of one similar example from Cancho Roano, found in H-9, also closely related to a room where bronze jugs and cauldrons were found[58].

51 Zulueta – Celestino 2003, 33 f.
52 Armada 2008.
53 Armada – Vilaça 2016, 144.
54 Faro 2015, with bibliography.
55 Berrocal 1994, 236.
56 Zulueta – Celestino 2003, 18–35.
57 Jiménez Ávila 2002, 65.
58 Zulueta – Celestino 2003, 57 f.

38 The rest of the abundant collection of bronzes is highly varied, as, apart from a large number of unrecognisable bronze fragments resulting from the fire in the building, pieces of different functionalities were recovered: a rattle, four circular plates from a balance, nine hooks, and the top of a handle or staff with a plaque in the shape of a bovid skin. The handle or staff with plaque is of great significance and in the lower ends two holes were drilled to insert two small, rounded figures of doves (Fig. 10 f). The symbolism of the bovine skin is very recurrent in the Tartessian culture and, later, in the Iberian sphere, although it is usually restricted to the shape of the earthen altars[59] and, perhaps, to other decorative elements such as the horse blanket from Cancho Roano, the trays from El Gandul and La Joya, or the foot of the *thymiatérion* from tomb 17 at La Joya[60]. No less abundant are the representations of birds in the protohistory of the Iberian Peninsula, related to Astarte[61] and whose iconography is also present in Cancho Roano, where two doves were also represented facing each other on the side sections of the horse bits[62]; in the *thymiatérion* of La Quéjola[63]; or on the sculpture of the Lady of Baza[64], where the dove appears in the left hand of the female figure.

39 Finally, a 0.25 m long cylindrical piece of quartzite was found, the ends of which had been ground to give them a rounded appearance. Microscopic analysis revealed that the piece still retained traces of the red paint with which it had been decorated. Consequently, the piece has been identified as a baetylus and is extremely similar to the one found in the Cancho Roano pit, measuring 0.17 m, also with traces of red paint, found next to one of the prism-shaped baetylus[65]. Other similar examples are known, such as the one from La Joya, whose ends are also ground[66], or the one from Tejada la Vieja, also with traces of red paint, although it is larger and decorated with a series of five circular perforations[67]. They are, in short, expressions of divinity that must have been quite common in Tartessus[68], either as a legacy of the cult that developed during the Late Bronze Age in the area or as a manifestation of the aniconic cult practiced by the Phoenicians.

40 Ultimately, room S1 or the ›banquet room‹ is a space that was used for preparing food, although at the final moment, before the fire and the destruction of the building, it must also have been used for the consumption of food. However, the space is small and several structures –benches and fireplaces– were built on the floor, which would have made it difficult to move around the room. We believe that behind the large opening in the north-west of the room there must have been a room where banquets such as those documented throughout the Iberian world were held[69], which means that S1 would only be the anteroom to this large space which runs parallel to room H100.

3.1.3 Room N1

41 On the north side of the vestibule there is a room parallel to S1 which we have called N1, although it has not yet been possible to complete its excavation because it is the only direct access to the interior of the building. However, the skeleton of a 25-year-old male was found in the backfill of this space, which is the first documented burial in the Central Guadiana Valley from this period, bearing in mind that nearby are the

59 Gómez Peña 2017, with bibliography.
60 Gómez Peña 2018.
61 Arruda 2016.
62 Blech 2003, 162.
63 Blánquez – Olmos 1993.
64 Chapa – Izquierdo 2010.
65 Celestino 2022, 300.
66 Garrido – Orta 1978, 143.
67 Toscano 2019, 521.
68 Seco Serra 2010, 135–137.
69 Sardà 2010.

Fig. 11: View of room N1 from the west.

11

Tartessian necropolis of El Pozo (Medellín) and Valdelagrulla (Mengabril)[70]. The remains are in the process of being studied[71], but their location and arrangement in space seem to reflect that his death must have occurred in the process of destruction of the building, leading to the body being placed on the first level of the infill of the room. Three stacked bronze braziers, located in the centre, and two spearheads were documented, as well as other objects that are not directly related to the body, although some of them are located in the stratum that covers the remains (Fig. 11).

3.2 The Lower Floor

42 On the east side of the vestibule there is a fourth opening that connects this space with the lower floor of the building. This is a small corridor paved with slate that leads to one of the most outstanding constructions in the building: the monumental staircase that connects the upper floor with the courtyard, the first area of the lower floor of Casas del Turuñuelo to be the subject of archaeological work. It is a space of enormous interest both because it is the most explicit reflection of the ritual use of the enclave before it was burned, destroyed, and sealed, and because of the materials recovered[72].

3.2.1 The Courtyard

43 Most of the excavation work in the courtyard was carried out between 2017 and 2018, with work resuming in 2021 to complete the full survey of the fauna documented on the courtyard pavement. The delay in the work was due to the great complexity of the excavation, influenced by the discovery of a unique animal sacrifice that covered the whole of the courtyard and required the intervention of a specialised team to consolidate, extract, and analyse the remains.

44 The stratigraphy of the courtyard is easy to interpret, since after the fire, the courtyard was filled with the remains from other areas of the building, including some

70 Rodríguez González – Paniego 2021, with bibliography.

71 The analysis of the skeleton was carried out by Victoria Peña Romo at the Complutense University of Madrid.

72 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2019.

12

Fig. 12: Photogrammetric view of the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

fragments of the ›bathtub‹ found in H100. However, while the rooms of the upper platform have a very homogeneous stratigraphy, with a filling that corresponds to a single stratigraphic unit, the size of the courtyard (125 m^2) and the height of its walls (5 m) made it difficult to demolish and fill (Fig. 12).

45 The first layer of the courtyard is formed by a level of yellowish clay with an average depth of 0.30 m, which belongs to the sealing layer that covered the entire site. This type of sealing layer after the destruction of a building is not uncommon in the Tartessian tumuli of the Guadiana; in fact, a similar layer of red clay was documented in the contemporary sanctuary of Cancho Roano[73], as well as in the last building of Cerro Borreguero, from the beginning of the 6th century BC[74]. The persistence of this type of layer demonstrates the survival of a sealing ritual that originated in this area. The infill of the courtyard is almost 5 m deep and was deposited in several phases which we have been able to identify in their respective stratigraphic units. The first layer is mainly composed of orange-coloured mud bricks, from which fragments of amphorae and other ceramics typical of the site were recovered, together with a Hispanic ring-shaped fibula. The next, very thick, layer is also composed of adobes, but also of stones and a large quantity of ceramics, among which we once again find CR1-type amphorae[75]. A large quantity of seeds, mainly barley, was collected from the debris, occupying the

73 Celestino 2022, 351.

74 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2018, 173.

75 Guerrero 1991; Rodríguez González et al. 2020.

entire length of this infill[76]. The most outstanding feature of this infill is the presence of four bonfires with abundant remains of ashes and coals, delimited by medium-sized quartzite stones and associated with bones of fauna, including the remains of a cow and a horse. These fires, situated at the same level, towards the middle of the infill, seem to be the result of a pause in the work on the courtyard, when the large number of people involved in the work, which must have lasted for weeks, decided to have a communal banquet[77].

46 Under the layers of infill, a thick layer affected by fire was documented which occupied the entire courtyard, although it was possible to identify the different areas where the remains of ashes and coals were most evident. Within this burnt level was the animal sacrifice, which occupied the entire space. Finally, a layer of silt and small pebbles was documented on the floor of the courtyard under the slaughtered animals, which seems to have been laid immediately before the animals were slaughtered in order to protect the original floor, which has survived in a magnificent state of preservation. This practice of protecting certain architectural elements of the courtyard can also be seen in the staircase, which is covered with a thick layer of yellow clay, or in the slate box, which shows the degree of care and detail that the inhabitants put into the process of dismantling the building.

13

Fig. 13: Photogrammetry of the staircase in the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

47 The monumental staircase was erected on the western façade of the courtyard (Fig. 13). This structure, described below, is remarkable both for its dimensions and for its construction technique, as it implies a technical mastery of calculation and a knowledge of the territory in order to access a raw material absent in its immediate surroundings. It is surprising that the construction technique used to make the mortar blocks of its six lower steps had not been exported to other contemporary buildings, such as La Mata or Cancho Roano, especially the latter because of the painstaking care with which the building was erected. The staircase is also a demonstration of dominance and propaganda, an ideal place for a tribute that demonstrates the political and religious power of the ruler of the place. Its uniqueness suggests that it was made by a specialised artisan, or a skilled builder, who may also have been involved in the construction of the proposed vault that covered room H100. The

76 The carpological analyses are being carried out at the Archaeobiology Laboratory of the Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences of the CSIC, under the direction of Leonor Peña Chocarro.

77 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2019, 346.

technique used in the staircase in the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo is, to date, a unique example in peninsular protohistory, as it is the first evidence of the manufacture of parallelepiped blocks using lime mortar, which allows us to write a new chapter in the history of Mediterranean architecture.

48 One of the aspects that attracted the most attention after the excavation of the animal sacrifice was the asymmetry of the courtyard. It is strange that a structure as monumental as the staircase does not occupy a central position, as it is displaced to the north of the courtyard. Originally, this circumstance was justified by the presence of the slate box connected to the pipe channel running north-east through the courtyard[78]. However, the archaeological excavations in 2022 revealed that the courtyard has at least two different construction phases and, therefore, two different conceptions of the space.

49 One of the objectives of the recent archaeological work carried out at Casas del Turuñuelo was to identify and characterise the possible monumental doorway of the courtyard, located in the wall that encloses this space to the north[79]. This hypothesis was based on the identification of a large pile of collapsed stones, very well-cut quartzite and even decorated with geometric motifs, signalling the monumental nature of the doorway. However, the excavation of this space, still to be completed, reveals that the pile of collapsed stones does not correspond to this entrance, but to the foundations of a later wall that was built to reduce the dimensions of the courtyard and create a small perimeter corridor to the north, breaking with the symmetry of the courtyard. This wall was connected to the existing structure, meaning its stability was reduced, hence its poor state of preservation and its slight deterioration. This situation led us to consider that the decision to reduce the space must have been made shortly before the building was closed and finally sealed.

50 Thanks to these new archaeological data, we now know that the courtyard was originally quadrangular, so that both the staircase and the slate corridor at its foot occupied a central and predominant position (Fig. 14). The documentation of this compartmentalisation of the courtyard makes it possible to consider that the building was considerably remodelled, an activity that was also evident in the results of excavations of nearby sites such as Cancho Roano and La Mata.

3.2.2 The Sacrifice in the Courtyard

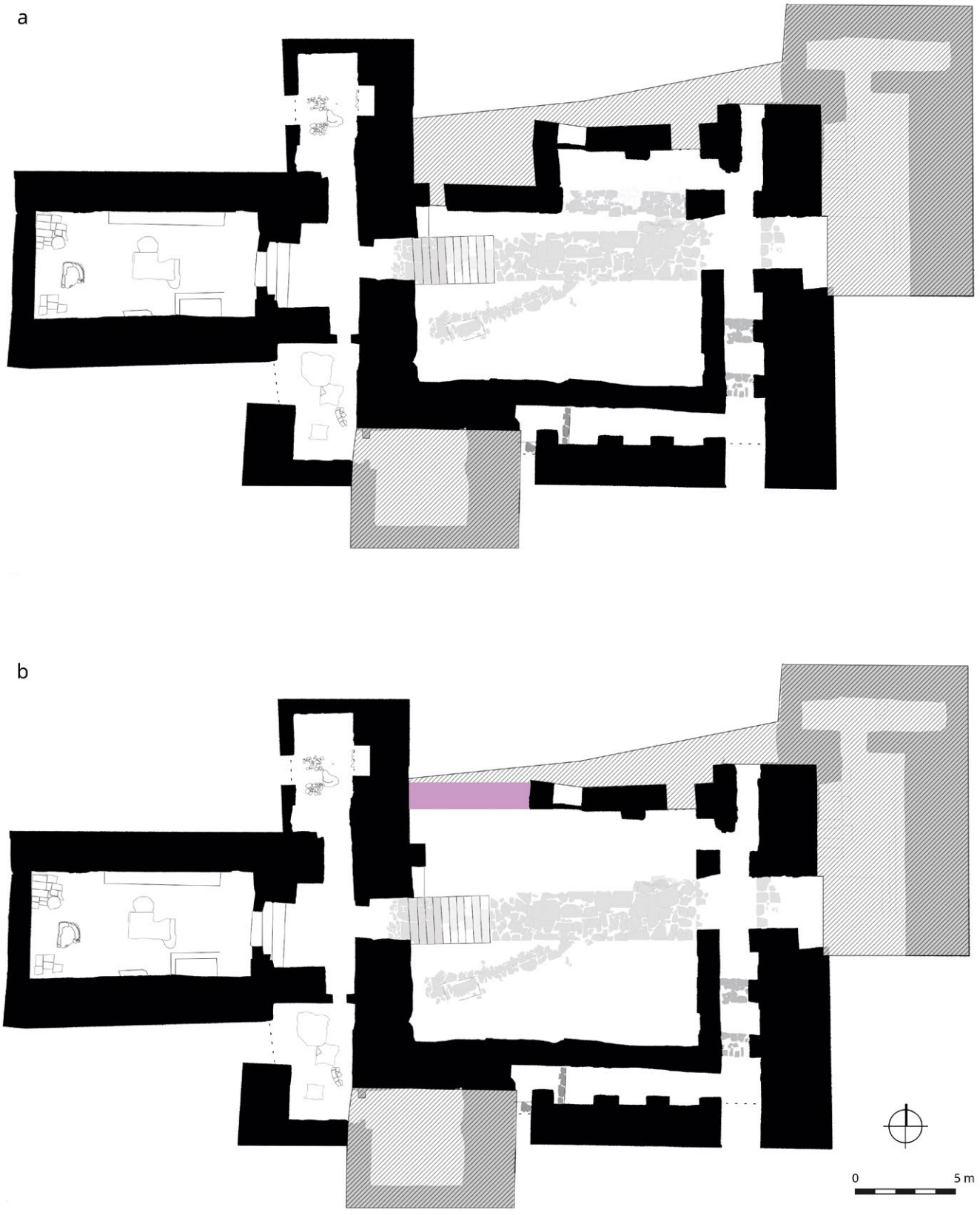
51 Under the successive layers of the courtyard infill and the generalised fire level of the building, the skeletal remains of an animal sacrifice that occupied the entire surface of this area were found (Fig. 15). This is one of the most extraordinary finds of Mediterranean protohistory, which obliged us to organise a team of specialists from different disciplines to excavate, consolidate, survey, and analyse it, as until now archaeozoology did not have to deal with a sacrifice on the scale, in an archaeological context to the Iberian Peninsula, of the one documented at Casas del Turuñuelo[80].

52 Following the anatomical and taxonomic analysis of the remains deposited in the courtyard, 52 individuals have been identified with certainty, although there is a large number of bones scattered in the southeast corner of the courtyard that could increase this figure. It is particularly noteworthy that the 41 equids, six bovids, four hogs, and one canid, were all young animals (Fig. 16).

78 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2019, 350.

79 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2019, 347.

80 To excavate the area where the animal sacrifice took place, a research team was set up consisting of the following specialists: Silvia Albizuri (UB), Pilar Iborra (IVCR+I), Jaime Lira (University of Toulouse), Joaquín Jiménez Fragoso (UNEX), María Martín Cuervo (UNEX), Rafael Martínez Sánchez (UCO), Rafael Martínez Valle (IVCR+I), Ana I. Mayoral Calzada (UNEX), Ariadna Nieto Espinet (University of Lleida) and Silvia Valenzuela Lamas (CSIC).



14

Fig. 14: Current floor plan of the courtyard of the site of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain) (a) and hypothetical original layout of the courtyard, prior to the construction of the north wall (b).

53 After documenting the remains, the first working hypothesis led us to consider that all the animals had been slaughtered and deposited in the courtyard at the same time, coinciding with a phase immediately prior to the closure of the building[81]. However, the study of the remains, both in terms of their taxonomic analysis and the presence of marks resulting from solar damage and the intrusion of scavengers into the courtyard, reveal a very different scenario that substantially alters the interpretation of both the sacrifice and the functionality of the building. Thus, today we can speak of the existence of at least four different phases, two of which are particularly noteworthy. The first corresponds to the remains of animals that still show an anatomical connection and are concentrated in the westernmost part of the courtyard, where the equids are arranged in pairs, many of them with their heads crossed, sometimes with an iron bit (Fig. 17). The second corresponds to the accumulation of bones in the southeast corner of the courtyard, where, although all the skeletal remains are mixed, the heads and pelvises have been distributed in pairs (Fig. 18).

15

Fig. 15: 3D view of the sacrifice in the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

54 Although many answers have been obtained from the analysis of the skeletal remains recovered, all of which will be presented in a forthcoming publication, we are still investigating two questions: how and where the animals from the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo were slaughtered. The courtyard, despite its large surface area, does not have the capacity to host such a complex ritual with such a large number of individuals, so we are investigating the possibility that they were sacrificed in another space and then moved and placed on the clay and pebbles that covered the pavement of the courtyard, where they could have been manipulated to create the final scenography.

55 As we have already mentioned, the sacrifice documented in the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo is an unprecedented event in the Mediterranean, although there are references to animal sacrifices and hecatombs in the Bible and the Iliad. The most extensive documentation comes from Greece, specifically from Athens, where the Panathenaic festivals were held recurrently in the first month of the Attic year, the *hecatombéon*. The complex ritual was dedicated to the protector goddess of the city, Athena, in which one hundred oxen were sacrificed to the divinity, from which the name derives, although the texts that have come down to us refer to hecatombs with a smaller number of animals sacrificed and a certain variety of fauna[82]. There are more examples of mass sacrifices in the Greek world, such as the 81 black bulls that King Nestor sacrificed in honour of Poseidon on the beach of Pylos[83], or the numerous references

81 Lira et al. 2021.

82 De la Nuez Pérez 2008.

83 Isaakidou et al. 2002.

16

Fig. 16: Planimetry of the animal sacrifice documented at Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

17

Fig. 17: Close-up photograph of one of the iron bits associated with an equid from the Casas del Turuñuelo site (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

Fig. 18: Close-up of two skulls found among the skeletal remains in the southeast corner of the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

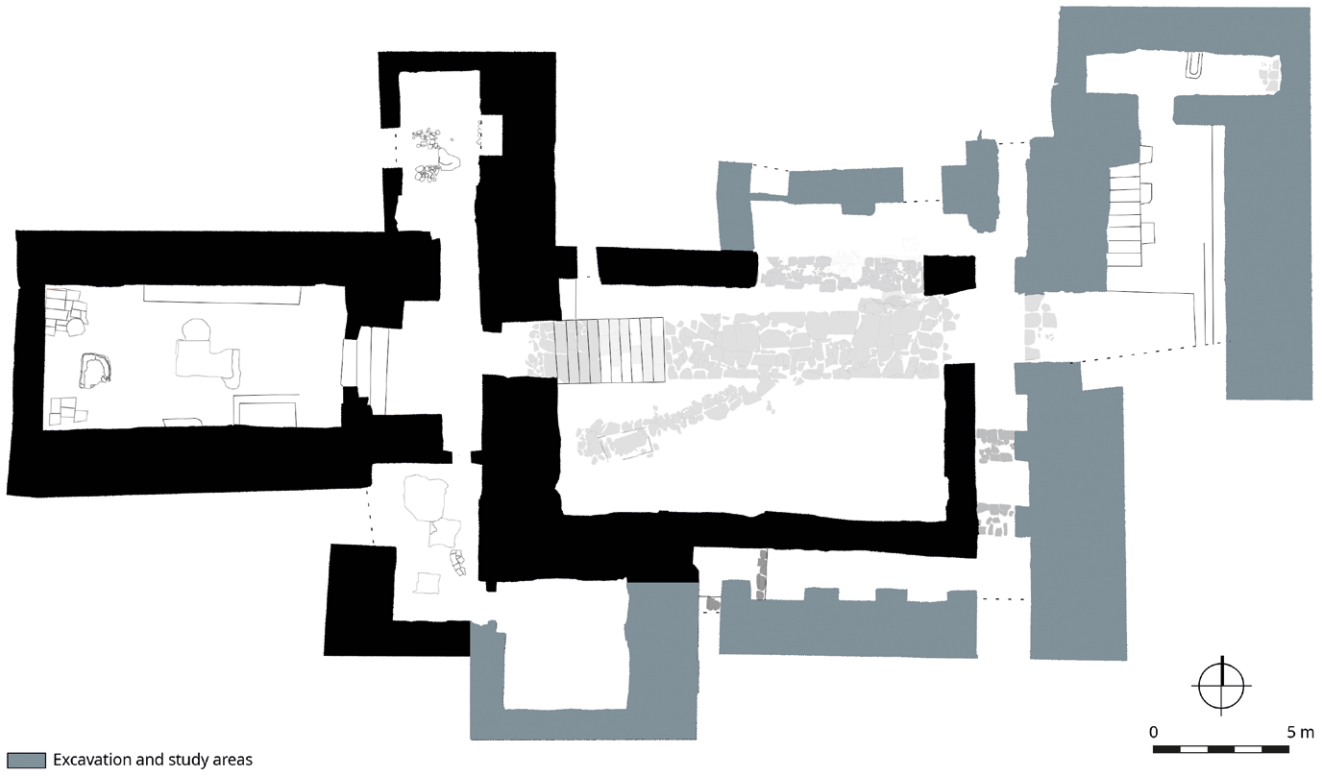
in Greek literature[84]. These sacrifices were carried out to atone for evil or misfortune, but also to prevent it. We believe that in the case of Turuñuelo, the mass sacrifice of animals may have been to atone, as we will explain below.

56 The ritual carried out in the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo has its closest parallel in the sanctuary of Cancho Roano, where a large number of animals were also sacrificed, with equids again the most prominent group. The ritual documented at Cancho Roano can also be considered a hecatomb, but with different patterns, as the sacrificed animals were accumulated in the ditch that surrounds the entire building. In addition, some of the equids had their heads severed and were lying in sectors far from where the rest of the body was deposited. Considering the large number of ceramic vessels that accompanied the fauna sacrificed in the pit, it seems clear that the ritual carried out was directly related to a great final banquet, prior to the burning, destruction, and sealing of the sanctuary[85]. Fifty-three animals have been identified from the fauna recovered in the pit, a very similar number to that of the sacrifice at Casas del Turuñuelo, including eight equids (*Equus caballus*) and a total of five specimens of a small variety of donkey (*Equus sp. asinus*), referred to as the ›Cancho Roano type‹ due to its unique presence. The rest of the fauna consisted of 13 sheep, ten cattle, six deer, four swine, three pigs, a wild boar, and a fox, as well as the remains of three birds,

18

84 Ekroth 2014.

85 Cabrera Díez – Celestino 2014.



19

Fig. 19: Planimetry of the Casas del Turuñuelo building showing the areas around the courtyard, currently being excavated and studied.

including a little bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*)[86]. The main difference with the sacrifice in Casas del Turuñuelo is the way in which they were deposited, but there are also similarities, such as the number of animals slaughtered and their ages, most of them being fully mature adults.

3.2.3 New Spaces next to the Courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo

57 The latest archaeological work carried out in the Casas del Turuñuelo building concentrated on the spaces around the perimeter of the courtyard, mainly in the east and north areas. The choice of both sectors stemmed from the appearance of two doors that provide access to this large space. In its northern wall, the courtyard has a single small entrance, 0.80 m wide, located at its western end, just in front of the staircase, as the existence of a monumental door in the centre of the wall has already been ruled out. Next to it, the second entrance is located at the east end, opposite the staircase, which is connected to it by a long corridor with slate slabs. The east entrance, with a span of 2.56 m, leads to a small rectangular vestibule without a roof. Three more openings lead off from it: one to the north, whose excavation has not been completed, another to the south, where an extensive perimeter corridor bordering the courtyard has been documented, and another to the east, giving access to a new space or corridor that is still being excavated, meaning that we only have a clear idea of its northern part (Fig. 19).

58 The south corridor runs along the entire perimeter of the courtyard on the east and south sides. The two spaces are separated by a 1.20 m wide wall made from a stone plinth on which the adobe wall rests. In its eastern section, the adobe wall has a series of window-like openings that must have served to illuminate the interior of the corridor. Some of these openings coincide, on the opposite wall, with the design and execution of a series of buttresses that form a system of entrances and projections along the entire length of the corridor. These buttresses are associated with the wall that de-

86 Celestino 2022, 166–171.

20

Fig. 20: View of the south corridor of the Casas del Turuñuelo building from the entrance to the north. The ceramic remains recovered can be seen on the floor, as well as the remains of charred beams from the ceiling slabs.

limits the courtyard by means of a series of stone braces that connect the plinths of both walls. This system, hitherto unknown in Tartessian architecture, has led us to consider the possibility that they were used as a reinforcement system to distribute the loads, helping to support this monumental building (Fig. 20). Nevertheless, and regardless of their architectural function, the archaeological record has allowed us to document how these spaces were used for the storage of material, mainly amphorae, of which several examples were recovered during the excavation of this space. Finally, the south corridor has two more openings, apart from the entrance that connects it with the east door of the courtyard. One of them is located in front of this entrance, while the second, smaller one, is located at the end of the corridor, at its western end. Both openings connect with two spaces located to the south of the tumulus that have yet to be excavated.

59 Both the presence of the buttresses and the narrow width of the south corridor, between 1.40 and 1.55 m, led us to consider the possibility that its roof could have been accessible, like a corridor. Although the entire space to the east and south of the corridor has yet to be excavated, the documentation of an adobe staircase in the eastern area excavated in 2022 seems to confirm this hypothesis. This new adobe staircase is attached to the eastern wall that encloses the space. It has seven steps, although we know that several of them were severed by the construction of a medieval trench that destroyed several structures in the building at this point (Fig. 21). Although the study has yet to be completed, we have considered it appropriate to include it in this paper as it confirms the communication between the lower floors and the roofs of the spaces surrounding the courtyard.

21

Fig. 21: Photograph of the adobe staircase located in the eastern sector of the Casas del Turuñuelo building (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

4 The Building of Casas del Turuñuelo through Its Architecture

60 A study of this nature must be accompanied by a brief analysis of the construction elements documented at the Casas del Turuñuelo site. The excellent state of conservation of the site, whose greatest treasure is undoubtedly its architecture, allows us to discover construction details that have not yet been published in protohistoric chronologies, as well as to analyse the earthen architecture that was characteristic of the period but which has been little studied.

4.1 Foundation Systems

61 As we mentioned at the beginning of the article, one of the circumstances that attracted our attention during the first excavation campaigns was the absence of both foundations and plinths in room H100, although we were unaware that we were on an upper floor, and thus the foundation system, without a trench to lay the foundation of the construction, was on the ground floor, as revealed in the subsequent campaigns. The construction without a foundation trench, as in Casas del Turuñuelo, is common in the architecture of the southwest Iberian Peninsula from the Early Iron Age, as exemplified by the cases of Cerro Macareno[87] and El Carambolo[88] in the province of Seville, Tejada la Vieja and Cerro Salomón[89] in the area of Huelva, or buildings C and B from Cancho

87 Pellicer et al. 1983.
88 Fernández Flores – Rodríguez Azogue 2022, 109.
89 Blanco et al. 1970; Fernández Jurado 1987.

Roano[90] in the central valley of the Guadiana. This common but not generalised practice has already been highlighted in other sites of Phoenician influence in the Iberian Peninsula, as well as in Middle Eastern contexts[91].

62 Therefore, it was the work carried out on the ground floor that made it possible to confirm the existence of foundations, although the necessary analyses for their detailed characterisation are not yet available. The small test pit dug in the courtyard, next to the south wall, revealed what appears to be the continuation of the plinth below ground level. However, although both structures were made using the same material and technique, discontinuity can be seen, with the stones that form one and the other not interlocking. A more thorough study of the foundations is one of the objectives we have set ourselves for the next excavation campaign, as it may also help us to identify the construction phases of the courtyard.

4.2 Vertical Structures (Plinths, Walls, and Columns)

63 Plinths have been documented on three of the courtyard walls and in the perimeter corridor. All of them have similar characteristics, with an average height of 1.10 m and a variable width, exceeding one metre in all cases. They are made of more or less regular blocks of medium-sized quartzite, bound with mud and smaller stones. There is also a uniform external surface achieved by the semi-finishing of the stone, resulting in a relatively smooth texture[92]. The upper part of the plinth was also built with flat stones of a smaller size than the rest of the plinth. This final row was intended to level the top of the plinth and to facilitate the uniform laying of the subsequent adobe walls (Fig. 22).

64 The most interesting aspect of the plinths is that, thanks to the documentation of a collapse (or intentional destruction) in the north wall of the courtyard, we have been able to verify that they are made up of a double outer layer of large rocks and an inner filling of earth and smaller stones (Fig. 23). This type of plinth is not very common in the Tartessian sites of the Central Guadiana Valley and has only been documented in Cancho Roano to raise the terraces of the final sanctuary, but it is more common in other sites from slightly earlier periods, as can be seen in the floor plans of the Phoenician levels of sites in the southeast. This is the case of Chorreras[93], Morro de Mezquitilla[94] and Toscanos[95], as well as in the structures excavated in Calle Puerto no. 12, in Huelva[96]. The same applies to the rest of the Mediterranean Phoenician world, where it is widely represented, which led Enrique Díes Cusí[97] to identify it as a technique strongly linked to Phoenician architecture, with a special Tyrian influence and a near-eastern background. In fact, this technique of plinth construction can be observed in Tyre from the 13th level, dated between 1100–1050 BC[98].

65 Adobe walls were erected over the powerful plinths. So far, we have been able to establish a maximum width of these walls of 1.70 m, found in room H100[99]. However, in most of the rooms only one side has been exposed, so we do not know the width of all of the building's walls. In terms of height, the courtyard walls are the highest, measuring almost five metres in the southern section[100]. In this same wall, its slope-shaped layout is particularly relevant, in the same way as in the west elevation, where the staircase is

90 Celestino 2001, 27.
91 Díes Cusí 1994, 166; Díes Cusí 2001, 69–72.
92 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2019, 347.
93 Aubet 1987, 311 fig. 13.
94 Schubart 1979, 204 fig. 18.
95 Niemeyer 1979, 241 fig. 6; Aubet 1985, 20 fig. 3.
96 Fernández Jurado 1989, 101 fig. 2.
97 Díes Cusí 1994, 166 f.
98 Bikai 1978, pl. LXV.
99 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2019, 347 f.
100 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2019, 348.

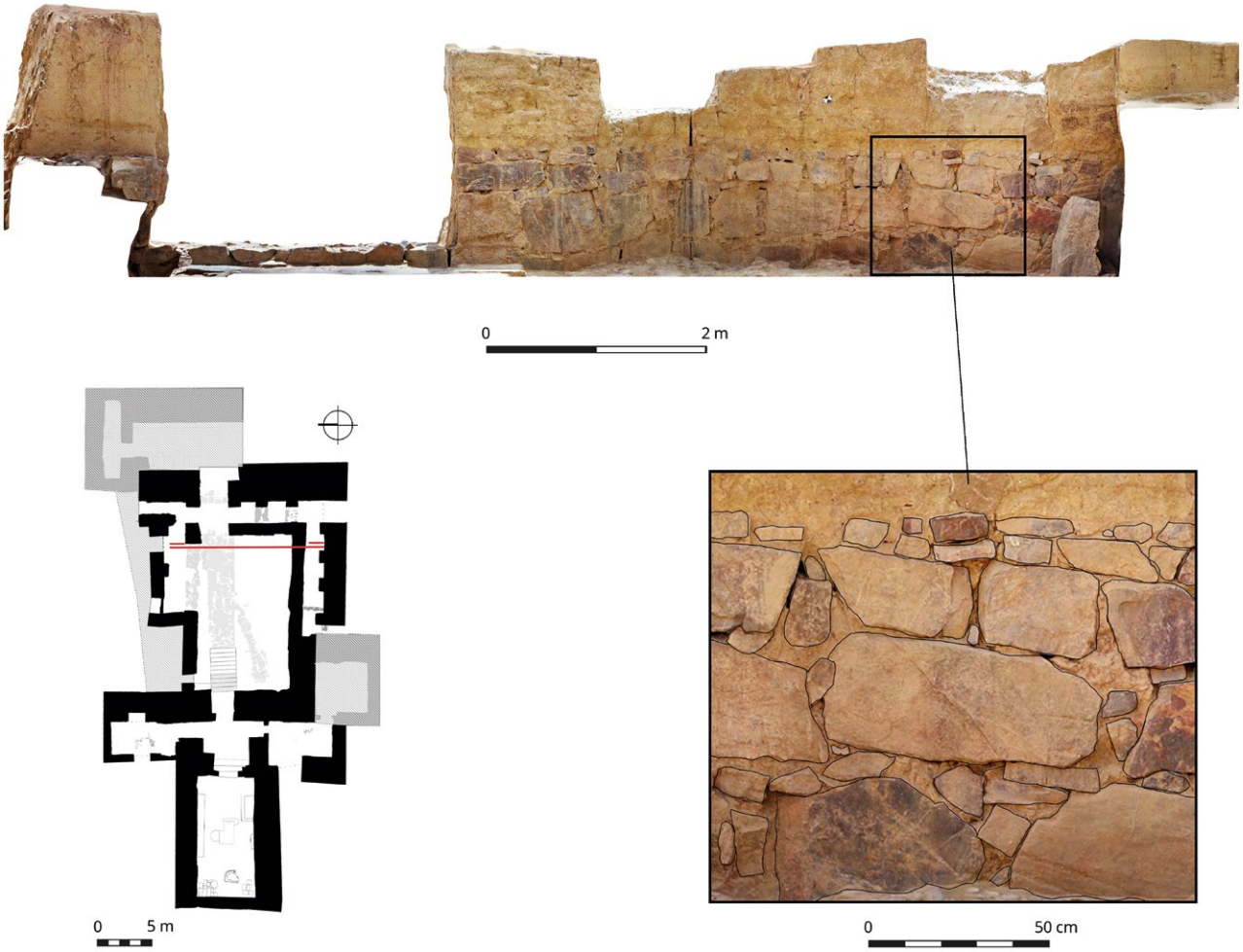


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Fig. 22: Elevation of the east wall of the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain) and detail of the rigging of the quartzite plinths.

Fig. 23: Close-up photograph of the north wall of the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo showing the construction system used.

located. Although their total width has not been documented, both elevations could correspond to a phase of extension, modification, or repair of the courtyard, in line with the north door described above. This hypothesis makes sense if we add the fact that at least the southern wall is supported by an earlier wall that had a stone plinth.

66 As for the adobes, rectangular blocks measuring 40 cm × 20 cm × 20 cm × 10 cm, 55 cm × 40 cm × 10 cm × 10 cm, and another completely square slab measuring 41 cm × 41 cm × 9 cm have been documented[101]. The structure is difficult to define. Firstly, because most of the elevations still have their coverings, which makes it impossible to see the layout of the adobe bricks. Furthermore, when they are visible, we find the added difficulty that the three blocks share one of their dimensions, with-

101 Carranza et al. (in press).

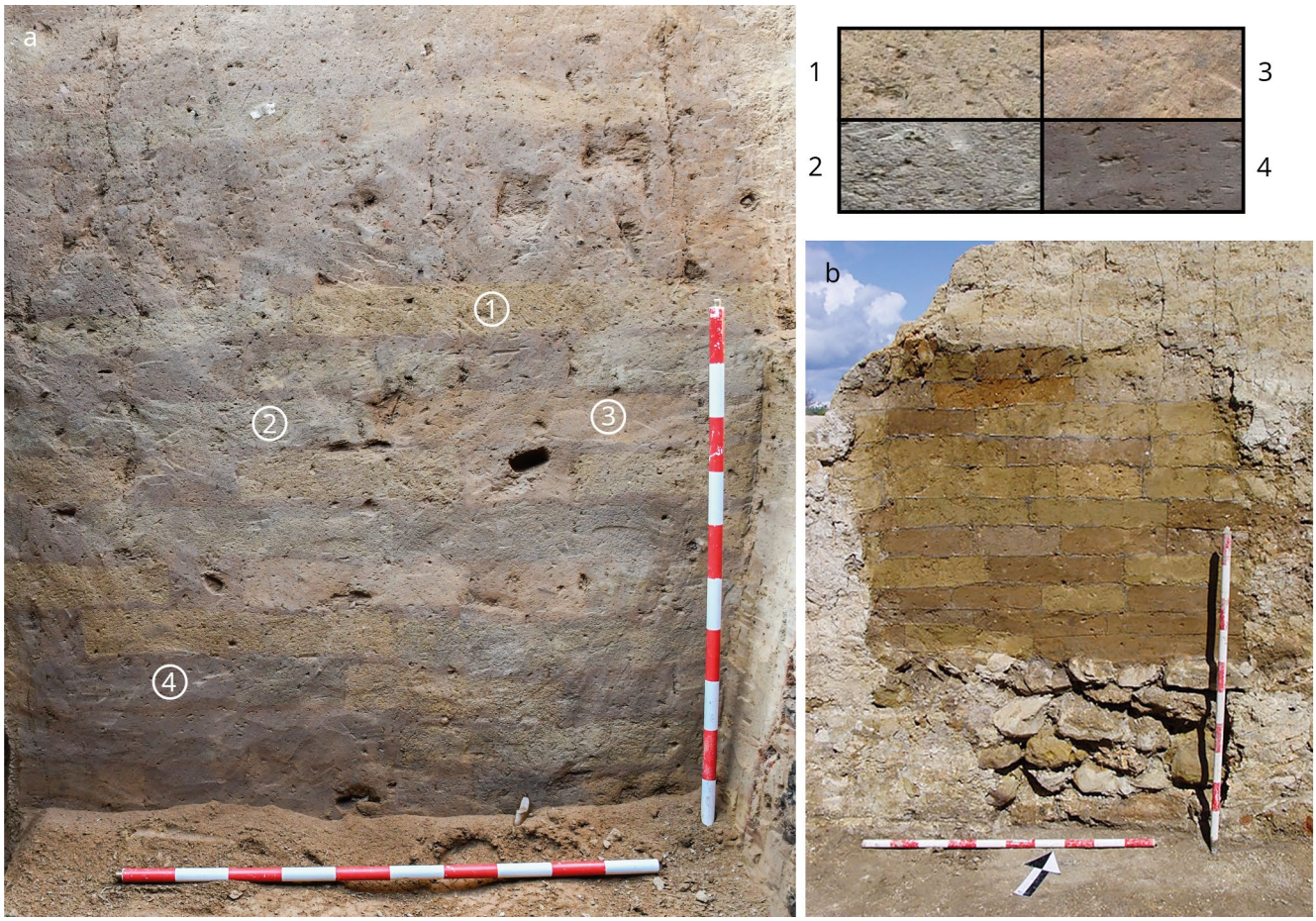

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Fig. 24: a. Close-up of the different colouring of the south elevation of the perimeter corridor of Casas del Turuñuelo in which four varieties of adobe can be distinguished; b. Elevation of phase IV of El Carambolo showing the different sizes and compositions of the adobes used.

out being able to identify which of them we are looking at. In addition, many of the adobes are deformed by the action of continuous pressure in an environment with high humidity, so they can vary in width from 6 to 10 cm in a single piece. This difference in size is repeated in the case of the bed joints, although they are usually 2 cm wide.

67 Another significant fact is the variety of composition in the different adobe bricks used. The analyses carried out rule out the use of both gypsum and man-made lime[102], meaning they were made solely from a combination of soils of different particle sizes to which vegetable matter was added as a stabiliser. While still awaiting the results of the granulometric curves, we can describe, as a general rule, a fairly homogeneous fine-fraction matrix with evidence of plant remains whose taxa are yet to be defined, both preserved and, more commonly, in the form of pores and imprints. As far as colouring is concerned, it does not depend solely on the effect of the fire, but at least five varieties can be distinguished throughout the site. The most interesting thing about this is that there are elevations where the same composition was used in the adobes, as in the buildings of Cancho Roano C, B, and A[103]. In other cases, adobe bricks with different compositions were documented forming part of the same wall (Fig. 24 a), a situation that can be seen clearly in the elevations of El Carambolo (Fig. 24 b). This compositional variety may be associated with the production of different batches and the choice of different sources of raw materials, which allows us to explore questions of how the construction process was organised and managed.

102 Martín Sánchez et al. 2019, 7.

103 Celestino 2001, 30; Carranza et al. (in press), fig. 4.

4.3 Horizontal Structures (Floors and Roofs)

68 One of the aspects on which the site of Casas del Turuñuelo is providing more information relates to horizontal structures, such as the floors and roofs. This information is even more valuable when we consider that these are the elements that are most prone to deterioration, especially when they are made of earth and plant materials.

69 Among the different architectural features there are, first of all, the intermediate floors consisting of wooden decks and rammed earth[104]. As the excavated rooms belong to the upper floor, we have still not identified whether the loads were directed towards intermediate pillars or whether the floor slabs were supported directly on the walls. However, given the large spans found on the site, the design logic suggests the need for columns.

70 Secondly, there are the roofs of the building, an element that followed, for the most part, the same trend and structure as the intermediate floors. However, the roofs are in differing states of preservation, so we do not know the specific form that was used in each and every room; although other construction elements, such as the cladding, suggest whether the rooms were covered or not. In any case, both the in-situ arrangement of several charred beams and the location of other anthracological remains corresponding to bundles of twigs and wooden battens can be clearly associated with roofs built using a framework[105]. These structures would have been used for the flat roofs or, possibly, the single-slope roofs. The most obvious case appeared in the previously described room S1, where, in addition to the remains of bundles of twigs, the almost 2 m long central pillar which served as support for the roof framework was documented[106] (Fig. 25).

71 As far as the wood used is concerned, the analyses carried out so far have made it possible to identify some taxa, especially *Pinus sylvestris*, both for the roofs and for the various remains of the floors and carpentry[107]. This pattern is consistent with other sites in the direct vicinity, such as La Mata (Campanario, Badajoz)[108], as well as pollen analysis showing the existence of *Pinus* taxa in most of the Tartessian sites in the Central Guadiana Valley[109]. However, the anthracological analyses carried out at the site of La Mata show that a wide variety of taxa were used as construction materials[110].

72 This type of roof has also been documented thanks to the variety of plant imprints that have been preserved. The fire associated with the destruction of the building has allowed us to recover the final covering layer of the roof of one of the rooms in the north-eastern sector. Specifically, this refers to the clay covering, 15–20 cm thick, which rested on the layer of branches of the framework. Unlike the adobes, here we can see a greater compositional uniformity, with a fine-fraction matrix and, although there is a higher percentage of sand in some cases, there are no gravels.

73 Although the plant elements have been lost, the rubbing of this layer has preserved the imprints of leaves and branches. They appear to be shrubby plant elements of an unidentified taxa that were certainly laid in place while still fresh. These imprints complete the characterisation of the roof frameworks, since, at least in this room, they were not found with branches as a final layer, but with the final covering of earth. This suggests that, unlike a branch or tile finish, the use of compacted earth gives the necessary strength and robustness to allow people to walk over the roof.

104 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2020, 13.

105 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2020, 13. 18.

106 Rodríguez González – Celestino 2019, 188.

107 Rodríguez González – Celestino 2019, 183. The anthracological analyses were carried out by Mónica Ruiz Alonso at the Archaeobiology Laboratory of the Centre for Human and Social Sciences of the CSIC.

108 Duque 2004.

109 Rodríguez González 2020, 289.

110 Duque 2004.

25

Fig. 25: View of room S1 at Casas del Turuñuelo during the excavation process. The charred remains of several roof beams are preserved on the floor, as well as the central post that would have supported the roof structure.

74 In addition to these imprints, other specimens have been identified whose morphology seems to be linked to a different framework system. Although they are still being studied, the marks in the form of parallel channels of between 4–7 mm seem to indicate the use of reeds (or similar taxa) as a construction material (Fig. 26). The problem we encounter is that unlike in the previous case, the fragments recovered come from the backfill of the rooms and not as part of an in-situ roof. Although the data seem to indicate the existence of this type of roof framework using reeds, we cannot rule out the possibility that we are dealing with another construction technique that belongs to vertical structures, such as some kind of latticework.

75 For these contexts of the Early Iron Age in the southwestern Iberian Peninsula, archaeological research has repeatedly used flat roofs in the hypothetical reconstructions. However, we believe that there has been a certain overexploitation of parallels, generalising the model of flat roofs made with wooden frames and bundles of twigs, then covered with clay[111]. The exclusive use of flat roofs as the only construction solution is questionable for the geographical area and climatic characteristics of the site, although long-term paleoclimatic studies are still needed. Even though this may have been the most common roofing system in the Tartessian civilisation, this does not mean that it was the only architectural resource available, nor should we rule out options such as single-pitched roofs, even if they were not very steep. In fact, the site of Casas del Turuñuelo offers other possible alternatives, such as the one found for room H100.

26

Fig. 26: Fragment of rubified clay belonging to the upper layer of one of the roofs of Casas del Turuñuelo in which the imprints of reeds can be seen, which formed a part of the framework.

4.4 The Vault

76 In room H100, already described above, we suggest the possibility of finding a solution other than frameworks used as roofing. We should not forget that we are dealing with a large space of 60 m^2, enclosed by four adobe walls of different widths,

111 Carranza et al. (in press).

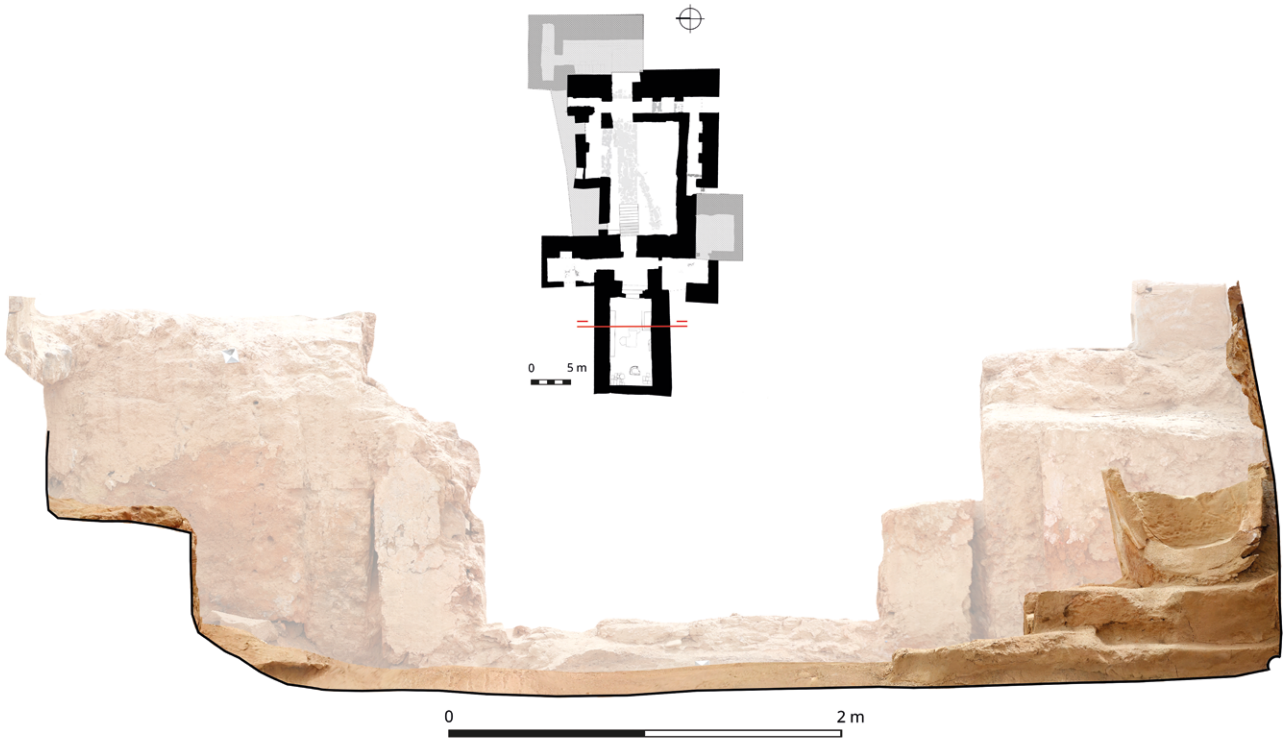

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Fig. 27: Section of room H100 showing the curvature of the south wall of approximately α = 80° and β = 100°.

architectural function, and state of conservation. The long north and south walls are up to 1.30 m high, although the construction of a Medieval ditch severely damaged the north wall. The most peculiar thing about these walls is that the long walls, on the north and south sides, are 1.70 m wide, in contrast to the 1.20 m of the short walls, which in any case are of disproportionate dimensions in relation to other known constructions of the period. These measurements could be related to the roofing system. Consequently, there are strong reasons to believe that this size may have been intended to counteract the loads of a vault. We are also interested in the fact that the south wall has a progressive and uniformly graded curvature towards the interior of the room as it rises in height (Fig. 27), the main element that led us to consider the presence of a vault during the excavation phase.

77 In addition to the aforementioned construction details, there are the materials recovered during the excavation of the room and the absence of others that are commonplace in the rest of the rooms. No remains of vertical structures beyond the walls, such as pillars, stanchions, beams, or any other element intended to support a flat roof covering a span of this size, were found in this room. This information is essential because, as the roofs and intermediate floors are subject to deflection, it would be difficult to bridge a span as large as the one in this room without some of these elements. However, a large concentration of bricks was documented, now under analysis to determine their composition and mechanical characteristics, in the central area of the room and occupying its entire length, decreasing in density towards the north and south walls[112].

78 With all these data, and even considering the possibility that in the process of filling and sealing the building, materials from other areas and possibly from neighbouring buildings were used, we believe that the room may have been covered by a vault, like those known from other parts of the Mediterranean. In short, the problem to be solved is how they were able to close the space of such a large rectangular floor plan

112 Rodríguez González – Celestino 2017, 187.

using pieces smaller than the actual span of the room and without resorting to wooden elements or plaster. Given these construction requirements, a self-supporting vault built with conical slabs, in which the slabs are set at an angle and joined with earth mortar, is the most feasible option. The complexity of the subject has led us to reinforce this line of research within the ›Building Tartessus‹ project, re-evaluating the roofing systems of the Tartessian sites in the Central Guadiana Valley, in addition to those proposed for the different protohistoric sites in the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula.

4.5 Vertical Cladding

79 The cladding of the elevations of Casas del Turuñuelo is another of the constructive elements whose state of conservation allows them to be studied in depth. In terms of technique, the most common is the application of a thick rendering (± 2 cm) with fine-fraction earth mortar and sand content as a first covering layer, including both the plinths and the adobe elevations. Over this first layer, a second, more refined and finer-grained surface layer was applied. Finally, different layers of pigment were applied as a final coating.

80 The wide range of analyses carried out using a combination of spectroscopic and thermophysical techniques have made it possible to identify the use of kaolinite for the white tones, while the clays used for the red palette have this pigmentation due to their high iron oxide content[113]. The application of kaolin for the white rendering is the same method used in other contemporary buildings, such as Cancho Roano[114] and La Mata[115], although in these two cases it is simply painted on, not applied as a thick coat of rendering. In addition, it is interesting to note the peculiarity that in Casas del Turuñuelo pulverised slate was used as another of the colorimetric alternatives, giving a pearly grey appearance to the areas where it was applied. This slate also appears, in the form of slabs, as a material used in vertical cladding, although it was used most prominently as a flooring material.

81 Significantly, it is possible to observe and count the different layers of finish in some areas of the building, such as the upper hall (Fig. 28). Here we have documented superimposed materials that show signs of having required regular maintenance. The highly localised nature of this work can be attributed to the needs of a space that was sensitive to inclement weather, meaning it was located in the open air. Furthermore, this interpretation is supported by the fact that there is no colour variation from one layer to another. This can be interpreted as repainting rather than as changes and alterations to the colour of the walls. In the same room, however, there is a section adjacent to the door of H100 where a thick covering has been applied over an earlier one. In this case, it is associated with a specific remodelling aimed at reducing the span of the doorway between the vestibule and H100.

82 Finally, a series of claddings have recently been documented on the north wall of the perimeter corridor of the courtyard that merit particular study. The cladding is a rough, irregular, and non-uniform rendering that covers the entire surface of the elevation, although it remains to be assessed whether it is an intermediate process of preparation or whether it was intentionally made this way. What is most interesting is that the rubification of the rendering has made it possible to preserve the handprints resulting from applying the mortar in a malleable state (Fig. 29).

83 We have been able to document various types of horizontal coverings. We have already seen how the floors of the rooms on the upper floor, made of rammed earth, are in a poor state of preservation. As indicated above, the irregularity of the

113 Martín Sánchez et al. 2019.

114 Celestino 2001, 72.

115 Ponce de León 2004, 331.

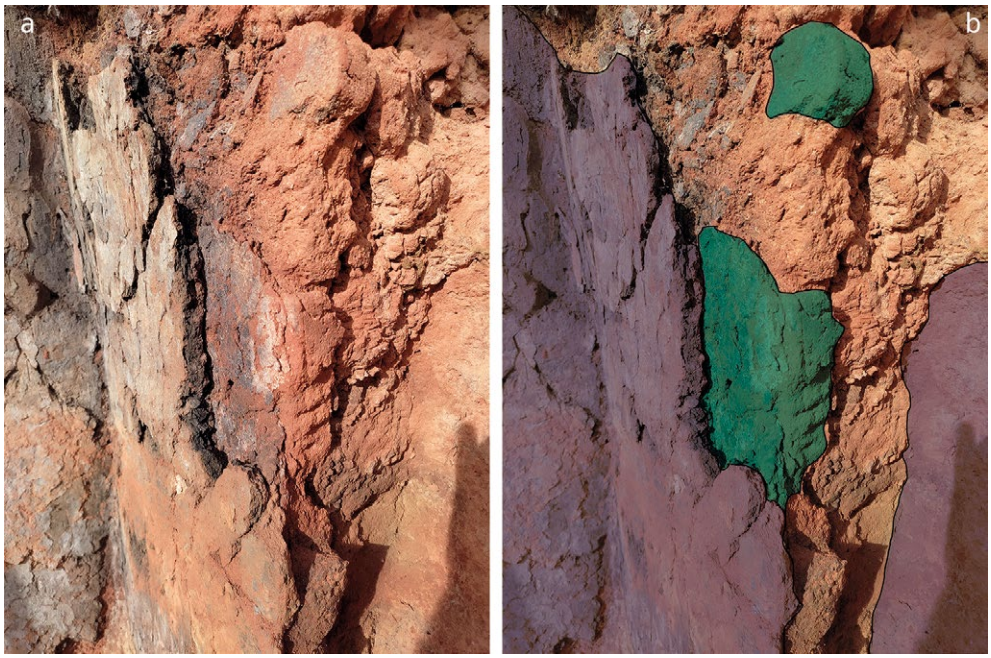

Fig. 28: Superimposed rendering associated with the remodelling of the door opening of room H100.

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Fig. 29: Close-up photograph of one of the renderings documented in the north corridor of the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo, showing the detail of the finger imprints resulting from applying the mortar directly by hand.

29

floors is associated with the fact that they are located on the infill of the lower rooms. Therefore, during the sealing process, the silting-up and collapse caused the frames and floors of the intermediate floors to rest on an uneven surface. This situation is particularly visible in the case of room S1, where the floors are unevenly sunken and ›sagging‹ from the adobe elevations, with variations in height of up to 0.50 m (Fig. 30).

84 Slate appears as a cladding material on the upper steps of the staircase leading to the courtyard from the upper floor. However, its presence is notable on the lower level of the building and in different transit elements, specifically in the passageway along the courtyard, measuring 10.39 m × 2.50 m, which connects the base of the monumental staircase and the opening leading to the east end of the courtyard[116]. At this north-

116 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2019, 350.

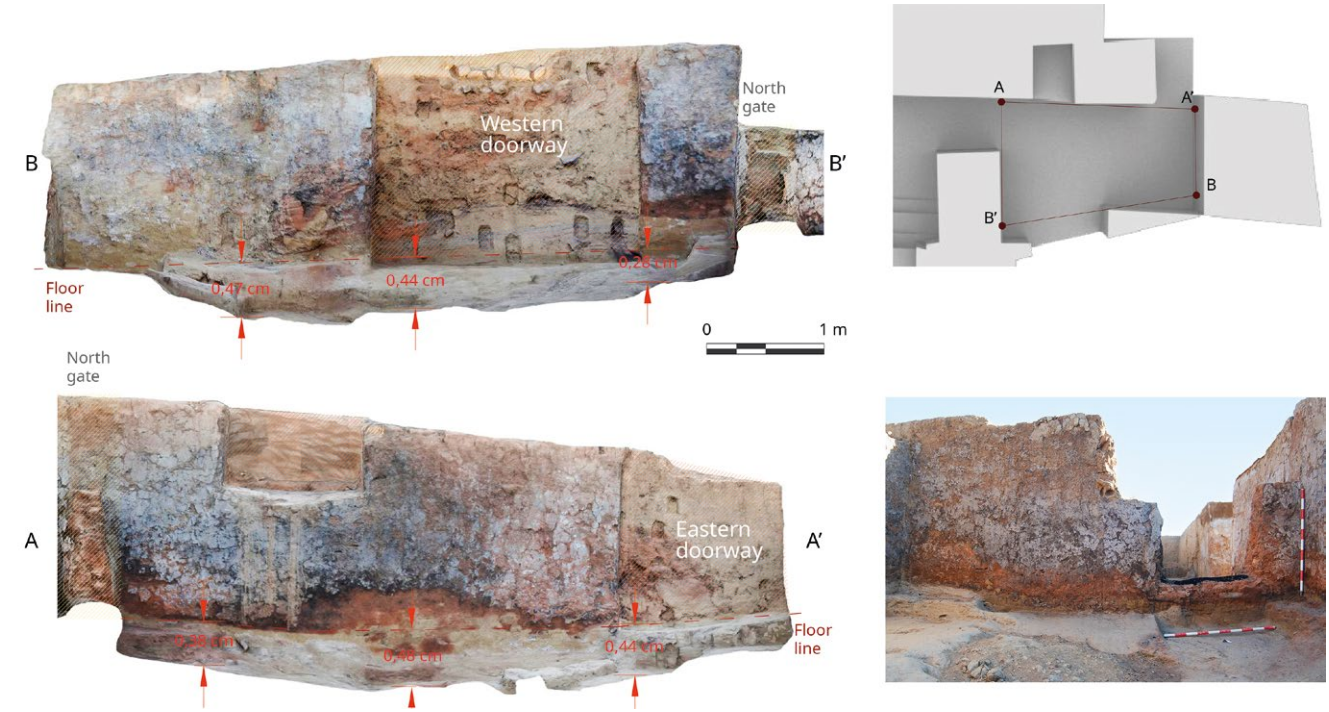

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Fig. 30: East and west elevations of room S1 of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain) showing how the floors have completely sunk with respect to the original alignment.

eastern point, the slate slab corridor extends in a northerly direction and, although no continuity can be seen, it could have reached other rooms given that we find the semi-demolished wall that cuts through the courtyard. These stratigraphic relationships once again reveal the existence of different phases that significantly affected the layout of the building.

85 From the southern midpoint of the slate passageway, a second passageway of narrower slabs branches off. This is also made of large flagstones, acting as a cover for the drain that starts in a ›box‹ made of the same material (Fig. 31). One of the distinctive features of this second corridor is that, while the main, larger corridor has smooth, even edges, this ›branch‹ is highly irregular. This suggests that its width is incomplete. In fact, during the excavation process of the courtyard, a significant amount of loose slate slabs were also documented, with dimensions similar to those used in the corridor. Some of these pieces still have the preparation of quartzite pebbles and sandy mortar adhered to one of their faces, indicating that they were part of the horizontal cladding. Therefore, although we do not know their exact origin, they indicate that part of the building had slate-covered floors, a feature that has also been found in other examples from the Central Guadiana, such as Cancho Roano A[117].

86 In the rest of the courtyard, a layer of pebbles was found with a silty mortar, interpreted as a level of protection for the original paving in connection with the destruction process. Under this layer is the general paving of the courtyard, which is slightly inclined towards the east to allow water to drain away. It is made up of superimposed and alternating layers of pebbles with other layers of sandy soil, almost half a metre deep, over which a layer of earth was spread and then tamped down to even out the soil. However, it seems that there are two construction phases in the courtyard, as a red clay pavement from an earlier period is situated under the pebbles. The last type of paving that we have documented at the site comes from two test pits dug in the southwest corner of the courtyard and next to the monumental staircase, respectively. Here we find red paving superimposed on the previous layer of white primer, a technique

117 Celestino 2022, 98.

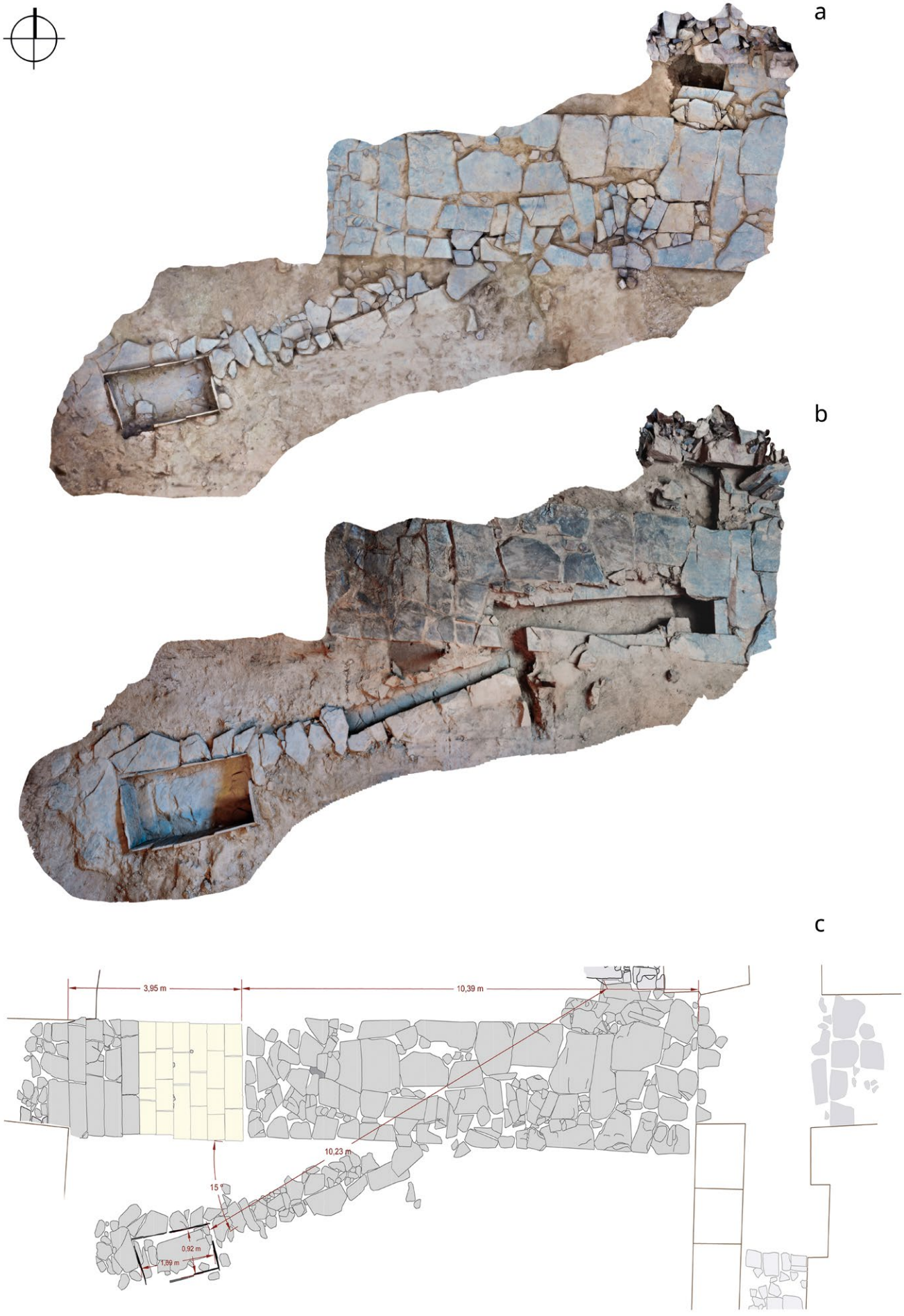

Fig. 31: Photogrammetric view of the covered (A) and uncovered (B) gutter. Planimetry of the slate structures (C) in the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

inherited from Oriental architecture[118] which is repeatedly found in Tartessian sites (such as Cancho Roano B[119]). The excavated profile reveals a deposit that is more than 12 cm thick, which implies a continuous and numerous superimposition of soils. This is evidence of the existence of phases prior to that of the current courtyard and that this soil was uncovered, which meant that maintenance was necessary, with the consequent raising of the level of use. This could be the original level of the courtyard, which will be verified in the future along with its extent.

4.6 Auxiliary Elements, Service, and Transitional Installations

87 At Casas del Turuñuelo there are also interesting examples of auxiliary construction and sanitation elements, both on the upper and lower floors. Firstly, the slate box already described in the courtyard appears to be one of the most unique architectural elements of the building, as there are no known analogies for this stage of the building's history. This is a slate box measuring 1.70 m × 0.92 m with a depth of between 0.30 and 0.38 m (Fig. 32). It is slightly inclined and partially open on the east side, where the water drainage system starts. This drain or gutter runs under the small slate corridor and crosses the entire courtyard until it disappears under the walls on the north side, thus we do not know if it ends in some kind of well or tank[120].

88 As is usual in this type of architecture, there are recurrent auxiliary elements, such as continuous benches, altars in the form of a bovid skin, platforms of various types, worktops, and stone seats. In the case of the continuous benches, the one in room H100 stands out for its size and state of preservation, 5.66 m have been preserved, with a height of 0.66 m. The bench, which would have run around the whole room, is built with adobe bricks completely covered with slate slabs, of which several examples have survived, while the front still preserves cut-outs of red plaster with traces of printed wave decoration. It also has a small plinth or podium to support the feet.

89 Altars in the form of bovid skins, as we have already mentioned, are another recurrent element in this type of site from the Tartessian period. The largest of those found at Casas del Turuñuelo was found in the centre of room H100, measuring 2.30 m × 1.31 m, although, as we have seen in S1, there are other smaller ones scattered around the building. The first of these, measuring 0.98 m × 0.96 m, was affected by ground subsidence and is therefore poorly preserved, although a thick layer of ash was documented on the surface (Fig. 33 a). The second, also free-standing, is located in the southern part of the room and is much better preserved as it has not been affected by the subsidence of the ground. It measures 0.75 m × 0.75 m and was made, like the previous one, from two orange adobe bricks bordered by a thin strip of yellow clay. The surface of this second structure was also covered with ash (Fig. 33 b). We have recently compared these altars found in the buildings of the Middle Guadiana Valley with others from the eastern coast[121], suggesting a re-eval-

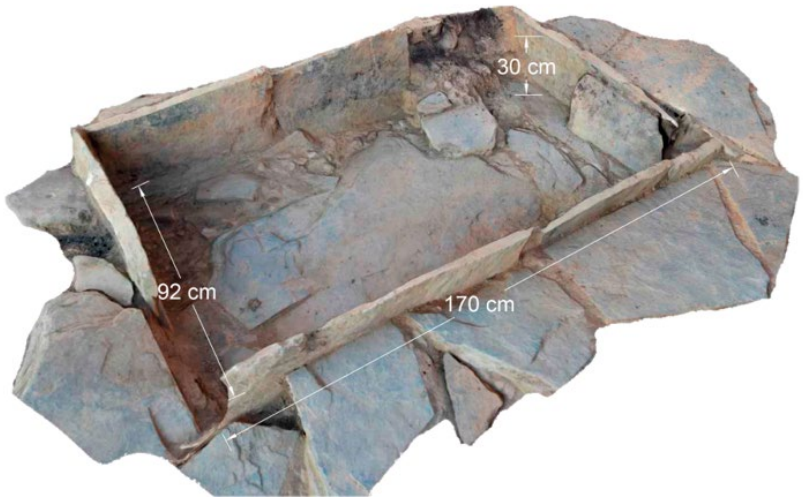

Fig. 32: Photogrammetry of the slate cist documented in the south-western sector of the courtyard of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

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118 Arruda – Celestino 2009.
119 Celestino 2001, 22.
120 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2019, 350 f.
121 Carranza et al. (in press).

Fig. 33: Fireplaces found in room S1 of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

33

uation of the relations between the east and west of the Iberian Peninsula during the Early Iron Age.

90 But the most outstanding architectural element of the site is the great staircase in the courtyard, both for its state of preservation and for its construction technique and composition, which has been studied in detail in previous papers[122]. This staircase, consisting of eleven steps in total, connects the upper vestibule with the courtyard. It is 2.94 m high, with a maximum depth of 3.14 m, 2.30 m long on each step, has a slope of 35° and a tread of 0.27 m, although with variable dimensions on the riser. The only measurement that remains constant in the eleven steps is the height.

91 The top five steps are made of adobe with a tread made of slate, a material widely used for its water-repellent properties, while the bottom six steps are made of

122 Rodríguez González et al. 2020.

parallelepiped blocks built with dry-laid lime mortar. Each of the blocks has an unequal length and width, except for the height, with an average of between 0.25 and 0.27 m. This can be interpreted as a result of them having been made in the same mould, but then having been randomly cut before the material had set. This process has been documented thanks to the fact that some of the blocks preserve traces of working and cutting on the exposed lateral face, an element that we are currently studying, and which will help shed more light on the tools that were used to carve them. Lastly, the ends of the steps were painted red, matching the coating on the plinths of the walls that surround the courtyard on all four sides.

92 The composition of the blocks is the element that makes them especially relevant, as it is the oldest lime mortar found in the Iberian Peninsula[123]. The analyses carried out show both its composition, mainly consisting of lime, and the construction technique, where layers of tamped mortar would have been applied, superimposing layers of varying thickness[124]. In addition to the other analyses conducted, X-ray Fluorescence (XRF) results suggest the presence of gypsum in the lime mortar mixture, which is essential for setting a structure of this size. The identification of anthropogenic lime and the determination of its physical and chemical composition is a complex issue that has already been addressed by specialists[125]. Although little is known about the use of lime in the Protohistory of the south-west[126], this case from the Casas del Turuñuelo site both questions and pushes back the dates of its use.

5 Imported Artefacts from the Casas del Turuñuelo Site

93 As previously mentioned, since archaeological work began at Casas del Turuñuelo in 2014 the discoveries made at the site have only served to highlight its importance in the economy and organisation of the Guadiana region. In addition to its monumental architecture, the factor that is most indicative of the importance of this site is the impressive collection of imported artefacts found in its various rooms. This collection plays a key role in defining the trade routes that connected Casas del Turuñuelo with distant centres both on the Iberian Peninsula and in the Mediterranean basin. However, it is not only of interest to trace their origin in order to identify the trade routes of the second half of the 5th century BC, but also to understand their use and the new meaning given to them by the last Tartessian communities that inhabited the Guadiana Valley. To do this, it is also essential to consider the information provided by the contexts in which the findings were made.

94 The imported objects found in the building can be grouped into five types: ceramics, ivory, vitreous paste or sand core, glass, and marble. Although they are scattered throughout the building, their concentration in areas such as the courtyard or room H100 is significant, a fact that is consistent with the importance of these spaces, which, judging by their design, must have been conceived as places of assembly and participation.

95 The imported pottery at Casas del Turuñuelo consists of three Attic forms that are extremely common in Iberian Peninsula repertoires: Castulo cups or inset lip cups as classified by Brian Sparkes and Lucy Talcott[127], one-handled black cups, and stemless large plain rim cups with red figures. The collection dates the final stage of use of the site to around 450–375 BC. This chronology fits with the record documented in the

123 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2020, 22.
124 Rodríguez González et al. 2020, 443.
125 Hobbs – Sindall 2011; Jover et al. 2016; Martín Sánchez et al. 2019.
126 Vela Cossío 2004, 427.
127 Sparkes – Talcott 1970.

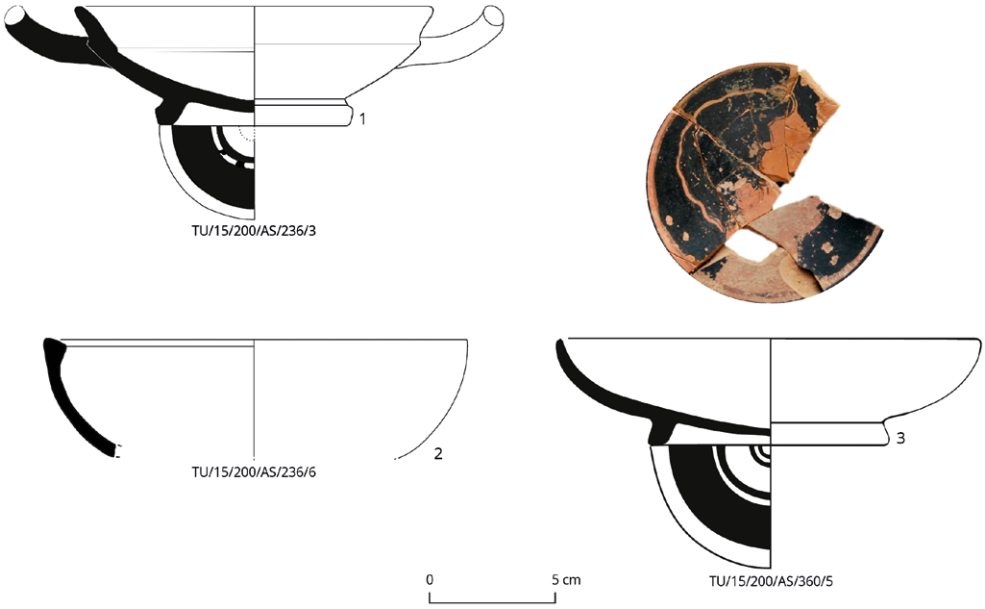

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Fig. 34: Drawings of the three Attic forms documented in Casas del Turuñuelo: 1. Inset lip cup; 2. One handled black cup; 3. Stemless large plain rim cup with its red-figure decoration.

similar building at Cancho Roano[128]; however, the enormous quantity of Attic pottery found at the latter site is far greater than the twenty or so pieces found to date at Casas del Turuñuelo (Fig. 34)[129].

96 According to the classification criteria established by Carmen Sánchez Fernández[130], the Castulo cups from the site date from the chronological transition between the 5th and 4th centuries BC (c. 425–375 BC) due to their poorer finish and the absence of unglazed areas. Furthermore, in keeping with the Iberian panorama, black glazed forms in general, and Castulo cups in particular, are the most common types in Casas del Turuñuelo. Another issue is the one-handled black cups found at the site, with a much wider time frame (c. 500–400 BC), similar examples of which have been found in the Iberian Peninsula. The majority of these examples are located either in the last quarter of the 5th century BC, as is the case at Mas Castellar (Pontós, Girona)[131], El Puig de la Nau (Benicarló, Castellón)[132], and El Cerro del Prado (Algeciras, Cádiz)[133], or in a period between 425/400 and 375 BC, this is the case of the examples from the necropolis of Puig des Molins (Ibiza)[134], Ampurias (Girona)[135], Camp de l'Ylla (Viladamat, Girona)[136], and the necropolis of Túrugi (Galera, Granada)[137]. The closest parallels to the material from Casas del Turuñuelo are located at Cancho Roano, dated to the second half of the 5th century BC[138], although our examples seem to point to the end of the 5th century BC.

97 As for the red-figure goblets, this type of decoration is not common for this period in the Guadiana Valley, so the six examples from Casas del Turuñuelo stand out in the corpus. Their decorative patterns are in keeping with the style used by the workshops and painters of the second half of the 5th century BC. One rare specimen in the Iberian Peninsula is a cup with a young man's head depicted in the background, in the manner of the representations of *ánodos*, where the decoration consists of the head of a woman wearing a *kekrýphalos* (a hairnet). In the Iberian Peninsula there are very few examples of Attic cup bottoms depicting male heads, the most notable being the one from Los Villares (Caudete de las Fuentes, Valencia)[139].

128 Gracia 2003.
129 Miguel Naranjo et al. 2023.
130 Sánchez 1992, 331.
131 Pons 2002, 227 fig. 10, 6. 8.
132 Sanmartí Grego 1976, 222 fig. 1, 3.
133 Cabrera – Perdigones 1996, 160 s. fig. 4, 47. 49. 51.
134 Fernández Gómez 1992, 126 fig. 49, 135.
135 Sanmartí Grego 1988, 107. 125 figs. 6. 9. 10, 13. 14.
136 Casas et al. 2010, 236 fig. 7, 5.
137 Sánchez 1992, 264 fig. 57.
138 Gracia 2003, 39 fig. 14, 3. 5. 6.
139 Pla Ballester 1980, pl. XXX.

98 This collection of Attic ceramics must have played an important role in the functioning of the group or groups that made use of the site in its final stage, not only because of their technical quality and difficulty of acquisition, which already endow the pieces with a prestigious character, but also because of their location in the stratigraphy. Most of the Attic vessels were found in the upper levels within the thick layer of yellow clay that served to seal the tumulus after the rooms were demolished. This leads us to believe that this type of ware was reinterpreted by the communities of the Central Guadiana Valley. Its possession and use in certain contexts of social cohesion of the group, such as a closing ceremony for the building, gave them a new symbolic value within the community. Depending on the perspective, this value could be exclusive, for a selected group as opposed to the rest, or it could be inclusive, with the possession of this vessel being conceived as a distinctive element of belonging to the group, reflecting its cohesion in a rite or gathering through the use of this type of ware.

99 The other collection of great interest among the Casas del Turuñuelo imports are its ivory pieces (Fig. 35). It has already been noted that four panels were found on the floor of room H100, which connected to form a rectangle that proved to be a cover or lining for a wooden box that was destroyed by the fire. One of them, the ›north plaque‹, and the preserved rivets have been found to be made of hippopotamus ivory

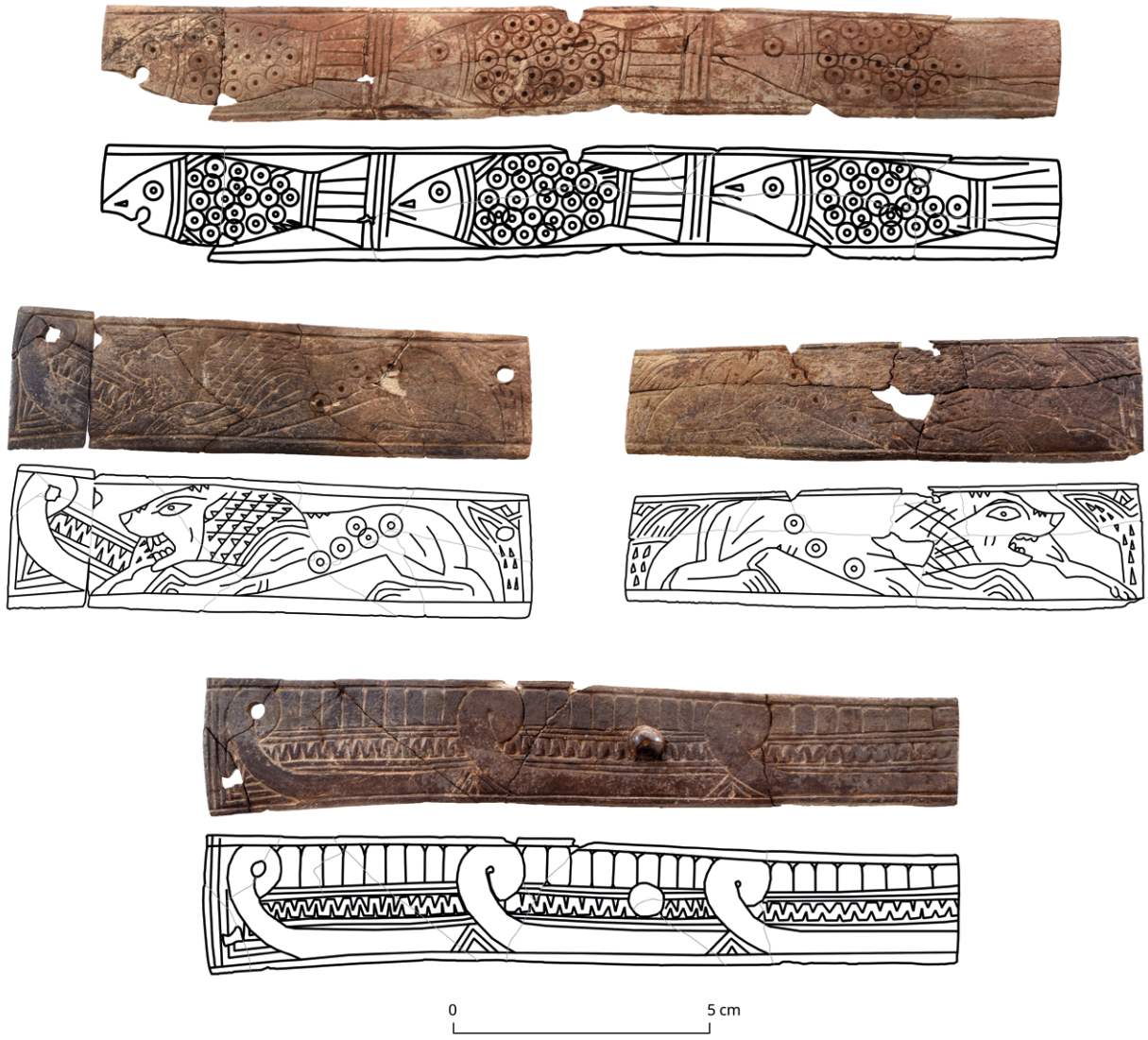

Fig. 35: Photograph and drawing of the four bone and ivory plaques that decorated a wooden box documented in room H100 of Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spain).

35

(*Hippopotamus amphibius*), while the rest of the plaques were made of bone[140]. This fact has meant a radical change of perspective in the study of the so-called Hispano-Phoenician ivories, as it implies the need to revisit previous works and submit similar pieces found in Tartessian contexts to this type of analysis in order to determine whether they are actually ivory or bone artefacts. They also encourage us to look at the question of possible peninsular workshops from a new perspective.

100 In addition, a final free-standing ivory plaque was found extremely fragmented in one of the areas of the room most affected by the fire, which was part of the destruction process. Although we have not yet been able to carry out the corresponding analysis to determine the type of ivory, this piece has preserved some exceptional elements, such as the gold leaf glued to the frame in relief of the scene carved on the plaque or the remains of Egyptian blue pigment that would have coloured the composition, making it a unique discovery.

101 As regards the decoration on the ivory plaque of the ships and the one found on its own, also made of ivory, they are quite different in terms of their iconography, even though the technique used in the manufacture of both pieces is bas-relief. While the scene on the ›north plaque‹ consists of a series of boats, the free-standing plaque shows a pair of seated bovids, adapting their position to the shape of the plaque. Depictions of bulls are omnipresent in Phoenician cosmogony and, therefore, in Tartessian cosmogony.

102 The presence of ivory at the site indicates the existence of long-distance commercial connections that linked the Guadiana Valley with centres in the Mediterranean basin and North Africa within a highly complex logistical network. Firstly, the raw material for the ›north plaque‹ and its rivets must have arrived through contacts established between the centres on what is now the Moroccan coast and those located in the Strait of Gibraltar. This is not the place to delve into the question of whether there were workshops in the Iberian Peninsula making artefacts predominantly using the bas-relief technique[141], but it can be affirmed that the acquisition of this type of materials entailed considerable difficulties. This can be deduced from the presence of the other three bone plaques that would have joined the ›north plaque‹ as appliqués on the box, as they would denote a later repair in a more readily available and easier to work material. This leads us to situate it within a broad chronological range between the beginning of the 7th century and the 6th century BC, in line with other ivory artefacts found in the Iberian Peninsula[142]. However, the modification in bone would have been made during the period when the Casas del Turuñuelo structure was in use, in the 5th century BC[143].

103 The bas-relief technique of the two ivory plaques has certain similarities with those found in the necropolis of Los Villares (Hoya-Gonzalo, Albacete) identified as Etruscan artefacts[144]. This situation adds another factor to the complex commercial route by which these imports must have reached the Guadiana, indicating links with nuclei on the eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula and the Central Mediterranean. According to the classifications of Yvette Huls[145] and Marina Martelli[146], the free-standing plaque would date to the second half of the 6th century BC so that, like the ›north plaque‹, it was treasured for several generations within the time between its manufacture, acquisition, and subsequent destruction in the early 4th century BC.

140 Herranz Redondo et al. 2019; Rodríguez González et al. 2020, 12 f. figs. 6–8.
141 Aubet 2008.
142 Le Meaux 2010.
143 Rodríguez González et al. 2020, 69.
144 Roldán Gómez 1995–1996.
145 Huls 1957.
146 Martelli 1985.

104 Moreover, in the 2022 campaign we recovered a collection of highly fragmented ivories and bones behind the eastern door of the courtyard, corresponding to at least three different plaques with a rich decoration in relief with oriental motifs, some of which also contain gold leaf. The fragments are currently being cleaned at SECYR[147] and we hope to be able to study them soon due to their undeniable interest, as they are reminiscent of Etruscan carved ivory pieces already documented in the Iberian Peninsula and even in the Central Guadiana Valley, the origin of a fragment found on the surface of another Tartessian burial mound, the Turuñuelo de Mérida[148].

105 In the process of excavating the four joined plaques, it was also possible to recover the contents of a box, consisting of 56 sand core or glass paste beads, greenish in colour and which possibly belonged to a necklace. However, the high temperature to which the beads were subjected by the final fire in the building meant that they were in a poor state of conservation, and many were fused together forming a shapeless mass[149]. This circumstance has made it impossible to analyse these pieces in greater depth, but this opens the way for the next imported material to be addressed: sand-core objects.

106 The presence of sand-core objects in the contexts of Casas del Turuñuelo can be summed up in the group of three polychrome ointment jars, popularised through Punic trade between the 6th and 4th centuries BC. These jars were found in the courtyard of the building, in the space between the staircase and the northern enclosure wall under a level that was significantly affected by fire[150]. Two of the ointment jars are oinochoes, an unusual type except in settlements in the southeast and eastern parts of the peninsula[151], as well as in Ampurias and Ibiza[152]; while the third is an *amphoriscus*, well known in Guadiana contexts thanks to the large collection found at Cancho Roano[153]. Together with the examples of Attic ceramics, the presence of both oinochoes in Casas del Turuñuelo is another argument to support the existence of an east-west trade route through the Iberian Peninsula during the 5th–4th centuries BC[154].

107 However, the archaeological finds in the courtyard of the building are not limited to the three ointment jars. Four glass bowls and a pedestal of a sculpture, all of Greek origin, were found at the foot of the staircase, exceptional objects given the absence of parallels throughout the Iberian Peninsula.

108 Of the four bowls, the two best-preserved are translucent and have radial incised decoration running from the base to the body of the vessel[155]. The third bowl is blue in colour and was very fragmented when discovered, although its profile and decoration, also incised and radial, are clearly discernible. However, the fourth, which is yellowish in colour, was found to be very fragmented due to the fire, meaning that it was impossible to reconstruct. Stylistic and isotopic analysis of the pieces have made it possible to establish their origin in the Eastern Mediterranean and to date them to between the 6th and 4th centuries BC (Fig. 36).

109 In turn, the pedestal of the sculpture has only been preserved to the feet and the bottom part of the legs, which has made it impossible to identify. The sculpture had a bichrome decoration, as can be seen from the remains of red paint made using iron oxide on the outline of the feet and the nails, as well as the remains of Egyptian blue on

147 The ivories, metals, and glass were restored in the laboratory of the Conservation, Restoration, and Scientific Studies of Archaeological Heritage Service (SECYR) of the Autonomous University of Madrid.

148 Jiménez Ávila – Domínguez de la Concha 1995, 140 fig. 7.

149 Rodríguez González et al. 2020, 51 fig. 3.

150 Celestino – Rodríguez González 2019, 354–356.

151 Sol Plaza et al. 2018.

152 De la Torre 2005.

153 Jiménez Ávila 2003.

154 Maluquer de Motes 1985.

155 Rodríguez González et al. 2023.

the pedestal itself. As with the glass bowls, although the results of the analyses and the implications of the discovery of this sculpture in the interior of the Iberian Peninsula will be published shortly, the petrographic and isotope analyses carried out clearly indicate that the pedestal is made from fine-grained marble from the Pentelic quarries near Athens. This makes the sculpture the earliest documented example of Greek origin on the Iberian Peninsula, centuries prior to the arrival of the Asclepios/Serapis from Ampurias in the 2nd century BC (Fig. 37).

110 As noted above, these imports are a reflection of the economic and political capacity of the individuals who inhabited Casas del Turuñuelo to motivate the arrival of such unique objects of such distant origin to the interior of the peninsula. In addition, the general analysis of the whole corpus suggests the very probable existence of an east-west route along which most of these products would have travelled. This route would have been witness to the trade of intermediaries with receiving ports on the eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula and redistribution centres, as would be the case with ceramics and vitreous paste objects, as well as a direct trade that would have allowed orders to be placed and transported from point A to point B, as in the case of the glass bowls and marble sculpture.

Fig. 36: Photograph of the three glass bowls.

36

Fig. 37: General and close-up photograph of the Pentelic marble sculpture (Athens, Greece).

37

6 Conclusions

111 The archaeological excavations carried out at the site of Casas del Turuñuelo are part of a detailed study of the territory of the Central Guadiana Valley during the last stage of Tartessus, between the 6th and 5th centuries BC. The exceptional nature of the remains found in the excavation carried out to characterise the tumulus led to its complete excavation, revealing not only a building in an excellent state of conservation and with magnificent archaeological materials, but also an in-depth understanding of certain aspects of the Tartessian culture that until now were little or even completely unknown.

112 There is no doubt that the most outstanding feature of the Casas del Turuñuelo site is its architecture, more specifically the construction techniques used to erect such an exceptional building. Thanks to its state of preservation, as the building still has two floors, it has been possible to identify construction techniques hitherto unknown in Tartessian architecture. This is the case of the possible brick vault that would have covered the main room or H100; the construction of the monumental staircase that joins the upper floor with the courtyard, made with lime mortar blocks; the beams that join the perimeter walls of the courtyard; and the earth mortars, some plastered, with which the internal and external walls were decorated.

113 Logically, what we are documenting at the site is the last moment of the building's existence, which may distort its true intended function. Casas del Turuñuelo is located within a territory, the Central Guadiana Valley, which is characterised by the existence of a series of buildings hidden under burial mounds created by the intentional destruction of the monuments themselves after a long ceremony prior to their abandonment at the start of the 4th century BC. Only at Cancho Roano and now at Casas del Turuñuelo has it been possible to document this complex destruction ritual.

114 At a certain moment, and for reasons that are still being studied but which are increasingly distant from the hypothesis based on the invasions of the peoples of the northern Meseta, the Tartessian communities of the Guadiana decided to abandon the territory, perhaps due to some climatic event that affected the flooding of the rivers and the consequent flooding of the lands of the valley. What we have been able to document is that before the abandonment, a large banquet was held, in which a large number of diners must have participated given the large number of animal remains found, the enormous quantity of tableware documented, and the utensils related to a ritual meal, including outstanding bronze pieces. This was followed by one of the most extraordinary acts documented to date, the slaughter of more than half a hundred animals, almost all of them of productive age, most notably equids, with forty-two specimens deposited in the courtyard of the enclave, some arranged in a theatrical manner; a veritable animal hecatomb never before documented in the Western Mediterranean in the Early Iron Age.

115 After this communal banquet and the animal sacrifice, all of the building's furnishings, which have been found completely fragmented in the different spaces that had been excavated so far, were destroyed. The next step consisted of starting a large fire that caused the roofs to collapse, which to some extent protected the physical remains. Finally, the entire space was filled with earth and adobe from the upper walls and sealed with a thick layer of clay, from which a significant number of Attic cups have been recovered, which must have been reserved for a final libation.

116 No less significant are the objects found inside the building, some of which have also been documented for the first time in the Iberian Peninsula, such as the fragment of the statue made of Pentelikon marble or the glass bowls made in the Eastern Mediterranean. In addition to these objects, there are Etruscan-inspired ivories that coexist with others with a clearly Tartessian origin.

117 In summary, the site, of which only a little more than 30 % of the total surface area is known, is providing us with crucial documentation to understand how Tartessus developed in its final stage. The results confirm that the Guadiana Valley was part of the cultural environment of Tartessus from at least the 7th century BC, as demonstrated by the necropolis of Medellín, the building of Cerro Borreguero, and the original sanctuary of Cancho Roano. It seems increasingly obvious that after the sixth-century crisis that affected the heart of Tartessus this area of the Central Guadiana Valley was favoured, along with other neighbouring areas, with a strong demographic impulse that contributed to its economic and cultural development, with an evident originality, but without abandoning the cultural roots of Tartessus.

118 Finally, it is still too early to attribute a function to the enclave of Casas del Turuñuelo because we have a very distorted vision due to the events that took place at the end of its existence. Nevertheless, according to the remains that are being documented, there is no doubt that we are dealing with a multipurpose building, where the existence of a large number of iron tools related to agricultural work and large storage vessels containing cereal seeds, show that an economic control of the surrounding territory was exercised from the building. At the same time, the presence of imported items such as a marble sculpture from the Pentelic period and glass bowls of Eastern Mediterranean origin show its prominent political and commercial role. But the building's relationship with the cult is no less evident as we have noted in these pages. Given the organisation of the spaces excavated so far, it seems clear that we are dealing with a monumental building with two well-differentiated parts, one of restricted nature on the upper floor and another public area around the courtyard, where the spaces reserved for storing agricultural surpluses, mainly barley, have also been found; this circumstance seems to relate the site to a relevant centre of power that may have changed its original function as a result of the circumstances that led to its destruction. Therefore, we are cautious, for the moment, about labelling the building until we can make further progress in its study.

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RESUMEN

El edificio tartésico de Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, España)

Campañas de 2015–2022

Sebastián Celestino Pérez – Esther Rodríguez González – Luis Miguel Carranza Peco – Guiomar Pulido González

Este trabajo recoge los resultados obtenidos durante las campañas de excavación llevadas a cabo en el edificio tartésico de Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, España) entre los años 2015 y 2022. Junto a la presentación de los espacios documentados, se muestran los resultados correspondientes al estudio y análisis de algunos objetos recuperados durante dichos trabajos. Así mismo, el artículo ahonda en dos aspectos principales del estudio del yacimiento: el análisis de su arquitectura y el estudio de sus materiales de importación documentados a lo largo de los trabajos arqueológicos realizados. Toda esta documentación nos permite actualizar las lecturas e interpretaciones que, hasta la fecha, se habían hecho del edificio de Casas del Turuñuelo y de la etapa final de Tarteso, desarrollada en el valle medio del Guadiana.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Protohistoria, Edad del Hierro I, Tarteso, valle medio del Guadiana, edificio bajo túmulo, arquitectura de tierra

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das tartessische Gebäude von Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spanien)

Kampagnen 2015–2022

Sebastián Celestino Pérez – Esther Rodríguez González – Luis Miguel Carranza Peco – Guiomar Pulido González

Der vorliegende Beitrag fasst die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungskampagnen zusammen, die zwischen 2015 und 2022 in dem tartessischen Gebäude von Casas del Turuñuelo (Guareña, Badajoz, Spanien) durchgeführt wurden. Neben der Vorstellung der dokumentierten Räume werden auch einige Ergebnisse der Untersuchung und Analyse der Funde vorgestellt. Der Artikel befasst sich mit zwei Hauptaspekten der Untersuchung der Stätte: der Analyse ihrer Architektur und der Untersuchung der Importe, die bei den Grabungen dokumentiert wurden. Die Dokumentation erlaubt es, die Deutung und Interpretationen, die bisher über das Gebäude der Casas del Turuñuelo und die letzte Phase von Tartessos im mittleren Guadiana-Tal gemacht wurden, zu aktualisieren.

SCHLAGWÖRTER

Frühgeschichte, frühe Eisenzeit, Tartessos, mittleres Guadiana-Tal, unter Grabhügeln versteckte Gebäude, Lehmbau

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ADDRESSES

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