

International Conference 'Iconografía Ibérica e Iconografía Itálica: propuestas de interpretación y lectura'. Rome, 11th-13th November 1993.

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On 11th, 12th, and 13th November 1993 an international meeting about new approaches to the interpretation and analysis of Iberian and Italic iconography took place in the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) Spanish School of History and Archaeology in Rome. The meeting, organised by the Spanish School and the CSIC Madrid Historical Studies Centre Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, set out to present to a large group of Spanish, Italian, and French scholars and specialists the results of recent research in Iberian and Italo-Tirrenian iconography, following a new approach to the study of the meaning of images in these two cultural areas. Twenty papers were given in morning and afternoon sessions on the first two days and a morning session on the third day, followed by full and active group discussions, which were one of the most interesting aspects of the conference.

Professor J. Arce, Director of the CSIC Spanish School of History and Archaeology in Rome, opened the conference by emphasising the close scientific collaboration between the conference organisers at the two research centres in Rome and Madrid. He noted that contact between the Iberian and Etrusco-Italic worlds had been proposed many years ago by Professor M. Pallotino; firm evidence for this suggestion can now be found in the similar way that the two cultures had used and interpreted Mediterranean images and motifs.

Dr. R. Olmos, Director of the CSIC Madrid Historical Studies Centre Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, and conference co-ordinator, continued the introduction by stating that one of the aims of the conference was to encourage discussion about common research problems, and to propose new ways of approaching the images used in Iberian culture by comparing and contrasting them with those of the Italic world, thus improving our knowledge of both these complex Mediterranean societies.

The first paper, by M. Torelli (University of Perugia), analysed the development of an ideology of power and prestige in the archaic Italic world of the Latium area, from the Late Bronze Age to the consolidation of aristocratic Etruscan society. Taking examples from the gestures and attitudes of small funeral sculpture, which represents the figure of the dead and his social ideals, the speaker traced the development of the political figure of the *pater familias*. He demonstrated the possibility of deducing social standing from this archaic Italic iconography by analysing and interpreting the whole iconographic vocabulary. This was particularly clear in examples such as the decorations of a bronze cart, used as an incense-burner, from the Bisenzio necropolis.

H. Massa Perault (CNRS, Rome), in her paper on the political function of myth, stressed the value of myth as an ideological expression on the society from which it emerges. The use of myth by the dominant power in the eighth and

seventh centuries BC can be seen by reading the narrative code of archaic vessels with geometric Orientalising decoration in the Tirrenian area. Myth can only be introduced when society has evolved in such a way as to be able to accept it. In this case, up to the first half of the seventh century there can be seen a mixture of influences from the Greek heroic, aristocratic tradition and from oriental models more based on the royal palace. Later, when the city gains in political and social importance at the end of the seventh century, new techniques of symbolic representation emphasising the importance of royalty and the aristocracy are introduced.

A. Ruiz (University of Jaén) produced an interesting study of the development of Iberian society as seen through the development of an aristocratic ideology. The evolution and consolidation of Iberian aristocracy is made clear in the transformation undergone by the oppidum, seen as the urban and residential space and the expression of aristocratic power, and the social organisation that this expresses, as seen in the upper Guadalquivir valley. The various stages of this transformation from a tribal to a hierarchical aristocratic society run from the beginning of the seventh to the fourth century BC.

A. Rouveret (University of Paris-Nanterre) examined the concept of 'archaic' in treatises of art from the Roman period, and the need for careful consideration in the use of literary texts in this kind of exercise. She referred to the strong Hellenistic influences in republican Rome from the second half of the fourth century BC onwards, which resulted in the re-elaboration of Classical motifs and figures; from this time, also, dates the increasing consciousness of the 'archaic' in Roman writers.

R. Olmos (CSIC, Madrid) emphasised the various ways in which Iberian iconographic language could be interpreted, and how, through a complex repertoire of representational forms and signs of deep social meaning, it could mirror the society of its time. Besides their representational function, signs also have a complementary symbolic and social function as determinant elements of a narrative language. In pottery, for instance, small roses and other vegetable symbols have both decorative and organising functions, and express an ideology associated with the aristocratic world. The search for an iconographic language leads to the use of fabulous animals and divine human figures. This figurative and ambiguous language forms a narrative code from a constantly changing subject-matter in a state of internal dynamic relationships.

The paper given by B. D'Agostino (University of Naples) dealt with the political and social meaning of the mythical figure of Herakles. The myth had a civilising function, and was adopted as an opposing figure to barbarism in a world that was consolidating itself. The myth had structural importance in a society which needed a myth on which to base itself. The development of the figure of Herakles, an image which had moved from West to East like a parable of the sun, should be understood in this social and political context. The hero's ethical character expresses itself in the glorification of strength and warfare. In due course the myth becomes a mere story.

In his paper M. Almagro Gorbea (Complutense University, Madrid) linked the image of the wolf with initiation rites in the Iberian world. The wolf symbolises the mysterious, untameable side of nature and is the most important

indigenous element in Iberian animal iconography. Its use may refer back to an old Indo-European ideology, linked with ritual circles of central European origin in the Late Bronze Age. Representations of wolves are abundant, and may relate to the fighting character of a youth undergoing initiation rites associated with other worldly deities.

L. Cerchiai (University of Salerno) proposed a new reading of the aryballos motif from tomb B-27 of the Sala Corsilina necropolis, dating from about the middle of the sixth century BC. The main subject may be a *komastai* dance scene, modelled on an Etruscan-Corinthian oinokoe from the Pontecagnano necropolis. The most notable point here would be the social meaning of the dionysian scene (within which the *komastai* scene appears) and how this could be integrated within the new social relationships of archaic Etruscan society.

C. Pouzadoux (University of Paris-Nanterre), like the previous speaker, proposed a new reading, this time of the complete version of the funeral of Patroclus, as depicted on a krater by the painter Darius. The composition is organised in three horizontal bands with a central subject, the sacrifice of prisoners by Achilles; a vertical axis marks the most important scenes. The artists gives deliberate autonomy and strong coherence to the central scene, and shows by gesture the strength and victorious power of Achilles and the humiliation of the defeated.

C. Aranegui, H. Bonet, C. Mata and J. Pérez Ballester (University of Valencia) gave a paper on the comparative iconography of figurative patterns on pottery from the village of San Miguel de Liria (Valencia). The paper highlighted the religious, political and above all social significance of the scenes represented. Approximate dates of between 225 and 150 BC were proposed, during which time several workshops were in existence. The iconography reflected the profound social changes that Iberian society underwent in this period: the second Punic war, Roman conquest and assimilation, and the reorganisation of society. The various narrative friezes expressed the collective consciousness of the community through religious episodes or the activities and jewelry of the women. It was also apparent in the finding of vessels with complex vegetable, animal or human decoration; in particular find-spots - sacred spaces, complex houses, and in the use of particular pottery types: lebes, pithoi, kalathoi, oinochoai. Similarly, the use of a tri-lobed flower suggested close contact with Punic Ibiza.

T. Tortosa (CSIC, Madrid) gave a talk about the iconographic typology of Iberian pottery in the province of Alicante. She described the main decorative motifs (geometric, vegetable, zoomorphic) in the style known as Elche-Archena (second to first century BC) from the most important sites in the Alicante area: La Alcudia, El Monastil, La Serreta de Alcoy. A whole series of iconographic and stylistic relationships were established according to the abundance and variety of the various types. There was an underlying cultural unity throughout the area, as shown by homogeneous elements in the decoration, though distinguishing variations also arose according to the differing influences each centre received from other areas.

M. Blech (German Archaeological Institute, Madrid) analysed the origin of the iconography of archaic Iberian stone sculpture from some of its most

representative examples. The sculpture of the Pozo Moro tower monument, the oldest of its kind in the Iberian peninsula, may indicate connections between this massive monument and late Hittite oriental prototypes, perhaps through the Phoenicians. A full analysis of the significance of the heroic scenes on this monument might make clearer the exact origin of its individual style. For other examples of sculpture, like the stone lions from the provinces of Albacete and Alicante, a more recent Hellenic influence has to be apparently added to this oriental one.

J. Blázquez (Autónoma University, Madrid), in his paper on warriors and the aristocracy in the fifth century BC, spoke of the high degree of internal cohesion and political legitimacy among aristocratic groups in the area crossed by the route of Hannibal through the present province of Albacete. This route marked an extensive transit area between upper Andalucía, the Castilian meseta and the east coast, of great strategic importance because of its control of trade routes among these areas. In order to understand Iberian culture it is important to bear in mind the continuous change it had undergone, from external influences and internal readaptations and interactions, and also to have a clear and precise idea of the chronological and spatial subdivisions involved. The archaeological record shows that the aristocratic elite at the time had achieved great social predominance, with a high degree of differentiation within that group itself. Burial mounds show different categories or classes in both the graves themselves and the 'dowries' found in them. Very rich imported Attic ware from the end of the sixth century showed that the practice of banqueting had spread among the aristocracy. The warriors' ideology was expressed in the sculpture of a horseman (one of many from the region), showing his garments and appearance (including, importantly, the hair-fringe and ringlets), his horse and his weapons.

T. Chapa (Complutense University, Madrid) dealt with Iberian sculpture as a marker of territorial boundaries. It was possible to see this as early as the fifth century BC in the country around Córdoba and the territory around the oppida in Jaén province, following the distribution of sculptures which could be seen as symbolic of aristocratic predominance, of the perpetuation of an aristocratic lineage, and as markers of the territory concerned. The sculptures were mostly of lions, in pairs or individually. They were erected on the graves of notables, to link them with the mythical world and to express an aristocratic ideology. The lions from the region of Baena, Nueva Carteya, Santaella, etc., had a common model and similar style and features (frontality, schematism, the jaws and the detail of the coat), and came from one or two workshops only. Their distribution covers a transitional area among the territories of the Turdetanians, the Oretanians and the Bastetanians.

J. A. Santos (CSIC, Madrid) explored the validity of using the image as an indication of the cultural unity of Iberian territories in the lower basin of the Segura. The coherence of the Contestanian-Bastetanian area centred on La Alcudia de Elche could serve as a model for the large zone between the Segura and Vinalopó rivers and the mountains of Alcoy. Hellenic and Punic influences, the latter from Ibiza and Villaricos, had catalysed a local reaction which resulted in the political, social and economic homogeneity of the whole area. This was expressed in the urban development of walled villages throughout the area, and

in important princely necropolies like those of El Cigarralejo and Verdolay. Sanctuaries also served an important social and political function. Economically, Elche formed the centre, with surrounding circles of diminishing dependence.

The social meaning of the image was also the main subject for the paper by M. Tagliente (Soprintendenza Archeologica della Basilicata), which covered indigenous culture in Puglia and Basilicata. Greek colonisation in Basilicata (Metaponto) had exerted great influence on the interior of the province, in that the representational language of the Greeks came to be used by the autochthonous peoples for communication within their own societies, though to a different extent according to the degree of contact with Greeks. The iconography of the horsemen, as a symbol of the authority and prestige of the dominant group, was widespread in Basilicata as early as the sixth century BC. The adoption and interpretation of Greek religious models could be seen in the figures of votive bearers or enthroned divinities, which were also used as decorative motifs. Cults such as Pythagorism and Orphism spread through Basilicata. As early as the fifth century Orphic motifs such as rays, the sun and the moon, expressing a triumph over death, could be seen. Scenes of music and singing at Daunian in the fourth century attest to the wide diffusion of Greek motifs, while funeral scenes as early as the end of the century show Roman influence.

L. Prados (Autónoma University, Madrid) spoke of the imagery of bronze votive images from El Collado de los Jardines, El Castellar and El Santuario de la Luz. There were two main groups: masculine and feminine, with sub-division within the masculine group according to whether they were praying, offering gift, priests, warriors (always standing up), or horsemen. Naked or dressed, the figures express themselves mainly with hand-gesture showing devotion, greeting or supplication. Some of these gestures are imitations of Etruscan and Punic types, though with local features. Details such as costume give the social status of the donor, particularly with feminine offerings. The offerings come from rural sanctuaries in caves or underground places associated with chthonic deities with curative and fertility-promoting powers, and are shaped according to the part of the body affected. The date is difficult to determine but may lie in the third and second centuries BC.

A. Pontrandolfo, E. Mugione and F. Salomone (University of Salerno) took examples from ancient Italy to propose an ordering and classification of the iconographic repertoire of Daunian steles. The imagery of these steles reflected the life of Daunian aristocratic elites showing warriors, banquets and so on. Hellenised examples gave evidence of the social evolution of Daunian communities.

A. Poveda presented recent finds from excavations at the settlement of El Monastil (province of Alicante), a site with a complete sequence of occupation from the Copper Age to the Islamic period. Reference was made to two stone sirens which might have come from the top of a pillar or tower, since they were associated with architectural fragments, including pieces of volutes. The date would be about the fifth century BC. Also shown was a relief on an ashlar slab of a female figure touching an equine figure with one hand and holding a snake in the other. This image might be equated with a winged divinity, perhaps a figure of Tanit. Another ashlar slab pictured a small human head.

M. P. Garcia Bellido (CSIC, Madrid) gave the last paper of the conference, on the imagery of Iberia as shown in the coinage. She made particular mention of the figure of a horseman, a local image taken by the Romans and imposed on the mint of Hispania Citerior in the first half of the second century BC. The horseman figured in legends written in Iberian scripts, and would become the emblem of the Iberian people in their struggle against Rome, figuring on coins used by Sertorius to pay his troops. After Pompey's victory image of the horseman was gradually replaced by a crown of laurels. Notably, the horseman represented Iberia for foreigners as well as for Iberians, and during the second Punic war Morgantina minted coins showing it, in memory of the Iberians who fought on the Roman side.

M. Torelli, for the Italian side of the conference, concluded by saying that the conference had shown the possibility of using images to analyse and interpret past civilisation which had not left written evidence; R. Olmos, for the Spanish side, pointed to the joint themes of the Spanish contributions: the interrelationship of image and territory, and the Iberian and Italic usage of Mediterranean motifs. J. Arce closed the proceedings by remarking on the high scientific level reached by the contributions