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## Some Balkan and Danubian influences to southern and eastern Spain

The prehistoric archaeologist visiting Spanish provincial museums is frequently impressed by a number of objects showing strong Balkan or Danubian influences or even accusing a direct ancestry from those regions.

Bernabó Brea, in his exhaustive paper on prehistoric Sicily and its relations with the Orient and Iberia (1) clearly considers Balkan and Danubian influences to have been negligible in "distant Iberia". He applies this equally to the earliest period characterised by cardial (or impressed) ware and to the later one contemporaneous with the painted wares of Ripoli and Matera when a wave of Balkan cultures swept over peninsular Italy. Brea considers most of the foreign influences traceable in Iberian material of these early periods as emanating from the Aegean whereas Martínez Santa Olalla and San Valero would derive them mainly from a North African source. While both these interpretations are possible and even plausible the present writer would like to emphasize yet a third, already envisaged by Childe (2), namely that of a Balkan inspiration and origin for some of the exotic objects in various Spanish assemblages of the Neolithic period. This view has recently been implicitly applied by Almagro (3) to the culture he calls "Neolítico Hispano II" (or the Almerian) and there are some slight

(1) L. BERNABO BREA: "La Sicilia Prehistórica y sus relaciones con Oriente y con la Península Ibérica". Ampurias XV-XVI, 1953-54, pp. 137-235.

(2) V. GORDON CHILDE: "The Dawn of European Civilization", 6th ed. London, 1957, pp. 266-7.

(3) M. ALMAGRO: "Origen y Formación del Pueblo Hispano", Barcelona, 1958, pp. 56-7.

indications that these Balkan-Danubian influences persisted into later periods in the Iberian peninsula.

The material under discussion in this article comes from two museums, Valencia and Almería. In the first (notable for its splendid scholarly display) the relevant assemblages are those of the Cueva de la Sarsa, the Coveta de l'Or and the Cova de la Pastora (Alcoy). The first of these sites is a purely neolithic one: no trace of metal was found during the excavation which yielded quantities of cardial ware. The material has been fully described by San Valero (4) and it is not proposed here to re-assess it as a whole. The objects most relevant to our thesis are the bone spatulae but the stone bracelets are also noteworthy as a link with Vinca and Tordos in this same earliest period. And it is also worth remembering the relation between Starcevo and Cardial wares, already noted by Childe (5), and the fact that the rusticated ware from La Sarsa is remarkably reminiscent of that of the Körös style.

The bone spatulae, some with engraved notches along one side (which Sr. Fletcher Valls regards as a Spanish Levantine characteristic (6), number over a dozen and are indeed startlingly Starcevo like. Childe has said of the Balkan ones: "Such spatulae recur on practically every Starcevo site throughout the province, but in no other context, so that they can be used as a diagnostic type of the culture as confidently as pots" (7). In his last book (8) he adds that Cardial folk "also ladled the flour with the same sort of bone spatulae as their kinsmen in the Balkans". This work had not yet been written when the writer first noticed the Valencian spatulae but the striking similarity between the Balkan and Spanish objects is thus based on strong authority.

These bone spatulae recur in the next assemblage under consideration, that of the Coveta de l'Or, and add emphasis to the argument. To the best of the writer's knowledge this most interesting site has not yet been published. Its materials present a curious

(4) J. SAN VALERO APARISI: "La Cueva de la Sarsa (Bocairente, Valencia)", *Trabajos Varios del Servicio de Investigación Prehistórica de Valencia*, número 12, Valencia, 1950.

(5) V. GORDON CHILDE: *Op. cit.* note 2, p. 266.

(6) The writer is greatly indebted to Sr. Fletcher, Director of Valencia Museum, for his courteous assistance in making material available and for supplying further information by correspondence.

(7) V. GORDON CHILDE: *Op. cit.* note 2, p. 85.

(8) V. GORDON CHILDE: "The Prehistory of European Society", London, 1958, p. 47.

admixture of exotic imported objects (such as the bone spatulae, stone beads and arc-pendants, serrated tanged and tanged-and-barbed arrowheads) and remains of an autochthonous culture of Mesolithic ancestry represented by numerous petit-tranchets and geometric microliths. Naturally the advocates of the North African origin of the Cardial ware culture would derive these latter from a supposed Capsian tradition. But an equally strong argument could be put forward for a Mesolithic survival and this is reinforced by the bone fragments from La Sarsa decorated with finely incised geometric patterns. In both these sites, La Sarsa and de l'Or, occur arc-pendants of schist and stone which provide an interesting link with other more northerly sites of the Western cycle. Both these sites have yielded cardial wares in abundance and are obviously closely related.

The third assemblage under consideration, that of La Pastora de Alcoy, belongs to a later period since it includes a few metal objects. Here again there is a mixture of native and foreign material including amber and callais. The objects have been briefly described by Ballester (9) but the site has never been published as a whole. The skulls have formed the object of a special study by Riquet (10) and Fusté Ara (11) and are especially interesting in view of the fact that many have been trepanned (12). This provides yet a further link with French sites and with the Danube (13).

The most relevant items of this assemblage are the numerous bone pins, many of which are very Danubian in aspect. Most are made in one piece but one has a separate head vertically pierced in the manner of Danubian bulb-headed pins. There is also one of amber and, most curious of all, a crutch-headed one of bone (Pl. I, 1). The only exact analogy known to the writer comes from

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(9) I. BALLESTER TORMO: "Idolos Oculados Valencianos", *Archivo de Prehistoria Levantina*, II, Valencia, 1945.

(10) R. RIQUET: "Analyse anthropologique des crânes eneolithiques de la grotte sépulcrale de la Pastora (Alcoy)", *Archivo de Prehistoria Levantina*, IV, 1953.

(11) M. FUSTE ARA: "Estudio antropológico de los pobladores neo-eneolíticos de la región valenciana", *Serie de Trabajos Varios del S. I. P de Valencia*, número 20, Valencia, 1957.

(12) A. RINCON DE ARELLANO y J. FENOLLOSA: "Algunas consideraciones acerca de los cráneos trepanados hallados en la cueva "La Pastora" (Alcoy)", Valencia, 1950.

(13) V. GORDON CHILDE: "The Danube in Prehistory", Oxford, 1929.

the much later context of the Terramare (14). These two Terramare pins are of bronze and Saflund notes that they are very rare there; he adds that the type with horizontal head, found at Remedello, is lacking in this later context. He cites as analogous, but not identical, two bronze pins from Cyprus (15) but these do not appear to bear a very close resemblance to his type A6. The two Terramare pins mentioned above belong to this type; unfortunately they have no known stratigraphical context. Taken in conjunction with the presence of amber and a Palmella point the Unetice-type bone pin from La Pastora would lead one to infer a somewhat late date for this site, despite the scarcity of metal objects, somewhere within the region of the first half of the second millennium.

The Unetician context of crutch-headed pins is a well-established fact accepted by all. Local copies or imports are known from peripheral areas such as the British Isles during the Wessex period of the Early Bronze Age (16). La Pastora de Alcoy might conceivably be equated chronologically with the beginning of the Wessex Culture and this particular bone copy of the original metal straight-headed pin could be considered as corresponding to the British pins although these latter adhere more closely to the prototype. It would then appear not unreasonable to seek a common inspiration for both the British and Spanish pins in the Early Bronze Age of Bohemia. Childe was quite disposed to envisage a date within that period for the rich settlement of Los Millares in Almería (17). If La Pastora be considered as a poor but contemporary site the bone pins fit into a logical chronological context. They would have been made by native Iberians influenced by traders and metal prospectors possibly of Danubian origin or at least in

(14) G. SAFLUND: "Le Terremare delle provincie di Modena, Reggio, Emilia, Parma, Piacenza", Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Rom. Acta Instituti Romani regni Sueciae, VII, Lund, Leipzig, 1939. Tav. 58, núm. 16. This pin was kindly pointed out to the writer by Professor J. D. Evans who also contributed by helpful discussion.

(15) E. GJERSTAD, J. LINDROS, E. SJOQVIST & A. WESTHOLM: "Finds and results of the excavations in Cyprus 1927-31", Swedish Cyprus Expedition, Stockholm, 1934, Vol. I, Pl. XXXIV, n.º 137. These pins are from Lapithos, tomb 320 and belong to the Middle Cypriote II period.

(16) V. GORDON CHILDE: "Prehistoric Communities of the British Isles", 3rd ed, London, 1949, pp. 137-8. No specific crutch-headed pins are mentioned but there is one in Gloucester City Museum which comes from Snowhill (Archaeologia LII, pp. 70-72). The writer is indebted to Mr. A. Hunter for this last reference.

(17) "Hence while personally I want Los Millares I to be 3rd mil. it makes just as good sense if it be 2nd i. e. first trading port on way to Cornwall in Wessex period" (From a letter dated 19. ix. 57).

contact with contemporary Danubian civilization. The amber, the trepanned crania and the pins are all pointers in that direction whereas the geometric microliths argue an autochthonous strain of Epi-Palaeolithic ancestry with a North African admixture.

These tentative conclusions are the result of a rapid survey of part of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic material on show in Valencia Museum. Some of the objects belonging to these periods suggest contact with the Balkans and the Danube. There is doubtless much additional relevant material not noted here which would serve to emphasize the argument, for instance twin-vases such as that from La Sarsa (18). It would be tempting to see some late Danubian survivals in the material from the Canary Islands among which the clay pintaderas would provide the most suggestive item (19). But that would take the discussion beyond the set chronological scope of this article. This Canary Islands' material is indeed intriguing with its painted pottery and its pintaderas, but at present too little is known about it to warrant its inclusion within any definite chronological context.

In the obscure provincial museum of Almería lies a wealth of still unpublished material, despite the efforts of Arribas (20). The largest assemblage most relevant to the present discussion is that from Tabernas. Much of the material from this important site remains in private hands but the writer and Arribas shortly intend to publish the Tabernas objects on view in Almería Museum. In view of this it is only possible here to note the objects which suggest possible Balkan or Danubian affinities. Since this habitation-site has yielded some metal artefacts (notably a flat axe and some

(18) J. SAN VALERO APARISI: *Op. cit.* note 4, fig. 20, p. 66.

(19) A bibliography of these pintaderas was most kindly supplied by Sr. Fletcher Valls.

J. ALCINA FRANCH: "Distribución geográfica de las Pintaderas en América", *Archivo de Prehistoria Levantina*, III, Valencia, 1952, p. 241.

J. ALCINA FRANCH: "Hipótesis acerca de la difusión mundial de las Pintaderas", *Trabajos y conferencias del Seminario de Estudios Americanistas*, 6, Madrid, 1955, p. 217.

J. ALCINA FRANCH: "Las Pintaderas de Canarias y sus posibles relaciones" *Anuario de Estudios Atlánticos*, 2, Las Palmas, 1956, p. 77.

J. ALCINA FRANCH: "Las pintaderas mejicanas y sus relaciones", Madrid, 1958.

O. CORNAGGIA CASTIGLIONI: "Origini e distribuzione delle pintaderas preistoriche euro-asiatiche", *Atti del I.º Convegno Interregionale Padano di Paleontologia Firenze*, 1957, pp. 79-162.

(20) A. ARRIBAS PALAU: "El ajuar de las cuevas sepulcrales de los Blanquizares de Lébor (Murcia)", *Memorias de los Museos Arqueológicos Provinciales*, vol. XIV, Madrid, 1953, pp. 78-126.

awls of quadrangular section) it seems reasonable to place it in the same chronological context as La Pastora de Alcoy i. e. somewhere within the first half of the second millennium.

Apart from the metal objects (and it is worth noting that "quadrangular copper awls —perhaps tattooing needles— are comparatively common in Moravia and Bohemia") (21) the ones most relevant here are some fragments of bone spatulae and of possible "fruitstands", strainers, a clay spoon, twin-vases, an unusual painted sherd and a very Danubian clay figurine.

Since the spatulae fragments are amorphous it is impossible to determine their original shape and so they cannot be rightly compared with the Starcevo ones in Valencia Museum. It is equally impossible to discuss the fragments of what appear to have been pedestalled bowls (or fruit-stands), a type common to both the Balkans and the Danube where they have a long history. Strainers also are a Balkan type which can be dated to the Gumelnitsa horizon (22) and would thus fit into the chronological horizon proposed for Tabernas. They also occur at Vila Nova de San Pedro (23), Chassey (24) and Fort Harrouard (25), all of which are sites whose later phases have many features in common with Tabernas. The clay spoon, like the strainers, is a frequent Western Neolithic type first appearing in the Balkans in Boian A. All these spoons, like the Tabernas specimen, have solid handles and not socketed ones like the Danubian ladles. But, though their East Mediterranean origin is not contested here, it seems possible to advocate an inland distribution-pattern following in the wake of the first farmers for these two types found in Copper Age habitation-sites whose roots reach back into the Neolithic.

The twin-vases and the painted sherd both somewhat remotely suggest the Balkans and the Danube. The sherd is quite unlike

(21) V. GORDON CHILDE: *Op. cit.* note 13, p. 190.

(22) V. GORDON CHILDE: "Prehistoric Migrations in Europe", London, 1950, pp. 181-3.

(23) E. JALHAY & A. DO PAÇO: "El Castro de Vilanova de San Pedro", *Actas y Memorias de la Sociedad Española de Antropología, Etnografía y Prehistoria*, XX, Madrid, 1945, p. 60.

(24) J. DECHELETTE: "Manuel d'Archéologie préhistorique, celtique et gallo-romaine", Paris, 1908-14, vol. I, p. 559.

C. BAILLOUD & P. MIEG DE BOOFZHEIM: "Les civilisations néolithiques de la France", Paris, 1955, pp. 97 ff.

S. PIGGOTT: "Le Néolithique Occidental et le Chalcolithique en France; Esquisse préliminaire", *L'Anthropologie* LVII, 1953, pp. 400-43, esp. p. 410.

(25) ABBE PHILIPPE: "Cinq années de fouilles au Fort Harrouard", *Société normande d'études préhistoriques*, XXV bis, Rouen, 1927.

any other Iberian one of this Chalcolithic periods. It has a burnished surface with a pattern of red parallel lines, chevrons and a lozenge on a dark background and it has a large nipple lug. As it stands it appears to be an isolated specimen of its kind in this region and its analogies outside Spain would provide a fruitful field of research.

The female figurine (Pl. 1, 2) is perhaps one of the firmest links in this chain of evidence for Iberian contact with Balkan and Danubian civilizations. It is of reddish clay tempered with mica and schist, smoothed, cylindrical, 8 centimetres high, with a strangulation indicating the neck and it has very marked breasts. The base is narrower than the head and there is a transversal perforation in the shoulder region which suggests that it was worn as an amulet; the marks of wear visible within the perforation confirm this assumption. A very close parallel to this Tabernas idol comes from Zengövrkony in the Danubian II period (26). There are numerous other idols from Tabernas which conform with the more usual types found on local sites, such as conical and flat schematized figurines of stone and bone, phalanges and phalli. These all suggest an ultimately Eastern origin whereas the idol described above pertains to a different ideology. Tabernas might be interpreted as a meeting-place of foreign influences from various sources overlying a native tradition and such an outstandingly Danubian figurine cannot be ignored as a pointer in that direction.

Although the objects from Tabernas now in Almería Museum represent only a fraction of the material from the site and although they have no known stratigraphical position they still offer sufficient suggestions of Balkan and Danubian influences to make them noteworthy. A serious re-excavation of Tabernas and a reassessment of new material and of that still in private hands looked at from this angle would probably greatly strengthen this hypothesis which at present rests merely on isolated specimens. A complete reassessment of past and future material from habitation-sites of these early periods might well produce a new concept of the development and the ramifications of the Western Neolithic culture and of the Chalcolithic period in Iberia. Meanwhile it remains both possible and plausible to postulate an Eastern mediterranean origin for most of the objects under consideration.

But the purpose of this article is to suggest that the objects

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(26). V. GORDON CHILDE: *Op. cit.* note 22, fig. 70 n.º 2, p. 93.

themselves (or their direct inspiration) did not necessarily reach southern and eastern Spain by the maritime route. Up to now it has been argued and generally agreed that most new influences reached Iberia either directly from the Aegean or by a slower infiltration via North Africa. It is only very recently that certain Spanish prehistorians, such as Almagro (27) have begun to react and protest against this "african mirage". Maluquer accepts the existence of a neolithic culture of Balkan and Danubian ascendancy in the zones of western Europe at sites such as Arene Candide (28). But he rightly argues that the presence of one particular type, in this instance the square-mouthed pot in Catalonia, does not permit to postulate the existence of this culture there. In this we are in complete agreement but when, in eastern and southern Spain, there are other types implying the same influences the theory at once becomes far more plausible. Very recently fresh evidence for this thesis has been put forward by Professor J. Evans who considers that the North African theory certainly does not tell quite "the whole story". His reference to the habitation-site of Cantarranas near Madrid goes far towards supporting the theory so tentatively advanced here (29).

Objects such as those discussed above mark a trail from the Balkans and the Danube to southern Spain via north Italy, south France and north-east Spain. It has always been argued that the pit-grave burials of Catalonia represent a northward spread of the Almerian culture but they might equally well stand for a southward extension of the Danubian one. The bone spatulae, solid clay spoons and trepanned crania all occur in Provence. A site like Chateauneuf-les-Martigues (30) provides a possible half-way house for this southern spread of types and rites in the wake of the first farmer's inland expansion of which one stream goes north-west and

(27) M. ALMAGRO: *Op. cit.* note 3, p. 49.

(28) J. MALUQUER DE MOTES: "La cultura de La Lagozza en Cataluña" & "Vasos de boca cuadrada en Cataluña", *Rivista di Studi Liguri*, XV, nos. 1-2, 1949, pp. 46-52.

D. FLETCHER VALLS: "Un vaso de boca cuadrada, de la provincia de Valencia", comunicación al VI C. A. N., Oviedo, 1959.

D. FLETCHER VALLS: "Vasos de boca cuadrada en la Península Ibérica", homenaje al profesor Zatz.

(29) J. D. EVANS: "Two phases of prehistoric settlement in the Western Mediterranean", 13th Annual Report & Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, 1958, pp. 49-70.

(30) M. ESCALON DE FONTON: "Préhistoire de la Basse Provence", *Préhistoire XII*, 1956. This site yielded much cordial pottery and also spatulae and spoons.



the other south-west. The first eventually reaches the British Isles and the second Spain and Portugal: a square-mouthed pot was found there also (31). Through the centuries this gradual spread is enriched with later types from the same source, as well of course as from various others, and this expansion lasts well into the Copper Age and possibly much later still (32).

While far from denying direct Aegean and North African influences in Iberia in these early periods it also seems only sensible to admit others which travelled by an overland route. In Childe's words: "On the scanty evidence at our disposal the neolithic constituents of the Cardial culture could equally well be derived from Northern Africa, from the coasts of Hither Asia or from the Southern Balkan peninsula." (33).

(31) J. D. EVANS: *Op. cit.* note 29, pp. 59-60.

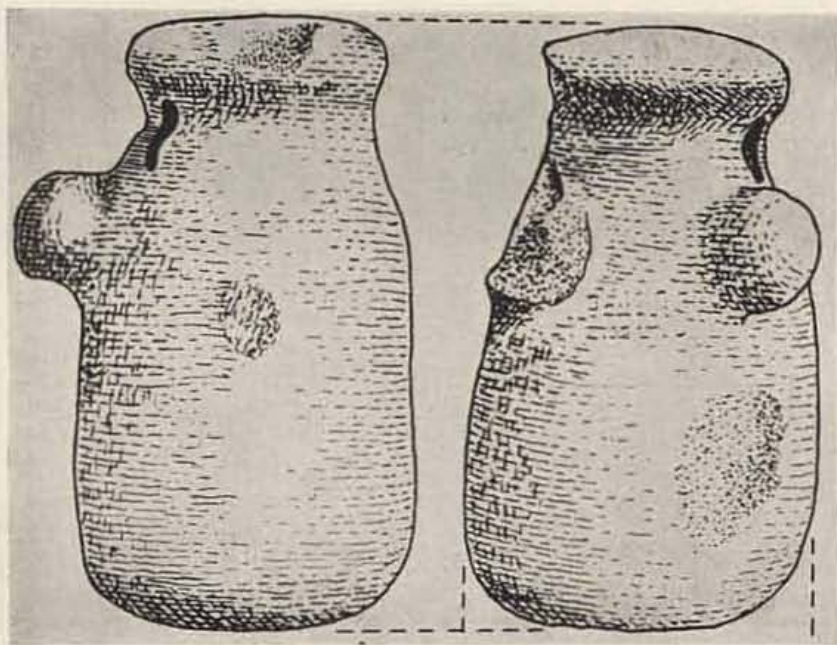
(32) V. GORDON CHILDE: *Op. cit.* note 13, p. 193 & p. 240.

(33) V. GORDON CHILDE: *Op. cit.* note 8, pp. 48-9.





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