

No prelo - Braga, C. "The new sector of Via XVII necropolis in *Bracara Augusta*: the high imperial phase", in *Atas XVIII International Congress of Classical Archaeology – Centre and periphery in the ancient world*, Mérida

A new sector of Via XVII necropolis in Bracara Augusta: the High Empire phase

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Abstract

Between 2008 and 2009 a preventive excavation supervised by the Unit of Archaeology of the University of Minho was conducted in an area with approximately 5000 square meters allowing identifying a wide sector of the Via XVII necropolis, which is one of the five roman necropolises known to have existed in Bracara Augusta. The findings enabled us to define a typological framework related with incinerations, to understand the internal organization of the necropolis and recover the ritual marks of the funerary practices between the first century BC and the second century AD.

1 Introduction

The present paper synthesizes the study results of a sector of via XVII necropolis, one of the five roman necropolis known to have existed in Braga. It was identified between 2008 and 2009 in a preventive excavation conducted in a wide urban area located in the eastern part of the current city of Braga.²

The necropolis is known since the 1950s due to the occasional findings of tombs and funerary inscriptions.³ In the 1980s two preventive archaeological interventions were conducted and identified two discontinuous areas of the same necropolis: one area related with incineration practices dating back to the High Empire period and a second area referring to tombs from the fifth century.⁴ However, it were the works conducted between 2008 and 2009 that contributed towards a better understanding of the use of this necropolis enabling us to obtain chronological data related with different typologies of tombs. The present paper will only focus in the High Empire occupation of the necropolis.

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² Fontes *et al.*, 2009; Fontes *et al.*, 2010; Martins *et al.*, 2009

³ Tranoy y LeRoux 1989-90

⁴ Martins y Delgado 1989-90