

'Clay Cannabis Pipes'? Interpretative approach between archaeological and historical sources on cannabis and clay smoking pipes in the Iberian Peninsula from late medieval to early modern periods

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Abstract: This contribution is intended to suggest aspects of several clay smoking pipes exhumed in archaeological interventions between Portugal and Spain. In this regard, some archaeological works published clay smoking pipes which were defined as 'hashish pipes' (*pipas de hachís* or *cachimbos de haxixe*) related to the use of *Cannabis* sp. by the Moors, predominately the Sufis, between the 10th-15th-centuries. These have been described as a diverse Nasrid production based on historical and etymological evidence. However, these artifacts reveal morphological elements which currently promote a reinterpretation due to new research and typologies.

Keywords: *Cannabis*; Clay smoking pipes; Iberian Peninsula; 10th-18th centuries; Consuming habits.

Resumen: Con esta contribución pretendemos comprender el uso y cronología de determinadas pipas halladas arqueológicamente en Portugal y España. Al respecto, algunos trabajos arqueológicos presentan pipas cerámicas definidas como pipas de hachís relacionadas con el uso del *Cannabis* sp. por parte de los moros, en particular sufíes, entre los siglos X y XV. Se ha publicado como una amplia producción nazarí, basándose en fuentes históricas y etimológicas. Sin embargo, los objetos estudiados revelan elementos morfológicos a los que proponemos una interpretación y atribución cronológica renovada debido a nuevos estudios y tipologías.

Palabras clave: *Cannabis*; Pipas cerámicas; Península Ibérica; Siglos X-XVIII; Hábitos de consumo.

INTRODUCTION

It is intended to provide a generic review over several studies dealing with cannabis' archaeological and historical evidence from late medieval to early modern chronologies, namely clay smoking pipes. Although it would have been of great importance to extensively frame this approach within the consuming habits historical perspective (Goodman, Lovejoy & Sherratt, 2007) we focused on the clay pipe materials uncovered in the Iberian Peninsula due to publication restrictions.

'CLAY CANNABIS PIPES' EVIDENCE IN THE LATE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

There are historical elements which demonstrate how *Cannabis* sp. was applied by medieval societies in the Islamic world, particularly for its entheogenic properties (see for example Lozano Cámara, 1996). This involved swallowing it with the help of water, rubbing its heated oil on the skin or inhaling the smoke that resulted from it being thrown on fire, since 'smoking pipes was relatively uncommon until the custom was introduced from the New World in the 16th century' (Warf, 2014: 417).

First Mentions

During the early 1980s, Rachel Arié provided a remarkable contribution on the studies of the Muslim occupation in Spain where she mentions that *‘hašiš was smoked recurrently in Granada’* (1982: 326). In the same decade, Fernando Valdés Fernández (1984) wrote a research paper on the clay smoking pipes found in the *Alcazaba de Badajoz* and formed an *‘approximation to the origins of hashish consumption in Al-Andalus’* with five clay pipes from the site and additionally one clay pipe from the caliphal city of *Madīnat al-Zahrā* (Cordova) which was at a private collection, and might be currently reviewed with the recently description of late 18th- to 19th-century Palamós pipes.

In 1990 Ignacio Lozano Cámara published his translation of three Islamic documents concerning hashish and clarified that

‘the oral ingestion of hashish, solid or diluted in some liquid, is the only way of consumption until the introduction of tobacco to the Islamic world according to the literary sources’ (1990: 119, fn. 11).

However, in 1991 Purificación Marinetto Sánchez analyzed a collection of clay smoking pipes from the excavations of Leopoldo Torres Balbás in the Alhambra of Granada between 1923 and 1936 based on Valdés Fernández research. This collection is still the most diverse with 46 elements which were then divided into six groups and are partly exposed in the Alhambra Museum (Marinetto Sánchez, 1995: 481-482). At that point, Valdés Fernández published a synthesis of ten archaeological contexts in Spain with *‘hashish smoking pipes’* since his first publication on the matter, mostly from museum collections, dumpster levels or underwater salvage works, questioning the references of Lozano Cámara with *‘how can one justify the presence of clay smoking pipes inside and outside Al-Andalus?’* (1993: 292-293).

We suggest it can be justify on the basis of poorly stratified contexts from which the *‘hashish smoking pipes’* were found, and the fact that the literary evidence cited both by Rachel Arié, Fernando Valdés Fernández and Purificación Marinetto Sánchez solely mentions that Muhammad VI of Granada helped the chief of police to find the traffickers of *hašiš* as he was a high consumer himself (Fernández-Puertas, 1997: 17-18).

Moreover, St John Simpson forensically analysed that 374 out of 377 clay pipes recovered from Belmont Castle (Şuba, Jerusalem) have revealed a negative result for residues of cannabis or opium, suggesting *‘that they were indeed used for smoking tobacco’*, vindicating the 18th- to 20th-century typological parallels among the Ottoman territory and refuting *‘the persistent opinions among some Israeli and other archaeologist that pipes were used to smoke narcotics at an earlier medieval date’* (1994: 14-15; 2000: 147) referring directly to Fernando Valdés Fernández.

Current Paradigms

Nevertheless, the research of Valdés Fernández lead to an impact on the following Iberian clay smoking pipe studies. In this regard, some researchers moved after the cited classification and even proved that clay pipes could, in fact, show residues of *Cannabis sp.*, as observed in a green glazed Catalan clay pipe from Castillo de Cornellà in Llobregat (Barcelona) with a typology dated to the late 17th or 18th centuries (Beltrán de Heredia, Miró & Soberón, 2012: 111) classified as an 11th- to 13th-century hashish smoking pipe (Juan-Tresserras, 2000: 265).

In Portugal the first clay smoking pipes which have been associated to the Muslim occupation were collected from the surface of a military structure in the Roman ruins of *Ammaia* (Marvão) in 1996 (Oliveira *et al.*, 1997: 21). However, those were, in fact, probably related to the people who reused noble stones from the site in the 18th century, as also mentioned (Oliveira *et al.*, 1997: 20).

During the current millennium, in a collection of materials recovered from a *‘heavily adulterated convent’* in Tavira (Portugal), where

‘unfortunately, the contexts and stratigraphic units from which most of the ceramics in analyses come from are contexts corresponding to rubble/fill deposits, and also to levels disturbed by military activities’ (Covaneiro, Cavaco & Lopes, 2010: 114),

one ottoman clay pipe of the 17th or 18th century (see Gosse, 2007: 238-243, 267) was published as a 14th- to 15th-century importation from the Emirate of Granada (Covaneiro, Cavaco & Lopes, 2010: 116). Those publications mislead to a *‘pre-discoveries tradition [paradigm], connected with the [smoking] consumption of other substances’* (Teixeira, Torres & Bet-

tencourt, 2015: 26). Most recently, there is still research based on the previous works in Spain (see for example Valdés Fernández, 2014; Mendivil-Uceda, 2018: 393, fig. 3; Fernández Puertas & Marinetto Sánchez, 2020: 165) as in Portugal (Cavaco & Covaneiro, 2018; Oliveira, 2021: 96).

CONCLUSION

Although there are some references on 'clay cannabis pipes' of Nasrid origin dated between the 10th- and 15th-century, it is unfortunate that this is not possible on reliable stratigraphic grounds. Additionally, for the most part those artifacts found parallels in post-medieval productions from Iberian (see for example López Colom, 1999; Beltrán de Heredia, Miró & Soberón, 2012; Oliveira, 2019) and/or Mediterranean workshops previously attested (see for example Hayes, 1980; Robinson, 1985; Gosse, 2007). At this point, examinations such as X-ray fluorescence spectrometer analysis are recommended to investigate the kilns in the region that were likely sources of the clay smoking pipes.

Furthermore, unless an archaeometric procedure such as residue analysis using gas chromatography-mass spectroscopy (GC-MS) had been performed in order to confirm the smoked species (see for example Thackeray, Van der Merwe & Van der Merwe, 2001), it can also be suggested a re-evaluation of any smoking pipe associated solely with *Nicotiana sp.* as other components and flavor additives could be used.

On the other hand, complementing consulted research (Duvall, 2019), it is agreed that smoking *Cannabis sp.* might have happened more than once over many sites in the Human History without further notice, regardless its known medical properties in the Old World (Fig.1). However, in consideration to the known Iberian archaeological contexts it is proposed that cannabis smoking using a pipe must have had a post-medieval origin from somewhere in Africa, between the Eastern region with *riamba* smoked in wooden *mutopas* and the Northern region with *kief* smoked in clay *sebsis*.

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Figure 1. *Nomen istius herbe. Canabe. / Nascitur autem h(a)ec herba: locis / asperis et secus vias et iuxta sepes / prima cura ipsius ad sanandum(m)* [The name of this herb: *Cannabis*. / Grows but in waste places, and at roadsides and along hedges. The very best medicine for healing], England or North France, ca. 1190 (British Library, Sloane 1975, fol. 44v).

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