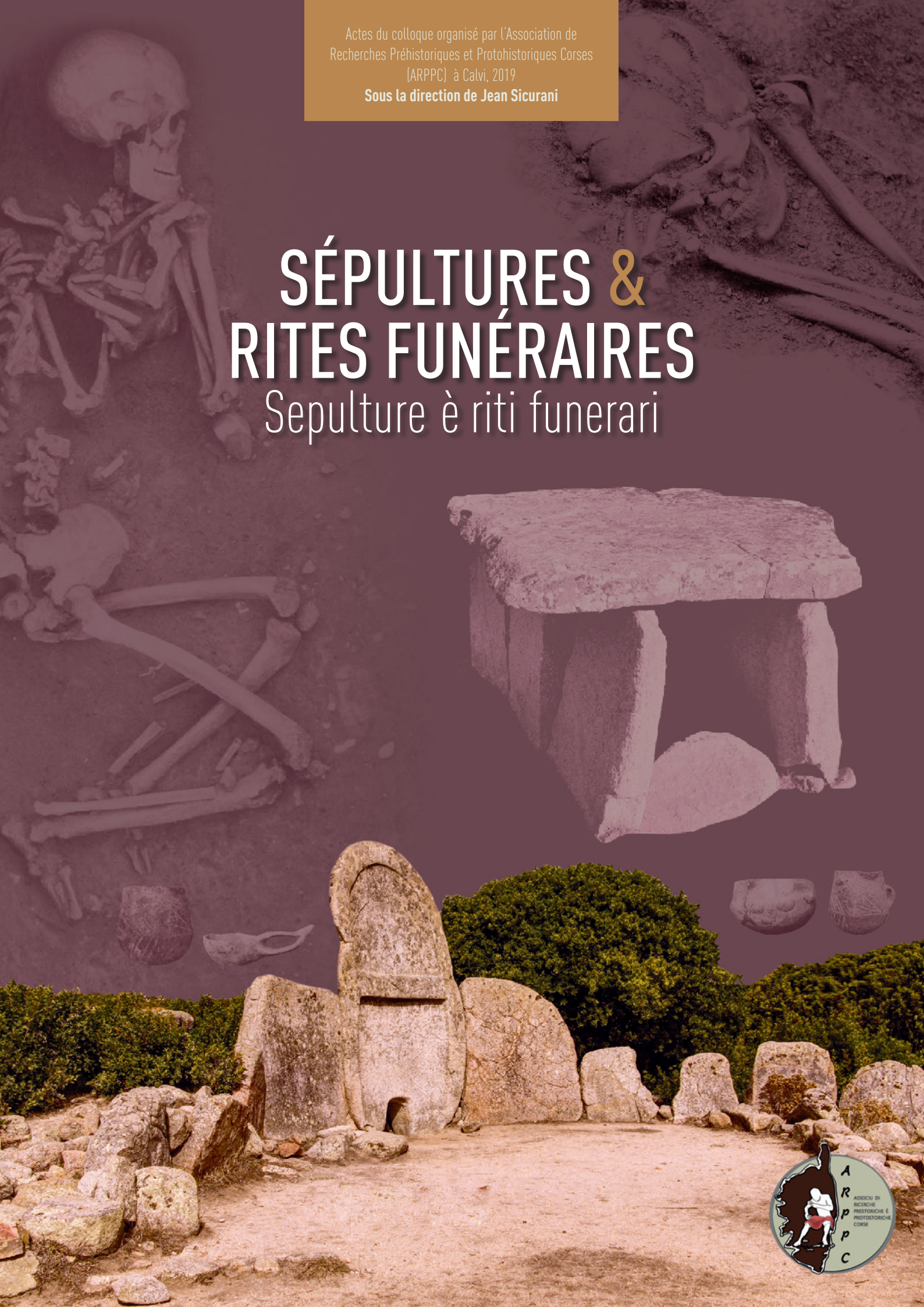
Actes du colloque organisé par l'Association de Recherches Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques Corses (ARPPC) à Calvi, 2019

Sous la direction de Jean Sicurani

SÉPULTURES & RITES FUNÉRAIRES

Sepulture è riti funerari



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CHANGEMENTS ET PERMANENCES DES RITES FUNÉRAIRES DANS LES ANCIENNES SOCIÉTÉS PAYSANNES DU CENTRE ET DU SUD DU PORTUGAL

Résumé : Avant le III^e^ millénaire a.n.e., les manifestations du sacré associées aux monuments funéraires sont rares dans le centre–sud du Portugal. Quelques objets trouvés pendant les fouilles dans certains villages sont parfois classés comme étant de « nature symbolique », mais dans la plupart des cas il s'agit de pièces rares ou hors contexte. Parmi les céramiques du Néolithique ancien, il y a des composantes décoratives associées à la figure humaine, à une figure théomorphique, ou même à la représentation d'un « orant ». La dernière n'a été trouvée qu'une fois au Portugal, à Valada do Mato, un habitat. En accompagnant des enterrements du Néolithique ancien, nous pouvons aussi nous référer à un exemple récent d'une probable association entre un squelette et un grand vase, type cruche, au Palais Ludovice, à Lisbonne. Quelques pièces isolées, telles que les idoliformes de Comporta et Montemor-o-Novo, sont interprétées comme étant du Néolithique, mais aucun contexte garanti ne permet de l'affirmer.

Les enterrements d'individus isolés ou de familles plus ou moins élargies, comme ce fut probablement le cas au dolmen 1 du Poço da Gateira, semblent être un élément typique du Néolithique ancien et moyen (Leisner e Leisner, 1951 ; Gonçalves, 1999). Dans ce dernier cas, nous devons nous référer à la présence, en association, de haches, d'herminettes et de géométriques. Les géométriques sont des éléments survivants de composantes d'objets antérieures aux premières sociétés paysannes. Les haches et les herminettes étaient utilisées pour abattre des arbres et couper les branches adjacentes. Elles se rapportent donc à l'ouverture de terrains agricoles et, curieusement, on les trouve non seulement en Alentejo mais aussi dans des zones côtières ou dans des hypogées comme São Pedro do Estoril 2. Il s'agit d'un acte symbolique aussi documenté en petites cystes mégalithiques de l'Alentejo moyen ou de l'Algarve, possiblement (mais pas certainement) attribuables au Néolithique moyen et aussi présentes dans les petits dolmens à couloir court.

Plusieurs auteurs ont interprété le phénomène mégalithique comme un gros bloc, en oubliant toutefois qu'un grand monument peut avoir été utilisé une seule fois, lors de sa construction, et puis tout au long du IIIe millénaire, comme c'est le cas pour les deux dolmens de Olival da Pega, surtout Anta 1 (ou Anta Grande). Cette situation nous pose le problème de savoir si le symbolisme était identique pendant tout le temps d'utilisation d'un monument ou s'il changeait selon divers points d'utilisation, comme c'est le cas pour un grand nombre de monuments orthostatiques. Les cavités karstiques sont évidemment des monuments en soi, donc leurs occupations se superposent souvent et nous donnent un champ d'interprétation douteux. Néanmoins, les cas où l'enregistrement moderne était efficace nous présentent des situations concrètes acceptables.

À un moment donné du mégalithisme orthostatique, nous trouvons des plaques en schiste gravées au cou des morts, représentations de la déesse-mère, protectrice de la Vie et de la Mort. Leur diffusion dans l'Alentejo moyen, probablement en accompagnant des groupes de bergers, explique leur présence dans d'autres types de monuments funéraires depuis le mégalithisme (des grottes aux hypogées et aux tholoi).

Vers 2500 a.n.e., l'arrivée de prospecteurs miniers du cuivre venus de l'Andalousie explique la présence d'un autre complexe magico-religieux, comprenant surtout des objets votifs en calcaire. Il traduit des influences maritimes liées au fond méditerranéen, acheminées par terre ou par mer de l'Andalousie jusqu'à l'Occident. Au Portugal, il se compose de deux grands centres, l'Algarve et l'Estremadura, et d'autres petites apparitions locales en Alentejo qui ont probablement un rapport avec le grand sanctuaire de Pijotilla, vers la rive gauche du Guadiana.

Chacun de ces ensembles a, en plus des zones centrales, des zones de reflux. On y trouve sans doute des objets votifs en calcaire portant des symboles éternels des anciennes sociétés paysannes, tels que les serpents, les figurations théomorphiques, phytomorphiques et aussi des objets purement utilitaires (les petits vases ou mortiers permettant de transformer le colorant rouge pour saupoudrer les morts).

À partir d'un certain moment (circa 3200 a.n.e.), les plaques gravées en schiste ont commencé à inclure des composantes anthropomorphiques plus explicites, telles que les yeux (étoilés ou non), les sourcils, le nez, des tatouages ou peintures faciales et les cheveux, y compris des tresses et, parfois, des figurations vulvaires.

Pour bien comprendre le phénomène des objets votifs en calcaire, il faut reconnaître que quelques-uns d'entre eux étaient associés en des vraies mises en scène, comme à Los Millares et dans la grotte du Correio Mor (Cardoso et al., 1995 ; Gonçalves, 2008).

Il faut aussi souligner que les petites idoles féminines trouvées à Pêra, en Algarve, ou le « poids » de Correio Mor, appartiennent à un groupe qui peut être associé aux figures de l'Egypte prédynastique, étant les seuls dans cet ensemble qui nourrissent un mirage orientaliste. Dans la première moitié du III^e^ millénaire, il y eut une véritable explosion des représentations symboliques sous la forme d'idoles, faites de matériaux très divers et existant au sein de plusieurs sous-systèmes magico-religieux. Ce fut aussi à cette période que l'on assista à l'apogée de la collectivisation des tombeaux, avec un accroissement du nombre d'inhumations par sépulcre et une multiplication des manipulations secondaires des dépouilles mortelles.

Peut-il exister un rapport entre les deux phénomènes ici présentés ? De quelle façon la collectivisation de la mort se rapporte-t-elle à la prolifération des symboles ? Et quelles sont les pratiques funéraires associées aux différentes formes d'organisation sociale ? La phase finale de ce complexe magico-religieux semble intervenir pendant le troisième quart du IIIe millénaire, parallèlement à un changement des pratiques funéraires. C'est alors qu'apparut, de nouveau, une composante individuelle en ensemble avec les campaniformes locaux, quelques-uns avec des représentations symboliques de cervidés, utilisés comme symboles de la renaissance de la fertilité.

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1. Death in ancient peasant societies of Central and Southern Portugal: a traveller's guide

In ancient peasant societies of Central and Southern Portugal, death was marked by a wide diversity of architectural solutions, both in terms of space and timing. Our approach in this paper is essentially cultural, among many issues related to funerary practices of ancient peasant societies. We chose not to probe into strictly biological fields such as paleopathology, DNA or mobilities. For this synthesis, we selected a transversal analysis guide, as follows:
- Individual and collective dimensions in funerary practices
- Symbols and magico-religious subsystems.

These reading notes shall be quoted against different geographical units, burial solutions, and chronological-cultural levels. For many years now, one of the authors (VSG) has developed a holistic notion of megalithic culture, defining "(...) a complex ensemble of magical-religious prescriptions related to death, rather than, in a reductive way, a type of funerary architecture" (Gonçalves, 1995, p. 27). In line with the above guidelines, we shall seek to check this initial assumption through the analysis of the recent archaeological record.

Our approach is focused on Central and Southern Portugal, a region with a Mediterranean cultural identity since the beginning of the Neolithic down to historical times. This interpretation will focus on the 4th and 3rd millennia (middle and late Neolithic, and Chalcolithic), preceded by a preamble on the background.

2. Central and Southern Portugal : data under analysis

2.1. Territories

The territory of South Portugal has been called Central and Southern Portugal, covering the river basins of Tejo, Sado, and Guadiana (Gonçalves, 1995). This region includes regional areas defined not only by geographical criteria but also by their cultural nature – even by the reality resulting from the pace of archaeological research itself. We can thus identify areas such as Estremadura, Alentejo (upper, middle, and lower) and the Algarve, which also correspond to large administrative regions.
Estremadura is a narrow and elongated strip of land, flanked to the East by the Tejo basin and to the West by the Atlantic Ocean, including the peninsulas of Lisboa and Setúbal. In the Holocene, the coastal line would be larger and deeper than today (Daveau 1980). The geological substratum is a mosaic, composed of large areas of marls and limestones, interspersed with basalt formations.

Alentejo covers a third of Portugal (Feio, 1983). It is a fully Mediterranean territory, characterized by peneplanes (Ribeiro 1945) and by the river basins of Tejo, Guadiana, and Sado. Middle Alentejo is more relevant in geological terms, due to the metamorphic and eruptive rocks of the old Massif and the tertiary river basins of Rivers Tejo and Sado.
The Algarve is influenced by Lower Alentejo in its Mountains (Serra) and by Andalucía on the Coast (Gonçalves, 1995: 212). The southernmost region of Portugal (the Algarve) is marked by geological diversity and can be roughly divided into three large units, i.e. Serra, Barrocal and Litoral (Feio 1949; Gonçalves, 1989; Pereira, 2017). Serra is an extension of the major geological units of the Alentejo: composed of schist substratum that forms an uneven relief and poor soils, it is called Serra Algarvia (Algarve Mountains). Barrocal is essentially composed of limestone substratum, forming a plateau cut by the river network. The Litoral (coastal area), slightly slanting towards the sea, is covered by Quaternary detritus.

The territory of Central and Southern Portugal thus has a widely diversified geological substratum, a circumstance that conditions organic preservation and therefore the study of funerary practices. In Estremadura, the limestone geological substratum enables a good preservation of organic matter and it is Portugal's region with the best-preserved human remains. In the Alentejo, the acidic granite soils destroyed most organic matter, which has been preserved in very few contexts. In the Algarve, well-preserved organic matter is essentially found in the limestone plateau of the Barrocal and Coastal regions. Apart from their physical differences, these regions have cultural specificities, as evidenced by material culture, settlement morphology and burial solutions.

2.2. Archaeological record: Estremadura, Alentejo and Algarve

As regards the thematic related to ancient peasant societies, megalithic culture and funerary context are,

for sure, the theme with the longest historical record of research. This makes any synthesis a complicated task.

Many excavations of tombs began in the 19th century, in contrast with settlements – less visible and with less impacting remains. Large museums (Museu Nacional de Arqueologia, Museu Geológico) and small local museums (Museu de Lagos, Museu Leonel Trindade, Museu Condes Castro Guimarães...) own valuable collections of biological and cultural items, with an often inexistent or insufficient archaeological record. Many researchers excavated Neolithic and Chalcolithic tombs, but it was Georg and Vera Leisner the only ones who carried out a systematic survey and data analysis (Leisner e Leisner, 1943, 1956, 1959; Leisner, 1965).
More recent research projects have allowed to review some of the most representative ensembles, namely the Megalithic group of Reguengos de Monsaraz (Gonçalves, 1992; 1999; 2001; 2003; 2013), the dolmens of the Lisboa region (Boaventura, 2009) or the necropolises and the settlement of Alcalar (Morán e Parreira, 2004; Morán, 2015, 2018). The systematic study of human remains also provided important information on this subject-matter, as regards funerary practices, demographic composition, burial dynamics, diet, and mobility (Silva, 2012; Boaventura et al 2013; Silva, 2017).
Finally, a large array of information has been gathered by recent interventions of preventative archaeology, especially in the Alentejo. These interventions have allowed to map new types of tombs, like hypogea with pit access of the Sobreira de Cima type (Valera, 2014) or burials in ditches and pits (Valera et al, 2012; Rodrigues, 2012).

TABLE 1. QUANTIFICATION OF BURIAL TYPES OF THE 6TH - 3TH MILLENNIUM IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN PORTUGAL : NUMBER OF TOMBS
(Portal do Arqueólogo, Sistema Endovélico – 2020)

	Natural caves	Orthostatic monuments	Hypogea/ rock cut caves	Tholoi	Total
Estremadura	86	25	16	11	138
Alentejo	4	1490	18	24	1536
Algarve	6	31	7	23	67

Organic matter is well preserved In Estremadura, but research is old, the archaeological record is extremely insufficient, and recent excavations rare. Most monuments were excavated between the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th : dolmens, rock cut caves, tholoi, and natural caves.
The fact that different burial types co-exist in the same geography and timeframe is particularly relevant, showing a dynamic process of long duration uses and re-uses. Tombs have long chronological biographies, frequently lasting for more than 1000 years (from 3200 to 2100 BCE), which renders their interpretation even more intricate.
Among the different types of tombs, special reference should be made to the use of natural caves as burial grounds, the most abundant type in this region. Many of these burial spaces had an extended funerary use, starting at early stages of the Neolithic and lasting until the Bronze Age. Ensemble serialization is therefore difficult. Single-phase occupation caves, or recently excavated caves, are the ones that allow us to increase our knowledge of funerary practices in karstic contexts: Algar do Bom Santo (Carvalho, 2014), Cova das Lapas (Gonçalves, 1989b), Nascente do Rio Almonda (Zilhão and Carvalho, 1996), Gruta do Caldeirão (Zilhão, 1992), Porto Covo (Gonçalves, 2008) and Poço Velho (Gonçalves, 2009).

Dolmens form a limited ensemble, mostly concentrated in the Lisboa region (Boaventura, 2009). Many orthostatic monuments were probably destroyed by anthropic pressure in the region. The architecture of these monuments is more evolved, always with separate chamber and corridor, but their timeframe is quite old, hailing back to the 4th millennium (Boaventura 2009; Silva et al, 2019). Recent excavations, providing a finer reading of funerary practices, are also scarce. We can only mention the interventions of Rui Boaventura in the dolmens of Carcavelos, Pedras Altas, and Monte Serves (Boaventura, 2009). Only the Carcavelos dolmen yielded enough anthropological traces to allow a more accurate interpretation of the funerary practices – even though this study has not yet been completed.

The inventory of Estremadura's hypogea currently totals 16 necropolises, 14 of which in the Lisboa Peninsula (south of Caldas da Rainha) and 2 in the Setúbal Peninsula (Jordão and Mendes, 2006-2007; Sousa and Gonçalves, 2019). The existence of several necropolises with many monuments (from 2 to 4 burials, in close clusters) may indicate that this was a recurrent situation in hypogeum architectures.

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Rock cut caves "coelheira type, rabbit hutch type" necropolises are only found in Estremadura. These structures, carved into the rock, had a separate corridor and chamber, with a man hole in the chamber, a unique feature in Iberia, forming a "rabbit hutch-type" architecture (Gonçalves, 1995). This evolved architectural type is documented in the necropolises of Casal do Pardo (Leisner et al, 1961; Gonçalves et al, 2018), Alapraia (Jalhay e Paço, 1941; Gonçalves, 2005) and Tojal da Vila Chã (Heleno, 1932; Gonçalves et al, 2004, Boaventura et al, 2015). Many of the remaining hypogeum necropolises are partially destroyed, thus we cannot neither confirm or deny that they originally had a man hole – although it possibly existed at São Pedro do Estoril (Leisner et al, 1964; Gonçalves, 2005) or at the monument of Praia das Maçãs (Leisner et al, 1969), given the presence of a corridor. Most rock cut caves and hypogea in Estremadura were excavated between the late 19th century and the first decades of the 20th, which makes it difficult to interpret the funerary practices. However, references should be made to the recent field and office work done at the necropolises of Alapraia (Gonçalves, 2005) and Casal do Pardo (Gonçalves et al, 2018a, 2018b), as well as to the discovery of the hypogeum of Convento do Carmo (Carvalho, 2019).

Estremadura's tholoi are concentrated in the Lisboa Peninsula, where we find 11 tombs (Sousa, 2016). The cultural identity of Estremadura is reflected in the tholoi types, with virtually a single architectural solution – composed of chamber and corridor in masonry. Apparently, these are stand-alone monuments, unlike the ones in Alcalar or other locations of Southern Iberia. São Martinho, in Sintra, is the only "cluster" composed of two monuments.

The exhaustive study of the anthropological collections kept in museums allowed a global interpretation of Estremadura's inhumated populations (Boaventura, 2009; Boaventura et al, 2014; Silva, 2017), a highly relevant circumstance since organic matter is best preserved in this region of Central and Southern Portugal. Systematic programmes of systematic dating of individual tombs have also been developed, as those for Poço Velho, Porto Côvo or Alapraia (Gonçalves, 2005, 2008; 2009) or for the dolmens of the Lisboa region (Boaventura, 2009). A proposal was recently submitted for globally phasing Estremadura's megalithic culture, based on artefact contents and Bayesian analysis (Boaventura, 2011).

We find a strong concentration of orthostatic tombs (mostly dolmens) in the Alentejo, which have been the object of significant archaeological works since the 19th century (Correia, 1921; Leisner and Leisner, 1951; 1956, 1959). The research history of the other monuments is slightly more recent. The first tholoi were identified in the mid-20th century at Reguengos de Monsaraz (Leisner e Leisner, 1951; Gonçalves, 2014) and in inland Lower Alentejo (Viana et al, 1958; Silva, 2008). The geological substratum does not favour presence of karstic caves, but the Escoural Cave (Araújo e Lejeune, 1995) evidences the existence of this burial solution in Montemor-o-Novo, right in the Megalithic area, and it also appears near the coast (Cerca do Zambujal, Lagar de Melides). In the 21st century, following important works of rescue archaeology, the first Neolithic hypogea was identified (Valera, 2013), and completely changed the interpretation of this phenomenon in Central and Southern Portugal. Other funerary practices were identified in ditches and pits (Valera 2014; Rodrigues 2014), but few sites have been dated, even though organic matter abounded. This makes it difficult to place them in their chronological-cultural context, since other relative chronological-cultural indicators are scarce.

The impressive number of orthostatic Megalithic monuments in the Alentejo is essentially concentrated in the granite landscapes of the old Massif, in Middle Alentejo. They belong to a wide diversity of architectural types, i.e. monuments without corridor (or "cysts"), short-corridor dolmens, dolmens with an corridor. Acid soils of the granite and schist substratum obliterated the human remains of most monuments, raising serious obstacles to both the interpretation of funerary practices and the phasing of regional megalithic culture. Due to the long history of research, the number of excavated monuments is relatively large. Special reference should be made to the 300 monuments excavated by Manuel Heleno in the municipalities of Coruche, Montemor-o-Novo, Arraiolos, Mora and Estremoz, during the 1920s and 1930s, virtually unpublished (Heleno, 1956; Rocha, 2005). The corpus established by Georg and Vera Leisner (Leisner e Leisner, 1956, 1959) enable a first global picture, but the knowledge of this phenomenon was better defined only after the systematic study of Megalithic groups. Specially relevant is the Megalithic Group of Reguengos de Monsaraz (Leisner e Leisner,

1951; Gonçalves, 1992, 1999, 2013), in which one of the authors of this paper (VSG) systematically studied different types of Megalithic monuments, some of which with relatively well-preserved organic matter. Other regions have been studied, namely the basin of River Sever, in Northeast Alentejo (Oliveira, 1996), or Alter do Chão (Oliveira, 2010), but the preservation of organic matter and of archaeological contexts is extremely uneven. Despite the large number of excavated orthostatic monuments, major information gaps still exist. The oldest phases possibly match the small tombs without corridors located in Coruche, Montemor-o-Novo and Évora. Nevertheless, no tomb of this type contains preserved human remains and few sites enable any dating, except Cabeço da Areia, on bone (Rocha e Duarte 2005) and Rabuje 5, on charcoal (Boaventura, 2006). Since many orthostatic megalithic monuments present an accumulation of consecutive funerary uses, it is hard to establish chronological-cultural phases based on architectural indicators and materials, as evidenced by different phases proposed for the Alentejo megalithic culture (Gonçalves, 1999; Boaventura, 2011; Mataloto et al, 2017).

Totally invisible in the landscape, Alentejo hypogeum necropolises were identified only in the 21st century. Their number however already exceeds Estremadura's updated inventory, changing our views on funerary practices on Central and Southern Portugal. The Alentejo hypogea are concentrated precisely outside the granite area of Middle Alentejo, though this mapping is seriously limited by the map of major public works. These tombs have a strong scientific potential due to several circumstances: 1) recent excavation, 2) well-preserved organic matter, and 3) the relatively circumscribed use of these 4th millennium monuments. Many hypogea have not been duly published and only Sobreira de Cima (Valera, 2013) and Quinta da Abóboda (Valera, 2017) are dated, apart from Monte do Carrascal 2 (Neves, 2019) – belonging to a different type. Dates seem to point at the 4th millennium, contemporary to the beginning of orthostatic monuments. Most of these hypogeum-type tombs have a simple chamber, or pit access, and can be found in necropolises with a maximum of 9 monuments (Vale Barrancas, Fernandes, 2013).

Tholoi in the Alentejo are distributed in a relatively small area. This may be due to the restricted visibility of the tholoi or the continued use of orthostatic monuments in this region. It is precisely in Reguengos de Monsaraz, where there is an impressive concentration of dolmens (152), that we systematically find tholoi annexed to orthostatic monuments, e.g. Farisoa 1, Comenda 2 (Leisner and Leisner, 1951), Olival da Pega 2 (Gonçalves, 1999, 2014), Cebolinhos 2 (Gonçalves, 2003). Actually, besides Reguengos de Monsaraz, we only know one case of tholoi annexed to dolmens in Southern Iberia, i.e. Dehesa de Palacio III, Sevilla (Sanjuan, 2000). In Lower Alentejo, at Beja county, 14 tholoi have been excavated, one of the largest ensembles in Central and Southern Portugal. The ensemble excavated by Abel Viana and the Geological Services team is particularly relevant (Silva, 2008). The recent works of preventive archaeology have enabled the identification of tholoi necropolises annexed to pit enclosures, as in Perdigões, Reguengos de Monsaraz (Valera 2012) or close to Porto Torrão, where six tholoi were found. Organic matter was well preserved in certain recently excavated tholoi, allowing a reconstruction of funerary practices, namely in the tombs of Perdigões (Evangelista, 2019) and Centirã (Henriques et al, 2013).

There are much fewer Neolithic and Chalcolithic necropolises in the Algarve, possibly due to the anthropic impact on the coast and to the fact that there are many hidden tombs in this region, e.g. natural caves, hypogea and tholoi. In fact, since the pioneer work of Estácio da Veiga in the late 19th century (Veiga, 1886, 1887, 1889, 1891) few new sites have been detected, although new monument findings occurred in the necropolises of Alcalar e Aljezur. As observed by E. Morán and R. Parreira (2009), Megalithic ensembles are concentrated in four quite different clusters: 1) the bay of Lagos/Portimão, the Megalithic complex of Alcalar; 2) the Monchique necropolises; 3) the Cacela cluster, close to the sea (Marcela and Nora: Veiga, 1889; Santa Rita: Inácio et al, 2008; 2009) and 4) the Serra Algarvia (tholoi and dolmens).

The Barrocal plateau has a favourable limestone substratum and so the caves used as burial sites were probably used throughout a long-term diachrony. So far, however, no necropolis caves like those of Estremadura and Escoural have been found, though they probably had different uses, namely funerary – as suggested by the data from Gruta de Ibn Ammar (Boaventura et al, 2015). Other burial solutions may have been developed during the Upper and Middle Neolithic, as found in Castelo Belinho (Gomes, 2008).

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Compared to the Alentejo, the Algarve has a *"huge void (...) in terms of megalithic culture"* (Gonçalves, 1989, p. 73). As regards Megalithic orthostatic monuments, special reference should be made to the Monchique necropolis ensemble, excavated in the 1940s and 1950s by José Formosinho and Abel Viana (Viana e Formosinho, 1942; Viana et al, 1954; Gonçalves, 1989). According to artefacts and the architecture, some of the monuments date from an earlier timeframe, but there is no radiocarbon dating available to allow an interpretation, and the archaeological record is rather defective. These small cyst-like monuments, with rectangular or trapeze plans, have stone tumuli. The continuity of use and construction at the Monchique monuments is evidenced by several tombs, e.g. Palmeira 7, suggesting possible regional dynamics of conservatism. In this case, it is quite difficult to establish the difference between "ancient and archaic" (Gonçalves, 1989, p. 74) and the regional identity of this ensemble is unquestionable.

The presence of one real dolmen in the Megalithic complex of Alcalar (Alcalar 1) evidences eventually the "monumentalized landscape" (Moran e Parreira, 2009) of this impressive megalithic complex, i.e. dolmens, hypogea, and tholoi.

Potential hypogea have been documented in West Algarve since the pioneer works of Estácio da Veiga, but this type of burial was only properly documented in Monte Canelas, a site with an excellent preservation and anthropological record (Moran e Parreira, 2004; Parreira, 2010; Silva e Parreira, 2010). The Barradas necropolis, in Aljezur, was recently identified and excavated (Barrada et al, 2013). A bit older than Monte Canelas, it is also in a good state of preservation.

The megalithic culture in the Algarve is classically marked by the impressive ensemble of Alcalar, the most remarkable tholoi complex identified in Central and Southern Portugal, composed of 18 tholoi. Excavations hail back to 1880, carried out by António José Nunes da Glória, Estácio da Veiga and Pereira Jardim, continued by Santos Rocha and José Formosinho, and today by Rui Parreira and Elena Morán. Given the complexity and heterogeneity of the available information, we should essentially refer to the two most recent syntheses by Victor S. Gonçalves (1989) and by the Rui Parreira and Elena Morán team (Morán e Parreira, 2004; Morán, 2018). The exceptional case of Alcalar has no match in the entire Algarve and there are few cases of relatively isolated tholoi in the opposing extremities of the region, i.e. East Algarve, at Alcoutim (Gonçalves, 1989; Cardoso e Gradim, 2007) and West Algarve, in Aljezur (unpublished).
Albeit relatively scarce, the Algarve burial sites are quite important, as they evidence the combined influence of the dolmen culture of the Alentejo and Andalucía.

3. Individual and collective dimensions in funerary practices

The collectivisation of death, as from the 4th millennium is a process common to Central and Southern Portugal, globally present in all types of burials. There are however different rhythms and meanings that we must analyse.
Such analysis is rendered quite difficult by the long-term use of most burial sites. Understanding this accumulation of funerary depositions would only be possible if we had an accurate archaeological record, absolute dating series and a systematic study of the anthropological and votive remains.
Single-phase use sites are quite scarce, but they can provide important indicators for this exercise.

3.1. The early stage of ancient peasant societies: individual death in the 6th and 5th millennia?

Although the number of contexts of the Early Neolithic in Central and Southern Portugal has recently grown (Gonçalves and Sousa, 2018), we still know very little about funerary practices in the early stages of the Neolithic.
The earliest funerary traces that can be associated with the first Neolithic groups are found in Estremadura (Zilhão, 2009). They essentially correspond to funerary depositions in caves.
There are very few preserved contexts and presence is testified essentially by the available radiocarbon dating. We can systematize the information into three main timeframes:
1) Early Neolithic (3rd quarter of the 6th millennium)
2) Evolved Early Neolithic (Epicardial, late 6th millennium – first half of the 5th millennium)
3) Early Mid Neolithic (second half of the 5th millennium).

The oldest phase is documented only in the cave ensemble of Almonda (Zilhão, 2009), Caldeirão (Zilhão, 1992) and Correio-Mor (Cardoso, 2003). Few available

data concern the number of type of inhumation, but the stratigraphic analysis of the Caldeirão cave proposes the existence of three individuals inhumated separately, associated with different votive packages, i.e. one woman with a cardial vase, a man accompanied by geometrics, and another man with perforated shells, possibly a necklace (Zilhão, 1992, p. 76). At Galeria da Cisterna, in Almonda's AMD2 area, the number of individuals was possibly larger, considering the abundant artefacts and human remains. Nevertheless, this area's sedimentary deposits do not show any stratigraphic layering, making it difficult to serialize data, due to the presence of long-term occupation. If we only consider as indicator bones with absolute dating, we can establish a minimum 5 dated individuals (personal information given by João Zilhão, whom we thank).

The number of funerary contexts dating from the evolved Early Neolithic is considerably larger, but few contexts allow a safe reading. It is also in karstic caves that we find most funerary contexts with absolute dating, ranging from the final quarter of the 5th millennium to the first half of the 4th, i.e. Algar do Picoto (Carvalho, 2007), Gruta do Caldeirão NA 2 (Zilhão, 1992), Gruta do Almonda, Cisterna (Martins et al, 2015; Carvalho, 2017), Pedreira das Salemas (Cardoso et al, 1996), Casa da Moura (Straus et al, 1988), N. S. das Lapas (Oosterbeek, 1993) and Abrigo 2 do Lisandro (Sousa et al, in print).

In most contexts, the deposition conditions do not enable safe readings aimed at determining the type of deposition, except N. S. Lapas and Abrigo 2 do Lisandro. A child's inhumation was identified in the N. S. Lapas cave, deposited inside a sub-oval stone structure (Oosterbeek, 1993, p. 55). The inhumation of an adult in dorsal decubitus position, and traces of a sub-adult, were identified at Abrigo 2 do Lisandro, in which a stones contour was also found (Sousa et al, in print).

Open-air funerary depositions were recently found in residential contexts in Lisboa, namely Armazéns Sommer (Cardoso et al, 2018) and Palácio Ludovice (Simões et al, 2020). In both cases, the depositions were in dorsal decubitus position, accompanied by decorated vases. Other contexts, such as Cova da Baleia, may bear witness to funerary depositions in settlements (Sousa et al, 2017). These depositions, in full residential context, may suggest different funerary practices, still in the Early Neolithic.

In the second half of the 5th millennium, the general practice remained the same as to the type of deposition. Caves were still the main burial ground, but for most contexts either available information is not enough, or the sites are poorly preserved. Only in contexts with absolute dating can we confirm that the site belongs to this timeframe, namely the caves of N. S. das Lapas (Cruz, 1997), Cadaval (Oosterbeek, 1994; Cruz, 1997), Lapa do Sono (Fernandes et al, 2015), Oosterbeek, 1994; Cruz, 1997 (Zilhão & Carvalho, 1996), Lagar (Lubell et al, 1994) and Algarão da Goldra (Strauss et al, 1992; Carvalho & Petchey, 2013). For the first time, we find caves with a funerary use in the Alentejo (Lagar) and the Algarve (Algarão da Goldra).

It is precisely in the Algarve that we find one of the most important funerary contexts for understanding the individual-collective dynamics. At Castelo Belinho (Gomes, 2008) we find traces of a settlement with an ensemble of 11 funerary pits, 10 of which with funerary depositions, totalling 14 individuals (Gomes, 2012). In one pit, a 35-year old male was identified, deposited with 22 bracelets of Glycimeris shells – the oldest funerary deposition of the ensemble (Beta-199913: 4651-4220 cal 2 sigmas, 5720+-40 BP, Gomes, 2012, p. 120). No votive artefacts accompanying the depositions were found in the remaining pits.

This individualization of funerary depositions has a parallel in Catalonia's pit necropolises (sepulcros de fosas), but the nearest parallel is found in Cadiz, at the Campo de Hockey site (Vijande et al, 2015). A settlement with a necropolis was identified there, composed of more than 80 burials, with the tombs (individual, double, and triple) contoured with stones, also with an unequal distribution of funerary objects.

A similar situation apparently existed also at Atafonas, where small proto-megalithic graves were identified, with overlapped domestic and funerary space (Albergaria, 2007). Although no chronometric data is available and human remains are poorly preserved, these appear to be individual depositions, judging from Sepultura 1 de Atafonas. It would be relevant to propose a timeframe for this necropolis, a mixed structure composed of pit, granite blocks and mound. According to the excavator's proposal, considering the material culture, it should be dated from the evolved Early Neolithic.

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Despite huge information gaps, the trend seems to be the deposition of individuals, or a small number of inhumations, in the early Neolithic phases of the 6th to 5th millennia.

3.2. In the second quarter of the 4th millennium: individual or collective?

In the first half of the 4th millennium BCE, a diversified ensemble of tombs appeared, which included the first megalithic architectures. Chronometric and anthropological data is scarce, and we must apply strict criteria to define chronological phases, giving priority to dating based on human bones.

The Bayesian study made by Rui Boaventura for the megalithic culture of Central and Southern Portugal (Boaventura, 2009), identified an early stage between 3680-3290 cal BCE, which includes small megalithic tombs and a massive use of natural caves. A similar group of votive objects was found in these different types of tombs, consisting of geometrics, small blades and bladelets, few pieces of ceramics and no engraved schist plaques. Although new dates have been established, the proposal remains valid (Mataloto et al, 2017). Nevertheless, the identification of many hypogea of early timeframes in the Alentejo may introduce a new line of interpretation.

We cannot accurately address the issue of the original timeframe of megalithic culture in Western Iberia in this paper. Therefore, we restrict our analysis to the theme of the collectivisation of burial spaces.

In Middle Alentejo (Coruche, Montemor-o-Novo, Mora), where we find the largest concentration of orthostatic megalithic monuments, and where megalithic culture of Western Iberia was possibly born (Omega project directed by VSG), there are cyst-type monuments with archaic objects which could represent a first early stage of megalithic culture. According to the state-of-the-art, there is not a chronometric definition for small simple-chamber tombs and short-corridor tombs with archaic remains, as evidenced by the recent data compilation on this thematic (Mataloto et al, 2017).

Only one simple-chamber monument has been dated on the basis of human remains, i.e. the tomb of Cabeço da Areia (Montemor-o-Novo), excavated by Manuel Heleno in 1933, with dated remains of two individuals (Beta-196091: 4650 ± 40 BP: 3621-3356 cal BC 2σ, Rocha e Duarte, 2009, p. 776). In Rabuje 5, a monument with the apparent juxtaposition of a corridor to a simple tomb (Boaventura, 2006), dates based on short-life charcoal fit this timeframe (Beta-191133: 4650 ± 50 BP, 3630-3345 cal BC 2σ, Boaventura, 2009).

As regards simple-corridor monuments with archaic objects, only two dolmens have been dated in the Alentejo, i.e. Cabeceira 4 and Santa Margarida 2. In the 1930s, Manuel Heleno excavated the Cabeceira 4 dolmen (Mora), and the remains of three individuals were recently dated (Rocha, 2005; Carvalho e Rocha, 2016), pointing at a timeframe identical to that of the small tomb of Cabeço da Areia (Beta-196094, Beta-196094, Wk-41066 – dated from 3647 to 3379 cal BC 2σ). Dolmen no. 2 of Santa Margarida (Reguengos de Monsaraz) was excavated by one of the authors of this paper (VSG), and dating based on short-life charcoal regarding the closure of the corridor determines a terminus post quem between 3334-2906 cal BC 2σ (Beta-153911: 4410 ± 60 BP, Gonçalves, 2001, p. 172).

Regarding the Alentejo coast, Carlos Tavares da Silva and Joaquina Soares proposed a similar sequence in architectural terms (tomb of Palhota – Marco Branco – dolmen of Pedra Branca [Silva e Soares, 1983]). Unfortunately, we only have absolute dating for the dolmen of Pedra Branca. The two available dates (Soares, 2010) are clearly insufficient for the Pedra Branca dolmen, considering that this monument was used in the long run, possibly for over 1,000 years. As this is an evolved monument, we can hardly understand the old date established for the monument's chamber, i.e. ICEN-1040: 4620+-60, 3628-3106 cal 2 sigmas (Soares, 2010). Even though this date was based on human bones, and its object collection includes some archaic materials (i.e. geometrics), one date is clearly not enough to support this proposal and the underlying previous phases.

The current absence of chronometric definition does not confirm nor disprove a phased-in evolution from individual to single-family burials. If we just consider the architectural structure and the objects, we find a clear difference between simple tombs and short-corridor dolmens. The small size of chambers and the scarce number of artefacts may suggest that simple cyst-like tombs were supposed to house one individual, or a small number of individuals, while short-corridor dolmens had a restricted single-family use, e.g. the dolmens of Poço da Gateira or Gorginos

2, at Reguengos de Monsaraz, Alentejo (Leisner e Leisner, 1951).
Organic matter is better preserved in Estremadura, but almost every monument was excavated early. Some of them have been built at early phases but they have been be used for a long time after that. We do not know any simple cyst-like tombs in this region, but the available dates for dolmens with archaic objects fit the same timeframe of the Alentejo dolmens, i.e. between the second and the third quarters of the 4th millennium. Special reference should be made to the monuments of Carrascal and Pedras Grandes, both excavated by Carlos Ribeiro in the 19th century, and later studied by Rui Boaventura (2009).

The Carrascal monument (Sintra) apparently had an early occupation, contemporary to Alentejo' cist tombs. Carrascal have been dated between 3600 and 3300 with four dating tests based on human bones (OxA-35900: 4766+-30 BP, 2640-3384; Beta-228577: 4770+-40 BP, 3644-3381; OxA-35901: 4752+-31, 3638-3382, Beta-225167: 4640+-40, 3620-3350 cal 2 sigmas, Boaventura, 2009; Silva et al, 2019). Few objects were found, in association with a minimum of 16 individuals (9 adults and 5 non-adults), a number established by the anthropological study of the materials collected during the late 19th century excavations. This possibly suggests the familiar nature of these tombs (Silva et al, 2019). In addition, Dolmen of Pedras Grandes (Odivelas), belonging to the same timeframe, has a small number of inhumated individuals (nmi 7), although its chamber is larger (Boaventura, 2009, p. 7). We must underscore the demographics of these first dolmens, as follows: *"(...) the anthropological analysis of the human remains deposited in Estremadura's tombs reveals the presence of individuals from the entire spectrum of the community, regardless sex or age. Accepting that some individuals of special condition could have been deposited there clashes against the evidence of this diversity, but especially against the absence of data that enable us to affirm that with confidence"* (Boaventura, 2009, p. 368).
Despite the importance of the Monchique necropolis, information is rather scarce in the Algarve. Still it seems plausible that the timeframe is identical to that of the cyst-type tombs of the Alentejo, even though they were used here for a longer time.

The simple hypogea (without corridor) and the hypogea with pit access, which recently appeared in Lower Alentejo, date from nearly the same timeframe of these first orthostatic tombs.
This region's first hypogea were discovered only in the last 10 years, in the framework of preventive archaeological works (Valera, 2013). Their number already amounts to 17 identified necropolises, usually organised in multiple necropolises, with 2 to 16 monuments (Neves e Silva, 2018). Reference should be made to the good preservation state of funerary depositions and, as a rule, a short-lived occupation enabling a quite accurate dating.
The number of dated and published necropolises is still small. Some have been dated between 3600-3300 cal BCE, as a starting point of these tombs, associated with votive artefacts that look like those found in the first orthostatic tombs. Other non-dated hypogea, with identical artefacts and preserved contexts, point at this chronological-cultural horizon, e.g. Outeiro Alto (Valera e Filipe, 2012), or Monte de Malheiros 2 (Melo e Silva, 2016).

They usually have small-sized chambers and few funerary depositions. Tomb 1 of Sobreira de Cima 2 has 22 recorded individuals, while Tomb 4 of the same necropolis has 16 (Valera, 2013). Quinta da Abóboda 2 has only 2 recorded individuals (Valera, 2017). Five individuals were found in Tomb 1 of Monte de Malheiros 2, and 4 individuals in Tomb 2 (Melo e Silva, 2016).
Few necropolises have yet been dated, so it is risky to assume that hypogea, simple-chamber tombs, and small dolmens were contemporary. We know they are contemporary, and that they adopted identical funerary practices in terms of number of inhumations and associated artefacts, but there probably is a finer phasing that is not yet obvious.

In Estremadura and in the Algarve, close to the coast, these rock cut tombs appeared at a later stage, as from 3200 BCE. They have a different architecture, with a long access corridor and larger chambers. Many such rock cut tombs have old excavations and long-term uses (Casal do Pardo – Palmela, Alapraia, S. Pedro do Estoril – Cascais). It is therefore difficult to accurately establish who were the first builders of these monuments, as evidenced by the anthropological data from Monte Canelas 1 (Silva e Parreira, 2010).

Thus, the first family tombs appeared in the transition from the 3rd to the 2nd quarter of the 4th millennium. Their major difference, rather than the number of

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inhumated individuals, is apparently the adoption of an undifferentiated common burial chamber.
In this timeframe, in addition to the first megalithic architectural structures, natural caves were systematically used as burial grounds.
We naturally must ask the following question: What came first? Collective depositions in caves, or the first megalithic monuments?

The exercise is still quite difficult, as we can hardly give a chronometric definition of both moments.
Since natural caves were intensely used during the 4th and 3rd millennia BCE, the case of caves that were used only during a restricted phase of the first half of the 4th millennium, with votive artefacts similar to those defined for the first phase of the megalithic tombs, is very interesting. This is the case of the caves of Algar do Bom Santo (Carvalho, 2014) and Lugar do Canto (Carvalho e Cardoso, 2015), both located in Estremadura.

Lugar do Canto cave was initially excavated in 1975 by the Geological Services team (Leitão et al, 1987) and was later reviewed (Cardoso e Carvalho, 2008; Carvalho e Cardoso, 2015). The initial estimate points at a minimum number of 48 inhumated individuals, and 8 radiocarbon dates were obtained (Carvalho e Cardoso, 2015).

According to the initial proposal made by the excavating team of Lugar do Canto, a first burial was identified (H15) followed by a subsequent phase of collective inhumation. Three different dates were obtained for the "founder" individual (Sac-1715: 5120 ± 80 - 4068-3707 cal BC; Wk-30210: 4819 ± 32 - 3658-3524 cal BC 2 sigmas; Sac-2710: 5000 ± 60 BP - 3948-3662 cal BC), showing how difficult it is to read these tombs with an intensive funerary dynamics. Regardless the issue of the existence/ absence of a founder, there seems to be an older first phase, in the 1st quarter of the 4th millennium, and a second phase (including the remaining dates) which already fits the bracket between the 2nd and 3rd quarters of the 4th millennium (Carvalho e Cardoso, 2015, p. 45). As the aforementioned phasing is clear, it seems quite risky to consider the first phase of Lugar do Canto as a starting point of collective depositions in caves. It is not possible to accept the date of 3800 BCE as the beginning of collective practices, contrary to the proposal made by J. L. Cardoso e A. F. Carvalho (Carvalho e Cardoso, 2015, p. 50). As previously mentioned, the use of caves as burial space was permanent since the 6th millennium and the older dates of Lugar do Canto may correspond to simple or multiple funerary depositions without a collective nature.

Algar do Bom Santo was identified and partially excavated in 1993, and exhaustively studied (Carvalho, 2014). The anthropological study revealed a minimum number of 36 adults and 17 non-adults (Granja et al, 2014), but the number of inhumations yet to be excavated must be much higher, judging from the initial estimate of 121-127 inhumations (Carvalho, 2014, p. 9). The 21 radiocarbon dates obtained for Bom Santo indicate that the main phase of its use ranged between 3800 and 3400 cal BCE, with only 4 before 3700.

It is hard to determine time limits based on the upper bracket of dating in a linear way, and thus we can state that, just like the first megalithic monuments, collective depositions in caves appeared still in the 2nd quarter of the 4th millennium. With the aforementioned caveat, however, we can generally say that the Middle Neolithic caves had a collective use, while the first megalithic tombs had a more restricted use, perhaps familiar (although we have no genetic studies available to confirm this proposal of family relationships).

3.3. Collectivisation of death in the 4th-to-3rd millennium transition

In the 4th-to-3rd millennium transition, we find a growing number of inhumations and artefacts in natural caves, in rock cut caves, and finally in tholoi.
Considering that, as previously mentioned, organic matter is poorly preserved in Southern Portugal, it is in Estremadura that we take a more in-depth approach to this theme. As a result of the anthropological studies made by Ana Maria Silva (Silva, 2002, 2012) and Rui Boaventura (2009), we now have a high number of burials with a minimum number of individuals quantified, i.e. 12 dolmens, 6 rock cut caves, 22 natural caves, and 6 tholoi. This is essentially old excavations, but we can consider that collection problems are transversal to all types of burials. According to Rui Boaventura's analysis (2009), dolmens have the lowest average number of inhumated individuals (29), followed by natural caves (63), rock cut caves (106), and finally tholoi (124). These values apparently point at a trend of growth of the number of inhumations deposited by burial, from the 4th to the 3rd millennium. It is in tholoi, the only burials

exclusively found in the 3rd millennium, that we identify the largest number of inhumated individuals. The case of the Paimogo tholos is particularly relevant, with 413 individuals (Silva, 2003).

Considering the cumulative effect of funerary depositions, we can hardly make an estimate of how many such inhumations belong to the 4th or 3rd millennium, so more so that in many cases there are few radiocarbon dates available.
With all due precautions, we should actually stress that the lowest number of funerary depositions is found in dolmens with archaic artefacts, dating from the mid-4th millennium (for example, the Carrascal dolmen and Pedras Grandes). Moreover, the number of individuals is higher in more evolved orthostatic monuments. Unsurprisingly, the dolmen of Carcavelos, which has a relevant collection of 3rd millennium votive artefacts (Boaventura, 2009, p. 294), has the highest number of individuals (mni-81) recorded in dolmens of Estremadura.

In Southern Portugal (Alentejo and Algarve) dolmens with preserved organic matter are extremely rare, namely Anta 3 of Herdade de Santa Margarida (Reguengos de Monsaraz, Alentejo), excavated by one of the authors (Gonçalves, 2003), and the Santa Rita 2 dolmen (Cacela, Algarve) currently under study (Inácio, 2008).

Dolmen 3 of Santa Margarida belongs to the Megalithic Group of Reguengos de Monsaraz, and it is possibly one of the last orthostatic constructions erected in this region, as the nine radiocarbon dates points at the 3rd millennium (Gonçalves, 2003). Its anthropological study (Cunha et al, 2003) established a total of 28 inhumations – 9 adults and 16 sub-adults. Given the funerary dynamics typical of the megalithic burials of this phase, direct associations with votive artefacts are rare. But we should underline that a minimum of 22 engraved schist plaques have been identified. To the inhumated STAM-3 population, we must subtract the three individuals that unarguably belong to the second phase, a time in which plaques would have disappeared from funerary and magical-religious contexts. The 25 individuals would be associated with the 22 schist plaques, a much higher number than the total funerary depositions of adults. All men, women and sub-adults of the first STAM-3 phase might have been accompanied by engraved schist plaques (the missing three may corresponding to the multiple fragments recovered, may have been lost in violations occurred in pre-historical or medieval times, or may correspond to sub-adults under 1 year of age).

We feel tempted to use schist plaques as indicators of the minimum number of individuals (mni) for the Alentejo dolmens, in which organic matter is not preserved. In fact, some dolmens have more than one hundred plaques of schist, as found in the Anta Grande of Olival da Pega (Leisner e Leisner, 1951), Paço de Aragão (Gonçalves, 2008). However, there is no dolmen with preserved organic matter that has such a high number of inhumated individuals.
There seems to be an explosive growth of inhumations in rock cut caves / hypogea after the last centuries of the 4th millennium. Several issues must be addressed when analysing the minimum number of individuals found in rock cut tombs (cf. updated list in Neves, 2019):
1) Many Alentejo tombs are not dated and therefore cannot be integrated in chronological and cultural terms;
2) many Estremadura tombs were largely used until the late 3rd millennium, but there is not any associated archaeological record.
A global quantification of the minimum number of individuals is thus quite risky, considering the abovementioned cumulative effect. Notwithstanding, we should mention the total of 255 inhumated individuals in Cave 2 of São Paulo (131 adults and 124 non-adults), the highest number recorded in rock cut tombs of Central and Southern Portugal (Silva, 2018).
At the Monte Canelas 2 hypogeum (Portimão, Algarve), we find the best anthropological record of this type of burial, which enabled us to identify two levels of funerary deposition, i.e. 147 individuals counted for the first phase of use (late 4th millennium) and only 24 recorded individuals in the second phase of the late 3rd millennium (Silva, 1996; Silva e Parreira, 2010).

It is in tholoi, generally dated from the 3rd millennium, that we find massive depositions of hundreds of individuals in the same burial space. In fact, when we compare the number of individuals inhumated in different times of tombs, we find that, generally speaking, a large number of burials is found in tholoi, Special reference should be made to the 413 individuals at the Paimogo 1 tholos, in the Portuguese Estremadura, or the 300 individuals from tomb 3 of

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La Pijotilla, in the Spanish Extremadura (Hurtado et al, 2000). The high number of individuals found at Paimogo 1 may somehow inflate the average number of inhumations per tomb in Estremadura, but there is an undoubtable trend towards a marked growth of the number of inhumated individuals in the Estremadura tholoi.

In Southern Portugal (Alentejo and Algarve), there are more tholoi with preserved human remains than dolmens, and there are some new recent excavations. At Reguengos de Monsaraz, some tholoi appear to yield a high number of inhumations, judging from data available for tholos OP-2b (Gonçalves, 1999), or for the tholoi of Perdigões (mni 103 individuals for tomb 1; Evangelista, 2019 and mni 36 individuals for tomb 2: Silva et al, 2017). Nevertheless, certain tholoi of Lower Alentejo apparently show a lower number of inhumated individuals, judging from the numbers of Centirã 2 (mni 7: Henriques et al, 2013) or Cardim 6 (mni 8; Valera et al, 2019). The small number of artefacts found in most false-dome monuments of this region may result from a small number of inhumations, namely at Cerro do Gatão, A-do-Tassos ou Malha Ferro (Russo, 2019). Some monuments of Alcalar may also have a small number of inhumations recorded due to the small size of the Alcalar tholoi chambers and the concentration of prestige artefacts, namely copper and ivory.

The collective character of tholoi therefore results from multiple situations, namely the number of individuals and the inhumation practices: counting the number of individuals is not enough, it is also quite important to understand the dynamics of their deposition.

At Valencina de la Concepción, the exceptional tholos of Montelirio evidences the deposition of 20 individuals (possibly women) who were inhumated at the same time, or over a short period of time, between 2900-2800 cal BCE (Bayliss et al, 2016). A preliminary study of the Los Millares tholoi (monuments 71, 74, 75) evidenced a small number of inhumations, not exceeding a dozen (Aranda, 2020).

A common feature of most tholoi is the highly fragmented human remains, evidencing intensive dynamics of use and possibly secondary inhumations. These new dynamics of funerary management began in the late Neolithic, in the final quarter of the 4th millennium, as well evidenced in the hypogea of Monte Canelas 1 (Silva, 2002; Silva e Parreira, 2019), or at the Santa Rita 2 dolmen (Inácio et al, 2008).

Apart from the internal dynamics, tombs were consecutively remodelled, involving the relocation of human remains and votive artefacts – in all types of tombs. At Reguengos de Monsaraz, the Megalithic complex of Olival da Pega 2, excavated by one of the authors (Gonçalves, 2014), was deeply remodelled in the 3rd millennium. One segment of the corridor of the orthostatic monument was emptied for placing the access to three annex tholoi. The chamber of the Santa Margarida 3 dolmen was fully remodelled to new funerary depositions (Gonçalves, 2003). These emptying actions can also be found in hypogea, such as Cabeço da Arruda 1 or São Pedro do Estoril 1 (Leisner et al, 1964).

Collectivization dynamics make it difficult to establish the presence of primary or secondary depositions. Besides, poor or old records, or bioturbation, also hinder the reading. With some caution, we can say that the increased secondary deposition is associated with the collectivisation of death, growing significantly in the 3rd millennium.

The fragmentation and dynamic relocation of human remains also is a factor of equalization of inhumated individuals in terms of funerary rituals. It is quite difficult to find direct associations of inhumations with specific artefacts. Furthermore the demographic profiles do not evidence any type of gender- or age-related selection, as stressed by several authors (Boaventura et al, 2013; Valera, 2012; Evangelista e Valera, 2019): *"And above all, no sense of individuality emerges in any of these contexts"* (Evangelista e Valera, 2019, p. 50).

However confirming the secondary character of the inhumations is difficult. The intensive collective use of the tombs triggered intense actions of bone relocation, but establishing the secondary character of the depositions, with a complete transformation of the burial site, has quite different implications.

We have few traces of secondary depositions and manipulations after the Middle Neolithic in natural caves and hypogea. The hypothesis of a room with secondary depositions was raised for the cave of Algar do Bom Santo, with parts of inhumations and

fragmented materials (Carvalho et al, 2019). At the hypogeum of Monte de Malheiros, the absence of the skull may also point at secondary manipulations (Melo e Silva, 2018).

The possible existence of secondary funerary depositions is amplified in large ditch enclosures, but few contexts have yet been studied and published. This evidence is best documented at Perdigões (Valera et al, 2014). It has been proposed that secondary depositions existed at this enclosure, as from the Late Neolithic.

Reference should be made to the dual situation of the Perdigões tholoi, located inside the enclosure, but in its outer perimeter. In fact, while Tomb 1 is believed to contain exclusively human remains transferred from other sites within the Perdigões complex, or from outside areas (Evangelista, 2019), primary inhumations and secondary depositions of human remains coexist in Tomb 2 (Silva et al, 2017). Human remains were found in different contexts of the Perdigões complex, over a long diachrony (Valera, 2014). They probably have different meanings, as they are present in pits and ditches. A recent quantification of the minimum number of individuals at Perdigões estimates a total 551, of which 189 in the four tholoi and 250 (!) in a pit (Evangelista e Valera, 2019).

This outlook, marked by death pulverization and multiple burial spaces, is common to other large ditch enclosures, e.g. Porto Torrão, where hundreds of bone fragments belonging to six individuals were found in the inner ditch (Rodrigues, 2014). Some of them still had anatomical connections, while other bones were fragmented and associated with "domestic" waste, such as fauna, ceramic sherds, and stone blocks. As in Perdigões, we find different funerary practices in this complex, namely deposition in pit inside the enclosure, human remains in the pit, and tombs in the adjacent area (tholoi and rock cut caves).

The presence of death is considerably more discrete in fortified settlements, though a few human bones appear both in Estremadura (Zambujal, Liceia, Penedo do Lexim, Olelas) and the Alentejo (Monte Novo dos Albardeiros). A relatively large number of human bones was found at Zambujal, totalling 349 fragments that might correspond to a minimum of 20 individuals (Kunst el al, 2014). Judging from the dates available for Penedo do Lexim (Sousa, 2010) and Liceia (Kunst el al, 2014), these depositions seem to have taken place at a late stage, but it will be important to establish a dating programme for Zambujal.

The study on the human remains of ditch 5 at Marroquíes (Zorita et al, 2020) included systematic dating, isotopic tests and bioarchaeological research. This study established that bone parts were selected, individuals were local, and human remains with chronological differences existed in the same deposit. As a result, the authors hypothesized that they were collected from local necropolises, or from perishable structures (Zorita et al, 2020, p. 18).
Evidence of multiple funerary practices in the 3rd millennium was found at Perdigões, Porto Torrão, Marroquíes or Zambujal.

A recent chronometric and isotopic study on the Late Neolithic in the region of Rioja (Fernández-Crespo et al, 2019) associated its funerary variety (caves and dolmens) with socioeconomic differences within a very small area.

The case of Reguengos de Monsaraz is a paradigm of this variety of funerary solutions in the 3rd millennium, e.g. construction of new dolmens, like Santa Margarida 3 (Gonçalves, 2003), reuse of dolmens and addition of tholoi (Gonçalves, 2014), construction of tholoi in ditch enclosures (Valera, 2014) and deposition of human remains in non-funerary deposits, such as ditches and pits (Evangelista e Valera, 2019). Primary inhumation practices are found at the dolmen Anta de Santa Margarida 3, hygienization fires at tholos OP-2b and cremations at Perdigões. What is the meaning of this huge variety in death? The mobility study recently published on Perdigões (Valera et al, 2020) underlines the non-local character of the people inhumated at Perdigões, compared to a small sample of inhumations from dolmens in the region (Cebolinhos 1, Vigueiras 1, Comenda 1 – excavations in Leisner e Leisner, 1951), but the authors carefully emphasize the fact that there is not a chronometric definition for these interments, which may be older.

It has been known for decades that the 4th-to-3rd millennium transition was characterized by diversified burial solutions and the collectivisation of death. We clearly need to know more about the populations inhumated in caves, hypogea, dolmens, tholoi, pits and

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ditches so we can understand whether the apparent equality and collectivisation of death really concerns the same population, in terms of geographical and social origins.

3.4. The beaker phenomenon and the emergence of funerary individualization

The collectivisation trend was apparently reversed in the second half of the 3rd millennium, possibly related to the beaker phenomenon, reflecting a new social and ideological order (Guerra Doce e Delibes, 2019). Considering that the largest number of beaker sites and ceramics of Iberia is found in Estremadura, it is not surprising that almost all its burials have components usually associated with the beaker phenomenon.

The old age of archaeological works and the long-term funerary use of these tombs make it extremely difficult to determine who and how many individuals were inhumated with beaker components, and in how they were deposited in the collective chambers. Inhumations with beaker components concern the final phase of use of these tombs. The beaker depositions are found in the upper levels and are more affected by stratigraphic disturbance, which also renders the chronometric definition of the beaker phenomenon quite difficult in the region of Lisboa.

In Estremadura the rock cut cave of São Pedro do Estoril 1 is an exceptional case, due to its accurate excavation record and publication. The stratigraphic position of the beaker depositions is shown (Leisner et al, 1964, p. 65) and the distribution plans emphasize that the beaker-related artefacts were found in the central zone of the chamber (Leisner et al, 1964, p. 74). In the rock cut caves of Casal do Pardo, part of the funerary depositions with beaker materials occupied the corridor, namely Cave 1 (Costa, 1907; Gonçalves et al, 2018). The use of the corridor in the "beaker" phase has been documented in other tombs of Southern Portugal, like the beaker deposition in the corridor of Anta 1 de Casas do Canal (Leisner e Leisner, 1955; Gonçalves et al, 2018), or the inhumation of dolmen Anta de Nossa Senhora da Conceição dos Olivais, in the Alentejo (Boaventura et al, 2014-2015).

Cases of funerary depositions contoured with slabs, thus enhancing their individual character, are rare. This situation is documented for the Tituaria tholos, in Estremadura (Cardoso et al, 1996), where the funerary depositions were structured with slabs after the vault was pulled down. At the dolmen of Pedra Branca (coastal Alentejo) two structured interments were identified in the dolmen's chamber (Ferreira et al, 1975), and possibly also in the dolmen of Carcavelos, in Estremadura (Boaventura, 2009, p. 157). This situation probably existed in other tombs. We must stress that the three examples mentioned above concern excavations made in the final quarter of the 20th century.

In fact, purely beaker tombs are rare in Central and Southern Portugal. In Estremadura, we find the caves of Verdelha dos Ruivos, Vila Franca de Xira (Cardoso, 2014), Abrigo 1 do Lisandro, Mafra (Sousa et al, in print), and possibly the hypogeum of Convento do Carmo, Torres Novas (Carvalho, 2019). Regarding the Alentejo, the pit of Quinta do Castelo 1, Beja, has been published (Valera et al, 2016).

The caves of Verdelha dos Ruivos, excavated by Veiga Ferreira in the 1970s, have not yet been totally published (Ferreira e Leitão, 1982), and therefore it is difficult to understand this necropolis. Reference should be made to the existence of horizontal separation slabs, and in one case of a vertical slab (idem, p. 205), with the inhumations in foetal position (Cardoso, 2014).
Detected and excavated in 2017, Abrigo 1 do Lisandro is currently being published by the authors of this paper. It belongs to a possible necropolis composed of rock-shelters overlooking the beach of Lisandro. In one cave, three individuals were identified in association with beaker artefacts (Sousa et al, in print).
The pit of Quinta do Castelo 1 yielded a single funerary deposition of a sub-adult individual, accompanied by a maritime vase with a complete profile (Valera et al 2016), dated from the 3rd quarter of the 3rd millennium (ICA 16B /0304: 3890±30 BP, 2470–2290 cal BC, Valera et al, 2019).

While the aforementioned depositions suggest a tendentially individualizing character, the recently published hypogeum of Convento do Carmo (Carvalho, 2019) is, according to its excavators, an exclusively bell-beaker collective tomb (mni 15). It should however be stressed that the burial evidenced a strong depositional dynamics, with no primary depositions, and that only two samples were dated. Considering that all absolute and relative data indicate that the hypogeum necropolises of Estremadura were

built in the late 4th millennium / early 3rd millennium, it would be important to widen the dating spectrum in order to confirm that this is a tomb for collective use built only in the second half of the 3rd millennium – which seems doubtful.

The scarcity of tombs of bell-beaker origin in Central and Southern Portugal contrasts with the Spanish Meseta, where many tombs were found in pits and hypogea, accompanied by Ciempozuelos-type beaker artefacts, since the 19th century. At Camino de las Yeseras (Blasco, Liesau, Rios, 2019), Humanejos (Garrido Pena et al, 2019), La Magdalena and other necropolises (Liesau, 2017), funerary depositions are tendentially individual, both female and male.

In the exceptional case of Humanejos, the tombs were apparently closed in a hurry. They are all primary inhumations, which strengthens the unique character of these depositions (Garrido Pena et al, 2019). At the regional level, however, there are multiple votive practices that include the possible opening of graves and their manipulation (Blasco, Liesau, Rio, 2019), secondary depositions in residential contexts, like in Camino de las Yeseras (Liesau et al, 2018), and the presence of a large number of tombs without beaker artefacts.

The coexistence in the one region of tombs with and without beaker artefacts in the same timeframe is also documented for Southern Portugal, namely at Dolmen 3 of Santa Margarida (Gonçalves, 2003), where the deposition of three individuals dated from the 3rd quarter of the 3rd millennium has been recorded, without any fragments of beaker ceramics – even though an important bell-beaker artefact collection was found in the enclosure of Perdigões, only a few kilometres away from this dolmen (Valera e Basílio, 2017).

It is highly probable that megalithic monuments were just reused in the second half of the 3rd millennium, without any active construction. Reference should however be made to a few tholoi in inland Lower Alentejo, which exclusively yielded dates from the second half of the 3rd millennium – e.g. Centirã 2, where beaker materials were found (Henriques et al, 2013) or Cardim 6 (Valera et al, 2019). The dolmen of Santa Margarida 3 underwent profound architectural remodelling works in the 3rd quarter of the 3rd millennium, but apparently no orthostatic tomb was built in this timeframe. The case of Convento do Carmo, the only hypogeum in Central and Southern Portugal with a proposed "beaker" origin (Carvalho, 2019), requires further chronometric definition.

Also in Estremadura there are necropolises of the 3rd millennium with any component of the bell beaker package, as in Gruta dos Bolores, with 11 dates of the 3rd millennium (Lillios et al, 2015). There are also fortified settlements such as Penedo do Lexim with very few bell-beaker ceramics, showing a strict circulation of this phenomenon (Sousa, 2010).
The diversity of funerary rituals in the region of Madrid has been interpreted as reflecting social differentiation and social tensions (Garrido Pena et al, 2019). The tombs with the richest artefact collections remained untouched (Liesau e Blasco, 2019), which seems to suggest strategies of power legitimisation by means of funerary management.

In Central and Southern Portugal, funerary depositions associated with the beaker culture appear to be tendentially individual, but information is scarce. In the current state-of-the-art, we find no situations identical to those recorded in the region of Madrid. The record points at a systematic funerary use of the pre-existing megalithic monuments. In Central and Southern Portugal, megalithic monuments apparently were a structuring factor in funerary practices that overlapped the new social ideology associated with the bell-beaker culture. They resisted as preferred funerary places until the late 3rd millennium.

4. Symbols and magico-religious subsystems

We know little about the magico-religious subsystem associated with what we usually still call the "Early Neolithic". We know even less about those associated with the "Middle Neolithic", as this phase is poorly characterized due to the episodic nature of interments and the insufficient knowledge of what accompanied the funerary rites.

Clay figures as the ones from Comporta or Montemor-o-Novo present one serious problem: they are de-contextualized. Therefore, saying that they belong to the Early Neolithic is seriously risky, as they may date from the second half of the 4th millennium, or even from the first half of the 3rd millennium.

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In an early Neolithic settlement as Valada do Mato (Évora) for a partially excavated habitat (Diniz, 2007) we have just a ceramic sherd with an anthropomorphic representation and a beheaded figurine with the Goddess collar (Beta 153914: 5040-4790 cal BC 2 sigmas). The same attribute we will find later in some engraved schist plaques.

The very true explosion of artefacts associated with the Sacred began, in terms of radiocarbon dates, by maximum parameter, in 2900 to 2500 BCE.
The appearance of engraved schist plaques as from 3200 BCE may be due to the consolidation of peasant societies in a period of real demographic growth. The large number of pieces per monument translate the consolidation of a mode of production that collapsed with the arrival the copper prospectors from Andalucía. But it is their disappearance, around 2,500, that really points at the appearance of a second wave of penetration of the Western territory by people who no longer shared the magico-religious assumptions inherent to the plaques. Data recently obtained from the excavations at the Chalcolithic farm of Cabeço do Pé da Erra, in Coruche, (Gonçalves e Sousa, 2017) shows that the schist plaques from the first phase were reused as simple decorative elements in the site's final phase of occupation. In short, they were used to hang around the neck of the living, not to be placed in the chest of the dead.

In the 4th-to-3rd millennium transition, and during the first half of the latter, an ideotechnic artefact prevailed in the archaeological record of the ancient peasant societies, illustrating part of a magico-religious subsystem. The symbolic signalling is substantiated in an artefact engraved on schist, or more rarely on serpentinite. The most viable interpretation for this artefact appears to be that of a Mother Goddess, protectress in Life and Death. It is a handicraft product, and despite its specific shapes and motifs, we can identify variations depending on the region, or engraving schools.

Engraved schist plaques of Western Iberia are distributed over a large area, from river Mondego to the Extreme South. Their largest concentration is, however, found in Middle Alentejo, particularly in the territory of today's municipalities of Montemor-o-Novo, Évora and Reguengos de Monsaraz.
Decorative solutions triggered a plaque paging that complies with major criteria and other, equally important, minor criteria. In the so-called "traditional" models, there is clearly a space at the top reserved for the "head", and another one reserved for the body. It is really a representation of an anthropomorphic entity. Or better: an teomorphic entity...The filling of the two mainly areas of a plaque varies widely.

The head has a central area (the head within the head) which organizes the space and can be triangular, trapezoidal, and in rare cases rectangular. It is surrounded by motifs that, in most situations, could be interpreted as facial tattoos.
The "body" presents motifs varying from filled triangles included in incised bands – the "zigzagging" stripes, the vertical stripes, or the chessboard chequers.
This simplistic image is tinged with variants, the insertion of separators, or the changing dimension of the bands. When the chosen motif is composed of zigzagging horizontal stripes, there may been guiding lines to help define the composition.

We may (or not) find holes in the head, as the plaques were meant to be placed around the neck of the dead. At Cova das Lapas, Dolmen 3 of Herdade de Santa Margarida, and perhaps Monte Canelas, we find space associations of individuals with plaques. An interpretation has been proposed for undrilled plaques, i.e. they would be used in secondary depositions over the bones of the dead, rendering the perforations unnecessary (Gonçalves, 1992). We also find "false eyes", which are not unfinished perforations, as in some cases they are associated with true perforations. Most engraved schist plaques have trapezoidal shapes with continuous outline. Some of them, however, have cut-out shapes adding to their anthropomorphic character. A few others have rare shapes, like the plaque from the Escoural funerary monument, and some are shaped as "ostrich egg", like the one from Cabacinhitos (Gonçalves et al, 2005).

Another issue is the plaque symmetry, present in most of them, but absent from the so-called "crazy plaques" (Gonçalves, 2003c).

The latest plaque shapes have complementary anthropomorphisation elements, including braids on the back, eyes with radiating indicators, and noses. There is also one or more (> 67) small figures that have been interpreted by some authors (Leisner e

Leisner, 1951) as "flat idol" figurations, and by others as representations of a figure from the Mediterranean mythologies, that of a Young God (Gonçalves, 1970). Some plaques also have vertical frames, with one or more representations of the Young God. The plaque from Mitra 2 (Gonçalves, 2004) illustrates a clumsy representation of one such image. But in monuments such as Dolmen 1 of Paço de Aragão there is an empty frame, also known in other contexts. We may hypothesize that this frame contained a painted figure of the Young God, of which no traces remain. Chemical tests are expected to ascertain the existence of the tiniest remaining traces. The composition of plaques with multiple representations is more intricate, ranging from the plaques of Courela dos Nacedios, Mértola (Gonçalves, 2006), with seven idols in a row, to those of Galvões, with 67 Young Gods engraved (Gonçalves, 2014).

The components of the new symbolism are also present in different materials. Small figurines of the Young God, in bone or schist, are well known in the Lisboa Peninsula and the Alentejo, respectively, proving once more that the material is less important than the representation.

The votive artefacts in limestone, significantly present in the peninsulas of Lisboa and Setúbal, and in the Algarve, (Gonçalves, 1995) seem to have existed in 2600-2400 BCE. They are more scattered than the two recognised concentrations of the peninsulas of Lisboa and Setúbal, and the Algarve. In the case of little mortars of Alcalar, however, it cannot be determined if they were exclusively used as votive artefacts, or if they were remnants of Death rituals. These artefacts also appear in the Alentejo, due to occasional contact with people from beyond today's border – or not. We know the cases of Monte Novo dos Albardeiros (Gonçalves, 1988/89; Gonçalves, 2005); Monte da Tumba (Silva e Soares, 1982), Pombal (Boaventura, 2010), Perdigões (Valera e Evangelista, 2014). Special reference should be made to the exceptional "artistic" quality of the pieces early identified in the peninsulas of Lisboa and Setúbal, where unique shapes exist – for example, the neck pendeloque of Casaínhos, apparently identical to those found in statue menhirs of Southern France, but also artichokes, pine cones, or even reproductions of artefacts such as adzes with handle. We must also mention the cone pine from Casaínhos, which has three engraved serpents converging at the top (Cardoso et al, 2001/2002). The admirable staging of votive artefacts in limestone at the Cave of Correio Mor (Gonçalves, 2008b) evidences the fact that the quite common baetylus are associated to rare, or almost unknown, artefacts, such as the "weight" or the adze blade. On this regard, we should stress the presence of several adzes, which until now have been exclusively found in the peninsulas of Lisboa and Setúbal. However, these are not artefacts, but rather images of an artefact, the adze blade, connected to a short handle by fastening ropes.

The fact that limestone is common in the peninsulas of Lisboa and Setúbal (and even in the Algarve) explains the non-importation nature of these ideological products. But the ideology that generated them is related to a higher magico-religious reality, linked to a global conception of the deities, of their representation on different materials, and their widespread presence in Southern Iberia, from Los Millares to the Atlantic coast. Limestone was always the chosen material for the peculiar idols of the Moncarapacho type, representations of the Sun Eyes Goddess, whose specific location in the Algarve is confirmed since the Lezíria of Castro Marim (Gonçalves, 1980).

A new situation emerged in the mid-3rd millennium, with the presence of small clay figurines, which appear to be clay versions of previous representations on animal phalanxes. Found at settlements of the Huelva region (Nocete, 2001), they recently appeared at the Chalcolithic farm of Cabeço do Pé da Erra (Coruche), with small morphological variations, namely the breasts, absent from the small "Portuguese" figurines. These and other images may be interpreted as theomorphic images, but it is not impossible that some of them, namely those from Perdigões (Valera, 2015), were children's toys. The fact that many images from this archaeological complex represent various animals may have nothing to do with any kind of animal polytheism, but rather with the diversity typical of children's toys.

Some figurines have specific representations of the female sex, namely vulvas – for example, the calcite baetylus from the fortified settlement of Liceia (Cardoso, 1997, p. 105), which depicts the labia majora. In other cases, the pubis is represented in the shape of triangles with dots, corresponding to plucked hairs, forming small cavities, sometimes filled with a white

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paste.

Representations of rabbits, probably associated with fecundity, were associated with infertility by one author) of this paper (VSG, Gonçalves, 2009). Rabbits are sculpted in bone, schist, or green stone, and have perforated paws, so that they can be hung from the neck. Once again, the idea has no relation to the material, even though it can suggest social differentiation in some circumstances.

Essentially, in some moments of the long-time manifestations of the Sacred in Western Iberia are holistic phenomena referring to magico-religious subsystems presents in many aspects of Life and Death. They relate to contexts that were definitively lost and cannot be understood by way of simple suggestions or proposals of interpretation. The same figure of one God may appear in quite different contexts.

5. Discussion

Before the 3rd millennium BCE, few manifestations of the Sacred are associated with funerary monuments.
In some settlements, artefacts were interpreted by the excavators as having a "symbolic nature", but they are poorly known or de-contextualized cases in most situations. Ceramic pieces of the Early Neolithic show decorative components associated with the human figure, or a theomorphic figure, or even the representation of a praying man. This case was found in Portugal only at Valada do Mato (Diniz, 2003). Accompanying burials of the Early Neolithic, a skeleton was recently associated with a large vase of the jar type at Palácio Ludovice, Lisboa (Simões et al, 2020).

Isolated pieces like the idoliforms from Comporta and Montemor-o-Novo are considered Neolithic, but none of them has a context confirming such assumption.
A typical element of the Early (and Middle) Neolithic seems to be the burial of isolated individuals, or more or less extended families, as possibly occurred at Dolmen 1 of Poço da Gateira (Leisner e Leisner, 1951; Gonçalves, 1999). In the latter, we should stress the associated presence of axes, adzes, and geometrics. Geometrics are surviving artefact components previous to ancient peasant societies. Axes and adzes are related to tree cutting and the cleaning of the adjacent branches, referring to the clearing of farming land. Interestingly we find them not only in territories of the Alentejo but also on the coast, in hypogea such as São Pedro do Estoril 2. This symbolic act is also documented in the small megalithic cysts of the Middle Alentejo and the Algarve, which can probably, but not surely, be dated from the Middle Neolithic. They are also found in short-corridor dolmens.

Several authors have interpreted the megalithic phenomenon as a block, forgetting that a large monument could have been used for a first time after it was built, and then continuously used throughout the 3rd millennium – e.g. the two dolmens of Olival da Pega, namely Dolmen 1 or Anta Grande. This raises issues. We need to determine if symbolics remains the same throughout the entire use of the monument, or if it changes depending on the time of use, as often occurs in many orthostatic monuments. Karstic caves are natural monuments on their own, and their occupation frequently overlaps, paving the way for doubtful interpretations, but whenever modern record was effective, they evidence concrete situations.

Engraved schist plaques appeared at a given phase of the orthostatic megalithic culture. They were representations of the Mother Goddess, protectress of Life and Death. Their dissemination, starting in Middle Alentejo and probably accompanying roving groups of shepherds, explains their presence in other types of funerary monuments, from "megalithic caves" to hypogea and tholoi.

The arrival of mining prospectors from Andalucía explains the presence of another magico-religious subsystem, consisting mainly of votive artefacts in limestone. It translates maritime influences related to the Mediterranean world, brought by land or (and) sea, from the Andalucía to the West. Its two main clusters, the Algarve and Estremadura, are joined by local spots in the Alentejo, some of which are probably related to the great sanctuary of Pijotilla.

Each of these groups has reflux zones that surpass the central areas. We can undoubtedly find votive artefacts in limestone bearing the eternal symbols of ancient peasant societies, such as serpents and phytomorphic representations, in addition to other purely utilitarian symbols (small vases, or mortars, to process the red dye that was spread over the dead). The schist plaques themselves began to incorporate more obvious anthropomorphic components such as starry, or non-

starry eyes, eyebrows, nose and mouth, hair, including braids, and vulvar representations.
To understand these two phenomena, we must realise that some of them included staged scenes, like the one in Los Millares and at the cave of Correio Mor (Cardoso, 1995; Gonçalves, 2008).
Special reference should also be made to the small female idols of Pêra, in the Algarve, or the "weight" of Correio Mor, belonging to a group that can be associate with the figures of pre-dynastic Egypt – the only ones in this ensemble that evoke the association with an Orientalist mirage.
In the first half of the 3rd millennium, a true explosion of symbolic representations occurred, assuming the form of "idols", in many different materials, with different magico-religious subsystems co-existing. The height of burial collectivisation was also reached in this period. The number of inhumations per monument increased and the secondary manipulations of human remains multiplied.

Were these two phenomena somehow related? How does death collectivisation relate to symbol proliferation? Which forms of social organization are related to these funerary practices?

This magico-religious subsystem apparently faded away in the 3rd quarter of the 3rd millennium when funerary practices also changed. The individual component then re-emerged, with the appearance of the local beaker culture(s). As princess Irulan once said, the beginning (and the end) of things is a very fragile moment...

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Fig. 1 *Above, a figurine of an Early Neolithic Goddess from the habitat site Valada do Mato, Évora. Excavations M. Diniz, photo V. S. Gonçalves. Note the Goddess necklace similar to the figures of the ancient Neolithic of the Near East. The decoration of the body shows impressions and incisions with the application of white paste, such as the ceramics of the Early Neolithic site of Casas Novas (Coruche). Below, a "Simpson type" hand over a fragment of a ceramic vase from Valada do Mato*
Excavations M. Diniz, photo V. S. Gonçalves.
These two graphical representations can be associated with the Beta-153914, 5040-4790 cal 2 sigmas dating, the only reliable one obtained for the site.
The hand is identical to those represented in ceramics from the Valencian region (Spain).

Fig. 2 *Two types of megalithic monuments.*
Above, Deserto 16, Montemor-o-Novo, a small sub-rectangular chamber tomb with a polished stone ax and trapezoidal armature, an example of the ancient Megalithism of the middle Alentejo. Foto A. C. S. Excavation V. S. Gonçalves and M. Andrade in a monument initially surveyed in the 1930s of the 20th century by M. Heleno.
Below, partial image of a large megalithic complex, Dolmen 2 of Olival da Pega (Reguengos de Monsaraz). The large initial monument goes from F (beginning of the Corridor) to A (Chamber). Probably built around 3200 BCE. The monument was architecturally transformed with the addition of tholos B and small tholos E. Later, another tholos, D, was built, with a different type of architecture from the previous ones. The beginning of the Corridor consists of two stelae orthostats, with cupmarks and placed later horizontally. The area designated by H corresponds to an atrium of creek pebbles placed next to the stelae. The deposition of a single individual, with a copper weapon, had an access (I) marked by a schist pavement. The schist used in this pavement is foreign to the region and was only used in tholoi and in a repair done in the Chamber. Excavations by V. S. Gonçalves.

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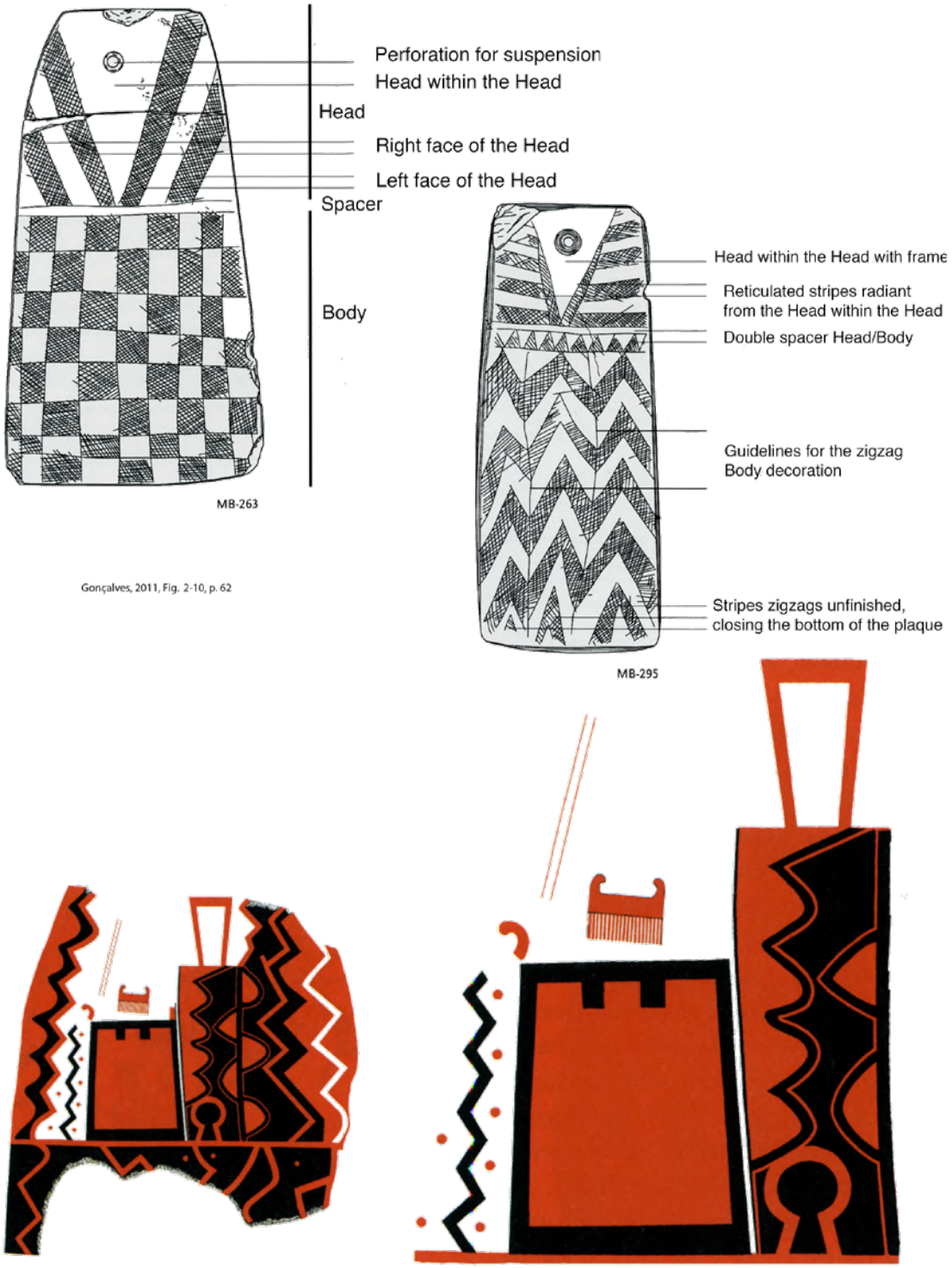

Fig. 3 *The basics of engraved plaques represented on schist or serpentinite. The anatomy of the plaques varies according to the monuments, but the most frequent motif of the body is the filled triangles (Gonçalves, 2008, p. 114; 201).*
Below, paintings of a headstone of the dolmen chamber in Antelas representing a hierogamy (Ferreira et al, 1957, Gonçalves, 2004). The tallest figure is identical to a cut-out shape plaque. The lower figure, superimposed by a large comb, has the equivalent of the breasts or future perforations of the plaques and is surrounded by a black frame.

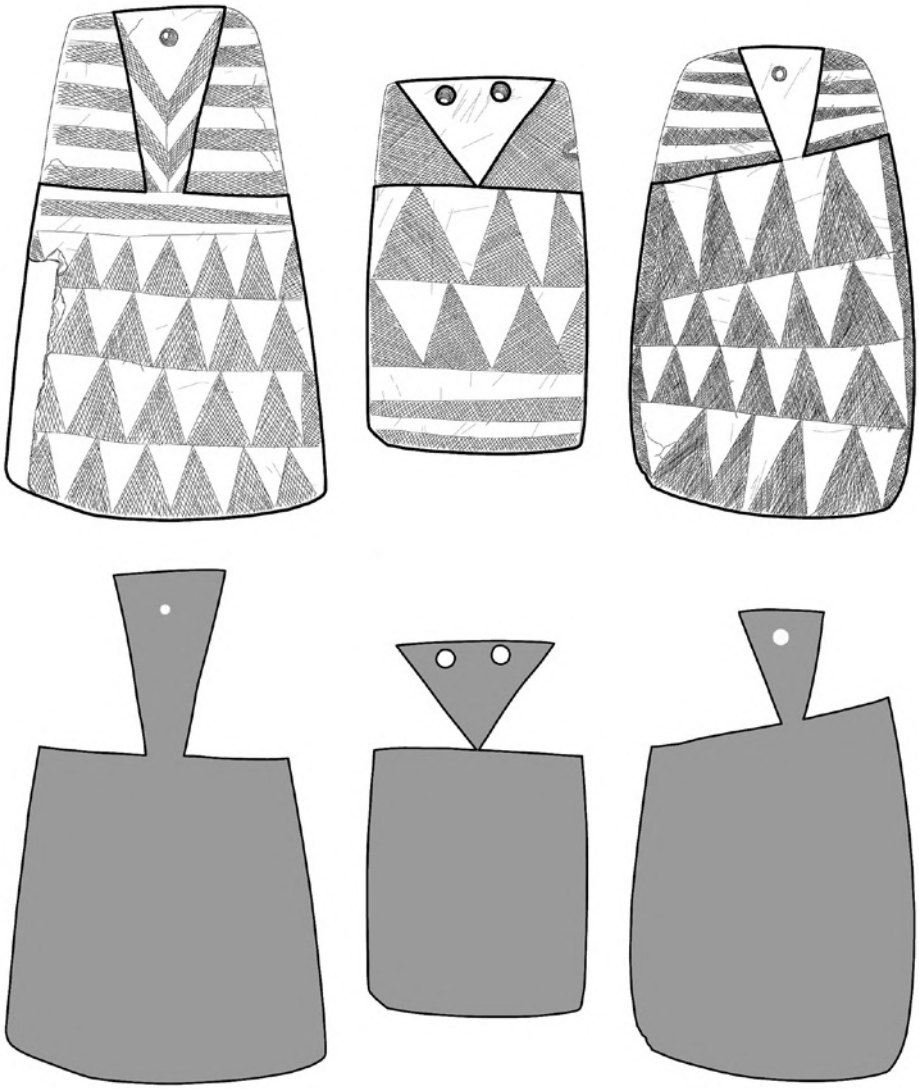

Fig. 4 *The head within the head on three unpublished plaques from Monte da Barca (Coruche, drawing by M. A. Andrade). Below, the body of the three plaques and the head inside the head are shown, in their typical triangle or trapezoid formulations.*

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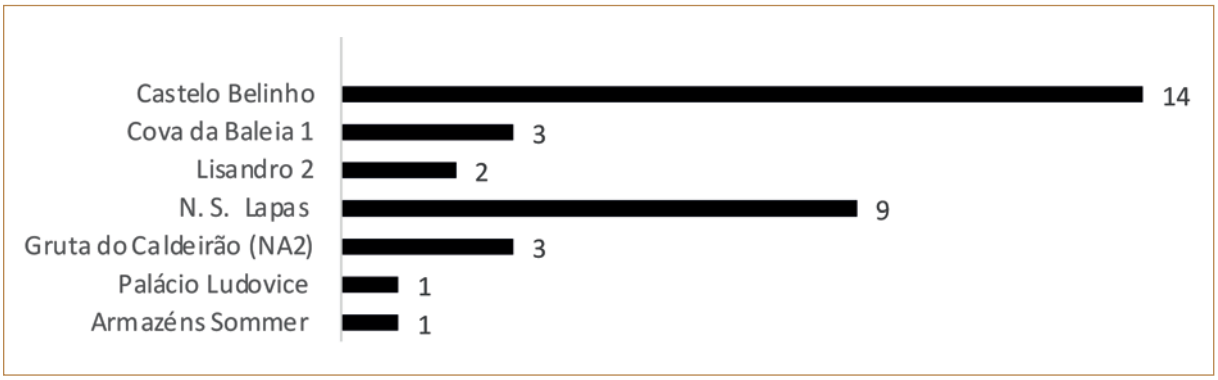
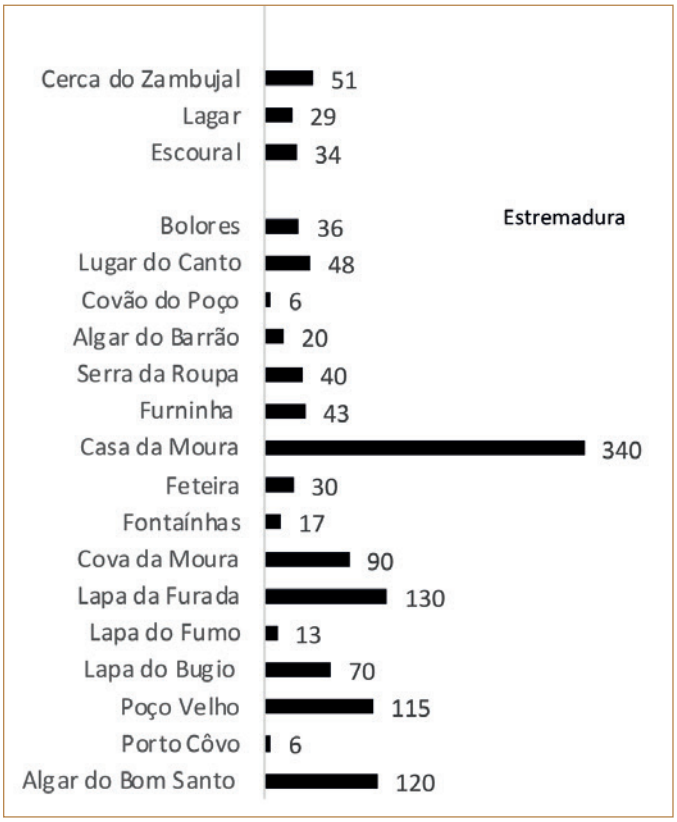
Fig. 5 *Plaques that are clearly associated with a given skeleton are very rare and therefore can be reliably dated by radiocarbon. In the image above, we have the skeleton of the shaman from Cova das Lapas, Alcobaça, dating Beta 464385, 3036-2913 BCE, 2 sigmas. The plaque was removed for washing, being very worn. By photomontage, his drawing was implanted in the original place. Excavations and photo by V. S. Gonçalves, drawing by André Pereira. Below, the large plaque cut out shape of Dolmen 3 at Herdade de Santa Margarida, Reguengos de Monsaraz. The plaque was dated by fragments of skull and jaw that can be seen at the top of the image, Beta 166422, 3011-2705 BCE 2 sigmas.*
Excavations by V. S. Gonçalves, photo by M. A. Andrade and drawing of the Vale do Côa Archaeological Park. Monograph: Gonçalves, 2003.



Graphic 1 *MNI – Neolithic burials in Center and South Portugal (6th – 5th millenium BCE). Data: Castelo Belinho: Gomes, 2012; Cova da Baleia: Sousa et al, 2018; Lisandro 2: Sousa et al, no prelo; N.S. Lapas: Tomé and Oosterbeck, 2011; Caldeirão: Zilhão, 1992; Ludovice: Simões et al, 2020; Sommer: Cardoso et al, 2018.*



Graphic 2 *MNI natural caves Center and South Portugal (4th – 3rd millenium). Update Boaventura, 2009: Bolores (Lillios, 2015).*

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Fig. 6 *The appearance of several plaques with explicit anthropomorphic representations goes from Huelva to Lisbon in a straight line distance of 312 km. This area of dispersion, goes from River Guadiana to the Tagus and north of it, reaching the coastline. Neverthless, a bizarre figure appears represented inside the plates, alone or in groups. In the case of Alentejo plaques, the figures range from well-engraved figures to very clumsy engraved ones.*
These plaques were identified early, but without much comments. J. Leite de Vasconcellos, the founder of portuguese National Museum of Archaeology, a visit to Elvas, in 1916, saw one, from Herdade do Freixo, which he drew quickly. In it, there are three bands with what the Leisner couple would later call "Plain idol" or "Almerian figurine". In the Leite de Vasconcellos sketch, there is a head with two perforations, a separator Head/ Body, the latter consisting of three bands. The top one has six figures, the middle one five, and the bottom one five. As it is a sketch, in the first band only the first idol on the right side of the plate is filled. In the second band, only the first idol on the right is completely filled and the second one only on the head. In the third band, only the fifth figure is fully filled. We do not know if it is an unfinished plaque or if it was a drawing whose filling in of the figures was partial.

At the top, *in the center of figure, on the engraved schist plaque of Courela dos Nacedios, there is a band with seven unfilled figures, the details of which are shown at the side. The first of the figurines, on the right side of the plaque, has an arm folded over the waist, which also appears in other situation. This bi-perforated plaque also has eyebrows and non-radiant eyes. It presents the figure of a central nose in the form of a pencil, with indicators of the exit or entry of air in the nostrils. This is also a hybrid plaque, because it presents three horizontal motifs that frame the plaque. The top two have triangles and vertical zigzagging strips and below the band with the figures, an end of plaque indicator with triangles filled with the apex downwards. This also proves the contemporaneity of anthropomorphic representations and the plaques with sunny radiant eyes, pencil-nosed.*
Below, on the left, *a small plaque with clumsy engravings from Anta 2 of Mitra, Évora. The figurine has the head and body represented and filled with a reticle, but the part corresponding to the lower limbs was left blank, so as not to be confused with the attached areas filled in. Eventually, it could be there three figures, even though this is less likely. The recorder did a bad job here ... (Gonçalves, 2013, plaque given for study by J. de Oliveira).*
In the center, plaque from Anta dos Galvões, Alandroal. The highest concentration of Young Gods known to date on a plaque: 67 stickers arranged in bands at the rate of 16 + 14 + 13 + 12 + 12.
Bottom right *Lapa do Bugio plaque. This plaque basically consists of a final band, with large reticulated triangles and a frame with short triangles pointed symmetrically to the right and left of the plate. In the empty space, a figure is engraved with a subtriangular or trapezoidal head, two arms, the one on the right with four fingers in the hands (again the Simpson's syndrome...), the one on the left with three fingers. The two triangles that define the body and the lower limbs were reticulated, it is not impossible that the same thing happened to the head, but there the state of erosion is considerably greater. Interesting is the fact that, in the construction of the decoration, this figure is within a frame that itself imitates the outline, a head and a body.*
Photo V. S. Gonçalves, retouched.

Fig. 7 *187 km separate these two figurines of a Young God. To the left of the reader, a bone figure currently in the Geological Museum of Lisbon, from Samarra, a strange tomb in Sintra. On the right, the figurine that was cut out of schist recovered from the Anta Grande or Anta 1 of Olival da Pega, Reguengos de Monsaraz, currently in the National Archeological Museum. Like almost all cut-out figurines, the shoulders form an acute angle with the head.*
Photo V. S. Gonçalves.

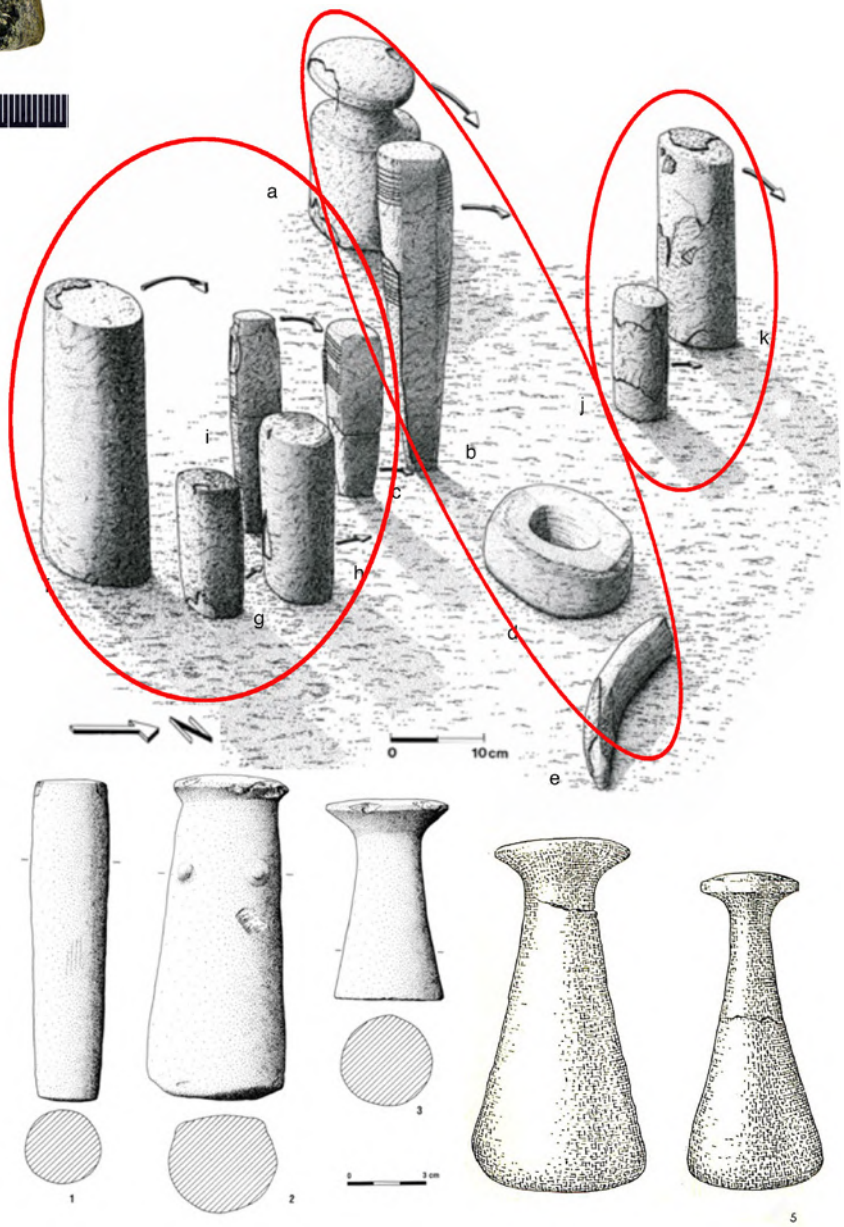

Fig. 8
Staging with votive limestone artefacts from the "shrine" of the Gruta do Correio Mor, Loures. Original drawing in Cardoso, 1995. Grouping of figures first presented in Gonçalves, 2008, p. 115-119.
In this proposal, now revised, the alignment facing the East of four key artefacts is highlighted: the weight, the decorated conical cone, the wooden head of drilling the earth and the adze blade, flanked to the North by a set of two baetyles and to the south by a set of five. While the central alignment seems to group the symbolic figurations of high category, the two or three groupings can refer to clustered groups, possibly belonging to two or three family nuclei.
Below, *two groups of baetyles with heads, to the left those from Pêra, Algarve (Cardoso, 2002) and, to the right of the observer, two from Los Millares (Leisner and Leisner, 1943). These long-distance clusters and the obvious similarities reinforce the idea of the existence of one magical-religious subsystem corresponding to an extension of copper archeometallurgists from Los Millares to the Atlantic façade.*

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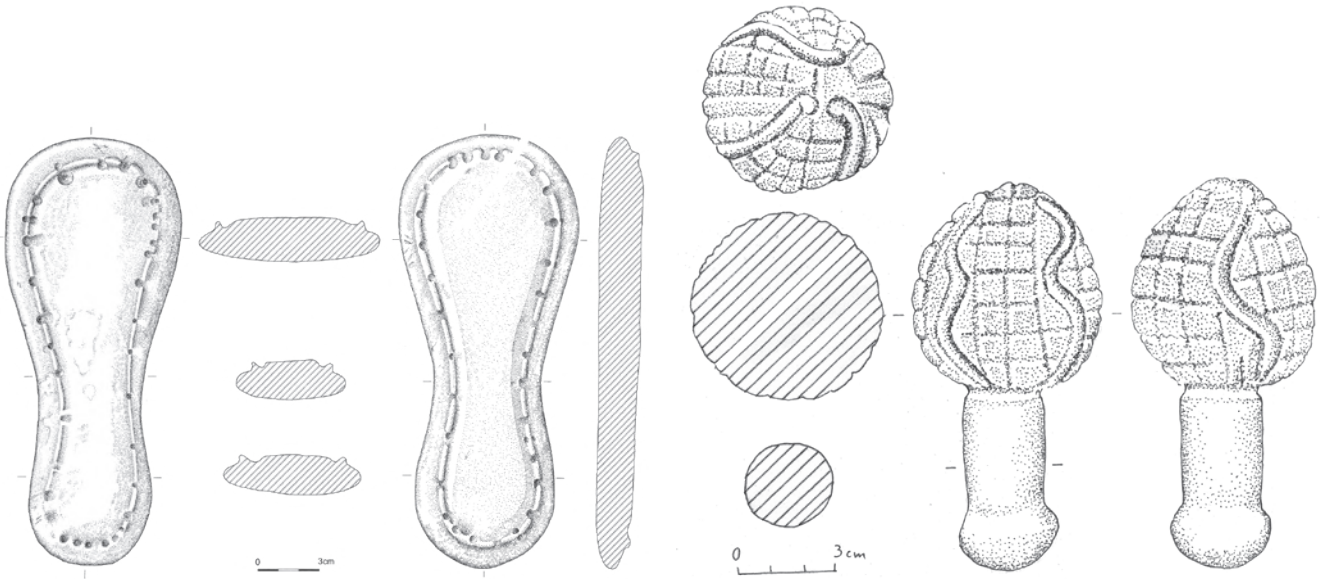


Fig. 9 *Of the rare symbolic representations in late bell-beaker ceramics, the male and female deer are the only ones present. The drawings refer to Casal do Pardo, a necropolis of artificial caves on the Setúbal Peninsula. The photograph concerns a Palmela bowl from the tholos of Tituaria, Mafra.* *Drawings by G. Casella and photos by V. S. Gonçalves.*

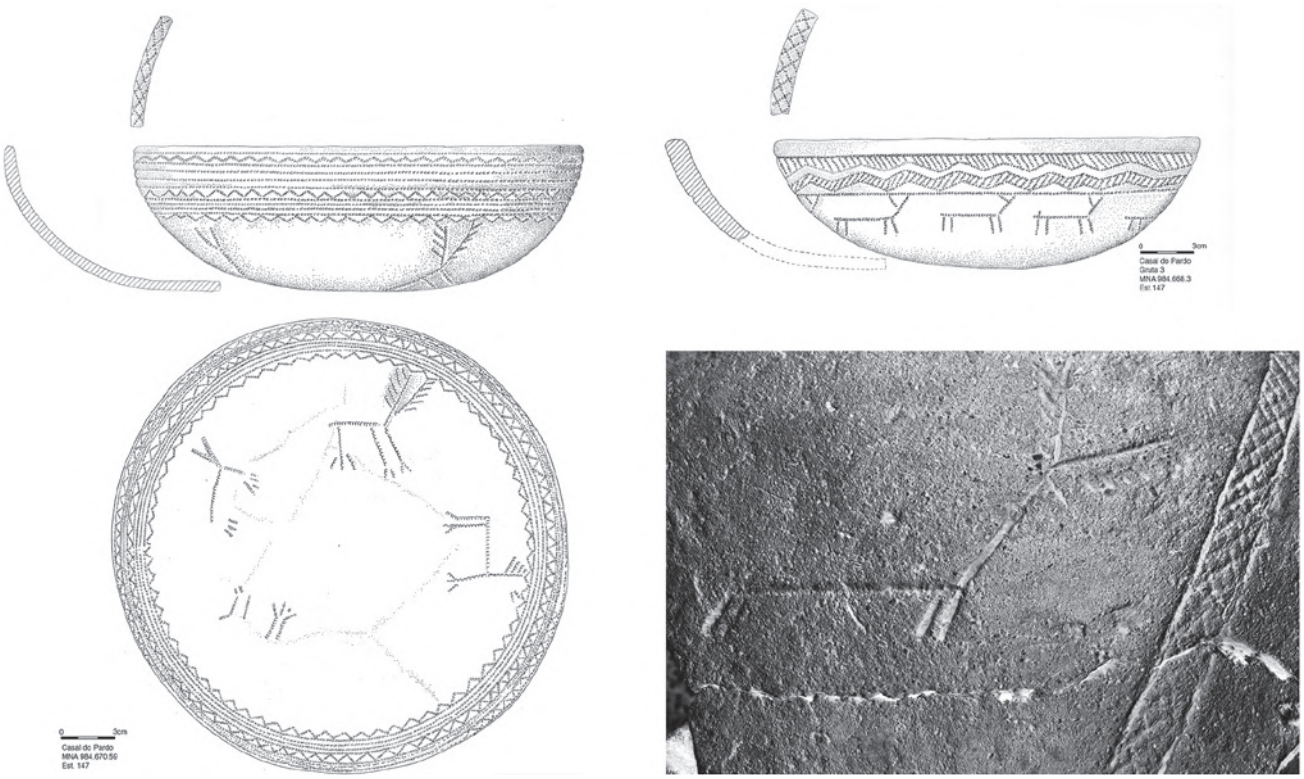
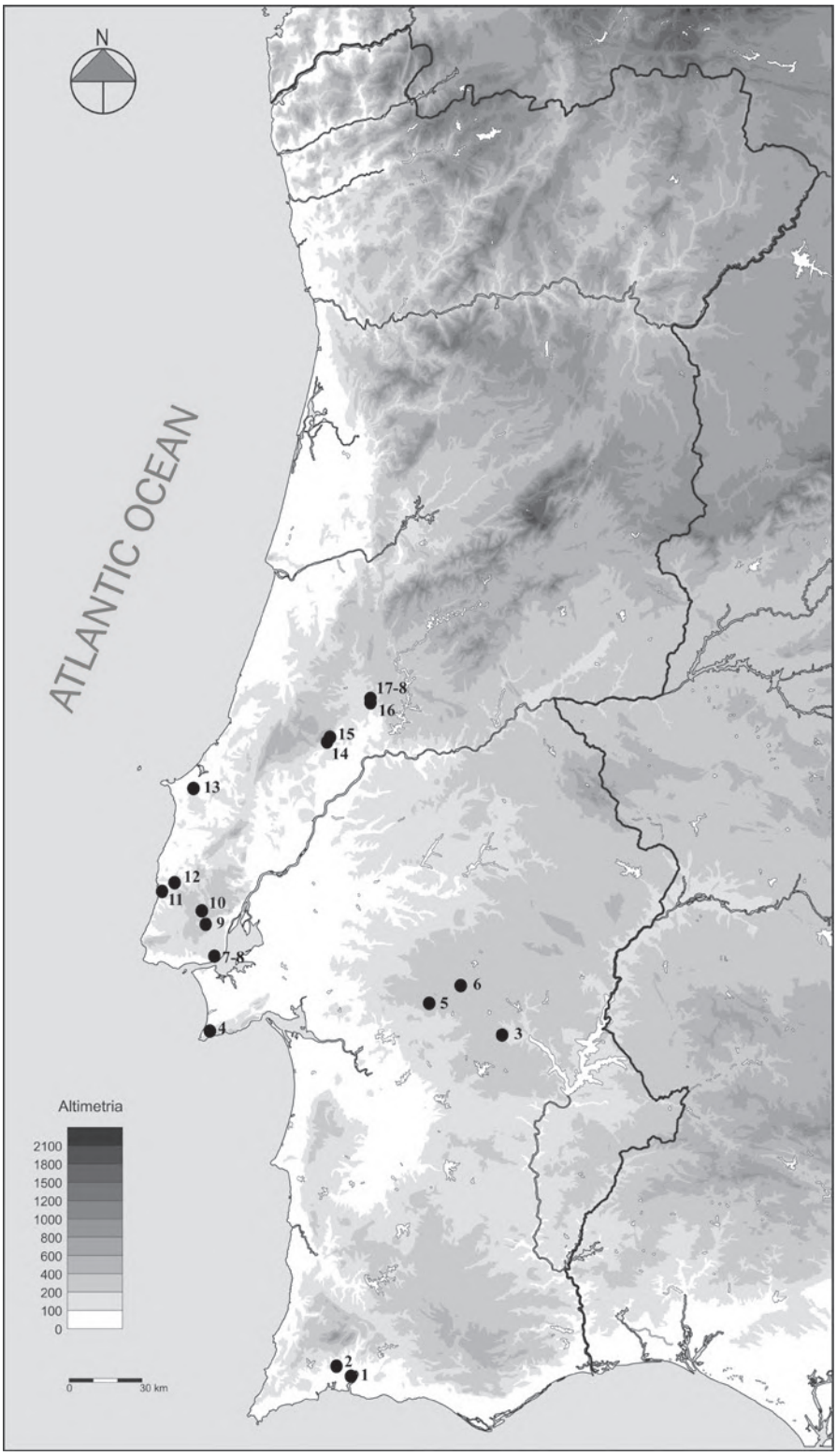


Fig. 10 *Two admirable limestone votive artefacts from the Lisbon Peninsula. Above, the limestone sandals of the artificial cave Alapraia 2 (Cascais) and the pine cone of the dolmen of Casainhos.* *Both designed by G. Casella.*
Limestone pine cones and artichokes still represent today symbols of eternity in death. The three snakes have to do with the magical-symbolic charge of the number 3 (if there were four represented, it would be easier to guarantee symmetry), the snakes being another symbol, at least since the Sumerians, of eternal youth.



Map. 1 *Main sites from the 6th and 5th millennium BCE referred in this paper:*

1 - Ibn-Ahmmar (Lagoa)
2 - Castelo Belinho (Portimão)
3 - Anta da Herdade das Atafonas (Évora)
4 - Lapa do Sono (Sesimbra)
5 - Gruta do Escoural (Montemor-o-Novo)
6 - Valada do Mato (Évora)
7 - Palácio Ludovice (Lisboa)
8 - Armazéns Sommer (Lisboa)
9 - Gruta do Correio-Mor (Loures)
10 - Gruta das Salemas (Loures)
11 - Lizandro 1 (Mafra)
12 - Cova da Baleia 1 (Mafra)
13 - Casa da Moura (Óbidos)
14 - Gruta do Almonda (Torres Novas)
15 - Algar do Picoto (Torres Novas)
16 - Gruta do Caldeirão (Tomar)
17 - Gruta do Cadaval (Tomar)
18 - Gruta de Nossa Senhora das Lapas (Tomar).

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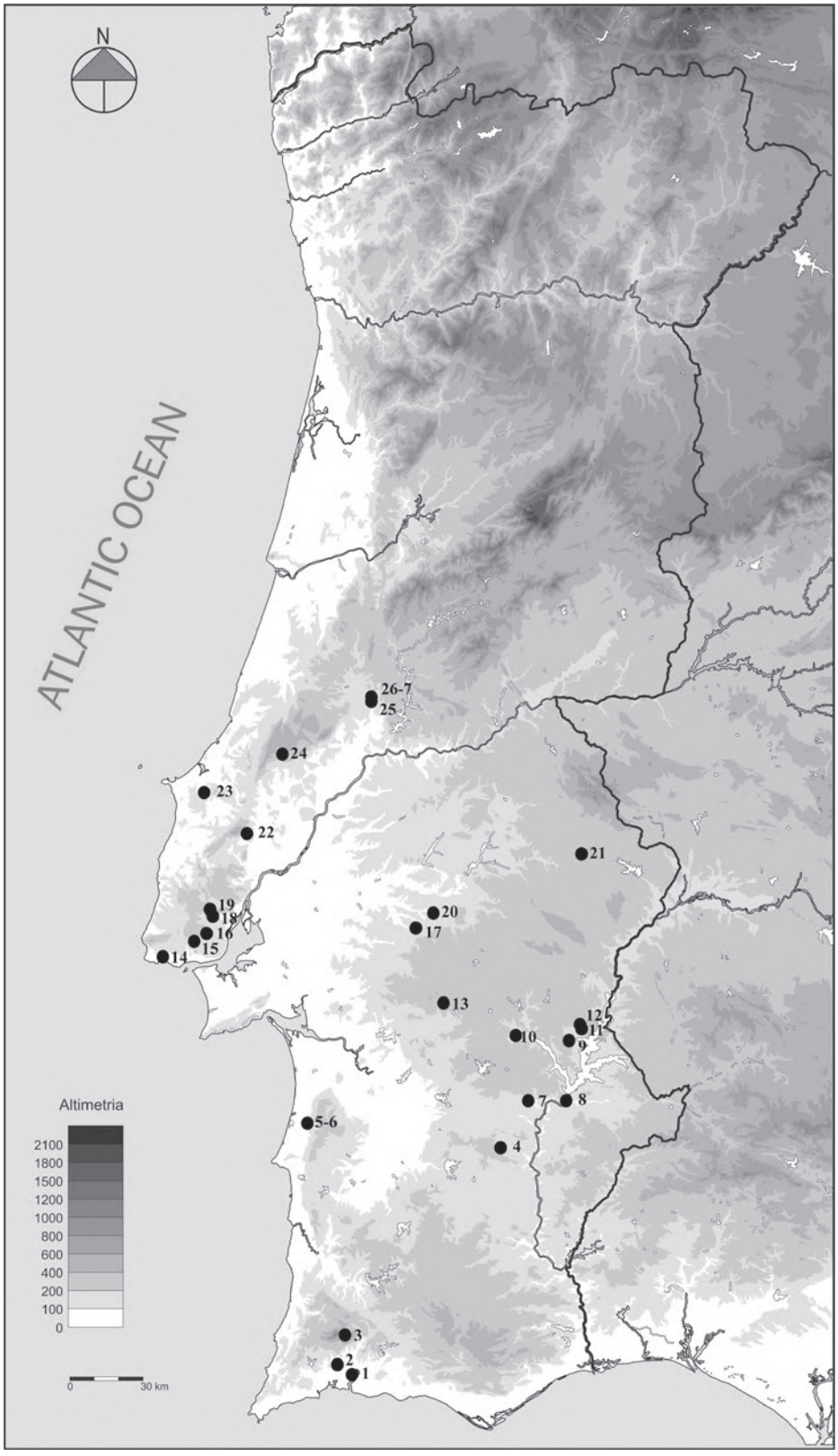
Map. 2
Main sites from the first three quarters of the 4th millennium BCE referred in this paper:

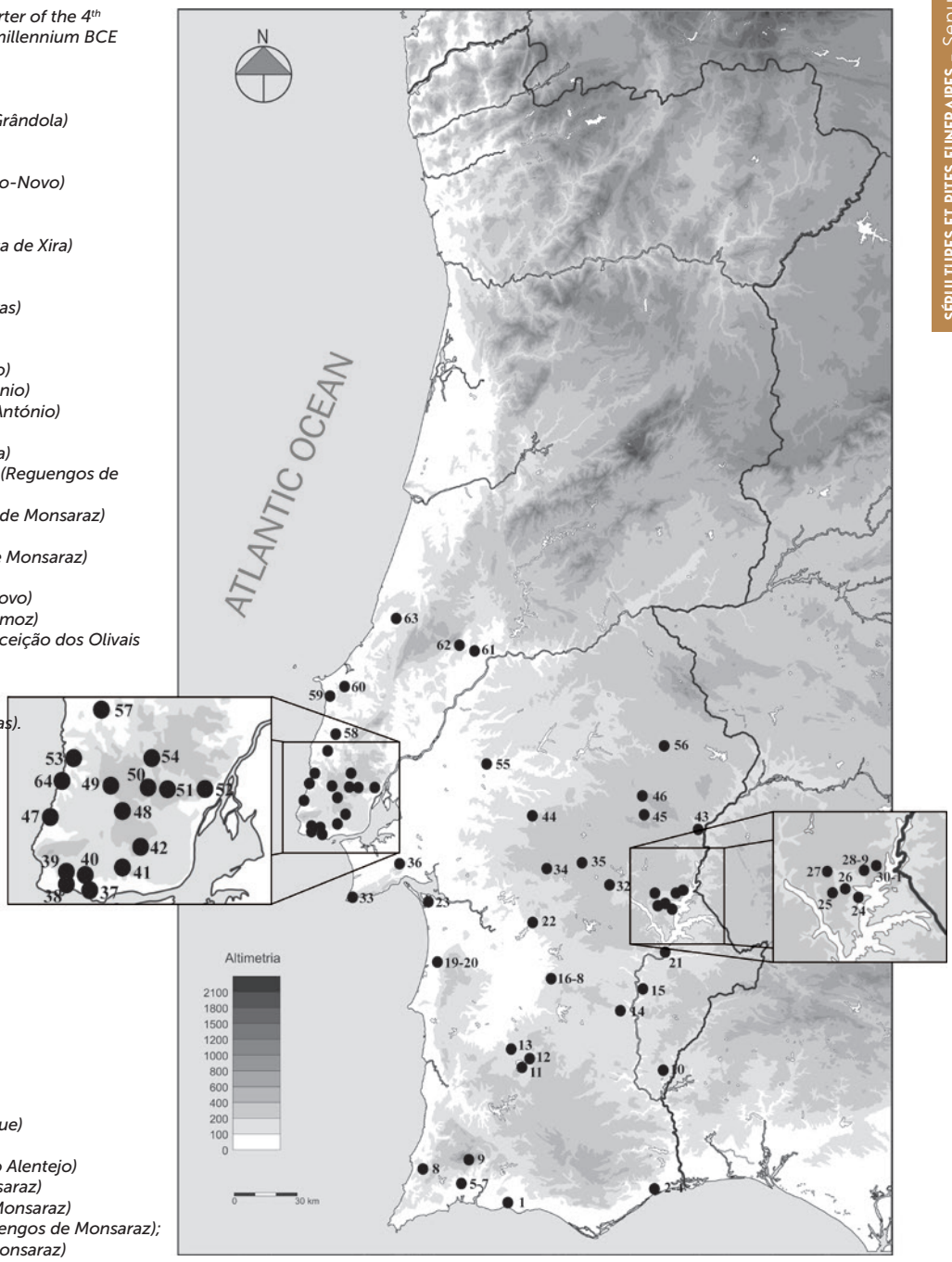
Natural Caves
1 – Ibn-Ahmmar (Lagoa)
13 – Gruta do Escoural (Montemor-o-Novo)
14 – Porto Covo (Cascais)
18 – Gruta de Salemas (Loures)
22 – Algar do Bom Santo (Alenquer);
23 – Casa da Moura (Óbidos)
24 – Lugar do Canto (Santarém)
25 – Gruta do Caldeirão (Tomar)
26 – Gruta do Cadaval (Tomar)
27 – Gruta de Nossa Senhora das Lapas (Tomar).

Orthostatic monuments
3 -Palmeira 7 (Monchique)
5 – Palhota (Santiago do Cacém)
6 – Pedra Branca (Grândola)
9 – Gorginos 2
(Reguengos de Monsaraz)
11 – Santa Margarida 2
(Reguengos de Monsaraz)
12 – Poço da Gateira 1-2 (
Reguengos de Monsaraz)
15 – Anta do Carrascal (Sintra)
16 – Pedras Grandes (Odivelas)
17 – Anta do Cabeço da Areia (Montemor-o-Novo)
19 – Anta de Carcavelos (Loures)
20 – Cabeceira 4 (Mora)
21 – Rabuje 5 (Monforte).

Hypogea / rock cut caves
4 – Quinta da Abóboda (Beja)
7 – Monte Malheiros 2 (Vidigueira)
8 – Sobreira de Cima (Vidigueira).

Other
2 – Castelo Belinho (Portimão)
10 – Anta da Herdade das Atafonas (Évora).





Map. 3 *Main sites from the last quarter of the 4th millennium until the end of the 3rd millennium BCE referred in this paper*

Natural Caves
19 - Gruta da Cerca do Zambujal (Grândola)
20 - Gruta de Lagar (Grândola)
33 - Lapa do Bugio (Sesimbra)
34 - Gruta do Escoural (Montemor-o-Novo)
38 - Poço Velho (Cascais)
39 - Porto Covo (Cascais)
52 - Verdelha dos Ruivos (Vila Franca de Xira)
53 - Lizandro 1 (Mafra)
60 - Casa da Moura (Óbidos)
62 - Galeria da Cisterna (Torres Novas)
63 - Cova das Lapas (Alcobaça).

Orthostatic monuments
2 – Nora (Vila Real de Santo António)
3 - Marcela (Vila Real de Santo António)
4 - Santa Rita 2 (Vila Real de Santo António)
9 - Palmeira 7 (Monchique)
10 - Courela dos Nascedios (Mértola)
30 - Anta Grande do Olival da Pega (Reguengos de Monsaraz)
28 - Santa Margarida 3 (Reguengos de Monsaraz)
32 - Cabacinhitos (Évora)
31 - Olival da Pega 2 (Reguengos de Monsaraz)
43 - Anta 1 dos Galvões (Alandroal)
44 - Anta 1 do Paço (Montemor-o-Novo)
45 - Anta das Casas do Canal 1 (Estremoz)
46 - Anta da Nossa Senhora da Conceição dos Olivais (Estremoz)
50 - Anta de Carcavelos (Loures)
51 - Casaínhos (Loures)
57 - Cabeço da Arruda (Torres Vedras).

Hypogea / rock cut caves
7 - Monte Canelas 1 (Portimão)
8 - Aljezur 2 (Aljezur)
18 - Monte do Carrascal 2 (Ferreira do Alentejo)
21 - Sobreira de Cima (Vidigueira)
36 - Casal do Pardo (Palmela)
37 - São Pedro do Estoril (Cascais)
40 - Alapraia (Cascais)
42 - Carenque (Amadora)
47 - Praia das Maças (Sintra)
61 - Convento do Carmo (Torres Novas).

Tholoi
5 - Alcalar 2 (Portimão);
11 - A-dos-Tassos 1 (Ourique)
6 - Alcalar 7 (Portimão)
12 - Cerro do Gatão 1 (Ourique)
13 - Herdade de Malha Ferro (Ourique)
15 - Centirã 2 (Serpa)
16 - Monte do Cardim 6 (Ferreira do Alentejo)
25 - Farisoa 1b (Reguengos de Monsaraz)
26 - Cebolinho 2b (Reguengos de Monsaraz)
27 - Perdigões (Tholos 1,2, 4) (Reguengos de Monsaraz);
29 - Comenda 2b (Reguengos de Monsaraz)
31 - Olival da Pega 2b (Reguengos de Monsaraz)
54 -Tituaria (Mafra)
59 - Paimogo (Lourinhã).

Fortified settlements
22 – Monte da Tumba (Torrão); 24 – Monte Novo dos Albardeiros (Reguengos de Monsaraz); 41 – Liceia (Oeiras); 48 – Olelas (Sintra); 49 – Penedo do Lexim (Mafra); 58 – Zambujal (Torres Vedras).

Ditched enclosures
17 – Porto Torrão (Ferreira do Alentejo); 27 – Archaeological Complex of Perdigões (Reguengos de Monsaraz); 55 – Cabeço do Pé da Erra (Coruche); 56 – Pombal 1 (Monforte); 6 – Alcalar.
Other: 1 – Pêra (Silves); 14 – Quinta do Castelo 1 (Beja); 23 – Possanco (Comporta, Alcácer do Sal); 35 – São Caetano (Évora); 64 – Samarra (Sintra).

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