

Megaliths and Geology

Megálitos e Geologia

MEGA-TALKS 2

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Edited by

Rui Boaventura, Rui Mataloto
and André Pereira

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A look at Proença-a-Nova's Megalithism (Beira Baixa Intermunicipal Community, UNESCO Global Geopark Naturtejo, Portugal)

João Caninas

Archaeologist. AEAT – Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo; CAPN – Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova; Mesopotamos Archaeological Project; CHAIA – University of Évora.
emerita.portugal@gmail.com

Francisco Henriques

Archaeologist. AEAT – Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo; CAPN – Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova; Mesopotamos Archaeological Project.
fjrhenriq@gmail.com

Mário Monteiro

Archaeologist. AEAT – Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo; CAPN – Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova; Mesopotamos Archaeological Project.
mario.monteiro@emerita.pt

Paulo Félix

Archaeologist. AEAT – Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo; CAPN – Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova; Mesopotamos Archaeological Project.
pfelix_pt@yahoo.com.br

Carlos Neto de Carvalho

Geologist. UNESCO Global Geopark Naturtejo; Instituto Dom Luiz – University of Lisbon.
carlos.praedichnia@gmail.com

André Pereira

Archaeologist. AEAT – Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo; CAPN – Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova; Mesopotamos Archaeological Project; UNIARQ - Centro de Arqueologia da Universidade de Lisboa.
andreperreira@letras.ulisboa.pt

Fernando Robles Henriques

Archaeologist. Municipality of Almada; AEAT – Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo; CAPN – Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova; Mesopotamos Archaeological Project.
fhenriques@cma-m-almada.pt

Cátia Mendes

Archaeologist. AEAT – Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo; CAPN – Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova; Mesopotamos Archaeological Project.
catiamcmendes@gmail.com

Emanuel Carvalho

Archaeologist. AEAT – Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo; CAPN – Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova; Mesopotamos Archaeological Project.
emanuelscarvalho@gmail.com

Abstract: Knowledge about funerary Megalithism at Proença-a-Nova's municipality area was present through 95 records in the inventory organized by Georg and Vera Leisner, but these researchers hadn't the opportunity to further develop their study. The AEAT – Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo started in the 1970's a project of systematic field recognition, which, until this date, allowed the identification of almost thirty monuments, much less than the number registered by the German researchers. These findings are part of a broader group of monuments, if one takes into consideration the territory forming part of the Beira Baixa Intermunicipal Community (Castelo Branco, Oleiros, Penamacor, Proença-a-Nova, Idanha-a-Nova, and Vila Velha de Ródão). Since 2012, archaeological excavations are being conducted at three megalithic tombs of Proença-a-Nova (Cão do Ribeiro, Cimo do Vale de Alvito, and Cabeço da Anta), in the frame of the CAPN – Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova, a study to be carried on in the following years under the same institutional framework, but also as part of a new research program, the Mesopotamos Archaeological Project. CAPN is promoted together by the AEAT and the Proença-a-Nova's Town Council and have as its partners the universities of Alcalá de Henares, Évora, Coimbra, and Oporto, through several of their research centers, private companies, and the UNESCO Naturtejo Geopark. The work done so far at Proença-a-Nova monuments yielded very interesting results concerning the knowledge of the processes and materials used in the construction of these megalithic tombs, still requiring further evaluation but already showing both variability and standardization of their architectural features.

Keywords: Funerary megalithism; Proença-a-Nova Archaeological Field Camp (CAPN); County of Proença-a-Nova

Um olhar sobre o megalitismo de Proença-a-Nova (Comunidade Intermunicipal da Beira Baixa, Geoparque Naturtejo, Portugal)

Resumo: O conhecimento acerca do megalitismo funerário do concelho de Proença-a-Nova ganhou destaque no inventário elaborado por Georg e Vera Leisner com 95 monumentos, mas estes investigadores não tiveram oportunidade de aprofundar o seu estudo. A partir dos anos 70 do séc. XX, a Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo iniciou pesquisa de campo sistemática que conduziu à identificação, até ao momento, de quase três dezenas de monumentos, um número muito inferior ao estabelecido pelos investigadores alemães. Estes achados enquadram-se num conjunto mais alargado de monumentos, considerando a região abrangida pela actual Comunidade Intermunicipal da Beira Baixa (Castelo Branco, Oleiros, Penamacor, Proença-a-Nova, Idanha-a-Nova e Vila Velha de Ródão). De 2012 até ao momento foram iniciados trabalhos de escavação arqueológica em três sepulturas megalíticas de Proença-a-Nova (Cão do Ribeiro, Cimo do Vale de Alvito e Cabeço da Anta) no âmbito do Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova (CAPN), modalidade que terá continuidade nos próximos anos, enquadrada no projecto de investigação Mesopotamos - Povoamento entre o 5º e o 1º milénio AC entre os rios Tejo e Zêzere na actual Beira Baixa. O CAPN que é promovido pela Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo e o Município de Proença-a-Nova tem sido organizado em parceria com as universidades de Alcalá de Henares, Algarve, Évora, Coimbra, Porto) e respectivos centros de investigação, com empresas do sector privado e o Geopark Naturtejo. Os trabalhos executados nos monumentos de Proença-a-Nova têm fornecido resultados, ainda em avaliação, mas com muito interesse para o conhecimento dos processos e materiais utilizados na construção daqueles monumentos funerários, evidenciando variabilidade e padronização das respectivas arquitecturas.

Palavras-chave: Megalitimso funerário; Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova (CAPN); Município de Proença-a-Nova

1. Introduction

Proença-a-Nova is a municipality located in the interior center of Portugal (Fig. 1), with a territorial area of 395 square kilometers, forming part of the Beira Baixa Intermunicipal Community along with the municipalities of Castelo Branco, Idanha-a-Nova, Oleiros, Penamacor, and Vila Velha de Ródão. It is enclosed by a vast natural amphitheater, anchored in the westernmost section of the Iberian Central System, open to the East and the South. This region is structured by several parallel faults, defining a tectonic stairway expressed by three steps. From the Northwest to the Southeast, the degree of altimetric variation explains the environmental, climatic, and biotic variability that we can observe, for instance, at Oleiros, the highest territory, included in the Central Horst System, in the western part of the region, and at Idanha-a-Nova, which belongs to the most eastern and less elevated block. Political and geographical factors have contributed to the isolation of this region, transitional between the North and the South of Portugal, and to the preservation of archaic forms of rural life (Mattoso, Daveau & Belo, 2010). Curiously, its megalithic heritage, not showing the monumentality intrinsic to the constructions made of granite, scarce in this territory, is probably one of the less known and published and less known among the different regions of Portugal.

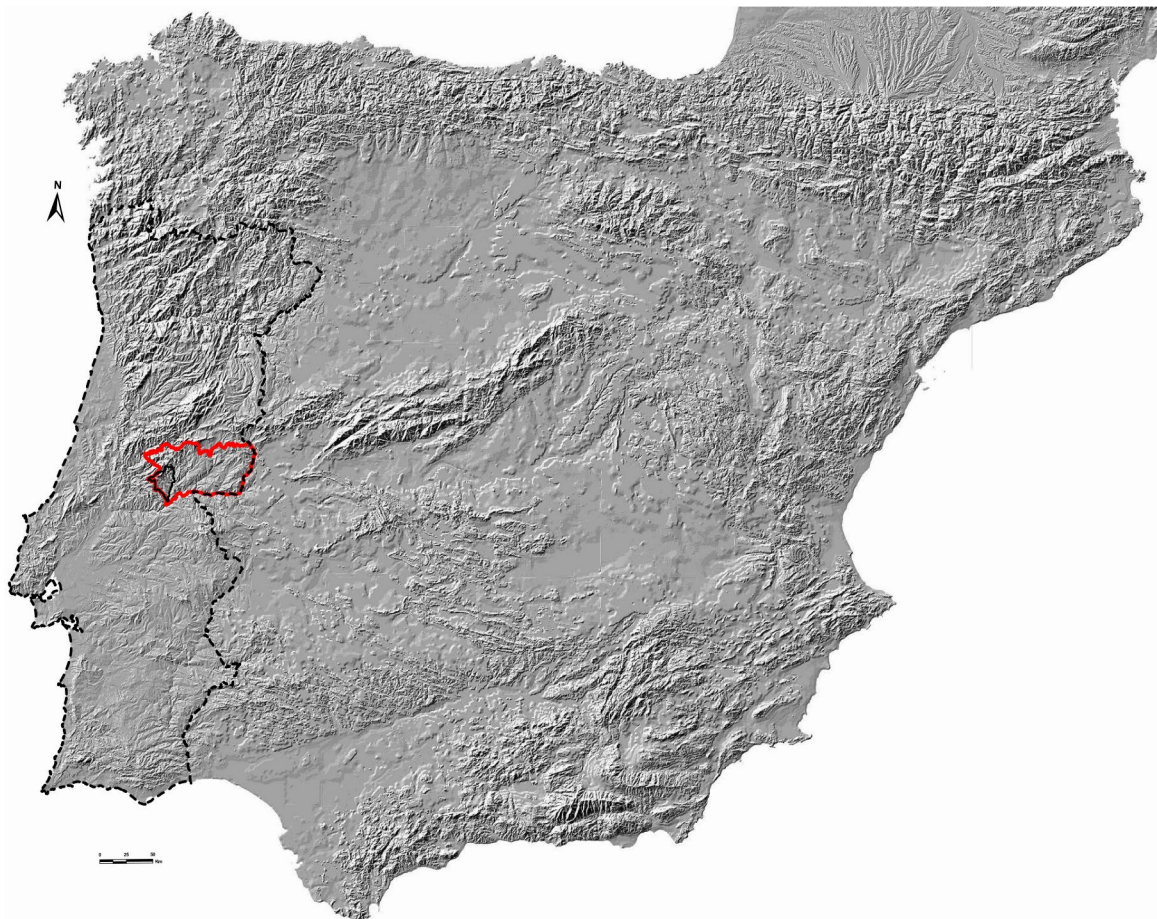


Figure 1 – The municipality of Proença-a-Nova (black continuous line) in the study area (red line) and its location relatively to the Portuguese territory (black dashed line). Map credits: <http://ricardocosta.com>.

Proença-a-Nova has adapted its administrative boundaries mostly to striking geographic accidents, with no noticeable continuity gaps. It is confined in almost the totality of its perimeter by incised river valleys that drain into the Tagus, the most important river in western Iberia, and, in the North

and Northwest, by a section of the Iberian Central mountain range. This is a territory dominated by a plateau gently sloped to the Southeast, severely cut by the river system. The geologic setting is formed mainly by metasedimentary rocks of the Beiras Group, dating from the Neoproterozoic (610 to 542 Ma), not being preserved the Cenozoic intramountain siliciclastic deposits (50 to 1 Ma), still abundant in the eastern area of the region under investigation.

2. The history of the investigation

Attention toward funerary megalithism in the territory of Proença-a-Nova gained momentum with the inventory of supposedly 95 dolmens (*anta*, in vernacular Portuguese) by Geog Leisner (Fig. 2A) in the first half of the twentieth century, an inventory posthumously published by Vera Leisner under the editorial organization of Philine Kalb (Leisner, 1998). Unfortunately, these researchers did not get further in the investigation of this megalithic heritage, contrasting to what they did with notable success in other regions of Portugal, particularly in the Beira Alta and Alentejo.

Georg Leisner's work was recently revised under the scope of the organization of the municipal archaeological heritage inventory, which, contrary to what was displayed at *Die Megalithgräber*, could only confirm 28 occurrences (Fig. 2B), not all coincident with those proposed previously. Moreover, the fieldwork could not corroborate the possibility of existence of megalithic tombs in the majority of the 95 *loci* mapped by the German archaeologists. We think Georg Leisner, following information given by local inhabitants, might have inventoried the location of a lot of hypothetical tombs, which he could not verify, but reproduced in the 1956 edition of *Die Megalithgräber* (Leisner & Leisner, 1956, taf. 70).

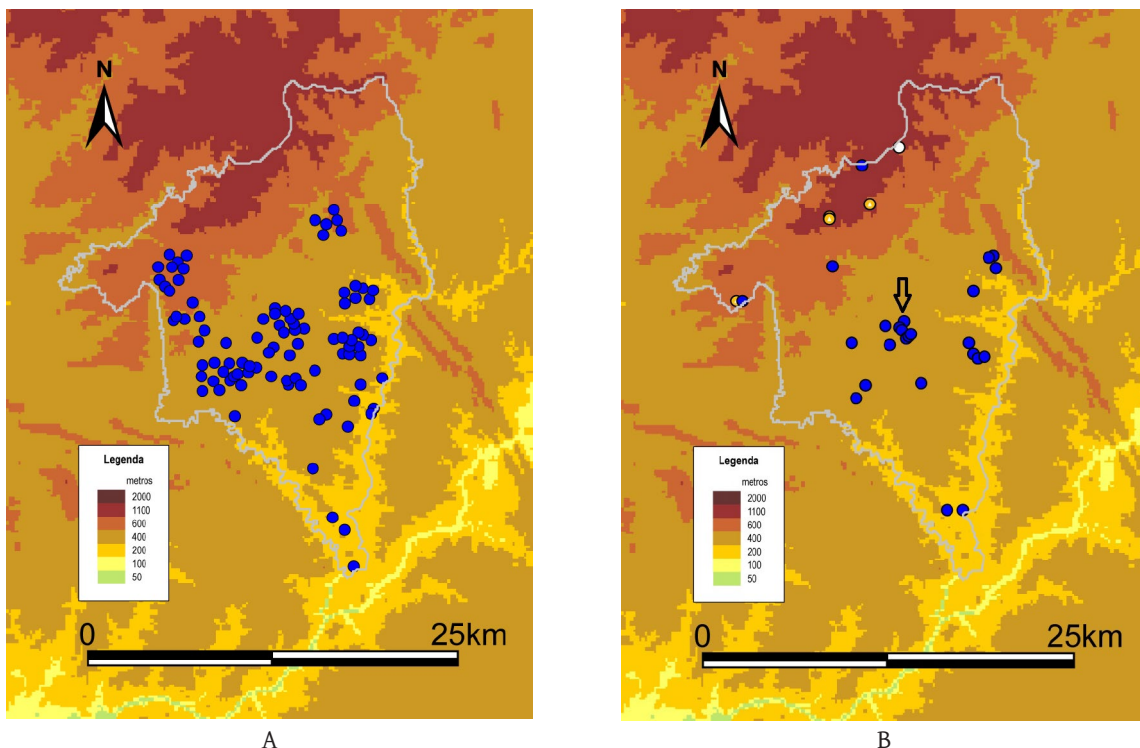


Figure 2 – Map of megalithic tombs in the municipality of Proença-a-Nova: (A) following Leisner (1998); (B) current distribution, following the work of the AEAT. The arrow points to the location of Moitas group (Cão do Ribeiro, Cimo do Vale de Alvito and Cabeço da Anta).

Georg Leisner, maybe accompanied by his wife, visited some of the monuments of Proença-a-Nova and left the plans of five orthostatic structures — Chã das Vargens, Covão do Ribeiro, Vale de Alvito, Moita da Galinha, and Portela da Lameira (Leisner, 1998, taf. 77-78) — and a photograph of one of them — Covão do Ribeiro (Leisner & Leisner, 1956, taf. 57). The plans of Covão (also Cão) do Ribeiro, Vale de Alvito, and Moita da Galinha correspond very accurately to the conditions of preservation we found those monuments when our research in the region started in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Before Georg and Vera Leisner, Francisco Tavares de Proença Jr., the forerunner of archaeological investigation in the region of Castelo Branco (Henriques & Caninas, 2004), pointed out the existence of six megalithic tombs in the vicinity of Proença-a-Nova (Proença Júnior, 1910), but did not leave any substantive data about them. Between 1904 and 1907, he probably excavated at least 15 tombs in the municipalities of Vila Velha de Ródão, Castelo Branco, and Idanha-a-Nova, but only one was published, the Anta da Urgueira (Proença Júnior, 1909). His escape from Portugal after the establishment of the republican regime and succeeding premature death may have contributed to the loss of the fieldwork notebooks with the information concerning the excavations done at the other sites. Artifacts recovered during the excavations are currently cured by the regional museum that carries his name (Ferreira, 2004).

Throughout the third quarter of the twentieth century, Octávio da Veiga Ferreira, who was by then working at the Roman city of Egítania (municipality of Idanha-a-Nova), seized the opportunity to excavate nearly a dozen monuments (Cardoso, 2008), a work that was only published in the form of a few small reports. The longer report refers to a tomb at Granja de São Pedro (Almeida & Ferreira, 1971).

From the last quarter of the twentieth century until the present day, the study of the megalithic phenomenon widened and became consolidated in the framework of the AEAT¹ activities with the development of a continuous programme of archaeological inventory in the five municipalities of the Beira Baixa Intermunicipal Community, complemented, so far, with the excavation of about 20 monuments (Henriques, Caninas & Chambino, 1993; 2008; Cardoso, Caninas & Henriques, 2003; Caninas, Henriques & Cardoso, 2011; Caninas *et al.*, 2014). This work led to a first outline of a model of chronological evolution of Megalithism in the region, placed between the fifth and the third millennium BC (Cardoso, Caninas & Henriques, 2003), in despite of the absence of absolute dates and being solely based in the variability of architectural solutions and findings, which resulted from the excavation of ten monuments located in the southern sector of Idanha-a-Nova, in the International Tagus area. For that reason, this chronological outline, the only one made until the date for the region, should not be generalized nor used outside the subregional set for which it was built (Rosmaninhal, Idanha-a-Nova).

The results from the research promoted by the AEAT are presented in a palimpsest of almost 300 occurrences with an asymmetrical distribution throughout the study area (Fig. 3). We think this distribution is conditioned by two main factors related to the paths followed by the investigation and the historical use of the soil: concentration of points at the meridional zone, by the Tagus river, between Vila Velha de Ródão and Oleiros, due to a greater incidence of the archaeological work; a higher degree of destruction of monuments at the lower lands corresponding to the central and septentrional zones of Idanha-a-Nova and Castelo Branco, with larger agricultural potential and effective land-use, where the voids are also in accordance with a smaller frequency of the research effort.

However, we can recognize a sort of ubiquity in the distribution of these megalithic tombs, which indicates an extensive occupation of the territory, beginning with the Neolithic, from the ridges of the Central System, at 1,000 meters of altitude, in the Oleiros territory, to the banks of the Tagus river,

¹ AEAT – Associação de Estudos do Alto Tejo (Upper Tagus Study Association).

below 100 meters a.s.l., in Vila Velha de Ródão. This distribution corresponds to placements on very diversified geological and geomorphological settings (Caninas, 2012). In the recorded set, almost all the monuments display the use of metasedimentary rocks (*vulgo* schist and greywackes) as the raw material for both orthostatic structures and mound lithic substructures, which stands for the prompt usage of materials available in the vicinity of the places where the monuments would be built. Thus, it is uncommon the incorporation of granitoid rocks into those constructions.

Other kind of monuments, as menhirs and cromlechs, are nearly absent in this region, in contrast to what we can see at the Alentejo, particularly at the adjacent district of Portalegre (Oliveira & Oliveira, 2000). The most notable cases correspond to the presence of two monoliths at Granja de São Pedro mound (Almeida & Ferreira, 1971) and to the reuse of other two, where some engraved depictions were made during the Late Bronze Age, such as the examples of São Martinho, Castelo Branco (Monteiro & Gomes, 1978), and Corgas, Fundão (Banha, Veiga & Ferro, 2009). On the other hand, we consider very doubtful an interpretation as cromlechs attributed to the lithic enclosures of Fonte Fundeira, Castelo Branco, and Couto da Espanhola, Idanha-a-Nova, and to the displaced set of menhirs from Couto de Santa Marina, Idanha-a-Nova (Henriques, Caninas & Chambino, 1993).

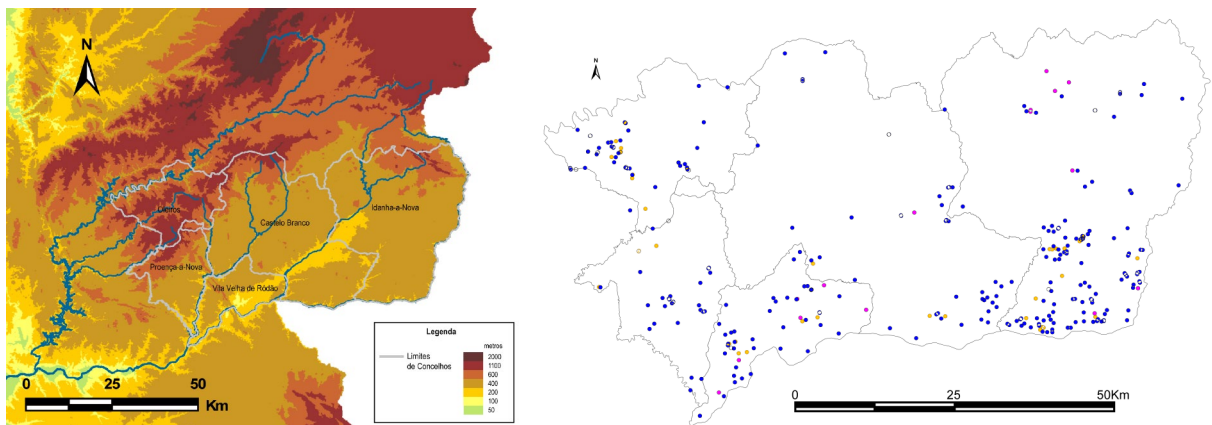


Figure 3 – Hypsometric map with the location of megalithic tombs and mounds at the municipalities of Castelo Branco, Idanha-a-Nova, Oleiros, Proença-a-Nova, and Vila Velha de Ródão (source: AEAT). Map credits: <http://www.guiadeportugal.pt>.

The characterization of Late Prehistoric occupation of this region, especially the one dating from the fourth and third millennium BC, by correlating the pattern of distribution of megalithic tombs with the dispersal of residential sites and open-air graphical-symbolic expressions, is enhanced by the preservation of a series of settlement traces on Cenozoic detrital formations (Henriques, Caninas & Chambino, 2008), namely at Vila Velha de Ródão (Caninas, Henriques & Osório, 2017), where we can find also a vast complex of open-air rock art by the Tagus river (Gomes, 2010).

This reality gains regional significance, having the Tagus river as an axis, with the continuity of the megalithic network into the neighbouring regions of Cáceres, Spain (Bueno *et al.*, 2006), North Alentejo (Oliveira, 1998; 2008), and Upper Ribatejo (Scarre *et al.*, 2011), and, in the context of a graphical, schematic, and polymorphic universe, shared by different types of depiction (engraving and painting) and sites (Bueno, Balbín & Barroso 2009; 2011), including, alongside open-air rock outcrops, engraved and painted representations in megalithic tombs (Bueno *et al.*, 2006) and painted depictions in rock shelters located in the quartzite mountain ranges of San Pedro (Bueno *et al.*, 2006), São Mamede (Oliveira & Oliveira, 2012), Zimbreira (Cardoso, 2003), and Talhadas (Henriques *et al.*, 2011; Henriques, Pereira & Caninas, 2017).

3. The most recent research at Proença-a-Nova

Three of the Proença-a-Nova's dolmens referred by Georg Leisner (Fig. 2B), Cão do Ribeiro (altitude: 368 meters a.s.l.), Cimo do Vale de Alvito (371 meters a.s.l.), and Cabeço da Anta (386 meters a.s.l.) are under study since 2012 (Henriques *et al.*, 2016). Excavation campaigns have been included in the scope of the Proença-a-Nova Archaeological Field Camp (CAPN) and have benefited from the commitment and support of the town council. The selection of these monuments was determined by scientific and public valuation goals. Concerning the scientific purposes, it was determinant the relative proximity of the megalithic tombs, their placement on a well delimited plateau, their distribution around the source of São Gens stream, and the possibility of being part of a larger necropolis associated to a potential settlement not yet identified, but we assume could have been located in the area of Moitas airfield. With the second objective, we intended to qualify the public understanding concerning these monuments, which are now part of a walking trail promoted by the town council (PR1 – History in the Landscape).

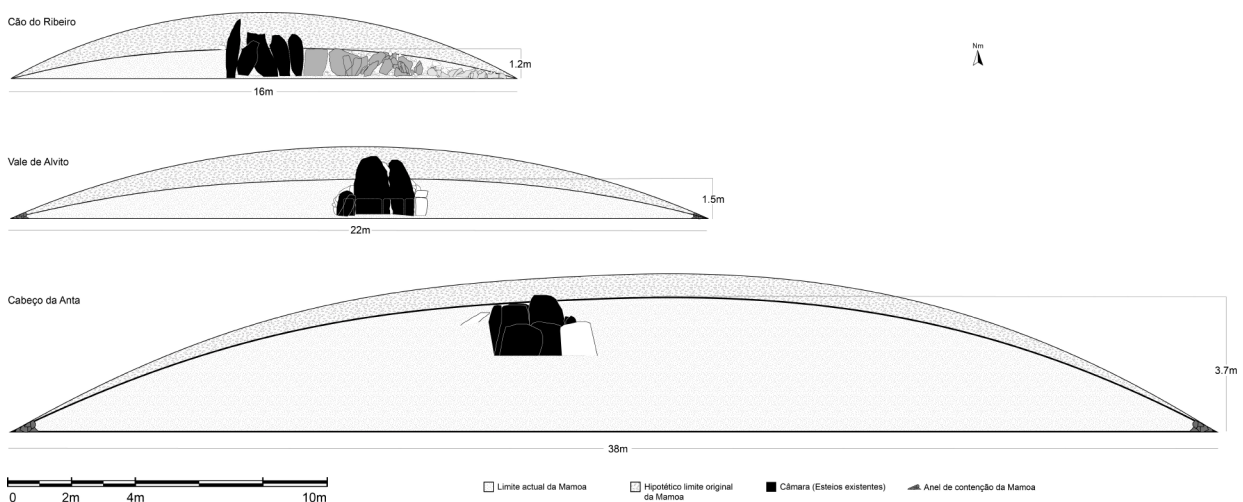


Figure 4 – Relative size of Cão do Ribeiro, Cimo do Vale de Alvito, and Cabeço da Anta mounds, with a comparison between the current and estimated heights of each mound and a schematic representation of the orthostatic substructures.

These monuments present very diverse magnitudes (Fig. 4), and it was possible to document a direct correlation between mound sizes and their topographic prominence: Cão do Ribeiro is located in the southern slope of a hillside and shows a narrower range of vision than the other two tombs, situated on hilltops. The degree of preservation of both their orthostatic structures and mounds are also very different: Cabeço da Anta, the largest monument of the region, is the best preserved. While there are evident volumetric differences, all three monuments seem to respond to the same construction pattern, with orthostatic substructures (chamber and differentiated corridor in both plan and height), peripheral and covering substructures, all built with local metasedimentary rocks and using clay as the main constituent of the mounds. Moreover, this feature was highlighted by Georg and Vera Leisner (1951, 32). However, we should mention that Cabeço da Anta's corridor has not yet been exposed and Cão do Ribeiro's peripheral containment ring was not identified, maybe because it was previously destroyed by modern agricultural work. Cão do Ribeiro lies some 1,000 meters from Cimo do Vale de Alvito and 1,200 meters from Cabeço da Anta. The distance between Vale de Alvito and Cabeço da Anta is 400 meters.



A



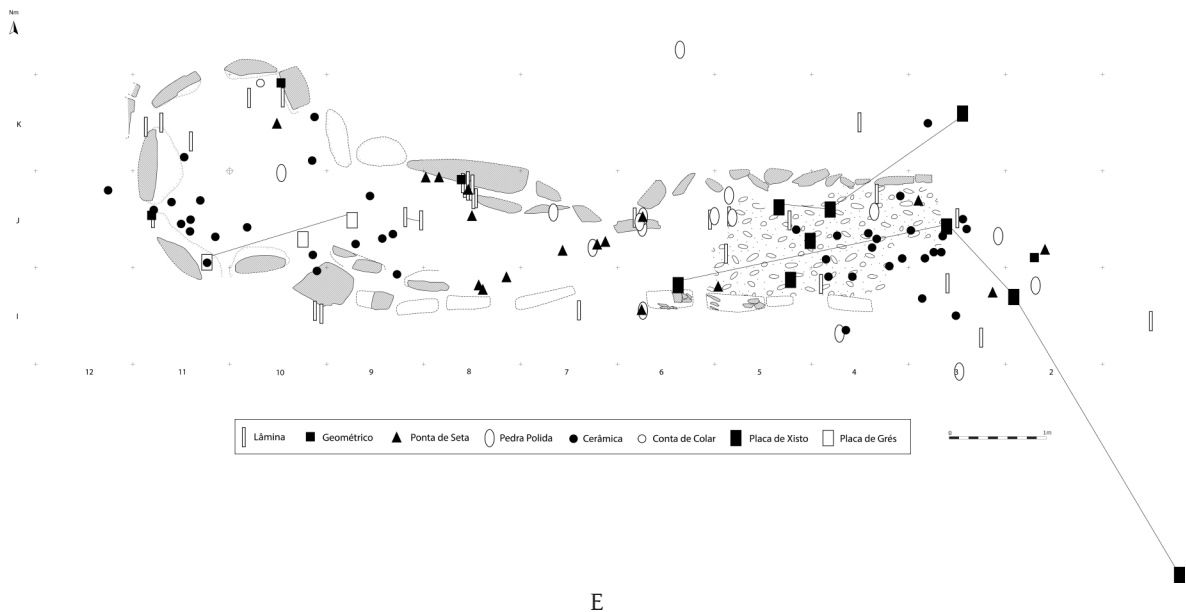
B



C



D



E

Figure 5 – Cão do Ribeiro: A. Before the excavation; B. During the excavation; C. A view of the sampling trench; D. After partial reconstruction; E. Plan showing the distribution of artifacts. From left to right: blade, geometric microlith, arrowhead, polished stone implements, pottery, necklace bead, engraved schist plaque, and sandstone plaque.



Figure 6 – Vale de Alvito: A. A panoramic view of the monument; B. At the beginning of the excavation; C. A moment of the excavation with the delimitation of disappeared slab sockets; D. The chamber at the end of its excavation; E. Stratigraphic section between the chamber and the periphery of the mound at the end of the excavation.

Excavation work was already concluded at Cão do Ribeiro, but not at Cimo do Vale de Alvito neither Cabeço da Anta, from which we just have a fractional knowledge of their structural and ritual characteristics, especially Cabeço da Anta, whose excavation at the chamber did not reach yet the lowest levels of sedimentation and provided only a reduced amount of archaeological artifacts. The three

yearly archaeological excavation campaigns at Cabeço da Anta were preceded by geophysical diagnosis (Electrical Resistivity Tomography, Ground Penetrating Radar, and Magnetometer, under the direction of António Correia), because we considered these techniques could be helpful as a first guidance for the excavation and, additionally, could be cross-checked by the results of the excavation itself.

The excavation of Cão do Ribeiro (Fig. 4 and 5) revealed a seven-slab small chamber with a surrounding buttress, associated to a medium sized passage or corridor separated from the periphery by an elongated atrium, whose floor was a flat stone paved ritual structure made of rounded pebbles. This orthostatic set, built with metasedimentary rocks, was wrapped by a mound made entirely of clay and best preserved in its northeast quadrant. We concede that agricultural practices could have contributed to the destruction of the monument's peripheral containment ring and, if ever existed, mound covering stone structures. The owner of the land made some earthmoving work at the southeast side of the monument, which resulted in the removal of the mound clay in that sector and the dismantling of the south line of the passage and atrium slabs.

Beyond the mentioned structural characteristics, the excavation of Cão do Ribeiro provided very valuable information on the funerary rituals, materialized through the positioning of an assorted series of lithic and ceramic artifacts (Fig. 5E), still under study, most of them found *in situ*, in the passage and atrium areas. In this regard, we should mention the concentration of pottery sherds at the atrium, chamber, and the passage area adjacent to the chamber; polished stone artifacts were found mostly at the end of the passage and the atrium, where all the schist plaque fragments were also recovered. By contrast, all sandstone plaque fragments came from the chamber. In the group of knapped stone artifacts, arrowheads were distributed predominantly in the passage area, whereas blades were ubiquitous inside the orthostatic structure. Presences at the chamber may indicate the last or final depositions and the atrium could have played a function of condemnation of the monument or a place for secondary inhumations. Most probably with a different meaning, geometric microliths were deposited at some of the sockets of the chamber's slabs.

In 2013, when the excavation started, the monument of Cimo de Vale de Alvito (Fig. 4 and 6) displayed a funerary chamber reduced to two complete slabs, the same as previously represented by the German archaeologists (Leisner, 1998), and a well well-preserved mound, but slightly reduced in its height due to erosion and showing a few depressions originated from the extraction of clay for building purposes. At the external surface of one of the slabs, two circles engraved by percussion were still visible.

Using the same methodology adopted at Cão do Ribeiro, the excavation was focused on the inside of the orthostatic structure and on a sampling trench covering all the radius of the mound. The excavation of the inside of the chamber is already finished, reaching the bedrock. This procedure allowed us to know that the chamber was built with eight slabs and reinforced by a strong stone buttress. Besides the two complete monoliths already known, the excavation brought to light the remains of two additional slabs and the sockets cut in the bedrock for the other four orthostats. These were probably extracted in the last hundred years. A quite diversified set of artifacts, predominantly very fragmented pottery, was collected in the lower level of the chamber's deposits. The passage, already identified in the area of its intersection with the chamber, is apparently well preserved and its excavation will start in the years to come.

The sampling trench revealed that the mound is currently reduced to a core made solely of clay and a stone peripheral containment structure surrounding it. In a similar way to the case of Cão do Ribeiro, no planar lithic substructure in a covering or intermediary position inside the mound has been documented. These kinds of substructures could have disappeared by erosion or agricultural exploitation of the land. As a matter of fact, the gap we can observe between the top of complete chamber slabs and the summit of

the mound, in the central area of the monument, reflects a significant loss of mound mass that, besides the clayey fraction, could have contained the mentioned stone covering/reinforcing substructures.



A



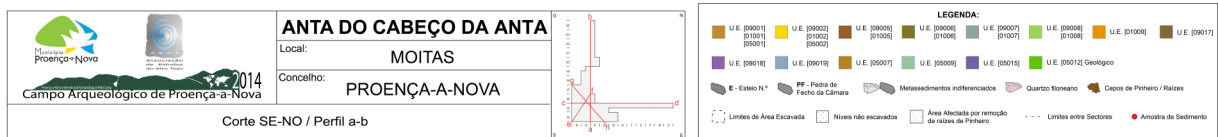
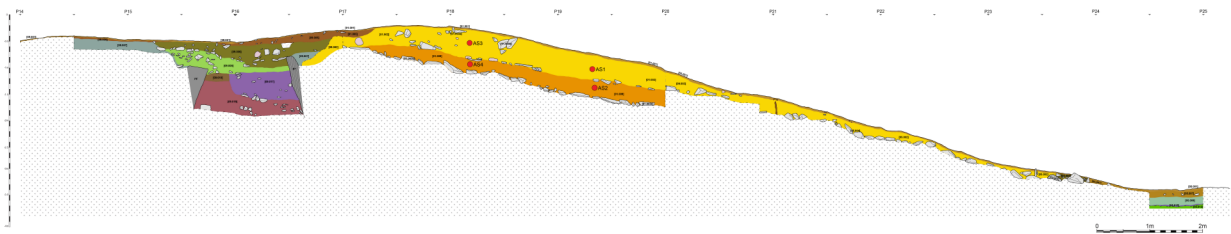
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C



D



E

Figure 7 – Cabeço da Anta: A. A view of the mound; B. A view of the chamber's excavation; C. Stone structure adjacent to the chamber; D. One of the sampling trenches; E. Stratigraphic section between the chamber and the periphery of the mound (NW-SE), during its excavation.

Work done at Cabeço da Anta (Fig. 4 and 7) during the excavation campaigns of 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 led to the characterization of several substructures, to a great extent due to the fact this monument was much better preserved than Cão do Ribeiro and Cimo do Vale de Alvito. The excavations revealed a nine-

slab funerary chamber with just one of them being absent (position noted with a square symbol in Fig. 7B). At the eastern side of the chamber, we could identify a block we consider the closing slab of the gap existing between the top of the chamber and the top of the passage (noted with a circle symbol in Fig. 7B), suggesting that the passage is positioned to the East (not yet visible). In so far, we recovered just a few archaeological artifacts and, albeit the excavation has reached two meters deep (counted from the top of the highest slab), the bottom levels of the chamber, with potential funerary depositions, are still to be attained.

The mound is very well preserved both in plan and height, being slightly higher than the top of the largest slab. A few sampling trenches were opened in the mound, especially two radial trenches with orthogonal directions covering all the mound, from the chamber to the periphery. Despite this planimetric cover, the excavation was not very deep, with the exception of the chamber area. The research has documented an extensive use of clay, but with a more complex vertical structuration than the observed at the other two monuments (Fig. 7E), and the inclusion of planar stone substructures very close to the top of the mound (Fig. 7C and 7D).

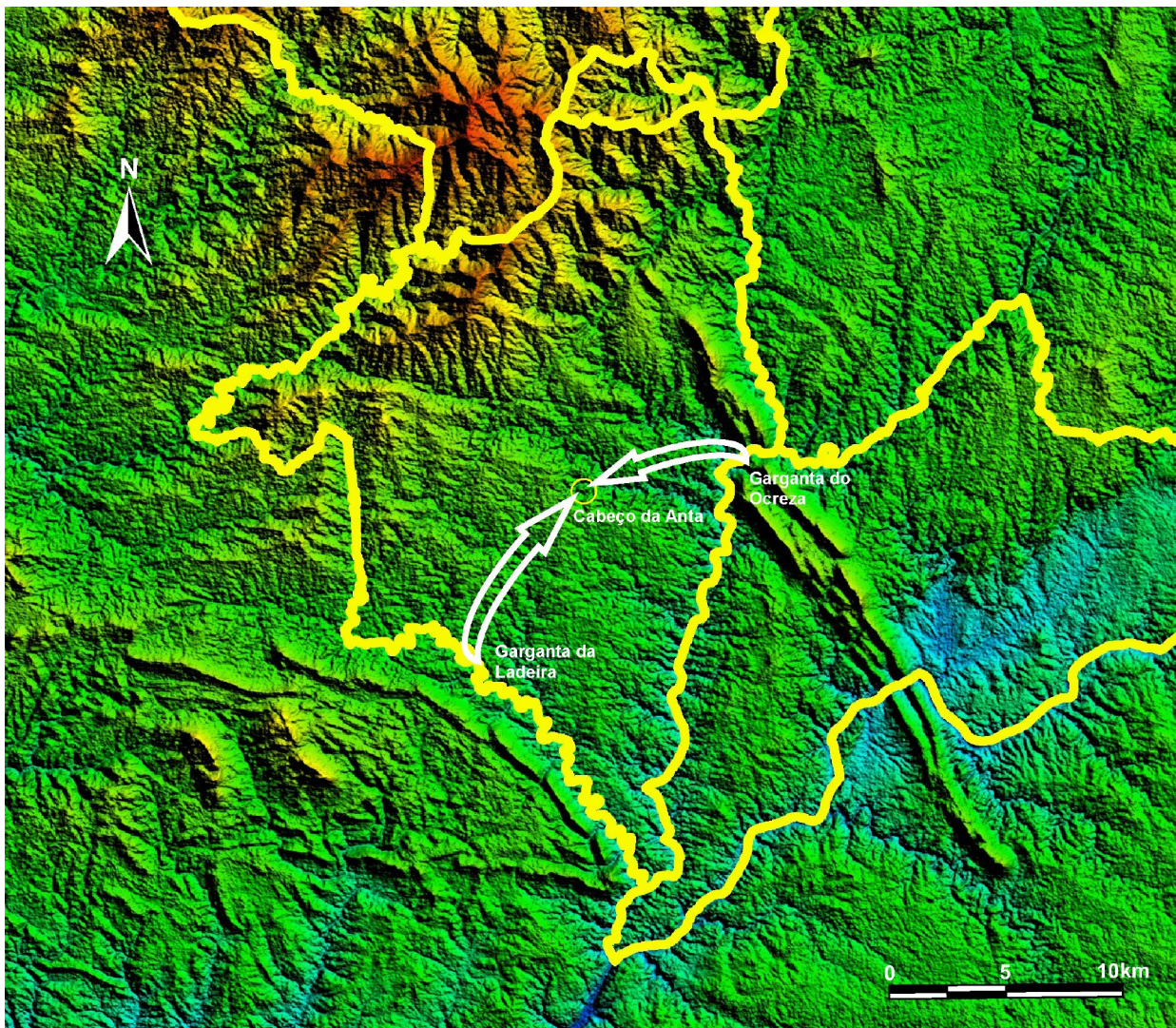


Figure 8 – Cabeço da Anta: hypothetical origins and routes of transportation for the metaquartzite slab registered at the funerary chamber (representation on a DTM produced by Hugo Pires).

The excavation of one of the trenches all the way down to the bedrock may reveal a more heterogeneous stratigraphy than what was perceived until now, and such knowledge may contribute to recover important information about the original composition of the more eroded mounds. As in the case of Vale de Alvito, mound's stone peripheral markers appeared at the end of both orthogonal trenches. Likewise Cão do Ribeiro and Cimo do Vale de Alvito, in the construction of Cabeço da Anta metasedimentary rocks were used almost exclusively (42,9% metapelites; 40,8% metagreywackes; 6,1% metarenites; N= 49), identical to those available locally, and we registered a very scarce presence of hydrothermal vein quartz. The majority of the clasts is angular, of heterogeneous sizes, being present rare rounded pebbles of fluvial origin, as well as weathering patina and cortex alterations, which are typical of clasts accumulated in river terraces and subject to subsequent edaphoclimatic processes. However, one of the chamber slabs, a metaquartzite with sedimentological features that enable to relate it with the upper beds of the Armorican Quartzite Formation,, which, in this region, occurs in the Talhadas and Águas Quentes ridges (Fig. 8), could have had a more distant origin, of at least 11 kilometers, what is suggestive of a further demanding construction project.

4. Concluding remarks

The current state of development in the investigation of the megalithic tombs of Cabeço da Anta, Cimo de Vale de Alvito, and Cão do Ribeiro, three related but dimensionally well differentiated neighboring monuments, does not allow the publication of substantive and representative results on these funerary architectures and associated rituals in the territory of Proença-a-Nova. As a matter of fact, the study of the internal funerary structures is still underway in the first two monuments and has been finished only at Cão do Ribeiro. The analysis of the set of artifacts recovered at the latter tomb will be concluded very shortly, a set that includes, as a novelty, several geometric incised schist plaques and fragments of others made of sandstone. The finding of incised plaques north of the Tagus, alongside those from Charneca das Vinhas (Caninas, Henriques & Cardoso, 2011) and Cabeço d'Ante (still unpublished), in Vila Velha de Ródão, and the structure 1 of Amieiro 5 (Cardoso, Caninas & Henriques, 2003), in Idanha-a-Nova, has altered the former view that defended its total absence in the region of Castelo Branco (Kalb, 1987).

However, some relevant information about the construction features of these monuments has already arisen from the fieldwork carried out until the present date, namely the intensive use of clay in the elaboration of the mounds that covered the megalithic structures, a trait also noticed in the middle of the twentieth century (Leisner & Leisner, 1951) and documented by us in other areas of the Intermunicipal Community, like Vila Velha de Ródão (Caninas, Henriques & Cardoso, 2011) or Idanha-a-Nova (Cardoso, Caninas & Henriques, 2003).

The follow-up of these monuments archaeological investigation, especially at Cabeço da Anta, the largest and best preserved one, reinforced by complementary physical, chemical, archaeometric and paleoenvironmental studies, some already initiated, will contribute decisively to the characterization of these tombs and the rituals performed there in the Past, to the knowledge of the construction techniques, of the materials used and their provenance, and to an approach to this territory's prehistoric settlement network, for which we don't know any dwelling site at the moment.

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