Comparative Archaeologies

The American Southwest (AD 900-1600) and the Iberian Peninsula (3000-1500 BC)

Edited by Katina T. Lillios



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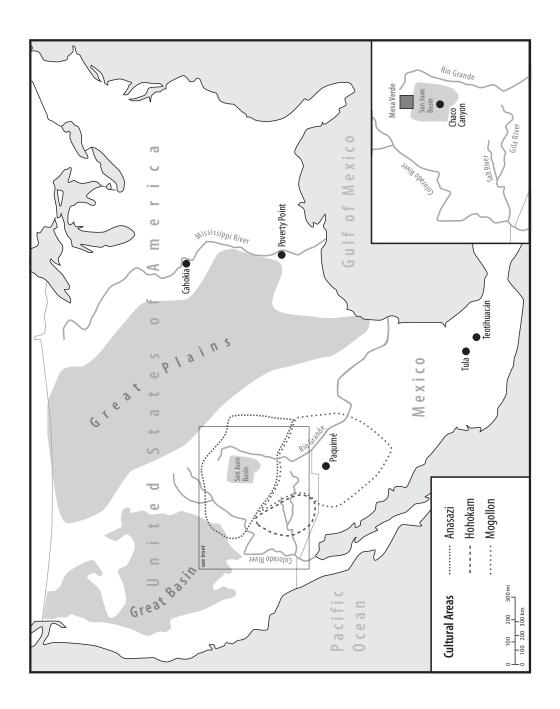
* Preface

rchaeology has become a field of epistemological ice floes, which occasionally bump into each other, but more often than not, glide silently past each other. There are many cleavages in archaeology, with the processual-postprocessual (or evolutionary-postprocessual) debate often used as a singular opposition to organize a range of theoretical tensions. However, this framing not only masks an enormous range of hybridity in actual archaeological practice, it reflects a parochial vision of archaeology, as the debate has been primarily an Anglo-American concern. If archaeology is to become a truly global enterprise, archaeologists need to acknowledge and more actively engage with the diverse histories and practices of national and indigenous archaeologies. This volume contributes toward this end with a new approach to comparative archaeology that explicitly engages the distinctive archaeologies and archaeologists of two regions of the world — the Southwest and the Iberian Peninsula — in the common goal of exploring the dynamics and historical trajectories of complex societies.

Comparative Archaeologies is the product of an Obermann Summer Seminar held at the University of Iowa in June 2006. The seminar was organized and directed by William (Billy) Graves, a Southwest archaeologist and my former colleague in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Iowa, and myself, an anthropologically trained archaeologist who has studied the late prehistoric societies of the Iberian Peninsula since the mid-1980s. Over the period of the nine-day seminar, 15 archaeologists from the United States, Portugal, Spain, and Austria worked together to share research, to educate each other, and to vigorously debate new ideas. By the end of the seminar, intellectual blindspots were revealed, potentially fruitful research questions were illuminated, and — most importantly — a deeper understanding of the entanglement between history and knowledge production in North American and European archaeology emerged.

The idea for *Comparative Archaeologies* began in a chance conversation I had with Billy Graves one afternoon in the spring of 2005. For reasons now forgotten to me, we found ourselves talking about pottery design while walking to the Anthropology Department main office to pick up our mail. As we talked, we recognized many parallels between the archaeological record of the Southwest and the Iberian Peninsula, but we also realized we were largely unfamiliar with the archaeology of each other's area. This unfamiliarity left us with a lingering sense of unease. Despite our broad training in anthropological archaeology in North American institutions, the scholarly communities with which we found ourselves primarily interacting — Southwest archaeologists and Europeanists — seemed to be largely unaware of the other's work.

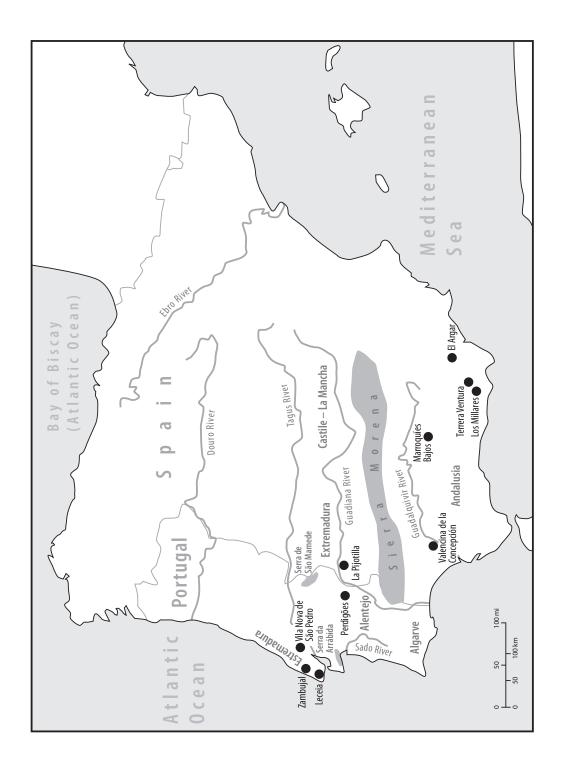
FIG. 1 *Map of North America, with main sites and regions referred to throughout the book.*



At around the same time as this conversation, I was teaching a graduate seminar in Archaeological Theory and Method for which, among other texts, I had assigned Timothy Earle's 1997 book *How Chiefs Comes to Power*. The book provided an intellectual space in which students from the different subfields of anthropology could react to and draw from. After our discussion of Earle's book ended, however, I found myself increasingly wondering how our understanding of intermediate-level societies would be different if the ethnographies of the Pacific, North and South America, and Africa had not been available to serve as comparative models for our thinking about diverse cultural phenomena, such as material culture and exchange, power and inequality, and social evolution. While comparisons between, specifically, Pacific societies and ancient complex societies have generated a wealth of productive literature, the particular conditions of the Pacific — its island ecosystems, regular long-distance navigation and island colonization, and the ruptures associated with European colonialism — structure these ethnographic accounts and, surely, those archaeological analyses articulated to them.

In subsequent conversations, Billy and I discussed how historical contingencies, such as nineteenth- and twentieth-century European colonialism, have played into archaeological understandings of complex societies, and we began to contemplate the insights that might be gained by creating new comparative points of reference in archaeology. Thinking back to our original exchange, we wondered how we might engage the insights of anthropologically trained Southwest archaeologists with historically trained Iberianists toward better understanding the dynamics of complex, non-state societies. We put together a proposal for a seminar and—to our delight—we were awarded funds from the University of Iowa Obermann Center for Advanced Studies to organize Comparative Archaeologies: The American Southwest (AD 900–1600) and the Iberian Peninsula (3000–1500 BC).

This volume, based on the revised and expanded papers written for the seminar, is comparative at two levels: empirical and epistemological. At the empirical level, there are many parallels between the archaeologies of the Southwest between AD 900-1600 and the Iberian Peninsula between 3000-1500 BC that make their comparison appropriate. Human populations in both areas were engaged in a common set of social and political behaviors, including social differentiation, long-distance exchange, craft production, population aggregation, agricultural intensification, and the construction of monumental ritual spaces. Some of these parallels are likely due to similar environmental regimes, particularly the constraints imposed by the arid landscapes found in both regions. The common need to access key raw materials and finished goods while maintaining a relatively stable agricultural community may also account for some of the similarities. Recently, Stephen Lekson wrote, "Southwestern archaeology sometimes appears obsessed with complexity" (Lekson 2005: 236); Iberian archaeology could well be accused of the same (see Chapter 5). There are also historical parallels between these two areas: after an enduring tradition of decentralized political organization, ancient populations in both regions were subjected to colonial rule — in the Southwest by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century AD, and in the Iberian Peninsula by Rome in the third century BC. As subjects of archaeological inquiry, both regions have long and distinguished pedigrees, beginning in the nineteenth century.



In addition to this empirical comparison and in contrast to many comparative enterprises in archaeology, Billy and I also sought to engage different epistemologies and national traditions of archaeological research in our seminar. We were particularly keen on highlighting their differences and on finding common agendas for future research.

Distinctive archaeologies in the Iberian Peninsula and the Southwest have emerged not only owing to differences in the material record, but also because of the more recent political histories of Iberia and the Southwest. Archaeologists of the Southwest have played a key role in American anthropology for generating broad insights into social evolution. The ability of Southwest archaeologists to make historical connections to ethnohistoric and ethnographically documented human groups, to employ a range of fine-grained dating techniques, such as dendrochronology and ceramic seriation, and to reconstruct detailed environmental histories, through dendrochronology and packrat midden analysis, have also facilitated a nuanced narrative for the ancient Southwest. Archaeologists of late prehistoric Iberia, by virtue of the rich and highly varied archaeology of the Peninsula, have also made key contributions to more historically-oriented debates in Europe on the emergence of social inequality, politics and archaeology, megaliths, rock art, metallurgy, and the beaker phenomenon. Chronological control, however, is not as fine-grained as for the Southwest, and Iberianists must work with more expansive periodizations of a few hundred years. There are also no closely related living peoples with whom the archaeological populations of the third and second millennia BC might be compared.

Comparative Archaeologies is, therefore, not only about archaeologies, but also about archaeologists, who, while committed to a common set of problems, draw from different national traditions. It represents a complementary form of comparative archaeology that recognizes and embraces the totalities and historicities of past societies of similar forms, while reflexively focusing on in-depth and nuanced comparisons of multiple themes.

This volume is organized around five themes — Histories, Landscapes, Bodies, Gender, and Art. These themes were selected because they provide broad intellectual canvases on which a range of theoretical perspectives from both Americanist and Europeanist traditions had contributed and which, together, would generate a relatively coherent understanding of current research on our two culture areas. For each theme, two chapters — one written by a Southwest archaeologist and one by an Iberianist — are included. Each pair of chapters is introduced by a bridging chapter, coauthored by the two scholars who wrote the chapters on that theme. These bridging chapters were written after the seminar was completed, and in addition to providing an introduction to the subsequent chapters, they reflect emergent engagements that developed between the two regional approaches to archaeology as a result of the seminar.

Timothy Earle, an archaeologist long dedicated to comparative archaeology, introduces this volume. His chapter provides a historical context to our project and identifies some of its strengths and weaknesses. In the Conclusion (Chapter 17), I expand on the volume's goals, discuss the benefits and pitfalls of comparative research, and explore how this volume has contributed to the comparative enterprise and to the study of complex societies.

This volume—and the seminar on which it is based—are, in various ways, experimental. For example, the order of the chapters differs from the sequence in which they were delivered at the seminar. At the seminar, Billy and I wanted to experiment with the usual structure of archaeological narrative, which generally begins with (and implicitly privileges) the material conditions of a culture, such as environment and economics, and concludes with those aspects of culture more closely tied to ideology and cognition, such as art and religion. Thus, the seminar itself began with the papers on Art, then proceeded to Gender, Bodies, Landscapes, and Histories. At the conclusion of the seminar, when the structure for this book was discussed, the participants felt that the traditional materialist-idealist narrative sequence would work better for the publication. Billy and I felt that the experimental order had served its purpose, and we were willing to shift the themes back to a more conventional order for this book.

The contributors of this volume were all seminar participants and were selected through a competitive process involving an international call-for-papers. Billy and I sought scholars who had a demonstrated expertise in their thematic topic and a proven interest in comparative research. We also invited three keynote speakers to present papers. Tim Earle provided a historical reflection on comparative archaeology, and Barbara Mills and Antonio Gilman provided summary culture histories for the Southwest and Iberian Peninsula, respectively, in order to orient the seminar participants. For this volume, however, we felt that the two area summaries were less critical and would have lengthened the book considerably; thus, they were not included. The presence and participation of Barbara and Antonio, however, were central to the success of the seminar—and their thoughtful provocations are indirectly reflected in all the papers in this volume.

Three meta-themes emerge as central to this volume — and could well be taken as key leitmotifs in archaeological research on middle-range societies: History, Scale, and Power. I briefly introduce them here; in the Conclusion, I discuss them in greater depth.

History is entangled with archaeology at a number of analytical levels—and it became increasingly clear, as the seminar progressed, that archaeologists need to consider history at all these levels. First, histories of nations and regions shape the institutional structures that create and legitimate archaeological knowledge. The histories of research in different areas of the world are also central to understanding trajectories of thought. In the bridging chapters, the authors of this volume outline the history of research on their particular topics in order to better frame and contextualize their chapters (as well as to suggest areas of future research). Finally, the role of history—or the historical antecedents—to the archaeological peoples we study is increasingly being recognized as an explanatory variable to consider. Sometimes linked to memory studies, historical approaches to ancient societies have an important role to play in understanding emerging social inequalities—specifically, with respect to how people invoke their histories to legitimate actions, create ancestral genealogies, construct identities, or to claim territory.

Scale — both temporal and spatial — and determining appropriate and productive scales of analysis emerged as another critical dimension in our analyses. While comparative analyses in archaeology tend to focus on the level of the settlement system or culture area, comparisons between individual sites in different culture areas may also

draw out key insights to distinctive cultural particularities (as Lekson and Díaz-del-Río illustrate in Chapters 4 and 5).

Finally, power—in its diverse forms and materializations—was, not surprisingly, a common thread throughout the papers. Although focused on the exploration of histories, landscapes, gendered behaviors and artifacts, the treatment of bodies, and art in the ancient Southwest and Iberian Peninsula, the authors of this volume also grapple with the central issue of how power was created, legitimated, and resisted.

This book is the final product of an extended project that began in 2005 with the planning of the 2006 seminar, and it has benefited from the energies and commitment of many individuals and institutions. I wish to thank Billy Graves, the seminar's co-director, for his invaluable insights and collaboration during the seminar. The Obermann Center for Advanced Studies provided not only the generous funding but the administrative support that made the seminar and this resulting volume possible. I am deeply grateful to Jay Semel, Director of the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies, and the Obermann Center staff, particularly Carolyn Frisbie, Jennifer New, and Karla Tonella for all their help. I wish to thank University of Iowa students Anna Waterman, Jonathan T. Thomas, John Willman, and Jody Hepperly for all their assistance during the seminar. Jonathan Thomas also aided in the preparation of this volume. I am grateful to Tim Earle, Leonardo García Sanjuán, Antonio Gilman, and Barbara Mills for their sage input and critical feedback on this volume. Jill Neitzel provided the perfect balance of constructive advice, counsel, and moral support in the final stages of this book's production. Finally, I wish to thank all the seminar participants for their enthusiasm, their goodwill, and their contributions.

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Chapter 13

Bodies in Motion

Implications of Gender in Long-Distance Exchange between the Lisbon and Alentejo Regions of Portugal in the Late Neolithic

Rui Boaventura

Late Neolithic human groups from the regions of Lisbon and the Alto Alentejo has been noted since archaeologists began carrying out research on this time period. The Late Neolithic—around 3500-2500 BC (Soares 1999; Soares and Cabral 1993)—is associated with the consolidation of the Neolithic Revolution, namely with the intensification of secondary agricultural and pastoral products (Gonçalves 2000–2001; Sherratt 1983, 1995) and the construction of elaborate funerary structures and walled settlements. During this time it is believed that people circulated not only in their own regions but also into distant areas, motivated by necessity, obligation, or curiosity, procuring products and looking for other human groups.

Researchers approached these regional contacts mainly from a socioeconomic point of view, discussing the evidence for regional exchange of raw materials and artifacts (Cardoso and Carvalhosa 1995; Forenbaher 1999; Lillios 1997, 1999, 2000, 2008) or verifying typological differences for each region (Silva et al. 1995). On a social superstructure level, other studies compared the degree of similarity and transmission of magical and religious rules related to death and its funerary structures, generically designated as "Megalithism" (Gonçalves 1995, 1999a, 1999b) and compared typologies of objects accompanying the dead or the types of structures, such as dolmens or *tholoi*, from both regions (Ferreira 1959; Leisner 1965; Leisner and Ferreira 1959; Leisner and Leisner 1959; Gonçalves 1995).

Nevertheless, circulations of people implied by "bodies in motion" have never been examined in terms of gender. To better understand this objective, it is important to clarify what is meant by gender and sex. Sex is a physiological distinction (male/female), although some authors see this classification of sexing human remains as the result of

cultural baggage (Claassen 1992). Gender is a social and cultural construction (man/woman or other types of gender) comprising the roles given to, and identities perceived by, men and women in a particular society (Claassen 1992; Gibbs 1998)

In the present chapter, sex and gender will be summarized as male/female roles, respectively, despite the fact that other genders could have existed (Claassen 1992). Thus, this basic approach should be understood as a first step to challenge other researchers to pursue archaeological projects that take gender into consideration.

Geographic Context

The region of Lisbon, also known as the Baixa Estremadura, constitutes the southern portion of the Estremadura and shares with it common geologic characteristics. It extends northward to the mountains of Candeeiros and Montejunto, south to the Serra da Arrábida, and is limited to the west by the Atlantic Ocean and from the northeast and southeast by the Tagus River (Ribeiro 1998 [1967]). The principal bedrock is constituted of limestone, marl, and sandstone and, in the region of Lisbon, cut by the granite intrusion of the Serra de Sintra and a basalt sheet originating from ancient volcanic activity (Ramalho et al. 1993; Zbyszewski 1964). Due to tectonic activity and erosive agents on the bedrock surface, such as water and wind, this area is marked by steep valleys and cliffs. In this region, veins or nodules of flint can be easily found; in prehistory, these were worked into knives, arrowheads, and other cutting instruments (Forenbaher 1999).

The long estuary of the Tagus River marks the border between the Alto Alentejo and Lisbon regions. Indeed, during the Late Neolithic that shore, climatically induced by the Flandrian transgression, was larger than it is today, giving the area the appearance of a large interior sea (Daveau 1980, 1994; Daveau and Gonçalves 1983–1984, 1985). However, this body of estuarine water was not an obstacle and may have actually made it possible to easily reach both shores of the Tagus River by watercraft. Moreover, when we consider that the maritime tides extended almost 100 km inland, as recent research suggests (Daveau 1994), one must assume that people knew how to take advantage of such currents. Recent research also indicates that the large and salty estuary of the Tagus created a source of salt for ancient people (Valera et al. 2006). In addition to salt, maritime products such as fish and mussels could be retrieved from the ocean and estuary for local or distant consumption. For example, there are many examples of shells found in Late Neolithic funerary sites in the Alentejo as decorative and/or symbolic items (Leisner and Leisner 1959; Silva and Cabrita 1966).

The Alto Alentejo corresponds approximately to the modern administrative districts of Portalegre and Évora. The north and central portions of this territory are included in the Tagus basin, and the southern area constitutes part of the Guadiana and Sado river basins. In fact, the relative flatness of this region (Ribeiro 1998 [1967]), as well as the prehistoric human spatial occupation, makes it difficult to separate the northern and southern areas. Nevertheless, there are a few topographic features that can be used to frame the area, such as the Serra de São Mamede to the north and the Serras de Portel and Monfurado to the south. Inside the region, other major landforms can be found, such as the Serra d'Ossa. The Alto Alentejo is made up of principally schist and granite

bedrock, where veins of good-quality hard rocks, such as amphibolites (for groundstone tools), schist and slate (for votive plaques or beads), and green rocks, such as variscite (for pendants and beads), can be found. Along the left margin of the Tagus River this bedrock gives way to sandy and marl areas, mainly dated to the Pleistocene, which results in a kind of buffer between the river and the schist and ancient granite platforms. In fact, some of these areas remained swampy and sandy during the Late Neolithic, and the evidence for human presence at this time points to a low population level (Daveau and Gonçalves 1985; Gonçalves 1982, 1983–1984). Recent research, however, suggests that population levels may have to be reevaluated (Valera et al. 2006).

The Archaeology of the Lisbon and Alto Alentejo Regions

In addition to their geographic and geological features, there were also differences in the material culture of these two regions during the Late Neolithic. Although ceramic vessels of both regions present common typologies, pots with vertical or almost closed walls are more numerous in the region of Lisbon (Silva et al. 1995). Also, the presence of decoration on those ceramic vessels is higher (10 to 20 percent) than those from Alentejo (less than 1 percent; Silva et al. 1995: 163–64). In fact, this abundance allowed the establishment of a decoration sequence, as markers or fossil types, for this period in the region (Cardoso 2000; Kunst 1995b, 1996; Silva et al. 1995: 163; Sousa 1998). The presence of more closed vessels and decoration may be correlated, since in other known studies the external surface of such vessels was preferred (Lago et al. 1998: 90; Valera 1997: 81–83). One explanation for the larger percentage of closed vessels is that they could reflect a specific diet based on soups and stewed types of food in the Lisbon area during this period. In the Alentejo, in contrast, there are more open ceramic vessels, such as plates (Lago et al. 1998: 80–104; Silva et al. 1995), which could suggest a diet based on, for example, porridges and roasted meats.

Between 2600–2300 BC, a new decoration style and ceramic type, known as the Bell Beaker, emerged in the Iberian Peninsula (Cardoso and Soares 1990–1992; Harrison 1977). Bell Beaker ceramics are found at sites throughout the area of Lisbon and in other regions of the Iberian Peninsula. Compared to the Lisbon area, however, the evidence for Beaker style in the Alto Alentejo is far scarcer (Boaventura 2001). Within the Alto Alentejo, the south–central area has more of these vessels than the northern region, and among these, several Beaker pots have no decoration (Mataloto 2006; Valera 2006). Thus, if further research confirms these observations, it seems that groups from the Alentejo area preferred aesthetically plain ceramic vessels, even during a period when Bell Beakers became popular.

Distinctive distributions and formal differences also occur in ceramic loom elements or weights. Both Lisbon and the Alto Alentejo are represented by distinct typologies and weights, which may imply a differentiation in weaving techniques (Boaventura 2001; Valera 1997). In Lisbon, the loom elements have a sub-quadrangular shape with slightly convex surfaces and are more decorated and heavier than the ones from the Alentejo. This heavier weight could be indicative of their use in vertical looms, as has been demonstrated elsewhere (Cardito Rollán 1996; Valera 1997). In the Alentejo, be-

sides being lighter, the loom elements have a crescent and sub-rectangular shape that is rarely decorated and which could be associated with tablet weaving (Boaventura 2001: 48–54). Once again, besides the typological differences, the preference for ornamented wares in the region of Lisbon (Cardito Rollán 1996) when compared to Alentejo should be emphasized.

Although fortified settlements such as Leceia (Cardoso 1994, 2000), Zambujal (Kunst 1995a, 1995b; Kunst and Uerpmann 2002), Chibanes (Carreira 1998), or Penedo do Lexim (Sousa 2007) with stone walls and round towers seem to be more numerous and better known in the region of Lisbon, a few settlements with similar characteristics are known in the Alentejo, such as Monte da Tumba (Silva and Soares 1976–1977, 1985, 1987), Escoural (Gomes et al. 1983), or Monte da Ponte (Kalb and Höck 1997). Thanks to recent research projects, more fortified sites have been uncovered in the Alentejo, such as São Gens (Mataloto 2005), São Pedro (Mataloto et al. 2007), and Porto das Carretas (Silva and Soares 2002), which seems to indicate that this type of settlement has been underrepresented in previous surveys. Also, due to the increase of research in the Alentejo region, settlements with earthen walls and ditches, such as Santa Vitória (Dias 1996), Perdigões (Lago et al. 1998), Juromenha (Calado 2002), or Moreiros 2 (Boaventura 2006), are as well-represented now as in other central and southern Iberian areas (Hurtado Perez 2003; Valera et al. 2006). However, they have not yet been detected in the region of Lisbon.

The local availability of flint in the region of Lisbon might explain the large number of cores and the variety of artifacts of this raw material, including specific typologies less common in the Alentejo, such as the large bifacial points, or almost absent, such as the ovoid bifacial blades (Forenbaher 1999). According to Leonor Rocha (personal communication, 2006) there is a flint ovoid blade from Anta Grande do Zambujeiro (Évora), one of the biggest dolmens of its type. However, blades and arrowheads are found with similar typologies in each region—for example in funerary contexts (Leisner 1965; Leisner and Leisner 1959)—even if in the Alentejo they were made of non-flint raw materials and the total number of each type varies or is small (Forenbaher 1999).

Votive slate plaques are found in small numbers in graves in the region of Lisbon, but the known types are similar to the ones found in abundance in the Alentejo dolmens (Gonçalves, 1995, 2004, 2007; Leisner 1965; Leisner and Leisner 1959; Lillios 2002, 2008).

There is further variability in the votive offerings between Lisbon and the Alentejo. In Lisbon, there is a very rich tradition of craftsmanship of limestone objects; these include small vases and mortars, ritual adzes, crescents, pine cone shaped objects (also identified as mushrooms or artichokes), cylinders (sometimes engraved with bio-/anthropomorphic features), and other less identifiable objects (Cardoso et al. 1995; Gonçalves 1995). In the Alentejo, cylinders and mortars are the most common objects, although they are found in low percentages (Lago et al. 1998).

Groundstone tools, namely axes and adzes, represent similar typologies in the two areas. Although these tools can be made of other types of hard rocks, amphibolites are the main choice because of their resistance (Cardoso and Carvalhosa 1995; Lillios 1997). This raw material is abundant in the Alentejo and absent in Lisbon. However, it can be

found in settlements from both regions, although in funerary contexts it is much more abundant in the first region. For example, unused artifacts made of amphibolites are frequently deposited as votive offers in the graves from the Alentejo, but in Lisbon those votive artifacts are more often emulated in poor quality rocks (such as basalt or limestone), probably because of the rarity and importance of amphibolites in daily-life tasks (Lillios 1997, 1999, 2000).

As several authors have pointed out, the differences in material culture between the two regions mentioned above suggest the establishment of two general cultural traditions, although there are certainly similarities as well, suggesting interactions between populations (Cardoso 2002; Gonçalves 1995; Leisner 1965; Leisner and Leisner 1959; Silva et al. 1995).

The geographic conditions of the Tagus valley would have made navigation with different types of watercraft through the estuary and to the outskirts of the Alentejo's ancient continental plateau (or vice versa) both easy and likely and allowed for a relatively continual flow of flint, amphibolites, or other products. In fact, fluvial transportation would have made it possible to carry more products than a terrestrial journey. Indeed, as late as the early 20th century, the main transportation of products in this area was done by boat, because this mode of transportation was faster, safer, and allowed for the conveyance of more bulky goods than transport by land (Daveau 1994, 1995: 118–19; Ribeiro 1998 [1967]).

Discussion

This long-distance exchange would imply "bodies in motion." While the rationale and method by which they moved are reasonably plausible, the individuals who made those journeys are less evident. Based on the evidence submitted above, I would like to argue, however, that these travelers would mainly be men, occasionally accompanied by women or older children. For this reason, I argue along with the most common divisions of labor and its constraints, as presented by several authors (Brightman 1996; Brown 1970; Burton and White 1984), despite some studies pointing out exceptions (Brightman 1996).

Cross-cultural studies have shown that women tend to adopt productive tasks that allow them to be close to domestic spaces because of pregnancy, motherhood, nursing, and to take care of infants. Such activities would not have required "rapt concentration and [were] relatively dull and repetitive; they [were] easily interruptible and easily resumed once interrupted; they do not [place] the child in potential danger; and they do not [require] the participant to range very far from home" (Brown 1970). Examples of such "repetitive, interruptible, and non-dangerous" tasks include gathering, horticulture, ceramic production, basketry, weaving, and from agery. Of course this labor had (or has) little to do with physiological and psychological reasons and more with social organization and economic efficiency for the group.

Also, a recent study of several male and female human remains from the El Argar culture in the Bronze Age seems to indicate that men would have engaged in activities suggestive of more intense walking and physical effort (Jiménez-Brobeil et al. 2004). Women on the other hand did not present such traces, which has been interpreted as an

indication that they were essentially undertaking activities in domestic environments that did not require long walking or intense physical effort. Although the data is from the southeastern region of the Iberian Peninsula, and around a thousand years later, it could be indicative of a trend for Iberian populations.

If women passed on the traditions and techniques of which they were most knowledgeable to their children, and female children stayed longer with their mothers to assist in childcare, we could assume that female gendered traditions and techniques would have a more restrictive distribution. The regionally distinctive distributions of ceramic loom elements and pottery in the Late Neolithic of the areas mentioned above may well be evidence of such mother–daughter transmissions. In fact, considering the role of female ceramists, in the region of Lisbon women may have played a vital role in the stylistic innovation throughout this period. Also, a similar situation could have occurred in the Alentejo, where certain types of plates and bowls evolved. Of course this may question previous assumptions that female tasks (namely weaving, food preparation, or pot-making) were open to little innovation, because there was no space or time for risk and experiment (Barber 1994: 29–33). Moreover, it calls attention to the tendency among Iberian archaeologists who

"have attributed prehistoric ceramics, which are always catalogued as 'simple,' to female work ... always and when this craft forms part of the domestic activities or a good that is developed to create containers and domestic objects. When ceramics are thought to have ceremonial use or for prestige, if they are beautifully decorated or are presumed to have required advanced technological abilities, as they are associated with the rich, the female artisans are forgotten and the male artisans are presumed to be the makers of these vessels." (Colomer Solsona 2006: 184)

The stylistic cohesion detected in the region of Lisbon could also testify to virilocality, as proposed previously by João L. Cardoso (2000: 50). However, such an idea needs more in-depth and complementary studies to evaluate its existence and impact. One example for such caution comes from the Bronze Age El Argar culture: based on a regional study of metric variability of human skulls from both sexes, J. Buikstra and L. Hoshower demonstrated that men would have moved more often to other settlements in search of a wife (cited in Escoriza Mateu and Sanahuja Yll 2006: 120–21).

Ovoid bifacial blades may also point to mother-daughter transmission in the region of Lisbon: these tools may have been used to harvest certain types of plants, namely cereals (Cardoso 2000), or, according to other authors, "were used for cutting, as well as scraping and whittling" (Forenbaher 1999: 82). More significantly, a recent study that analyzed human remains in Catalonia during a slightly earlier period (4000–3300 BC) pointed out that the preparation of hides could be one task performed mainly by women, using some blades but more often expedient tools, such as retouched flakes (Gibaja Bao 2002, 2003a, 2003b). Nevertheless, cereal harvesting may have been a collective activity (Gibaja Bao 2002, 2003a, 2003b). If so, it would be natural that women from the region of Lisbon were knapping flint and producing specific utilitarian tools for similar tasks.

Though capable of the aforementioned activities, men, lacking child-care-related responsibilities, were generally occupied with animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, procuring long-distance raw materials, and/or the protection of the group's assets, including episodes of warfare. In fact, the ethnographic record shows that warfare, defensive or offensive, is mostly a male activity (Christensen 2004: 138), despite examples to the contrary (Sanahuja Yll 2006). Reinforcing this impression, the Catalonia study previously referred to seems to ascribe to men the majority of ground stone tools, arrowheads, and blades (Gibaja Bao 2002, 2003a, 2003b) that could have been used in hunting or warfare. Also in the Bronze Age of the El Argar culture, halberds and swords are found associated with male adults (Castro et al. 1993–1994, Sanahuja Yll 2006) — in both situations these instruments are related to male tasks. In addition, some of the already mentioned activities stimulated travel to more distant areas. In the context of the Late Neolithic, contact with other groups would have facilitated the learning and transmission of new lithic styles, typologies, and techniques. Thus, the similar typologies of flint arrowheads, axes, and adzes in both regions could be the result of long-distance travel carried out by men. In the case of large bifacial points, the evidence seems to accentuate their importance as a "prestige good" that could have involved status legitimization through long-distance exchange (Forenbaher 1999: 108). Also, the similarity of the layout of stone wall enclosures between the two regions may be indicative of these contacts.

Moreover, if we accept the explanation of genealogy for certain types of votive slate plaques (Lillios 2002, 2008), associated with the features of the Mother Goddess (Gonçalves 1995, 1999a, 1999b, 2003), it would be possible to detect not only the exchange but the eventual migration of populations from the Alentejo region into other neighboring areas, namely Lisbon. Following the logic mentioned above, it could be proposed that they were male individuals. However, the two known examples of gender associated with these objects provoke caution for the moment: one case is a female from the Alentejo buried in a dolmen with a slate plaque on her chest, and the other is a male from the northern area of the Estremadura buried inside a cave (Gonçalves 2003, 2007).

Still within the mortuary sphere, the growing evidence from the Estremadura region on the higher number of probable female individuals located inside burial structures—such as the *tholos* of Pai Mogo and the rock-cut cave of São Pedro do Estoril (Silva 2002, 2005)—could be indicative of some type of frequent absence of males (Silva 2002). Men would be involved in tasks outside of surrounding domestic spaces, such as mentioned above, and sometimes died and were buried elsewhere. Moreover, a gender-specific selectivity associated with migration, although based on historical cases (Brettell 2002; Burmeister 2000), should be considered here. In the present case, this migration should be generally understood as the movement of specific people for a certain time period (Burmeister 2000) in a context of scouting parties, leapfrogging, or migration streams (Anthony 1990, 1992; Chapman and Dolukhanov 1992). The evidence for exchange products between the two regions seems to point to the creation of well-defined routes towards specific destinations.

Conclusion?

This approach to the available data may not give a definite answer regarding the social organization of these groups and who really traveled. However, it seems to point to travel as a male activity. And while it is not yet possible to address questions about whether these groups were matriarchal or patriarchal societies, we must concede that women likely had significant control of the daily life of the group and its offspring. Men, although spending time in the settlements, would likely have taken over activities related to longer distances.

This comparison used only two neighboring regions, the Estremadura (mostly around Lisbon) and the Alto Alentejo; it would be important to verify similarities and differences with other adjacent areas from the perspective proposed here.

Finally, perhaps the increase of bioanthropological studies focusing on occupational stress markers, isotopic and aDNA/mtDNA studies, and the study of trace marks on tools found associated with different sexes will give us more data to elucidate the present hypothesis. However, one fact remains evident: despite an apparent higher mobility of men, both genders had a vital role in the consolidation and cohesion of their local groups, with travel being just one part of that enterprise. Unfortunately, those significant roles become less visible after 2400 BC, when archaeological evidence seems to point to a more hierarchical importance of men and their weaponry. But was that really the case?

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