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(eds.)

**APPROACHING
“PREHISTORIC AND PROTOHISTORIC
ARCHITECTURES”
OF EUROPE FROM A
“DWELLING PERSPECTIVE”**

Proceedings of the
TAG session
Sheffield 2005

Porto
ADECAP
2006

**COPPER AGE “MONUMENTALIZED HILLS” OF IBERIA:
THE SHIFT FROM POSITIVISTIC IDEAS TO
INTERPRETIVE ONES. NEW PERSPECTIVES ON OLD
TECHNIQUES OF TRANSFORMING PLACE AND SPACE
AS RESULTS OF A RESEARCH EXPERIENCE IN THE NE
OF PORTUGAL***

by

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About the research of the authors – co-directors of at least one of the season’s excavations made until now in Castanheiro do Vento – and about the team in which they are integrated, see: <http://www.architectures.home.sapo.pt>. The local journal “Côavisão” (municipality of Vila Nova de Foz Côa, Portugal) publishes regularly the main results of each season’s excavation.

This paper would not be possible without the collaboration of the five authors, both in field work and post-field work.

Abstract: The long-term experience of excavation of the hill site of Castelo Velho de Freixo de Numão (V.ª N.ª Foz Côa, Portugal) by Susana Oliveira Jorge, Univ. of Porto (from 1989 to 2003), has shown that these kind of sites of the III/II mill. b. C. – in Iberia, commonly called “fortified settlements” – demands a completely new kind of approach. These are mainly huge monumentalized hills, or built settings. Were they conceived as a sort of microcosm? Were they built in order to create and reinforce social cohesion and communal identity? Both are possible. What seems certain is that they were focal points in a territory. Their main structures were earthen architectures (probably made out of cob, but they could also be a sort of rammed earth walls) with a base course of stone; thus they are included in a long tradition of Mediterranean architecture which lasted until the present. The authors put forward here some thoughts suggested not only by the results of the excavations (since 1998) of Castanheiro do Vento, but also resulting from a longer experience in the region. The latter hill site is a place, in fact, which belongs to the same general typology (or a sort of “architectonic style”) of Castelo Velho and, outside the region, to that of Los Millares (Almeria) or Vila Nova de S. Pedro / Zambujal / Leceia (Portuguese Estremadura), among many others. Extensive excavation, interdisciplinary approaches, and, especially, new ways of looking at these architectures, i. e. at their specific characteristics, are fundamental to overcome current interpretations. These latter do not seem plausible any more. Therefore, they may provoke serious misunderstandings in the way we look at these sites, and in consequence irreversible damages in restoration actions resulting from erroneous interpretations.

We believe that our reflections may also be useful to colleagues working on prehistoric architectures in other areas of Western Europe, where these kinds of problems have been discussed for a long time. Some very general and fundamental issues are at stake here: above all, our guidelines for interpreting “archaeological data”. So, the main goal of this paper is to articulate very general issues (how to approach the remains of “monumental architectures”) and particular ones (the presentation of our own area of research) in a summarized way. We think that the attention to the particular is unavoidable to build general ideas, and vice-versa.

Key-words: “monumentalized hills”; “architecture” and the construction of socialities; earthen architectures.

Resumo: A longa experiência de escavação da colina de Castelo Velho de Freixo de Numão (V.ª N.ª de Foz Côa, Portugal) por Susana Oliveira Jorge, da Universidade do Porto (de 1989 a 2003), mostrou que este tipo de sítios do III/II milénios a. C. – habitualmente designados na Península Ibérica “povoados fortificados” – exige uma perspectiva completamente nova. Eles são basicamente grandes colinas monumentalizadas, cenários construídos. Seriam concebidos como uma espécie de microcosmos? Seriam construídos para criar e reforçar coesão social e identidade comunitária? É possível. O que parece certo é que eram pontos importantes num território. Também as suas estruturas principais eram arquitecturas de terra (provavelmente de terra empilhada, mas podiam ser também um tipo de muros de taipa) assentes num embasamento de pedra. Assim, incluem-se numa longa tradição da arquitectura mediterrânica que chegou ao presente. Os autores deste artigo apresentam uma série de reflexões sugeridas não só pelos resultados das escavações (realizadas desde 1998) do Castanheiro do Vento, mas também resultantes de uma mais demorada experiência da região. Aquela estação arqueológica de altura pertence à mesma tipologia geral (uma espécie de “estilo arquitectónico”) de Castelo Velho e, fora da região, de Los Millares (Almeria, Espanha) ou Vila Nova de S. Pedro / Zambujal / Leceia (Estremadura portuguesa), entre muitos outros. Para superar as interpretações mais correntes são fundamentais escavações em extensão, perspectivas interdisciplinares, e, acima de tudo, novos modos de olhar estas arquitecturas na sua especificidade. As interpretações mais comuns não parecem hoje plausíveis e podem provocar graves distorções interpretativas que se traduzirão em destruições irreversíveis no momento de se proceder a restauros.

Creemos que as nossas reflexões podem também ser úteis a colegas que trabalham sobre arquitecturas pré-históricas noutras zonas da Europa ocidental, onde estes tipos de problemas têm sido discutidos desde há muito. Estão aqui em causa algumas questões muito gerais, e fundamentais: acima de tudo, as nossas linhas de orientação na interpretação dos “dados arqueológicos”. Assim, o principal objectivo deste artigo é articular questões muito gerais (como encarar os restos de “arquitecturas monumentais”) e particulares (através da apresentação da nossa área de pesquisa) de uma forma sumária. Pensamos que a atenção ao detalhe é indispensável para construir ideias gerais, e vice-versa.

Palavras-chave: Colinas monumentalizadas; arquitectura e construção de sociabilidades; arquitecturas de terra.

*"It is true that there is not much useful literature
in the archaeological anthropology of architecture.*

*I don't understand why the topic has been so
neglected, when it is obviously so central to understanding
past societies, but there is clearly a big gap to fill."*

Tim Ingold

2006 (pers. comm.)

*"(...) We may indeed describe the forms in our environment as instances of
architecture, but for the most part we are not architects. For it is in the very process of
dwelling that we build."*

Tim Ingold

2002, p. 188

*"It is by being dwelt-in, not by being constructed, that some portion of the real
world becomes an environment for people.*

...

*"Thus every act of building is but a moment in a continuous process of dwelling.
This process (...) is one through which persons and their environments are reciprocally
constituted, each in relation to the other."*

Tim Ingold

1996, pp. 115-116

"(...) the past that we evoke is just the present that never happened."

Vergílio Ferreira (Portuguese writer)

1969, p. 95

*"On one hand, we need "to give back to data [the given] all their resistance" and,
on the other hand, we need to recognize that the data [the given] of the theories and
hypothesis is a "domesticated one."*

Maria Filomena Molder (Portuguese philosopher)

quoting **Fernando Gil** (Portuguese philosopher)

2006 (in "Actual", 25.3.06, p. 21)*****

0. ARCHAEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, LANDSCAPE, SOCIALITIES, CONSTRUCTIONS: SOME SUGGESTIONS

At a first sight, we might say that in general the history of mankind presents itself as a process of externalization or objectification, of "making explicit" in the environment, of a series of features that have transformed the way people act and think, in the very process of being made by humans. We are not talking about an

***** Fernando Gil (1937-2006) is one of the most important Portuguese philosophers, recently deceased.

inscription in “the material world” of ideas or meanings previously thought, or conceived in the “mind”, as common sense and many theories assume as obvious. We are saying the contrary: human action and thought are not complementary, but one and the same.

Cumulative development and history have created the environment and mankind as we presently know them. Some “steps” in that “process” – from a very particular point of view – could be isolated schematically: “graphic” and “architectonic” activity of all kinds, modeling and remodeling “physical spaces” with signs of human presence; later, the appearance of writing, which detached messages from contexts of action; then alphabetic writing, which allowed the expansion of writing to some very restricted elites; much later, printing, connected in our Western world with the public importance of the book and education, and the technical reproduction of all sorts of information; and finally the personal computer tied to later capitalism and modern individualism and globalization.

Clearly, this story is very much a Western-oriented point of view. Our interest is to comprehend, against this background, the importance of building some kinds of restricted/bounded spaces/places in later European prehistory as devices for, among other things, the creation of knowledge, that is, for the establishment of a division between “those who knew it all” and “those who did not know”, or, at least, who were “allowed to know only a part of it”. Making restrictions to movement is also to set up regimes of order and concealment. In other words, our last concern is with power, with politics. How were humans “divided” into different categories which turned out to be, in certain times and places of history, so incredibly separated, to the point that some of them became kings and even gods? Archaeology is for us a way to explore these kinds of questions.

It is obvious that, as any other person or scientist, we, archaeologists, as subjects in quest for meaning, are situated in the present. The “present” around us – as perceived by us – is a space, a “landscape”, an environment full of references and memories. It is in a “physical” representation of that environment (a map, for instance), as we face it today, that we trace conventional geographical boundaries: our main field of study.

Normally, when we conceive a research project, we try to use, as a basis for that conventional definition of a space where we are going to concentrate our efforts of survey / excavation, a “geographic zone” that may seem relatively homogeneous to us.

Any concept like that is obviously contingent, subject to constant revision.

As any area of the territory is in a continuous process of transformation – and, as prehistorians, we want to imagine past landscapes, socialities, and experiences – we tend to base ourselves, when we start by defining boundaries to our research, in

what seems to be the "more permanent features of the ground": those that we call today the geomorphological ones. Obviously, that very idea is highly debatable.

But in fact this option does not involve any sort of "presentism", any naïve idea that "in the past" people looked at those features (admitting that they were there) as we do now. To the contrary, we do not search for that analogy; we just need to choose an explicit, commonly accepted, point of departure, as when our colleagues the mathematicians, for instance, take some axioms as a base to develop their reasoning.

Our way of acquiring knowledge is a process of continuous feedback between fieldwork and library/laboratory work. We move continuously between more visible action (besides being intellectual, it is physical) in outside space (body in movement; team work) and less visible action (intellectual activity; work in isolation or in small groups) in home/university space (body seated).

What kind of knowledge is that? What are we intending to understand? The answer to these questions vary from archaeologist to archaeologist, because they – questions and answers – imply a theory, even if this one is only implicit from the beginning.

Both explicit and implicit theories are rooted – as every process of human life – in unconscious assumptions of the subject, of the observer. The "isolated observer" is an abstraction, an illusion. Everybody is included in a system of social relations and he or she is the outcome of regimes of learning, where the production of "scientifically valued arguments" – through the "education of attention" and the embodiment of a series of practices – is the result of a continuous dialogue with others.

Therefore, what each one of us try to demonstrate as "true" – his/her discursive act – is the outcome of a particular position in that system of practices and beliefs. It is an historical product, as much as an individual one – but it seeks scientific validation in a community of peers.

Scientific rationality is the effort to objectify those above mentioned assumptions, and discursive acts, together with the "methodological choices" that derive from (or are connected to) them, in order to establish that community of people interested in the same field of knowledge. Such a community of scientists is a net of subjects intending to compare their assumptions, observations, conceptual networks, conclusions, etc., in order to permanently verify the rationality of each team's results, records, and interpretative proposals. Objectivity is this apparently contradictory process of accepting contingency and at the same time of trying to go beyond our present assumptions.

In our opinion, the knowledge we archaeologists try to get is of two main kinds. But these two aspects shall be oriented in order to overcome the common dichotomy between synchrony, statics (space) and diacrony, dynamics (time).

First, we want to give a meaning to our environment, to the “landscape” (seeking to understand it) as a display of continuously changing features, i. e., as an experience of variability, and also as a whole, including what Ingold (2002) calls its temporality. In other words, to “organize” space, its places and circuits into a coherent (although open) explanation, with a certain density and consistency. This one involves the consideration of time; not a “singular, universal time”, but a pluralistic one (“temporalities”) (Shanks and Tilley, 1987, 211). Second, we need to build models or explanations of what happened before us (the “past”), i. e., to explain our current situation as humans alive, people with memory (individual and collective). However, in reality present, past and future are modalities of the same question/experience, as they are inseparable from a consciousness of what we are (or of what of think we are) as communities, groups, or individuals.

How is it possible, for instance, that we, westerners, have become so peculiar, not to say exotic, or strange, to our own eyes? This implies self-reflexivity, separation from our common beliefs, a process of decentralization. Is this way of self-questioning common to all humans, or is it characteristic of our intellectual tradition? Why should it be so?

In other words, this means not only to map space, but to “organize” time, and to try to get some trends out of the image we have of “human experience”. Traditionally, organizing time, in our culture, has an ultimate goal: to tell a story, to establish a sense of continuity from a mythical “origin”, to “show” how mankind has evolved through a series of episodes until its present state. But evolutionism and neo-evolutionism are ways of understanding “the past” that seem not “function” anymore. They are a heritage of Enlightenment.

We should actually avoid this evolutionary “utopia”: “there can be no universal histories” (Shanks and Tilley, 1987, 211), but multiple, specific and even conflicting ones. Yet, that is very difficult, or nearly impossible for us; that “revolution” is yet to be done. We can not conceive of ourselves, or survive, without prospecting and retrospection.

Certainly, as long as we live in this kind of order, people will need some type of overarching, generalist view, consistent with the present globalized world, where Western models of thought – at least, at a superficial level – seem to impose everywhere. But if that approach is to be admitted as a contingent view –, made, in fact, of a complex negotiation of multiple perspectives, and not of the imposition of ours to the other’s –, that may be a step ahead.

Actually, we can not ignore that public opinion asks archaeologists for a comprehensive narrative of “history”. That is part and parcel of a process not so much of justification, but mainly of conceiving alternatives, of “making sense”, of the progressively complex, changing, and mostly chaotic world where we live. We

need to be open to a multiplicity of histories, not to keep in command, as colonizers, but to unfold opportunities for dialogue, as peers.

As Tim Ingold (pers. comm.) told us recently: "there's no need to throw out history; we only need to think of it differently. Linking it to development, we can understand it as the process through which people, through their activities, affect the conditions of development for themselves and their successors. We find this sense of history in Marx."

When we engage in these tasks we must try to overcome old dichotomies that are obstacles to clear reasoning. We should dissolve the separation between "historic time" and "geologic/evolutionary time", "culture" and "nature", "society" and "environment", "matter" and "idea", functional and symbolic, biology (genes) and culture or learning, etc. (Oyama, 2001; Ingold, 2001; 2002). The refusal of these polarities should not drive us into a sort of implicit valorization of any of those dichotomous poles. Pragmatically, we need to avoid those traps. Clearly, it is easier to say this than to put it into practice.

We believe that we should adopt a monist approach, assuming that the physical, the reality of the objects, the material, from a human point of view, are in a continuous dialogue with thought, with project, with anticipation. In that line of reasoning, the concept of "material culture", for instance, is misleading (Ingold, 2001). Externalities and interiorities are abstractions; in fact, we have action. Not only isolated action – or individual – centred action, as it is presented to us in many discourses produced by our modern, individualistic society – but also collective action.

How was action organized in each point of time and space? That is our crucial question, one of the movers of our quest. So, archaeology is inevitably also philosophy, as it is anthropology: not as separated fields, but as different traditions, historically separated ways of thinking.

Therefore, it seems not enough to say that the continuous process of dwelling is a reciprocal interaction of people, or human beings, and their environment. We need to face a fundamental problem to understand that (including the action of building): in which regimes of sociality were people acting? What kind of human beings were "they"? This means enlarging the frontiers of sociology, history, anthropology, philosophy, etc., avoiding the simplifications of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries' theories.

We can not remove social relations, power relations, etc., from our explanation, connecting only ecological psychology, developmental biology, phenomenological theory, and an approach to social anthropology. The result of that (suggestively), may be incomplete.

We refer for instance to the seminal book by T. Ingold (2002), in which (p. 312) he quotes an idea of Wolf (1988): to use the concept of society "is not to denote a thing but to make a claim". We agree. But we need simultaneously to

propose an alternative, in order not to create a vacuum. Small scale societies, or oral societies, are expressions that do not satisfy us anymore; but we need to use some concept which stands beyond the abstract, a-historic idea of the individual.

We have expressed this concern of “divorcing people from social relations” to T. Ingold himself. In his opinion, that criticism would be not fair. And he adds why, in his opinion (pers. comm.): “It comes from viewing my starting point through the lens of an ontology that I reject – namely one in which persons are bounded entities, and in which “the environment” is set apart from “society”. In my view, the environment includes both human and non-human others, while every person is not a bounded entity but a specific nexus of growth and development within a continually unfolding field of relations. Thus persons and relations are one and the same: they are the paths along which life is lived.” We agree with that, and also we know that is impossible for a single author to review all the problems of anthropology: we have all a long way ahead.

So, “before” and besides the existence of what is commonly called “societies of writing”, before and besides “societies” regulated by a dualist philosophy like ours, and coeval to them (until present times) most people lived, thought and felt differently. That difference was not just a difference from us – as if we were the reference for all the others – but a radical difference and variability in itself. We never have the last word in anything, as if we were the masters of the world – not just in economic, but also in interpretative terms. Most of our anthropological and archaeological knowledge is in a process of remaking itself.

We know that in certain points of space/time minorities started using ways to objectify rules, norms, everything that formerly used to be simply made, not verbalized. In other words, some elites have created a regime of communication that was independent of memory, proximity, kinship. That was an enormous shift in each case. It is the conditions that led to that shift that we need to understand, case by case. Therefore, we shall give paramount importance to (infinitely variable) regimes of sociality and to specific contexts of action which differ so much from our modern, “literary” ones.

How can we imagine the different, the variously alien to us? Archaeology being not fiction, but precisely the opposite (a will to know beyond “my” illusions) the sort of imagination we need to use is framed by a context of the production of evidence, the rules of establishing “facts” that may be shared by a collective, or by a community of other scientists.

We may adopt two “maxims” of Shanks and Tilley (1987, 211 and 212 respectively): “the past exists not as the past studied in itself but represents a project in the present”, and “choosing a past, constituting a past, is choosing a future. The meaning of the past is political and belongs to the present.” But those ideas just serve us to see the immense tasks ahead.

So, we must objectify our subjectivity, we must turn our impressions, our intuitions, into the so-called evidence, or "proofs", i. e., into verifiable "documents". Notwithstanding, frames and documents are subject to discussion; they are not stabilized "truths", but they are themselves in a constant need of a meta-justification. A "fact" and a "theory" are relational poles within a discourse of multiple scales. A fact is always a theory of a lower scale reality, and a theory a fact for a higher level of abstraction.

When we walk or work in the field, "inside" a landscape, we are having continuous sensorial / intellectual experiences. We need a way, a method, to organize those experiences/observations so that they may be useful to our research. Although conscious that the contemporary importance of the sense of vision, of sight (implicit in the very concept of "landscape") is a matter of debate when we want to use it in other contexts ("view" or sight as an idea is by no means an universal, as anyone knows), we have chosen to privilege it in the archaeological field methodology that we are currently carrying on.

The reason of this choice (as a practical decision) is three-fold. First, we assume that we are definitively modern observers (and therefore it would be absurd "to divine" what senses our "prehistoric ancestors" valued more in their lived experiences). Not only can we not escape (even if some may still have that delirious and absurd desire) our own "culture" – since as archaeologists we put into practice not only a methodology but an entire field of research which is completely modern (Thomas, 2004) – but also that very omniscient project would be nonsense. To know "how the past has been" is a question of the present, not a problem of the past; "the past in itself" never existed.

Second, to apply the same criterion to all of our "record" (our object of research) is the only possible means of comparing its components, never dismissing the hypothesis of trying any alternative method, at any moment, or in the future; this conversion is made easy by our current technical means of data collecting, storage and treatment.

Third, can we in any way separate sight (vision) from other senses, like hearing, for instance, and to imagine that in "prehistoric societies" "they" were more sensitive to hearing (or whatever) than to vision? What kind of absurd generalization would that be? As Ingold (2002, p. 156) writes: "(...) ethnography suggests that people in non-Western societies do not regard vision and hearing as radically opposed, but rather as virtually interchangeable. (...) For many, vision remains paramount. But it is a vision that is non-representational, a matter of watching rather than seeing. Like hearing, it is caught in the flow of time and bodily movement. One can, in short, dwell just as fully in the world of visual as in that of aural experience: indeed for the most part these worlds are one and the same."

So, we stress again that we do not want "to recover" the feelings/senses of

“our ancestors”; that generalization, taking as reference the so-called “pre-modern societies” as an homogeneous entity, has no significance.

As Ingold (pers. comm.) told us recently: “I agree that we can’t simply lump together all ‘non-western’ cosmologies/ontologies in opposition to a ‘modern western’ one. But what we can do, I think, is to seek to close the gap that has been erected, in the history of modernity, between being and knowing (ontology and epistemology). Simply treating multiple ontologies as objects of anthropological comparison merely opens the gap again, turning them back into “worldviews”. That is a good suggestion: we are “making archaeology” in every act of our lives, and above all during our leisure times. As long as we live and experience the world, if we are really concerned with archaeology, we finally have a good idea, we find a useful start, a pregnant sentence. But we need to solve the opposition between work and holiday, simply embodying the “archaeological problems” as questions that sooner or later “seem to be born” spontaneously in our own “mind”... In other words, we need to overcome the common sense-daily organization of our own time. An “ordinary life” does not make a good result easy, or even probable.

We need a rational, plausible way to organize the present reality before us, here and now, a way whose usefulness lies in the fact that it may be corrected at any time. We “progress” by discarding the less plausible ideas, not by building “truth” piece by piece, as in a puzzle, i. e., in a movement towards a finite goal. To move ahead it to see in a clear way, not to reach “truths”.

That “reality” – which is inappropriately called “archaeological record” – is sometimes labeled “material”. So people talk often about “material culture” with a surprising conviction. And, for processualism – especially the first versions of it – the “archaeological record” was a static reality from which, through scientific methodology, we should be able to reach the vivid, dynamic reality of the past.

Coming progressively from the “remains”, the material signs, to the entire unfolding of the “truth”, of the past, of “societies” in the very process of living – that would be, and still is, for many, the nostalgic and positivistic horizon that drives them into archaeology.

That is the heart of the myth of our discipline: like life-savers, archaeologists should be able to breathe air (“mouth-to-mouth resuscitation”) into the dead past, bringing it again into life. A God’s or a Prometheus’s task, in fact.

In prehistoric communities, as in our own, an intimate sense of empirical reality, embedded in action, was / is crucial for social cohesion (order, stability, collective identity) and individual integration (personal well-being and identity). But in this or that “prehistoric” way of living, daily experience had to be very different from ours, or even completely alien to our own. Thus the first and continuous task of today’s archaeologist is to strip common knowledge; if he/she wants to reach

a plausible interpretation of "the past", i.e., of the archaeological reality, he/she must be in an attitude of permanent critical watchfulness of what seems to be self-evident. The main task of the archaeologist is not to say how the past has been; but, to the contrary, why it could not have been so and so. Here, and elsewhere, improving knowledge is more a process of discarding than of accumulation; obviously, we never return to the point of departure, as each "departure" is always dependent on all the previous experiences.

Ingold (2002) and others have underlined the need to overcome the conceptual dichotomy nature / society mentioned before. We agree with that. So, we think that it makes more sense to talk about socialities rather than societies (prehistoric or otherwise), although, sometimes, we cannot avoid the explicit (or implicit) use of the latter. The concept of society as a stable, useful entity, is being dissolved by sociology itself (Urry, 2000).

How could "societal rules" emerge and work out in oral, relatively small, not only pre-capitalist, but stateless communities? We lack a general name for those regimes of sociality... or types of environment (in Ingold's sense), and that very lack is significant.

In what ways should we imagine the process of constitution / reconstitution of a system of "social cohesion", cooperation and exchange (that is, of power over individual subjects or small communities) having a certain scale beyond the "local group"? Again, a very problematic concept.

Can we conceive a system capable of mobilizing considerable amounts of people/energy for communal tasks – and thus having an elaborate ideology capable of superimposing the mere "local", "daily" routines – but not based in the state, nor in formal rules/laws, or even not in explicit goals? But is it not misleading, to talk of a "local group" as a given, a good point of departure? What is a local group, anyway? One of our rhetorical devices to make heterogeneity homogeneous. How are we to conceive of socialities capable of building huge monuments without projecting into their minds our own, based on a project/action dichotomy?

We are approaching some fundamental problems for "prehistorians" to solve. It is not a question of terminology; that is the problem – we cannot name it yet.

Shall "architecture" play here an essential role? Probably, but in this issue we need to be very cautious.

Actually, we think that the very way we currently formulate any questions biases and conditions the answers.

In fact, and in general, we tend to depart from the "minimal entity" (the individual, the ego, as in traditional kinship studies) to the larger one; but "individual" and "society" are two poles of our own current experience. They do not correspond to other ways of living and to other regimes of cognition. Even in our

society, the isolated, self contained individual is simply a myth.

A system of social relations, based on classes, or on kinship, or on both (classes do not erase kinship-based behaviors, but integrate them into different logics), or whatever, is always a system of differentiations, of distinctions, of classifications. The social role of each individual and community is ascribed by a situation which never departs from zero, and that is always in a process of transformation. A community is not a sum of individuals, but an entity of larger scale with some “emergent” properties. But these properties are contingent, not derived from universal models or cross-cultural comparisons. On the other hand, these properties are never pre-determined by any previous “invisible structure”. So, the question is complex. “Society” and “individual” are not very useful ideas to think in later prehistory – and not, perhaps, to think at all.

On another hand, “agency” and “action” in general seem to be too much abstract as concepts for helping to understand the continuous “fabric” of socialities. Social relations are always potentially ambivalent, but the nature and scale of conflict is the important point to specify.

For instance, marxism tried to establish a general theory of history, of social change, based in a continuous difference, or tension, between interests within the communities. But, can we apply to prehistoric populations the very notions of “production” and “labour”, “value”, etc., inspired by modern capitalist society (“forces of production”, “labour value”, “social relations of production”, etc.)? The answer is clearly no, although we think that in each theory, in each author we may find inspiration to search for our own way. The work of Marx is obviously fundamental. The point was and still is in its forced adaptation to “pre-capitalist societies”, to use a common expression. The problem is that an overall approach like that is, probably, misleading in itself.

We need to rebuild, piece by piece, a contextual theory of social differentiation, power, etc., – i. e., a theory with infinite versions, each one adapted to the circumstances of the regimes of sociability under study.

And we need to discard the nostalgia of a general theory of universal history (although accepting historical narrative as a first hand approach for purposes of simplified knowledge and initial learning), because inevitably we would fall again into the fallacies of positivism and of overarching views. This totalitarian ambition is the ideological face of imperialism, even when it presents itself as anti-empire. A politically engaged archaeology is open to a level dialogue with all the other versions of “history”; it is necessarily not authoritarian; to the contrary, it is based in a ethics of equal sharing, in a deeply democratic conviction.

The very attention to the variability of “cultures” would be in fact the only way of embracing them all – to control, to dominate, to manipulate, to reduce

plurality to unity. Alternatively, we should abandon a metaphysics of totality and try to replace it by a practice of "local knowledge"; but we know how difficult that aim is, as long as totality is inscribed in our matrix of thought. We do not admit limits to the expansion of a knowledge whose "ethos" is to be expansive.

In the next sections of our paper we will address again this crucial question, adding some more thoughts on it. But let us develop here some general suggestions.

The question is a philosophical and a sociological one. We think that our main difficulty of imagining "past action" remains in the fact that we tend to see every "society" as a mirror of our own. That is, as basically composed by the "association" of individuals, by small units (through kinship systems, etc.), then grouped into larger and larger communities according to a growing quantitative and qualitative scheme: domestic unit (hut, house, hamlet), then a still larger village' community, then a territory that may be composed of hamlets, villages, and other focal points, and so on.

From the smaller to the larger, from the unit to the compound, we naïvely apply a modern way of living/conceptualizing "the social" – the ideology/practice which is typical of the "society of individuals" (N. Elias, 1988). We commonly think "the social" as a "contract" between individuals, in whose privacy, intimacy, individuality, resides the ultimate rationality of human life. Nothing could be more "exotic" for most others' experiences. Using that spontaneous way of looking at them, we condemn ourselves to a meaningless effort, never understanding "prehistoric action", if this expression is to be admitted.

It seems obvious that, in spite of its contingency and fluidity, the "system" of social relations that "produces" each human being is – indeed, always was – in some way "prior" to him/her, and it is that very "system" that we need to try to characterize in the first place. Any person is born and is formed within a particular environment which we are accustomed to simplifying under the label of "culture" or "society".

When we move from "the social" into "the picture of life" in general, we use the same erroneous method. We want to find the house, the basic social unit "at home". The obsession with the house as an archetype and its supposed universal connotations (Bachelard, Rapoport, etc.) are well known. Climbing up the ladder, we have the hamlet, the village, etc., in a scale of progressive grandeur. There are marvellous images of "rebuilding and exposing" these domesticated views of prehistoric life, i.e., showing our society projected by the imaginary into a "state of nature". Prehistory seems to be the sentimental bridge over the mythical gap between us, humans, and wild nature.

When we find the so-called "archaeological record" (another positivistic expression!) (Thomas, 1999, p. 463) better preserved conserved better, due to its monumentality, we tend to explain it by exceptional reason circumstances: the ritual,

the sacred, the ancestors (level of the mysterious) or, alternatively, the fear, the need for security and survival, in a state of real or potential conflict (the functional connotation of defending each group's persons and goods from enemies).

Therefore, a sort of idealized "neolithic" life would be composed of three kinds of "scenes", captured (as in a cartoon or photo) by our imagination, and exposed in many books for children or in museum's discourses (by those curators that have understood that showing only "pieces" to people is completely useless, unless they are presented as "art pieces").

We all know too well the three common-sense scenes mentioned above: people quietly living their "daily lives" in peace (sub-liminal message), working and producing as good laymen and laywomen – projection into the past of the "economic man" (domestic harmony); people burying their dead, making their "art" or "monuments", praying to their "spiritual entities or ancestors" – projection of the "religious man" (cosmic harmony); and people making fantastic efforts in the construction of defenses or fortresses in order to defend themselves from "nature" or from external human attacks – projection of the "political man", in the famous line of thought that says that "war" (whatever its nature) is nothing but politics (whatever its scale) pursued through different means. Domestic and cosmic harmony menaced, and making all efforts to maintain itself in homeostasis.

Thus, it is no surprise that we find the following "holy trinity" of prehistorians continuously repeated in almost every discourse: houses and settlements (fortified or not) ("daily, common life"), ritual places/monuments ("exceptional moments of the living"), and, finally, burial places (the "loci" of the dead, or ancestors). This is just a slightly different version of the domesticated "pictures" mentioned above.

Monumentality is another feature which, being added in different proportion to the previous fields, would act as a trend or symptom of the process of moving from the simple (small, perishable, using "natural" pre-existences") to the complex (big, imposing, enduring, artificial). Easy access and free movement would be progressively constrained into physical devices settled in the territory (its centre or its margins), and these devices would establish distinctions between people and groups. Complexity of space would be homological to the complexity of "society".

Obviously too, we know that even in common discourse the categories above mentioned frequently overlap – in prehistoric times "they" mixed up everything, because, before the use of writing and the "process of individualization", "they were still too simple" (for a recent, intelligent, variation of this ideology of "primitive simplicity", very interesting in its own contradictions, see Hernando, 2004), compared with modern complexity and differentiation. Probably, we have ourselves fallen into this discursive trap throughout the present paper.

What we want to stress here is something that has already been underlined

above: that it was by and through "practical action" that socialities – social relations – were constituted. Today, and in the past, nobody is/was born or can/could grow in a vacuum, as an abstract individual. Everyone of us is in a way "the product of a system", and of a set of relationships and inherited rules where he/she finds himself/herself embedded as soon as he/she comes to life. But that statement is an oversimplification. Each person modifies the system, even if he/she does so in a minimal way; system and person are very simplified polarities, too.

In every social group, "people make themselves" through the performance of tasks (Ingold – 2002 – uses in this context the expressive term "taskscape"), developing skills. Each person learns a variety of ways of performing tasks, according to a variety of rules and of characteristics of materials, in a perpetual "craftsmanship" of the very community and the self. Individual and community are therefore intertwined.

A particular kind of activity is, in this respect, very important: the constitution of space and place, i. e., the mental/practical "fabrication of order" through the embodied relationship with the territory and its physical features, so to speak. The principals of those features are of the kind that we conceptualize today as geomorphologic ones, i. e. enduring and lasting. But humans, as other animals, are in a constant action in their environments; some of that active behaviour consists in what we call today the building of things, the crystallization of attitudes and meanings through objects settled in a landscape; briefly, to some sort of "architecture".

Note that we are not talking about human imposition of "cultural order" to a "natural landscape", or "domestication" of the "wild", as certain authors did (Hodder, 1990, for instance) or still do – that idea is something very typical of Western modern mainstream ontology. We respect very much the pioneering work of Hodder, but in this respect we are going in a completely different direction. Human beings – predominantly in pre-consumer modern societies, but also in this modern one too – are dwelling in the world, not occupying it as an objective commodity, or as a series of resources to be exploited. That is the ideology of capitalism, probably a shorter period in history than some would like it to be.

We are aware of the danger of conceptualizing what we, Westerners, call "architecture", as a universal, or trans-historic "sector of activity". Nothing could be more absurd. "Architecture" in a prehistoric context should never be envisaged as a triple process occurring in temporal succession: design, mental template or layout / effective construction or action of building, transforming the physical features of a given place / final construction or building "ready to use and re-use". To the contrary, as several authors have underlined (for instance, Lesley McFayden, paper given in this session) we have many observations which suggest that the important aspect was the very act of building/rebuilding/constant transformation of a place, not only in the sense of restoring parts of it, but also, in some instances, of letting

it decay. Hands and matter were – and are – in a constant dialogue, and the idea of building would be an end in itself, not predominantly a means to do something with.

Building was an activity within a particular regime of sociality, of exchange, of cooperation, of task division, of differentiation, and it is this point – why did it occur in each case? – that we need to comprehend. We should be able to question why some “layouts” appear to show a certain common “style”. This is mainly intriguing for prehistoric times, where the circulation of ideas was probably more frequent than we are prepared to admit; we resist diffusionist explanations, but we should work out new ways of explaining the appearance of similarities in the most diversified contexts.

What we are suggesting is that the process of tasks involved in the collective and continuous “physical transformation” of the territory could be holistically meaningful, and significant. To a point, building in the world was a way of dwelling in it, of giving it (including collective action) a meaning. But that meaning was probably not verbally expressed in many cases; it was just made, put into existence. So, community (social cohesion) and space (net of mnemonics for oriented action) were “built” together, as the same process, simultaneously involving identity and alterity.

In that line of thought, moments of “monumentalization” – the building of enduring, visible, permanent settings – may be a very interesting way for us, archaeologists, to understand the so-called “past”. But we need to be careful, because “monumentality” could be precarious and contingent, subject to continuous changes, plastic, and not associated with the permanence and prestige (to our modern eyes) of stone, for instance. People built things using earth, clay, trees, branches, etc – an enormous variety of forms. Sometimes they were searching for enduring, visible features; in other occasions, intentionally making contingent, invisible, or even “condemned” features, after a short period of “use”. The regimes of existence and ostensive display, and their reverse, were very diversified throughout time and space. They are not givens, they are problems to solve.

The following statements are just an interpretative hypothesis. Some, at least, of those moments of intensive inscription of signs and visible features in the territory may have been moments of transition. We are referring here to periods where collective and ostensive action could be important to reaffirm, or naturalize, relatively fragile systems of leadership, thus allowing “collective organization” to overcome a certain “status quo” and to get into a new “state” or “scale”, in order to reach a more inclusive, or even ranked, situation. This hypothesis does not imply – we hope – the acceptance of any “cultural” evolutionism or neo-evolutionism, whose traps are well known.

That means that we do not accept any “table of socialities’ regimes” establishing some sort of teleology, implicit or explicit, from “savage” or “simple” or “primitive”

to "complex societies". As we all know, this was the ideological and anthropological background of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' colonialism and neo-colonialism.

How, then, could the "history of mankind" be completed, traced from its own origins? This obsession with a total, overwhelmingly time-oriented narrative was not invented recently – it is a matrix of our own culture. But it raises a difficult problem indeed. Probably, we will never get out of that matrix; but many, feeling the impasse of the positivist approach to the past, live that as a nostalgic loss. They are always underlining what archaeology can not do, as they are continuously complaining of "missing links" and the "fragmentary character of the record". This is not common in other sciences! Instead, we should stress what are our real problems, departing from our capacities to solve them.

So, can we envisage a new "interpretative archaeology" of "stateless communities" without the "useful cane" of the neo-evolutionary social theory, with all its variants, the so-called Marxist influenced ones, or whatever? In an overarching way, we do not think so. We shall abandon the nostalgia of interpreting each site, each region, each temporal section using general labels. Shall we then turn to space, place, architecture, in order to find some "replacing system" to evolutionism, and to avoid purely casuistic explanations?

As suggested, that approach is useful, and it was exploited long ago. See for instance this suggestion of Shennan (1999, p. 882 – inspired in D. Kertzer), in the context of a discussion about the "social" significance of neolithic causewayed enclosures and, later, of henges: "(...) rather than suggesting that the monuments and their rituals simply legitimized the power of an élite group, it is at least as plausible to suggest that it was the process of building the monuments and being associated with the rituals within them which actually created the central power and the polity around it, as a newly imagined community perhaps based on a longer-standing feeling of common identity." That is, the very building of special sites could be a focus for collective action and collective action could be a base for the reproduction of the collectivity itself. Leadership would emerge in such a context.

But some care is needed in this contemporary over-valuation of "architecture". We all know quite well that the interest in space, place, and related fashionable subjects is one of the characteristics of post-modernity (in contrast with the valuation of time and history by modernity), consumer society, heritage industry, tourism, etc. And it is very easy "to tell a story about a site" to visitors.

For instance, working as we do on places like Castanheiro do Vento (see point 4 below), located on the top of a hill whose slopes were probably very important in the past and are now almost completely destroyed by agriculture and plantation, like an island lost in the middle of cultivated fields, we are collaborating in the building of a post-modern landscape. With time, even local people will show gratitude to

these seasonal volunteer workers who have put their village on the tourist map; and local guides will suddenly appear, with an incredible conviction, explaining to successive tourists coming out of buses what happened there five or for thousand years ago. Most of these people, eager to see other curiosities in the area, will accept any explanation, as long as they are allowed to take some pictures and circulate. People are nervous movers, these days; the tourist gaze is a fast one.

On the other hand, we shall not assume the human body/movement/perception of space as universals, and thus imagine that from that such a-historicity we may reach some clues to interpret “past materialities”. It would be a new deceiving illusion. Bodies are historical products, as is our relationship with places. So each one of us cannot imagine that in a certain way it is possible to “re-enact” the performances of prehistoric people, by walking, surveying, excavating, or whatever, now, in the field. It is with a certain disquiet that we see some colleagues just walking in the fields, taking notes and pictures, and making books out of that so-called “phenomenological experience”. The relative emptiness resulting from that kind of activity by the “nomad archaeologist” is sometimes compensated for by an imaginary landscape of spatial/cosmic senses directly pasted there from the brain of the so-called archaeologist.

Suggestions coming from diverse fields are welcome – theatre, dance, and performance studies are very interesting, in the sense they may suggest possible ways of validating our experience as archaeologists, and also reinforcing ideas about what we should not believe. All of these approaches are very important. But more crucial is avoiding the positivistic obsession with “retrieving the past”, and continuing to develop more and more demanding and open archaeological research.

1. THE MYTH OF “REBUILDING THE PAST”, THE PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLICS AND THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXTS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

We need not only to get rid of positivism, but also the nostalgia that was left in its place when it disappeared. “The past as it happened” is a myth of that positivist ideology. That past never happened – it is not exactly a re-presentation; it is in fact in a process of continuous becoming.

In his pioneering book “Time, Culture and Identity” (1996) Julian Thomas writes, criticizing processual archaeology (pp. 88-89): “Something of the past is missing from spaces and places investigated by archaeologists, yet that *something* cannot be regained by method alone. [...] If human beings no longer inhabit the spaces we excavate, we must *put their bodily presences back*, through interpretation

(...) which (...) is not a reconstruction or a recovery of a past meaning, but a plausible account produced in and for the present."

This is just a fragment of an elaborate discourse, which in general is very interesting. However, are not these sentences still reminiscent of a certain feeling of loss? In other words, shall we say that in our science, in our study, something is lacking, something is missing; when the other fields of knowledge are constantly proclaiming their conquests, their progresses, even if they refer to very tiny bits of reality? In a last analysis, who decides what is missing?

There is no "real" past, just as there is no real universe, or geographic space, or biological reality: instead, a system which produces validated knowledge, a knowledge that is the outcome of a series of useful conventions, shared by the community, and useful to our sense of equilibrium, of coherence, as humans living in the world. And we are in a transitional epoch, where the general models of knowledge are changing, even in biology and medical sciences (see Oyama, for instance).

So, by definition, the past is a model, an interpretation, a perspective that is (and always has been) in a process of eternal transformation, and its "truth" is happening in each "now".

Past, present and future are constructs of the mind which orient us in our particular trajectory: to allow us to map ourselves in a coherent whole, making sense of our present living, and of the options we are daily forced to take. History, too, has that character of an ordered narrative that gives sense "a posteriori" to our collective memories. Without personal memory and collective history life would not only be absurd, but impossible to live. But that not mean that we adopt some sort of restoration plan.

The past is liquid, like identity. We need it, individually and collectively, but in a state of permanent reflexive re-construction. It is like domestic work: something that demands daily effort and never ends, never comes to a frozen point.

It is not only acceptable but expectable that the layman and those who are not archaeologists ask us for a coherent and complete explanation of "everything that happened before our lives". Children in particular raise the most direct and troubling questions, because they want "to know it all", the whole story; they want us to provide an explanation for each thing. Children love stories like adults, because we never loose, fortunately, that level of marvellous, fairy-tale kind of dreams that make our life possible. And young ones have not yet had the time and have not reached the maturity for experiencing doubt, ambivalence, liquidity, uncertainty, loneliness, and fear, like an adult does; they live in the secure regime of truth, of evidence. They ask us the impossible, as they live under our protection, to have the time to learn by themselves and to acquire their own protective shields.

But, if we think about this, we do the same with our colleagues in other

disciplines. Sometimes we raise questions that may make them smile. Not because those questions are stupid or clever; most of the time they may be interesting. But our colleagues know the complexity of each of their fields, the genealogy of questions, the frame and net of concepts needed “a priori” to make sense in their discipline. Each field of study demands a long preparation, and can not be approached naïvely. It is a protocol for formulating pertinent questions. A meaningful question is the outcome of a long process of maturation. That is why so many people prefer to stay in the passive position of the spectator: they fear to lose “their image”, to reveal more than a mere ignorance. To admit an ignorance, a gap of knowledge, is the privilege of those that know already that they know enough to allow themselves to be exposed to the criticisms of their interlocutors.

Obviously, these questions all raise the problem of the transmission of scientific culture to the non-scientists, especially in an epoch where knowledge – all knowledge – is said to be potentially accessible to everybody. We are in an information and communication age, they say, and we repeat. But sociologists know that this is not so easy as it seems; and even the layman experiences a certain uneasiness when his “opinion” is asked for in the street by a reporter. Most questions today are not primarily a matter of opinion, but of knowledge which sometimes is very difficult to access, because it implies time, research effort, and the intersection of many sources of information. Knowledge is a very prized commodity.

To imagine “the past” conveniently (indeed in a pluralistic, open way, i. e., not only admitting the possibility, but expecting different versions of it), we need first to remove many myths and apparent evidences that shaped our minds when we were children. That deep layer, in its general structure or layout, was not erased by higher education; this last one consists, most of the time, in simply making a “common ground”, accepted as obvious, more complex. We project into the past our current values and habits, even before being conscious of mental processes that make that projection “obvious”, inescapable. Such an archaeology is not prepared to be taken seriously as a partner in the field of social sciences. It is too naïve, and too much turned into itself. It does not dialogue enough with recent developments and debates of all the other fields of knowledge.

For instance, what is meant, in fact, by a concept so commonly used as “house”? Is this a universal device, corresponding to a universal “need”, the need of a shelter? If yes, are we going to trace its origins back to “Adams’s hut in paradise” (or, if you want, into the “first” shelters of Palaeolithic men and women) down to the contemporary, modern and post-modern block of apartments, with their flats, or urbanizations of villas, for instance?

Many archaeologists speak of houses (and search for them) so eagerly and so easily as if they were obvious universal objective realities corresponding to univer-

sal "needs." Ingold, in his work (2002), refers to this phenomenon, deriving from the "naturalization" of supposedly universal needs, and so does Jean Baudrillard in one of his very important books about modern consumer society (1981).

The idea consists in the conviction that human and non-human living organisms share "material", biological needs, that are in many aspects universal and, in any case, "previous" to what in humans would be the extra-somatic means of adaptation, i. e., "culture". This one would become, with time, more and more complex, but its common feature would be "the artificial", a layer superimposed on the naturalized and objectified world.

The main goal of "prehistorians", bridging this gap between the "natural" and the "cultural" would be to find the traces of the "origins", i.e. of an epoch where men and women, being still "natural" creatures in the constant struggle for survival, had already jumped into the next qualitative step, the "cultural", even if only in a very tiny way. We do not need to remember that the determination of this "pathos" moment is a "topos" of constant debate between colleagues, together with the general discussion about the two competing models of evolution: the "slow motion" one (change is progressive) versus the "dramatic" one (change is a process made of steps, or moments of qualitative and fast change, followed by "plateaux" of continuity).

On the other hand, many colleagues make a distinction between simple "occupation" (they talk about "occupation levels" or "layers", for instance) and "settlement". That conceptual division seems to assume another obvious evidence: in some places people just went through, or stayed for a while (leaving only very scattered traces), like temporary camps; in others, they installed themselves for a longer time, and assembled in large groups. So, we shall expect these last places – except in the case of later destructions or as a consequence of any other "post-depositional" mechanisms – to be bigger, or contain more "evidence", more "remains", then the sites which correspond to a shorter or more nomadic stop.

The simplicity of this way of reasoning is obvious. But any simple explanation attracts because, although mistaking the complexity of things, it gives an impression of certitude, elegance, and self-confidence that is impressive to certain minds. The simplest solution is normally the best candidate to the truth, say some of our colleagues in the labs. On the other hand, a "back to the basics" emphasis is always an appealing style in times of fast communication. Common people, politics, tourists, media reporters and current students are waiting for the same: an easy answer, so that they may leave for other activities or subjects. We have come back to the old prestige of the rapid answer: hesitation is a sign of weakness, of a lack of competence. The good performer models his/her activity by the promptness of the advertiser: he seeks to seduce instantaneously.

We repeat: we can not rebuild what never existed. The past is a product of our

imagination, the imagination of each “present”, of each person, of each work team. That imagination may be called a “scientific” one, in the sense that it submits constantly to the criticism of other researchers who share the same rules of observation, description, and interpretation (three processes that do not run in succession, but in parallel).

It is obviously true that the Enlightenment, and particularly the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, created the conditions for the emergence of history as a “scientific knowledge” which developed many rules and procedures in order to get rid of the regime of “belief” and to establish a “positive” history, proved “to have existed” through documents submitted to a protocol. But that is only a very general common sense idea. Nobody would accept a lie, but everybody knows that many truths compete to present themselves as “the better truth”.

Actually, the fact that we can show that certain things have occurred, and others not, and so “improving knowledge” (discarding too simplistic explanations), does not allow us to imagine that anytime in the future we will “know it all”, replacing God in His omniscience.

Each historic narrative is itself historically situated, intentionally written, and its effects are very powerful as they claim to have the exclusive “truth”, or at least a strong probability of it.

Each historian knows well that the first thing he has to do is to study the very contexts and conditions of production of former “historical explanations”. Why should some of his former colleagues be so certain as they seemed to be about their discoveries, ideas, interpretations, so as to present them as true, or self evident? The rhetoric implicit in certitude is much too visible.

Assuming that history is necessarily a perspective, that it must be anchored in documentation, and that it must make sense and be rational (so in a certain way cumulative, and submitted to peer review), we may even accept that it pursues “truth”, as long as we define “truth” as a plausible interpretation, as a product itself of a certain discursive regime, i. e., as a contingent reality.

So, we need to envisage “truth” in a relativistic fashion, which does not mean to level every explanation/observation to the same plane. To the contrary: the need for a continuous criticism of proposed interpretations is a direct consequence of the impossibility of reaching any definitive stage of stability, of certitude. That is the “ethos” of science, in opposition to positivism, which tried to replace religion by a kind of authoritarian science, discarding to a different plane, the artistic/aesthetic one, the manifestation of imagination and personal feeling.

It is obvious that archaeology, history, philosophy, and all the other social sciences mutually influence themselves. The crucial point is to assume that a theoretical underpinning, or prejudice, exists in all configurations of knowledge; in particular,

the process of explaining realities where humans intervene is inevitably tied to an implicit or explicit theory of what it means to be human and to live in a social system. Values of common life are very much implied in every product of our work. Projection of those values into other "moments" in the past are almost unavoidable. But all science, when we reach its very foundations, is based in unproved assumptions and philosophical "takes for granted".

So, by principle, social sciences are not more or less "ideological" (based on "unproved beliefs") then exact or natural sciences. Every knowledge is settled on axioms. On the other hand, reality is not divided into essentialist sub-realities or "fields", each one with its particular path into knowledge like a sort of peculiar attachment.

The point is that concepts and products coming from applied biology, physics, chemistry, or mathematics may have an enormous and direct economic impact in a sophisticated society like ours; to the contrary, social sciences develop reflexive thinking, which is useful for the governance of that complex society, but may also introduce polemics and controversy, thus interfering with the political agenda. Politicians are always repeating the same slogans to the committees they invite: technical advice (ours) is one thing, and political decision (theirs) is a completely different one – their business of (giving us the impression of) anticipating the future.

The main difference between the two artificial fields produced by the scientific system ("heavy sciences" and "soft sciences") – divided, we are more useful to the system – is that to think about "human affairs" (including scientific production of any sort) demands a certain amount of sociological, anthropological, philosophical education. A long way to run, if we want to reach some sort of "original" piece of thought.

This is not asked of "current scientific work", which is mainly descriptive and repetitive, be it done in laboratories or in libraries. But a person with a background in human/social sciences is conditioned, by the very nature of the university system, to "think about" his/her own action as a citizen and as a producer of knowledge. To "think too much" in a lab would obviously interfere with the chain of production that the lab needs to assure, due to the amount of money involved. Also, to raise too many problems in the preparation of, say, a PhD, is a direct way to a never ending path; so people are submitted to the "fa presto" productivity system.

Archaeology is mainly a domain which prepares young people to work for the heritage industry and rescue excavation. Research is a very long, expensive, unproductive process from the point of view of a late capitalist, liberal, consumer society. So, why should this system spend more than a symbolic portion of the national budget to fund archaeological work? The welfare state is the past, and the consumer tourist industry is developing each year; this industry does not need to be fed with a

complicated past – that is a waste of time and money.

In giving more and more of that small portion of finance resources to rapid rescue archaeology, the current system reinforces itself, serving heritage/tourist industry, and at the same time it is helping to develop a new kind of archaeologist, perfectly adapted to the post-modern environment. That archaeologist, not having enough funds for a slow, careful, long research programme, i. e., to real research – may be tempted to develop a new profile: he/she may for instance concentrate in writing (sometimes very interesting) books and in becoming a (sometimes famous) author.

This does not mean that his/her books have no interest; to the contrary, leisure from continuous excavation is fundamental to think, to elaborate ideas, to write before coming back to the field. But in the long run, the separation of a practical, rescue, applied archaeology (with funds but no time) from a theoretical one (with time but no funds) consistent with the logic of a neo-liberal economy, is fatal to our work. Needless to say, this is to become an accomplice in a very unsatisfactory situation.

In fact, the “quality” of archaeology – for instance, its capacity to import and export ideas from, and to, other fields of knowledge and intervention, and to influence public decisions effectively – is dependent on structural, organizational aspects. If a continuous flow of information and discussion is not assured between practice and theory, practice tends to become a routine, called “technique”, and theory tends to import concepts from other disciplines (showing how the author is “clever” and “informed”), rather than to create and export proper “fresh knowledge”. The maintenance (and acceptance by archaeologists) of this two-fold situation is, in our view, a perverse one, although it is far from surprising in the present context where we live.

In poorer countries like Portugal, where a modern system of survey, storage and retrieval of archaeological information never existed, the situation is especially tragic, because most of our “archives” (archaeological reality) are being destroyed daily, and in general rescue surveys and excavations have a very debatable scientific output, to put it nicely.

To be considered as serious work, archaeology, like any other “scientific” knowledge, should obviously submit to a continuous task of self reflexive validation and criticism, and, having reached a certain level of self-consistency, should be open to all the other fields of research. Also, it should not be done only in a nationally-based organization; archaeology should no longer serve nation-state tourism exclusively, but it should be engaged at a broader level (in our case, the European one, of course).

As we all know, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work is something very difficult to accomplish, especially in the current conditions. We all try our best with “some help from our friends and colleagues”, because after all science is an activity

area where volunteer work is still a reality; indeed, people understand that only by helping each other can they expect to do something interesting.

In short, let us say that archaeology has always been in a continuous process of "loss of innocence"; in that it has no singularity. In the European continent, positivism and descriptivism (fear of "theoretical" discussion, associated in certain minds to a useless "philosophical" activity, in the pejorative sense) certainly left a deeper mark than in the UK or the USA. Culture-historical archaeology is dominant in many universities. Thought inspired by rigid "Marxism" (contrary to the very richness of the work by Marx) it is still alive in certain places (Spain, for instance). And all this panorama is here and there mixed with some problematic views coming from a processualist and even (more rarely) a post-processualist inspiration. Computer applications, very useful indeed, serve sometimes as a screen to cover a certain absence of "deep" (a word out of fashion) discussion of ideas. Like many other technologies, the belief that they may produce results by themselves is wide spread.

Open circulation of different ideas in a Europe divided into so many languages and nationalisms – and increasingly confronted with problems of multiculturalism and different sorts of extremisms and terrorisms – is still very difficult.

Perhaps (let us be ironic) we should learn more from behaviour like that of international financial organizations, and try to adopt a little bit of a similar capacity of moving fast, beyond national (and mental) boundaries, and becoming what we have ever been, Europeans, but in a new, more effective, way.

What sort of way? And now, this is serious talk. A cosmopolitanism open to diversity, dialogue, solidarity, and to all peaceful religions, beliefs, and "cultures" that are part and parcel of Europe itself, isolating extremisms of any kind. Nation states were (and still are) based in archaeology to reinforce their identity, which they ostensibly exhibit in museums.

Now, in a global world, archeology could serve a different and very generous goal – the diversity, complexity and richness of all peoples, regions of the world, times and nations, concentrating efforts in international projects of common interest for many citizens. We ask of readers a certain concession to our optimism or naiveté.

2. THE MYTH OF THE "FORTIFIED SETTLEMENTS"

Everything imaginable has already been said about prehistoric precincts and monuments of all sorts, existing all over Europe. For Britain, see for instance Thomas 1991, chapter 3 (a brilliant piece of work). We have also modestly contributed, in several previous papers, to that flow of discourses. So, we are not going to repeat and comment here on what has been written.

The general impression is, as always, a feeling that very few sites are completely excavated and published. Information is scarce and we tend to compare things that are obviously very different from each other. But the complexity and heterogeneity of the subject has been appropriately stressed by many authors, like M. Edmonds (1999), for instance.

Here, we prefer to concentrate on the particular kind of sites to which the place that we currently research belongs – Castanheiro do Vento. As a consequence of that choice, we recommend the book by Susana Oliveira Jorge (2005) as a very important one; unfortunately, for an English reader, it is in Portuguese. That book is not only about Castelo Velho (a similar site 11 km to the west of Castanheiro); it traces the evolution of research of more than a decade at that site, but it has a much more broader interest, because it discusses in detail all the questions that we try to sketch in this paper.

We do not want to focus on a particular site, just by itself; the interest of a systematic research like this – with the amount of documentation that it produces every year and the problems of recording, interpretation, conservation, etc., that it raises – is to offer us a certain number of resistances, of enigmas, of occasions and circumstances for intellectual elaboration and collaboration; it is a shared experience of a team composed by people that concentrate on this unique and intensive job – for a short period of time: one, two, or three months in a year. The elaboration of the documentation produced is – will be, we hope – a never ending process.

Reduced to a small part of itself by many destructions, Castanheiro do Vento is still a site worth of careful attention; its research is also in a certain sense the suite of the work done by S. O. Jorge in the above-mentioned place of Castelo Velho – since 1989. Otherwise, if it was not excavated now, Castanheiro would probably have the same destiny of the greater part of our territory, from an archaeological point of view: it would be purely and simply removed (totally or partially) by the “modernizing process”.

We want to emphasize the following point: no research project is ever finished; and the study of a site like this is necessarily a collective job.

When we look at the information already recovered at Castanheiro, we immediately understand that its “architectonic style” has obvious parallels in the south and south-west of the Iberian Peninsula. Many names of famous sites come to our mind, including Los Millares in Almeria, southeast Spain; and Vila Nova de S. Pedro (Azambuja), Zambujal (Torres Vedras) and Leceia (Oeiras), all the three in Portuguese Estremadura (Lisbon region). Every archaeologist working on the prehistory of the Iberian peninsula knows these sites well. They are often quoted in archaeological literature, although Vila Nova (for a time considered as the typical site of a “culture”) was never conveniently excavated.

The common feature of all these sites is the fact that they are placed on prominent positions in the landscape, often on hills. Los Millares is famous for the fact that it constitutes an exceptional, enormous archaeological complex, including a plateau with several "concentric" precincts and, beside them, a necropolis of corbelled-vault passage tombs. In the hills around the main plateau, several contemporaneous minor places seem to monumentalize "points of view" to the central area and to the surroundings. It is a unique place in Europe. An extraordinary setting indeed, which served as a knot of regional and trans-regional relationships.

All these sites exhibit stone bases (schist slabs in Castelo Velho and Castanheiro do Vento, basically) of walls that should be made out of clay. As long as we know, there are no traces of adobes, so common in all the Mediterranean area since Sumerian times. Thus, we could deduce that the method/technique of rammed earth would be applied. But some colleagues, including specialized architects, suggest a simpler method, saying that rammed earth would be much too sophisticated a technique for the time. We are not sure of that. Atlantic Europe, namely Britain, has shown how perfect woodworking in the Neolithic could be. So, people in the III millenium BC could perfectly well have built the wooden "box" (using planks) and other devices that the rammed earth method demanded. In this method adjacent sections of walls are made using a compacted mass of wet clay; when it is dry, a new section is laid on top, offset against the first course in order to strengthen the building.

The third alternative, i. e., a simpler technique of mere accumulation of clay on the stone bases to built the walls (perhaps using daub, or even wattle and daub) seems also likely. In any case, these sites were conceived as prominent features in the landscape, and they reveal a certain sophistication which would be better articulated, in our opinion, with a technique of the sort of the rammed earth referenced above. But things could differ from case to case, as it is very difficult to infer from the field observation what was the exact methodology used, at least as far as we know.

Delineating curves, or with rectilinear sections, these walls are also characterized by semi-circular structures, which look like round "protuberances" when seen from outside, generally called "bastions" (because of the former connotation of these sites with defensive precincts; we maintain the word but only in a morphological sense). They create a certain repetitive, typical "style", mentioned above.

These "round" structures, coupled to the walls, were covered by a roof, and their interior was an elaborate space, accessible from the inner areas of the precincts. Thus, a series of concentric walls with "bastions", and also entrances, some of them monumentalized (larger than the others, or coupled to round structures) were able to create a very peculiar setting.

The human effort implied by these constructions, which are all of the same general epoch (III millenium BC, sometimes with "extensions" to the IV and the II

mill. BC), was considerable. For instance, the construction in clay demanded enormous amounts of that matter, and also of water, not to speak of stone and wooden/vegetable materials. Permanent restoration of decayed areas of the sites would be necessary.

But more important than that: if we admit that a certain layout was built in a particular “phase” of the long life of these settlements, we have to accept the idea of a considerable concentration in time of people united by the same goal, and a capacity of command that would imply evolved “abilities” of leadership by some sort of elites.

These complex devices, located in prominent areas of the landscape, were commonly interpreted – and still are – by traditional functionalism and commonplace discourse as fortresses, as we have already suggested. This military interpretation, as Susana O. Jorge has shown in 1994 (see S. O. J. 2005), has existed in different versions according to the theoretical assumptions of the authors.

In fact, what could be the reason for such a considerable effort, except the protection of people (taking refuge inside the walls as in a Medieval castle) and goods from external attack? And what kind of goods were these? Diffusionists interpreted these “small castles” of their imagination as “colonies” made by people coming from the Eastern Mediterranean in search of copper. Later, local development was favored in relation to the previous hypothesis of external colonization. The fortresses would have been made and defended by indigenous people. Therefore, elites would promote these constructions in order to protect themselves and their goods (copper and other prestige or exotic materials, and stored food) against local or regional enemies. This last idea obviously implied a “state of war” of a certain scale in these old times.

Although explanations vary in detail from one author to another, there are some dominant trends. We may give two significant examples of current interpretations of these sites. One is taken from a guide for the visitors of Los Millares (Molina and Cámara, 2005), and another from a synthesis of this period – Copper Age – in Portugal (Cardoso, 2002). The authors of both publications, whose aims are obviously considerably different from each other, are very well known and qualified archeologists; and we have had the opportunity to discuss these matters with both, so we know their arguments directly and from their published work.

Basically, together with the enormous amount of information produced, they show that most of Iberian prehistory is still made in the frame of a “culture historical” paradigm, although sometimes people uses some terms and concepts that sound processualist or even Marxist. An eclectic approach, indeed.

We all accept that the important excavations of Los Millares, which were directed by Prof. Fernando Molina (Univ. of Granada) for a long time, are still very incomplete, because that archaeological complex is enormous. Also, an important

effort was made to understand the archaeological context of the site, but we need to admit that much more needs to be done.

Also, João Cardoso (Open University, Lisbon) is the excavator of an important site like Leceia, near Lisboa, one of the most extensively analysed prehistoric places in Portugal. But on the other hand we all agree that the state of the research on the Copper Age (survey, data bases, excavation and related work, publication, etc.) in our country is not enough developed to make a coherent and fresh synthesis of all the territory an easy task; the analyses made are still very incomplete, as in this case.

The criticisms that we may make here are in connection with general trends of the Iberian archaeology's research, which suffered very much from historical and political conditions in the twentieth century, and a dominance of positivism in universities and elsewhere.

Both authors mentioned above, and many other specialists who admit the complexity of the subject, seem nonetheless not to have had any doubt about the main "function" of this kind of sites: a defensive one. Let us remember again that Susana O. Jorge has shown in 1994 (see Jorge 2005, chapter one) that such a conclusion is difficult to maintain for a universe of sites which is characterized by its heterogeneity.

Los Millares is a multi-period complex, but it dates mainly from the endings of the IVth, and the III millenia B. C. (3.400/3.300 – 2.200). Molina considers it a main central place, located in an area with smaller "central places" and more common sites, and controlling a large net of relationships. The unequal importance of these Copper Age "fortified settlements", and the differences in social status within each one of them is, according to Molina, a consequence of several conditions. These conditions were: the limited areas suitable for cultivation in southeast Spain, provoking processes of competition; the tendency to the accumulation of wealth by animal husbandry, and the concentration of the labour force in some settlements, which made the mobilization of numerous people to agricultural tasks, or to monumental works, easier.

Social inequality and restricted access by the elites to power and wealth would have been consolidated through the specialization of certain centers in particular resources, like minerals (as copper, in the first place), the emergence of "agricultural" settlements dependant on the former (and paying tributes to them), and the control of prestige items, some of them (rare, in fact) coming from far away (like north African ivory).

Molina and Cámara invoke a "sacred ideology" to suggest the symbolism of the necropolis adjacent to a place like Los Millares. The apparent scenic effect of regularity of the mounds would mask the differences of status of families or groups buried there (as stressed by Chapman in 1981).

Two disciples of Molina, in a useful paper about conflict in the IIIrd millenium in south-eastern Iberia (Aranda and Sánchez, 2004), work on the usual tautology of this “doxa”: although the fact is that the management of conflict is admittedly complex and “polysemical”, these kinds of sites are fortifications, so they prove the increase of conflict. And as the authors conclude (p. 269): “The process of social complexity documented throughout the late prehistory of this area [southeastern Iberia] demands the valuation of certain aspects, such as the specialization of material and social means and resources for the development of violent conflicts, the organization of complex defensive systems (that are authentic symbols of power, and that concentrate the settlement systems of certain areas and the exploitation of their resources), the emergence of specialized weaponry such as arrow heads, the probable development of groups of warriors or conflicts between social groups having different levels of wealth but living in a social context that is apparently communitarian.” The argument is a little bit obscure, but it is easy to understand that the authors try to maintain at all cost certain ideas that are, for them, unquestionable.

João Luís Cardoso (2002), on fundamental points, has no doubts too, namely about the “well succeeded” Copper Age economy. He accepts Sherratt’s idea of the Secondary Products Revolution (as do several other colleagues working in central/southern Portugal – see for instance Soares, 2003). The “new technologies”, together with a demographic “explosion”, and a diversification/specialization of activities allowed and required an increase of productivity, the occupation of, and the competition for the most fertile soils, a storage of surplus, and economic interactions between distant areas of the country.

All these changes brought about an instable social ambience, with some people more favored than others in the same community, and with different communities displaying inequalities in wealth. The resulting tendency was for groups to invest energy into the fortified settlements, which where the places were they felt comfortable in a world of disequilibrium. These monumental devices were also prestige symbols, reinforcing the group’s cohesion and identity, marking their dominion over the surrounding territory, and serving to dissuade potential enemies. The author accepts the traditional distinction between three main kinds of sites or areas of activity: the domestic, the ritual, and the funerary.

So, in short, differences in wealth (intra- and inter-community) brought fear and conflict; and this state reinforced the individuality of each group in a competitive world, leading to the building of fortresses of various sizes. Those differences were based in land productivity and not in metallurgy, which is relatively late in Portuguese Estremadura, for instance, although the author admits that in certain areas – like the Guadiana valley – the precocity of metallurgy and the availability of copper could have played an important role in the building activity.

In other regions, like the high Mondego basin, the coexistence and complementary role of the hill fortresses and stable settlements, located near fertile soils, seem, in his view, acceptable. This second kind of site would have no natural or artificial defenses, and in some it they may have represented the continuous occupation of lands where competition was probably not so intense as in Portuguese Estremadura.

On the other hand, the High Alentejo – and the adjacent Western Andalusia – raises a particular problem with its huge defensive sites surrounded by ditches. Perdigões (Reguengos de Monsaraz – with c. 16 hectares), Monte da Ponte (Évora – with ditches and walls), Porto Torrão (Ferreira do Alentejo – having between 50 and 100 hectares) and La Pijotilla (c. 100 hectares) are very peculiar sites. Like with the hill ones, smaller examples are also known.

La Pijotilla (Badajoz) is included in an enormous valley of fertile soils, surrounded by hills. Unfortunately it was very much destroyed in recent times.

In many of these sites, we need better information about their detailed setting. For instance, the case of Los Millares and its surrounding hills. The 13 complementary sites found on them would have been not so much fortresses, but the outcome of the monumentalization of "observation points" over the main site in the valley below. These Copper Age populations were indeed concerned with particular ways of looking from a distance into particular spaces. For us, the presence of "windows" in certain "bastions" (Los Millares, Zambujal, etc.), normally called "embrasures", may be better interpreted in this line, if we consider the possibility that in the Chalcolithic they were not making "castles" or "forts" which seems to be more in our imagination (full of infantile stories of medieval heroes and fights) than in the complex reality itself.

In fact, much of what has been written about "war" or "conflict" in prehistoric societies is based on a common sense philosophy and sociology, sometimes too simplistic, mixed up with accounts taken from some "ethnological descriptions" of modern "primitive" peoples that are not useful for understanding prehistory. The main reason for this situation is the lack of interdisciplinary formation for many authors working in these matters, whose basic ways of reasoning come from current general history or natural sciences. Very obvious and simple explanations may be comfortable for some of our colleagues, but not for those who are not satisfied with these conventions, taken for granted. Obviously, new ideas and perspectives are emerging in Spain and Portugal, as a result of a more intensive work and of a better knowledge of foreign bibliographic sources (see for instance Jorge, S. O., 2003; 2005).

Conventions and dogmas were finally blocking the progress of interpretation, i. e., the development of science. This one is more about doubt, than certitude – doubt opens to more acute thinking, certitude closes its possibility. Nothing in this world is definitively obvious, "nothing is written about" the past in any kind of "holy book". "Too coherent" explanations are probably wrong, or useless.

3. THE MYTH AND PRESTIGE OF STONE WALLS

As we have seen, roughly speaking, some prehistorians still like to divide up the subject of their study according to a naïve classification: places where people lived (settlements), places where “they” made “special things” (sanctuaries, temples, “rock art” sites, monuments), and places where “they” were buried after death (tombs).

That is to say, the territory of the so-called “daily life” (the space of routine, of the profane), the territory of prayer, ritual meeting and common concern (the sacred, the ritual, the special moments of concentration of people and “intention”), and the territory of the deceased.

Everybody knows that each site is a site, each context a context, and each landscape is a landscape. Nothing repeats. Although the process of knowledge is always a process of reducing the particular to some degree of generality, we must be careful not to impose onto our imagination of the past a reflection of our own life and thought.

For instance, anyone would accept that “sacred” and “profane” (a dichotomy typical of our own culture) overlap in everyday life, anywhere. In many regimes of sociality, that distinction is probably useless and misleading.

On the other hand, the widespread notion of universal principles or ideas like information/ignorance, truth/fiction / material/ideal, natural/artificial, mythic/rational, war/peace, etc., introduces still further confusion.

Architecture is also used as a universal, like something which has to do with a more or less intense, enduring, and monumental intrusion of people into natural features, in order to reach some degree of comfort, harmony, beauty. It is, in that mentalist approach, something that starts with a design, an idea, and then is put into action by the process of building.

The idea of the prestigious stoned walls is tied to the military interpretation of many prehistoric precincts. But we know their variability, the diversity of their dimensions, of the materials used to built them, of their topography, etc., etc. They were never “finished architectonic objects ready to be occupied”, but constantly modified structures that were related to a very complex living process.

We have already talked about conflict. Evidently enough, conflict has many scales and aspects – and, particularly, so does war. They are historical processes.

Yet, as one of us (VOJ) has stressed elsewhere (2005; we reuse here some thoughts expressed there) some pre-historians still seem to suffer (even if unconsciously) from a sort of “Asterix village” syndrome when they attempt to interpret many architectonic places of prehistoric Europe as defensive enclosures, the so-called fortified settlements. They thus add one problem (“fortified”) to another one (“settlement”); that is to say, they join up two concepts as if they were self-evident. From this perspective, in order to be protected from enemies, sedentary populations,

especially if they had some stored valuables (food and/or prestige items), critically needed to erect walls around them, around their assemblages of houses/huts. And an important part of their labour was consumed by that pressing need. This is a straightforward solution for a complex question: the immense variety of architectures all over Europe, from the so-called Neolithic period onwards.

A wall needs to be enduring, imposing, discouraging for the potential attacker. Our Greco-Roman tradition (for a pre-historian, we are late Romans, as our western culture is obviously a product of an old Mediterranean mixture) has convinced us that stone (very carefully worked stone) has more prestige than soil, clay, adobe, wood, or whatever, in the making of a "nice" defensive wall, a clear boundary between the "domestic" and the "wild", between inside and outside, "us" and "them". All too often, we forget that the houses of common people were never made of "nice", expensive, stone, even in a Roman city like Conimbriga (near Coimbra, in central Portugal), for instance (Alarcão, pers. inf.).

Nor does it matter – according to the approach which we are criticizing – that for many of the so-called "primitive societies" this distinction "domestic / wild" would simply have no meaning; and, very probably, not to put it as a positive conclusion, the same could be said of prehistoric peoples.

As the stone is more resistant to erosion than other materials, the so-called "archaeological record" seems precisely to confirm that very same supposition. Which brings us to the perversity of some archaeology, or of many "observational sciences" for that matter: more often than not, the most important is invisible, it has disappeared, and therefore appeals to a particular kind of imagination, the scientific one.

The good scientist – as we have stressed throughout this entire paper – is a creative person, who "sees" things before he finds them, who "previews" the evidence before he/she can present it in an indisputable way. We run into more difficulties when we do not know what we are searching for; and we need to keep an open-minded attitude towards unexpected things. This is why "theory" (that is, a broad cultural preparation, including philosophy) is so permanently vital.

But for many, to find some interesting structure, enjoyable to the eye and choreographed as an institutionalized "past site" – especially in the southern European countries – is to find stone walls, as huge and as well-preserved as possible.

This prestige of the more or less "worked" stone – something enduring and imposing – is not obviously confined to "settlements": it extends to all sorts of monuments, namely the so-called "megalithic" passage graves.

Let us take, for instance, the traditional romantic aura of the dolmen chambers, standing now as ghosts in the middle of plains, despite the fact that in the past they were hidden inside artificial hills, their mounds. Who cares? Tourists like to see them in this way, their aim is to take pictures beside them, with a smile on their faces.

Let us also remember the “beauty” of some “cleaned” cairns after excavation (for instance, Puech, in Saint-Antonin, Tardet-Garonne, France – v. J. Guilaine, “La Mer Partagée”, Paris, Hachette, 1994, p. 261); we sometimes ask ourselves if they were conceived to be displayed like that, or if they corresponded otherwise to a quite different sort of design, even if the latter was not visible. The second hypothesis is the better.

Actually, in prehistoric sites many of the features that we now value were not meant to be visible, they were covered and concealed inside more complex structures.

The question is: are we not all too often “sculpting” some sort of “stone skeletons” or new installations of “land art” through the very process of excavation and “restoration” that we use?

The prestige of the stone, connected to stability, monumentality, resistance to time, and the disregard for the architectures using earth – by far the most common material all over the world – are certainly responsible for many destructions and false reconstructions. And not only in prehistoric sites.

In this aspect too, archaeology should accomplish the process of autonomy that has happened in its other fields: to get rid of the tradition of finding beautiful artifacts, art works, and nice sites.

Archaeology is not about the exceptional, but about common things – the environment, or the landscape as a whole, and the signs of human action within it. Excavating a site is to study its anatomy, not to search for this or that “beautiful” piece or structure, in spite of the joy we feel when, in a context of work, we recognize something nice or prestigious. Every archaeologist feels that passion, but underneath that his/her motivation should be of a different kind.

When, in a prehistoric building, we want at any cost to show the vertical, clean and beautiful walls, which stand underneath a complex structure of embankment, we have a tendency to see the latter not as a part and parcel of the architecture, but as a snag. Excavations are expensive activities that need to produce results (otherwise they will be stopped) – most future visitors want walls, simple things they can see and understand. They demand the past as a commodity. We have the unconscious tendency to conform to that demand. It is easier, it is less expensive, it pleases the heritage industry and the curators with its service.

But let us face the truth: if for instance we mistake that embankment – a sort of architecture very common in prehistoric times – for a fallen component (rubbish) of the supposedly stone walls, we will remove (destroy) the embankment and rebuild a (false) high wall.

That wall has never existed as such, except in some archaeological minds. We can see it in many photos of old publications, where we still notice the remains of monumentalized banks (several of the sites mentioned in this paper, for instance).

That "wall" and its embankment were a unit, and on that stone base a structure made of clay was settled, a structure which did not resist erosion, except in particular places. This situation is very clear to the informed excavator. Hence, the character of the so-called "archaeological record" (which tends to preserve enduring architectures rather than more perishable ones), the expectations of the "innocent" archaeologist, and the desires of the public and the "heritage" entities that finance the research, all converge to a solution which may be misleading.

So, we build a domesticated past, to make visitors interpretation easier, and we pack the postmodern landscape with more or less conventional pastiche structures and the popular books with "lieux communs". Everybody is thus happy. Tourism is served, even before research has reached a more serious conclusion. We come full circle, like the dental surgeon who would extract a sound tooth; until the time when the ill one would force him to repeat the operation.

4. CASTANHEIRO DO VENTO: A PLACE OF MULTIPLE EXPERIENCES

When we try to study the so-called Copper Age of the Iberian Peninsula (a conventional name for a conventional period of the Late Neolithic at a European scale) in order to put into context the results of our own research, we face many difficulties, mainly due to the very incomplete character of the excavations/surveys made and of the publications produced about the period.

In fact, precise details of the succession of the several steps of excavation – which are crucial as raw material for our work of re-interpretation – and of the reality of each site (its architecture and layout) are scarce. Obsessed with connecting each site, each layer, each special piece of material with something extremely general – culture, horizon, phase, process, etc. – people jump very easily from a general map to a series of plates with artefacts, seen as proving the general thesis of the author. Sometimes they give us also some precious plans or photos carefully chosen, some stratigraphic sections, some tables of pot's forms. In the meanwhile, the site itself, in its particularity, has disappeared – it became metaphysical, non-interesting.

Indeed, much of the archaeology we urgently need is about the precise "surgery" of sites, their detailed, documented process of analysis, in order to scientifically evaluate the quality and plausibility of the conclusions of our colleagues. Also, with these elements of comparison we are unable to reason, and we are reduced to some picturesque details of each site.

More than conclusions, or general interpretations, together with chosen features, taken away from their precise context, we need the "documents" that allow us to

rebuild the very process of others's excavations and observations. Otherwise, archaeology continues to be a matter of authority, sympathy, or belief.

That is why we publish every year the report of the excavations of the previous season, in the local journal "Coavisão" (property of the municipality of Vila Nova de Foz Côa); by its own characteristics it is not enough to spread in scientific forums, but it allows us to include more graphic documentation than any other journal. That report is the one that we are required by law to send to the Portuguese administration in order to be allowed to keep researching. But these kinds of reports should be more detailed than they currently are. They would force archaeologists to remain up-to-date with the results of the former campaign before starting a new one. Also, in our view, archaeologists should never have the permit to study several sites at the same time, nor to start new research before finishing the reports of the previous ones. It is the scientific status of our discipline that is at stake here.

Therefore, in the present paper we are not going to describe again the data recovered in a site which is already relatively well known; the interested reader will consult the respective bibliography, including the report of 2005's excavations (3 months season with a team of 20-30 people medium) (Jorge *et al.*).

Our intention in this section is to underline very briefly some recent ideas and questions that the site raises, not only by itself, but moreover in the hope that they may be of more general interest, for the understanding of the type of monumental settings to which Castanheiro do Vento clearly belongs: Iberian Copper Age monumentalized hills, with walls and "bastions". In fact, as archaeologists, we are always confronted with this continuous play between the specific and the general, the unique and the typologically characterized.

As far as we know, this type of site, or complex precincts located in focal points of the space, occur mainly in the south of Iberia, in a "Mediterranean" kind of environment, and thus the use of clay for their construction is not surprising at all. Now, the northern examples we know are Castelo Velho/Castanheiro do Vento in the Portuguese High Douro basin (a region with some characteristics of Mediterranean climate), giving the impression that this type of architecture "surrounded" (or was located in the periphery of) the Iberian Meseta, to put it in a very general way.

But that impression must be false. By this, we mean that in the Meseta the research done until now is not enough for us to have a clear picture of the problem; for instance, in the northern Meseta – as in many parts of Portugal – we do not have a systematic study of a prehistoric hill site like those we are trying to analyse in the Foz Côa area. Why should it be so? The answer is very clear and easy, but will take us some paragraphs.

Actually, the main reasons for that are, certainly, the inherent costs in time and energy of a work like this (15, 20 years or more of persistent research work by a

reasonably numerous team). But, more important than that, is also the traditional predominance in Iberian archaeology of a culture historical approach, which was adequate for small area excavations in order to recover stratigraphies and artefacts which were then used as symptoms of "cultures", "periods", "phases", "horizons", etc.

That is, theory and practice went together (as they always go) in perfect harmony, feeding each other. On one hand, to study a site is a demanding effort and calls for an enormous input of energy and money. On the other hand, archaeologists were obsessed by type fossils – namely pottery, but metal objects were always welcome – to create cultures, or horizons, that they could easily baptize with a new name, based on artefact types, and to which they could ascribe – in their cultural historical imagination, obviously – an extension in time and space. So prehistory was – and in many cases still is – something absurd for us now, but in which people convincingly believed: a succession of names of cultures and horizons, from time to time, from area to area, in order to fill the gaps of the historical narrative of succession, of lineal time. To reach that goal, some trenches in each place were enough (and fast to do) to obtain the artefacts for diagnosis. The attention was concentrated in abstract artefacts as if they could provide historically valuable information. So, archeologists used to jump from site to site, and papers showed, side by side with texts, general maps with dots and then a series of plates with "typical pieces".

Later, processualism understood how big that "gap" was, and how useless it was to keep looking at (searching for) pots and weapons, or even typical monuments, and tried to fill the vacuum with processes of social evolution, man-environment relationships, etc. In Spain – especially Andaluzia, it seems – a sort of "Marxist doxa" developed, trying to adapt the so-called "archaeological record" to an overarching view of history imported from modern societies and, in particular, capitalist ones. In general, it is not convincing.

However, that was better than before, overcoming casuistic explanations archaeology concentrated in objects. But as long as we do not have our job done (systematic work, including excavation, at a local and regional level – a process, by definition, incomplete, something like a never ending "weaving" task), or, at least, as long as we have not developed a more fruitful way – we can not articulate general hypothesis with particular observations.

Prehistoric archaeology in important parts of Iberia – at least for late prehistoric times – is still in its infancy. Questions have grown, the problems were amplified, but our field information did not evolve in the same rhythm. Taking "lateral paths" like those which sometimes are called "landscape archaeology" or whatever (in a more fashionable kind of "jumping activity" allowed by generalized accessibility and transportation), describing landscapes and personal feelings about their features, modern or old, without completing our basic work, does not seem to drive us toward

a the better way. We may produce suggestive hypothesis, and that is intellectually compensatory, but we still miss continuous work – which in Iberia needs to articulate theoretical debate with a criticism about the so called “hard data”. Undistinguishable, both go together in a spiral that makes us unfold new ideas and prospects.

To come back to the kind of sites we study, and that serves us a basis to reason:

- As we have said, the site of Castanheiro do Vento is a particular variation of an “architectonical style”. This “style” can be characterized by a sort of “monumentalized hills”, suitable for the possible (not to say probable) creation of visual effects according to the point of the landscape from which they were seen.
- The acceptance of the former hypothesis implies that “human dialogue” with the environment would include not so much the addition to previous “natural features” of many “artificial” ones, but a more or less dynamic process, without a beginning or an end, involving people and matter in action, socialities and environment in a mutual negotiation and fusion.
- The setting thus created should not be imagined as a static one, but something that would be in a process of transformation through time, probably alternating periods of relative stability with periods of relative change, or active transformation.
- Following the movement of outside observers in the space, those visual effects could go from almost total invisibility (site “melted” or hidden in the landscape) through intermediate steps, until total visibility.
- This “total visibility” could show the place relatively isolated, as a well defined volume, detached from its surroundings (in the case of Castanheiro, this view was/is ideally obtained from the hills located to its NNW).
- The internal layout of the top of these hills was a sort of “labyrinth”, composed by a series of concentric walls. Besides the main areas, these walls divided spaces, and tended to put an emphasis on the upper, higher leveled part of a hill.

This section is completed by the following one (5), and by the observation of the plates in the ending part; this paper, certainly longer than we expected, and more general than we wished it to be, must finish here. But, as the reader will agree, it could continue indefinitely. We promise to return to this dialogue with the Copper and Bronze Age monumentalized hills.

5. GLOSSARY OF CASTANHEIRO DO VENTO'S MAIN OBSERVED CHARACTERISTICS (AND ABBREVIATIONS FOR EACH TERM, I. E., WORD OR EXPRESSION) (see plates, especially fig. 4)

"Bastion" – B – we discard any "military" connotation of this word. It is a structure that generally has a semi-circular plan (D form), inserted in the line of a wall, with "the convex side" turned into the outside area of that wall. So, as a volume, it formed like a "protuberance" of the wall; its occurrence in different and distant sites like Los Millares (Spain) or Zambujal (Portugal) creates an impression of a "common style" of these monumental complexes. As a "container" for the deposition of things, the "bastion" was accessible from the inner area of the wall. The interior space of a "bastion" (protected, or covered, by some sort of "roof" made out of perishable materials) could contain "micro-structures" of diverse kinds. That area was used to deposit various kinds of things. Those depositions (probably in a process of more or less constant change) would be very meaningful, because "bastions", as a part of a boundary (wall), were in a liminal position, underlining the contrast between inside (immediately accessible, visible) and outside. They occurred in the "main precinct" (walls 1, 2 and 3) (fig. 4, SBW1, SBW2 and SBW3) and, also, in the secondary precinct. Detailed analysis will reveal analogies and contrasts between "bastions", especially in their internal structures and depositions. They were like individualized cells. But we can imagine, as a hypothesis, that the monument (the site) as a whole was a sort of metaphor of the cosmos, and also at the same time of the ordered community (microcosm). Each segment of the community taking part in the building/maintenance of the general setting could afterwards be "represented" in a particular area of it. The "bastions" could have been one of the categories of those "particular areas". Obviously, this static view is misleading; negotiation and transformation of features and depositions could have been the rule, especially in some "transitional moments" of the "site's life".

Buttress – Bu – a structure, built of slabs and clay, against the stony base of a wall, as a support of it. Possibly, in most cases both base and buttress were not to be seen, because they were beneath ground level and/or they were covered with a clay revetment. Shape/dimension and internal form of buttresses varied, according to the adjacent structures, area of the site, and its characteristics in terms of declivity.

Buttresses are typical of many prehistoric constructions; but, as archaeologists are often called to (or themselves obsessed with the idea of) exposing the faces of "walls" – and these walls, being in perishable materials, do not exist anymore – they sometimes take off these buttresses in order to show a base made out of stones as a (at least in part misleading) kind of wall. Sometimes, with the lack of competent

restorers (because these specialists were mainly trained to deal with monumental structures, t. i., stone buildings) they collaborate uncritically with this kind of wrong interpretation and destruction of prehistoric/vernacular buildings, where clay (not stone) was the more important material used.

In Castanheiro we have observed some very well preserved parts of buttresses, showing systems of intertwined and mutually perpendicular slabs, embedded in clay, forming a sort of puzzle, adapted to the declivity or the slope, and constituting a whole of masses and forces in equilibrium. That skilled construction allowed their conservation, preserving them from erosion and damages of human origin (agriculture, plantation, etc.)

The buttress of a structure could be included in a wider space arrangement, and in this case it would be a part of a structured, monumentalized slope ("rampart", without any military connotation) for instance.

Clogging structures – Cs – We call so all the results of actions whose goal was to fill a previously empty space, closing it, making it inaccessible for future action or movement inside it. When we work in Castanheiro (like in Castelo Velho some years ago), and we clean the superficial layers of humus, the upper part (layer) of many conserved areas and structures (zones between walls, bastions, entrances, circular structures of various kinds) has the aspect of a filling of stones. This one appears like a "continuous layer" that (only preserved in areas not disturbed) would tend to fill all the gaps between convex features, before posterior destruction. We do not know if that "layer" belongs, or not, as a whole, to a homogeneous, hypothetical last "phase" or moment in the life of the site (we do not interpret these places according to traditional evolutionary schemes of "general phases" of "occupation/building"). We call those fillings of stones (and clay, very probably) "clogging structures", expression that we prefer to "condemned" or "closed" structures, because these last designations seem to suggest a functionalist approach. A very important point is the fact that, at least in the inner areas of those well defined structures ("bastions", for instance) where our excavations were more intense, the upper layers of stone were not a chaotic amount of blocks and slabs, but an organized filling, with a certain kind of order. In general, "clogging" was a part of a continuous process of "construction". That is very clear, for instance, in a narrow passage (entrance) turned to the east, in the wall 1 (fig. 4, e2): not only was its interior carefully filled with stones and slabs in an organized way, but the exterior closing of the entrance was monumentalized by a wall describing a perfect arc of a circle. Another example would be the inner part of "bastion" D (fig. 4, BD), where a series of parallel slabs suggested the form of a fish's scale.

Clusters of adjacent sub-circular or sub-oval structures – Clas – groups of small round or oval structures, located side by side, very close to each other, so that – in extreme examples – the peripheral slabs of the central one served also (on their opposite face) to delimit the nascent structure. Until now, we have had two main groups: one between two “bastions” of wall 2 (fig. 4, clas 1/2/6), and so inserted in the concave space between those two “protuberances”; and another in a transverse position, between walls 2 and 3 (fig. 4, clas 7/8/9). A third cluster seems to exist near the so-called “tower” (fig. 4, clas 11/13). These clusters of small “containers” (a word not used here in a functionalist way) clearly show – among many other features of the site – that the spaces between walls were intensively filled with structures, allowing multiple kinds of connotations, actions, concealment acts, etc. In other words, all the monument would be a place of intensity, a “locus” for the concentration and display of multiple “meanings”.

Entrance – e – interruption of a wall in order to create a way in and out. We insist that it is obvious that it would be misleading to look at these features – as well as any other part of the site – in a functionalist way. Entrances were intentionally placed; their form was more or less monumentalized, being in certain cases a narrow passage; complexity is also variable from case to case (inclusion of engraved stones, secondary walls added to the sides of the entrance, etc.); they could stay open for a while and then be closed; the “clogging structures” of an entrance could be as elaborate as the entrance itself, etc. Entrances are included in a general layout made out of barriers and circuits, in order to create a physical system of constraints to movement and a series of obstacles and, conversely, of facilities. People (bodies) approaching these settings from outside, for instance, would be forced, as in a labyrinth, to frequently change the direction of movement, if they wanted (if they were allowed), for instance, to reach the inner precinct. That would create multiple possibilities for playing with space. Entrances – as in many other contexts in time and space all over the world – were probably “liminal”, critical places, charged with intense “symbolism” tied to power and status negotiations. The archaeological analysis of entrances, showing how complex and monumental their clogging structures could be, is very important. It proves that these were not buildings to make and use as in our functionalist society, but instead they were a sort of communal devices that “served” “social cohesion/identity” and were being continuously altered, changed, negotiated, like stages of communal action/performance.

Main precinct – Mp – For the moment, it is only a hypothesis. We consider that the probably inner area corresponds to the upper zone of the site, where we are excavating what we call, by convention, a “tower” (?). If it exists, as is probable,

it may be surrounded by at least three lines of walls with “bastions”. So, it would be a complex precinct, different from the secondary one, smaller, and simpler, with only one wall in its periphery. The three walls are numbered from the exterior (wall 1) to the interior (wall 2 – in an intermediate location – and wall 3 – the inner one) (fig. 4, SBW1, SBW2 and SBW3). To reach the inner area of this main precinct (?), people would need to follow a relatively varied path, as noted elsewhere.

Micro-structures (small “containers”) – Mis – this is intentionally a very general, embracing concept. We call all the smaller features micro-structures (i.e., occupying a restricted space of the site) that use stone as a delimitation; they are in fact sub-structures of (or incorporated in) larger ones, like “bastions” or sub-circular structures, for instance. So, we include in this general category some features found in the inner space of “bastions”, like for instance small sub-quadrangular or sub-round areas surrounded by granitic grinding stones. Many archaeologists would interpret them as “fire places” or “ritualistic containers”, reusing former grinding stones for some practical or symbolic purpose. We reject this as a too-simplistic, functionalist interpretation (the symbolic being the opposite face of the practical). These “boxes” (“bastion” D, “bastion” F) or “niches” (“bastion” A) are obviously “signs”, i.e., as everything else in the site, they “make reference” to “other things”, they belong to a system of “transformations of meaning”. By this we intend to express the continuous agency of space and place according to communal “rules”, shared and/or negotiated between the members of the groups connected to this monumental device that we call Castanheiro do Vento. We try to avoid dichotomies like practical vs. ritual, which are projections of our ethnocentric mind. Those categories are not universals, but functionalist dichotomies of our contemporary “daily experience”. This point is crucial to the “interpretation” of even the smallest features of a site like this.

Secondary precinct – Sp – a precinct defined by a single wall, located in the SE extremity of the excavated area. Its position in a way “interrupts” the wall 1 (SBW1). Its plan is oval; it has entrances and bastions. Its study, like the rest of the site, has just started. It is interesting to note that it is turned into the south-east. It may have “functioned” as a sort of monumental “access” to the upper part (Mp?) of the hill site; obviously, this is just a hypothesis.

Stone base of a wall – Sbw – walls are the most important structural features of the site. Rectilinear or, as it is more common, curvilinear, they define the general layout of the exposed monumental area on the ground. Actually, what we find today is the base of the walls, not the walls themselves, which have collapsed probably in prehistoric times. They may even have collapsed before the filling of the “empty

spaces" by the "clogging structures", especially when those last ones have the aspect of "cairns", i.e., of accumulations of slabs and blocks. We admit that the walls were mainly made of clay (rammed earth?), a plastic, smooth material, suitable to the creation of round forms and imaginative spaces and volumes. Using clay, people needed to deal with the site mainly by modeling, by using hands and tools very carefully, and not by percussion, by "aggressive action" (as with the stone). Clay walls needed continuous maintenance. The base of the walls that we find is made out of schist slabs, organized in various ways and combinations. For instance, the external and the internal face of the wall may correspond to the extremities of slabs, forming a double, symmetrical line transverse to the main axis of the wall. Differently, in other parts or areas of the walls, long slabs were placed according to the main axis of the wall (and not perpendicular to it, as in the previous example), in its internal or external periphery. The question about where the base of the wall (made of stones, to avoid the contact of the clay with the humidity of the soil) ended, and where the "real" wall (made mainly of clay) started, is controversial, and needs to be connected in each case and context with stratigraphic data. This "division" between base and wall may have had different solutions in the site. Probably we should not assume that it was a sharp distinction. Parts of walls made of stone, near the base of compartments, for instance, especially if they were coated with clay, could well exist. That does not contradict the general fact that we are dealing with an earthen architecture.

"Structured slope" or "embankment" – Ss – This is also a question which is not yet studied enough in Castanheiro do Vento; we only know that structures of this kind – the monumentalization not of plateaux, but of slopes – exist in certain areas of the site (NE, north). An example of an enormous "monumentalized slope" of this type was studied in the neighbouring site of Castelo Velho (southern slope). Anyway, we should distinguish between two probable and different situations. These two situations correspond, respectively, to the "moment" when the site was more intensively built or rebuilt, and to the "later moment" (if this is plausible) during which the site could have been transformed to a sort of bank of stones and clay by filling the "gaps" between walls and "closing" the previous "labyrinth", i.e. changing it into a more massive unity. The hypothetical character of this idea is obvious; we need to wait for the suite of the research. Anyway, in the north of Portugal (in the region of Trás-os-Montes, to the north of the Douro area where we work) other sites with "embankments" comparable to ours are clearly documented: Crasto de Palheiros (Murça) (excavations by Maria de Jesus Sanches, UP) and S. Lourenço (Chaves) (excavations by Susana O. Jorge, UP and Paula M. Santos, UFP, not published yet). The importance of this observation is great: because it underlines the fact that the hills as a whole were "the monument"; and that they were to be seen from afar, and

in particular from valleys located at lower levels. In this case, slopes would be critical to create an impressive setting, calling attention to the more concealed area of the upper plateau. In fact, as we know, any regime of visibility is also and simultaneously a regime of concealment. A display to impress and to distinguish people, to include and to exclude, to create identities and alterities. Both go together.

Sub-circular structure – Cs – any round structure with a certain size, of the kind that archaeologists call often “hut” or even “house”, according to a very broad mythology of these concepts as self-evident (the “domestic space”, the “domestic context”, and so on). They are defined by a more or less narrow “ring” of stones, which sometimes include grinding stones. In any case, their periphery is very different (much more narrow in size) from that of the main walls or of the bastions. It would not be possible to settle a large wall on it; so, the superstructure would be necessarily light, but roofed. Typically, they contain a more or less thick layer with very small plaques of schist. Especially when the area around these was more intensively excavated by us, we notice that their base is made of a very compact yellow sediment (clay) contained by a periphery of stones which tend to be disposed in a oblique situation forming a sort of “basin” or “box”. In most cases this morphology is already noticeable in the excavated top of the circular space (see fig. 8).

Tower (?) – T(?) – conventional name for a monumental and complex structure, with a general sub-circular shape, located in the possible inner area of the main precinct. It is currently being studied. (see fig. 12). We have also found a small round structure, made out of horizontal stones, inserted in wall I (near bastion D), that we have provisionally called a “tower” (fig. 4, t?).

In the absence of a common terminology accepted by the community of archaeologists for this particular kind of site, we need to be continuously inventing new terms, until our research and others’ stabilizes those concepts and interpretations (at least for a while).

6. APPENDIX: RADIOCARBON DATES FOR CASTANHEIRO DO VENTO

Neolithic, Copper Age and Bronze Age in Portugal (VI to II millenia BC) have been very much studied in these last thirty years, in comparison with the former long period of our archaeology. For instance, the reader will be surprised to know that thirty years ago we only had some TL dates and very few radiocarbon dates for sites of the periods mentioned in this paper.

The great improvement of Portuguese archaeology, after 1974's democratic revolution, was first a work of a generation of people (now in their 50's) who entered the teaching system and thus were "forced" to produce research in the logic of their academic careers in the universities.

A second generation, formed by that one, is now active. Even with the existing difficulties, a completely different scene from that of the past is now a reality, and many people are in a process of finishing their Ph D dissertations, or starting new ones.

The importance of the excavations of Castanheiro do Vento has already been stressed in this paper. Radiocarbon dates for the site are abundant, allowing a very general idea about its chronology, especially when used together with the dates for Castelo Velho. Obviously, only in a context of a future detailed monograph of the site can these dates be completely meaningful, each one of them for the particular context where the sample was taken.

We decided to include this appendix here, because it reveals data not published before, and also because some readers living abroad have difficulty accessing the local Portuguese bibliography (where we have already published more detailed information about the sites and the excavations, including 14C dates).

That said, the reader will understand why we have reduced our table to the basic items available, starting from the older dates and moving down to the more recent ones. For more details, consult the specific bibliography mentioned below (7.2). Here, we have simplified our stratigraphic observations into 3 main levels: 1 – superficial layers: soil with much humus and some scattered objects; 2 – sub-superficial, or deeper layers, in general connected with the main structures of the site, and normally presenting a yellow color; 3 – predominantly yellow colored layers, underneath the levels where the main structures of the site are included – we do not know if this very "general epoch" corresponds to a "pre-monumentalized hill", or not.

So, in general, as far as we know, the chronology of the site as a monumentalized place tends to concentrate in the middle/second half of the III millenium and the first half/middle of the second millenium BC. This corresponds mainly to the above mentioned "stratigraphic" level 2, in our simplified scheme.

As said before, we stress the fact that we do not know yet what were the activities undertaken in the place before that chronology (the above mentioned stratigraphic level 3); but it is probable that the main periods of "building activity" in the site fall inside those parameters, like in Castelo Velho.

We also have a concentration of dates in the first millenium BC. It corresponds to a completely different "use" of the top of the hill in a later date (when the old Copper/Bronze Age structures were already transformed and in a state of ruin), and

the activities in connection with that period (eight-fourth centuries BC) were not well-documented until now (production of charcoal?). These activities, and later historic ones (agriculture, etc.) until now, are roughly associated with our "level 1".

Program used for calibration: Calib Rev. 5.0.1 (Calib Radiocarbon Calibration program by M. Stuiver and P. J. Reimer):

Calibrated date 2 sigma cal BC	General provenence of the sample / Comments	Lab number
3400-2700	Interior of bastion D, attached to the external main precinct wall 1. Layer 2	Ua-22456
2900-2300	Interior of bastion D, attached to the external main precinct wall 1. Layer 2	Ua-22458
2886-2495	Bastion A, in front of the narrow entrance into the structure. Layer 2.	Ua-18039
2880-2490	Interior of bastion D, attached to the external main precinct wall 1. Layer 2	Ua-22460
2877-2582	Beneath bastion C. In layer 3, greyish sediments with large percentage of clay.	Ua-20455
2870-2490	Beneath the buttress attached to the secondary precinct in layer 2.	Ua-23432
2870-2470	Under the basal line of a massive "tower". In layer 3.	Ua-22455
2860-2460	Interior of bastion "F", close to the basal line. Layer 3	Ua-23426
2860-2460	Interior of bastion "D", attached to the external part of the walls, In layer 2.	Ua-22461
2860-2460	Interior of bastion "D", attached to the external part of the walls, In layer 2.	Ua-22457
2856-2464	Beneath bastion "C". In layer 3, greyish sediments with large percentage of clay.	Ua-20453
2856-2336	In the interior of the main precinct wall 1 in a area of stone structures, In layer 2.	Ua-18697
2856-2229	Interior of bastion "A". In layer 2.	Ua-18044
2855-2292	Beneath the basal line of bastion "B". In layer 3.	Ua-18695
2840-2340	Interior of bastion "D", attached to the external main precinct wall 1. Layer 2	Ua-22459
2838-2464	Beneath bastion "C". In layer 3.	Ua-20454
2787-2463	Beneath the basal line of bastion "B". ". In layer 3.	Ua-18041
2630-2450	Close to the internal face of the main precinct wall 2 (intermediate). In layer 2.	Ua-32081
2630-2340	Between stones of the butress of the secondary precinct. In layer 2.	Ua-32088
2624-2289	Beneath the basal line of bastion "B". ". In layer 3.	Ua-18696
2623-2457	Beneath the basal line of bastion "C". ". In layer 3, with carbon and faunal remains.	Ua-20452
2618-2348	Beneath the basal line of bastion "C". ". In layer 3.	Ua-20451
2580- 2309	Beneath the basal line of bastion "C". ". In layer 3.	Ua-20450
2577-2206	Beneath the basal line of bastion "B". ". In layer 3.	Ua-18703
2560-2200	Near the external main precinct wall 1. Possible area of combustion. Greyish sediments. Delimited by slabs. Layer 2.	Ua-23431
2492-2144	Beneath the basal line of bastion "B". ". In layer 3.	Ua-18702
2480-2200	Interior of a round structure (n.º3), in a area with burnished clay. It can correspond to the construction of the structure. All the sediments of the interior were very clayish and yellow, with no differences. Layer 2.	Ua-32080
2480-2200	Inside the main precinct wall 2 (intermediate),close to bastion "L". Layer 2.	Ua-32083
2460-2200	Bastion "E". In layer 2.	Ua-23429
2460-2140	Near a small structure located in a geminate situation with others. In layer 2.	Ua-32079
2460-2130	In an area of entrance of the bastion "K". In layer 2.	Ua-32084

2457-2035	In bastion "A". In layer 2.	Ua-18040
2457-2015	Bastion "C", close to internal main precinct wall 1. Layer 2.	Ua-18701
2446-2036	Interior of bastion "B". In layer 2.	Ua-18042
2310-1886	In bastion "A". In layer 2.	Ua-18043
2290-2020	In bastion "F". In layer 2.	Ua-23428
2280-1970	In bastion "E". Under a set of structured stones (mainly schist) that could be covered by clay. Layer 2.	Ua-23430
2140-1880	Interior of a structure (n.º6) located in a geminate situation with others. Layer 2.	Ua-32087
1956-1636	Interior of precinct, close to internal main precinct wall 1. Layer 2.	Ua-18694
1890-1680	In bastion "F". In layer 2.	Ua-23427
1884-1687	Interior of bastion "C", central area. Beneath a layer of schist stones. Layer 2.	Ua-20449
1880-1530	Interior of the secondary precinct in a level of dark sediments, corresponding to a combustion area. Layer 2.	Ua-23425
1878-1524	Under a combustion area between the main precinct wall 1 and bastion "B". Layer 2.	Ua-18700
1874-1520	Bastion "C" on a central structure, close to a <i>stelae</i> . Layer 2.	Ua-18699
1740-1520	Between stones close to the external wall of secondary precinct. Layer 2.	Ua-23433
1740-1490	Interior butress of the Tower in the inner area of the main precinct. The interior of this structure are not yet full excavated.	Ua-32085
1130-840	Top of the upper level of bastion "J". Between a level of small stones. Transition from layer 1 (much destroyed by roots and agricultural machines) to layer 2.	Ua-32086
802-542	Combustion area between the main precinct wall 1 and bastion "B". Layer 1.	CSIC-1807
770-400	Between internal stones of a clogging structure in passage 5. Layer 2.	Ua-22452
766-402	Bastion "B", near the internal face of the main precinct wall. Layer 1.	Ua-18037
764-258	Between main precinct wall 1 and main precinct wall 2. In an area of burnt stones. Layer 1.	Ua-18038
761-406	Exterior of bastion "B", nearby a combustion area. Layer 1.	CSIC-1808
761-230	Combustion area between the main precinct wall 1 and bastion "B". Layer 1.	Ua-18698
760-390	Between internal stones of a clogging structure in passage 5. Layer 2.	Ua-22453
730-360	Intersection area of geminate structures connected with a the Tower. Layer 2.	Ua-32082
550-200	Internal face of the secondary precinct. In an area of burnt stones. Layer 2.	Ua-22451
520-378	Combustion area between the main precinct wall 1 and bastion "B". Layer 1.	CSIC-1806
390-110	Exterior of bastion E. Layer 2.	Ua-22454

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Plate I

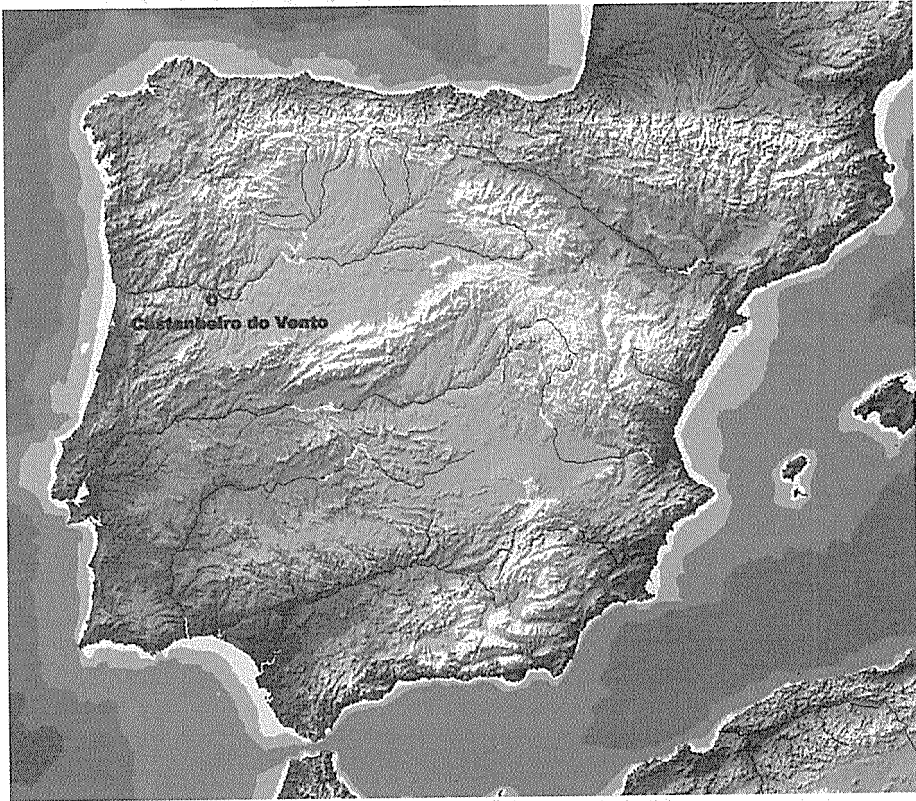


Fig. 1 – Map of the Iberian peninsula, showing the location of Castanheiro do Vento, in the Foz Côa region. It is immediately to the south of the Douro river, and to the west of the northern Meseta (across which the Douro flows).

Plate II

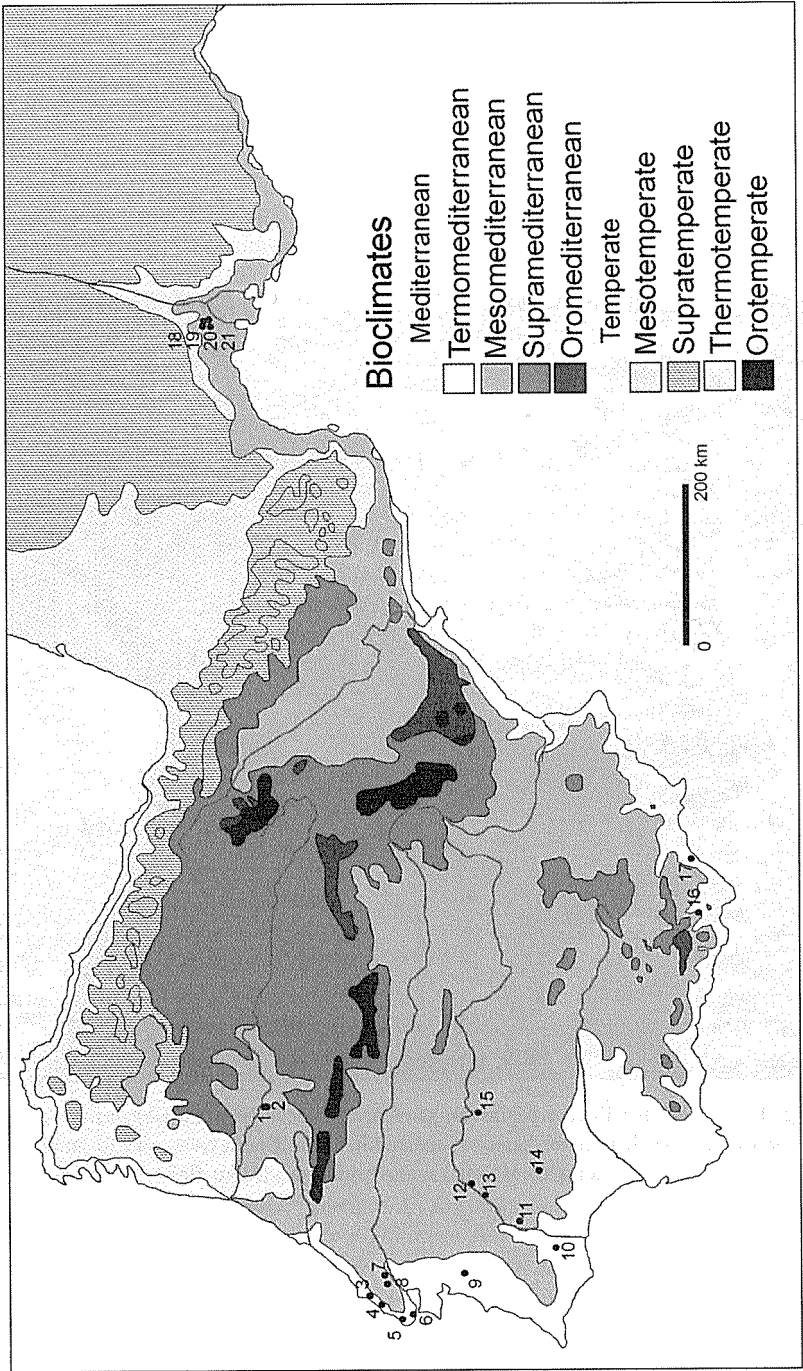


Fig. 2 – (See page 252) Map of West Mediterranean Europe, showing some important prehistoric places that seem to belong to a certain "common style": they are settings with several lines of walls (some of them with "bastions") and entrances, located in prominent (high) areas of the landscape. This "common style" seems to occur (from east to west) in the following areas: French Languedoc, Spanish Andalucía, Portuguese Algarve and Alentejo, and Portuguese Estremadura. Excavations of Castanheiro do Vento proved definitively something that the excavations of Castelo Velho had suggested: that it is also present in the NE of Portugal, i. e., in the Portuguese High Douro (see fig. 1).

1. Castanheiro do Vento (V. N. de Foz Côa); 2. Castelo Velho de Freixo de Numão (V. N. de Foz Côa); 3. Columbeira (Bombarral); 4. Zambujal (Torres Vedras); 5. Olelas (Sintra); 6. Leceia (Oeiras); 7. Vila Nova de S. Pedro (Azambuja); 8. Pedra do Ouro (Alenquer); 9. Monte da Tumba (Alcácer do Sal); 10. Cerro do Castelo de Santa Justa (Alcoutim); 11. Cerro dos Castelos de São Brás (Serpa); 12. San Blas (Badajoz); 13. Porto das Carretas (Mourão); 14. Los Vientos de la Zarcita (Huelva); 15. Palácio Quemado (Badajoz); 16. Los Millares (Almería); 17. Campos (Almería); 18. Tailladette (Hérault); 19. Campmau (Hérault); 20. Boussargues (Hérault); 21. Lébous (Hérault)

Cartographic basis adapted from:

[Bioclimatic Map of Europe](#), Thermoclimatic Belts

by Salvador Rivas-Martínez, Angel Penas and Tomás E. Díaz
www.globalclimatic.org/form/maps.htm

We have chosed a bioclimatic map as a background to locate the above mentioned sites. They all occur in a zone corresponding to the Mediterranean macrobioclimate, characterized by a dry summer period.

Different thermicity rates and annual positive temperature allow scientists to divide that zone into four sub-zones, as seen in the map. Only two of them, Thermomediterranean and Mesomediterranean, were considered here.

Plate III

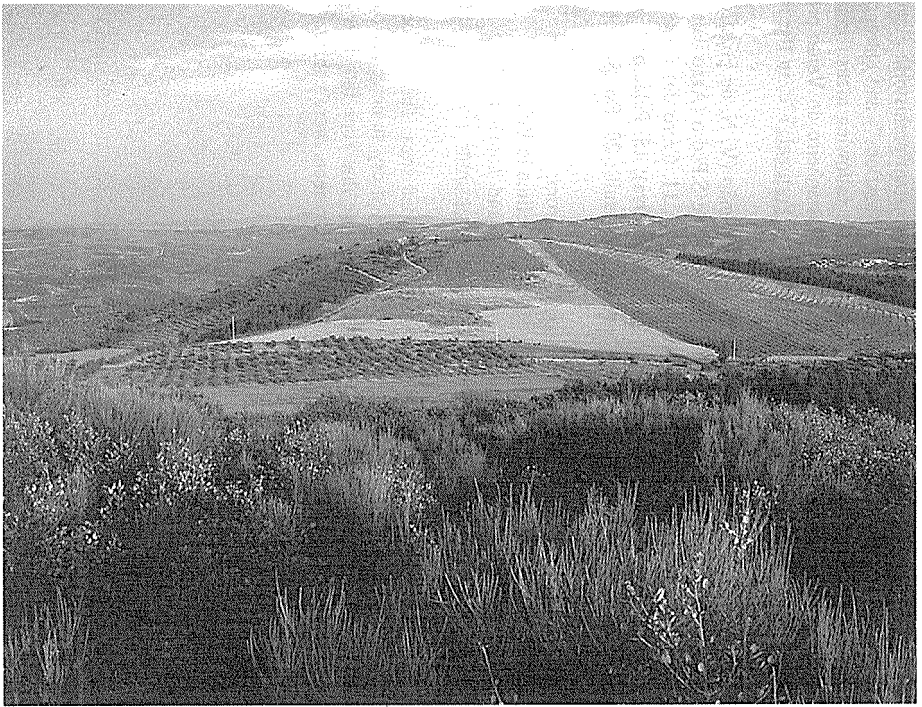


Fig. 3 – The hill site of Castanheiro do Vento seen from the NNW.

Plate IV

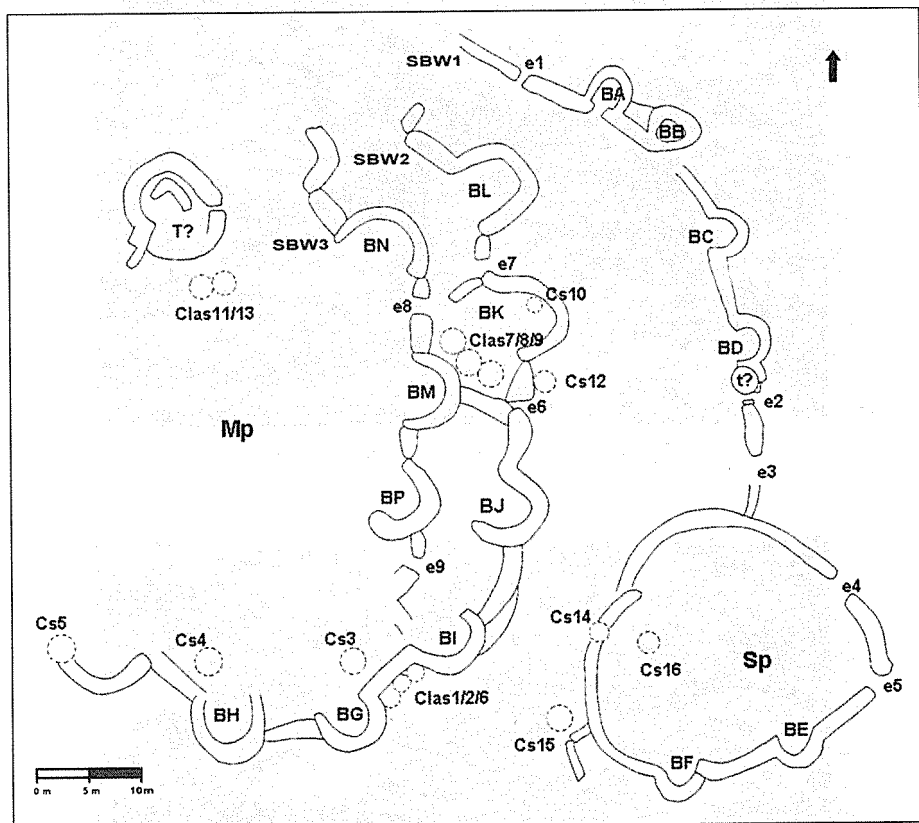


Fig. 4 – Schematic plan of the excavated area of Castanheiro do Vento between 1998 and 2005, in the top of the hill. For the abbreviations used, see glossary in the text of this paper (section 6): SBW (= sbw) – stone base of a wall; Mp – main precinct; Sp – Secondary precinct; B – “bastion”; T – “tower?”; e – entrance; Cs – Sub-circular structure; Clas – Clusters of adjacent sub-circular or sub-oval structures.

Plate V



Fig. 5 – “Bastion” G (BG), seen from NNW.



Fig. 6 – “Bastion” J (BJ), seen from E. Note the internal structures, which “reuse” granitic grinding stones.

Plate VI



Fig. 7 – “Bastion” P (BP), seen from E.



Fig. 8 – Subcircular structure Cs4 and its surrounding area, located to the SW of the excavated zone (see fig. 4), seen from E.

Plate VII



Fig. 9 – Sub-circular structure Cs3 located to the S of the excavated zone, between BG and BI (see fig. 4), seen from W. Notice the compact and thick layer of small schist slabs and clay in the interior of this structure. To the left, part of the structure is not excavated; to the right, an adjacent structure of support (small buttress) can be seen.

Plate VIII



Fig. 10 – Sub-oval structure Clas6 (see fig. 4), located to the south of the excavated area, seen from S. Is belongs to a cluster of three. This cluster is in a sort of niche, between BG and BI, against the wall Sbw2. Note the base made out of clay and small schist plaques; and the presence of a fragment of white quartz. These more or less round blocks of quartz have an intentional location, as everything else in the site. All in this site is the result of a system of depositions and spatial markers.

Plate IX

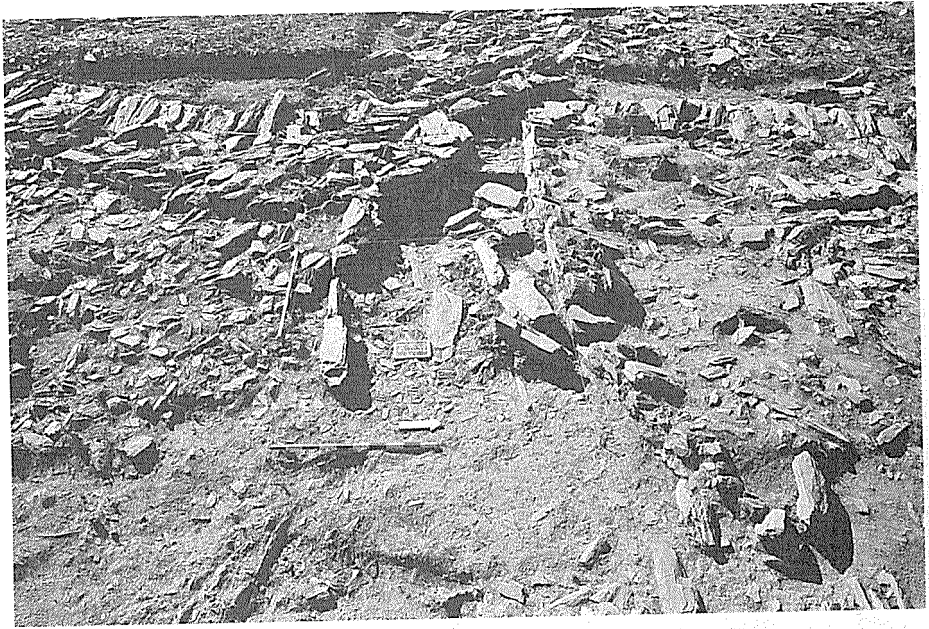


Fig. 11 – Important passage (6) in the wall Sbw2, very damaged by agricultural work. It seems to be in the same direction of another entrance (2) of Sbw1. The complex superimposition of different works in this area is obvious. Both entrances look east. The partial uncover of this structure, together with the discovery of several lines of walls with “bastions”, the clusters of small structures, and the so-called “tower”, was one of the great advances of 2005’s campaign.

Plate X



Fig. 12 – Huge sub-circular or sub-elliptical structure (T ?) located in the upper part of the main precinct, still in course of excavation (photo taken in the last days of September 2005). Its relationship with the rest of the precinct and adjacent area is a question still to be solved. Indeed, it is very interesting and complex. Notice for instance in first plan the way used by the builders to buttress the base of the walls. This is simple the infra-structure of a volume that should me imposing, made out of clay. Thus, he could have be seen for afar; and from its top, those who would have access to it could have had a panoptic view over the hill and over the surroundings.

Plate XI

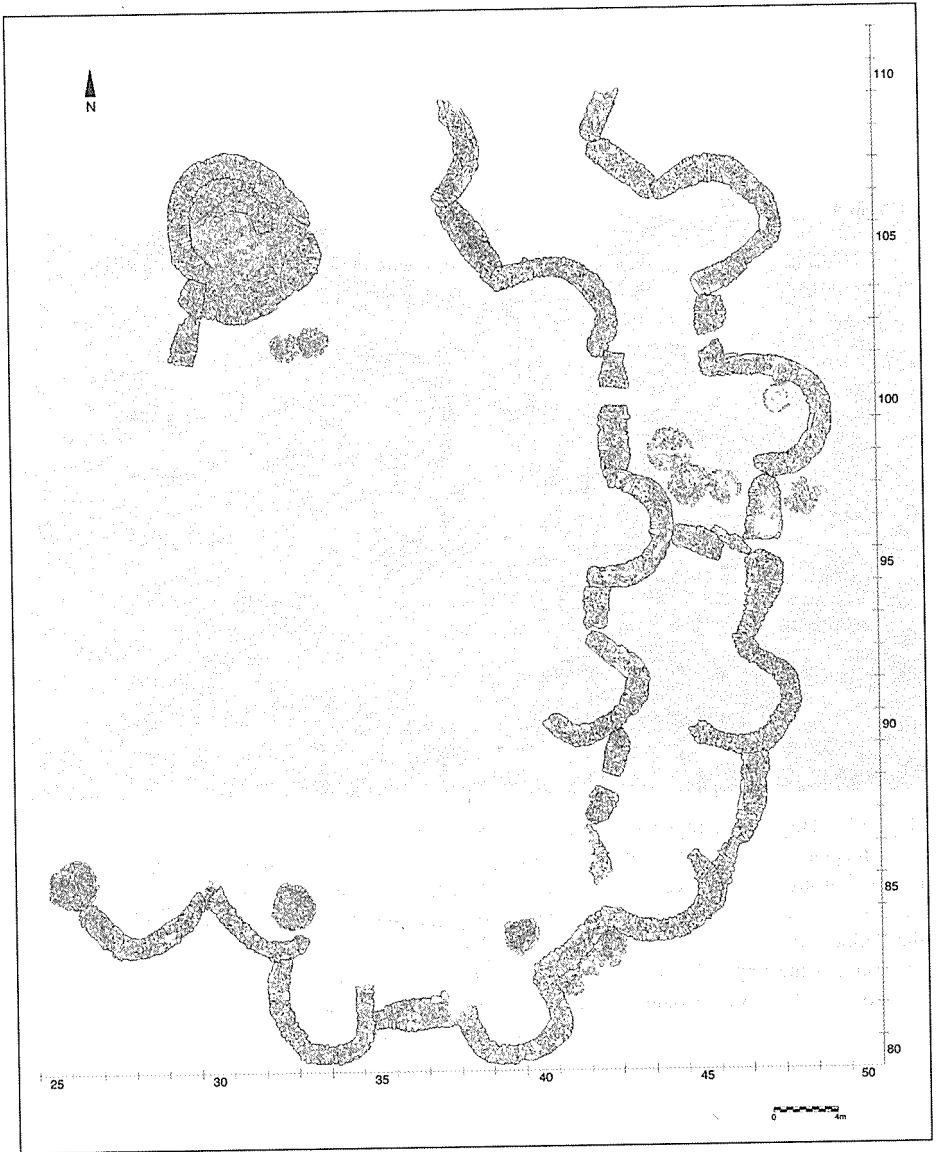


Fig. 13 – Schematic plan of part of the excavated area of Castanheiro do Vento (2005) (see fig. 4), corresponding to what seems to be the inner main precinct of the site. Field drawings: B. Carvalho.