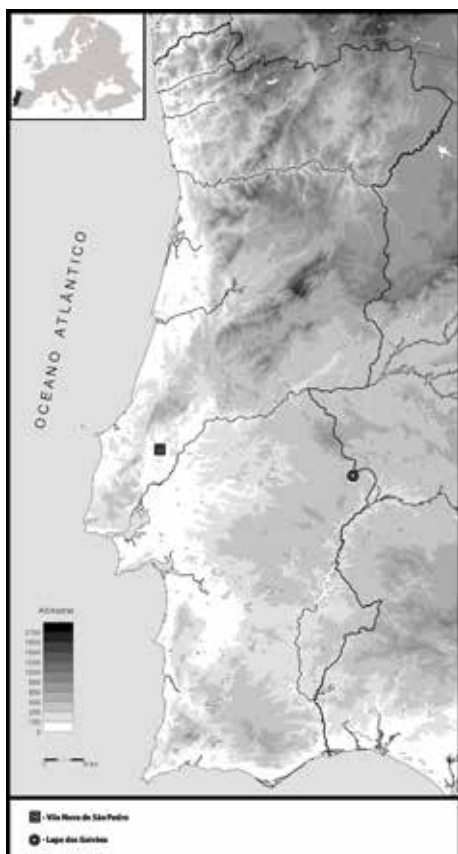


Iconography of the third millennium BC in Western Iberia: the representations of deer

1 – Schematic and zoomorphic representations on various supports

In the current Portuguese territory, the iconographic representations of the 3rd millennium BC are characterized by their technical and typological diversity,

occurring in the most varied backdrops and with formal characteristics that adapt to specific archaeological contexts. The schematism intrinsic to these representations often prevents us from carrying out a formal and interpretive classification, with human and animal motifs being more easily recognizable due to their formal characteristics, beside the anatomical details scarcely represented. In zoomorphs, the existence of stems or antlers, tails, or fur, as well as the morphological characteristics of the animal's body allow us, in some cases, to differentiate animal species, with the red deer being classified in this category. In this work we will present some examples of schematic representations of red deer in portable artefacts and natural rock formations, starting from a scene present in Lapa dos Gaivões to the representations present in the Vila Nova de São Pedro's loom plates/weights¹ (Figure 1).



2 – The elements in study: shelter with schematic painting and artifacts from a Chalcolithic settlement

2.1 – The post-paleolithic schematic art of the Iberian Peninsula

Schematic art is an artistic tradition existing throughout the Iberian Peninsula, which has technical, morphological and

Figure 1 - Vila Nova de São Pedro and Lapa dos Gaivões - Portugal (cartographic basis - Boaventura, 2009)

chronological particularities. It is concentrated in the central mountain ranges of the Serra Morena and mountain ranges of the Tagus, Guadiana, Guadalquivir and Douro valleys, also appearing in the Cantabrian belt, in the Meseta Norte and in the entire Levantine area (Moure Romaniño, 1999: 158). From a technical point of view, motifs can appear in painting or engraving, in very diverse places such as rock panels in open air (vertical and horizontal), semi-protected rock-shelters or even inside cavities, this diversity reflecting options for anthropizing the landscape by prehistoric communities (Martins, 2016).

Identified in the 17th century, it was first reproduced in 1738, with the publication by D. Jerónimo Contador de Argote of the paintings of Cachão da Rapa, on the bank of the Douro River in Portugal (Abreu, 2012). This was followed by the paintings of Las Batuecas (Salamanca, Spain) in 1868 (Hernández Pérez, 2006: 15) the start of a period of identification of hundreds of archaeological sites with schematic painting, gathered in the monumental work of Henri Breuil "Les Peintures Rupestres Schématiques de La Péninsule Ibérique" (1933a,b,c; 1935).

Throughout the 20th century and the first decades of the current millennium, numerous systematizations, interpretative approaches and definition of technical and typological parameters were presented (Acosta, 1968; Bécares, 1983; Martins, 2016).

From a typological point of view, it refers to schematic motifs, where the human and animal figures have lost their formal attributes and anatomical details, presenting a simplification of shapes. The rest of the motifs are very simple, highlighting the dots, bars, solar motifs, geometric figures, circles, among many others.

The wide chronological spectrum, begins in the period of the transition to the Holocene, with a first phase, known as Pre-Schematic Art, well documented from Ancient Neolithic - Middle Neolithic (c. 6000 - 5000 BC) characterized by representations of larger animals, predominantly

deer, and where human figures appear dominating some of the compositions. With the effective sedentarization and complexification of agro-pastoral communities, the symbolic and conceptual universe changes, the motifs losing their formal characters, become totally schematic. This phase - schematic ideographic art, has developed since the middle of the fourth millennium BC and had its peak throughout the third millennium BC, in the Copper Age of Iberian Peninsula, a period of social, economic and symbolic changes as well as high population dynamics, which allow the circulation of people, goods and raw materials throughout the peninsular territory.

2.2 – Lapa dos Gaivões, panel 4 – zoomorphs scene

Lapa dos Gaivões is located in the Louções Mountain (Arronches, Portalegre) on the group of shelters with schematic rock painting art from Alto Alentejo, between Portalegre and Arronches, distributed by the quartzitic buttresses that cross this border region. It was identified in 1914 (Hernández and Cabrera, 1916), and published monographically a few years later by H. Breuil (Breuil, 1933b). Throughout the 20th century, several researchers referred to Lapa dos Gaivões and its iconographic repertoire, writing poor detailed studies integrated mainly in generalist syntheses. (Castro and Ferreira, 1960-1961; Jorge, 1986; Oliveira *et al.*, 1996; Pestana, 1987; Peixoto, 1997; Pinto, 1932; Santos Júnior 1942). In 2009 these analysis were integrated into an academic research project - "Shelters with schematic art from the Center of Portugal: symbolic world and anthropization of the landscape" - and their study was reviewed and updated, and later fully published (Martins, 2016).

Lapa dos Gaivões corresponds to a large shelter and the 11 decorated panels are distributed throughout the shelter area, from the interior, ceiling, and exterior area. (Figure 2) The panels located on the outer surface are visible at medium dis-



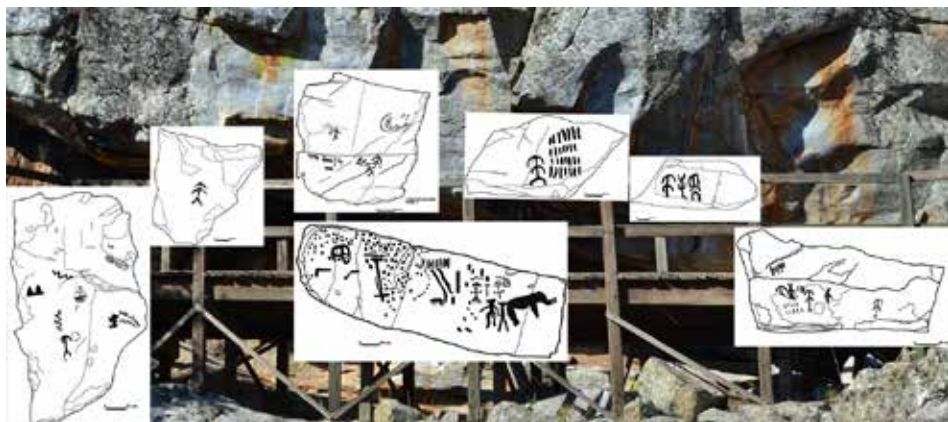
Figure 2 – Lapa dos Gaivões rock shelter

tance, whereas those located on the ceiling are only observable from the inside. The slight decline of the slope, in the area in front of the shelter, would allow several people to stay in that place, reducing this number to around ten to twenty when approaching the panels. Observation of the panels located on the ceiling would only be possible simultaneously by two or three people, although at least twenty people

could remain seated on the ground of the shelter, thus being protected.

Regarding the iconographic device, 64 motifs were characterized, corresponding to 291 figures, with points (168) and bars (72) predominating. The 26 anthropomorphic motifs and the 9 zoomorphs also stand out in the iconographic repertoire. Less frequent are geometric motifs (5), indeterminate ones (5), motifs with a circular ten-

Figure 3 – Lapa dos Gaivões – panels with schematic paintings



gency (3), tectiforms (2) and, with just one specimen the diverse motifs, in this case, characterized as a possible idoliform motif (motif 35). (Figure 3)

2.2.1 – The cervids in panel 4

Panel 4 is located on the roof of the shelter, in the center of it, dominating the entire scenic space of the roof. It is a large panel, 1.62 m long by 1.5 m wide, located 2.25 m from the ground. It has a sub-rectangular shape and was delimited considering the fractures of the geological substrate, of flat and regular surfaces. The figures are distributed over the three areas of the panel, with fractures as guide-lines for the scheme and location of the figures, consisting of 14 schematic motifs. (Figure 4)

The scheme appears to us quite elaborate, being able to be organized in four different compositions or scenes. This panel was painted with the artist sitting on the stone block on the ground of the shelter for the execution of the central area and standing for the most lateral areas of the panel.

In the uppermost area there is an anthropomorphic figure (18), of considerable dimensions (20 cm), highlighting the existence of four lines perpendicular to the left upper limb, which may correspond to some type of ornament or symbolize another entity.

In a lower area we find a detailed scene characterized as a "red deer hunt", formed by two zoomorphic motifs (19 and 20), followed by an anthropomorphic (22) and another zoomorph (24), all horizontally aligned. The zoomorphs show an oval-shaped or sub-rectangular body, a triangular head, two legs and small lines at the end of the head, which in the case of motifs 20 and 22 are perfectly recognizable as deer antlers. In the lower area of motif 20, another zoomorphic motif (23) appears, of smaller dimensions, but which also presents the representation of antlers in the head. At the upper right end of the anthropomorph (22) there is a small vertical line that connects to the motif 21, characterized as an ellipsoidal figure. This association can be interpreted as an anthropomorphic throwing a rope with a



Figure 4 – Lapa dos Gaiões – panel 4





Figure 5 – Lapa dos Gaivões, panel 4 – detail of the red deer

loop, on the zoomorphs that are in front of it. (Figura 5)

We will thus be facing a red deer hunting scene, possibly mythological, based on the throwing of ropes on the animal's rods, and the existence of several male deer, all together, close to a human being. This would not have been an easily observable situation in nature unless the animals were domesticated. Are we thus facing an imaginary scene or a possible ritual hunt? Is this anthropomorph a mystified entity and could it be related to the superior character (anthropomorph 18), corresponding to his transformation into a man-cervid with the rods on his arm?

On the right side of this scene, another composition appears, consisting of five anthropomorphs aligned horizontally and with the upper extremities together, that is, holding hands. (Figura 6) This scene can be interpreted as a dance, an alignment of people or the representation of people connected by family ties. The morphological characteristics of anthropomorphs and their condition do not allow the determination of sexual differentiation, especially when no anatomical details are observable. They may correspond to female representations or asexual beings, whose meaning will be inherent in other symbolic assumptions.

In the upper rightmost area of the panel, we have another

anthropomorphic figure (30) whose upper end is formed by a curved line, which may represent hair or some type of headdress, showing the trunk and arms wide open, without the lower limbs. The gender is not explicit, being able to represent a female figure, in parallel with others of the same shelter (Martins, 2021). Close to this motif, is a figure with a circular tendency (31), characterized by a set of three concentric semi-circles, which may correspond to a topographic representation, possibly of a domestic site, like a settlement (Martins, 2016).

Analysing the entire composition, we can say that we are facing a pair of anthropomorphs, one male and one female, who command the two scenes (hunting and dancing), organizing the scenic space. The red deer hunting scene is led by the male figure transmuted into an entity with an arm ornamented with rays / plumes / strokes, reinforcing a possible hunting activity. On the other hand, the female figure guides an alignment of five asexual anthropomorphic figures, possibly in a dance or parade, hypothetically related to a ritual or ceremony linked to agricultural practices or the strengthening of intra-group ties, on the representation of the settlement or community lands.

Figure 6 – Lapa dos Gaivões, panel 4 – detail of anthropomorphs



2.3 – The Copper Age settlement of Vila Nova de São Pedro

The Chalcolithic settlement of Vila Nova de São Pedro (Azambuja, Portugal) (VNSP) is one of the main fortified settlements of the third millennium BC of the Iberian Peninsula, being well known in the international bibliography since the first half of the 20th century. (Figure 7) With archaeological fieldwork for 31 years, between 1937 and 1967, by Eugénio Jalhay (until 1950) and Afonso do Paço, it is characterized by its defensive system of three lines of concentric walls, where thousands of archaeological artefacts were found, most of which deposited in the Carmo Archaeological Museum (Lisbon, Portugal) (Arnaud & Gonçalves, 1990; 1995; Arnaud & Fernandes, 2005; Paço & Jalhay, 1939; Paço & Costa Arthur, 1952).

Away from the main stage of scientific research and debate for a few decades, the new research project - **VNSP 3000** -

Vila Nova de São Pedro, again, in the 3rd millennium - has developed fieldwork and interdisciplinary monographic studies from the extensive artefactual collection, which includes all types of artifacts that characterize the Iberian Chalcolithic (Arnaud *et al*, 2017; www.vnsp.arqueologos.pt).

In this extensive artefactual set, we highlight the so-called loom plates (with more than 500 elements). It corresponds to pottery artifacts of quadrangular or rectangular shape with 4 perforations, interpreted as elements of suspension in a structure for weaving that can also be horizontal. (Figure 8) One of the singularities of these elements is the diversified iconographic repertoire that they have engraved on one or both sides, where the geometric motifs are predominating, but also with soliform, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic motifs (Arnaud, 2013; Paço, 1941; Martins *et al*, 2020). The presence of these graphic elements on these domestic

Figure 7 – Vila Nova de São Pedro – chalcolithic settlement





Figura 8 – Vila Nova de São Pedro loom plates – various iconographic motifs

instruments may be related to the use of the loom itself, functioning as a mnemonic when the plates are rolled on the loom, a feature that we can confirm through experimental archeology activities.

Figura 9 – Vila Nova de São Pedro loom plates with representations of cervids



2.3.1 – The loom weights from VNSP: representations of cervids

So far, 14 zoomorphic representations have been identified, of which eight are characterized as representations of deer (*cervidae* family) (Martins *et al.*, 2020). These are engraved on eight plates/weights, seven of which deposited at the Carmo Archaeological Museum and the rest at the Alenquer Municipal Museum (n° 516). (Figure 9)

These animals classified as red deer (*Cervus elaphus* L., 1758) show the presence of branched antlers in males as a mark of sexual diformism, which is the anatomical detail present in the engravings that allows us to assign a species. The cervids present in the loom plates are schematic-style figures, made in simple and linear forms, with the body (trunk, lower back, and belly) represented only by a horizontal line as in plate 236. The other option, present in a few elements, is when they acquire the volume with the representation of a rectangular shape.

On plates 236, 269, 403, 475, 491 and 516 the front and back members are represented by oblique strokes, symbolizing the animal's movement. Only on plate 305

the rigidity and verticality of the strokes reveal their static character.

All figures are represented in profile, and they can have four legs or just one front and one in the back.

These figurative motifs occur in the centre of the square-shaped artefact.

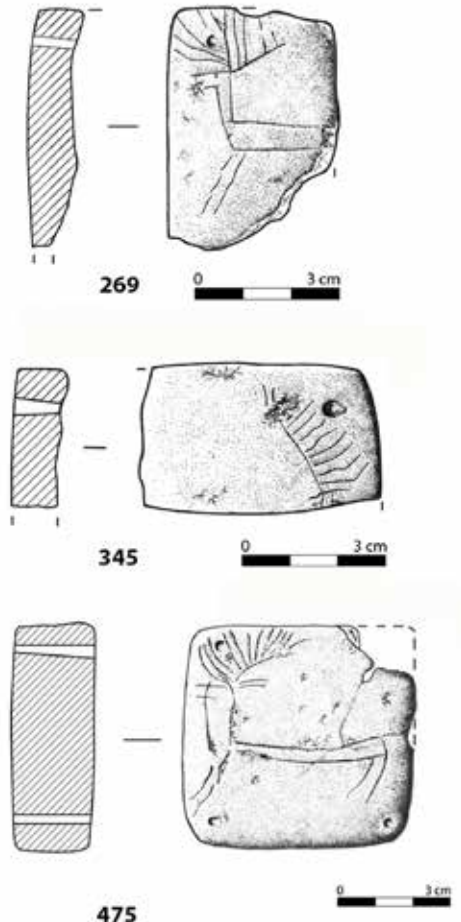
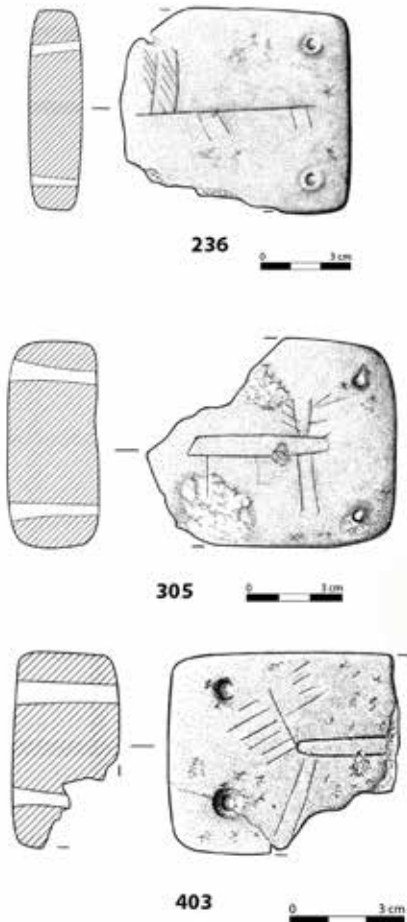
The representation of the antlers shows some variation. In some cases, they are more schematic and rigid as in plates 236 and 305 formed by two vertical lines that show a series of other small oblique lines. In other examples, they are represented

by just a central line crossed by horizontal lines, visible on plate 403. (Figure 10)

Of a more naturalistic feature are the antlers of plates 345, 475 and 516 where the central stem of the antler has the natural curvature towards the back of the animal. This element is associated with a variable number of small strokes that represent the well-developed branches. Also noteworthy for its naturalism is plate 269, which shows the representation of the snout, eye, and an elaborate branching of the antlers, showing an animal with a high head in a warning sign. (Figure 11)

Figura 10 – VNSP loom plates – 236, 305 and 403 (drawing César Neves)

Figura 11 – VNSP loom plates – 269, 345 and 475 (drawing César Neves)



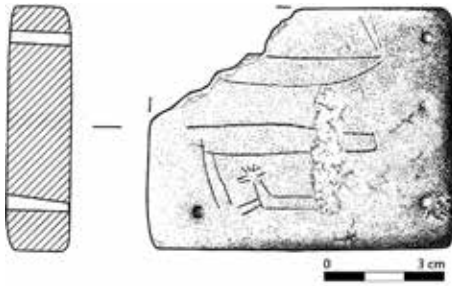


Figure 12 – VNSP loom plate n. 491 (drawing César Neves)

Plate 491 shows a very peculiar composition made up of three zoomorphs. The smaller one is highlighted, placed under the belly of the central zoomorph, with the representation of antlers still forming. This is probably a familiar scene formed by the two adult zoomorphs and one young. However, the poor state of the surface doesn't allow the identification of the sex of the upper figures - it could possibly have the branched antlers. (Figure 12)

The elements 305, 306, 475 and 491 also show iconographic motifs engraved on the opposite surface. All of them belongs to the geometric style (lattices and wavy lines).

3 – Representation of cervids in agropastoral societies of Iberia

Cervidae is the animal family most represented in the iconography of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic communities, showing anatomical characters that allow their easy identification. The representation of the branched antlers, typical for adult males, which antlers reach their peak in summer, immediately report them to the male deer (*Cervus elaphus* L.), being more difficult to define the females, juveniles or even adult males after mating and loss of the antlers.

The accentuated sexual dimorphism in the red deer allows a greater sexual differentiation, a factor less present with respect to the roe deer (c. *Capreolus*). Red deer antlers develop according to their age but also the availability of food, and at the end of the first year they are formed only by a trunk, with no branches

and only curved. When reaching reproductive age, the antlers become more elongated and branched, acquiring in adult life the large ones that are born between April and June, being ready in August before the season of September-October, and falling later in March (Salvado & Cardoso, 2001-2002: 51).

During most part of the year, the red deer gather in herds of males, females, and juveniles. However, there are some solitary males, which only meet in the mating period that occurs in the autumn.

Of the deer family (reindeer, elk, deer, fallow deer, roe deer) only the reindeer, absent in the Iberia, are totally domestic. The remaining species are semi-domesticated, and the animals can be tamed or circumscribed to limited spaces (Clutton-Brock, 2002: 210). Deer are a very unpredictable territorial species, especially during the heat season, being currently hunted in reserves.

From a symbolic point of view, it would certainly be a special, wild, strong species that regenerates itself every year, changing the bigger antlers and starting a new cycle. The formation of the antlers themselves, each with its own generating center, could lead to marked morphological differences or even to the annual fall of each stem in different periods (Salvado & Cardoso, 2001-2002: 50), occurrences certainly recognized by the prehistoric societies.

The deer was not only an important source of protein but also valuable for secondary resources such as the antlets. The marked sexual dimorphism is also very visible in its size, with males reaching 250 kg whereas females weigh between 50 and 90 kg. In this particular, red deer was a raw material used on diversified utensils and even in possible ceremonies or rituals with manipulation of parts of the skeleton such as the skull and respective antlets. Most of these last elements were probably obtained from the molting, a resource that was easily accessible and available periodically.

The iconographic similarity between motifs present in rock art and in mobile artefacts has been addressed by several Iberian researchers. The analysis goes back to the Early Neolithic, with reference to the works developed in the areas of Valencia and Alicante, with the definition of artistic cycles relating cardinal ceramics with Macro-schematic motifs (Martí Oliver & Hernández Pérez, 1988; Martí Oliver, 2006; Hernández Pérez & Segura Martí, 2002), where we also find representations of deer.

The use of graphic representations in artifacts from secure stratigraphic provenance allows a relative chronological attribution to identical motifs existing on rock art and, for which, it is not possible to carry out a direct dating. Several analyses allowed the definition of chrono-stylistic sequences for some schematic motifs, taking into account artifacts, archaeological contexts, typologies and formal similarities leading to an approximation of the symbolic contents of these agropastoral communities (Carrasco Rus *et al*, 2006; Martins, 2016).

At the stylistic level, there are some differences between representations in mobile artifacts and in rock art. On artifacts, such as loom plates or ceramic containers, the motifs are mostly linear, without depth or thickness, whereas in the engravings or paintings they appear with contours and interior filling, corresponding to figures with volume, anatomical shapes and a clear notion of movement.

The weight of these animals in the symbolic universe is reflected in the numerous representations existing on all types of supports rock art (painting and engraving), pottery vessels, bone industry and ideotechnical artifacts. But it is on the so-called symbolic bell beaker ceramics, from the Copper Age, that we find several representations of *Cervidae*. They are usually associated with ocular or soliform motifs, as well as elaborate geometric compositions, engraved by incision in the most visible and prominent

areas of the bowls or vases. Traditionally associated with funerary contexts, this pottery also recorded in domestic sites, with the scenarios of its use and the possible content being much discussed (Bueno Ramírez *et al*, 2017; Garrido Pena & López-Astilleros, 2000). It allows a specific chronological attribution to these representations, thus being part of the graphic manifestations of the end of the third millennium BC in the Iberia.

Portuguese Estremadura, in a funerary context, we highlight the representations of deer of Casal do Pardo (Palmela) (Pereira and Bubner, 1974: 123; Soares, 2013), and in Tholos da Tituaría (Mafra) the representation of male deer with branched antlers (Cardoso *et al.*, 1996: fig. 58). Examples of bell beaker pottery with deer were also identified in several settlements in southern Portugal (Martins *et al*, 2020). (Figura 13) Also, in this area an admirable ivory statuette representing a red deer (Valera *et al*, 2014: 25) was collected in a funerary context at Perdigões (Reguengos de Monsaraz) - Tholos 2 - dated between 2575-2200 cal BC.

However, the vessel from Tholos 15 de Los Millares (Almería – Spain) remains as one of the most iconic specimens which, in addition to the representation of the ocular / solar eyes, features three deer, one clearly male and the rest probably female (Leisner & Leisner, 1943, est.20). This same composition appears in another bowl at Tholos 7 in Los Millares, where a male deer with branched antlers is surrounded by five other deer, possibly female, as well as a representation of a solar figure or ocular representations (Leisner & Leisner, 1943, est. 12). In these elements, we have a composition that involves the two most represented motifs in the decoration of symbolic chalcolithic pottery - deer and solar motifs -, showing the value of this association. A detail of these two compositions is that, in both, some of the red deer have their heads turned backwards, looking directly at the large male, which may correspond to a type of sexual or age differentiation.

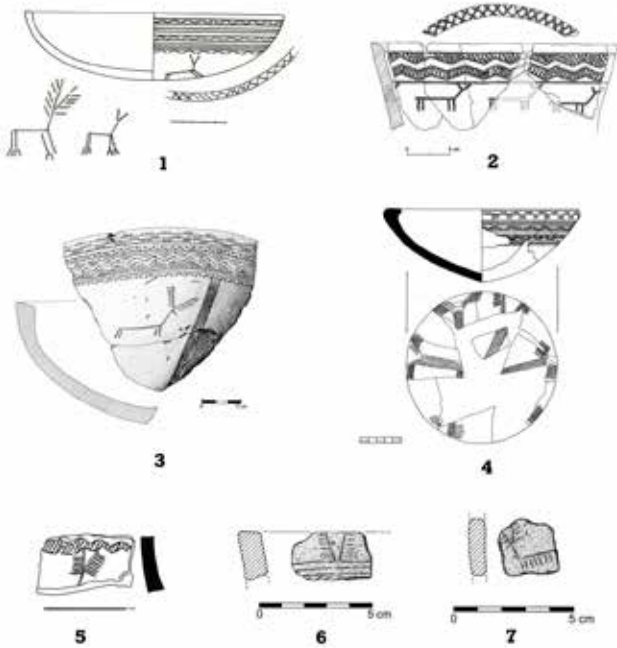


Figure 13 – Chalcolithic ceramics with deer representations: 1 – Casal do Pardo (Pereira & Bubner, 1974-77: 123); 2 – Casal do Pardo tomb 3 (Soares, 2003: 119); 3 – Tholos da Tituaría (Cardoso et al, 1996: fig. 58); 4 – Cova da Moura (Harrison, 1977: 146); 5 – Castro da Portuqueira (Harrison, 1977: 147); 6 – Freiria (Cardoso et al, 2013: 584); 7 – Freiria (Cardoso et al, 2013: 584)

The deer hunting scene that we observed in Lapa dos Gaivões, ritual or mythographic, is not a unique example in the Portuguese schematic painting. From a previous period – Neolithic – a

similarly themed composition was found in the Fraga d’Aia (S. João da Pesqueira) shelter, where an anthropomorphic figure with a bow hunts a large red deer (Jorge et al, 1988). Deer hunting is also represented inside megalithic monuments (also Neolithic) as we can see in the extraordinary scene in one of the main orthostats of Orca dos Juncais (Vila Nova de Paiva), where a group of anthropomorphs, armed with a bow and accompanied by canids, confront several zoomorphs defined as red deer (Cruz, 2000; Twohig, 1981). (Figure 14) These representations of hunting, exclusively for red deer, reveal the importance of this species to the agro-pastoral communities.

As a parallel to some representations present in the VNSP loom weight/plates, we highlight the copper age schematic painted deer in panel C of Forno da Velha (Macedo de Cavaleiros) (Figueiredo & Baptista, 2009), with the characteristic schematic branched stem.

Regarding the art engraved on the banks of the great rivers, the nucleus of the Ta-

Deer alignments can also be observed in bell beaker vessels from Las Carolinas (Madrid) (Leisner, 1961), Brenes (Carmona) (Harrison et al, 1976), or in Tholos de San Blas (Cheles, Badajoz) (Hurtado, 2004: 107).

However, it is on the walls of rock shelters or in large horizontal panels that several deer representations appear, from North to South of Portugal, in the various artistic cycles, and with an extended chronology, from the beginning of the Neolithic to the end of the Chalcolithic. From the great boulders and horizontal blocks with Atlantic Art to the inaccessible shelters with schematic paintings, the deer representations appear as a structuring element in several scenes and mythographies. Post-Paleolithic representations are also present throughout the Spanish current territory, both in schematic art, Atlantic art in Galiza and in the artistic cycle of Levantine Art, where the deer is also an omnipresent zoomorph².

Figure 14 - Representations of deer hunting scenes in schematic paintings: Lapa dos Gaivões (adapted of Martins, 2016), Fraga d' Aia (Jorge et al, 1988) and Orca dos Juncals (Tiwohig, 1981: fig. 45)



Fraga d'Aia



Orca dos Juncals

gus Valley stands out, axis mundi of a rock sanctuary, where the representations of deer have a structuring role in the chrono-cultural and symbolic organization. With a very wide chronology, from the Epipaleolithic to the Late Neolithic, the representations of great deer are part of scenes and symbolic transmutations (Gomes, 2010: 263). The ecological features of this species are referenced, with adult animals appearing with the antlers at the height of their development, also juvenile animals, and females that may be pregnant. The stylistic parallels with the representations of Vila Nova de São Pedro are abundant, highlighting the rigid antlers of the deer of the rock 56.4 of the Cachão do Algarve with the existing one in plate 305. Another example comes from the exuberant antlers of several deer of the rock 49 of the Fratel (Gomes, 2010: 265), with the representations of the plates number 269, 345 and 475. (Figure 15).

But also to the south, in the engraving rock art of the Guadiana Valley, we find representations of deer typologically similar to those of VNSP. In rock 3 of Mocissos and rock 109 of Moinhola the stems formed only by vertical straight lines crisscrossed with small oblique lines show clear similarities with the deer of plate 236 (Baptista & Santos, 2013).

4 - The symbolic iconography of 3rd millennium BC: the deer. A brief analysis

The deer is an animal represented since the Paleolithic period, appearing in painted caves, in open air rocks or engraved on artefacts, its representation remaining in the Holocene period. This iconographic continuity reveals its importance to very different communities, hunter-gatherers and later sedentary agro-pastoral communities. The wild undomesticated animal, with markedly mythological characters symbolizing strength

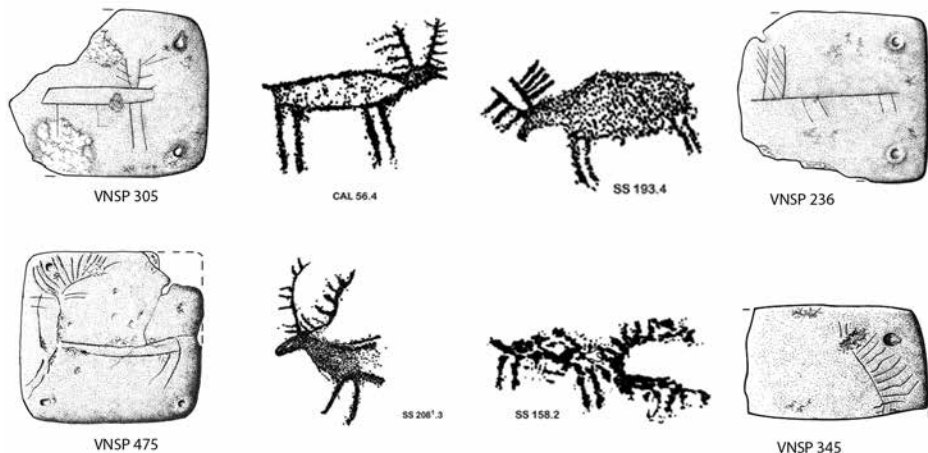


Figura 15 – Representations of deer in VNSP loom plates n. 236, 305, 345 and 475 (Martins et al., 2020) and representations of deer in Vale do Tejo engravings (Gomes, 2010)

and continuous renewal, was a prominent figure in the imagination of these communities. This cultural and social identity, present in both hunting and ritual actions, allows us to have representations of deer in different traditions or artistic cycles, not only in the Iberian Peninsula but in different parts of Europe and Asia.

It was our objective in this work to introduce representations of deer from the Iberian Peninsula, in different supports and in a very specific period – the Copper Age (3rd millennium BC). As mentioned, we find the representations of deer in the Neolithic in open air rocks, rock shelters and inside megalithic monuments, however the exponential profusion of these representations in ceramics occurs in the Copper Age, namely in its final period with the Campaniform. This transposition of the figure into everyday artifacts, identified both in settlements and funerary contexts, reflects the complexification of these societies and the numerous artefactual diversity that characterizes this period.

Studying agro-pastoral societies necessarily implies an overall approach, where the debate over the elements of material culture is related to the data on faunal remains and to the mobile and rock art

manifestations. The motifs represented on different supports are part of the same conceptual and symbolic universe of these communities, leading us to accept that they may have similar meanings and roles.

The parallels for the red deer representations either in the paintings of Lapa dos Gaivões, or in the loom plates of the Chalcolithic settlement of Vila Nova de São Pedro, reveal the symbolic, iconographic and cultural identity of these prehistoric communities.

Animals would be an omnipresent category, part of the daily landscape, habitat, territory, and ecological environment of these communities, which depended on them for their own continuity. The domestication of certain species led to their iconographic and symbolic absence, with only wild animals being represented, independent of the human subjection and therefore species related with distinct metaphysically and symbolic level. The role that animals play in the construction of prehistoric symbolic systems and the equivocal relationship established with their economic meaning remains under discussion.

Cervids are part of the numerous faunal remains of VNSP, both as a primary source

of food, as well as suppliers of secondary resources such as antlers or skin (Detry *et al*, 2020; Francisco *et al*, 2020).

In the abundant bone industry of VNSP (such as punches and needles), there are numerous artifacts executed from deer antlers that may have been collected after the molting or by slaughtering these animals.

With respect to the representations of cervids on the VNSP loom weights/plates, we can say that they are part of a graphic complex universe where different types of symbols (geometric, anthropomorphic, styliform), were chosen to be engraved in the clay. This choice, always intentional, will correspond to compositional programs that may or may not be predefined before execution, and there may also be technical specialization.

The unknown of the local production system, as well as the social organization of the community, do not enable us, for now, to make more considerations about the production of the loom weights and associated iconography. It is admitted, however, that the engraved face could be seen by the weaver, suggesting a particular position for these objects, on a horizontal or vertical loom. At the same time, certain motifs can represent a certain movement in the action of weaving, creating different patterns, functioning as a visual mnemonic.

The VNSP's loom plates allow a transdisciplinary approach, from the operational chain of its production, iconographic execution, functionality and used method, leading to aspects such as social, economic, and symbolic organization that can be achieved with the study of this artefactual category.

Lapa dos Gaivões, a large shelter easily accessed, would be a place for gathering and community aggregating, with the several painted panels historically functioning as sub-chapters of a story to be told and shared with the group. These short stories, such as the fertility and renewal of the group present in

panel 6 (Martins, 2021), the sexual differentiation visible in panels 7 and 9, as well as the ceremonies or dances revealed in panel 4 are, alongside with the deer hunting scene, the different "takes" of a film broadcast to the present community. Being part of these stories, the memory transmission of real or mythological events is carried out through oral reports and transposition, through engraved or painted signs, understood and apprehended by their contemporary communities.

The zoomorphs, real or mythical, were represented in different supports being part of everyday life, either by their actual existence or in orally reports, materialized in engravings or paintings. More than a possible chronological attribution, the iconographic parallels allow to confirm a cultural identity, in which the conceptual and symbolic universe is identical, leading to the execution of similar motifs in distinct and spatially distant communities.

The cervids as a graphic element circulate between different environments, present in settlements, funerary contexts and rock art sanctuaries. Its symbolic functionality takes shape in formally metaphysical environments such as the orthostats of megalithic tomb or a rock art panel, but also in objects of domestic nature, such as the loom plates, in an obvious demonstration of the complex network of meanings and uses that mark human societies.

Acknowledgements

This work was financed by Portuguese funds through FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia in the framework of the project UIDB/00698/2020 and also SFRH-BPD/108951/2015

Andrea Martins

andrea.arte@gmail.com

UNIARQ – Centro de Arqueologia da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa; FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia

Notes

1. Study carried out under the post-doctoral project funded by FCT - SFRH / BPD / 108951/2015

2. For this paper, we only analyze the current Portuguese territory, allowing a restrict geographic view.

5 - References

Abreu, M. S., (2012) - *Rock-Art in Portugal, History, Methodology and Traditions*, Vila Real: Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, 4 vols.

Acosta, P., (1968) - *La Pintura rupestre Esquemática en Espana*, Memorias del Seminario de Prehistoria y Arqueología, Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca, 250 p.

Arnaud, J. M.; Gonçalves, J. L., 1990 – A fortificação pré-histórica de Vila Nova de S. Pedro (Azambuja) – balanço de meio século de investigações. 1ª parte. *Revista de Arqueologia da Assembleia Distrital de Lisboa. 1. Lisboa*, p.25-48.

Arnaud, J. M.; Gonçalves, J. L., 1995 – A fortificação pré-histórica de Vila Nova de S. Pedro (Azambuja) – balanço de meio século de investigações. 2ª parte. *Revista de Arqueologia da Assembleia Distrital de Lisboa. 2. Lisboa*, p.11-40.

Arnaud, J. M; Fernandes, C. V., eds., 2005 - *Construindo a Memória – As Coleções do Museu Arqueológico do Carmo*. Lisboa. Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses

Arnaud, J. M., 2013 – Reflexões em torno das placas de cerâmica com gravuras de Vila Nova de S. Pedro (Azambuja). *ARNAUD, MARTINS e NEVES (coords.)*

Arqueologia em Portugal – 150 Anos. Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, Lisboa, p.447-455.

Arnaud, J. M.; Diniz, M.; Neves, C.; Martins, A., 2017 – Vila Nova de São Pedro – de novo, no 3.º milénio. Um projecto para o futuro. *Arqueologia e História*, 66-67, Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, Lisboa, p.7-17.

Baptista, A. M.; Santos, A. T.; 2013 – *A Arte Rupestre do Guadiana Português na área de influência do Alqueva. Memórias d’Odiana*, Estudos Arqueológicos do Alqueva, 2ª série, 339 p.

Bécares Pérez, J. (1983) - Hacia nuevas técnicas de trabajo en el estudio de la pintura rupestre esquemática, *Zephyrus*, XXXVI, Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, p. 137-148.

Boaventura, R., 2009 - *As antas e o megalitismo da região de Lisboa*. Tese de doutoramento apresentada à Universidade de Lisboa. 2 vols.

Breuil, H., 1933a - *Les Peintures Rupestres Schématiques de la Péninsule Ibérique, Vol. I – Au Nord du Tage*, Imprimerie de Lagny.

Breuil, H., 1933b - *Les Peintures Rupestres Schématiques de la Péninsule Ibérique, Vol. II – Bassin du Guadiana*, Imprimerie de Lagny.

Breuil, H., 1933c - *Les Peintures Rupestres Schématiques de la Péninsule Ibérique, Vol. III – Sierra Morena*, Imprimerie de Lagny.

Breuil, H., 1935 - *Les Peintures Rupestres Schématiques de la Péninsule Ibérique, Vol. IV – Sud-Est et Est de l’Espagne*, Imprimerie de Lagny.

Bueno Ramírez, P.; Barroso Bermejo, R.;

Balbín-Behrmann, R., 2017 – Redefining Ciempozuelos. Bell-Beaker culture in Toledo?, *Sinos e Taças – Junto ao oceano e mais longe. Aspectos da presença campaniforme na Península Ibérica*, Estudos e Memórias, 10, Uniarq, p. 324-341

Cardoso, J. L.; Leitão, M.; Ferreira, O. V.; North, C. T.; Medeiros, J. P.; Sousa, F.; 1996 - O monumento pré-histórico de Tituaría, Moinhos da Casela (Mafra), *Estudos Arqueológicos de Oeiras*, 6, Oeiras. p. 135-193.

Cardoso, J. L.; Cardoso, G.; Encarnação, J.; 2013 – O Campaniforme de Freiria (Cascais). *Estudos Arqueológicos de Oeiras*, 20, Oeiras, Câmara Municipal, p. 525-588

Carrasco Rus, J.; Navarrete Enciso, M.; Pachón Romero, J., 2006 - Las manifestaciones rupestres esquemáticas y los soportes muebles en Andalucía. Martínez García, J. e Hernández Pérez, M. (eds) - *Arte Rupestre Esquemático en la Península Ibérica – Congreso*, Comarca de Los Vélez, pp. 85-118

Castro, L. de A.; Ferreira, O. V., 1960-1961 - “As pinturas rupestres Esquemáticas da

Serra dos Louções”, *Conimbriga*, Vols. II-III, Universidade de Coimbra, 1-20.

Clutton-Brock, J., (2002) – *História da domesticação dos mamíferos – dos primórdios à actualidade*, Editora Replicação, 246 p.

Cruz, D., 2000 - *Roteiro Arqueológico de Vila Nova de Paiva*, Vila Nova de Paiva: Câmara Municipal de Vila Nova de Paiva, 46 p.

Detry, C.; Francisco, A.; Diniz, M.; Martins, A.; Neves, C.; Arnaud, J. M.; 2020 - Estudo zooarqueológico das faunas do Calcolítico final de Vila Nova de São Pedro (Azambuja, Portugal): Campanhas de 2017 e 2018. Arnaud, Neves e Martins (coords.) – *Arqueologia em Portugal 2020 – Estado da Questão*, Lisboa: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, p. 925-941.

Figueiredo, S.; Baptista, A. M.; 2009 – As pinturas esquemático-simbólicas do Forno da Velha (Lagoa, Macedo de Cavaleiros): um diálogo entre a arqueologia e a geologia, Bettencourt, A.; Alves, L. B. (eds.) – *Dos Montes, das pedras e das águas. Formas de interacção com o espaço natural da pré-história à actualidade*, p. 11-24

Francisco, A.; Detry, C.; Neves, C.; Martins, A.; Diniz, M.; Arnaud, J. M. (2020) - As faunas depositadas no Museu Arqueológico do Carmo provenientes de Vila Nova de São Pedro (Azambuja): as campanhas de 1937 a 1967, Arnaud, Neves e Martins (coords.) – *Arqueologia em Portugal 2020 – Estado da Questão*, Lisboa: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, p. 943-957.

Garrido Pena, R.; López-Astilleros, K., 2000 – Visiones sagradas para los líderes. Cerâmicas campaniformes com decoração simbólica en la Península Ibérica, *Complutum*, 11, p. 285-300

Gomes, M. V., 2010 – *Arte Rupestre do Vale do Tejo – Um Ciclo Artístico-Cultural Pré e Proto-Histórico*, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 3 vols, (Dissertação de Doutoramento, texto policopiado).

Harrison, R. J.; 1977 - *The Bell Beaker Cultures of Spain and Portugal*. American School of Prehistoric Research Bulletin, 35. American School of Prehistoric Research, Cambridge-Massachusetts, 257 p.

Harrison, R. J.; Bubner, T.; H., V. A., 1976 - The beaker pottery from El Acebuchal, Carmona (Prov. Sevilla). *Madrider Mitteilungen*, XVII, p. 79-141.

Hernández-Pacheco, E.; Cabrera, A., 1916 - “Pinturas Prehistoricas y dólmenes de la Région de Albuquerque (Extremadura)”, *Boletín de la Real Sociedad Espanola de Historia Natural*, Tomo XVI, Nota nº 8, Madrid: Comisión de Investigaciones Paleontológicas y Prehistóricas.

Hernández Pérez, M.; Segura Martí, J., (coord.), 2002 – *La Sarga. Arte rupestre y territorio*, Ediciones del Museu de Alcoi, Caja de Ahorros del Mediterráneo, Alcoy, 213 p.

Hernández Pérez, M., (2006) - Artes esquemáticos en la Península Ibérica: el paradigma de la pintura esquemática, In Martínez García, Julian; Hernández Pérez, Mauro, eds., *Arte Rupestre Esquemático en la Península Ibérica – Congreso*, Comarca de Los Vélez, p. 13-31.

Hurtado, V. H., 2004 – San Blas, the discovery of a large chalcolithic settlement by the Guadiana river, *Journal of Iberian Archaeology*, Vol. 6, Porto: ADECAP, p. 93-116.

Jorge, V. O., 1986 - “Arte Rupestre em Portugal”, *Trabalhos de Antropologia e Etnologia*, Vol. 26, fasc. 1-4, p. 27-50.

Jorge, V. O.; Baptista, A. M.; Jorge, S. O.; Sanches, M. J.; Silva, E.; Silva, M.; Cunha, A. L., 1988 - O abrigo com pinturas rupestres da Fraga d’Aia (Paredes da Beira – São João da Pesqueira) – Notícia preliminar, *Arqueologia*, nº 18, Dezembro de 1988, Porto, p. 109-130.

Leisner, G.; Leisner, V., 1943 - *Die Megalithgräber der Iberischen Halbinsel. I. Der Süden*. Romisch-Germanische Kommission, 17. Berlin.

Leisner, V., 1961 - Innenverzierte Schalen der Kupferzeit auf der Iberischen Halbinsel. *Madrider Mitteilungen*, 2, p. 11-33

Martí Oliver, B.; Hernández Pérez, M., 1988 – *El Neolític Valencià – Art rupestre i cultura material*, Servei d’Investigació Prehistòrica, Diputació de València, 114 p.

Martí Oliver, B., 2006 - Cultura material y arte rupestre esquemático en el País Valenciano, Aragón y Cataluña, In Martínez

- García, J.; Hernández Pérez, M., eds., *Arte Rupestre Esquemático en la Península Ibérica – Congreso, Comarca de Los Vélez*, p. 119-147.
- Martins, A.**, 2016 - *Abrigos de Arte Esquemática Pintada do Centro de Portugal: mundo simbólico e antropização da paisagem*. Lisboa: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses (Monografias AAP, 3).
- Martins, A.; Neves, C.; Arnaud, J., Diniz, M.**, 2020 - Os motivos zoomórficos representados nas placas de tear de Vila Nova de São Pedro (Azambuja, Portugal), *In Arnaud, J. M.; Neves, C.; Martins, A., coords. Arqueologia em Portugal 2020 – Estado da Questão*. Lisboa: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, p. 551-570.
- Martins, A.**, 2021 - Schematic rock art paintings in Portugal: an approach to the female Universe at Lapa dos Gaivões, *Cuadernos de Arte Prehistórico*, Número 11, Enero/Junio 2021, p.19-44
- Moure Romanillo, A.** (1999) - *Arqueología del Arte Prehistórico en la Península Ibérica*, Arqueologia Prehistórica, 3, Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 207 p.
- Oliveira, J.; Bairinhas, A.; Balesteros, C.**, 1996 - “Inventário dos vestígios arqueológicos do Parque Natural da Serra de São Mamede”, *Ibn Maruan – Revista Cultural do Concelho de Marvão*, nº 6, Câmara Municipal de Marvão, Edições Colibri, p. 43-61.
- Paço, A.; Jalhay, E.**, 1939 – A póvoa eneolítica de Vila Nova de S. Pedro: Notas sobre a 1ª e 2ª campanha – 1937 e 1938. *Brotéria*. Separata Lisboa. Vol. XXVIII: 6, p. 2-46.
- Paço, A.**, 1941 – Placas de Barro de Vila Nova de S. Pedro. *Congresso do Mundo Português*, Porto. 1, p.233-251.
- Paço, A.; Costa Arthur, M. L.**, 1952 – Castro de Vila Nova de São Pedro. I – 15ª campanha de escavações (1951), *Brotéria*, Vol. LIV, Fasc. 3, Março 1952, p. 6-25.
- Peixoto, A.**, 1997 - “A Lapa dos Gaivões – Arronches”, *Ibn Maruan – Revista Cultural do Concelho de Marvão*, nº 7, Câmara Municipal de Marvão, p. 265-291.
- Pereira, M. A. H.; Bubner, T.**, 1974-1977 - Novos materiais de Palmela, O Arqueólogo Português, Serie III, VII-IX, Lisboa, p.113-124.
- Pestana, M. I.**, 1987 - “Arte Rupestre da freguesia da Esperança (concelho de Arronches)”, *Primeiras Jornadas de Arqueologia do Nordeste Alentejano 85 – actas*, p. 17-24.
- Pinto, R. S.**, 1932 - “O Abrigo Pré-histórico de Valdejunco (Esperança)”, *Trabalhos da Sociedade Portuguesa de Antropologia e Etnologia*, nº 5, fasc. III, p. 245-246.
- Salvado, M. C.; Cardoso, J. L.** (2001-2002) – Análises de alguns fragmentos em haste de cerâmico do povoado pré-histórico de Leceia (Oeiras): cabos e caixas, *Estudos Arqueológicos de Oeiras*, 10, Oeiras, p. 49-76
- Santos Júnior, J.**, 1942 - *Arte Rupestre*, Comunicação apresentada ao I Congresso do Mundo Português, Porto.
- Soares, J.**, 2003 - *Os Hipogeus da Quinta do Anjo (Palmela) e as Economias do Simbólico*, Museu de Arqueologia e Etnografia do Distrito de Setúbal, Assembleia Distrital de Setúbal, 240 p.
- Twohig, E. S.**, 1981 - *The megalithic art of Western Europe*, Oxford: Clarendon, XI, 259 p.
- Valera, A. C.; Evangelista, L. S.; Castanheira, P.**; 2014 - Zoomorphic figurines and the problem of HumanAnimal relationship in the neolithic and chalcolithic Southwest Iberia. *MENGA - Revista de Prehistoria de Andalucía*, nº 05, p. 15-41.