REVISITING SOME EARLIER PAPERS ON THE LATE PREHISTORIC WALLED ENCLOSURES OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

by

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Abstract: Between 1994 and 2003 I published some reflections on the validity of different approaches to the interpretation of the so-called ‘fortified settlements’ or ‘walled enclosures’ of the 4th to the 2nd millennia BC in the Iberian Peninsula. It seems opportune to publish some of these papers again, if only in part, but this time in English.

The first was originally published in 1994, and presented for the first time a different perspective on the theme. In the present version the inventory and a final section have been omitted, and the absolute dates have been calibrated.

The second, originally published in 2002, is part of a longer article on the history of the site of Castelo Velho de Freixo de Numão. The chapter published here is a reflection on the multifunctionality of the site in the context of contemporary walled enclosures in the Peninsula.

The third and shortest text, as yet unpublished but circulated in the archaeological community, is a summary of a paper presented at an international round table held on the 15th and 16th May 2003 at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Oporto, on the subject “Late prehistoric walled enclosures”.

The three texts capture three stages in the personal development of an alternative view of late prehistoric walled enclosures in the Iberian Peninsula. This view calls for a dual interpretative strategy: an approach to these places within the hermeneutic framework of the anthropology of space, and their specific evaluation, including the chronological-cultural context and the interpretative systems employed in Europe for these generally similar and contemporary sites.

Key-words: Fortified settlement; walled enclosure; anthropology of space.


Creio que é oportuno voltar a publicar, agora em língua inglesa, ainda que parcialmente, alguns desses textos.

No primeiro, que inaugura uma outra perspectiva sobre o tema (publicado originalmente em 1994), retiramos aqui o inventário e ainda um sub-capítulo final. Na presente versão as datações absolutas foram calibradas.

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O segundo, publicado originalmente em 2002, faz parte dum artigo mais amplo sobre a história do sítio de Castelo Velho de Freixo de Numão. O capítulo agora publicado reflecte sobre a multifuncionalidade deste sítio no quadro dos recintos murados contemporâneos da Península Ibérica.

O terceiro (e curto) texto, ainda inédito, mas divulgado na comunidade científica, corresponde a um resumo duma comunicação apresentada durante uma mesa-redonda internacional, realizada em 15 e 16 de Maio de 2003, na Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, subordinada ao tema “Recintos Murados da Pré-História Recente”.

Os três textos captam fugazmente três momentos duma trajectória pessoal que reinvinda um olhar alternativo sobre os recintos murados da Pré-História Recente. Esse olhar apela para uma dupla estratégia interpretativa: a abordagem destes lugares no quadro hermenêutico da antropologia do espaço; a sua apreciação específica tendo em conta o contexto cronológico-cultural e os regimes interpretativos operados no espaço europeu sobre sítios contemporâneos globalmente similares.

**Palavras-chave:** Povoado fortificado; recinto murado; antropologia do espaço.

“(…) The language used to describe this site (Los Millares), and others related to it in south-east Spain and central-southern Portugal, is usually military: ‘citaded’ for the inner-most walled area, ‘fortification’ or ‘defences’ for enclosure wall, ‘bastion’ for circular cell, ‘barbican’ for elaborate entrance, and ‘fort’ or ‘fortlet’ for smaller circular structures. I believe that this kind of characterisation is misleading and that it is more profitable to examine ‘Los Millares’ and other sites of this kind as part of a wider process of creating place.”

(Whittle, A., 1996, p. 336)

“It is also worth reminding ourselves that definition of a class of sites according to one characteristic, the presence of fortifications, risks merging together sites that had different functions, productive activities and positions within regional settlement and political hierarchies”.

(Chapman, R., 2003, p. 169)

“(…) The overall impression of a site like Los Millares is of a collectivity of action. The monuments include far more than they exclude; and artefacts may have been deposited as of offerings carrying shared significance and meaning, to do with spirits, past members of society and the social virtues of cooperation. Los Millares may have served as a place in the landscape, as an ancestral home, as a meeting point for people, groups of communities from the wider regional around, but who from year to year or from generation to generation were dispensed and shifting across that region. A site like Los Millares served to create and then bond a wide sense of community.”

(Whittle, A., 1996, p. 349)
1. COLONIES, FORTIFICATIONS, MONUMENTALISED PLACES: A HISTORY OF INTERPRETATIVE APPROACHES TO A THEME FROM THE IBERIAN CHALCOLITHIC

1.1. Colonies and fortified settlements: a brief history of these concepts in the framework of 20th-century Iberian archaeological thought

1.1.1. ‘Colonies’ and ‘factories’: the problem of change and cultural transmission according to historico-cultural archaeology

The notion of ‘colony’, attributed to fortified settlements of the ‘Los Millares’ type in the Iberian Peninsula, goes back, as we know, to Siret (1908, 1913, 1948). This notion, though with variations, survived throughout the 20th century in the vocabulary of many archaeologists concerned with the Iberian Chalcolithic.

The notion generically presupposes a migration to the Peninsula (initially to the south-east) during the 3rd millennium BC by peoples from the eastern Mediterranean (but differing in precise origin, according to the authors) in search of metal, particularly copper. The westward migration of these peoples, who were usually called ‘small groups of metal prospectors’, was archaeologically documented in innovative domestic defensive structures – settlements with walls, towers and bastions – which mirrored a climate of confrontation resulting from aggressive foreign insertion in the indigenous environment. The ‘colonies’ would have been the most visible expression of the arrival, not always peaceful, of groups who were more technologically and socially developed than contemporary Iberian communities. Some authors emphasised the fact that the construction of these fortified settlements was related to other innovations, also of eastern Mediterranean origin: besides copper metallurgy, tombs with false corbelling and some rare artefacts constituted ‘material proof’ of the arrival, during the Chalcolithic in the Iberian Peninsula, of Mediterranean populations bringing new knowledge, wealth and power. Their mere presence would have led to profound changes in the social structure of Iberian groups.

Throughout the 20th century the defenders of the diffusionist model (see Hernando Gonzalo, 1988; Martínez Navarrete, 1989) adopted either a position actively in favour of ‘population migrations’ (the colonial theory espoused by the majority of authors) or a relatively ambiguous stance, arguing for ‘imprecise ethnic or commercial relationships’ with the Near East, which avoided acknowledging that outside groups would have actually arrived and stayed in the Peninsula.


If Blance introduced the theme of ‘colonies’ as ‘isolated places, strongly defended, situated in a culturally foreign environment’, it was Savory who defined the profile of the colonisers. These were portrayed as ‘a noble or royal family with their dependent artisans’, in search of metal. Thus it was not only architecture and artefacts that came from the Near East, particularly from Egypt, but rather a whole social and military organisation would have been transplanted. Schüle, continuing earlier positions from the 60s onwards, mounted in the 80s a vigorous defence of the colonial theory, taking the precaution nevertheless of replacing the term ‘colony’ with ‘first nuclei of prospectors’. In his view, the Chalcolithic colonisation of the Peninsula would have happened in three phases. During the second phase, the ‘colonists’, coming by sea from the Near East, would have settled near estuaries, exploiting the copper mines in the interior and keeping watch for possible attacks from the sea. The third phase would have seen a great expansion of ‘colonists’ from the coast into the interior, with an increase in so-called ‘tertiary fortresses’ sited next to ‘natural routes’, such as Cerro de la Virgen.

It has been said that while Blance recognised deficiencies in his explanatory system, lacking as it did ‘irrefutable empirical proofs’, Savory and Schüle, though admitting difficulties in the arguments, adhered to the colonial model by exhaustive use of ‘ad hoc explanations’. In this sense, the positions of these two authors are paradigmatic of the historico-cultural method which shapes the most orthodox version of the colonial theory.

Another group of archaeologists found an alternative to the term ‘colony’: the Germans Sangmeister and Schubart were the first from outside the Peninsula to argue for the term ‘factory’ as applied to Chalcolithic fortified settlements. This was an attempt to avoid some of the obvious weaknesses of Blance’s model, seen especially in his underestimating the strong native component in this entire cultural process. Since it was Sangmeister and Schubart who excavated Zambujal – still today emblematic of fieldwork in the prehistory of Portuguese Estremadura – they could not ignore what they recognised as a ‘process of acculturation’ between natives and ‘foreigners’. They saw Zambujal, like other fortified settlements in the Peninsula, as a place for exchanging minerals, certainly occupied by colonisers, but with particular characteristics arising from a very close relationship between colonists and local populations. Such contacts would explain the particular characteristics of Peninsular ‘factories’ compared with their origins in the Near East. Sangmeister and Schubart’s position was thus founded more on defence of the colonial theory than on its consolidation; their arguments still did nothing to clarify the ‘conditions of application of the colonial model’, which seemed indispensable at this time for an archaeologist of the Peninsula. In fact Arribas (1967) insisted on the need to prove the colonial theory through interpretation of cultural contexts involving both ‘colonisers’ and ‘colonised’ together, a demand which for the time and in the Iberian context was obviously an innovation.

At the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s the colonial theory was reactivated by an interesting process of theoretical and methodological miscegenation. Kunst used recent results from palaeoenvironmental studies which had reconstructed the Atlantic coastline in the Chalcolithic, particularly in Portuguese Estremadura, in order to establish a close relationship between the siting of fortified settlements (such as Zambujal, Vila Nova de São Pedro, Leceia, Alcalar and Los Millares) and their ease of access to the sea. In a
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neo-colonial framework, these sites would have been strategically placed to act as centres of trade between the Iberian Peninsula and other stopping-points in the Mediterranean. Some of them, like Zambujal, at the junction of three natural communication routes, were seen by Kunst as ‘central places’ within a ‘hierarchical network of settlement’. Zambujal would have controlled and defended an important passage between the sea and the interior, securing a clear ‘corridor’ for trade, especially in copper, silver and gold, but also in other products from outside the Peninsula, such as ivory and shells. Kunst also postulated a ‘complex’ social and settlement structure for places of ‘Zambujal type’. Fortified structures would have been not only for defence, but also for display by more powerful and ‘complex’ groups among native communities. This last position, therefore, is close to that of Schüle (1986), when he refers to the ‘intimidatory function’ of colonial fortifications.

Kunst’s methodology is clear: he used new empirical data and research into ‘local conditions’ favouring the emergence of specific ‘central places’ for Mediterranean trade in order to contextualise the motivations, needs and working methods of the colonisers. His was the first attempt to explain the ‘conditions of application of the colonial model’ through ‘empirical data’ gathered in the area, with which he endeavoured to confirm and revitalise the colonial theory.

Among Portuguese archaeologists of this final phase, those still defending the colonial model, are V. Gonçalves and R. Parreira. Gonçalves advocated a classical colonial explanation for the emergence of some imposing fortifications, such as Vila Nova de São Pedro, Leceia, Zambujal and, obviously, Los Millares. The novelty of the argument lies in the fact that he included apparently less architecturally complex sites, such as Santa Justa and Monte da Tumba, from another Chalcolithic context and of native construction, thereby disturbing the cultural unity which had until then been presupposed for ‘Chalcolithic fortifications’. It is true that other authors (Pellicer, 1986, for example), had put forward the hypothesis of a distinction between ‘native’ and ‘colonial’ fortifications. But with Gonçalves the distinction was crucial in explaining a model of Chalcolithic cultural evolution in southern Portugal, a model which allowed for the coexistence and interaction of several ‘Chalcolithics’ with their own rates of change. He also accepted a generalised pattern of intercommunity confrontation, whence came the need for various kinds of fortifications. Independently of the nature of the global argument, it does not go beyond the elementary level of traditional diffusionist explanations for a possible ‘colonial-type Chalcolithic’, nor does it provide ways to identify possible interactions between the supposed colonists (‘Mediterranean navigators landed beside the Tagus’) and the natives.

Finally, Parreira is a curious case of intellectual eclecticism. If it were not for the explicit emphasis on ‘contacts established by traders with Mediterranean communities and which allowed different kinds of knowledge to be appropriated’ (1990, p. 29), his would be a functional-processual position. In fact, he maintained that the new Chalcolithic social structures resulted from the convergence of a ‘dynamic of internal transformation’ (with almost an ecological determinism in the proposed relationship between space/ settlement/ resources) and so-called ‘external stimuli’, brought by contacts with Mediterranean traders in search of metals. Like Kunst, Parreira uses the term ‘central places’ for fortified settlements, seen as ‘strategic sites for extracting mineral and other resources, often with easy access to the sea, where various goods were stored and sorted’ (1990). He also describes Chalcolithic fortification as ‘an architecture of war’ in fashion at the time ‘throughout the Mediterranean world’, not linked only to defence, but also to ‘prestige and a symbol of
power’ (1990, p. 35). Parreira’s position is typical of more recent neo-colonial diffusionist perspectives, in its attempt to find support in a possible contextualisation of the sites attributed to the colonising process. But all the ‘data’ found seem to act as homologues of the colonial model: it is as though it was impossible to look afresh at the past. The theory is circular, unverifiable beyond itself.

How are we to explain the survival of the colonial theory (which fits, in the case of the authors just mentioned, into a historico-cultural perspective), into the 90s, within the multifaceted context of archaeological thought at the end of the century, a context which is certainly familiar to all the authors who defend the theory?

It is easy to see that the colonial theory, especially in its more orthodox versions, accompanies a historico-cultural perspective. It clearly shares a historically particularist view, where ‘each culture is the product of a unique sequence of development, in which diffusion plays a fundamental role in promoting change’ (Trigger, 1992, p. 147). Cultural change is thus caused by external factors, operating by diffusion of values between interconnected cultures. In this line of thought, cultures are seen as globally static, and are recognised archaeologically by recurrent patterns of materials in defined areas, known as ‘cultural provinces’.

The colonial model, applied to the Iberian Chalcolithic, interpreted the emergence of defensive domestic architecture, associated with other kinds of innovations in technology and ritual, as the product of the arrival in the Iberian Peninsula of socially more complex groups from the Near East. It therefore identified the ‘archaeological innovations’ as signs of change in social behaviour, explaining them by a mechanism of migration/diffusion. For such a model to have even minimum credibility, it had to objectify the motivation for these population movements, and also resorted to some archaeographic comparisons to show that this migratory process was probable.

However, Renfrew (1967) pointed out that the colonial theory never had irrefutable means to explain such movements of people. Firstly, the search for Iberian metal was never empirically confirmed, and above all the ‘need’ for fortifications was never successfully linked with the search for or the systematic exchange of copper. We now know that some fortified settlements were built at times and places where metal was never worked. Furthermore, ‘formal parallels’ (typologies in architecture and artefacts) between the Iberian Peninsula and the Near East were always weak, so much so that it was even mentioned by the defenders of the colonial model themselves, in recognition of an inherent fragility in their explanatory model.

In fact there have so far been no discoveries in the Iberian Peninsula, particularly in the so-called ‘colonies’ and ‘factories’, of the hoped-for ‘imported materials’, such as would indisputably prove not only genuine migration but also the undeniable transplantation of different and more complex social and symbolic structures to the Peninsula. We can see in certain authors (Fernández Miranda, 1985, for example) the discomfort caused by this gap in the ‘empirical data’, to the extent that he has adopted an ambiguous position, replacing ‘migration’ with ‘diffusion of ideas’, ‘commercial or other relations’ or ‘moderated diffusionary mechanisms’ to justify the absent (or undetected) data, still ‘surmised’ as ‘necessary’ and therefore ‘inevitable’ in the explanatory scheme of diffusionism.

Nevertheless, to say that colonial theory never had irrefutable means to explain itself (Renfrew, 1967) is to consider it from an angle inappropriate to the theory, which dismisses the internal study of any culture apart from the one which ‘portrays’ the theory
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archaeologically. The ‘identity’ of this culture, or its relations with other ‘cultures’, do not therefore need to be proved in a context of validation of empirical ‘data’. The vitality and survival of the colonial theory is thus due in part to its avoidance of real empirical opposition in modern scientific terms. Even when the credibility of the typological parallels or the plausibility of the social motivations found to justify ‘migrations’ are in doubt, it continues to believe implicitly in the almost inevitable possibility of ‘contacts’ and ‘influences’ (that is, cultural connections), even when such expressions depend upon archaeologically invisible or theoretically inconsistent processes. Contrary to appearances, the use of favourite expressions from ‘spatial archaeology’, such as ‘central place’ or ‘settlement hierarchy’, in the context of studies which claim to ‘contextualise’ (and so legitimise) the ‘colonial programme’ (Kunst, 1990; in press), only goes to show that evidence from ‘data’, used in a particular context, can serve any given ‘theories’. Normative archaeology appropriates new vocabularies and survives with new scientific methodologies (Micó, 1991).

The notion of ‘colonial Chalcolithic’, with its variants of ‘factory’ and ‘central place’, imposes a hegemonic vision of the past. It does not resort to empirical validation from exhaustive bases, but only to selected data, and at the same time limits the capacity to examine this past in alternative ways. In this sense the notion seems strategically suitable for constructing a single perspective on the past, static, rigid and authoritarian in tendency.

1.1.2. Chalcolithic fortified settlements in the light of the ‘New Archaeology’ and of Marxist perspectives. The question of ‘complexity’

According to J. Barrett (1994a), processual archaeology sees society as ‘a heterogeneous organizational system’ (which presupposes a notion of ‘internal complexity’) and change as occurring through ‘readjustments in the organizational principles’ (pp. 157-158). It was this conception of society as heterogeneous and complex that the ‘New Archaeology’ aimed to ‘reconstitute’ by application of a body of strictly archaeological theory concerned with inferring human behaviour from the study of ‘empirical data’. Regardless of the value of such methodology, we shall concentrate only on the interest of ‘New Archaeology’ in knowing, from an exclusively materialistic perspective, how prehistoric societies operated and changed.

There were of course many similarities between ‘New’ and Marxist archaeology. Both acting in a globally materialistic context, they were based on an evolutionary vision of cultural change, trying to understand the regularities of human behaviour through the validation of archaeological ‘data’. However, as Trigger (1992) emphasised, there is a marked difference between the two perspectives at the level of the factors which determine change. For ‘New Archaeology’, especially in its more orthodox variants, change is favoured by ‘factors outside the cultural system’ (demographic pressure, technological and environmental conditions), ‘treating human beings as passive victims of forces beyond their knowledge and control’ (Trigger, 1992, p. 304). For dialectical materialism, ‘the principle cause of cultural transformations takes place within the social territory, where it takes the form of competition for control of power between different groups in the same society’ (Trigger, ibid., p. 304). ‘New Archaeology’ thus expresses various forms of demographic and eco-
logical determinism, which are obviously minimised in the traditional Marxist approach.

Although the evolution of these two perspectives during the 70s and 80s has tended to diminish differences between neo-Marxist and cognitive-processual archaeology, in fact the impact of these new approaches has not yet been clearly felt in the interpretative frameworks of Iberian archaeology. Consequently, approaches other than the historicocultural to the Iberian Chalcolithic, and particularly the theme of ‘colonies’, generally follow relatively orthodox positions within ‘New Archaeology’ and dialectical materialism.

For neo-evolutionism to refute colonial theory, it had to ‘look inside’ prehistoric Iberian societies. Following this trend, most researchers in the area now advocate a vague indigenous explanation for the changes which took place in the Chalcolithic. From Arribas (1977, 1986), A. María Muñoz (1983, 1986, in press), Germán Delibes & Fernández Miranda (1993), Delibes et al. (in press), up to, for example, J.L. Cardoso (1989, 1994, 1995) – all these authors reject ‘migrations’ or even ‘moderate diffusionist processes’ in explaining fortifications, metal, new tombs and rituals and the so-called ‘economic intensification’ and ‘hierarchisation of society’. Such ‘changes’ are usually seen as a whole, some of them being transferred from colonial to indigenous theories without any conceptual break. These theories share a certain explanatory eclecticism, with a not always explicit predominance of functional-processual positions. Fortified settlements are still considered together as defensive sites, although with connotations of ‘display’ (Delibes and Fernández Miranda, 1993).

Another group of researchers in the 70s and 80s produced explicitly functional-processual or Marxist studies, particularly those on south-east Spain. We refer here especially to Chapman (1975, 1981, 1982, 1985, 1991), Ramos Millán (1981), Mathers (1984), Gilman (1976, 1981, 1987), and Gilman & Thornes (1985). As Hernando Gonzalo and Vicent García emphasise, these researchers interpret the Chalcolithic of the South-east as a ‘consequence of progressive adjustments in the relationship of energy exchange between human groups and the environment’ (1987, p.25). What distinguishes the concurrent theories are the ‘concrete mechanisms of these adjustments, as well as their effects on the transformation of social structures’ (ibid).

The proponents of all these theories are agreed in relating the changes seen in the archaeological record to two interdependent processes: so-called ‘economic intensification’ and ‘social hierarchisation’. However, for British and American researchers, environmental limitations must have caused disparate rates of developments between dry and wet zones, and this would have led to a much clearer process of social mobilisation in areas where the critical resources were scarcer. Thus, differences in access to such resources in the South-east would have promoted (by mechanisms which vary according to processual or Marxist perspectives) levels of inequality and associated social complexity.

It would be inappropriate in the context of this study to consider the validity of the environmental premises on which the theories of Chapman, Gilman or Mathers are based. Nonetheless, Hernando Gonzalo disagrees with the distinction between ‘dry’ and ‘wet’ zones in the Chalcolithic in this area, and even with the specific correlation ‘man/environment’ which these theories presuppose.

Our concern now, however, is to examine the role which the fortified settlements of south-eastern Spain have come to play in the light of these new theories:

1. Firstly, the category of ‘fortified settlement’ is closely related conceptually to that of ‘colony’. All fortified settlements are thus considered as indicators of the same
cultural reality, and in this sense they constitute ‘evidence’ of this reality.

2 – What is the reality being considered in the case of the Chalcolithic of the South-east? It is seen basically in general processes called ‘intensification’, ‘interaction’ and ‘social complexity’. Fortified settlements are places with functions of defence, intimidation and display, which express intercommunity conflicts in the need to affirm territorial rights. They are part of a global process of progressive ‘social complexity’ (Chapman, 1991).

3 – These processes are not directly related to any clear practice of metalwork. In contrast to the colonial theory, no causal link has been established between fortifications and metallurgy.

One of the most incisive criticisms of the above positions was that of Hernando Gonzalo (1988). In her view, a new approach to the nature of the fortified Chalcolithic settlements of the Southeast requires three types of study. Firstly, comparative analysis of fortifications: this has not shown different degrees of cultural complexity between the dry and wet zones. Los Millares is again seen as a large fortified settlement, an exceptional place not only within the dry zone but in the Peninsula as a whole. Secondly, considering differences (in area, architectural complexity, etc.), these are seen in all fortified settlements, regardless of their generic location on the coast or in the interior, which means we can assume internal variability of the fortified sites whose cultural meaning is to be determined. Thirdly, and following from the last point, the author considers that ‘fortification is not associated with the presence of metal…, and that [fortifications] bear witness to social organisation, not to social inequality’ (Hernando Gonzalo, 1988, p. 1296). In one of her final conclusions, she claims that ‘the process of progressive social complexity seen in the Chalcolithic of the South-east is not uniformly documented in all settlements’ (*ibid*, p. 1305).

Among the main conclusions of Hernando Gonzalo’s study is the fact that ‘complexity’ (regardless of its various possible definitions) has not been uniformly documented in all South-eastern fortified settlements. Thus we encounter a basic question: if these sites have lost a conceptual identity, that is, if they do not all conform to a specific cultural reality, even one known vaguely by labels such as ‘intensification’ or ‘complexity’, then we must reconstruct the plurality of processes which are at the origin of these settlements.

It should be noted that in the South-east this deconstruction of the cultural unity of Chalcolithic fortified settlements is also related to the deconstruction of the unity and identity of the famous ‘Los Millares horizon’ (Micó, 1991), to which these sites are traditionally linked.

Another group of authors approached the Chalcolithic of south-western Spain and Portuguese Estremadura from the above perspectives. Prominent among these are the Marxist approaches of C.T. Silva and J. Soares (1976/77), developed more recently by Silva (1990; in press). For Silva, a ‘new mode of production’, seen in the introduction of new technologies and intensive exploitation of agro-pastoral resources, would have begun even in the late Neolithic in southern Portugal. From this there followed the social division of work and obvious social inequality. The first Chalcolithic fortifications arose in response to permanent conflicts between groups competing for access to productive land and for ‘territory’ as a space of identity. Some of the settlements would have been built at a time when copper was not known or worked, which is, according to Silva, an irrefutable empirical basis for refuting the colonial theory. Gillman, in the 80s, also put forward opinions on the Chalcolithic of Portuguese Estremadura: changes, he considered, would have been due to control by elites, not of the technical conditions of production, as in
south-eastern Spain, but of the distribution of wealth, especially of ‘prestige goods’ such as copper and ivory. Trade and its control were thus the basis of local conflicts expressed in fortifications such as Vila Nova de São Pedro or Zambujal. These ideas were essentially taken up by Chapman (1991).

Both Gonçalves (1989, 1994) and Parreira (1990; in press), despite adopting the diffusionist colonial accounts mentioned above, mention the process known as the ‘Secondary Products Revolution’ (Sherratt, 1981, 1983) to justify not only the development and receptivity of local groups to ‘foreigners’ (Parreira), but also the splitting of these groups, intercommunity conflicts and ‘internal colonisation of territory’ (Gonçalves). In dealing with ‘indigenous Chalcolithics’, both authors operate in an area of indistinct ecological/economic/demographic determinism, familiar in functionalist and processual perspectives.

All these researchers into the Chalcolithic of southern Portugal saw fortifications as places of defence, destined to shelter people or stored goods, whether the people were native and/or colonists, or whether they were only native, and whether the goods were basically prestigious or also for subsistence. Parreira speaks of a ‘citadel with a Mediterranean flavour’ (1990, p. 35) as a place that not only expressed rivalry, but also affirmed identity, prestige and power. Thus there flourished, although in a diffusionist explanatory context, the plurality of meanings inherent in these ‘enigmatic’ monumental sites – so enigmatic that some authors can infer genuine ‘ruptures’ in the ‘model of occupation of space and society’ (Gonçalves, 1989, p. 466). Also, in general, these researchers place the fortified settlements of southern Portugal in a group comprising similar levels of economic and social development. The division between ‘large fortified colonial settlements’ in Estremadura and ‘fortified farms’ in the Alentejo and the Algarve (Gonçalves, 1989), while it destroys the unity of the concept of fortified settlement as far as origin (the builders) is concerned, nevertheless acknowledges a cultural connection between both, allowing for a system of economic and social interdependence the nature of which is not always sufficiently explained.

According to most recent approaches, southern Portuguese fortified settlements, while seen as distinct in size and architectural complexity, are placed in the same cultural setting of ‘intensification’ and ‘complexity’ as has been generically postulated for the South-east.

This perspective was not broadly questioned by the present writer in 1990 (Jorge, 1990). Nevertheless, even then we were influenced by a line of thought which questioned the fortified settlements of Estremadura in such terms as “A variety of constructive strategies, adapted to the internal dynamics of each community, seems thus to point to local settlement formulae, which assimilated external archetypes, certainly diffused within a context of long-distance exchange – a ‘sphere of interaction’ – where Estremadura was always in the forefront. The traditional discussion of the origins of settlements in Estremadura (and in other parts of southern Portugal) usually diverts onto an essentially empirical level… a basic problem that should be discussed in the ‘processual’ context of the relations of power between communities, their balance or imbalance, etc…. It is no surprise that these fortifications have a Mediterranean ‘family resemblance’: southern Portugal, on many levels, forms part of a Mediterranean peninsula. It would be expected that, thanks to intense supra-regional contacts, some groups and elites would adopt (in the context of ‘intensification’ of their ‘power apparatus’), highly prestigious forms of defensive architecture. Of course there still remains to be explained both the complex of causes which led some groups in Estremadura to surround themselves by walls, towers and bas-
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Jorge, 1990, pp. 188-189). We still subscribe to these words. The aim of the present study is to contribute to disentangle the ‘complex of causes’ at the origin of the construction and maintenance of each of these monumentalised places.

1.1.3. Potential and limitations of processual/functionalist (‘New Archaeology’) and Marxist approaches in dealing with the theme of Chalcolithic fortified settlements in the Peninsula

In our view, some potential advantages of these approaches are as follows:
– Practical archaeological verification that no traces relating to the colonial model are to be found. Excavations of the settlement of Zambujal made it so difficult for Schubart and Sangmeister to maintain this model that they were forced to try to redefine the concept of ‘colony’. This is an interesting case in which ‘empirical’ data came to weaken a theory which was not able to include them, and which was only generally upheld by its authors thanks to the ‘power’ of historico-cultural prejudice. The stylistic similarities linking many artefacts and building styles in the Mediterranean world should not be ignored, but they have to be interpreted in the context of other diffusionary mechanisms – large-scale interactions – the nature of which requires contextulised assessment going beyond acceptance of interconnected points between ‘closed cultures’.
– Attention to the internal development of cultures in a context of permanent interaction with the environment and with neighbouring groups. Thus, fortifications are placed among open cultural systems, whose operation and transformation have to be decoded.

The limitations of these perspectives can be summarised as follows:
– According to neo-evolutionist methodology, the explanation of a single piece of evidence – in this case, the ‘fortified settlement’ – is carried out by selecting general principles within which the particular ‘evidence’ comes to make sense. The fortified settlement thus becomes a hegemonic indicator of a certain degree of socio-economic development, expressed in the terms ‘intensification’, ‘differentiation’, ‘competition/interaction’ and ‘social complexity’.
– This approach follows very debateable parameters: firstly, the relationship between architecture and social behaviour operates within a body of strictly archaeological theory, and secondly this body of theory manipulates a limited and highly selected number of variables (‘intensification’, ‘interaction’, etc.), the ‘quantification’ of which, apart from anything else, is highly problematic.

There is no formula for overcoming these limitations: what is needed is a new mental position on the part of researchers. They must use the largest possible amount of contextualised (and not only archaeological) ‘data’, as well as culturally specific analogies; this may help to avoid the most obvious dangers – reduction and simplification – of neo-evolutionist theories. These theories were based on a limited number of behavioural regularities which did not fit the diversity and complexity of the cultural systems, so often contradictory in nature.
Following this, it would be easy to deconstruct the unitary and uniform nature of the concept of ‘fortified settlement’. If this functioned as an infallible indicator of the general processes we have mentioned, then whenever one such settlement was identified, these processes would be in evidence. But the study of the scanty ‘data’ available warns us of a very different reality. The fortifications are certainly places where energy and technical knowledge were invested, and in this sense they generically indicate parameters of social organisation and leadership. But the nature of each, case by case (spatially and temporally), is not determined, and since it is not, there is no sense in continually resorting to ‘keys’ such as ‘inequality’ or ‘social complexity’ to account for the plural reality we find. We have stopped believing in the truth of such supposed ‘explanations’ – and our loss of belief is, in the final analysis, the ‘motor’ of our search for other explanations, not to answer ‘processual’ questions, but so that we can invent other, new questions.

However, perhaps it would be useful to consider what it is that neo-evolutionist perspectives wanted to know about the fortifications. The main question posed is this: why did these settlements take this specific form? - that is, why were these defensive structures built? Let us forget for now the presupposition that they were defensive. It is only a sub-problem of a wider question which could be expressed as follows: if the space codified a model of society, how can we recover the ‘culturally specific meanings’ inherent in this code? In this question, apparently so simple, there is obviously a whole representationalist attitude to the past in which, to quote Barrett (1994a), two major ideas emerge: “the past has inscribed a truth about itself upon the archaeological record, and that by ‘explaining’ the data we automatically ‘explain’ the past; …the form of the past which we write as history is pre-determined by the ‘nature’ of our data, for no other past can exist outside those data. By way of such reasoning it simply remains the task of archaeology to identify those authentic voices which are present in the data” (op. cit., p. 156).

This is to say, the belief exists that writing history or pre-history is the same as ‘explaining’ the archaeological record, and that to the extent that it is well explained, then the basic, ultimate meanings which enabled a particular past to happen will be arrived at. Thus, in its most recent formulation, processual archaeology aims to transform itself from an archaeology of processes into one of meanings.

But do things have ultimate, ‘real’ meanings? Would it be the most correct, the most fruitful way for us, to try to reach such meanings? Let us look for the first time here at the object of our discussion: the sites themselves, surrounded by so-called walls, sometimes by ramparts, towers and bastions.

1.2. Chalcolithic ‘fortified settlements’ in the Iberian Peninsula: elements for an inventory of similarities and differences

Introductory note: 1. Included in this study are all those settlements with stone structures defining domestic spaces which are usually called ‘defensive structures’ by the respective authors; 2. We are here dealing only with published sites, a total of 69; 3. The aim is not to make an exhaustive inventory of the sites: this analysis is simply to demonstrate the inconsistency of a theoretical approach, and not to produce contextual studies on the places mentioned.
1.2.1. Spatial-temporal framework (Fig. 1; Table 1)

The settlements are distributed in the following areas: the South-east: provinces of Almeria, Mârcoia and Granada; the South-west: provinces of Huelva, Alentejo, Algarve, Badajoz, Cáceres, Beira Baixa; Portuguese Estremadura; the northern Meseta and its western periphery: the provinces of Salamanca, Zamora, Trás-os-Montes/ Alto-Douro and Beira Alta.

In the South-east, in the Algarve and in Portuguese Estremadura there are some settlements linked directly with the sea; in Estremadura most of the settlements were connected to estuaries in Chalcolithic times. But the vast majority of known sites are in the interior of the Peninsula, with many grouped in the west along the great rivers and their tributaries (the Guadalquivir, Guadiana, Tagus, Douro and Mondego).

In the South-east, twelve fortified settlements have been recorded. Of these, four raise doubts as to the ‘defensive nature’ of their stonework. Most of the settlements are on the coast or no more than ten kilometres from it (Los Millares, for example). All are below 500 metres in altitude, and are now in the dry zone. In the mountainous interior, always
over thirty kilometres from the coast, there are a few fortified settlements in the basins of rivers flowing into the Mediterranean or in the basin of the Guadalquivir. They are found at altitudes above 500 metres, in the present wet zone (El Malagón and Cerro de la Virgen, for example). Whether on the coast or inland, their siting seems related to the proximity of vital resources (water or arable land). As a rule they are in dominant positions, mainly on so-called ‘spurs or flattened hill-tops’, and they all have some degree of visibility and control over the varied landscapes. How the natural defensive capabilities of each site are interpreted depends on contextual studies, including of the social use of the environment over the period.

The chronology of these south-eastern settlements – in calibrated dates, which will always be used in this study – is very variable. If we look at the occupation of Cabezo de la Cueva del Plomo (late Neolithic), we have to accept that these walled sites could have arisen in the region about 4000 BC and have declined by about 2000 BC, at the end of the regional Chalcolithic. However, most of them were built between the end of the 4th millennium and the middle of the 3rd millennium BC, mostly between 3000 and 2500 BC. Apart from these general parameters, we should add the following: – short-term occupation of sites seems to be most common, 200 years or less in five or six cases, either in the late Neolithic (one example) or usually in the late Chalcolithic; – there is only one example (Los Millares) of a settlement occupied for more than 600 years (from the early to the late Chalcolithic); – occupation of sites in the medium term (approximately 300 to 400 years) is apparently less frequent, and would have happened during the mid and late Chalcolithic.

Table 1 – Relative chronology of Iberian Chalcolithic ‘fortified settlements’.

![Table 1](image)
In the South-west thirty-four settlements have been found which are said to be fortified. In a substantial number of these, too, the walls are often interpreted instead as ‘boundary walls’, so that their defensive nature remains an open question. If we accept the hypothesis that Alcalar could have included this type of structure, this would be the only settlement in the region only a few kilometres from the present coastline, and certainly directly connected with it in Chalcolithic times. Other sites, in the basins of the Sado, the Mira or even the Guadiana (in the case of the last river, the site of Santa Justa, for example), although only a few dozen kilometres from the sea, do not fit into the pattern of places linked with former estuaries. The majority (about thirty) of the sites identified in this region are connected with the middle Tagus or the middle and lower Guadiana rivers, and should be considered interior settlements. Given the great regional variety shown in the position of these sites, it is difficult to document, from the data available, any regular features linking settlement and resources. The majority are on hills or hilltops with varying degrees of visual dominance over the surrounding country. However, to interpret the defensive capacity of these places would also require contextual studies: these would help us to understand how the natural environment was socially manipulated over time.

The chronology of these south-western settlements is also very variable, although covering a shorter period of time then in the South-east. In fact, from the few reliable dates available, the first occupations would date from the early Chalcolithic (end of the 4th millennium BC), and the last from the late Chalcolithic (end of the 3rd millennium BC). Nevertheless, the building process seems to have been most intensive between 3000 and 2500 BC. Apart from these general parameters, we may add the following: – medium term occupation of settlements seems to be most common, with eleven sites occupied for between 300 and 400 years during the middle and late Chalcolithic; – we know of two or three cases of long-term settlements (500 years or more), between the early and late Chalcolithic (Santa Justa, Monte da Tumba and perhaps Castelo de São Brás); – there are eight examples of short-term occupation (about 100 years), dating from the early and late Chalcolithic.

In Portuguese Estremadura sixteen settlements have been studied. The great majority seem to have ‘defensive’ structures, although these are very different, as we shall see. The sites are all linked to the sea, either by former estuaries or by the mouth of the Tagus. Among the former, the most extensive and complex is the Castro of Zambujal; examples of the latter are Vila Nova de São Pedro and Leceia. All the sites are littoral settlements, no more than ten kilometres from the present coastline or from the lower Tagus. Many of them seem to be at the crossing point of natural routes, strategically positioned between the coast and the interior. No explicit pattern has yet been identified linking these settlements with a specific type of natural resource. For example, Zambujal is relatively far from the best agricultural land in the Sizandro basin, and within its micro-region there are no copper mines, which are in fact rare in Estremadura. But some other sites with ‘defensive’ structures may be linked to the proximity of arable land and other resources as yet archaeologically undocumented. The positions of these sites, which always predominate in the landscape, have been variously described, vaguely and imprecisely, as ‘spurs’, ‘flattened tops of spurs’, ‘hills’, ‘summits’, etc. They all have great natural defensive potential, some of them being practically hidden in the landscape. The real capabilities of each site to control its environment can only be assessed, as we have already mentioned, through
studies of the integration of the sites within networks of settlement, and of the conditions, in different periods, which enabled people to manipulate their environment in particular ways.

The chronology of these Estremaduran fortified settlements is rather different from the chronologies we have just seen. Firstly, the earliest occupation seems to date from the early Chalcolithic, at a slightly later date than in the South-west (especially the Alentejo and the Algarve) – around 3200 BC. However, some settlements, especially the larger ones such as Zambujal and Vila Nova de São Pedro, were last occupied in the early/middle Bronze Age, finishing around 1600 BC. This means that these fortifications were in use over a long period (about 1000 years) spanning a variety of social settings. The settlements are therefore not exclusively Chalcolithic, which points to the problematic relationship between structures and social realities as related to continuity or discontinuity. During the Chalcolithic occupation, construction and use of the fortifications were most intensive between about 3000 and 2400 BC. Apart from these general considerations, we may add the following: – medium term occupation of settlements seems to be most common (about 300-400 years), between the early and late Chalcolithic (five cases); – as already mentioned, two examples (Zambujal and Vila Nova de São Pedro) were occupied for a very long period (about 1000 years), from the early Chalcolithic to the early Bronze Age; – up to now only two possible cases of short-term occupation (about a hundred years) have been found, one from the early and one from the late Chalcolithic.

Finally, in the northern Meseta and its western periphery there are six examples (or seven, if we include an isolated case in the upper Mondego basin) of settlements with ‘defensive’ structures. It must be said, however, that in only two – Castelo Velho and El Pedroso – are investigations sufficiently advanced for this to be consistently shown. All the settlements are in the interior, directly related to the course of the River Douro and/or its tributaries (six cases) or with the upper Mondego (one case); the relationship of the sites to locally available resources is very varied. Some settlements, like Castelo Velho, stand at the crossing of two important natural routes. They are in dominant positions, usually on top of spurs, and one (El Pedroso) is at the top of a granite Inselberg. However, their degrees of visibility and visual control over the landscape are obviously different: Castelo Velho, now has a view of the entire horizon, particularly the area of the tributary of the Douro, while São Lourenço is more hidden, apparently with little ‘control’ over the plain of the Tâmega. As usual, a simple topographic characterisation of these sites tells us little, unless complemented by contextual studies integrating the settlement within a socially used and culturally constructed environment.

We know very little about the chronology of these settlements. At least three of them seem to have been inhabited for a long period, like the sites we have seen in Estremadura. Castelo Velho is the best example of a fortified Chalcolithic settlement whose walls were first built in the mid-Chalcolithic (about 2900 BC) and which continued to be occupied until at least the middle Bronze Age (1300 BC). São Lourenço and perhaps Castanheiro do Vento could have developed similarly. In Castelo Velho, artefacts were different in the Bronze Age from those in the Chalcolithic, but the so-called ‘defensive’ structures were maintained, although they may have been altered in various ways. Once again, then, we see a fortified site continuously occupied, though this does not necessarily indicate cultural immobility. The most intensive phase of construction of Chalcolithic fortifications in this
part of northern Portugal was concentrated in a short period, between about 2900 and 2400 BC. Apart from these general considerations, we may add the following: – medium term occupation of settlements seems to be most common (about 300-400 years), between the middle and late Chalcolithic; – there are also examples of settlements occupied for a longer period (about 1000 years), from the mid-Chalcolithic to the middle Bronze Age; – no cases of short-term occupation (less than 200/100 years) have yet been found.

Comparative analysis of the chronology of these settlements suggests the following general ideas: firstly, fortifications arose earlier in the South-east than in the north-western half of the Peninsula. Secondly, there is a period between about 3000 and 2500 BC when most of these settlements were built. Thirdly, it is only in Portuguese Estremadura and in northern Portugal that examples of reoccupation of these sites in the early and middle Bronze Age have so far been found; the great majority of fortified Chalcolithic settlements were abandoned around 2300 BC. Fourthly, two common aspects can be seen: in the South-east, South-west and Portuguese Estremadura short periods of occupation (about 100 years) were always either in the late Neolithic/early Chalcolithic or else in the late Chalcolithic, but never in the mid-Chalcolithic, and in all regions some fortified settlements were occupied for very long periods (about 500 to 1000 years). Finally, looking at the settlements as a whole, there is wide regional and local variation in the length of occupation of sites, which leads us to believe that if we had precise chronologies for each settlement, then the chronological framework we have presented would perhaps not be feasible.

1.2.2. Architecture and contexts of use (Table 2)

In 69 settlements analysed, about 26 are surrounded by walls (and/or ditches); the defensive function of these is not totally clear, especially in the South-west.

We shall try here to link the following elements: – probable area; – type of architecture (general characteristics, typology); – successive ‘building programmes’ (‘projects’ in the architectural sense) seen at each site; – different ‘contexts’ of use, in the broadest sense, detectable in the settlements.

We shall use the following scheme (see Table 2):

**Probable area:**
- A. between 4 & 5 hectares;
- B. 1 to 2 ha.;
- C. less than 1 ha.;
- D. unknown.

**Type of architecture:**
- Type: Aa – citadel with 3 lines of walls; towers; bastions;
- Ab – citadel with 2 lines of walls; towers; bastions;
- B – citadel with 1 line of wall, with or without towers and bastions;
- C – 1 line of wall with or without towers and bastions;
- D – 1 line or wall; platforms bounded by retaining walls;
- E – 1 line of wall, large perimeter;
- F – 1 line of wall; ditch;
- G – trapezoidal enclosure with towers at the angles;
- H – structure of unknown type.
‘Building programme’ (project):
A – various (site structurally remodelled);
B – only one (no structural remodelling);
C – unknown;

Context of use:
A – semi-specialised areas (activities in separate structures or spaces);
B – mixed areas (activities in the same area, rotating);
C – unknown;

We shall comment on the three main aspects underlying this scheme. Firstly, we are aware that the real area of the settlements could be greater than that outlined by the stone remains found so far. Secondly, the types of structure are based on a small number of published plans and on descriptions which are mostly summaries and of very uneven quality; this does not help in making distinctions based on uniform criteria. Thirdly, when considering what we have called different ‘contexts of use’, we refer to the presence or absence of areas for the production, transformation and storage of products for subsistence or exchange. We have chosen here to divide these areas into two main categories: - semi-specialised areas, with activities being carried out in specific spaces or in special, durable, permanent structures; and mixed areas, where activities were carried out in the same space,

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<tr>
<th>STRUCTURES &amp; CONTEXTS OF USE</th>
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<td>CONTEXT OF USE</td>
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Table 2
on a rotating basis with no spatial autonomy or exclusivity. Of course most of the archaeological data is decontextualised, which means that this selection criterion involves a high degree of generalisation and is no more than provisional. Nevertheless, in the context of this discussion it seems most productive to use the available data, even though it is often crude and unspecific, not only because they are the only ones we have, but because they constitute the empirical base for the functional-processual argument. This, in its orthodox version, uses exactly such a generalising and summarising approach, and to dismantle it requires the use of the same type of data, verifying their validity within an explicit problematic and methodological framework.

A first point to notice is the rarity of sites larger than 1 hectare with citadels and two or more lines of walls, semi-specialised areas of production or storage and signs of having been remodelled.

There is one case covering an area of 5 hectares (type A – see Table 2) – Los Millares – which, apart from anything else, is part of a very highly developed settlement/burial complex. Also in the South-east, we have the probable example of El Malagón, which might have been between 1 and 2 hectares in area. The remaining known examples of this type (type B) come from Portuguese Estremadura and the South-west, and are much smaller than Los Millares (about 1 hectare), and less complex architecturally (e.g. Zambujal, Vila Nova de São Pedro, Leceia). However, they are really exceptional in the Peninsula as a whole, since what predominates are sites smaller in area than 1 hectare (type C). These small sites usually have an enclosing stone wall (sometimes with a ditch outside it) and have been remodelled or enlarged on the basis of one original building plan, with mixed, non-specialised areas for production and/or storage.

If we look at the sub-regions individually, we come to various conclusions (see Table 2).

In the South-east, Los Millares stands out as an important, long-term fortified site (type Aa), which underwent structural modifications over a period of time, and inside which there were special places for activities such as grinding grain, weaving, storage and metallurgy. In this same generic area, another site – El Malagón – may correspond to architectural type Ab in our scheme above. Nearly all other settlements are much smaller (less than 1 hectare) and belong in types B, C and D. Their initial building plan was never modified, and they had mixed activity areas – no semi-specialised areas have so far been found there.

In the South-west, no sites as extensive as Los Millares have been found, nor – with the possible exception of El Malagón – any less imposing but still nevertheless ‘central places’, as seen in Portuguese Estremadura. There are five sites between 1 and 2 hectares in area, but the majority (ten) are smaller than 1 hectare. They belong in types B and predominantly C (only one line of walls with or without towers and bastions), making their defensive purpose questionable; little variety in typology has been documented. These sites too remained largely unaltered during their period of use. In some type B sites (five cases), semi-specialised areas have been found, but the remaining ten only have mixed areas.

In Portuguese Estremadura there is a considerable range of so-called fortified settlements. Firstly, there are no large ‘central places’ (Aa), but we find four sites of between 1 and 2 hectares in area, and a variety of domestic sites, five in all, smaller than 1 hectare. Secondly, although the group consists of only 16 settlements, that they include examples of four architectural categories; Ab (three cases), B (one), C (three), and G (three). This last category, G – small, trapezoidal enclosures bounded by a narrow wall with towers at
the angles – is reminiscent of similar constructions in the south of France – Lébous, Boussargues, etc. (D’Anna & Gutherz, 1989).

In Estremadura, then, there are sites which we may see, up to a certain point, as smaller replicas of Los Millares (Vila Nova de São Pedro, Zambujal and Leceia), which were occupied in the medium or long term, show signs of alteration in their building plans and which may have included semi-specialised areas. As far as we can tell from the available data, the remaining Estremaduran settlements, simpler in architectural type, contained only mixed activity areas.

Finally, in the northern Meseta and its western periphery, if we ignore the unique case of El Pedroso (architectural type E), with its long perimeter wall partially enclosing an area of about 4 hectares, almost all the other settlements appear to be smaller than 1 hectare. What seems most significant point here is the great variety of structure types: in fact, seven of the sites show examples of five categories – B, C, D, E, and F. In this sub-region, only one settlement (Castelo Velho) has been found which fits into type B. With settlements of types D and F, a defensive interpretation is very problematic. Only Castelo Velho shows signs of semi-specialised areas; at other sites, information is practically non-existent.

We should now emphasise the following main points:

1. In about 26 settlements, lack of evidence means that there are considerable doubts as to their possible defensive capabilities. This is particularly true of type C settlements in the South-west;
2. There is a considerable diversity of types, both of occupied areas and of architecture. The six architectural types selected could easily be doubled, if we consider other attributes;
3. However, some common features are apparent: it is especially in settlements of architectural types A and B (which probably functioned defensively) that semi-specialised activity areas have so far been found; it is these settlements which reproduce more or less faithfully architectural patterns common in the Mediterranean basin; these settlements are spread throughout the Peninsula, particularly in the South-east, South-west and Portuguese Estremadura; it is proportionally in Estremadura that we find not only the greatest architectural diversity, but also the largest number of ‘Mediterranean style’ settlements (types A, B and G);
4. If we wish to generalise on the basis of this data, we may suggest that the greatest defensive power is related to Mediterranean architectural styles (along with semi-specialised areas for production and storage). This could indicate a desire to protect socially important spaces and activities by means of constructions with supra-regional prestige;
5. Nevertheless, the specific contexts of use of the remaining walled Chalcolithic settlements in the Peninsula are still to be explained.

1.2.3. Fortified settlements: intensification and interaction? (Table 3)

The New Archaeology suggests a global definition of ‘economic intensification’ as increased diversity and specialisation in the base of subsistence. To recognise this in the archaeological record requires the use of indicators measuring ‘the increased productive
capacity of the entire system of energy exploitation... as seen in... the introduction of technological mechanisms and/or greater investment of human effort’ (Almudena Hernando Gonzalo & Juan Vicent García, 1987, p. 26). Within a functionalist framework, faithfully applied to the study of the Chalcolithic in the South-east by Chapman (1991), ‘economic intensification’ is seen above all in specialised techniques in agriculture (such as irrigation or Mediterranean polyculture), in the production of specialised agricultural implements (the plough, for example), in durable structures connected with storage (‘cisterns’, pits, etc.) in drainage (ditches, dams), drying and grinding (threshing-floors, grinding stones),

### Table 3

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**Key:** Indicators of ‘intensification’ and ‘interaction’ in fortified settlements in the Peninsula.

1 – non-irrigated agriculture; 2 – irrigated agriculture; 3 – horses; 4 – oxen; 5 – cistern; 6 – pit; 7 – clay oven; 8 – ditch; 9 – dam; 10 – metal working area; 11 – weaving area; 12 – storage area; 13 – grinding area; 14 – ‘threshing-floor’.

A – copper; B – ivory; C – amber; D – alabaster; E – gold; F – ‘idols; G – painted pottery; H – ‘symbolic’ pottery; I – bell beakers.
weaving (looms of various kinds), as well as in metallurgy itself (primitive copper working). In fact, direct or indirect indices of new production techniques have been used excessively to measure ‘intensification’. One necessary criticism of this approach is that ‘intensification’ is not always linked to the introduction of concrete ‘techniques’ (the so-called ‘capital investment technologies’), visible in the archaeological record. It can only be quantified by comparing a related set of variables, seen in socially contextualised systems. We believe, therefore, that in many areas with an apparent absence of specialised productive techniques - such as ploughing associated with domestication of cattle and horses, the consumption of milk products or the use of wool (part of the so-called ‘Secondary Products Revolution’, one of the most problematic aspects of ‘economic intensification’) – we cannot automatically assume the absence of specific processes of ‘intensification’.

To sum up, the concept of ‘economic intensification’ needs to be widened by contextualising its practices, which presupposes a similar widening and redefinition of its criteria of evaluation.

And what is ‘interaction’? It implies a reciprocal action between elements of a system, an action which changes the nature and behaviour of these elements. Interaction can imply a vast range of social relationships, from those involving direct contact to those requiring mediating mechanisms for exchanging information. For such a broad concept, New Archaeology normally uses summary indicators. Chapman (1991) uses mainly the presence or absence at sites of particular raw materials, artefacts or stylised symbols in order to establish what he calls ‘intercommunity exchange’. But it is obvious that while some level of interaction may be supposed in cases where there are indications of exchange of objects or diffusion of styles, nevertheless in cases where such indications are absent we cannot claim that no interaction existed. This serves to remind us that the relationship between material production and human behaviour can take complex and contradictory forms which should not be disguised by simplistic, reductive generalisations.

Table 3 shows the presence or absence of the most common indicators of ‘intensification’ and ‘interaction’ (according to processual schemes) at fortified Chalcolithic settlements in the Peninsula. There are, however, important limitations: the restricted nature of these indicators in relation to the global nature of the processes, and the difficulty in assessing the chronological and cultural connexions between the indicators and the period when the stone structures were erected.

An initial appraisal leads us to the following general conclusions:

Firstly, there are proportionally more indicators of ‘intensification’ in the South-east and in Estremadura (coastal areas) than in the South-west and the northern Meseta (areas of the interior); secondly, with regard to ‘interaction’, the picture is more uniform in all regions. Copper, for example, is found in all areas, but in a higher percentage in the South-east and Estremadura. On the other hand, at many settlements in the South-west it is impossible to establish a strict correlation between construction/use of fortifications and copper metallurgy. In variety of raw materials exchanged, Estremadura is pre-eminent. Of styles of decoration and artefacts, even bearing in mind the greater amount of archaeological evidence found in the South-east and Estremadura, we can say that they seem to have been found everywhere. We may add that specific indicators of ‘intensification’ and interaction are also found in contemporary non-fortified settlements, so that overall these phe-
nomena do not seem related to fortifications.

Focussing on the sub-regions themselves, and linking the specific indicators of ‘intensification’ and interaction with the architectural types previously analysed (see Plate 2), we find another picture.

In the South-east, whatever the fortification type (A, B, C or D), there are recognisable indicators of ‘intensification’. The problem, obviously, lies in the fact that it is only in settlements such as Los Millares and Cerro de la Virgen that an appreciable number of indicators coexist, even with this summary approach. At other sites only one, two or three indicators have been found, making the available archaeological basis unclear. As for ‘interaction’, independently of the problems raised in trying to quantify it, this pattern occurs: in all architectural types, materials seen as indicative of interaction have been found, but the greatest number are in types A, B and C. Ivory is important in about half the settlements studied, And copper, ‘symbolic pottery’ and ‘idols’ are found in about 80% of sites.

Overall, however, the picture seems to indicate that we lack the data to be able to state that the fortified settlements of the South-east, as a whole, are linked to any particular increase in productive capacity or to high levels of interaction.

In the South-west, the classic indicators of ‘intensification’ were found in architectural type B, with a few in type C. However, even in the former, there are only a few sites where these indicators are found all together, and their value as a sign of the process is problematic. Given the regional diversity in this area, we may suppose that there were many forms of ‘intensification’, some undetectable in the ‘archaeological record’. As for ‘interaction’, it is much easier to see in both architectural types (B and C); settlements with most indicators of ‘interaction’ are distributed uniformly between these types. Prominent here, since they each have several indicators, are the settlements of Monte da Tumba, Santa Justa, Três Moinhos and São Brás, but apart from these, signs of supra-regional interaction are scanty. There seems to have been little trade in copper, and it is impossible to connect it generally with south-western fortifications.

Overall, we cannot postulate any strict correlation between ‘intensification’, ‘interaction’ and fortified settlements in the South-west. As for ‘interaction’, unless we have recourse to other variables in the future, only low levels of local interaction seem to have existed.

In Estremadura, indicators of ‘intensification’ were mainly found in settlements of architectural types A and G, although there were also some in type C. We may recall that it is types A and G that reproduce most faithfully a certain Mediterranean stylistic form. However, these so-called ‘indicators’ are slight: there is no evidence of technologies for increasing production, nor of specific areas or structures related to this. We also lack palaeo-environmental studies reconstructing Chalcolithic flora and fauna, which might document specific forms of ‘intensification’. As for interaction, signs of this too are most frequent in architectural types A and G, with some indications in type C. The variety of raw materials and styles of artefacts is notable, suggesting that there was probably a higher level of ‘interaction’ here than in other regions of the Peninsula. However, copper and bell-beakers do not always coincide with the period of fortifications (as at Leceia, for example), and this could extend to other indicators whose chronological and cultural relationship with the stone structures is not definitely confirmed. Some indicators of ‘interaction’, such as a certain type of ‘idol’, are original to Estremadura, and would have spread from here to
other regions of the Iberian Peninsula.

In general, we still cannot establish a direct correlation between Estremaduran fortified settlements and a global phenomenon of ‘intensification’. It is true that the Chalcolithic in Estremadura shows a high level of ‘interaction’, but it has not been demonstrated that this group of fortified settlements was particularly linked with specific exchanges – or at least there is no way at present to prove this.

In the northern Meseta and its western periphery, traditional indicators of ‘intensification’ were only found in one type B settlement (Castelo Velho). However, indicators of interaction are seen in two type B settlements and one from type D.

The following main points should be emphasised:
1. It is impossible to correlate the traditional indicators of fortification, ‘interaction’ and ‘intensification’.
2. In some settlements from architectural types A, B and G, with more complex structures, we do find some of the more common indicators of the process of ‘intensification’, but we must not forget that the great majority of fortified settlements have never been excavated, so we cannot draw any general conclusions from these indicators. The term ‘intensification’ in fact needs to be redefined, bearing in mind the multiple forms it can take in the archaeological record.
3. Traditional indicators of ‘interaction’ are distributed more evenly between the various types of fortification, though seen most clearly in some settlements in the South-east and especially in Estremadura. As for the presence or absence of such indicators, however, no particular difference has been observed between fortified and non-fortified settlements. ‘Interaction’, too, needs to be contextualised to be of any practical use.

To the question posed in the title of this section, there are two responses:

a) it is impossible to answer because the ‘database’ is not large enough;
b) it is becoming useless to ask questions which cannot be answered within the scope of the contradictions produced by a generalist archaeology, which no longer believes in a limited number of regularities of behaviour and which has become ‘greedy’ for ‘data’.

If there were various ‘intensifications’ and ‘interactions’ and if, as we have seen, there were various types of ‘fortifications’ which did not always express these culturally specific processes, would there still be any ‘meta-regularity’ to unify the fortifications? We shall now attempt to examine the question of social differentiation.

1.2.4. Polysemy of Chalcolithic ‘fortified settlements’: variety in their social and symbolic contexts

Processual archaeology distinguishes between vertical and horizontal social differentiation (Chapman, 1991). The former is seen in the diverse forms of tombs (size and duration of necropoles, complexity of construction and differentiation of access to some tombs, presence of prestige goods, etc.), and in the hierarchy of habitats (different sizes of occupied areas, functional variety of domestic structures, presence/absence of fortifications, etc.). Horizontal differentiation is seen in specialisation in production, both within and between settlements.
Table 4 gives a general view of the association of necropoles and ‘fortified settlements’, which are culturally connected so as to show patterns of variability in tombs and settlements.

An initial appraisal leads us to the following general conclusions:

1. There is a marked regional difference between the South-east and South-west on one hand and Estremadura and the northern Meseta on the other. In the former there are monumental tombs (*tholoi*, megalithic monuments) associated with fortified settlements, with the necropoles concentrated in small areas close to settlements. Occasionally too there are burials in non-monumental graves (caves, *hypogea* or *cists*). In the latter areas no monumental burials indisputably connected with such settlements have so far been found. In general, various types of tombs are found in these areas (*tholoi*, *hypogea*, megalithic monuments), but it is not yet possible to correlate settlements and tombs;

2. The South-east is remarkable for having the largest number of tombs associated with fortified settlements. Even in the South-west, despite some important exceptions, the

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Key: *Kinds of relationship between burials/necropoles and fortified settlements in the Peninsular Chalcolithic*

A – clusters of tombs, visible from each other, near settlement; B – concentrated, long-term necropolis, adjoining settlement; C – concentrated, long-term necropolis, near settlement; D – 1 burial near settlement; E – settlement + rock art sanctuary; F – unknown.

Tombs: Th – *tholos*; f – pit; m – megalithic monument; c – cist; h – *hypogeum*; g – natural cave.

Table 4
pattern of relationship between settlement and tomb is not usually known;

3. Both in the South-east and the South-west, the links between type of tomb and type of settlement are very diverse, which makes it very difficult to recognise any typological/spatial pattern. Thus, settlements of architectural types B and C, which are in the majority in the Peninsula, are associated both with tholoi and with megalithic monuments, and burials in natural caves are linked with type A and C settlements. On the other hand, necropoles used in the long and medium-term, containing a variety of tombs, are also linked with distinct settlements; for example, the formula ‘tholos + pit’ is associated with settlements of architectural types C and H; the formula ‘hypogeum + megalithic monument’ with a probable example of type D; the formula ‘tholos + hypogeum + cist’ with a large type A settlement (Los Millares); and the formula ‘megalith + tholos + hypogeum’ with a possible type B settlement.

We believe that this diversity of associations indicates a social and cultural variability worthy of investigation within the context of each region.

In the South-east the outstanding, unique example, in the region and the Peninsula as a whole, is Los Millares, where a concentrated, long-term necropolis with about 80 tombs (including tholoi, hypogea and cists) is located not just near the settlement but blocking the only access to it. Given this positioning, it is valid to ask if the necropolis might not have formed a kind of ‘advance defensive line’ of the settlement. In fact, since it barred the only entrance, it could have served, in relation to the land outside, as ‘constraining territory’, since it was certainly ‘ancestors territory’. Anyone from another community approaching Los Millares, even before reaching the third, external, so-called defensive line, would first have had to cross a virtually ‘dangerous’ space, one charged with meanings which not only identified the community inhabiting the settlement, but also may only have been fully understood by those inhabitants.

In this region there are other necropoles more or less concentrated around settlements (at a distance of roughly 200 metres or more), such as El Barranquete, with about 15 tholoi (settlement of El Tarajal), La Encantada, with about 3 tholoi and 40 burials in pits (settlement of Almizaraque), and Los Eirales, with about 12 megalithic monuments (settlement of Cerro de Los Castellones).

These necropoles, or what remains of them, are very different from each other: – in number of tombs (between 2 and 50); – in variety and architectural complexity of tombs (tholoi, megalithic monuments, tholoi + pits, hypogea + megalithic monuments, natural caves); – in monumentality of tombs (very diverse visibility); in type of grave goods; – in duration of use and dynamics of development (spatial and temporal) of the necropoles.

These tombs may be an indication of social heterogeneity, with very diverse levels of social complexity both in space and time.

In the South-west, out of 34 settlements it is only in ten that we can establish a relationship with the respective necropolis. Nevertheless, despite this obvious lack of information, the ten sites are very diverse.

On one hand we have Alcalar, with a concentrated, long-term necropolis consisting of about 18 tombs (including tholoi, a megalithic monument and a hypogeum) sited at various points around the outside of the settlement. The large majority are false corbelling tombs, and the space inside is elaborately divided. Some have atriums in front of the
passages, with decorated menhirs. Goods include copper, gold, ivory and other raw materials. It is possible that the necropolis would have been more scattered in the late Neolithic, and that at this period there would have been small settlements in the area, including the first phase of Alcalar itself. But in the course of the Chalcolithic the necropolis would have become concentrated on the slopes about 500 metres around Alcalar, which could have assumed the position of ‘central place’ of the region, which would relate to the increased complexity of the necropolis in terms of variety and hierarchy of graves (Parreira, 1990; Parreirea & Serpa, in press).

On the other hand, we should also consider the small necropolis of La Zarcita, associated with the fortified settlement of Los Vientos. This is a small concentrated necropolis (four tombs with false corbeling), used for a short period, situated on the low hills that border the ‘citadel’ to the north. The monuments are arranged in a segment of a circle with a radius of about 700 metres, and each is different from the other in design. Inside, copper, ‘symbolic’ pottery and vestiges of bell-beakers have been found. There is no obvious spatial hierarchy in these tombs.

We should also mention some megalithic necropoles about which hardly anything is known in terms of architecture or grave goods. These are the necropoles of Torrejona and Moncarxa (settlement of Moncarxa), Canchal and Charneca do Fratel (settlements of the same names), Amieira (settlement of Senhora da Giesteira), and the necropolis probably connected with the settlement of Monte Novo dos Albardeiros.

Finally there is the tholos about 200 metres from the settlement of Escoural, and another possibly connected with the settlement of Santa Justa, but about 5 km from it.

Despite the obvious lack of information on these necropoles, it is revealing that in ten known cases there is such great diversity, in number of tombs, in their concentration or dispersal, in architectural conception and complexity (tholoi, hypogea, megalithic monuments), in grave goods, and in period and type of use. Once again we are reminded that these necropoles, each associated with a different type of fortified settlement, point to great diversity of social and symbolic contexts, not easily identified in the archaeological record in a linear way.

In Estremadura and the northern Meseta we have no data on the relation between settlement and tombs. However, we should mention the settlements of El Pedroso and Los Barruecos, in the provinces of Zamora (northern Meseta) and Cáceres (South-west), which are associated with open-air sanctuaries (with engravings and rock paintings), and whose walls enclose the whole area occupied by the so-called domestic-ritual space. No concentrated necropoles have been found in either of these regions, so it seems that what we have here is another form of spatial and hierarchical articulation between the settlement and its necropoles.

In conclusion, the necropoles and tombs associated with the ‘fortified settlements’ suggest an enormous range of possible interpretations, only one of which would involve a wide range of levels of social differentiation.

If we were to try to follow functionalist-processual methodology to find other indicators of vertical differentiation, especially in hierarchisation of settlements, we would certainly discuss the following dilemma: settlements in all the regions are obviously diverse in their domestic and ‘defensive’ (or simply boundary) structures, with these being more, or less, monumental in their design. But does this regional diversity always indicate a settlement hierarchy? Or could it (alternatively or additionally) show a variability of
functions related to production or even to other social levels? However, if we look at the settlements in this way, in any part of the Peninsula, we come to the same conclusion: the archaeological data do not allow any generalisation about a possible connexion between all the fortified settlements and specialisation of production, or indeed any other social activity.

Los Millares, Castelo Velho, Monte da Tumba and Vila Nova de São Pedro will always be exceptions, even if we consider examples of places used for producing and storing a variety of goods. The vast majority of “fortified settlements”, even extensively excavated ones like Lecceia, do not show any process of ‘specialisation’.

We are quite willing to accept that a settlement like Zambujal, among others, formed part of a hierarchical settlement network, and might perhaps be considered a ‘central place’, although it would be necessary to make clear what this means in the context of the late prehistory of Estremadura. Nor is it difficult to accept that in some necroples associated with fortified settlements (those of Los Millares and Alcalar, for example) there is an obvious hierarchy of tombs. We can also agree that in some settlements, such as Vila Nova de São Pedro and Castelo Velho, there are some indications – according to the classical approach – of ‘specialisation’ in production.

But what is indisputable is that all the above cases are exceptions from the point of view of ‘processual’ indicators of social differentiation. Using this methodology, such settlements do not show common factors in terms of social differentiation or complexity. Of course we may question whether such indicators are valid, even within a processual perspective, and whether we should not change our line of questioning, looking instead for other indicators. But what the so-called ‘empirical data’ have constantly done is to contradict the unity and practical efficacy of the concept of ‘fortification’.

To sum up what has been said so far: during the first half and up to the end of the 3.\textsuperscript{rd} millennium – that is, over a period of about 1000 years – there arose in the Iberian Peninsula sites bounded by walls or ramparts, used for varying periods, and linked with a variety of ecosystems and economic and social processes.

Once the general unity of the concept is broken, it is of course always possible to reassemble it in other categories with some internal coherence. It would be enough, for example, to restrict the number of examples used in this study and recombine them in the light of new variables: thus, ‘fortified settlement’ could be equivalent only to sites of architectural types A or B, in coastal areas or with coastal connections, and including semi-specialised production areas, linked to hierarchised necropoles, etc.

But once the conceptual unity has been broken, we believe that we should not miss the opportunity to rethink the problems underlying the questions asked above, and which we will reformulate. What was the reason for building settlements bounded by walls and/or ramparts? Who built and used them, and what meanings did these inhabitants give them? These questions involve two connected ideas: that despite all the differences we have noted, there is a kind of ‘meta-regularity’ linking these settlements, and that this ‘meta-regularity’ will only be ‘resolved’ on another theoretical plane, that of the anthropology of space, where key words like ‘spatial delimitation’, ‘architecture’ and ‘meaning’ will tend to replace the traditional debate around ‘ramparts’, ‘walls’ and their ‘builders’.
1.3. ‘Fortified settlements’ as monumentalised places

1.3.1. Structures, activities and settings: on the relationship between ‘culture’ and organisation of constructed space, in a palaeo-anthropological perspective

Culture is formed by social practices; it is a plural reality, constantly changing, where ‘visions of the world’ also contribute to the construction of reality (Bourdieu, 1988). Archaeology, like other social sciences, aims to study these practices, not so as to reach their supposed ultimate meanings, which would have been preserved in materialities, but rather to try to find out – through ‘invisible’ relationships preserved in the materialities – cognitive schemes, structures which might even have escaped the knowledge and the will of the social participants (Bourdieu, 1988).

One possible line of approach is suggested by the anthropology of space (Paul-Levy & Segaud, 1983).

According to Rapoport (1990, 1994), all human activities, organised in systems, take place within ‘settings’ which themselves are also structured in systems. The interpretation of the nature or meaning of a given activity thus depends closely on identifying the setting into which the action fits. Rapoport develops some basic notions on the concept of ‘activity’. It has four components: the activity itself; the way it is produced; the way it is linked with other activities and combined in activity systems; and its meaning – the last two aspects are particularly important when dealing with the prehistoric past. For example, the activity of grinding, in itself, can be seen as a technique for producing flour, linked in a system with other activities such as sowing, harvesting and storage, but also, at the same time or alternatively, as a propitiatory technical ritual for a good agricultural year: it depends on the settings of which the activity formed part. In fact, the interpretation of the nature of an ‘activity’ lies mainly in identifying the ‘setting’ which it is connected with – it is the ‘setting’ which gives meaning to the ‘activity’. For Rapoport the setting is the ‘milieu’ which defines a situation, making the action possible. Within a setting there are fixed, semi-fixed and non-fixed features; the role of the semi- and non-fixed features is always particularly important. The fixed elements of a setting (architecture, for example), which are our main concern here, are merely the minimum physical support for a complex space where vast amorphous elements interact in space and time. In the context of Iberian prehistory we must ask: how are we to connect structures, systems of activity and systems of settings?

We must remember that architecture in itself is unlikely to give us the key to the systems of activities and settings that it is part of. Such settings have to include areas beyond the constructions themselves, other places, and in the final analysis the whole surrounding environment.

Following this line of thought, some ideas are apparent:

– it is wrong to compare built structures in order to identify ‘activities’ and ‘settings’. It is only systems of activities and systems of settings that are worth comparing, when attempting to see possible common factors between activities;
– it is essential to try to understand the cognitive schemes involved in the structures we are studying, in an attempt to relate them to the production of social practices and their symbolic representations;
it becomes extremely difficult to compare ‘activities’ and ‘settings’ when dealing with prehistoric periods. But if we are fully conscious of this difficulty, this resistance, we can avoid a succession of false solutions, of interminable and ingenuous ‘explanations’. In a labyrinth, knowing that many apparent exits are false is a necessary step towards finding the right one, even though we may suspect that it will only be the entrance to an even more complex labyrinth;

architecture is in itself opaque, when considered as a physical expression of spatial organisation. However, all such expression constitutes an essential aspect of the organisation of meaning, which is materialised on different scales (power, wealth, privacy, social organisation, etc.). Architecture will only supply its own meaning when it becomes a ‘visible’ element of the physical expression of spatial organisation;

it is not just a matter of having to make the ‘data’ – architecture – speak: common sense tells us that archaeological data does not speak for itself. Rather, the important thing is to discuss in what ‘language’ we are going to have the architecture speak. We admit that the past is open to multiple and contradictory readings, and we believe, with Barrett (1994a), that ‘interpretation… requires an encounter which is informed by certain expectations about the world and about the agent’s place within it’ (p. 169).

1.3.2. Social complexity and organisation of domestic space: on the possibility of a ‘spatial theory’ of prehistoric societies

Rapoport (1990) believes that diversity and specialisation of ‘settings’ is more likely to occur in ‘complex societies’. In 1994, he summed up his ideas on the relationship between spatial organisation and social complexity in these terms:

1. Organisation of space involves: - classifying it into ‘domains’ and ‘settings’; control of space, by rules governing social behaviour; and communication of the type of domain and setting, of frontiers and rules, by the use of signs such as walls, semi-fixed elements, etc.

2. In complex societies, cognitive codes tend to be more developed; settings are increasingly diverse and specialised, and spatial marking is clearer: in the author’s terms, there is a greater redundancy of cues (walls, entrances, towers, etc.).

3. The spatial ‘markers’ of ‘settings’ and ‘boundaries’ function as mnemonics, reducing the need to process information.

4. The greater visibility of spatial ‘markers’ in complex societies is linked with the need to define ‘territory’ and ‘frontiers’ for outsiders, which usually relates to affirmation of cultural identity.

5. ‘Boundaries’, to be effective (to have communicative value), need to be noticed (redundancy is necessary), understood (to be culturally specific), and ready to impose themselves (on those approaching).

6. All built environments (including architecture) play an important part in community socialisation.

To sum up, the more complex the social organisation, the more complex the spatial organisation and the more this will be distinguished physically. Space then becomes apprehended much more through meanings at medium level (expressing identity, status, wealth,
power, etc.) and lower level (‘instrumental’ signs identifying the use of settings and thereby commanding social situations, movement, accessibility, etc.). We may conclude that ‘visible’ space is related to physically representable meanings.

Anthropological studies by Susan Kent (1990) have revealed links with Rapoport’s approach. Starting with a comparative analysis of 73 societies, she tries to correlate, among other things, socio-political complexity with specific areas within domestic structures related to certain functions and with gender. She claims that although all societies have areas restricted to only one use as well as multifunctional areas, the ratio of these two types of area varies according to degree of social complexity.

Within the societies Kent analysed, we shall now look at those in her categories III and IV. Category III consists of hierarchical groups with a chief (though not yet hereditary), with partial economic and socio-political specialisation; they have relatively stable levels of production and are sedentary. In their domestic architecture there are not only special areas for the production and storage of subsistence goods, but also specialised structures or areas for storing ritual objects, and even ‘ceremonial houses’. That is, not only have functionally specific areas been found, but also temporally specific areas in a domestic space, used for ‘exceptional activities’ – what Rapoport calls ‘ephemeral settings’ (for example, the chief’s house in an Ainu village was sometimes used for collective ceremonies). Category IV refers to stratified groups, with hereditary chiefs, developing permanent economic and social specialisation. These are also sedentary groups, using redistribution as a form of economic and social exchange. There is a clear social division of labour, related to gender, age and social status. Domestic architecture is highly compartmentalised, being closely related to cultural segmentation. There are different loci according to function, age and gender, and these groups often use separate areas and structures. It is interesting to note that even in cases where there are no physical barriers (such as walls), conceptual barriers are still rigid: there are places for cooking, storage and sleeping, public meeting places, etc. The strategic importance of such conceptual barriers is obvious.

These two kinds of societies, III and IV, complex but not yet politically centralised, are the most ambiguous from the point of view of the use of space and of domestic structures. In fact in these groups the division of space is a function of a wide range of variables, such as the nature and status of the activity and the sex and age of those involved, and is expressed in a variety of forms. Space thus seems ‘segmented’ but not really ‘differentiated’. This raises another question, on the archaeological visibility of a segmented space – that is, of a space which has been converted in to multiple settings, not always built ones.

Kent begins and ends her study with two key ideas: social complexity determines the organisation of constructed space, especially at the level of segmentation, and as a society becomes more complex, behaviour/use of space and material culture/architecture become more compartmentalised, more segmented.

In this way Kent leads up to the most important, and controversial, point of her research, which is the setting up of a predictive model: architectural segmentation and compartmentalisation imply cultural segmentation and complexity. This model is part of the author’s desire to contribute to a ‘spatial theory of society’, denying the scepticism of Hillier & Hanson (1984): ‘such a theory does not exist …. Such a theory, if it existed, would probably also be a theory of the nature society itself’ (p. 29).
Obviously there are two major obstacles here. Firstly, the anthropological parameters of the concept of ‘social complexity’ are not made explicit. Secondly, the proposed model is clearly ‘predictive’ in character, and, as we know, to explain is not the same as to predict: we can, by correlating material production and human behaviour, try to find out what happened in ‘the past’, but we will not know why. However, Kent’s work is especially useful in estimating the contextual variability of societies, which would contradict the author’s own generalising tendencies. To take a few examples: as we have seen above, certain ‘specialised areas’ are only temporary, which means that they have no spatial autonomy (these, as we have said, are Rapoport’s ‘ephemeral settings’); some of these specialised areas are related to exceptional activities, ceremonial in nature, which are usually seen in spaces normally considered domestic; in certain settings there are no physical barriers, which emphasises the importance of ‘invisible barriers’.

Returning to the question of possible connections between activity and architecture, or the possibility of a ‘spatial’ theory of society, we do not believe that it will be easy to gain new perspectives based on a possible homology between social and spatial ‘complexity’, as advocated by Kent and Rapoport. To say that ‘physical demarcation of space’ is a constant of ‘complex organisation of space’ requires previous reflection on complexity at the spatial level. Must a space full of physical cues always be seen as more ‘complex’ than one without any? Must it always be connected to a more complex social organisation? These questions become circular, and we shall leave them for the time being. But there emerges in Rapoport an idea which lets us look at space as related to the notion of territoriality: greater visibility of spatial markers is related to more incisive demarcation of territory, to the definition of boundaries and the affirmation of cultural identities. Space, territory, identity: these are key words for an alternative reading.

1.3.3. Chalcolithic ‘fortified settlements’ in the Iberian Peninsula: levels of monumentality and segmentation of space.

The ‘new’ domestic monumentality in the context of Peninsular territorialisation

It is time to redefine the key concept of this work. The so-called ‘fortified settlement’ is a domestic space bounded by stone structures with differing degrees of durability, visibility and monumentality. The common denominator of all these sites is the existence, within a more or less restricted area surrounded by walls or ramparts, of a variety of activities carried out in what is conventionally and reductively called a ‘domestic space’. That is, the restriction of the inhabited area is always accompanied by a stone boundary with differing degrees of visibility/monumentality.

The question normally posed is this: what were these stone boundaries for? The answer is usually contradictory: there are supporters of ‘defensive functions’, and there are ‘others’ – these ‘others’ usually consign the structures to the evanescent category of ‘symbol’. ‘Symbolic’, in this context, is a very vague and imprecise category, which functions as an umbrella term for a set of social practices of unknown nature. And of course there are also those favouring ‘reconciliation’ – such settlements included both ‘defensive’ and ‘symbolic’ functions. Some go further: there may have been some ‘symbolism’ within defensive structures themselves, which would have acted as a threat to potential aggressors
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– an explanation which obviously presupposes that any aggressors were able to recognise the meanings as expressed in the structures, since otherwise they could hardly have been intimidated by them.

For us, these questions should not be posed in such dichotomous terms, involving a whole network of possible compromises between divergent positions. What is important is to get away from this area of simplistic meanings, of ‘symbolic’ versus ‘defensive’ functions. One decisive step consists in going beyond the naïve functionalism which has for too long directed archaeological interpretation. It is not a matter of seeing power, and the struggle for it, as open, explicit conflict, carried to its extreme in warfare. Power is a subtle presence, disseminated in society and in people’s everyday behaviour. It is permanently negotiated through highly complex attitudes, gestures and procedures which are clearly not independent of the fixed (or semi-fixed, or movable) settings in which they take place.

Thus the very existence, within a space, of limitations on the movement of individuals would necessarily create physically significant conditions related to the negotiation of power, both within and between communities, which could certainly not be reduced to a function caricatured as ‘defence-attack’.

We think, then, that these ‘physical delimitations’ – walls, ramparts, etc. – will only make sense when associated with ‘practices’ which in their turn must be read by reference to a wider order, seen in a comprehensive ‘landscape of power’.

We shall now try to show Chalcolithic ‘enclosed’ settlements as being related in various ways with forms of territorialisation and affirmation of cultural identities. Apart from their possible function as ‘defences’ at a particular time in their history, their walls and ramparts must above all be considered as communication devices serving as markers of territory and identity.

We have divided the 69 sites according to their visibility and monumentality (the criteria are approximate, and include area, complexity of construction and probable prominence in the landscape).

Category A – high monumentality – settlements of architectural type A (Los Millares, Vila Nova de São Pedro, Leceia; El Malagon?).

Category B – moderate monumentality – settlements of types B & E.

Category C – low monumentality – settlements of types C, D, F & G.

Category A is seen from the end of the 4th millennium BC onwards, but only in the South-west and Estremadura, while categories B and C appear in all regions almost simultaneously from about 3000 BC (a little later – about 2800 BC – in the north of the Peninsula). How are we to explain this visibility of ‘domestic sites’ during the first half of the 3rd millennium BC? Might there have been some kind of supra-regional order which led to the appearance, in such diverse regions, of a phenomenon with such similar spatial characteristics?

In all regions where ‘enclosed’ settlements exist there is a common factor: a new form of occupation of the land and, concurrently, the emergence of new systems of representing it. From the middle of the 4th millennium BC what we see here, though in a variety of technical and human environments and social systems, is long-term investment in agriculture. This could have been in irrigation (in the South-east, for example) or in other intensive agricultural techniques, such as leaving land fallow for short periods. All
these would have resulted in continued occupation of the same places for long periods (as at the sites of Los Millares, Zambujal and Castelo Velho). This agricultural investment cannot therefore be dissociated from continuous and systematic occupation of territories which were increasingly limited geographically and conceptually. What we see here is a reformulation, on the Peninsula level, of systems of agro-pastoral territorialisation.

The large, relatively ‘open’ communities of the 5th/4th millennia BC, linked to extensive agricultural systems (with land fallow for long periods), were succeeded by the communities of the 3rd/2nd millennia. The new territory now experienced what has been called the ‘fragmentation of the agricultural landscape’. No longer extensive and flexible, it became a land with boundaries, both real and cognitive, with increasing dichotomies between interior and exterior, inside and outside.

The management of this new territory, by groups which were still politically decentralised and with few hierarchies, demanded great precision in the demarcation of frontiers and spaces, control of access, and spatial expression of prohibitions and possibilities. It required a different kind of power, marked in space, which shaped perception of the territory itself.

The ‘enclosed’ settlement of the first half of the 3rd millennium BC, independently of the network of contextual relations with which it was connected, reproduced, at the local level, a new form of ‘belonging’ – new perceptions, individual and collective, of the social world.

Instead of asking Why is this architecture specific?, or, What is being done by this architecture?, let us first ask Under what conditions? That is, following Barrett (1994b), What are the possibilities and limits of the action?

Oporto, March 1994

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2. THE MONUMENT OF CASTELO VELHO DE FREIXO DE NUMÃO IN THE CONTEXT OF MONUMENTAL WALLED ENCLOSURES FROM THE 3.\textsuperscript{rd} AND 2.\textsuperscript{nd} MILLENNIA BC IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA\textsuperscript{3}

The first built ‘monuments’, placed so as to be scattered in the landscape, appeared in the 5.\textsuperscript{th} and 4.\textsuperscript{th} millennia BC in different parts of the Iberian Peninsula. Such are the

tombs under *tumuli*, common in northern Portugal (Jorge, S.O., 1998). Neolithic necropoles follow a fairly simple logic in their placement in the landscape: small mounds of earth appear in succession over a particular period of time by a process of addition. In the construction of such ‘monuments’ there was no advance group planning, nor any intention of monopolising or interfering with large tracts of land. Nor were there any obvious physical barriers around these Neolithic ‘monuments’ (Jorge, S.O., 1998 b, in press c).

Monumental enclosures, among them ‘walled enclosures’ such as Castelo Velho and Vila Nova de São Pedro, appeared in the Peninsula at the end of the 4th/beginning of the 3rd millennia BC (Jorge, S.O., 1994, 1999 b). They are of various types, and need to be investigated within their regional contexts. The label ‘fortified settlement’ as applied to ‘walled enclosures’ like Castelo Velho, Zambujal or Los Millares limits the freedom to reconsider these sites in the light of a multiplicity of functions and scales of analysis, and should therefore, in our view, be rejected (Jorge, S.O., in press c).

We may observe some structural characteristics which distinguish the ‘walled enclosures’ of the 3rd/2nd millennia BC from the burial ‘monuments’ of the 5th/4th millennia: The ‘walled enclosures’ were on high ground, occupying visible points in the landscape. Seen from afar, they were *unmistakeable reference points*, marking new territories. These ‘monuments’ were the result of *pre-planned building programmes* in accordance with an *overall idea of the whole assemblage*.

Many of these enclosures lasted *in active use* for hundreds of years. They therefore functioned as poles, gathering the population around places which created links with the past. The durability of Castelo Velho as a ‘living monument’ with a multiplicity of functions must have helped create new ‘centralities’ (Fig. 2).

The building of monumental structures on hill-tops gave them *meaning, from top to bottom*. Besides this, the construction of a long-lasting ‘monument’ would require a *cohesive and permanent maintenance system for the building over several hundred years*. This would imply a significant number of people living near to the nucleus of the ‘monument’. Such ‘monuments’ and nearby areas must therefore have been more densely and diversely inhabited than we have tended to think. The rejection of the dichotomy ‘place occupied permanently/domestically’ and ‘place occupied seasonally/ritually’ (Jorge, S.O., 1998 b, 1999 b, in press c) is likely to be supported by analysis of such sites.

‘Walled enclosures’ in the Iberian Peninsula ceased to be used for their original purposes between the third and the second millennium BC. Some would have been abandoned as a result of a discontinuity with the previous systems of settlement, all that remained being the ruin and gradually fading memories. Others may have been deserted as part of a ‘strategy of mobility’ (Valera, A.C., in press), but not necessarily ‘abandoned’, which would imply a break with their original cultural system. Of these, what remained would have been the memory of a place which, although no longer functioning according to previous patterns, was preserved as an organising element in the landscape, a mark of the separate identity of a space. The contexts of such desertions needs to be studied at the Peninsula level; we may however suppose that the ways in which these places ‘ended’ were as varied as their beginnings and their local and regional developments.

In the case of the ‘walled enclosure’ of Castelo Velho, it seems that the entire site was covered by stone and clay around 1300 BC – i.e. its space was *symbolically closed* by depositing materials on the structures, forming some kind of huge cairn. In what had previously been an open space, with entrances and paths, there was now a sort of mound.
This could signify the ‘death’ of a place in the general context of the surrounding landscape. Let us look firstly at the physical signs of closing: this is what is commonly called, in burial or ritual contexts, a ‘condemnation’. The action of placing the stone and clay might possibly have been part of ‘closure rituals’: it would certainly have been an important time in the life of the site. This ‘condemnation’ could have been an abandonment either resulting from a break, or as part of a reformulation of settlement strategies. The physical mark of ‘condemnation’ tells us that further building there was prohibited – and in fact the site does not seem to have been occupied again until the Middle Ages. In other words, there were no further expectations that the place would be inhabited as it had once been. The prohibition could have led to the covering of the site and its gradual disappearance as a marker of spatial structuring. Alternatively, after the ‘condemnation’ the place may have remained active in people’s memories, and over time there may have developed a whole new system which reshaped its symbolic role. Seasonal meetings of some part of the population, for example, may have helped keep alive the newly transfigured role of the earlier ‘walled enclosure’. To check this hypothesis we would have to find out how long after the ‘condemnation’ the site remained symbolically active. We might then ask a further question: during this period, did the role of the place, as marking and organising the landscape, change its meaning? The ‘condemnation’ of Castelo Velho, seen as the beginning (and not the end) of a process of symbolic re-evaluation, could have placed it within systems of perception and management of space quite different from those in operation when there was a ‘walled enclosure’
at there. In fact, whether ‘alive’ or ‘abandoned’ but still symbolically active, places are always elements which reshape landscapes.

The ‘walled enclosures’ of the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC appear in landscapes which are dotted with a variety of interrelated places.

Permanently inhabited places (so-called ‘settlements’) are found in a wide variety of topographies, and are very different in size, architectural complexity, duration and visibility. They may be either near or far from built monuments. These ‘monuments’ (tombs under mounds, enclosures of menhirs or stelae, walled or ditched enclosures, etc.) also appear in different topographies, and they fill spaces, impose themselves or ‘injure’ the landscape in very diverse ways. What is specific to enclosures is their physical delimitation of an interior space, thereby establishing a real and symbolic frontier between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. Near these ‘enclosures’ sections of the population could live more or less temporarily, so as to conserve and protect these ‘special places’. Habitation can also be found near other types of sites, such as ‘rock art sanctuaries’ or enclosures of menhirs or stelae. Finally, in the landscapes of the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age there coexisted abandoned, ruined sites and deserted ‘monuments’ which still functioned as memorials. It is possible that periodic visits to these places by groups of people would have formed a continuity between the seasonal/ritual and the everyday, which survived after the monuments were ‘abandoned’.

Thus enclosures such as Castelo Velho formed part of landscapes where ‘special places’ stood side by side with ‘everyday places’ – though we would not wish to set up any dichotomy here between ‘ritual’ and ‘domestic’ landscapes.

Finally, a note on the idea of ‘monument’ as applied to enclosures such as Castelo Velho, that is, to places traditionally called ‘fortified settlements’.

It is not because it is a ‘monument’ that Castelo Velho is not a ‘fortified settlement’. The scale of analysis for interpreting these sites as ‘monuments’ operates at a high level: the crucial point here is the symbolic and structuring role that they represent in space. From this perspective, a ‘fortification’ could also be classified as a type of ‘monument’, since its appearance disrupts the landscape – if it is in a high and prominent position point, with good visual control, or if its architecture was previously planned, durable and monumental. Whether introduced by foreigners, or whether produced by groups from within the Peninsula, a ‘fortification’ (with the above characteristics) would fill the requirements for a ‘monument’, involving a break in the perception of the 3rd-millennium landscape. This is independent of whether or not we think it was built for defence.

But the enclosure of Castelo Velho is not a ‘fortified settlement’ simply because, on this same scale, it shows none of the central characteristics of a ‘defensive site’ (Fig. 3). The improbability that it was designed for defence is shown by its location on the edge of a spur (Fig. 4), on the most visible point of the hill, disregarding any possible concealment offered by a spot a few metres to the north, on the natural platform of the spur. The improbability continues with the placing of the monumental structures (seen, according to the ‘fortification’ theory, as ‘defensive systems’) on the sides opposite the easiest access point, to the north. There are other characteristics intrinsic to the site: a very small upper enclosure, initially with many ‘entrances’ (Fig. 3); and ambivalent archaeological contexts, involving symbolic representation of production and storage of cereals, the social manipulation of human bones, etc. Nor does the ‘archaeological record’ show any signs of open war or permanent conflict that might support the traditional explanation of the site as a fortified settlement.
But if Castelo Velho was not a ‘fortified settlement’, then why did this constructed scenic device keep to the same overall pattern for over one thousand five hundred years? What (at a low level of analysis) was it used for?

It is obvious that the idea of the enclosure as a ‘monument’ reshaping the landscape only gives us a very large-scale idea of what the site was: it was certainly a mediator of meanings, it had great visual impact, people gathered there, it was a focus for inter-community negotiations. But on another scale, how can we visualise the place? There are certainly some structures and contexts which allow us to glimpse activities which we could generally call ‘ritual’. The deposit of human bones (structure E.R.), the structure with seeds (S) and the cairn (C) are examples of ambiguous contexts which must have been ceremonial in nature. But to suggest that Castelo Velho functioned only as a ‘ceremonial centre’ would be inappropriate.

In fact there are neither anthropological analogies nor archaeological evidence that pre-state societies knew the concepts of ‘specialised places’ within hypothetical ‘ritual activities’. But if ‘ceremonial centres’ or even ‘ritually specialised places’ are unconvincing in this kind of society, how are we to classify, on a middle to low level of analysis, enclosures where complex settings of negotiation and display of power were conceived and carried out? – enclosures which expressed and reproduced *metaphors* of the world, representing the manipulation and transformation of the body and of the earth.

We must admit that understanding the so-called ‘specific’ nature of Castelo Velho (like that of Castanheiro do Vento and other monumental enclosures) leads into a general investigation, the aim of which would be to re-evaluate these Peninsular prehistoric sites as
a whole, in all their contextual variety, in the light of new interpretative approaches. This has not yet been achieved, and so although we can put them into broad categories (‘monumental/walled enclosures), it is impossible to classify them as demonstrating specific behaviours.

This work of contextualised re-evaluation now seems increasingly essential. Large-scale phenomenological approaches are indispensable (Tilley, C., 1994), but they should not be paramount. What is becoming ever more necessary in prehistoric research is medium-scale analogical connection with the past. At this level, the past should not be viewed as completely ‘other’ – fleeting, opaque, unknowable. We must once again give ancient places the status of palpable witnesses to different behaviours and perceptions. As such, they should ensure a degree of intelligibility for the past, or else they will not be fulfilling their social function as mediators between the present and the future – their obligation to be taken as credible instruments for present projects. The real challenge for prehistorians in terms of discourse, whether for a specialist audience or not (the acid test for any discipline), is *to make the past visible and intelligible while at the same time suggesting difference, strangeness, something beyond communication*. This narrative tension does not stop us from valuing continuity with the past (much desired as well as criticised) – rather, it encourages a kind of kaleidoscopic representation. After all, we even ‘control’ the past better if we invest it with a certain aura of uncertainty.

*Oporto, May 2002*

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**Fig. 4 – The “monument” of Castelo Velho on the edge of a spur, after the archaeological campaign of 2003 (photo by V. O. Jorge).**
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* Selected from the bibliography originally published in 2002.
3. LATE PREHISTORIC WALLED ENCLOSURES: MULTIFUNCTIONALITY AND HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

The interest shown in the Iberian Peninsula and in Europe in general in prehistoric structures of the enclosure type – that is, spaces bounded by walls, ditches, banks or any other type of barrier, which surround what we might call ‘arenas’ – is not new. However, their formal, chronological and cultural heterogeneity is such that we should question the

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5 Summary of paper presented at the Round Table held at the Laboratório de Conservação e Restauro do DCTP, Faculty of Letters, Porto, 15-16 May 2003, on ‘Late prehistoric walled enclosures’.
usefulness of speaking about enclosures as if they belonged to a conceptually coherent world.

Analysis of enclosures, with all their obvious differences, demands a double strategy: to appreciate their uniqueness, while linking them with contemporary sites in the region which were part of the same system, and, in parallel, to fit them into the general question of spatial organisation, so as to identify the semiotic innovation they demand.

Enclosures, as constructions, physically delimit interior areas, establishing a frontier, real and/or symbolic, between ‘outside’ and ‘within’. An enclosure is a device for formalising and controlling movement around and inside a scenographic arena; such control was all the more powerful when the enclosure was basically ‘shut’, communicating with the outside only through openings (passages, ‘windows’). Furthermore, many enclosures underwent innumerable basic alterations during their history, which indicate constant changes of setting and hence of representational manipulations and meanings.

Research into the functions of enclosures must also bear in mind that they can only be understood as points integrated in networks of inter-connected places – places where people and things circulated in relationships of very diverse kinds.

Recent analysis of walled enclosures in the Peninsula dating from the 4th to the 2nd millennia BC has emphasised their radical differences. Although they have certain formal characteristics in common, and can be read at a very general level as the first constructed community spaces, gathering together groups of agro-pastoralists at an early stage in the development of their identity, they must nevertheless have accumulated an extraordinary range of social uses within their specific local and regional contexts.

Study of Castelo Velho de Freixo de Numão points to the complexity and variety of activities and settings produced there over a period of about 1500 years. The ambiguity of many of these activities, in that they seem to be a small-scale imitation of social life as a whole – Castelo Velho seems to embody a metaphor of the world – suddenly transforms the study of such places into a turning point in considering constructed space in late prehistory.

Obviously, to stress the ‘heritage value’ of ruins endowed with such a plurality of meanings is a challenge to our capacity to communicate. It is in these circumstances that we most want to ask: what is the purpose of ‘doing heritage’? - if, in the end, any imitation we may create always seems to be less than the inexpressible time which we still keep trying to regain.

Oporto, May 2003

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