

Simbolismos.  
Construção Cultural  
da Paisagem

# Symbolism and the cultural construction of the landscape: a Galician example

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The title of this session refers to symbolism and the cultural construction of the landscape. It is my brief to introduce that theme. I can do so in one of two ways: by a purely theoretical discussion or by a worked example which exemplifies this kind of study. I prefer to take the latter course. I have chosen to illustrate my argument by discussing one kind of traditional architecture in Galicia: the raised granary or horreo.

For an archaeologist working in north-west Europe such buildings have an added significance, for they are often quoted as parallels for the small square structures discovered in the excavation of Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements. The buildings are represented by post holes and where they have been burnt they are associated with finds of carbonised grain. For that reason they have been taken to typify one kind of landscape archaeology. Their distribution can be plotted on soil maps to define the extent of a distinctive agricultural economy.

One weakness of that kind of study is its obsession with adaptation. Another is its restriction to what survives below ground. The pillars of the horreo are the equivalent of the post holes found in excavation but few field archaeologists are interested in the rest of the building. They have given little thought to the visual impact of such structures - to their place in the local topography or their influence over the people living among them. That is the missing dimension that our discussion has to consider.

Such issues are well illustrated by the horreos, which are constructed of granite and often dominate the buildings around them. They are frequently located so that they can be seen from roads and some of them are balanced on top of field walls and gain more height in that way. Thus they are not just agricultural facilities: they are also monuments. At the same time, such buildings might be constructed in a series of regional styles, which owe very little to the ecological variations between different parts of Galicia. On one level they seem to serve as expressions of local identities, whilst their prominent locations in the landscape ensure that strangers are immediately aware of these divisions. This is a good example of the way in which material culture plays a strategic part in the landscape.

But one feature is very important. All these distinctions concern the superstructure of the horreos, and apart from differences of size, their foundations would have remained much the same. It is the above-ground structure that carries such a weight of symbolism. A number of these elements - the moulded pillars that support some of these buildings, their elaborate gable ends, the pinnacles on the roof surmounted by a cross - do much to inform us about the position and economic power of their owners, but in fact they do more than that, for the Christian symbolism of these granaries speaks to us of very basic notions of death and regeneration that are entirely appropriate to a building that was intended to store grain. Farming provides a whole series of metaphors in the Christian religion, from the parable of the sower to the harvest festival. Having said that, we have to remember how rare it is to obtain an insider's view of symbolic systems of this kind. Ancient rituals and symbols are easier to recognise in the landscape than they are to interpret.

Symbols exist on many different levels, and whilst their form may remain the same, their content can be very unstable. We can see this in two ways. On one level, the horreo

seems to provide the prototype for some of the cemeteries found in the Galician countryside where the individual tombs can be raised high above the surrounding area. If that is more than a coincidence, it may relate the storage of the grain to the resurrection of the dead themselves. Relationships of this kind are found in many different cultures and are discussed by Bloch and Parry in their book 'Death and the Regeneration of Life'. At the same time, Galician agriculture is becoming increasingly mechanised and the pattern of settlement is changing, away from isolated farms and villages to new houses along the main roads. This process has provided a novel role for the horreo, as a symbol of social mobility. That mobility is expressed quite literally as abandoned structures are taken down and re—erected in front of the houses of people who no longer work on the land. They stand for links with the past that have often been severed completely.

The final stages in this transformation of the landscape can be found in the gift shops of Galicia where ceramic models of the horreos are on sale together with pilgrim badges. These are virtually ubiquitous and suggest that the horreo has become a symbol of national identity. As its practical functions fall away, the horreo is one way of expressing the difference between Galicia and other parts of the Iberian peninsula.

What are the lessons of this simple example? I suggest that landscape archaeology is impoverished unless it sheds its fixation with food production. Agriculture was crucially important but it was not unproblematical, and even such simple facilities as a grain store bear many layers of symbolism which we ignore at our peril. It may be difficult to address such issues, but that is a challenge that we cannot refuse.

#### REFERENCE

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# The Atlantic Bronze Age – and the construction of meaning

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**ABSTRACT** The paper discusses the features commonly used to define the ‘Atlantic Bronze Age’. The extent to which they express cohesion and sameness as regards symbolic significance and life style is considered in order to re-evaluate the character of this cultural phenomenon. On one hand, it is shown how the wide variety in cultural behaviour seriously challenges its existence as a coherent cultural identity. On the other, the consistent differences from other parts of Europe and the shared emphasis upon male association in material culture and rituals nonetheless give this area a communality. But even these practices are differently expressed within the regions, and the ambiguity of the Atlantic Bronze Age as a coherent entity is strongly argued.

**RÉSUMÉ** Ce papier va discuter les caractéristiques qui sont généralement utilisées pour déterminer l’Age du Bronze Atlantique. On considère comment elles expriment la cohésion et la similitude quant à la signification symbolique et la manière de la vie pour ré-évaluer le caractère de ce phénomène culturel. D’une part, on va montrer comment la variété considérable en comportement culturel lance un défi à son existence comme identité logique. D’autre part, les différences conséquentes d’autres parts d’Europe et l’accentuation commune sur la société des hommes en culture matérielle et rituelle quand même donnent à cette région un terrain d’entente. Mais ses habitudes mêmes sont exprimées d’une manière différente de région en région, et on se dispute énergiquement l’obscurité de l’Age du Bronze Atlantique comme entité cohérente.

## Questioning the existence of the Atlantic Bronze Age

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This session asked us to consider the existence of the Atlantic Bronze Age, as outlined for example by Brun (1991), in terms of “Symbolism – a cultural construction of the landscape”. The relevance of this theme was not immediately obvious; but on further reflection those aspects of cultural behaviour and experience that are implied appear to have obvious bearing on the general theme. The theme is, however, approached in an unusual manner as the session calls for reflection upon something we may call the essence and inner nature of the communities rather than the more common focus on its formal definitions and characteristics.

The title of the session is therefore intriguing and potentially ambiguous, and it directs us to consider the existence of this complex through new questions. The theme might, however, as easily refer to our own contemporary communities, our constructions of cultural landscapes and use of the past as symbol, as to how people in the Bronze Age mapped meaning upon *their* landscape. These two issues may not in fact be that easily separated. The inner tension and the continuous tendency to pull apart, which seems an almost centrifugal force built into the concept of the Atlantic Bronze Age and which has so much dominated its existence as an archaeological construct (for its history see Coffyn,

1985), might in fact be partly explicable in terms of the more recent history of the areas that we try to cohere, and their traditional interrelations. This area has no obvious traditional cohesion, solidarity or alliance and the focus on the English Channel as a ribbon of contact might, with due respect to its importance, be accused of hydro-centricity – had such a concept existed! In the other end of Europe, the Nordic Bronze Age is still marked by a totally self-assured notion of its existence as a unique and coherent entity – might we see there an echo of 19th-century Scandinavianism?

### Does it have an essence?

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More essentially, the theme forces us to ask if the Atlantic Bronze Age – whether as a construct or as a socio-cultural phenomenon of the Bronze Age – has an essence, a cultural flavour, which is truly shared through the province, and which gives its people identity? Although some of its elements had already been recognised at the turn of the century, the archaeological construction of this complex occurred relatively late in the history of Bronze Age studies. Santa-Olalla and Savory used the concept in the 1940s, its geographical reference was being established during the 1950s, and its content was finally confirmed during the 1980s (Coffyn, 1985, p. 7f). The existence of the complex was validated by the conference in Beynac on *L'Age du Bronze Atlantique* (Chevillot and Coffyn, 1991). The nature of its identity has at the same time been continuously questioned. In terms of its *existence*, it is therefore fair to wonder about the extent to which it arose in response to a disciplinary need to divide European prehistory as far as possible into large cultural blocks or whether it was informed by increased knowledge about the archaeology of the area. Did the construct of the 'Atlantic Bronze Age' arise as a result of the notion of the Urnfield Culture, and the failure to find it as a coherent complex in western Europe? If the rest of continental Europe was divided into the Urnfield, the Lusatian, and the Nordic Bronze Age culture/complex respectively, did the areas lying along its peripheries also demand to be labelled? To the east and south-east this was solved partly by contemporary political barriers that created a sense of 'the other', and partly by the emergence of more complex societies in south-eastern Europe which moved this area out of the Central European Bronze Age sphere. To the west, however, were other bronze-using societies. They appeared inferior to the Central and North European ones and were generally poor in material wealth, but they were nonetheless part of the European Bronze Age. Their common difference from the Urnfield and related complexes was constructed as a shared similarity, but in response a need to discover their common internal identity developed. These points are not merely rhetorical references to the concept's 'biography'. They provide an important background to the question of the existence of the Atlantic Bronze Age insofar as they highlight the fabrication of the concept and refer to a stronger unease about what constitutes its existence than is generally felt with regard to other entities of the Bronze Age. Most of the discussions have used a concept of culture that define it through physical correlates, such as the spatial distribution of the carp's tongue swords (see also Brun, 1991). This approach, clearly, has not been able to decisively confirm its existence, and it is therefore refreshing to discuss it here in terms of cultured landscape. This, however, is also a startling approach insofar as it proposes that there may be different correlates and definitions of 'culture'.

In the formal characterisation of the Atlantic Bronze Age the Portuguese representative of the *Bronze Age campaign* wrote "The Bronze Age of the Atlantic Façade has traditionally been considered as an archaeological 'entity' with a character of its own. The recognition of

a wide exchange network of metal objects, where various zones of the Atlantic Facade were linked has always been the main archaeological reality [of this] cultural ‘entity’” (Jorge, 1995). Thus, on a formal basis the complex is identified solely by a spread of metal objects, especially the carp’s tongue sword and such unusual items as the flesh hooks, which are found in a few concentrations on the mainland and in Ireland (Coffyn, 1985, table 21). Its unity is further augmented by referring to it as a sea front. It also shares characteristics such as the dominance of weapons and tools amongst its bronze objects, the general lack of ornaments apart from armrings, and that most of the bronze objects are from hoards or single finds, especially from rivers and wet areas (Brun, 1991).

Despite the apparently well-defined content and extent of the complex, its lack of completeness in comparison to, in particular, the Urnfield culture means that it has continually been questioned. Recently the critique has especially taken the form of asking what the nature of this entity is in cultural, social, and political terms. It is emphasised that the possible existence of some inter-regional entity means that its origin and development must be traced. These questions have also forced an increased concern with how local traditions are maintained and yet integrated with and partners to far-reaching interactions (e.g. Jorge, 1995). These concerns are not surprising, and similar questions are been asked of other peripheral areas, such as the Nordic Bronze Age (e.g. Kristiansen, 1987; Sørensen, 1987), and have affected much of the work on the Lusatian and related groups of northern Europe. The Atlantic Bronze Age, however, has appeared to be particularly vulnerable to these questions.

### **A ‘natural’ identity?**

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The Atlantic Bronze Age has been characterised as ‘a maritime-dominated landscape’ (Coles; Harding, 1979, p. 210), and this is sometimes even used as a defining characteristic of the complex. Its maritime orientation may thus be the variable that gives it identity as a place. The Atlantic Bronze Age extends widely over most of western Europe, including Iberia, western France and the British Isles. This extent, however, immediately undermines its maritime character as much of the land referred to is as far removed from a sea front as many other areas of Europe. The cultural landscape that may have given unity and identity to the complex does not therefore simply arise from a maritime association, although trade facilitated by water transport may have played a dominant role in the network of contacts extending over the region. The land is also, obviously, extremely varied, including the high plateaux of the Spanish Meseta, the Massif Central in France, upland Britain and the lowlands of southern Britain, Portugal and the Parish Basin. Thus it is by no means a geographically or topographically naturally defined area or a region of obvious unity.

There are many regions in this area with good conditions for agriculture and pastoral activities, and, possibly of particular importance, there are many raw materials including tin, lead, gold, and copper. Rock quarries, flint mines and copper mines were worked in the Bronze Age, so conditions for a certain independence in terms of production existed, while the tin sources (located in Spain, Brittany and south-western England) could have given these areas central positions in European-wide trade networks during the Bronze Age. These variables, rather than arguing for the development of a somewhat peripheral and in material-culture terms inferior Bronze Age complex, could by themselves suggest integration and centralisation of some of these places within the complex of the central European Bronze Age. Coles and Harding, for example, comment “... it is sometimes hard to sustain the argu-

ment that self-sufficiency, insularity and isolation were the over-riding concerns in the Bronze Age of the west.” (1979, p. 213). Nonetheless, the Bronze Age of the west, if at all a cohesive phenomenon, remained peripheral to the rest of Europe. Coupled to the consideration of whether it has an existence, we should therefore also have to consider what kind of existence this may be.

Turning away from the possibility that this discussion really should be about our own construction of cultured landscapes, to engage with the question in terms of symbolism and the cultural landscape of the Bronze Age, we need first to consider to what this may refer. Then, secondly, we can investigate how such issues are suggested by landscape attitudes in the Bronze Age and in particular how the Atlantic Bronze Age may be characterised in these terms. These two points will provide the structure for the following discussion.

### **Cultural construction of meaning**

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In this session’s theme, symbolism is somehow equated with or related to cultural construction of landscape. This may suggest that out of the latter come symbols or a set of symbols which create contexts of meaning. Or alternatively it may imply that the location of symbols, whether material or mental, upon the landscape makes it into a culturally constructed and experienced world. Or the equation may possibly mean that the two elements, symbols and constructed landscapes, are mutually interacting and enforcing. These, I find, are difficult but fascinating possibilities.

What, however, is the symbolism or the symbols for which we are looking and how do we detect the cultural construction of landscape? Are not all human activities taking place in landscape and engaging in a mutual act of transformation involved? and if not, which are the activities that we wish to exclude from this construction? Again, there are in fact very complex issues embedded in the apparent simple formulation of a theme. To engage with the topic, therefore, we may initially have to simplify our task. For a start, let us by symbolism mean material objects and practices that function as an element of communication intended to represent or stand for particular groups of persons, specific object, and particular idea. The first would, for example, be symbols of warriors, chiefs, men and women. The second could be symbols of swords or cooking utensils. The third would include, for example, ideas of community, of death and birth. In their material form these symbols might be relatively easy to recognise, but they do not merely take material form. They are also enacted through practice, and it is both through physical presence and practice that they affected the landscape, transforming space into place. Secondly, the title also suggests that there are potentially several cultural constructions of the landscape, and that not all of these are necessarily symbolic or result in symbolism. We might thus read the title as a suggestion that in the Bronze Age there would be different cultural readings of the landscapes, i.e. that there were different simultaneous ways of understanding and engaging with the landscape. Thirdly, our attention is drawn to a landscape that is constructed. It is not given, nor evolving, but brought into being through human agency. This implies practices enacted upon the landscape and meaning played out in it. The cultural construction of landscape is therefore used here to refer to the creation of meaningful places.

Having briefly considered what we are actually asked to think about in this session, let us try to make it slightly more concrete. How do we recognise such constructs? It seems relatively easy to agree that certain kinds of images, and in particular those that are found removed from the domestic context, are communal symbolic statements. Thus we assume

that stelae or cupmark stones played a symbolic role in the Bronze Age and that they gave meaning to places, constructed the bodily and mental movements through the landscape and helped Bronze Age people to understand their own environments and who they were. We also commonly agree that graves contain symbolic elements, both in their concern with death and in their creation of places associated with lineage and time, connecting the present with the past. Furthermore, as places they affected the location of other types of activities as well.

Let us, however, explore the archaeological record further for its potential symbolism. What about cooking pits or rubbish pits? Were they also part of the cultural landscape and in what ways? They must have been. We have, however, greater problems recognising their cultural implication as opposed to merely their functional properties and spatial and physical characteristics. We rarely assign them a dynamic interaction with the place created around them, apart from the very few attempts at essentially structuralist interpretations that ascribe them meaning in terms of food preparation, pollution, women etc. (e.g. Parker Pearson and Richards, 1994).

This is despite the archaeological record increasingly showing us that such features may not be randomly placed within domestic areas, nor just unstructured accumulations of rubbish. For example, on the Late Bronze Age site at Runnymede Bridge, England, a few pits, clearly containing specific deposits, were located within the site in a manner difficult to interpret but nonetheless obviously particular and meaningful (Needham and Sørensen, 1988). Clearly, we can agree that such features were also part of the cultural landscape. They played a role in people's movements within the location, and they were themselves assigned significance through their distinction and difference. What then about the material objects? We commonly assume that rare materials or shapes, and in particular the bronze objects, were symbols. We allocate them roles as prestige items and assume that they assigned values, created differences among people, ascribed power etc. The rest of the material culture, the mundane, we leave to be silent. It just functioned. It did not create meaning. Does this mean that cultural significance is not evoked when, for example, pottery is 'killed' and used to close features, to visualise and mark the end of a set of events. That must have created a kind of significance that communicated certain things within the community. And we could go on like this through the archaeological record and consider the various objects and activities that we do not habitually incorporate in our understanding of the symbolic or the cultural construction of meaning. This would repeatedly show how we simplify the active involvement of the material object in the construction of culture. Clearly the cultural landscape is not only created through monuments, through the concern with death and lineage and through the location of stelae and cupmarks on prominent points or marking paths through the landscape. Such monuments, activities and objects draw rather formal long-term structures on the landscape and they are of tremendous importance for the creation of significance and identities; but cultural understanding of the landscape is also created through less formalised, more habitual and, one might say, more earthly acts and objects. So let us attempt to 'look' at the cultural landscape with a sensitivity towards the range of things taking place within it which engage in a process of transformation and embodiment of meaning.

Some of the characteristics of the cultural landscape at the other end of Europe, in Scandinavia, may serve as guidelines for this inquiry. By now it has become well established that there is a structural interaction between graves and settlement in southern Scandinavia (Rasmussen, 1992; Strömberg, 1985; Thrane, 1980); these two places are 'tied' together in the choice of location and most likely they were also mutually affecting each other's mean-

ing. They must have created a very dominant structure both in terms of how the lived-in landscape was understood using ideas of us and them (for discussion of this relationship in terms of the Atlantic Bronze Age see Brun this volume), and also in terms of the kind of restraints they imposed upon the further transformation of the landscape. Thus meanings as well as directives for action were built into the structural relationship which dominated the landscape organisation of the southern Scandinavian Bronze Age. Another level of structural relationship between practices and their location is illustrated by the distribution of various Bronze Age activities on the island Als, southern Denmark. This shows that in addition to graves and settlements, which may be found throughout the island, there is also another practice present. It is constituted by what we might call ritual activities taking the forms of hoards, single bronze deposits and cupmark stones. These activities are very differently distributed on the island. They create a band through the middle of the island dividing it into two types of landscape, one with ritual activities in a largely wet environment, and another inhabited by settlements and barrows and possibly including a range of small-scale individual ritual events (Sørensen, 1992, fig. 3). The practices in the former area were not, based on their numbers, carried out on a regular basis; however, they might nonetheless have had a significant influence on mental structures and affected understanding of the landscape and the places in which people lived. They also provided obvious possibilities for secret knowledge, exclusiveness, difference of access to practices and knowledge etc. – actions, meanings, values that become a means of power and shape people's sense of themselves and their place within society.

These reflections and the observations from the Scandinavian Bronze Age demonstrate a number of points, which might help in our investigation of the cultural landscape of the Atlantic Bronze Age. Primarily, caution should be exercised in how the symbolic and cultural implications of various aspects of the archaeological record are interpreted. Mundane items such as sherds might often have been very important, but their significance is acted out at a different level from the ones we usually study. Secondly, the symbolic structures that affect society are not necessarily expressed only at one level. There are different logics within the system and varied scales at which meaning is created and communicated, and they do not necessarily have the same spatial extent.

### **Making meaning in the Atlantic Bronze Age**

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The issues raised above introduce but a few of the elements affecting the cultural landscape, although they provide more than enough points for a brief discussion of the Atlantic Bronze Age in terms of its cultural landscape.

It is clear, if we take just the very coarse categories of settlements, graves and rituals, that the way people lived within the Atlantic Bronze Age was extremely different. This difference, furthermore, cannot merely be reduced to something of no impact or significance when we try to understand it as a cultural phenomenon. For instance, it is well known that the house types within this region vary considerably, ranging from the round-house tradition of Britain to rectangular and square houses in western France and a whole array of dwellings within the different areas of Iberia. These are not trivial differences. Whether you live in a round house or a rectangular house, in a compound or a single dwelling, affects the organisation of the social group. The organisation of craft activity, domestic work, work divisions, the extent to which things can be separated, and how things can be made exclusive, or hidden and secret, all these and more aspects of habitat are affected by the space in which

they take place. Life has to be differently organised if you live in a round rather than a long house, and distinct practices, taboos, or norms may be developed to facilitate essentially similar concerns. But is it not such norms and practices that are the essence of culture? Furthermore, the organisation of the social groups seems to have varied over the region, with the extended family being housed in the settlement compounds of Britain, while bigger and differently composed group most likely were involved with the large and well-fortified settlements that are found in part of Iberia (e.g. Jorge, 1996) and France (Brun this volume). The settlements also have different degrees of formality. For France, Pautreau and Gómez de Soto (this volume) point to the simultaneous use of hill-sites, enclosed sites, open-air sites and even cave sites, in comparison with which the British settlement record looks relatively standardised. Such variability – within and between regions – is important for revealing how activities were delegated and controlled within a settlement system and they also suggests differences in people's lives in terms of permanence and long-term association with place.

Similarly, within their burial practices there is also great diversity. They range from the family graveyards found in connection with settlements in parts of France (Pautreau and Gómez de Soto, this volume), to a complex integration of a few large necropolises (50-60 cists) in special areas with either small family-type cemeteries or an absence of formal burials in the rest of the country, such as we find in Portugal (Gamito, 1989; Jorge, 1996). It also includes both elaborate architectural structures and the apparent invisibility or absence of formal funeral practices in Britain. In addition it involves both cremation and inhumation. Such diversity must reveal difference in the role that this activity had in structuring the cultural landscape by locating other practices within their orbits. It also had significant implications for ideas of death, of lineage, and identity. For Britain the archaeological record has begun to suggest that, while we do not have a formalised burial practice with an emphasis on visibility and display, human bones were used with different degrees of formality in a range of Late Bronze Age contexts (see Brück, 1995 for a review of human bones in Late Bronze Age contexts). Some of these contexts appear to be some kind of ritual places, for example, human bones found in caves with evidence of unusual activities, while others such as the deposits of skulls from the Thames may be interpreted as part of the depositional practices involving bronzes and in particular swords in rivers (Bradley, 1990; Bradley and Gordon, 1988). So in some parts of the Atlantic Bronze Age burials might be used to create location, to provide a communal focus and structure movements and pathways through the landscape, and to make an association between birth, living and death. But, for other areas, such as Britain, it seems likely that ideas of death were associated with a ritual world and that this involved secretness and restricted access. This, as in the case of settlements, suggests that power might have been differently based and evoked in these areas. Such differences have very severe implications for the idea of a united or cohesive Atlantic Bronze Age. How can communities who think so differently about themselves be seen to be the same?

The ritual activities can only be briefly considered in this short commentary on the Atlantic Bronze Age. The hoarding practice, their contents and association with water and wet areas, is already well reviewed and discussed in the literature. The common dominance of weapons in this practice furthermore means that, despite substantial regional variations in composition and frequency, it has been seen as a shared characteristic of the Atlantic Bronze Age. Hoards are therefore already well integrated in discussions of the existence of the Atlantic Bronze Age (e.g. Coffyn [et al.], 1981, and for a general discussion see Bradley, 1990). As an activity it does not seem to challenge the idea of the Atlantic Bronze Age in quite the same way as, for example, settlement and burial practices do. This lack of challenge

may, however, mainly be due to Bronze Age hoarding activities not being well understood generally, which means that variations can easily be disregarded.

Even more problematic for the notion of smanness and identity are those aspects of ritual practices that resulted in the making of stelae, statue-menhirs and cupmarks. Although their specific messages are now lost, they were probably originally semantically explicit. We can imagine them as a kind of signpost in the landscape, which, amongst others, told you about where you were, who you were and where you were going. It is therefore important that the kind of very direct and imposing physical directives that they provided is only found in some parts of the Atlantic Bronze Age. There are large stretches of land where stelae or cupmarks are not found. This aspect of the archaeology therefore suggests that there is a variation in cultural communication within the province. Thus within the 'Atlantic Bronze Age' there are potentially extremely important differences in how the cultural engagement with place were articulated and directed through the signs and signifiers imposed upon the landscape and engaged in ascribing it meaning and significance.

Finally a few comments on the objects and the potential symbols, which will be restricted to the weapons and the depictions on the stelae. It is very difficult – even with the best intentions – not to associate weapons with ideas of maleness or warriors, and due to the dominance of such objects in the Atlantic Bronze Age this becomes its main trademark. What is striking about its material culture, in a comparative perspective, is therefore how narrow it is both typologically and socially. Its vocabulary is limited, and it is very specialised and focused in terms of the range of types and their variability. It also appears conservative. There is little sense of dynamism and innovation within the bronze technology, and for a very long time essentially the same types and qualities were being emphasised and reproduced. Over the whole area limited variations on the form of types were made, and there was little experimentation and innovation in the production of bronze objects. Most strikingly, the bronze industry seems to ignore women (and probably also various groups of men) in its products. This is remarkable, especially in comparison with the Urnfield culture or the Nordic Bronze Age where the fullest skill is often reflected in the production of large richly-decorated ornaments and dress fittings (Sørensen, 1987, 1997). Ornaments and dress fittings have been found in most parts of the Atlantic Bronze Age, but they are infrequent, usually relatively simple and they do not constitute a shared feature of the complex. They also vary regionally with regard to whether they are mainly made in gold or bronze. They are found predominantly in the south of the region and in Ireland, and even there, with the exception of armrings, they do not appear to be part of standardised appearances.

Thus it appears that within the material culture of the Atlantic Bronze Age very little attention was given to the totality of the society, and in its place particular groups were emphasised. This emphasis, furthermore, permeated several levels of society and affected both production and use of objects as well as probably being partner to ideological construction. This emphasis was particularly clearly exercised in the selection of what was being exchanged and how things were consumed. The prominence of the male/warrior was therefore not just reflected and expressed by a particular set of activities; it seems to pervade a whole range of activities. These activities, furthermore, consumed much of the wealth (or more appropriately, surplus) of these societies and created important socio-political structures. It is not possible to deny this over-regional communality and to replace it with local meaning. These emblems had local meanings, but beyond that they were part of and self-referentially reproduced larger structures as well. At this level a striking cohesion was created. Suddenly the Atlantic Bronze Age, which we have otherwise not been able to see in terms of how people lived and how they understood and moved in their landscape, appears to be

about their shared values and practices. Momentarily there is something which unites them and makes them both strikingly different from the rest of Europe and at the same time internally similar. The isolation of this shared construction – in comparison with other cultural elements of these societies – is of essential importance for understanding both the Bronze Age warrior ideologies generally and its local form within western Europe. It is also a significant revelation for analysis of the specific social relations which made such reification of the warrior possible and in particular, of course, how this is enacted within and affects gender relations. The stelae, with their depictions of weapons, swords, spears, shields, helmets and sometimes even the body of the warrior, add an interesting dimension to this emphasis on the male/warrior that was made both in the production and circulation of bronze objects. Therefore, irrespectively of whether stelae conveyed social status with or without actual reference to its immediate social group, a concern interestingly summarised by S. Jorge (1996, p. 206), the reference to weaponry is unambiguous. The strong focus on weaponry is shared by the whole of the Atlantic Bronze Age; but the additional construction of stelae makes Iberia different. Either an extra dimension is added to the warrior ideology or their figuration is merely metaphorical, as suggested by S. Jorge (1996, p. 206), possibly transforming the concept of warrior into a kind of iconography. Meanwhile, while the stelae's depiction of warriors and their emblems may be an abstraction, they nonetheless embody and humanise this role in a manner that is different in its essence from how weapons (and in particular the sword) are assumed to symbolise or signify the warrior in the rest of the Atlantic Bronze Age region. Such a distinction in the language used to emphasise the male/warrior may be sufficient to argue that, even on the level where we do find the most cohesive elements of the Atlantic Bronze Age, there are differences. There is a subtle distinction in terms of the level of abstraction at which the male/warrior exists and thus how this figure is experienced. This, furthermore, probably relates differences in ideology and means of empowerment. It is therefore of significance that stelae in addition to their other distinctions were used in the construction of landscape in a manner that is distinctly different from how weaponry could perform – either during their use or when ritually deposited. The deposition of swords and other weapons uses principles of invisibility and secretness to gain significance. As the weapons disappear from sight they transmute into power. The stelae, in contrast, are visible and permanent in the landscape. While united by their shared reference to male/warrior, weapon deposits and stelae are equally divided by their different presence in people's lives. Such differences question the nature of power within the various Late Bronze Age societies in western Europe. This variation makes the presence of open-air sanctuaries and votive enclosures known from Iberia and western France, but so far absent from Britain, of great interest. Together these differences in 'ritual language' and the way the practices are played out and their signs displayed suggest that some aspects of ritual life, and thus the generation of power and legitimacy, were articulated and practiced very differently across the Atlantic Bronze Age despite the shared references to a 'warrior ideology'.

### **Exchange, networking and cohesion**

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The variables discussed so far cannot establish that the Atlantic Bronze Age existed. We must therefore question whether we have to return to the notion of exchange networks and the lines of communication that run over this region and to argue that it was this that wrapped it into a cohesive entity? It is well documented that extensive means of exchange and networking were established in western Europe. It was facilitated through the presence

of raw materials and furthered by waterborne trade (as witnessed by the shipwrecks); however, while we see evidence of extensive and intensive trade networks, this does not necessitate that the various communities involved unite to create a common culture. We therefore need to understand better the type of exchange or trade that was involved, and how it affected the various areas.

Influenced by models of prestige goods systems and elite exchange (e.g. Rowlands, 1980) it is now widely assumed that within the Atlantic Bronze Age social elites, which developed during the Early Bronze Age (Díaz-Andreu, 1995), were involved in conspicuous display and consumption of bronze objects. Certain objects, furthermore, are assigned particular significance within these exchange systems. The objects in question were the swords and special types such as flesh-hooks, items originating from workshops in western Europe and, in their circulation and consumption, apparently largely restricted to that same area. These two points are important. They show that the Atlantic Bronze Age was neither part of nor integrated with the rest of Europe in the exchange of prestige objects. What does this mean? It is possible to suggest that the distribution maps of swords in Temperate Europe – with the carp-tongue sword to the west and a wider variety of full-hilted swords to the north and east – are the fingerprints of two different prestige goods systems. We can further posit that they were ideologically different.

Thus, in the Late Bronze Age at least two different exchange systems had developed in Europe, of which the Atlantic Bronze Age was one. These systems may have been based on essentially similar principles, i.e. the importance of participating in exchange and the prestige role of specific objects, and also have ideological components in common. At the same time it is striking how the central European system differs from that of the Atlantic Bronze Age in its use of items of personal adornment, in its richness of symbols and ritual objects, in the emphasis on both men and women in display and the involvement of both in long-distance movement and communication. It is therefore reasonable to speculate that the social organisation, out of which the prestige goods system and exchange amongst the elite arose, involved features that were fundamentally different in these areas. It is, for example, possible to argue that the role and concept of the warrior was different between, on the one hand, the Urnfield culture and its affiliated complexes to the north and northeast and, on the other hand, the Atlantic Bronze Age. It also seems plausible that power was differently constituted and ritualised in the areas, and thus affected people and their understanding of themselves and their societies differently. The most urgent task regarding the Atlantic Bronze Age may thus be to understand the nature of its power structure and in particular the interplay between different kinds of power. Exchange, without doubt, was important; but the emphasis on hoarding and the various expressions of a warrior ideology intersected economic interests and dynamic while at the same time providing much of the motivation and legitimation for these engagements. The contemporaneity of hoarding practices and the emphasis on the warrior is, however, not without its own tension as the two were the basis for different kinds of power; and there is, therefore, both a potential for a dialectic or a dualism between, on the one hand, ritual/religion and, on the other, warrior/political power. The particular combination of and emphasis upon these different kinds of power within any region probably provided the basis for a real cultural-political difference between western Europe, despite its internal variation, and the rest. The relative exclusivity in the distribution of key objects circulating within the respective exchange systems of Late Bronze Age Europe until Ha C may thus be interpreted in terms of the lack of congruence between them. The border between the western and central European exchange systems was thus primarily cultural, and the Urnfield influences in western Europe, rather than being merely “shadowy,

elusive, and archaeologically indefinable” (Coles and Harding, 1979, p. 459), may have been largely irrelevant and ineffective.

### **Carp’s tongue swords and identity: a conclusion**

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To conclude, some of the emphases within the so-called Atlantic Bronze Age create a sense of unity due to their similar subject matters. The interaction with and experience of the landscape was, however, culturally constructed and reinforced in extremely different manners. This must have resulted in different mental structures and different ways of practising living, despite a self-conscious reference to a particular set of ideological ideals. So can we now answer the question of the conference? It seems that our main conclusion must be that the question is too simple. The question implies culture as a totality. Cultural cohesion is, however, a matter of scale and grades rather than a question of essence of life. The cultural landscape, it seems, is constructed, transformed, reinforced etc. at a much smaller, more local scale than that implied by the concept of the Atlantic Bronze Age (or any of the other cultural groups we try to define), and the distribution of carp’s tongue swords may have little relevance for people’s sense of identity. The Atlantic Bronze Age did not exist as a culture in terms of the specifics of people’s lives and as the source of their identities. On the other hand, to disregard and reject the cohesion of the exchange network and its creation of shared norms and values would also be a flawed response to the complexity of the question and the archaeological record. Furthermore, as regards its nature, it seems likely that in its difference the Atlantic Bronze Age trade network cannot simply be understood as a result of centre – periphery relations or as marginal to Urnfield central Europe. Answering whether the Atlantic Bronze Age exists or not remains therefore dependent upon what we mean by existence and what we understand as culture.

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# As arquitecturas como factor de construção da paisagem na Idade do Bronze do Alentejo interior

■ RUI PARREIRA\* ■

**RESUMO** Partindo do princípio que a arquitectura integra a paisagem construída, globalidade que funciona como um cenário – produto e, simultaneamente, condicionante de uma coreografia dos comportamentos sociais –, o A. faz algumas considerações sobre o chamado Bronze do Sudoeste, entidade arqueológica definida por Schubart (v. p. ex. 1975) e que faz corresponder às ocupações humanas do Sudoeste peninsular entre 2000 e 700 a.n.E. (datas calibradas). Assim, mediante a constatação da diferente visibilidade arqueológica dos vestígios que correspondem ao Bronze Médio e ao Bronze Final, o A. verifica uma dicotomia na construção da paisagem pela análise de três indicadores: o investimento de trabalho colectivo na arquitectura; a natureza dos espaços de exibição do prestígio e da riqueza individual; a expressão arquitectónica do espaço ritual. Fundamentando a sua análise, o A. passa em revista alguns casos de estudo, correspondentes à ocupação, na Idade do Bronze, dos Barros Pretos de Beja, dos campos de Ourique e da Margem Esquerda do Guadiana.

Tenho de confessar que, quando fui convidado para falar neste Colóquio, hesitei em participar. Desde logo porque, apesar de me serem conhecidos vários envolvimento, raramente me envolvi com a entidade a que chamam Bronze Atlântico. Depois, porque venho do Sul, do Alentejo interior: por tradição, o Atlântico sempre ali foi menos familiar que o Mediterrâneo. Era mais fácil descer o Guadiana, e estabelecer parcerias com as comunidades mediterrânicas, do que ter de enfrentar as dificuldades de navegação no Atlântico, dobrado o Cabo de São Vicente. Lembro apenas uma pequena história, de há trinta anos, quando numa pausa das escavações da Atalaia, em Ourique, no Baixo Alentejo, Schubart levou a passear os operários que para ele trabalhavam e que, pela primeira vez na vida, foram ver o mar, em Vila Nova de Milfontes. Entraram juntos na água, de mãos dadas, como crianças pela mão do pai. O estrangeiro funcionou, afinal, como elemento de comunicação entre distâncias bem pequenas.

No Alentejo interior somos pouco atlânticos. E no entanto, ao cartografarmos, como o fez Philine Kalb, os *tipos* que costumamos atribuir ao Bronze Atlântico, encontramos-os ali também representados.

Por isso gostaria de trazer aqui algumas reflexões acerca dos significados possíveis de alguns elementos arqueologicamente *visíveis*, reconsiderando-os em termos da humanização do território e da construção da paisagem. Ou seja, em termos da maneira como o território era percebido e construído, isto é adaptado, e de como essa percepção e construção parece ter mudado entre o Bronze Médio e o Bronze Final no Alentejo interior.

## O ambiente geográfico natural

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Desde logo haverá que distinguir, e deixar de lado, o *Norte Alentejano*, cuja ocupação durante a Idade do Bronze é ainda mal conhecida. É uma região interior, drenada pelos afluentes do Tejo, que confina, a leste, com as charnecas do Ribatejo e se estende, para sul desde a Serra de S. Mamede (1025 m) até à Serra d'Ossa (698 m).

As considerações que aqui faço referem-se ao chamado *Bronze do Sudoeste*, entidade arqueológica definida por Schubart, que ocupa no território hoje português o espaço geográfico correspondente, no *interior*, ao Alentejo Central, ao Baixo Alentejo e à Serra Algarvia, e, *na faixa costeira*, ao Alentejo Litoral e ao Algarve.

O Alentejo Central e o Baixo Alentejo são regiões essencialmente de campinas e montados, que se estendem no interior português confinando, a norte, com a Serra d'Ossa e, a sul, com as serranias do Caldeirão, no Alto Algarve Oriental. O relevo tem uma marcante fisionomia de peneplanície, drenada pelo sistema hidrográfico do Guadiana. Correndo em vales encaixados, esses cursos de água, impróprios para a navegação e caudalosos no Inverno, dificultaram, tradicionalmente, as comunicações. Porém, o Guadiana é navegável para sul do Pulo do Lobo, constituindo a grande porta de acesso ao mar desde o Alentejo interior. Apesar de uma aparente monotonia, o relevo é entrecortada por acidentes orográficos, definindo unidades de paisagem bem demarcadas e condicionando os sistemas de povoamento e a natureza do coberto vegetal.

A sul do Mendro, na zona campaniça, sobressaem, pela sua fertilidade, os barros de Serpa e Beja. Contrastando com estes, as terras xistosas do Baixo Alentejo fazem parte da faixa mineira de pirites, com numerosos chapéus-de-ferro ricos em cobre e, muito particularmente, em prata e ouro. Mais plana a sudoeste, nos campos de pastagens de Ourique e Castro Verde, esta paisagem xistosa – que albergou grupos humanos ligados à pastorícia e votados, também, aos trabalhos de mineração – é delimitada a leste e a sul por uma zona de serranias.

Não há praticamente elementos para caracterizar os biótopos na Idade do Bronze mas se nos basearmos naquilo que se sabe acerca da evolução do coberto vegetal alentejano pode contar-se com a existência de um matagal complexo de estevas e giestas, abrunheiros, medronheiros e aroeiras, integrando associações de diversas espécies de fagáceas, com predomínio do carvalho mas também com sobro e azinho. Marginando os cursos de água, predominavam freixos, amieiros, borrazeiras e ulmeiros, em biótopos que se mantiveram residualmente até hoje. À época do Bronze corresponde já uma acentuada degradação da formação climática natural, condicionada por intervenção humana, devido à procura de madeira e sobretudo por acção do fogo, principal meio de arroteamento de terras de semeadura e de conquista de pastagens, dando origem a diversas unidades biológicas, diferentes entre si segundo a forma e o grau de intervenção humana que incidiu em cada uma. Em

lugar do carvalho, as queimadas foram impondo a destruição do estrato herbáceo e o aumento das áreas de carrascal de folha perene – dominado por montados de azinheiras e de sobreiros.

### Parâmetros cronológicos

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Se nos quisermos referenciar a uma periodização esquemática da Idade do Bronze no Alentejo interior, podem dar-se, com datas calibradas, os parâmetros cronológicos seguintes:

– 2200 - 2000	Horizonte de Ferradeira	Bronze inicial
– 2000 - 1700	Bronze do SW I	Bronze médio antigo
– 1700 - 1200	Bronze do SW II	Bronze médio recente
– 1200 - 1000	Bronze final I	Bronze final antigo
– 1000 - 700	Bronze final II	Bronze final recente

### A construção da paisagem

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Para a reflexão que aqui me interessa fazer, parti de um princípio: que a arquitectura integra a paisagem construída como um *todo*, o qual funciona como um *cenário* das actividades humanas, cenário esse que é produto e que ao mesmo tempo condiciona aquilo que podemos designar como a *coreografia dos comportamentos sociais*. E, nesta medida, retive alguns indicadores de construção da paisagem, ao considerar uma dicotomia *Bronze Médio / Bronze Final*:

- o investimento de trabalho colectivo na arquitectura
- a natureza dos espaços de exibição do prestígio e da riqueza individual
- a expressão arquitectónica do espaço ritual

No Bronze Médio, a arquitectura *funerária* tem um carácter monumental, a que corresponde uma pouca visibilidade arqueológica dos *povoados*, que têm um carácter aberto e se localizam junto a recursos naturais importantes.

Já no Bronze final, há um acentuado investimento na arquitectura *habitacional*, com povoados a ocuparem posições elevadas e dominantes na paisagem, havendo uma deliberada monumentalização desses lugares mediante a construção de muralhas, que evidenciam uma área central, mais protegida, correspondente à área residencial, servindo a restante área cercada para estabular o gado, como Morais Arnaud supôs para a Coroa do Frade. Nas sociedades do Bronze final, o pastoreio desempenhava não apenas um papel na alimentação mas também um importante papel social como factor de riqueza e prestígio. Quanto à arquitectura *funerária*, e à excepção de reutilizações conhecidas de sepulcros megalíticos do Neolítico final/ Calcolítico, está aqui ausente do registo arqueológico.

Valerá a pena passar em revista alguns casos de estudo.

*Barros pretos de Beja* – Nos Barros pretos a ocidente de Beja os contextos são esclarecedores. Zona relativamente bem prospectada, com achados que correspondem a todas os períodos cronológicos da Idade do Bronze, efectuados com regularidade desde há muitos anos e que incluem necrópoles com espólios particularmente ricos, alguns povoados abertos e um povoado de altura de apreciáveis dimensões (Outeiro do Circo), a região apresenta

áreas de elevada capacidade agrícola, possuindo acesso a zonas mineiras. Tal contribuiu para um desenvolvimento diferente das zonas exclusivamente mineiras, uma vez que nestas os condicionalismos da exploração dos chapéus-de-ferro em áreas de fraco potencial agrícola e baixa pluviosidade pressupunham uma área de captação de recursos restrita. Pelo contrário, nos Barros de Beja, as áreas de captação são mais alargadas e a ocupação do solo deve ter proporcionado a existência de um sistema de lugares com uma diferenciação e hierarquia de funções.

Dos testemunhos conhecidos datados no Bronze Médio, infere-se que a população vivia da terra, dispersa em casais agrícolas, e praticava uma metalurgia de pequena escala. Com efeito, se tomarmos por regra uma *correspondência das necrópoles com pequenos povoados abertos*, torna-se interessante a posição ocupada pelos cemitérios da Idade do Bronze: eles aproximam-se em geral dos principais cursos de água, em zonas baixas, junto à curva de nível dos 50m, zonas essas que supomos menos densamente cobertas de matagal e mais facilmente agricultáveis. Os *cemitérios* são *polinucleados*, com agrupamentos de cistas. Não se detecta porém a existência de recintos, mamoads ou monumentos complexos. Em contrapartida, os espólios oferecem frequentemente mais do que um vaso, que procuram imitar, na cor e na forma, recipientes metálicos. Na Herdade do Pomar, onde se explorou um destes agrupamentos de cistas, integrado num vasto cemitério polinucleado, referenciou-se uma inumação infantil acompanhada por uma tijela de carena média e por um pequeno vaso do tipo «Odivelas», indício da importância atribuída aos laços de parentesco e à sucessão. Fazia parte do mesmo núcleo uma *estrutura, não sepulcral mas de significado ritual*, com a forma de uma cova aberta no solão, no fundo da qual fora colocado um punhal de rebites, depois recoberto por lajetas de xisto e por um empedrado. Nos rituais funerários, um dos aspectos mais interessantes da fase mais recente do Bronze médio é a utilização das *estelas insculturadas* de «tipo alentejano» que, através da representação de insígnias, armas e, mesmo, de pegadas – que simbolizam uma presença tutelar – exibem a posição social privilegiada de alguns indivíduos ou a existência de rituais de antepassados («ancestral rituals») conotados com heróis-fundadores. A reutilização destes monumentos como tampas sepulcrais denota que desempenharam um papel de relevo nas práticas funerárias. Em contrapartida, os *povoados* do Bronze médio são abertos e arqueologicamente pouco visíveis, sendo indiciados apenas pelo achado superficial de cerâmica e de percutores, não tendo ainda nenhum deles sido escavado na zona dos Barros de Beja.

No Bronze final, o grande povoado fortificado do Outeiro do Circo ocupa uma posição de charneira entre os dois agrupamentos de cemitérios/povoados abertos do Bronze médio: o da Ribeira do Roxo, a sul, e o da Ribeira da Figueira, a norte.

*Ourique* – As necrópoles dos Barros de Beja não atingem a monumentalidade dos cemitérios do Bronze médio da zona de Ourique. Schubart supôs um povoamento disperso, por comunidades que valorizavam o investimento nas estruturas sepulcrais, em contraste com a precariedade das construções habitacionais. Alcaria testemunha a existência de estruturas de habitação com um chão lageado de planta subrectangular junto a um monumento funerário.

Nesta zona, predominantemente pastoril e mineira, situa-se a mais espectacular necrópole do Bronze do Sudoeste escavada no Sul de Portugal: a do Monte Atalaia, nos arredores de Aldeia de Palheiros, ocupada nos períodos antigo e recente do Bronze médio (Schubart 1965, 1975). Para além de fossas de inumação individual, foram ali explorados vários conjuntos de sepulturas que apresentam uma estrutura idêntica: numa cista de xisto, ou numa fossa, embebida no subsolo xistoso e tapada com uma laje horizontal, era inumado

um indivíduo, provavelmente o membro mais destacado na hierarquia de uma pequena comunidade. A cista era recoberta por uma mamoa circular de pedras e terra, com uns seis metros de diâmetro, que se destacava no terreno circundante, delimitada por um muro baixo de pedras colocadas na horizontal, alternando por vezes com lages tanchadas na vertical que permitem reconstituir a altura mínima original do túmulo. A esse túmulo, que ocupava uma posição central e mais elevada, eram então, sucessivamente, justapostos outros túmulos mais pequenos, contendo igualmente uma ou duas sepulturas, dando ao conjunto o aspecto de um cacho de mamoadas, encostadas umas às outras. As sepulturas são de dimensões reduzidas, à justa para a colocação de um indivíduo, inumado em posição fetal, acompanhado ou não de espólio detectável pelo registo arqueológico. A forma cerâmica mais frequentemente associada a este contexto é uma pequena tijela de carena baixa. Ocorrem ainda adornos – espirais de prata, colares de contas de vidro – e punhais de rebites.

A organização espacial da necrópole da Atalaia apresenta alguns aspectos curiosos. Fica-nos a impressão de que algumas mamoadas centrais estão vinculadas ao topo dos cabeços. Esse terá sido o factor topográfico decisivo que levou à edificação de um primeiro monumento, valorizando culturalmente um espaço naturalmente destacado. Dentro de cada núcleo observa-se, pela estratigrafia horizontal dos «cachos» uma dimensão temporal, com organização do espaço a partir do túmulo central, que ocupa o «centro preferencial» da elevação. A construção do monumento inicial, «inventando a tradição» e estabelecendo uma zona funerária dentro de um espaço com condições «naturais» de implantação, foi o factor determinante da localização dos túmulos posteriores. Por vezes, dois núcleos juntam-se formando um único «monumento». Outras vezes, fica a impressão de que os cachos foram ocupando a colina em sentido descendente.

É difícil estabelecer uma periodização para esta necrópole da Atalaia para além da estratigrafia horizontal de cada um dos seus núcleos. Pode no entanto afirmar-se que a necrópole teve uma longa duração: sendo práticas rituais, as práticas funerárias não estariam sujeitas à mesma escala de tempo dos actos quotidianos. A construção sucessiva numa paisagem cultural de pequena escala e a existência de um processo de monumentalização, reflecte justamente o contraste entre um tempo quotidiano e um tempo a que se conferia dimensão ritual e simbólica, implicando um uso simultâneo de todos os monumentos, num sistema coerente de ritualização da paisagem. As mamoadas eram uma modificação cultural da natureza e desempenhavam um papel ritual de ordenamento da paisagem, uma alteração do espaço levada a cabo com a intenção de ser reconhecida enquanto tal. Independentemente do facto de, com o passar do tempo, a arquitectura funerária ser susceptível de diversas interpretações e de ser vista por pessoas diferentes as crenças básicas da comunidade estavam além da escala temporal quotidiana. Por isso a coreografia dos rituais não podia, nem devia, ser facilmente mudada. Nesta medida, o ritual mantinha a ordem social, fazendo-a parecer uma parte da ordem natural, i.e., intemporal. E, no entanto, o ritual podia ser manipulado, de tal modo que as mudanças nas práticas rituais seriam tanto mais efectivas quanto mantivessem a aparência de uma estabilidade na longa duração, como Bradley fez notar para outros contextos.

A estrutura tumular complexa da Atalaia repete-se na necrópole de Alcária, situada a escassos quilómetros, com dois monumentos já identificados e cuja fase mais recente se integra no período II.

Conhecem-se aqui tumulações do Bronze final, com reutilização de sepulcros megalíticos mais antigos, na Nora Velha e no Serro das Antas, podendo neste último caso tratar-se também da ocultação de três braceletes de ouro. Curiosamente, os povoados de altura são

ainda desconhecidos no registo arqueológico, apesar de a região ser uma das mais intensamente prospectadas do Baixo Alentejo, a não ser que admitamos a existência de uma ocupação do Bronze final no Castro da Cola, de que o achado de uma espada de bronze seria indício.

*Margem Esquerda* – Na Margem Esquerda, os cemitérios do Bronze Médio I apresentam-se mais dispersos, com sepulturas em cista distanciadas entre si algumas dezenas de metros, embora se verifique igualmente o costume de colocar junto ao morto uma, ou mais, tijelas de carena baixa mas as cistas surgem por vezes destacadas, inseridas em mamoas que estão na tradição megalítica local. Atribuível à fase II do Bronze Médio, o achado de Belmeque constitui um flagrante exemplo de uma tumulação de carácter excepcional.

Aqui são desconhecidas tumulações do Bronze final. Em contrapartida, reconheceram-se diversos povoados de altura, instalados em cabeços elevados e eforçados por cinturas de muralhas, como nos Ratinhos, e, num caso (Passo Alto) por «pedras-fincadas» («chevaux-de-frise»).

## Em conclusão

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Entre o Bronze Médio e o Bronze final é perceptível, no Alentejo interior, uma diferença na percepção do espaço entre o Bronze Médio e o Bronze final, com uma aparente organização interna das ‘polities’ do Bronze final em espaços hierarquicamente diferenciados, sendo de momento visíveis apenas os espaços habitacionais/ rituais.

No Bronze Médio, são as necrópoles que surgem como o factor preponderante de organização do espaço em termos físicos e simbólicos, como construções de referência para as comunidades, mantendo a aparência de estabilidade ao longo do tempo e funcionando como um cenário condicionador da coreografia dos actores sociais, com especial relevância para os rituais dos antepassados.

No Bronze final, parecem ter sido os povoados de altura que funcionaram como lugares-centrais de sistemas de povoamento complexos e hierarquizados em áreas já anteriormente ocupadas durante o Bronze Médio. Organizavam o espaço em termos físicos e simbólicos na medida em que eram uma espécie de centros económicos, no interior dos quais se encontravam áreas de actividades especializadas, relacionadas, por exemplo, com uma renovada prática metalúrgica de produção de objectos de bronze e ouro. Esses lugares desempenhavam um importante papel político, como centros regionais do poder, albergando os cabecilhas e as elites político-militares a eles associadas. Kristiansen sugeriu que no Bronze final as elites são ritualizadas. Nessa medida, os espaços por elas frequentados tendem eles próprios a ser ritualizados, conferindo-se-lhes uma dimensão monumental, apropriada à coreografia do desempenho dos papéis sociais.

Desses lugares emanavam as normas que aglutinavam territórios mais ou menos vastos, permitindo controlar e organizar as actividades de subsistência, o pastoreio, a exploração do solo agrícola e dos recursos mineiros, e assegurar o funcionamento das redes de intercâmbio, através do controlo das rotas terrestres, por vezes formadas na base dos caminhos da transumância, eventualmente privilegiados para a implantação de estelas como a do Pomar/Ervidel II, localizada, significativamente, na principal rota de circulação entre os povoados «fortificados» de Outeiro do Circo e Manganha e assumida como meio de comunicação mais do que como fronteira.

Fica ainda a ideia de que no Bronze final os sinais de ostentação se transferem das cerimónias fúnebres, privilegiadas durante o Bronze Médio como simbolismo de afirmação

social, exteriorizando-se em ritos de outro tipo, menos efémeros enquanto *representação*, onde a exibição, *periódica* e *pública*, das insígnias de prestígio exige a ostentação de adornos áureos maciços – como o colar de Portel ou o bracelete de Estremoz – bem como o uso ostentatório, a oferenda ou, tão-só, a representação, de bens de excepção de inspiração exótica, nomeadamente dos objectos presentes na iconografia das estelas de «estilo estremeño». Realidade a que haveria que somar a presença dos caldeiros de bronze, espetos e fúrculas – reveladores de um equipamento utilizado em banquetes rituais, ao gosto das élites mediterrânicas. Infere-se do registo arqueológico que as chefaturas do Alentejo interior estavam inseridas num vasto movimento de interacção de bens e de ideias; mas, também, que a esse movimento não serão estranhos os contactos, ditos «pré-coloniais», com mercadores mediterrânicos – não necessariamente os Fenícios –, que podem ter frequentado a Península desde os finais do II milénio a.C.

Que tem afinal isso a ver com o Bronze Atlântico? Muito pouco. Salvo se entendermos que o aparecimento no Alentejo Interior de *tipos* atlânticos, ou seja, de modelos socialmente aceites e reproduzíveis localmente, é comum a um espaço geográfico muito amplo, que inclui também a fachada atlântica, e que corresponde à partilha de informação e ao consumo de artefactos – ou seja, em termos de hoje, ao gasto de riqueza e à ostentação de bens de consumo, assumindo-se como um aspecto da competição –, entre ‘polities’ diferenciadas no espaço.

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# DEBATE

m o d e r a d o r ■ VÍTOR OLIVEIRA JORGE ■

## VÍTOR OLIVEIRA JORGE:

It will be difficult for me to be stimulant in my words and not occupy too much of your time in order to pass the word on to the audience, and I apologise.

I agree with much of what Michael Shanks said. I think I participate of the so-called Anglo-Saxon neo-pragmatism; it considers that every science is a system of beliefs and that in the centre of every knowledge there is argument. This reasoning, which comes from ideas by Kuhn, explains why we are now in a difficult situation. The reason is that we have many paradigms trying to impose themselves into a complex scenery.

Coming back to the theme of our session, about the landscape concept itself I would like to remember that landscape is not exactly the same as space or place. The point, also made by Michael Shanks, is that the very idea of space – abstract, continuous space, and time as an abstract, continuous, chronometric axis of our knowledge and of our thought – begins with the enlightenment and with modern science. It is not shared by peoples and cultures of other parts of the world.

The idea that we can measure time and that we can measure space, and the idea that space is some abstract product that we can divide, sell or use as a commodity, is something quite recent. For prehistoric people, very probably, space was not at all a continuum; space was more like a series of places full of memory, of experienced stories and of people.

Obviously, the idea of landscape comes from painting, in the sixteenth century and after, it increases its presence in the eighteenth century. Because it implies a looking, an eye that looks from outside to the space, it reifies that space as the “other”. We divide ourselves from nature and from the “objective reality” around us and we start considering that “objective reality” around us as “space” and seeing it as “landscapes”. This way of looking is an historical one, it is particular to our cultural view and it is not at all shared by all peoples in all times; probably they were not like that in Prehistory.

What I want to convey to you is that it was the industrial-mercantile society that needed to divide the reality into abstract chronometric time so it could pay the salaries to people and organise and mechanise the work. It also needed to divide space in order to transform it into a product. Now we look to this space from the outside, because this space is something that is out of us, and we can act upon it. It is something we can build-on, we can transform, we can continuously and actively negotiate. These ideas are ideas of our society.

As Michael Shanks suggested, it is not just for a casual reason that archaeology is born and developed from the eighteenth century onwards. Its birth has its roots in the idea of giving order to the outer space.

We do not understand that space because it is full of signs, of monuments, of volumes, and of materialities – of resistences, to use the words of Michael Shanks – which resist to our understanding and which ill-integrate in our conception of a continuous space which can be considered as a commodity, as a product, even as a touristic product.

In a meeting like this we were faced with a very difficult situation; we have very different schools of thought, very different traditions of looking at the so-called material record. I never really believed in that expression “material record”. I suppose nothing is “record”, nothing is registered, we are not persons coming to materialities in front of us, and extracting from them some hidden reality, the past. I suppose that we create, at every time, the past and we create different and conflicting pasts.

We are not equal, we are always in a scenery of dispute, we do not agree with each other, we have different political, ideological views, and we are struggling, first of all, for ourselves. Each of us is struggling for his ego; then he is struggling for interests of his group, is social class, etc. So we are not equal, it is not normal for us to be in agreement with each other. The normal situation is for us to be in conflict. The problem is that the system we live in, puts us in a psychological situation where we want to believe that we should agree (someday but probably not today). I think it will never happen.

**MARIE-LOUISE STIG SØRENSEN:**

Can I begin by making some comments to Michael Shanks paper?

As expected it was very passionate and very lively and, in that sense, a great challenge. But I regret to say that I did not find constructive the way you were discussing the way we think. I feel you are simplifying purposefully, in order to create strategies of discussion. I feel you are simplifying some very complex issues, and, in particular, I felt that your discussion about objectivity became, in a very simple way, a notion of objectivity-*versus*-subjectivity that could lead us to think that the problem is solved if we do not believe in objectivity.

The issue of understanding or generating knowledge is far more complicated than just deciding that we can be allowed to be subjective. It strikes me that one of the ways you characterised being objective is that those who believe in objectivity find in the past that which they admire in the present. I think that you yourself would agree that you find in the past what you admire in the present; you are not any different from those who believe in objectivity.

I also worried about everything being “fine” if we believe in subjectivity.

In the end, I was also struck by you actually saying that we generate knowledge, and from your discussion I have no idea about what you mean by knowledge.

I am not sure that my questions are very central to the theme this morning but I just felt that I had to express them.

**MICHAEL SHANKS:**

I did not mean to oppose the two, objective and subjective, as you seem, Marie Louise.

I was trying to say that we have lived with this separation for too long and, admittedly, the argument has to be curtailed. We are in a forum where rhetoric comes more readily than detailed argument that is inappropriate in such a circumstance. I was hoping to say that the two – objective and subjective – are inevitably intertwined in our constructions of knowledge and that the dualism is the one we have lived with for too long. It is the old Cartesian dualism and it is all written into many epistemologies and enlightenment projects.

The two go together; it is not just to say “let’s all be subjective now”; it is to say that we have always been like that: we have always been subjective.

The next point you made was about objectivity itself: what is it then?

My argument is that objectivity is in everything we deal with, it is not some abstract essence, it is not something near truth, it is not something out-there that we discover.

Objectivity consists of whatever resists trials of resistance.

The question immediately comes: what is a trial of resistance?

It could be anything. A statement can be upheld for various reasons, it can be for its logical consistency, it can be because it is conceived as corresponding with some outside reality – although I've raised the question of what that correspondence exactly is – but it might also be upheld for ideological reasons, indeed for commercial reasons, political reasons. Power and force can come in here: if someone will not believe you, you can beat them over the head until they do. That is the way to get people to believe that statements resist trials of resistance.

Objectivity then is a multifaceted thing; it is human, it is concrete, it is social, hence our statements about the past are considered strong because they resisted all sorts of things; the statements are about the past because it existed, it has happened. Following the line of these anthropologists, philosophers, historians of science, I would argue that it has always been like that. It is no different now.

What I am saying is that we are constructing knowledges, but they are human knowledges. I come back to what Vitor was saying: it is contested and it will always be like that. That is wonderful because it is democratic. We can argue about it, we can disagree and we can agree to disagree, as long as we recognise that we are involved in a human project. That project unites us with the past, reconstructing our own society when looking at past societies, working with what they left behind.

About the Atlantic Bronze Age I do not think it is irrelevant at all. We can say “It is an objective entity, we can statistically show that there existed such a thing”, but all you are saying is that that entity is resisting that trial of resistance, and we must also recognise that the project of constructing that entity is written into all sorts of political and ideological strategies.

#### KRISTIAN KRISTIANSEN:

As I understood, I think we had two interesting statements here.

One we had from Michael Shanks, who says that knowledge is constructed socially, and the norms for what is accepted as knowledge is tested in this kind of dialogue. We are now such a social group of scientists, we represent such a kind of context and forum where some questions of what is accepted or not accepted are up for discussion. This is the kind of forum where it is decided who do we believe, what do we believe in, what is accepted as knowledge.

Vitor Oliveira Jorge then made a statement, that we all have our different interests, from the individual to the group, and that we represent different theoretical ways of thinking and it is very difficult if not impossible to reach some kind of consensus.

I find it interesting, to contrast these two statements.

The other point is that we are here in a special situation because we confront a very unusual question: “does an Atlantic Bronze Age exist?”. Normally we are not asked, as scholars, to confront such a basic issue. I just want to make this observation to link Michael Shanks presentation and Vitor statement, which seemed to be a little pessimistic. We are the kind of group that is supposed to reach some kind of conclusion, but we are not voting. I think it was Antonio Gilman that asked:

- When will we have the vote?
- Vote about what? I asked, and he replied
- About if there is an Atlantic Bronze Age.

I think it is not the way it works, but on the other hand it has some significance.

**RICHARD BRADLEY:**

In a sense it is a question we can not vote on, because we all agree there is an Atlantic Bronze Age, but that it is an archaeological construct.

The question is whether that construct is a useful one and whether any two of us mean the same thing by it. I think that is why no vote is possible. Ultimately, we are, as Michael Shanks says, talking about what knowledge is, not a single monolithic negotiated settlement; that surely is the uncreative way of doing archaeology.

**STUART NEEDHAM:**

About Michael Shanks paper, perhaps I could just seek some clarification, on something difficult for me. Perhaps I am going to ask a very naive question that Michael Shanks heard many times. I hope I am quoting him right: at one time he said that there is no viable distinction between a real landscape and a socially constructed one. I wonder, if we believe in that statement, what do we believe the situation could have been before humankind, before human thought.

Clearly you are going to turn around and say: that is the difference between a world that existed before but not a landscape, and so forth. I would very much like to ear your views on this.

The component of this is non-human species, animals and birds. They have, presumably, some kind of perception of their habitats. How does that relate to the existence of something real, something tangible before human thought and human perception and conception come in the scene?

**MICHAEL SHANKS:**

You partly answered yourself with the distinction between landscape and world.

It is an oblique way of saying: why do we have to become bothered with the metaphysical concept of reality? We can argue all day about what reality really is.

I think it is interesting to philosophers and to those of us who wish to think philosophically to do so, but I am more interested in finding what concepts work for us, in terms of our relationship to the world we live in, and how does reality resists our trials of resistance.

We can deal with non-human species, we can study them and interpret their behaviour, but we are dealing with exactly the same thing than taking evidences, working them and constructing knowledges out of them. To it all it applies what I was saying.

We should not be bothered with what the real world is.

That does not mean it does not exist. This chair, for example, was constructed, was made by people, but we don't get worried whether it is real or not; we are more concerned, if we sit on it, if will it fall over; we are concerned whether it is viable, whether it works as a construction.

It is similar to what happens to knowledges: do they work? Are they useful? Do they serve any purpose? Or are they damaging in whatever way?

**STUART NEEDHAM:**

I think we understand each other on this rather well. In a sense we can disregard the reality, but why don't we call it the concrete reality to that one that we feel is not so important to establish as a truth, that one that is there underpinning everything.

You referred to these other realities and you used the adjective concrete from time to time, and I think that is misguided. Those are the realities we have to concern ourselves, the ones we construct, but we should not deny that there is somewhere, underneath and underpinning everything, a concrete reality; even if it is not our purpose to try and achieve that one.

**MICHAEL SHANKS:**

The real, in a tangible sense, is very difficult for you to handle.

The objective has to go through subjectivity. Subjectivity is the form the objective world takes, which is the sort of point you make. So what is real?

There is something real out there, yes, but it does creep up on us, because things happen.

The materiality of the body, for instance, it is there and we have different ways of dealing with it conceptually, but it is still there and you get ill and die. You die in the end, and that is the archaeological. It is often the ineffable, the material. That is, if you want, one realm of the real in archaeology. So, I would agree.

**RICHARD BRADLEY:**

Can we now broaden out the discussion so that we can embrace the other papers?

Can I ask Marie Louise Sorensen a question, trying to open out another strand in this debate.

You talked about very local practices – very local knowledges – and the ways, in particular in your survey area, in which the world was constructed and reconstructed.

You also talked about the very striking differences between the Nordic Bronze Age and what we are calling the Atlantic Bronze Age.

Can I ask whether, in the light of that very detailed analysis, we do not have, similarly, very local practices cross-cutting these broad patterns that we are seeing and grouping as the Atlantic Bronze Age?

We heard of some very specific uses, in the Alentejo, of monumental architecture in a very specific landscape.

What is the appropriate scale of analysis?

Should we, in a sense, do research on a small structure, in which we are looking at how a number of local systems work and looking for their articulation one to another?

Or should we have a sort of top-down approach, in which we start with this international phenomenon – the Atlantic Bronze Age – and proceed to deconstruct it into smaller and smaller units, as I think we have been doing here?

What are the implications of your approach for work outside Scandinavia?

How would you see us talking about the social construction of the landscape along the Atlantic façade?

**MARIE-LOUISE STIG SØRENSEN:**

I feel, as already indicated by previous discussions in this conference, that we do have to work simultaneously at different scales.

To some extent we are already doing that, however what clearly seems to be lacking, at this point, is an understanding of how these different scales interrelate.

People do things totally different in their domestic and local landscape, at the same time sharing into and being part of something that has borders that are in a very different dimension. There seems to be something conceptual about the expression of culture.

It is surprising how little we are using modern analogies. We must be able to find several modern analogies that demonstrate that such phenomena happen regularly, but it is not something unique to the period we are looking at, it is just taking particular forms and happening at particular scales in that period.

So I think people should continue doing the kind of work they are doing, but they have to add some conceptual tools, realising that we have to invest more in understanding what culture is and what is the significance of the statements we make at different levels.

**RICHARD BRADLEY:**

Would anyone like to follow that point?

One point that was mentioned, and that had not be mentioned substantially till this morning, was gender.

I thought it was very interesting that you were homing in, and quite rightly, on the apparent masculine symbolism of all the features that we use to define the Atlantic Bronze Age, whereas Kristian Kristiansen, for instance, as written very much in terms of female symbolism in terms of the defining characteristics of the Nordic Bronze Age.

Would anyone like to take this area further?

**STUART NEEDHAM:**

This was one of the points I wanted to raise with Marie Louise Sorensen.

It was very nice to have this external view of the masculine dominance of a lot of the emblems that we have in the Atlantic zone.

I did wonder whether the evidence has been totally skewed by one end of the chain of consumption. I think we have to be aware of the possibility that because what we tend to be seeing in this realm of the archaeological evidence is the final stage, the consumption, that is giving us the masculine dominated picture. We should not necessarily assume that at an earlier stage we have the evidence to point in the same way.

**HARRY FOKENS:**

I think that we might find that the male dominance of the symbolism happens on the supra-regional level and the female dominance is to be found in the local level.

For instance, Marie Louise showed us the discovering of a pit with pottery. There would be quite many a structuralist who would interpret this as a female use of material, constructed by females and a female symbolism in the closing of this pit.

I would like to ask Marie Louise if she would have comments on such an interpretation.

**MARIE-LOUISE STIG SØRENSEN:**

I tend, more or less automatically, to think that structuralist interpretations are lacking in subtlety, but I have no doubt, that females must have played a significant role. They were part of the society and the emphasis we see on the male is also saying something about the females. That emphasis is not just a statement about the male, it is a much more complex statement that is taking place. It is a selection among all the things that were available and that, as Stuart Needham said, were produced and used.

There is a particular selection taking place there, which in its material exclusion of women is saying something about the women and their position in society. What is it saying?

I think we have being giving very little energy to it, in terms of our explanations.

But I think that, by recognising the issue, we might be able to open up an area that deserves more attention, not only because it is political correct or something like that, but also because it would reveal something about the social make-up of the society.

Women are the domestic record, and it is possible, in many different ways, to throw light on it.

If a woman was closing the pit with those pots, she was taking the pots away from the men; there is a lot of interaction happening in this, which involves all the members of that community. So I think there are really some fascinating possibilities.

**MICHAEL SHANKS:**

Marie Louise is absolutely right. We are not dealing with male symbolism or female symbolism: it is gender relationships.

**JOÃO CARLOS SENNA-MARTINEZ:**

I absolutely agree with Harry Fokkens' distinction between levels of analysis, because what I think is happening here, should conduct us to ask a question.

I think that almost everyone agrees that there was some sea movement alongside the Atlantic façade, during the period of time we are discussing here.

One of the questions would be, of course: who were the sailors?

All the evidence I know points out for them being men, so it would not astonish me very much to see that what goes on with them, what is transregional, is part of male symbolism, ways of males expressing their own ideas and values.

On the other hand, as I suggested in my paper, behind the obvious similarities we are beginning to find out that in the pottery there are differences, especially in the very fine made drinking vessels. That can point out to emblematic differentiation at regional and at site level, behind transregional or interregional similarities like the ones that lead to Patrice Brun map, which grouped almost all central Portugal in one cultural province. Those differences would surely relate to the producers and the sense of continuity in society that go through the female work in the society.

**RICHARD BRADLEY:**

I wonder if we could add another point.

We have been talking happily about exchange, but for social anthropologists exchange is very much linked with kinship and the exchange of personnel.

We are talking as if, and we have at one point actually said "what is the point of exchanging one sword for another?"

The living personnel as opposed simply to the navigators, to the people who are physically transporting the artefacts, has disappeared from the archaeology, but we can not discount them and they may be the movement of people, not of ideas, but of people, not of material culture, but of living human beings, they may have been the pivotal system and we are seeing another distortion of the type Stuart has mentioned.

**SUSANA OLIVEIRA JORGE:**

I think that you could ask the assistance to discuss the notions of similarity and of difference.

I think that everybody assumes that there is, in a certain region of Europe, a lot of similarities in terms of the metallic artefacts, perhaps in other kinds of artefacts, but I think that this colloquium shows that there are a lot of differences in other terms: settlements, tombs, perceptions of territories, etc.

If you assume that the equation that equals similarities with identity, or entity, is right, and that the opposite is right too, we are in a very bad way, from my point of view.

**RICHARD BRADLEY:**

Who would like to respond?

I am sure someone would.

You do not seem to have provoked a response.

Are there other issues you would like to bring up at this point?

**TERESA JÚDICE GAMITO:**

I would like very much to pose a question to this audience.

We almost reached a breaking point; one was yesterday, with Vítor Oliveira Jorge, the other was today, with Michael Shanks. We face a dilemma: are we going to cope with the negative position, admitting we can not understand past behaviours or past records, and still are we going to have the idea of preserving them for the future?

How are we going to be seen in one or two centuries?

How will our position be seen in the future? Is there any future? A present?

**MICHAEL SHANKS:**

I hope that what I stand for, my arguments, will stand for a more concrete human archaeology. An archaeology that deals with the multidimensionality of the past, its textures, its relevances to us today, rather than an academic separation of past and present.

I am not denying that there are better knowledges or worse knowledges at all. I am saying “we need these things to work with to construct knowledges about who we are and where we come from as human beings”.

I would have thought that to be a far better argument for preserving the past than saying “we need to know what happened in the past”, because anybody can reply “Why do I need to know what happened in the past?”.

My argument is that the past is an essential part of what we are in the present, in the very core of our project, so therefore you can not do without it as we are in the moment.