

ZONA ARQUEOLÓGICA

MOBILE IMAGES OF ANCESTRAL BODIES:
A MILLENNIUM-LONG PERSPECTIVE
FROM IBERIA TO EUROPE

VOL. II



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Abstract

This paper constitutes the first-ever characterization study of the artefacts referred to as 'croziers', to their similarities with episcopal staves or croziers and shepherds croziers or croziers. Several possibilities are considered to explain the existence of these artefacts of a symbolic and exclusively funerary character: An inventory of the known exemplars is presented hereby.

There is a special concentration in central Alentejo, encompassing the megalithic region of Reguengos de Monsaraz, and two other clusters, much less important, limited to a few specimens, in the Eastern and Northeastern Alentejo, always related to the presence of megaliths.

The study of the decorative elements and their organization resulted in the identification of three main iconographic groups. The set of decorated exemplars from the westernmost domain, situated between the Tagus River and the Atlantic Ocean, constitutes a group with particular characteristics as both sides of the items are decorated. Excepting one item, all the artefacts display decoration on one side only with the exception of some undecorated specimens; the heads of these exemplars are always oriented to the left. This feature can be correlated with the way they were ritually held: admitting that they were wielded in the right hand of the deceased, only the convex longitudinal edge could be functional, which is consistent with their use as machetes, among other possibilities that are also the subject of discussion.

Keywords

Neolithic/Chalcolithic; 'croziers', Portugal; inventory; classification; signification.

Resumen

Este trabajo constituye el primer estudio de caracterización de los artefactos denominados "báculos", por sus similitudes con los bastones episcopales y los cayados de pastor, llamados del mismo modo. Se consideran varias posibilidades para explicar la existencia de estos artefactos de carácter simbólico y exclusivamente funerario.

Se presenta un inventario de los principales ejemplares conocidos. Existe una concentración en el centro del Alentejo, que abarca la región megalítica de Reguengos de Monsaraz, y otros dos conglomerados, mucho menos importantes, limitados a unos pocos ejemplares, en el Alentejo oriental y nororiental, siempre relacionados con la presencia de megalitos.

El estudio de su decoración y su organización dio como resultado la identificación de tres grupos iconográficos principales. El conjunto de ejemplares decorados del dominio más occidental, situado entre el río Tago y el océano Atlántico, constituye un grupo con características particulares, ya que ambas caras de los objetos están decoradas. A excepción de un objeto, todos los artefactos presentan decoración en un solo lado, salvo algunos ejemplares lisos; las cabezas de estos ejemplares están siempre orientadas hacia la izquierda. Esta característica puede correlacionarse con la forma en que se sostenían ritualmente: admitiendo que se blandían en la mano derecha del difunto, sólo el borde longitudinal convexo podría ser funcional, lo que concuerda con su uso como machetes, entre otras posibilidades que son también objeto de discusión.

Palabras clave

Neolítico/Calcolítico, báculos, Portugal, inventario, clasificación, significación.

The 'croziers' of the agro-pastoral societies of southern Portugal (last quarter of the 4th / early 3rd millennium BC)

João Luís Cardoso*

1. Preliminaries: morphological characterisation, functional interpretation and chrono-cultural ascription

This paper is intended as a contribution to a better understanding and characterization of the so-called 'croziers', portable art objects from the late Neolithic period, with parallels in the engravings and paintings of the coeval megalithic and parietal art of western Iberia.

Despite the interpretive differences that have arisen over the last one hundred and forty years, the designation 'croziers' is commonly used, in quotation marks, to avoid any connotation to contemporary objects with the same name, due to the formal similarity of these archaeological artefacts to the episcopal croziers or their popular equivalents, the shepherd's croziers that still exist nowadays. Thus, this designation applies both to items made of stone or organic materials (bone, ivory), and to their parietal representations, engraved or painted, or even to the plastic representations displayed on some vessels recovered from dolmens of the Alto Alentejo region. In all of them it is possible to isolate three essential parts:

- the grip, i.e. the proximal end, which extends insensibly over the body or handle of the object, often undecorated.
- the handle, more or less curved, slender and elongated, with convex or rectilinear edges, sometimes featuring a progressively or abruptly narrowed

proximal extremity (the grip); the presence of an end knob was observed in only one staff, and is also exceptionally displayed by some rock art paintings, e.g. on menhir 57 of the Almendres cromlech (Évora) (Gomes, 2003, Fig. 174).

- a distal end, generally distinctly convex and strongly curved (the staff's head), ending in an edge, oblique to the longitudinal axis of each item.

While on the portable objects –the particular subject of this contribution– it is possible to identify a remarkable richness and variety of decorative elements, their engraved or painted representations obviously do not show such details, since they are linear representations, engraved or painted.

Regarding their meaning, opinions are mostly rather vague, and authors simply point out their symbolic character, relating them to "symbols of power" or "symbols of prestige" of Final Neolithic agro-pastoral communities in a process of rapid development and social differentiation, during the last quarter of the 4th millennium BC, in the territory south of the Tagus River.

Recently, the presence of a crook at the Loba 2 dolmen was associated with a headman who would have been buried there (Gonçalves *et alii*, 2005: 29), and an identical interpretation was advanced regarding the four croziers found at the Monte da Barca deposit (Coruche) (Gonçalves, 2011), previously published (Vicente *et alii*, 1974).

Actually, the quality of the discussion on the meaning of these objects seems to have progressively been

* ICArEHB (Algarve University)

emptied of content, since the wise words of Estácio da Veiga concerning the first piece ever identified as such, found at a burial of Martim Afonso, about which he declared 'I do not know what it was or what it was good for' (Veiga, 1887: 431). Although this author has advanced, and rightly so, 'the extremely bold hypothesis that the plaques of this form represent the symbology of a local cult existing in the entire geographical stretch where they occur' (op. cit.: 439).

We would also mention Estácio da Veiga's connection of this object to a cult 'dedicated to the life-giving symbol', given the similarity of its outline with a phallus. If this correlation is presently to be rejected, its association to a cult of life and regeneration would seem to be in accordance with the votive and funerary character of these pieces. In the solar representation from rock 158 of S. Simão (Nisa) (Gomes, 2003, Fig. 184 F) (Fig. 1) this celestial body's rays are represented by 'croziers', which is a decisive argument in favour of its solar connotation, and, consequently, with life, eternally reaffirmed.

Indeed, some menhirs of the Alto Alentejo region display this very same association, the Belhõa menhir (Reguengos de Monsaraz) being paradigmatic, as its distal part shows a radiating sun and, further down, amidst wavy lines, a clearly delineated crook (Fig. 2).

The association of croziers with life and with its permanent regeneration is consistent with the fact that the objects referred to as shepherds' croziers are exclusively funerary productions, although their manufacture would naturally take place in workshops or specialised sites, just like their counterparts, the slate plaques. Thus, the interpretation of croziers or their parietal representations should take into account their evident similarity with decorated slate plaques, whose symbolic charge justified their frequent reuse, even in regions where schist was abundant (Cardoso, Vilaça, 2020). As it has long been recorded, croziers and slate plaques share common characteristics, in terms of raw material, technique and decorative patterns. Moreover, they occur in the same funerary spaces and share the same geographical distribution; therefore there is a direct relationship between these two artefact groups.

Several hypotheses can be considered regarding the interpretation of croziers in terms of their meaning and functions:

- the first hypothesis is that it could represent objects that would symbolise, in the world of the living, attributes of power and prestige; but only on a rock painting from Cueva de Los Letreros (Vélez



Fig. 1 – Pecked engraving from the rock art site of São Simão, Nisa (Gomes, 2003, Fig. 184 F)



Fig. 2 – Belhõa menhir, Reguengos de Monsaraz (MFS/JLC archive)

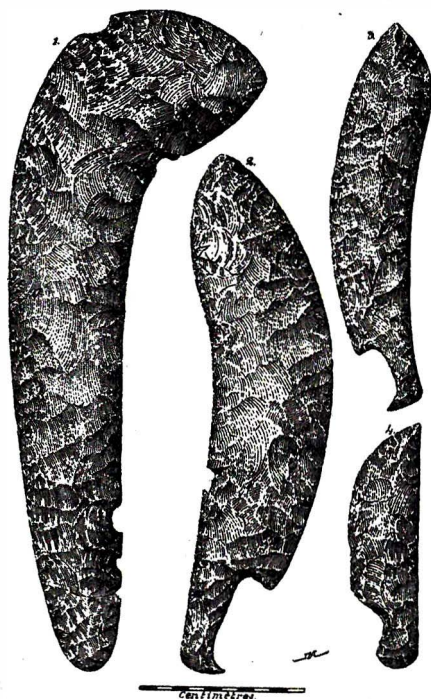


Fig. 3 – Bifacial chipped stone machetes from Messawiyeh (Morgan, 1926, Fig. 191)

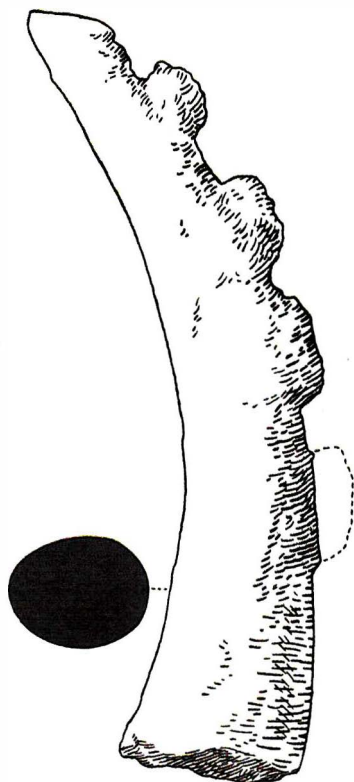


Fig. 4 – Limestone votive item from the artificial caves of Carenque, Amadora, possibly representing a weapon with flint blades attached to the wooden handle. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (N.º Inv. 2002.184.3). Length - 26 cm (Heleno, 1933, Fig. 19)

Blanco, Spain) can a male character be seen holding two curved objects in each hand (Breuil, 1935, Fig. 3), which H. Breuil classified, with some reservations, as representations of sickles (p. 14), which would seem appropriate.

The possibility that croziers may represent machete-like weapons should be weighed, as this was supported with relevant arguments by O. da Veiga Ferreira and Manuel Leitão. According to them, the symbology of these croziers was not connected to the symbology of the axe, the sickle or the halberd; the key to understanding this much debated question would reside in the staff of the Herdade das Antas dolmen (Montemor-o-Novo) (Ferreira, Leitão, 1981: 179) (Fig. 10, no. 4). Indeed, this particular exemplar shows, along the outer edge, a continuous serration consisting of projecting triangles, also observable on the piece from the dolmen to the west of Vale das Antas (Montemor-o-Novo), of which only the head is preserved and which has remained almost unpublished until now, since it was only reproduced with poor quality and without mentioning its provenance (Ferreira, 1985, Fig. 4). The location of this serrated edge can be related to the morphology of the handle's end knob observed on the former exemplar, confirming that, should croziers be replicas of cutting implements, this would be the working edge, remarkably convex. This finding enabled the authors to find parallels in the chipped stone bifacial foliates from pre-dynastic Egypt recovered at Messawiyeh (Morgan, 1926, Fig. 191); the similarities are indeed evident, including the existence of knobs on the handles to facilitate handling (Fig. 3). These items would thus be the reproduction of machetes, the serrated edges –only observed on the two croziers mentioned above– symbolising the cutting edges, with flint elements attached to the originally wooden blank. This conclusion is in fact suggestively illustrated in Portuguese territory by a votive limestone object, which could also be the votive representation of a sickle, whose convex edge is punctuated with protuberances, quite probably corresponding to attached flint elements (Fig. 4); this item was recovered from one of the Carenque (Amadora) artificial caves (Heleno, 1933, Fig. 19).

Dirk Brandherm has signalled the existence of functional examples, still partially preserving their wooden handles and ascribable to this type of weapon, from European domestic contexts where wood has been preserved, which feature flakes attached along the cutting edge. This author also refers to the abundance of

"croziers" engraved on Breton dolmens, which, according to him, may correspond to the representation of such weapons, also present in many other European archaeological contexts (Brandherm, 1995). These objects, true weapons perhaps only wielded by an elite, would therefore be a symbol of status and power, so that their lithic replicas would naturally be associated with the burials of the most prominent elements of the community, which would explain their rarity, compared to the decorated slate plaques.

- the second hypothesis regards 'shepherds' croziers' as representations of utilitarian implements, such as the machete-like weapons mentioned above, rather than objects of prestige or symbols of power but which, due to their economic importance, had a special meaning for the communities that used them and ultimately depended on them in their daily lives. In this regard, the always pertinent reflection by Estácio da Veiga makes sense, as he associates the decorated slate plaques in general with identity elements of a group united by the practice of the same cult, whose major expression would be embodied by the crook (Veiga, 1887: 439, 440).

The matter of the crocks' meaning was addressed, shortly afterwards, by J. Leite de Vasconcelos, who found no safe arguments to attribute any religious meaning to such productions, although he was also not in a position to defend the opposite (Vasconcelos, 1897: 160). He did not reject the possibility that they represented phalluses –bearing in mind their outline, an issue already addressed by Estácio da Veiga– but adding nothing more.

The same author, in an extensive critical review of the journal *Portugália*, published in Oporto, admitted some formal similarities of the slate plaques with Egyptian examples from Nágada, observed by himself, but made no mention whatsoever to "croziers" (Vasconcelos, 1906).

Shortly afterwards, J. Déchelette, in a synthesis dedicated to the prehistoric chronology of the Iberian Peninsula, also alludes to the relationship of slate plaques with the palettes of pre-pharaonic Egypt and mentions the schist croziers of the Portuguese territory (Déchelette, 1909: 17), of which only four exemplars were known at the time.

The association established by Déchelette between croziers and axe handles is noteworthy, considering that the cult of the axe would be embodied by three related elements pertaining to axes: the lithic blade; the

handle; or the complete representation of the implement. For this purpose, he refers to the representation of axe handles on one of the orthostats from the Table des Marchands dolmen (Locmariaquer, France), prolix in his view, concluding: 'L'identification des crosses du Portugal avec le manche de hache en pierre ne nous semble point douteuse' (op. cit.: 17). It can thus be concluded that, for Déchelette, the croziers engraved on Breton megalithic monuments were in fact representations of polished stone axe handles, reproducing the curvature of their distal ends.

Around the same time Louis Siret associated the curvilinear morphology of the two croziers he referred to –from the Estria dolmen and from the Casa da Moura cave– with water, as an allusion to the curvature of the octopus' tentacles, while the lithic nature of the blanks would evoke the earth, the whole representing the earth/water fecundating principle (Siret, 1913, Pl. VI).

Henri Breuil referred to these items as croziers, reproducing, in 1935, four of the five exemplars so far inventoried in Portugal (Breuil, 1935, Fig. 83). 83), emphasising their frequency in the schematic rock-shelter paintings of the Iberian Peninsula, a fact he was familiar with, and also in the dolmens of Brittany and southwestern France, that had recently been carefully recorded. Collogues I (Gard, France) is particularly outstanding, as the representation of the hafted axe is clearly visible, in bas-relief on the frontal area of the monolith (Octobon, 1931, 361). This stylised representation is similar to some representations classified as croziers by Octobon, to the Roman lituus, or even to boomerangs, observable on other exemplars from the same region. Thus, on the basis of the various inventoried representations, it can be concluded that some of them could be classified as either axes or croziers, consequently, one should consider the possibility that these are representations a specific type of object, always the same, i.e. the hafted axe, in a more or less stylised form. Actually, axes are present in a more explicit form on numerous engraved megaliths of Brittany (Octobon, 1931: 381), which had been characterised in detail a few years earlier (Péquart *et alii*, 1927).

The coexistence of the representations of axes and croziers is equally present in the Iberia, the former were the subject of a recent inventory, concerning megalithic art, and can be found throughout Iberia, from north to south, on the Spanish dolmens of Soto (Huelva), Alberite II (Cádiz) and Katillotxu V (Biscay) (Barroso-Bermejo *et alii*, 2021, Fig. 8.3).

The same situation can also be found in some Portuguese cases, such as the Monte da Ribeira stela-menhir (Reguengos de Monsaraz) (Gonçalves *et alii*, 1997).

It is worth mentioning that numerous representations of axes in megalithic art, both in Iberia (Barroso-Bermejo *et alii*, 2021, Fig. 8.3) and Brittany (Octobon, 1931, Pl. 6, 52 and 58), show a very distinct curvature of the handle towards the opposite side of the polished blade, resembling the outline of a staff and reinforcing J. Déchelette's aforementioned idea, according to which croziers would represent axe handles (Fig. 16).

Thus, the difference between axes and croziers would reside not as much in the symbolism, but mainly in the form, more stylised in croziers and less so in axes, but with all the formal gradations between both forms, to such an extent that in some cases it is not easy to choose one or the other alternative. Therefore, one could legitimately conclude that croziers could in fact correspond to axes, always represented in a much more stylised form, but sharing the same symbolic connotation.

Reinforcing this idea, i.e. that this is always the same type of representation, despite a number of variations, it is worth mentioning that some representations of axes show a handle knob (Octobon, 1931, Pl. 6, Pl. 52, 58) –e.g. the crozier of the Herdade das Antas dolmen (Fig. 6, no. 23 and Fig. 10, no. 4)– which constitutes a common element to be considered. This is also observed on certain engraved "cane", e.g. the Monte da Ribeira stela-menhir (Reguengos de Monsaraz) (Gomes, 2003, Fig. 179 G).

A representation of an axe, in profile, etched onto the unfired paste of one of the sides of a clay weight recovered at the Chalcolithic settlement of Outeiro de São Mamede (Bombarral) (Vasconcelos, 1922) recently redrawn (Cardoso, Carreira, 2003, fig. 68, no. 4). This exemplar has evident parallels in the axes engraved on the orthostats of the above mentioned Breton and Iberian dolmens.

The functional interpretation was approached from this same point of view in the first of the only two contributions dedicated exclusively to this discussion published until now. O. da Veiga Ferreira, based on the observation of the ca. 40 exemplars referred to by this author, considers that they may have been connected to the 'cult of the hafted axe' (Ferreira, 1985, 89), establishing a parallel between the votive limestone axes and the "croziers", closely following the opinion previously expressed by G. and V. Leisner (1951) in the same direction: axes and

adzes were indispensable artefacts for Neolithic farmers and therefore would justify a special cult.

- the third hypothesis considered in this essay is that these pieces are not replicas of objects used by the living. This possibility is supported by the existence of other objects in the same circumstances, such as the votive limestone cylinders so common in the Chalcolithic contexts of Extremadura, in the south-west and south-east of the Iberian Peninsula, or the slate plaques themselves, both of which were used exclusively for funerary purposes. However, we would recall that any votive object, being a symbol, is supposed to convey a meaning, known and understood by all –such is the case of limestone cylinders or slate plaques. Thus, and within this same perspective, croziers would correspond to the symbolic representation of life and its regeneration, without having to resort to any functional equivalent– which is always problematic – in order to acquire a meaning.

Thus, the conclusions that can be reached, after this extensive revisitation of the most diverse explanations offered up to now, are multiple and varied, matching the richness and diversity of the archaeological record, and it is not really possible to choose any one of them with certainty. However, the formal similarity between some representations of hafted axes and the "croziers" should be noted and enhanced, further legitimating the possibility that the latter might correspond to the stylised representation of the former.

2. Geographical distribution, historiographical aspects

The vast majority of the ca. 40 "croziers" were produced using slabs of black or greyish slaty schist, whose geographical distribution is almost exclusively limited to the Alto Alentejo region (Fig. 5). There is such an abundance in this region that 134 slate plaques and seven croziers, both whole and fragmented, have been recovered from a single tomb, the Anta Grande of Olival da Pega dolmen (Reguengos de Monsaraz) (Valera, 2015: 251).

In Spain, in the region of Huelva, the El Pozuelo burial yielded a flat crozier with a suspension hole on the proximal end (Leisner, Leisner, 1959, Plt. 48, 3) (Fig. 7, no. 4); much further away, *tholos* 17 of Los Millares (Almería, Spain) yielded an smaller exemplar, measuring about 16 cm, which could also correspond to a "rough-out" for one of these objects (Leisner, Leisner, 1943, Plt. 19, 1, 11) (Fig. 7, no. 5). In these terms, it can easily be concluded that this is a typical production of western Iberia

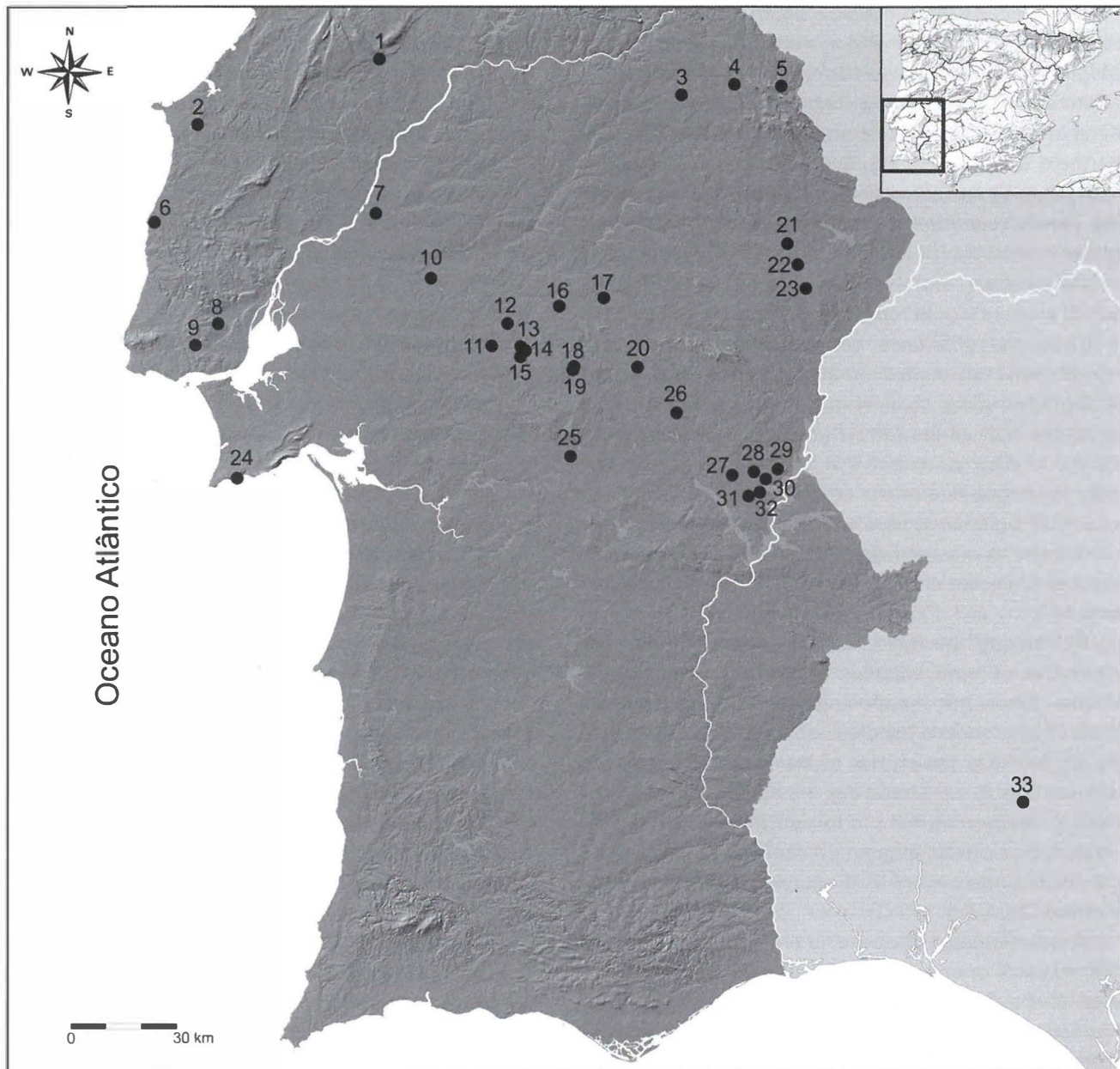


Fig. 5. Geographical distribution of the main "croziers" referred to in this paper. 1 - Lapa da Galinha (Alcanena) Fig. 7, no. 8; Fig. 8, no. 3; 2 - Casa da Moura (Óbidos) Fig. 7, no. 7; Fig. 8, no. 1; 3 - Anta do Couto dos Enxares (Crato); 4 - Anta do Alcogulo 3 (Castelo de Vide) Fig. 6, no. 10; 5 - Anta da Marquesa (Marvão) Fig. 6, no. 26; 6 - Gruta da Cova da Moura (Torres Vedras) Fig. 7, no. 2; 7 - Martim Afonso (Salvaterra de Magos) Fig. 6, no. 15; Fig. 10, no. 2; 8 - Gruta do Correio-Mor (Loures) Fig. 7, no. 3; 9 - Anta da Estria (Sintra) Fig. 7, no. 6; Fig. 8, no. 2; 10 - Monte da Barca (Coruche) Fig. 7, no. 9; 11 - Lobeira de Baixo 2 (Montemor-o-Novo, Évora) Fig. 6, no. 22; Fig. 11, no. 2; 12 - Anta Sul de Vale de Gato (Coruche); 13 - Anta a Oeste do Vale das Antas (Montemor-o-Novo) Fig. 10, no. 1; 14 - Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja (Montemor-o-Novo) Fig. 6, no. 11, 12, 13, 14; Fig. 12, no. 3; 15 - Anta da Velada (Montemor-o-Novo) Fig. 6, no. 9; 16 - Brissos 6 (Mora) Fig. 6, no. 25; Fig. 11, no. 4; 17 - Caeira 7 (Arraiolos) Fig. 6, no. 21; 18 - Anta 1 ou Anta 4 dos Gualões (Arraiolos) Fig. 6, no. 24; Fig. 10, no. 5; 19 - Anta 2 Gualões (Arraiolos); Fig. 10, no. 3; 20 - Anta 4 da Herdade das Antas (Montemor-o-Novo) Fig. 6, no. 23; Fig. 10, no. 4; 21 - Boudanha (Monforte) Fig. 6, no. 18; 22 - Horta Velha do Reguengo (Elvas, Portalegre) Fig. 6, no. 19; 23 - Jazigo de Alcarapinha (Elvas, Portalegre) Fig. 6, no. 7; 24 - Lapa do Fumo (Sesimbra) Fig. 13; 25 - Anta de Vale de Rodrigo (Évora) Fig. 6, no. 16, 17; 26 - Anta 2 da Loba (Évora); 27 - Monumento 2 dos Perdigões (Reguengos de Monsaraz) Fig. 9; 28 - Anta da Herdade do Duque (Reguengos de Monsaraz); 29 - Anta 1 do Olival da Pega (Reguengos de Monsaraz) Fig. 6, nos. 1, 2, 3; Fig. 11, no. 1; Fig. 12, no. 4; 30 - Comenda 2 e tholos da Comenda (Reguengos de Monsaraz) Fig. 6, no. 20; 31 - Cebolinho 1 (Reguengos de Monsaraz) Fig. 6, no. 8; 32 - Anta 1 da Herdade do Passo (Reguengos de Monsaraz) Fig. 6, no. 4, 5, 6; Fig. 12, no. 1, 2; 33 - El Pozuelo 3 (Huelva, Espanha), Fig. 7, no. 4; 34 - Los Millares (Almeria) Fig. 7, no. 5 (outside the figure)

an megalithism, its geographical distribution generally coinciding with the distribution of slate plaques, with an obvious concentration in central Alentejo (district of Évora) and an extension towards the western Atlantic coast.

Interestingly, the first prehistoric crook identified as such came from a geographical area located between Alentejo and Estremadura, corresponding to present-day Ribatejo. It was recovered from a burial of undetermined type of Martim Afonso (Salvaterra de Magos), unearthed during the archaeological excavations of the Muge shell middens conducted in 1865 (Costa, 1865) (Fig. 6, no. 15; Fig. 10, no. 2). This exemplar was reproduced on a fine lithograph illustrating several archaeological artefacts, executed under the auspices of the Comissão Geológica de Portugal, to illustrate a volume on Portuguese prehistory to be presented at the Universal Exhibition of Paris in 1867 only very recently published (Cardoso, 2016, Fig. 1). This piece was taken to the Escola Politécnica (Lisbon) in 1869 where it was studied by Augusto Filipe Simões, who illustrated it (Simões, 1878, Fig. 33), stating that 'In the Escola Polytechnica museum there is a kind of crozier (...) also made of black schist and decorated with motifs similar to the ones found on the plaques (...)' (op. cit.: 53). This was probably the first time that the designation of crozier was associated with this type of objects; this particular piece is currently kept at the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (Lisbon). However, Carlos Ribeiro, the explorer of the aforementioned burial, declared that he did not recall the recovery of this object. This information is to be taken into consideration, given the exceptional nature of this item, which certainly would not have gone unnoticed to him (Ribeiro, 1880: 65).

Thanks to the pioneering archaeological investigations carried out by this geologist and his collaborator Joaquim Filipe Nery Delgado, in the scope of the activity of the Comissão Geológica de Portugal and its subsequent agencies, two more "croziers" were published shortly afterwards, both originating from collective burials located north of the Tagus River:

- one from the Estria dolmen (Ribeiro, 1880, Plt. 5, no. 5 and Plt. 6, no. 1) (Fig. 2, no. 6; Fig. 8, no. 2). It was considered by the author, and for the first time as far as the interpretation of this type of pieces is concerned, as an 'emblem or sign of authority or command' (op. cit., p. 65); this interpretation was also followed by J. Leite de Vasconcelos (1885: 39), who referred to the Martim Afonso

piece as a 'schist implement, similar to a crozier, and which was probably a command baton'.

- the other exemplar referred to by Carlos Ribeiro in 1880 was recovered from the natural cave of Casa da Moura during the excavations carried out in 1879/1880 under the direction of J. F. Nery Delgado, deputy to the Secção dos Trabalhos Geológicos de Portugal (Fig. 7, no. 7; Fig. 8, no. 1). It was first published by Émile Cartailhac in 1886 (Cartailhac, 1886, Figs. 96 and 97), who stated in this respect 'leur destination reste un mystère' (op. cit.: 96). Cartailhac also mentioned the existence of three holes at the proximal end of the Casa da Moura exemplar, whose purpose will be discussed further on.

Meanwhile, already at the beginning of the 20th century, new "croziers" were discovered, still in Estremadura, as this continued to be the most explored territory, in archaeological terms. In 1908, another exemplar was recovered during excavations conducted at the Lapa da Galinha cave, under the auspices of the Museu Etnológico Português (presently the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia), directed by Félix Alves Pereira (Coito *et alii*, 2008, p. 151), which remained unpublished until 1942 (Heleno, 1942) (Fig. 7, no. 8; Fig. 8, no. 3). This is a particularly significant exemplar for the discussion on the meaning of these votive pieces, addressed further on.

From the early 1930s onwards, Manuel Heleno undertook an ambitious programme of systematic excavations of dolmens in the western and central Alentejo (district of Évora), resulting in the recovery of a remarkable set of "croziers", which to this day are by far the most numerous assemblage ever found in Portugal. In the following decades, and contrary to what one of its detractors claims (Gonçalves, 2011: 170), Heleno fostered the publication of some of the most important exemplars, not only those that he had personally recovered and were still unpublished, but also those that were kept in his care, at the Museum of which he was Director, and that are included in the monumental work of Georg and Vera Leisner (Leisner, 1959).

More recently, new findings of croziers were made in the scope of field works, such as those conducted in the region of Évora by Henrique L. Pina (Pina, 1961) along with a number of other interventions, of sufferable quality, conducted in the 1960s and 1970s by Agostinho Isidoro in the municipality of Crato (Isidoro, 1966), or

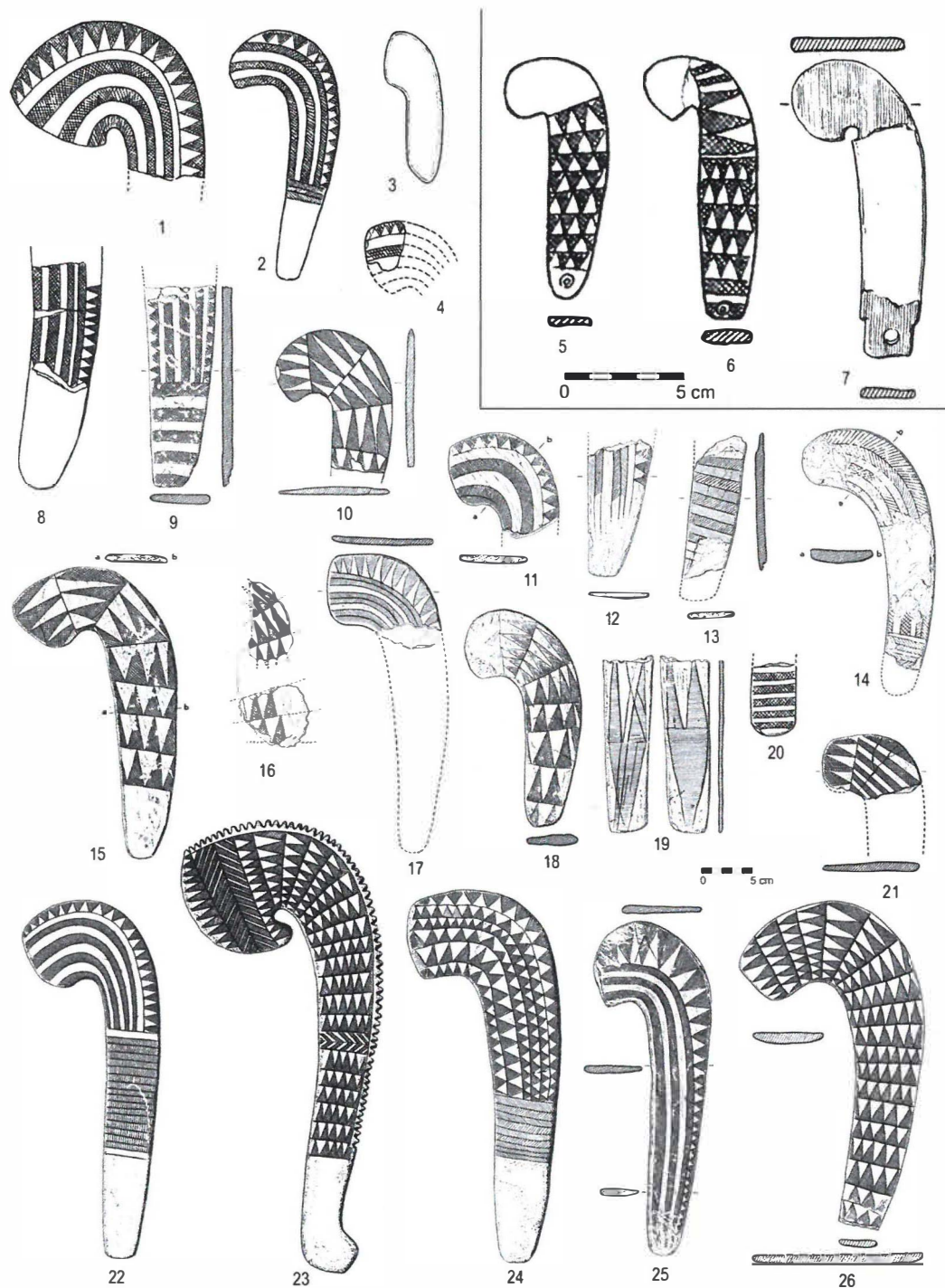


Fig. 6. "croziers" from Alentejo (in Leisner & Leisner, 1959). 1 - Olival da Pega 1 (Plt. 40, 1); 2 - Olival da Pega 1 (Plt. 40, 1); 3 - Olival da Pega 1 (Plt. 40, 1); 4 - Anta 1 do Passo (Plt. 39, 4); 5 - Anta 1 do Passo (Plt. 39, 4); 6 - Anta 1 do Passo (Plt. 39, 4); 7 - Jazigo de Alcarapinha (Plt. 11, 1, no. 97); 8 - Cebolinho 1 (Plt. 39, 5); 9 - Anta da Velada (Plt. 28, 1, no. 50); 10 - Anta da Cabeça (Plt. 3, 3, no. 3); 11 - Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja (Plt. 27, 1, no. 80); 12 - Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja (Plt. 27, 1, no. 82); 13 - Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja (Plt. 27, 1, no. 81); 14 - Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja (Plt. 27, 1, no. 79); 15 - Martim Afonso (Plt. 44, 12, no. 2); 16 - Vale de Rodrigo (Plt. 42, 1, no. 31); 17 - Vale de Rodrigo (Plt. 42, 1, no. 32); 18 - Boudanha (Plt. 8, 5, no. 3); 19 - Horta Velha do Reguengo (Plt. 9, 6, no. 18); 20 - Comenda 2 and *tholos* da Comenda (Plt. 39, 2); 21 - Caeira 7 (Plt. 30, 8, no. 16); 22 - Anta Grande da Lobeira de Baixo (Plt. 29, no. 25); 23 - Anta 4 da Herdade das Antas (Plt. 29, no. 26); 24 - Anta 1 ou Anta 4 dos Gualões (Plt. 29, no. 27); 25 - Brissos 6 (Plt. 22, 1, no. 34); 26 - Anta da Marquesa (Marvão, Portalegre), (Plt. 4, 5, no. 12)

resulted from fortuitous finds, e.g. the four "croziers" recovered during rural works at Monte da Barca (Coruche), in 1971 (Vicente *et alii*, 1974).

Until now, even though a lot of information has been accumulated and the most diverse interpretations of this

type of artefacts have been formulated, no overall study and synthesis of these objects had been undertaken. They are still almost as enigmatic today as when the first one was found, in the moorlands of Muge, in 1865.

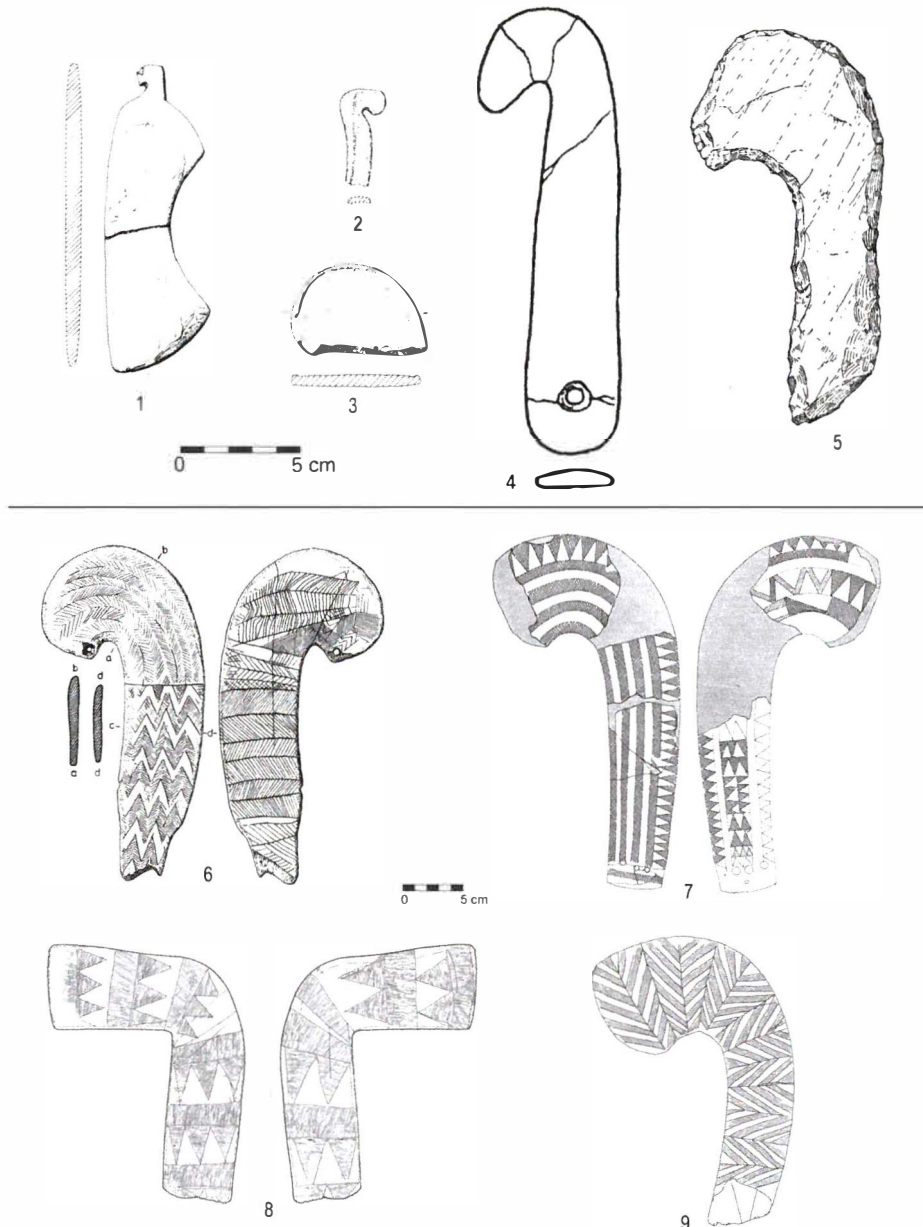


Fig. 7. Assorted croziers and related artefacts. 1 - Votive axe (double axe). Gruta II da Senhora da Luz (Cardoso, 1996, Fig. 36, no. 2); 2 - Miniature crozier on a cut-out bone plaque. Gruta da Cova da Moura (Spindler, 1981, Plt. 23, no. 358); 3 - Plain "crozier" head. Gruta do Correio-Mor (Loures), (Cardoso, 2003, fig. 32, nº 9); 4 - Plain "staff" used as a pendant. El Pozuelo 3 (Huelva), (Leisner & Leisner, 1959, Plt. 48, 3); 5 - Plain crozier. Los Millares 17 (Leisner & Leisner, 1943, Plt. 19, 1, 11); 6 - "Crozier" decorated on both sides. Dólmen da Estria (Leisner, 1965, Plt. 57, no. 3); 7 - "Crozier" decorated on both sides. Gruta da Casa da Moura (Carreira & Cardoso, 2001/2002, fig. 58). 8 - "Crozier" decorated on both sides. Lapa da Galinha (Heleno, 1942, Figs. 4 e 5, mod.); 9 - "Crozier" from Monte da Barca (original drawing from photo, cf. Vicente et al., 1974, Plt. XIII, no. 2)

3. Morphology

Shape.— Estácio da Veiga had already emphasised the fact that the shape of the exemplars known to him (only four) was canonical and easily recognisable, which ‘may have been the result of a confidential idea’ (Veiga, 1887: 431) although, as mentioned above, he was not able to explain it.

Orientation (the position of the curvature of the head in relation to the decorated side).— it is interesting to note that the curvature of the decorated side is always oriented to the left of the observer. Even on one of the exemplars decorated on both sides, from the Estria dolmen, there is a clear difference between the quality and rigour of both sides, the decoration on the side of the piece with the head turned to the left being much more complete (Fig. 7, no. 6). This means that the votive exemplars, to be held in the right fist of the buried individuals and laid horizontally over the body, would require a curvature towards the external

side, corresponding to the working edge, compatible with the use as a machete, if the decorated face was to be visible, as could be expected.

The grip.— this is the proximal end of the staff. From a morphological point of view, Émile Cartailhac (1886: 96) was the first to acknowledge the existence of a longitudinal chamfer along both lateral edges of the grip of the Estria dolmen piece (Fig. 7, no. 6; Fig. 8, no. 1); even if this grip is decorated, it could serve, according to this author, as a tang for hafting or could be a short handle. This particularity is paralleled in the small exemplar of the Alcarapinha tomb (Fig. 6, no. 7); it was also observed on the ivory crook recovered from the Perdigões enclosure (Fig. 9) and on some proximal parts of the handles of votive limestone adzes, such as the exemplar from the artificial caves of Carenque (Amadora) (Heleno, 1933, Fig. 9), which suggests a formal relationship between both assemblages.



Fig. 8. Decorated pieces on both sides from the Atlantic domain. 1 - Gruta da Casa da Moura (Museu Geológico/LNEG) Photograph by J. L. Cardoso; 2 - Dólmen da Estria (Museu Geológico/LNEG). Photograph by J. L. Cardoso; 3 - Lapa da Galinha. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No.Inv. 2002.181.1). Direcção Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021

In the exemplar from the Casa da Moura cave, equally decorated on both sides, the presence of three holes on the proximal end (Fig. 8, no. 1) was discussed at the time of the publication of all the remains exhumed in the 1879/1880 excavations, conducted under the direction of Nery Delgado (Carreira, Cardoso, 2001/2002), whose details were recently disclosed (Cardoso, 2020). These holes gave rise to two distinct alternatives concerning their purpose:

- allowing the object to be hung upside down, as would be the case with the small exemplars with a hole described further on; this hypothesis underlies the way in which the item was depicted by Nils Aberg, with the top corresponding to the perforated end (Aberg, 1921, Fig. 29);
- facilitating hafting, as it happens with the current episcopal croziers, in accordance with Estácio da Veiga's statement (1887) 'or simply to allow the suspension of light ornaments, like feathers, that were obviously not preserved' (Cardoso & Carreira, 2001/2002: 282). This last hypothesis is the only one that is not incompatible with the possibility of the item being held in the hand by the referred extremity.

From an iconographic point of view, the proximal end of the croziers, often plain, is separated from the handle, in some cases by herringbone or reticulated motifs, which might correspond to a vegetable braid that facilitated the handling of functional items, should they have existed. In other cases, it is filled with a decoration similar to the item's handle or with filled-in horizontal bands, according to the various examples illustrated in Fig. 6.

How croziers were actually handled was only fully known with the publication of an exemplar provided with an end knob, intended to increase safety when handling the implement: the piece from the dolmen 3 of Herdade das Antas, Montemor-o-Novo (Leisner, Leisner, 1959, Plt. 29, no. 26) (Fig. 6, no. 23). The position of this knob raises the problem of the orientation of the cutting movement. If the end knob faced forward, as in pre-dynastic axes, and also in modern machetes, to prevent the handle from slipping in the hand, then the cutting edge would correspond to the convex edge and not to the head of the crozier. In the light of this interpretation, the functional nature of these artefacts would be thus defined.

The handle.– This is the mesial area, the richest and most varied part of these items in iconographic

terms, featuring simple motifs organised in canonical patterns, which will be characterised further on.

The head.– the morphological individualization of the distal extremity is variable: evident and marked, in some cases, by a very closed internal curvature, in other cases this differentiation is indistinct because it corresponds to a slight inflection.

The morphology of the external curvature of the head is also an important element. Most items show a markedly convex edge, curved on itself, sometimes forming a somewhat oblique edge, which appears to be suitable for cutting. This evidence led Manuel Heleno, based on three exemplars, from Lapa da Galinha, Anta Grande (or Anta 2) of Lobeira de Baixo and Anta 1 (or Anta 4) of Gualões (Fig. 6, nos. 22 and 24; Fig. 7, no. 8; Fig. 8, no. 3; Fig. 10, no. 5) – which showed this progressive lateral inclination of the head – to consider croziers as representations of axes.

From this perspective, Manuel Heleno's appraisal of the Lapa da Galinha object is understandable, as this is the only known case with a vertical edge, forming the ending of the head, at a right angle with the handle, as found on present-day axes. This allowed Heleno to conclude that 'an important problem of our Archaeology' was thereby solved (Heleno, 1942: 463). In fact, Manuel Heleno also had a secondary objective, i.e. diminishing António Augusto Mendes Corrêa who first published this particular item, by then already fractured in two pieces, for not having realized that both pieces were part of the same object (Corrêa, 1928: 173, Fig. 9, 10). In our days, the Chalcolithic ivory piece from Perdigões shows, on one hand, the fragility of Manuel Heleno's theory about the typological evolution of croziers, since its head is similar to the Lapa da Galinha exemplar, regarded as the prototype of such pieces by Heleno. On the other hand, its similarity to a hafted axe is unquestionable, which means that the hypothesis formulated by this researcher still stands.

Actually, the three croziers ingeniously selected by Manuel Heleno for demonstrating his hypothesis (i.e. croziers as evolved representations of complete axes, and not just of their handles as Joseph Déchelette claimed) are conclusive in terms of what he aimed at demonstrating, and represent three main variations of the orientation and curvature of the head, an evolution that allegedly had a diachronic meaning.

Indeed, the explanation for the evolution of this item postulated by Manuel Heleno was based on

chronological grounds, with the exemplars that most closely resembled axes being the earliest croziers, from which 'the curved, staff-like forms derived' (Heleno, 1942: 463). However, there are three decisive limitations to this explanation, and therefore it cannot be accepted:

- firstly, the Lapa da Galinha as a unique item, thus lacking representativeness as a chronological marker;
- secondly, because it originates from a region located far from the area of highest concentration of these objects; thus, it could never be considered as corresponding to the primordial region from which croziers could have spread;
- thirdly, because the associated assemblage, still lacking a detailed publication but already known in its broad outlines (Sá, 1959), shows no evidence of corresponding to an earlier stage than the other known pieces.

Nevertheless, Manuel Heleno's interpretation, simple and suggestive, had the agreement of Georg and Vera Leisner at the time, who considered it, in face of the shortage of other arguments of comparative nature with different cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean, the most plausible hypothesis –although with reservations, and partly resorting to arguments similar to some of the aforementioned ones.

The existing analogies between croziers and the well-known votive limestone adzes, Chalcolithic artefacts limited to the Baixa Estremadura region (Leisner, Leisner, 1951: 136, 137), is a seemingly interesting line to explore. Indeed, these representations do reproduce the angled handle, originally made of wood, to which the lithic adze-head with a polished cutting-edge was horizontally fitted and attached with some type of cordage, equally represented. The inflection of the votive adzes' handles, along with the representation of the lithic blade, might correspond to the representation of the croziers' heads. This would explain their flattened shape, due to the limitations imposed by the raw material, which did not allow three-dimensional modelling, unlike the sub-crystalline limestones the votive adzes are made of.

4.– Plain croziers, decorated croziers

Regarding the decorated areas, the decoration of the handles often reaches the extremity of the croziers head, contrasting with the proximal end, which is often plain or features its own iconography. There are, however, rare

exceptions, such as the head of the piece from the dolmen to the south of Vale de Gato (Gonçalves, 2011, Fig. 3.8) and the Estria dolmen exemplar, which displays a transverse line separating the body from the head, both sectors being differentiated by distinct decorative patterns, on both decorated sides (Fig. 7, no. 6). On the small exemplar from Passo dolmen 1 (Reguengos de Monsaraz) (fig. 6, no. 5), the totally plain head also contrasts with the staff's body and, if its illustration could have raised justified doubts because the head is missing from the original drawing, its photo is quite conclusive. (Leisner, Leisner, 1951, Plt. 62, no. 2).

The Anta Grande do Olival da Pega dolmen yielded a small plain staff (Leisner, Leisner, 1951, Plt. 36, no. 5) (Fig. 6, no. 3; Fig. 12, no. 4); however, this does not seem to be an unfinished item, given the careful, complete polishing of both sides. Its outline is similar to the votive axe found at the Senhora da Luz caves, made on a greyish, fine-grained rock and totally polished, featuring a double, oblique convex edge (double axe) and a suspension notch at the proximal end (Fig. 7, no. 1) (Cardoso *et alii*, 1996, Fig. 36, no. 2). This item has no known parallels in Portuguese territory, only in the Eastern Mediterranean, as mentioned in due time, and may be a copy of an axe originating from this region.

Another plain exemplar was found at the Correio Mor cave (Cardoso, 2003, Fig. 32, no. 8). It was equally made on a greyish, fine-grained rock and features a distinctive concavity on the inner side of the head, framed by the curvilinear regularity of its profile (Fig. 7, no. 3). Moreover, it displays a particular feature, the existence of an outer ridge on one side of the "head".

A third plain exemplar was recovered from the Alcarapinha tomb (Fig. 6, no. 7); it is very similar to the Correio Mor exemplar, also showing a strong convexity of the head and a marked "sinus" on its internal ending.

The collective burial of El Pozuelo 3 (Huelva, Spain) (Fig. 7, no. 4) yielded a plain exemplar, used as a pendant, and another one, apparently only roughed-out, also of small dimensions, was recovered from tholos 17 of Los Millares (Fig. 7, no. 5). Several plain plaques are known in this region, as well as in Portugal. The existence of plain plaques –and also plain croziers– cannot be explained by the possibility of these specimens having been imported in this condition only to be finished at their respective sites of final use. In fact, there is a decorative background common to slate plaques –and also to croziers, as we shall see further on– which is transregional and thus irrespective of the region concerned (Lillios, 2008, Fig. 5.13).

However, this conclusion should be partially reconsidered in view of the recent identification of a specific group of slate plaques which, judging from their iconography, seems to be limited to the Estremadura region and neighbouring areas, represented by five items (Cardoso et alii, 2018), the only known exception being the fragment recovered from the Anta 1 do Passo dolmen (Reguengos de Monsaraz) (Leisner, Leisner, 1951, Plt. 21, no. 10).

It was therefore important to check whether the croziers known in Estremadura also reflected this reality.

5.– The three Atlantic pieces and their particularities

The three croziers originating from the region located between the Tagus River and the Ocean, already mentioned above, to which one fragment from Outeiro de São Mamede is dubiously added (Cardoso, Carreira, 2003, Fig. 71, no. 2), are all decorated on both sides, exactly as observed on the slate plaques mentioned above. We are referring to the exemplars from the Estria dolmen (Fig. 7, no. 6; Fig. 8, no. 2), the Casa da Moura cave (Fig. 7, no. 7; Fig. 8, no. 1) and the Lapa da Galinha cave (Fig. 7, no. 8; Fig. 8, no. 3). This indicates a very evident regional particularism, since outside this region only a single other item decorated on both sides was studied; this is a proximal fragment only (Fig. 6, no. 21), recovered from the Horta Velha do Reguengo dolmen, Elvas. We shall see further on that this characteristic occurs along some particular aspects, in terms of iconography.

The fact that nearly all croziers are decorated on one side only gives cause for thought, since, while this is understandable regarding the slate plaques, which would be laid on the chest of the buried individuals, the same might not be true in the case of this item, especially considering the theory according to which the putative originals would be symbols of power for public display (Gonçalves, 2011). Therefore, it would be expected that they would be decorated on both sides. As these are votive replicas, a full reproduction of the original objects would be only natural.

The explanation for this fact is that, if they were exclusively votive objects, with no functional equivalents, it would only be worth decorating the face that would be visible inside the sepulchre. In fact, Manuel Heleno reports that, at the dolmen 2 of Lobeira de Baixo, the crozier (Fig. 6, no. 22; Fig. 11, no. 2) was held by the deceased and rested on the chest. (Heleno, 1942, 462). Admitting that croziers were held in the right hand

by the buried individuals, then the croziers head would face outwards, as mentioned above, so that the decorated face would be visible, as could be expected.

6.– Decorative motifs

Estácio da Veiga (1887, 431) stated that, despite the small number of exemplars known at the time—only four - no item was exactly like another, an observation also valid for the slate plaques, on the basis of the 56 whole plaques and 23 fragments (op. cit., 430) he has studied. In view of this observation, he concludes: 'One must either admit that each design had a specific meaning, and in this case the number of symbologies was equal to all known designs, or this labour, with so many variations, should only be considered as a mere ornamental taste' (op. cit., p. 434 and 435). He consequently declared himself indifferent to counting 'the number of horizontal or oblique bands, of rows of triangles and other figures, and with all these symbols, properly counted and arranged, designate the rank, quality and other immunities of the characters entitled to wear such badges or insignia, when the only intention was to produce as many different patterns as possible' (op. cit., 435). These words are still fully up-to-date and correct, in contrast with a recent proposal, by no means original, which simply contradicted the opinion of this archaeologist, making full use of his idea, but in the opposite direction (Lillios, 2008). These considerations, which concern essentially the sub-rectangular plaques that constitute Estácio da Veiga's 1st group, ought to be checked in order to verify to what extent they may apply to croziers as well. Regarding the latter, several elementary motifs can be identified, organised in different decorative patterns that, as we shall see further on, followed pre-defined and canonically repeated models. Starting with the elementary motifs, we have singled out the following:

Wolf's teeth –often observed on the outer edge of some pieces, these motifs might be the representation of plumes attached to functional wooden objects, in case these ever existed. The embodiment of this idea is expressively illustrated by the indentations along the convex longitudinal edge of the exemplar from dolmen 4 of Herdade das Antas (Fig. 6, no. 23; Fig. 10, no. 4); this particularity, albeit limited to the head, was only observed on another item recovered from the dolmen to the west of Vale das Antas, so far only known through a poor-quality illustration (Ferreira, 1985, Fig. 4) (Fig. 10, no. 1).

Should croziers represent weapons, the triangles

might correspond to the lithic elements attached to the wooden handles, as previously mentioned.

Continuous longitudinal bands – partially or totally covering the croziers bodies up to the terminal curvature corresponding to their heads, or being rather limited in this part of the items, as can be seen in the exemplar from the dolmen 2 of Lobeira de Baixo (Fig. 6, no. 22; Fig. 11, no. 2).

Transverse bands of triangles –in this decorative pattern the base of the triangles defines successive lines transversal to the body of the "crozier", along its length; the head of some exemplars displays triangles, more or less elongated, with the opposite orientation, e.g. the exemplars from the Cabeça dolmen (Fig. 6, no. 10) and Martim Afonso (Fig. 6, no. 15; Fig. 10, no.2), which denotes a discrete differentiation in the graphic treatment of this part of the pieces in relation to their respective bodies, also observed in the fragmented "croziers" from Caeira 7 (Fig. 6, no. 21), the dolmen to the west of Vale das Antas (Ferreira, 1985, Fig. 4) (Fig. 10, no. 1) and the exemplar from the Couto dos Enxares dolmen, whose proximal half is also incomplete (Isidoro, 1966, Plt. 14). However, the majority of the items that are totally or almost totally decorated with this pattern do not display this arrangement, all the triangles being oriented with their apex towards the distal end of the piece, e.g. the exemplars from Boudanha (Fig. 6, no. 18), the Anta da Marquesa dolmen (Fig. 6, no. 26), the dolmen 2 of Loba (Gonçalves, Pereira & Andrade, 2005, p. 24), and one of the Monte da Barca exemplars (Vicente, Andrade & Dias, 1974, Plt. 12). Regarding the Herdade do Duque "crozier" (Pina, 1961, Fig. 9), due to the poor quality of the illustration it is only possible to state that the decoration consists of triangles arranged in successive transversal bands occupying the entire surface of the "crozier".

Longitudinal bands of triangles –in this case, the bases of the triangles define longitudinal lines that run along the body of the croziers, reaching the distal end of the items, e.g. the exemplar from the Anta 1 or Anta 4 of Gualões (Fig. 6, no. 24; Fig. 10, no. 5). Another piece recovered from the same dolmen, which has remained almost unpublished until now, since it was reproduced with poor quality and with no indication of its provenance (Ferreira, 1985, Fig. 4) (Fig. 10, no. 3), displays the same pattern of elementary triangles arranged longitudinally over the entire piece, except for the plain grip. The particularity of this item, also observed on the previous item, is the arrangement of the triangles between

ruled lines running along the entire length, creating four parallel bands; all the triangles are oriented with the apex pointing to the right side, as on the previous item.

Other geometrical motifs –Besides the two main groups already described, other motifs may exceptionally be observed. It is the case of the "chevron" motifs consisting of bands internally filled-in with alternating inclination and longitudinal development, observed on a single exemplar, from Monte da Barca (Fig. 7, no. 9).

This group also includes the two miniature from dolmen 1 of Passo (Fig. 6, nos. 5 and 6; Fig. 22, nos. 1 and 2), on which the triangles occupying the entire handle are arranged in horizontal bands, but in an inverted position compared to the other croziers bearing this decorative pattern, an arrangement also observed on the two decorated sides from the Lapa da Galinha cave (Fig. 7, no. 8; Fig. 8, no. 3).

The other two crozier of the Estremadura region also belong to this group. The Estria dolmen (Fig. 7, no. 6; Fig. 8, no. 2) shows the association of two geometric motifs on one of the sides: horizontal zigzags,, which have not been observed in any other exemplar, followed, on the upper half of the piece, by an alternating herringbone pattern, traced between longitudinal ruled lines; this pattern is comparable to an exemplar from the Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja dolmen (Fig. 6, no. 14; Fig. 12, no. 3). The other side of the Estria piece also shows the same decorative pattern, but arranged in horizontal bands, which become longitudinal bands on the croziers head; this is therefore a unique item, without any known parallels.

The exemplar from the Casa da Moura cave (Fig.7, no. 7; Fig. 8, no. 1) is similar to the previous one: while one of the sides displays a decoration quite common in the Alentejo region, consisting of continuous longitudinal bands along with an outer band of marginal triangles (wolf's teeth), the elementary motifs displayed on the other side –zigzags, triangles, continuous bands– form a heterogeneous and disorganised geometrical set, unparallelled by any other exemplar.

The only ivory piece known, from tomb 1 of the Perdigoões enclosure, (Valera, 2020), can be included in this group. As this is the only genuinely Chalcolithic crozier, it is natural that the decoration, limited to the mesial area of the piece body, as the head and proximal end are plain, should reflect the most common patterns in use during this period, which are actually similar to the decorated Chalcolithic ceramics from Estremadura (Fig. 9). Being exclusively geometric, this decoration consists

of an association of two fields filled-in with a reticulate pattern, separated by a space corresponding to a checkerboard motif consisting of a square subdivided into four internally filled-in triangles, which, as a whole, has no parallel in any other known piece.

There are also fragments corresponding to only one of the parts of a crook, which do not provide a clear perception of the organization of the displayed decorative motifs, e.g. the fragment from the south dolmen of Vale de Gato (Coruche), photographed without scale (Gonçalves, 2011, Fig. 3.8), whose head shows internally

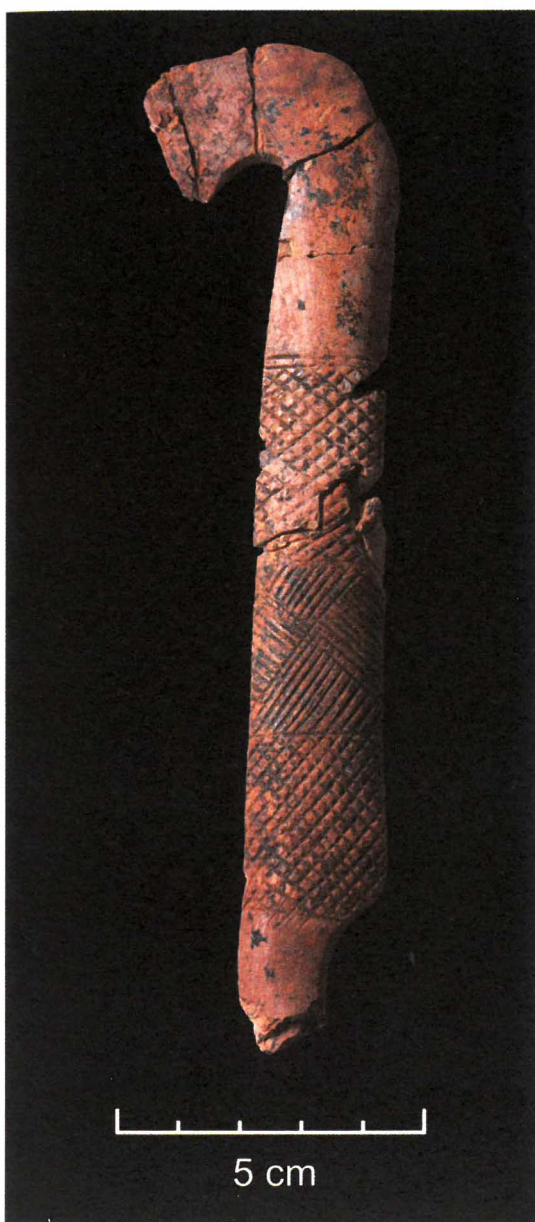


Fig. 9. Ivory crozier from Monument 2 of Perdígões. Photograph Programa Global de Investigação Arqueológica dos Perdígões/Era Arqueologia

filled-in bands similar to those observed on an incomplete miniature exemplar from dolmen 1 of Passo (Fig. 1, no. 6; Fig. 12, no. 1).

7.– A proposal for the classification of “croziers” based on iconography

Having identified the main elementary decorative motifs, it is now important to see how they combine to form more or less complex patterns, which led to the iconographic classification presented below.

The clear importance attributed to triangles in the decoration of this pieces, is quite evident, and there are very few exemplars that do not display triangles in one way or another, e.g. one of the case from Monte da Barca (Fig. 7, no. 9). Actually, triangles are also very common in the decorative grammar of slate plaques, underlining the aforementioned proximity between both groups of artefacts.

K. Lillios (2008, 135) had already pointed out this fact, mentioning that croziers in which such decorations are exclusive or almost exclusive, have a different geographical distribution than those featuring predominantly longitudinal bands, the latter being limited to a narrow territorial strip, NW-SE oriented, reaching Estremadura and represented by the plaque from the Casa da Moura cave (Lillios, 2008., Fig. 4.15).

The deeper study of this situation led to a proposed classification of the croziers according to their decorative motifs:

Group 1 (Fig. 10).– Pieces exclusively or almost exclusively displaying triangles arranged in longitudinal or transversal bands: this group includes nine objects illustrated in Fig. 6, nos. 9, 10, 15, 16, 18, 19, 23, 24 and 26, as well as all the items illustrated in Fig. 10, along with the exemplar from dolmen 2 of Loba (Évora) (Gonçalves, Pereira & Andrade, 2005, Fig. 25), one of the four exemplars from Monte da Barca (Coruche) (Vicente et alii 1974 Pl. 12) and the exemplar from the Herdade do Duque dolmen (Pina, 1961, Fig. 9).

Group 2 (Fig. 11).– Pieces displaying longitudinal bands running along most, if not all, of the items' length. As a rule, this motif is associated with 'wolf's teeth', which extend along the outer edge of the objects, but there may be some exceptions, e.g. the proximal fragment from Monte da Barca (Gonçalves, 2011, Fig. 3.3), which appears to be exclusively decorated with parallel longitudinal bands.



Fig. 10. Decorated pieces on one side, with the head oriented towards the left. Type 1. 1 - Anta a Oeste do Vale das Antas. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 2006.236.3). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021; 2 - Martim Afonso. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 997.73.5). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021; 3 - Anta 4 dos Gualões. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 2006.19.5). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021; 4 - Anta 4 da Herdade das Antas. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 989.28.1). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by António Ventura; 5 - Anta 1 ou Anta 4 dos Gualões. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 200619.4). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021

It is significant that the triangles defining the outer edge above referred to, i.e. the wolf's teeth, are only exceptionally observed along the inner edge, e.g. another crozier from Monte da Barca (Coruche) (Vicente *et alii*, 1974, Pl. 13, no. 1). The respective internal filling is always executed in the same way, in the form of triangles with the apex facing the inside of the piece, excepting a single studied exemplar (Fig. 6, no. 17). This fact cannot be a mere coincidence, as can be seen from the examples illustrated in Fig. 6, nos. 1, 3, 4, 8, 11, 13, 16, 22 and 25, as well as in Fig. 11. Thus, the existence of a systematically

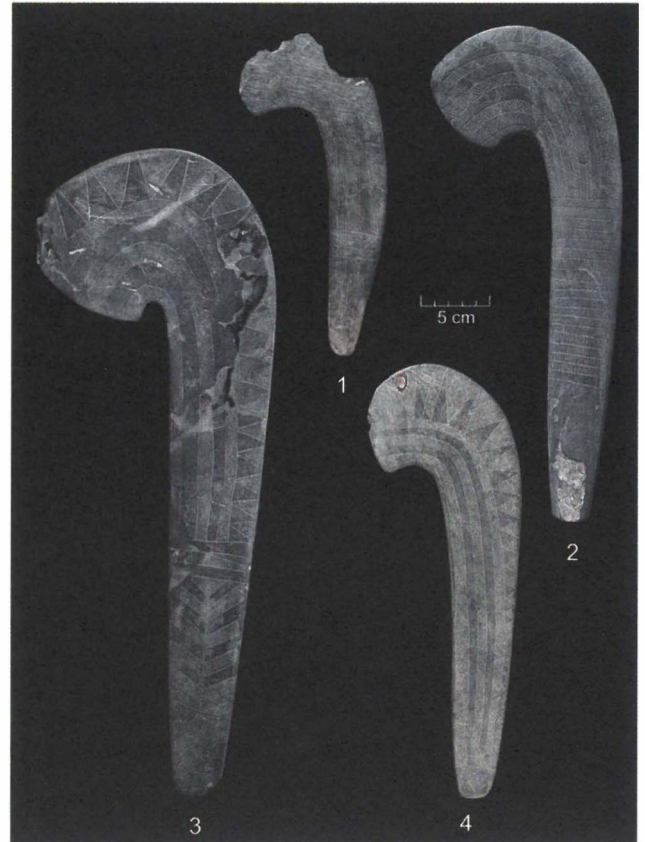


Fig. 11. Decorated pieces on one side, with the head oriented towards the left. Type 2. 1 - Anta Grande do Olival da Pega. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (n. Inv. 985.45.2). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021; 2 - Anta 2 da Lobeira de Baixo. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 989.28.1). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by António Ventura; 3 - Anta 3 da Herdade das Antas. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (no. Inv.2004.181.1). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021; 4 - Anta 6 de Brissos. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 995.45.66). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021

adopted set of canonical rules regarding the decoration of these pieces should be admitted.

Group 3 (Fig. 12) – Pieces decorated with chevrons or herringbone motifs. Only one of the exemplars from Monte da Barca (Coruche) is entirely decorated with chevrons, traced between ruled lines, with the exception of the grip, which is missing (Vicente *et alii*, 1974, Fig. 13, no. 2);

Chevrons can also be arranged longitudinally or transversally, traced between ruled lines, which run along the entire length of the few known exemplars,

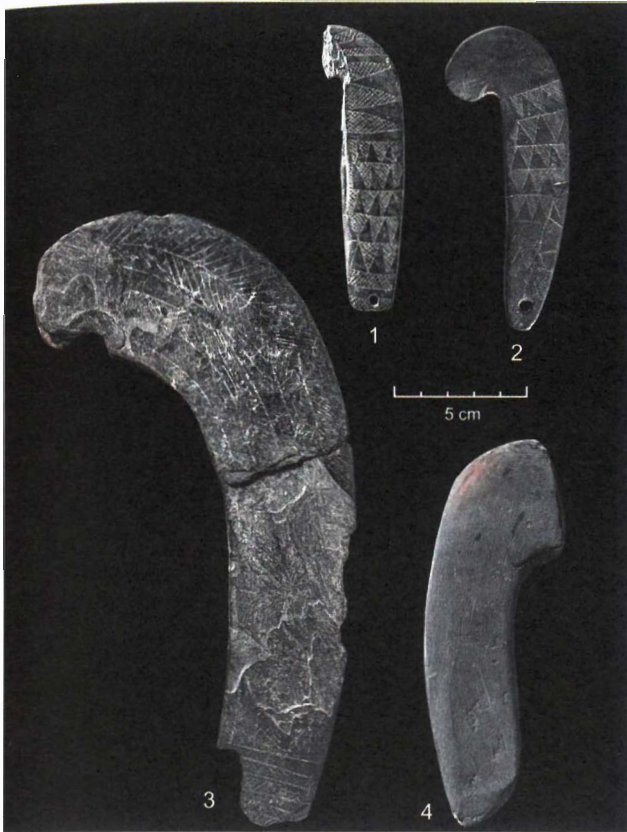


Fig. 12. Decorated pieces on one side, with the head oriented towards the left. Type 3. 1 - Anta 1 do Passo. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 989.26.46). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021; 2 - Anta 1 do Passo. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 989.26.47). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021; 3 - Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 985.51.88). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021; 4 - Anta 1 do Olival da Pega. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (No. Inv. 985.45.3). Direcção-Geral do Património Cultural. Photograph by José Paulo Ruas, 2021

in which case the decoration is referred to as 'herringbone', e.g. one of the exemplars from the Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja dolmen (Fig. 6, no. 14; Fig. 12, no. 3) and from the Estria dolmen (Fig. 2, no. 6; Fig. 8, no. 2). The other side of this crook shows a hybrid decoration: while its distal half is decorated with a traced longitudinal herringbone motif, very similar to the one from the Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja dolmen, the proximal half is entirely decorated with transversal zigzags, which have no equivalent in any other example, although they are well represented on the slate plaques. The exotic nature of this deco-

orative association is replicated on another of the three Estremadura croziers, from the Casa da Moura cave. Indeed, while one side displays a canonical decoration clearly attributable to Group 2, the other side displays a variety of decorative motifs whose association is equally unique: from the well-represented marginal 'wolf's teeth', typical of Group 2, to triangles with different orientations on the central part of the decorated area, followed by zigzag lines and curvilinear bands, in a rather incoherent amalgam which emphasises the particular character of the decorations of Estremadura croziers.

The third exemplar known from this region, recovered from the Lapa da Galinha cave (Heleno, 1942, Figs. 4 and 5) (Fig. 7, no. 8; Fig. 8, no. 3) is in line with the previously mentioned ones. Besides its shape, which is unique, the decoration is also unparalleled: unlike the items that usually display an exclusive or almost exclusive decoration of internally filled-in triangles, with their apex invariably oriented towards the distal end, in this particular item the triangles are oriented in the opposite direction.

Thus, it can be concluded that, both due to their decoration and to the fact that the three westernmost exemplars are decorated on both sides, they represent a group with its own regional significance among all the known croziers.

8.- Pieces with unfinished decorations

This particularity was only observed in the Casa da Moura cave exemplar (Fig. 7, no. 7; Fig. 8, no. 1), on which one of the surfaces displays a decoration with the aforementioned particularities, and thus clearly unfinished, as many of the triangles were not filled-in, the same also applying to other parts of the composition. This evidence suggests that this item would have been imported into the burial cave where it was deposited, from the Alto Alentejo region where other examples of this type occur. One side was decorated at the source whereas the opposite side was decorated locally with the previously mentioned non-canonical motifs. However, the latter was not completed prior to the deposition at the cave. Another particularity of this item is the existence of three basal perforations, whose function has already been discussed above, and which constitute an equally unique particularity, underlining its exceptional character among this type of objects.

9.– Dimensions

The largest crook known to date is probably the exemplar recovered from the Anta Grande do Olival da Pega dolmen, albeit only the head was preserved (Leisner, Leisner, 1951, 135, Pl. 36, no. 2); consequently it is not possible to assess its maximum length, which should certainly exceed 50 cm (Fig. 6, no. 1). The smaller one is a cut-out and plain bone plate, with a maximum length of 4 cm, recovered from the Cova da Moura cave (Spindler, 1981, Plt. 23, no. 358) (Fig. 7, no. 2).

10.– Pieces used as pendants

The presence of schist exemplars with a perforation on the proximal end is comparable to that of the small fibrolite votive axes, which have been found at a number of funerary and habitational sites in Portugal, dating from between Early Neolithic and Final Chalcolithic (Cardoso, 2019).

These are small schist croziers with a hole on the proximal end, enabling their use as pendants and retaining the symbolic charge of the original object, like the small perforated adzes or axes, which would have a comparable apotropaic value. Supposing that “croziers” could embody the vivifying and regenerating force, the small pieces would naturally hold such functions, with an apotropaic and protective character, when used as pendants, as suggested by the presence of holes at one of the extremities.

The two decorated items recovered from dolmen 1 of Passo feature suspension holes at their proximal

ends, just like some small votive axes (Fig. 6, nos. 5 e 6; Fig. 12, nos. 1 and 2); the plain head of one of these pieces resembles the totally undecorated exemplar from the Alcarapinha grave (Fig. 6, no. 7) and also the exemplar from the Correio Mor cave (Fig. 7, no. 3). The iconography of these two decorated items does not quite match the larger exemplars. Indeed, in both cases the body is decorated with filled-in triangles with the apex oriented towards the proximal end, contrary to what is usual in larger objects, in which the apex of the triangles is oriented towards the item’s head. In these two cases, one of the heads is plain (Fig. 6, no. 5) and the other, albeit incomplete, seems to have been decorated with parallel bands (Fig. 6, no. 6; Fig. 12, no. 1). Such differences underline the particular nature of these items, which is also denoted by their size and inherent functions, although they are always associated with funerary environments.

Alongside the small croziers mentioned above, which can be interpreted as pendants, there is a larger exemplar from the El Pozuelo burial (Huelva, Spain) (Leisner, Leisner, 1959, Pl. 48, 3), ca. 18 cm long, which also has a hole at the proximal end and was possibly used in a similar way (Fig. 7, no. 4).

11.– Pieces recycled from slate plaques

An item recovered from the Lapa do Fumo cave (Sesimbra) (Cardoso, Vilaça, 2020, Fig. 3, top) represents this category. This piece resulted from the reuse of a slate plaque, as its discontinuous decoration clearly indi-

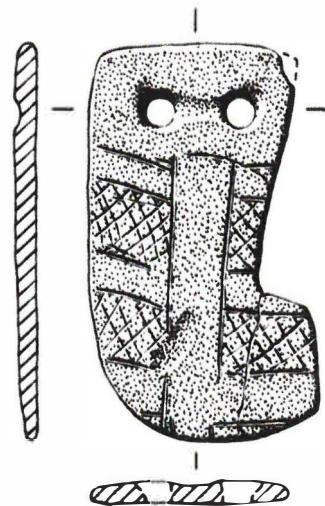
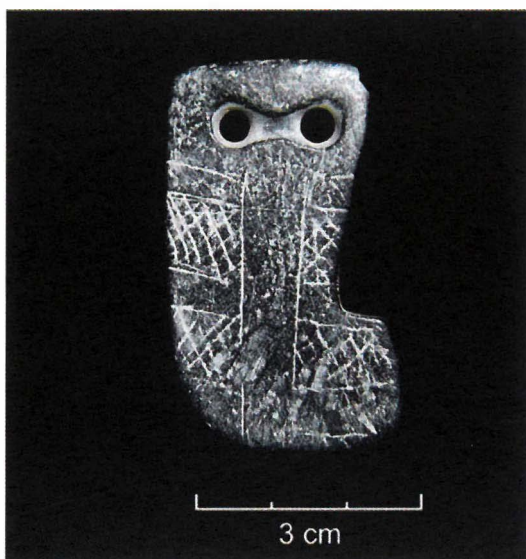


Fig. 13. Recycle pieces from a slate plaque. Lapa do Fumo. Museu Municipal de Arqueologia de Sesimbra. Photograph by J. L. Cardoso; drawing by F. Martins

cates (Fig. 13). It is probable that the contour of the plaque fragment, somewhat roughly shaped as a crook was adapted to the head of a plaque with two nearly adjacent perforations and an originally vertical axis of symmetry represented by the "nose", not unlike two plaques from Alcarapinha (Leisner , Leisner, 1951, Fig. 2, e; Leisner, Leisner, 1959, Pl. 11, no. 9). This is therefore a particularly interesting item, which reinforces the close correlation between slate plaques and croziers.

12.- Final remarks

The present essay focused on the study of lithic, ivory or bone *contour découpé* (outline cut out) artefacts, usually referred to as croziers. Thus, the rock art representations, both engravings and paintings, were only referred to as comparative elements related to the central theme of this study, since all of them are certainly part of the cognitive universe of the agro-pastoral populations that inhabited Estremadura and the south of the Portuguese territory, in Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic times. The representations displayed on vessels with low carinations, recovered from dolmens of the Alto-Alentejo region, can also be added to the above mentioned examples. In some cases the reference to the crozier is achieved by means of punctiform impressions made with a matrix on the fresh paste, e.g. an exemplar from the dolmen to the west of the Estrada de Montemor (Gonçalves, 2011, Fig. 3.9); in other cases, much more expressive, it is made in bas-relief, modelled in clay, creating two symmetrical representations turned to opposite sides, e.g. the exemplar recovered from the Chapelar dolmen, on the border between the municipalities of Montemor-o-Novo and Coruche (Gonçalves, 2011, Fig. 3.9, bottom); and on two other carinated vessels from the Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja dolmen (Montemor-o-Novo) (Leisner , Leisner, 1959, Pl. 26, no.36) and dolmen 7 of Caeira (Arraiolos) (Leisner , Leisner, 1959, Pl.30, no. 14) (Fig. 14). The allusion to croziers may be related to the ceremonial and funerary use of this type of vessels.

Throughout this essay, several interpretations have been outlined, which have been put forward over the last 140 years on the subject of these still enigmatic objects referred to as croziers, due to the formal similarity with the contemporary objects called croziers.

From all the above, we would highlight the following considerations, whose critical presentation concludes this essay:

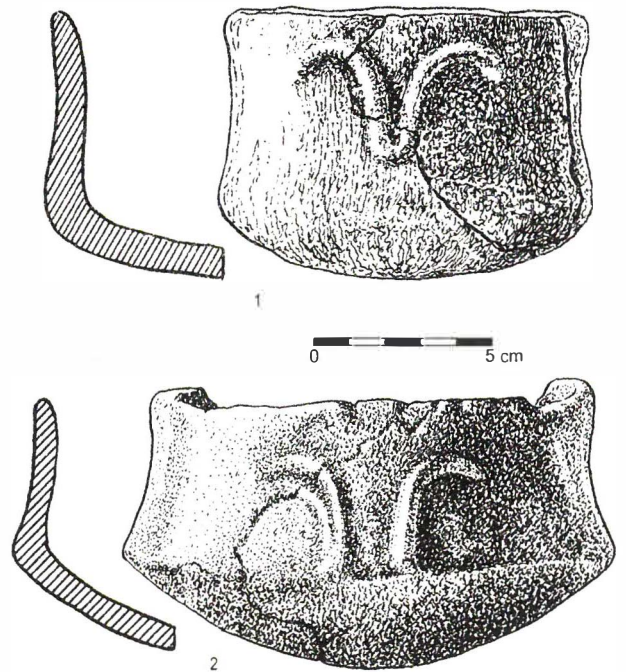


Fig. 14. Vessels showing bas-relief representations of croziers 1 - Anta Grande da Comenda da Igreja. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (N.º Inv. 985.51.784) (Leisner & Leisner, 1959, Plt. 26, n.º 36); 2 - Anta 7 da Herdade da Caeira. Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (N.º Inv. 995.6.39) (Leisner & Leisner, 1959, Plt., 30, 1)

1.- The incised, sculptured, painted or *contour découpé*



Fig. 15. Menhir 57 of the Cromeleque dos Almendres (Gomes, 1994, Fig. 11)

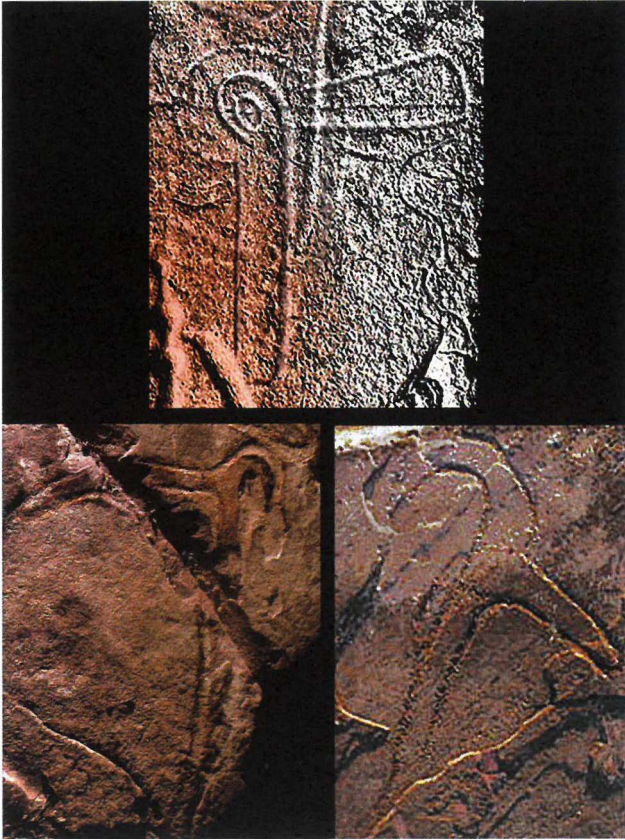


Fig. 16. Axes engraved on the orthostats of Iberian dolmens; in formal terms, the handles correspond to representations of croziers 1 – Dólmen de Soto; 2 – Dólmen de Alberite II (Barroso-Bermejo et al., 2021, Fig. 5.3, adapted)

croziers are representations associated with life, always reaffirmed, as one can conclude from the remarkable association displayed on a petroglyph from the Tejo rock art site of São Simão (Nisa), where the sun rays, radiating in all directions, are shaped like croziers (Gomes, 2003, Fig. 184 F). We would further highlight a number of other, also extraordinarily expressive representations, such as the upper part of menhir 57 of the Alendres cromlech (Évora), where the rock surface is totally occupied by this pieces (Gomes, 1994, Fig. 15), recalling the famous headstone of the Table des Marchands dolmen (Péquart *et alii*, 1927, Pl. 39, 40) (Fig. 15). Regarding the megalithic art of Brittany, it is important to stress that croziers and representations of hafted axes are displayed side by side, suggesting the coexistence of two distinct artefacts. The same situation can be observed in the Iberian territory, e.g. on the Monte da Ribeira stela-menhir (Reguengos de Monsaraz),

besides the rare representations of axes, like the one displayed on a clay loom-weight from the Chalcolithic settlement of Outeiro de São Mamede (Bombarral).

2.– The crook's connotation with life is compatible with its presence in the form of lithic (schist) elements, in exclusively funerary contexts. Such occurrences have usually been explained by assuming that they represent votive replicas of originally wooden artefacts, symbols of authority, or of spiritual power, or both, being thus used only by a few members of the communities, which would explain their rarity when compared to slate plaques. Yet, this interpretation has a drawback, since, if this were the case, one would expect to find croziers associated to the characters that would have actually wielded them on some rock art engravings or paintings of semi-naturalistic or semi-schematic style, which is not the case. On the other hand, the exuberant rock art representations of this objects, like the aforementioned ones, suggest an piece with an intrinsic value, because it was linked to an intangible concept, with which it was univocally identified by the whole community. As such, the idea that these votive pieces reproduced prototypes used by the living would no longer make sense. They would instead be symbols of life, a reality that is well suited to their exclusively funerary association. The same applies to slate plaques, always associated with the funerary world, and therefore having no counterparts in any artefacts belonging to the world of the living. This is attested by the importance of reused fragments of slate plaques occurring at settlements both in Estremadura and in southwest Iberia (Cardoso, Vilaça, 2020). These plaques thus continued to hold an important symbolic charge, probably related to the cult of the ancestors to which such objects were primitively associated. Interestingly, one of these reuses resulted in a small crozier, retaining the suspension holes of the original slate plaque, recovered from the Lapa do Fumo cave (Sesimbra).

3.– The connotation of croziers with the cult of the axe was hypothesised for the first time by Joseph Déchelette, who admitted that this items represented axe handles, with evident analogies to the handles of the limestone votive adzes, from the Chalcolithic period and only ever found in Portuguese Estremadura. Thus, the crook could be understood as an equivalent representation, albeit older, made

- on schist, which did not support the three-dimensional possibilities provided by limestone. Manuel Heleno, based on the exemplar recovered from the Lapa da Galinha cave, acknowledged that this hypothesis had been proved, given the close resemblance between the said item and the outline of an axe. This view was favourably assessed at the time, especially by Georg and Vera Leisner, and followers such as O. da Veiga Ferreira (1985). This hypothesis gains added credibility now, because both representations, in the form of rock art carvings, coexisted in time and often on the same megalithic monuments. Moreover, a good number of axe carvings from Breton and Peninsular dolmen orthostats, with the terminal part of the handle turned backwards, show obvious analogies with shepherds' croziers (Fig. 16).
- 4.– In the meantime, a proposed connotation with an offensive weapon was presented in 1981 by O. da Veiga Ferreira and Manuel Leitão, and subsequently enhanced by Dirk Brandherm (1995). The functional part of the piece would not be the lateral edge of the distal end - as it should be if croziers were to be associated with the functional representation of an axe - but its outer edge. It was therefore a machete, an idea that was reinforced by the fact that two exemplars displayed, along the entire length of the outer edge, a serrated decoration consisting of triangles, which would represent the flint blades attached to the original wooden blanks. This hypothesis would explain the fact that one of these exemplars, the most remarkable recovered to date, originating from the Herdade das Antas dolmen (Montemor-o-Novo), features an end knob on the handle, whose orientation is consistent with such a functional interpretation. On the other hand, according to Manuel Heleno the exemplar from the Anta 2 da Lobeira de Baixo dolmen was found lying on the sternum of the deceased, which would explain why all croziers (with the exception of those recovered in Estremadura) are decorated on one side only, just like most slate plaques. Bearing in mind the hypothesis that these items were held in the right hand of the buried individuals, so that the decorated side would always be visible, the working edge would necessarily be the convex longitudinal edge and not to the staff's head. This would therefore be consistent with the functional interpretation as machetes but not as axes. Thus, as it would have been a weapon of great efficacy, to which prestige and power would be inherent, it could only be wielded by some people, which would explain its rarity, when compared to the slate plaques, among the deceased belonging to the communities buried in the collective graves.
- 5.– Concerning the formal characteristics, the continuities observed in the relation between shape and iconography are evident: on all the head of the decorated side is always oriented to the left, which undoubtedly results from the way they were held, in the right hand of the inhumed individuals.
- 6.– Only three complete items feature both sides completely decorated - the piece from the Lapa da Galinha cave (Alcanena), the Casa da Moura cave (Óbidos) and the Estria dolmen (Sintra). The evident regionalism of this feature is paralleled by the existence of a particular group of slate plaques, with a similar geographical distribution (Cardoso *et alii*, 2019), displaying a specific decoration on both sides as well. The decorations shown by the three aforementioned croziers have obvious particularities, suggestive of the possibility that these are interpretations with a more or less marked regional nature, perhaps produced on undecorated blanks imported from the Alentejo region. This hypothesis is nuanced by the evidence found on the object from the Casa da Moura cave: while one of its sides displays a canonical decoration, common to some Alentejo croziers, indicating that it was imported already decorated, the other side shows an exotic, clearly unfinished decorative arrangement, and everything indicates that it was produced locally.
- 7.– The previously mentioned regularity in the selection of the decorated side is also underlined by the arrangement of the elementary decorative motifs, organized in regular and repeatedly observed patterns. It was thus possible to confirm the existence of two well-defined groups, identified by Katina Lillios (2008), in which almost all of the existing croziers can be included. A third group includes the few specimens whose decorations do not fit into the previous two groups, among which the only exemplar that is certainly Chalcolithic, recovered from tomb 1 of the Perdigões enclosure. It is made of ivory and its geometric decorations are similar to the decorative patterns of Chalcolithic ceramics from Estremadura and totally

different from the decorations displayed by the schist pieces, dating from a previous period.

The plain versions are also to be considered. The completely polished schist exemplar from Olival de Pega dolmen stands out, possessing a remarkable similarity to the votive double axe, of evident oriental inspiration, recovered from one of the Senhora da Luz caves. And we would mention yet another, incomplete one, totally polished and with a projecting external edge, from the Correio Mor cave. Both are clearly smaller than the decorated croziers. Moreover, two entirely plain items, with suspension holes, were identified as amulets and were used as pieces of apotropaic nature not unlike the perforated miniature fibrolite axe or adze from the Late Neolithic settlement of Carrascal (Oeiras) (Cardoso, 2011, 50).

- 8.– Given the geographical distribution of lithic croziers, the conclusion to be drawn is that they occur over a much more limited geographical area than their rock art counterparts, since only two cases are known in Spain, both found in collective graves, one from El Pozuelo (Huelva), corresponding to a plain pendant, and the other from Los Millares 17, also plain, and apparently unfinished, this being the second surely Chalcolithic known exemplar, besides the aforementioned ivory exemplar from Perdigões. This is indeed a production clearly associated with the megalithism of the western Iberian Peninsula, just like the vast majority of decorated slate plaques. The scarce pieces known in Portuguese Estremadura can be explained by commercial exchanges of raw materials, namely flint from Estremadura traded for Alentejo amphibolite and later on for copper (Cardoso, 2019), which soon led to the adoption of cultural practices by osmosis between these two regions, which explains the presence of some (scarce) croziers in the former region, along with a larger number of decorated slate plaques.

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