



MESO-NEOLITHIC HUNTER-GATHERER MOBILITY PATTERNS

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Authors: Joaquina Soares¹, Ana Catarina Sousa²

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Abstract

The mobility patterns of hunter-fisher-gatherers and first farmers/pastoralists are a major focus of this session. Overall, this theme articulates the study of diet, demography, social organization, interaction networks, technological knowledge transfers, which can provide insights on resource and territory ownership, cultural change process by autonomous development and/or by external acquisitions either through indirect fluxes or contacts.

The great variability of hunter-gatherer life styles, environmental adaptations and integration or rejection of Neolithic innovations can be discussed through the perspective of mobility patterns. From the “nomadic style” adapted to areas with scattered or almost no reliable resources (Binford, 1980), to semi-sedentary and affluent groups living in high productive environments, practicing foodstorage, as observed in the Tagus and Sado estuaries in Central and Southern Portugal (Soares, 2016), in fact there was a large scope of organizational possibilities for collector, delayed-return societies (Woodburn, 1980).

We assume a special interest in interactions through waterways, where mobility by boats and canoes (Rowley-Conwy and Piper, 2016) could ensure a faster and enlarged access to a huge variety of food, raw materials and contacts. In these ecosystems, fishing, shellfish gathering, seafaring could play important roles. The raw materials exploitation strategy is also indicative of the mobility of the first peasant communities, evident in several case studies (Gonçalves and Sousa, 2018).

Stable isotope analysis and archaeogenetic studies are powerful tools to answer questions about the mobility strategies and they allow the dismiss of rigid, unidirectional and diffusionist models of neolitization. In what concerns the Iberian Peninsula, there was an uneven distribution of Neolithic immigrants, with a maximum influx in the Northeast and a strong persistence of hunter-gatherer

mtDNA haplogroups in the middle Ebro valley and in the Southwest (Szécsényi-Nagy, 2017; Olalde *et al*, 2019), supporting the idea of a diverse neolithization process. In these regions, genetic data is in accordance with the archaeological record that revealed the important protagonism played by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers (Montes and Alday, 2012; Soares and Tavares da Silva, 2018; Soares, Mazzucco and Clemente-Conte, 2016). Although the advanced studies in neolithization process are becoming more widely discussed, further research as well as the enlargement of debates are necessary, both on scientific archaeology and archaeological sciences (archaeometry), to attain a better knowledge of the Past and a better commitment to our contemporaneity.

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1 MAEDS- Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography of the District of Setúbal/AMRS; UNIARQ-Archaeological Centre of the University of Lisbon. joaquinasoares1@gmail.com

2 UNIARQ-Archaeological Centre of the University of Lisbon. sousa@campus.ul.pt