

António Carlos Valera (Ed.)

FRAGMENTATION AND DEPOSITIONS

IN PRE AND PROTO-HISTORIC PORTUGAL

(LISBON, 14 OCTOBER 2017)



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CHAPTER 5

FRAGMENTATION AND ARCHITECTURE. CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE ON THE “FILL” OF NEGATIVE STRUCTURES IN BAIXO ALENTEJO’S LATE PREHISTORY.

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Abstract

This paper discusses the fill of negative structures in Baixo Alentejo’s late prehistory. These fills tended to be classified as burial, storage and rubbish contexts, associating the use of the structures to well-define social scenarios. Although this approach has let us understand the plurality of uses under which the structures were constructed, used and abandoned, it has overshadowed the ambiguity of some of the contexts. Regarding this, the remarkable presence of deposition contexts should be noted, as also should be noted that several depositions are made with fragments and parts of objects. Social fragmentation practices are a strategy to reconfigure the social arena, so the emphasis on fragments and fragmentation processes may then help us to redesign our view on this architecture tradition. Considering this, we focus on how fragments participate in the infill of the structures and how they might be a clue revealing temporal and spatial unities which, initially, were unimaginable. We show how fragments can be used to: define filling deposits of structures; revise filling sequences; and establish links between different structures. We present two examples from different sites to illustrate our reasoning. The examples demonstrate how the study of fragmentation may take us to see temporal and spatial dynamics different from those suggested by the classification of the fills as burial, storage and rubbish contexts. Following the links of the fragments may not help us to construct well-defined social scenarios, however those links do enable us to appreciate the strangeness of past communities’ temporal and spatial dynamics.

Keywords: Late prehistory; Baixo Alentejo; Negative architecture; Fragmentation; Temporal and spatial dynamics

1. Introduction

Recently, “a late prehistoric world in negative” (Valera *et al.* 2014) has been discovered in Baixo Alentejo as a result of several infrastructure projects. This “world” is composed of different negative structures (pits and hypogea, for example) which are distributed in clusters along small hills. In interpreting the social dimension of these sites, the analysis has tended to order the structures by defining their function according to the nature of their fills’ (e.g. Alves *et al.* 2014a; 2014b; Antunes *et al.* 2012; Santos *et al.* 2009). In doing so, studies are oriented towards the recognition of burial, storage and rubbish contexts. The focus on these “well-defined” archaeological contexts enables the structures to be linked to specific ritual and domestic dynamics, showing how this architectural tradition was a stage within different social scenarios. Although this approach has let us understand the plurality of uses under which the structures were constructed, used and abandoned, it has overshadowed the ambiguity of some of the contexts. Regarding this, the remarkable presence of deposition contexts should be noted (e.g. Valera *et al.* 2014; Baptista & Gomes 2013; Gomes & Baptista 2017) suggesting different social dynamics to the ones above-mentioned. Additionally, it should also be emphasized that several of those depositions are made with fragments or parts of objects connecting these structures to the practices of fragmentation in prehistory (e.g. Chapman 2000; Chapman & Gaydarska 2007). These contexts, by bringing together elements from different social dynamics, remind us that by insisting on ordering the depositions according to a function of the structure we may lose some aspects of its variability and social dimension; and the complexity under which its fills were produced.

The study of fragmentation entails an analysis of the life cycle of things, contributing to discussions of how deliberate fragmentation participates in the recreation of the social conditions of humans and non-humans (see Chapman *ibid.*; Chapman & Gaydarska *ibid.*). Fragmenting and distributing things are practices participating in and shaping the intra and inter-communities’ dynamics. The circulation of a fragment, as the circulation of any other social agent, contributes to the maintenance and transformation of social order (*ibid.*; *ibid.*; and also, Appadurai 1988). A fragment evokes time and space creating a tension which may reconfigure the imagery of the social arena; it activates memory (e.g. Bradley 2003a; Connerton 1989; Lillios 2003; Meskel 2003) and changes the limits and possibilities for action (Barrett 1994a, 1994b). The fragments in the negative structures we are presenting in this paper may be the evidences of social dynamics that would be overshadowed by an enquiry more oriented towards the identification of domestic or ritual activities. The focus on the fragments allows us to envision a different rationality to such a “well-defined dichotomy” (e.g. Bradley 2003b, 2005; Bruck 2001). Given the potential of a fragment to reconfigure the social arena, the emphasis on fragments and fragmentation processes may then help us to redesign our view on this architecture tradition.

In order to contribute to the understanding of Baixo Alentejo’s “world in negative” during late prehistory, this paper discusses how the study of fragments of artefacts and human bones can contribute to a discussion of the temporal and spatial dynamics of the infill processes of structures. By focusing on the results of 129 archaeological interventions developed by the team of Arqueologia e Património Lda. (Figures 1 and 2) in EDIA, S.A. infrastructure projects (e.g. Baptista 2010, 2013; Baptista & Gomes 2013; Gomes & Baptista 2017), we selected six contexts which show how the study of fragmentation reveals that the structure fills activate different temporal and spatial unities which, initially, were unimaginable. During the excavation, our concern was to translate the infilling of the structures into a linear temporal sequence (the Harris Matrix), privileging the individualization of fills and their stratigraphic relationships. Although these linear sequences were important in managing the digging and recording processes, and for understanding the infilling of the structures, they are just one perspective on the complex temporalities under which these infilling/construction practices took place. In paying attention to fragments (i.e., how the fragments were produced and how they were integrated within the fills), our goal is to add other temporal dynamics to the infilling of the structures. In so doing, we aim to contribute to grasping the temporal and spatial complexity of this architectural tradition.

The selected contexts come from four sites: Vale de Éguas 3, Monte Marquês 15, Horta do Jacinto and Montinhos 6. The archaeological intervention in Montinhos 6 was initiated by the

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construction of a reservoir allowing the investigation of two small hills, in which were identified more than two hundred structures distributed in several groups. In Monte do Marquês 15, a pipeline project crossed a small hill revealing a cluster of almost thirty structures in its crown.

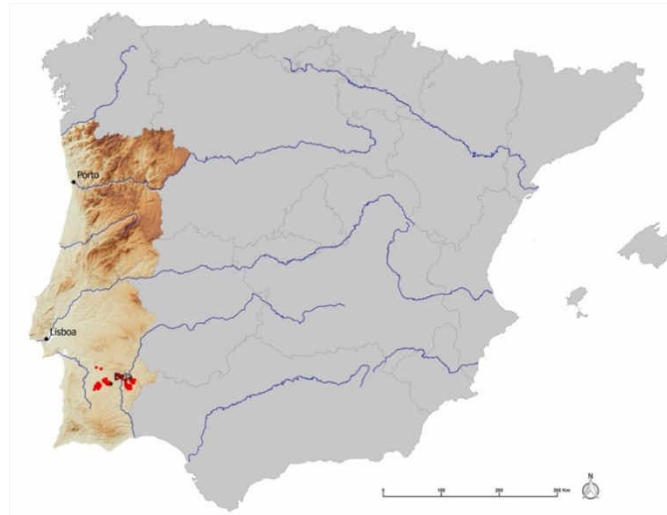


Figure 1 – Location of the sites on the Iberian Peninsula.

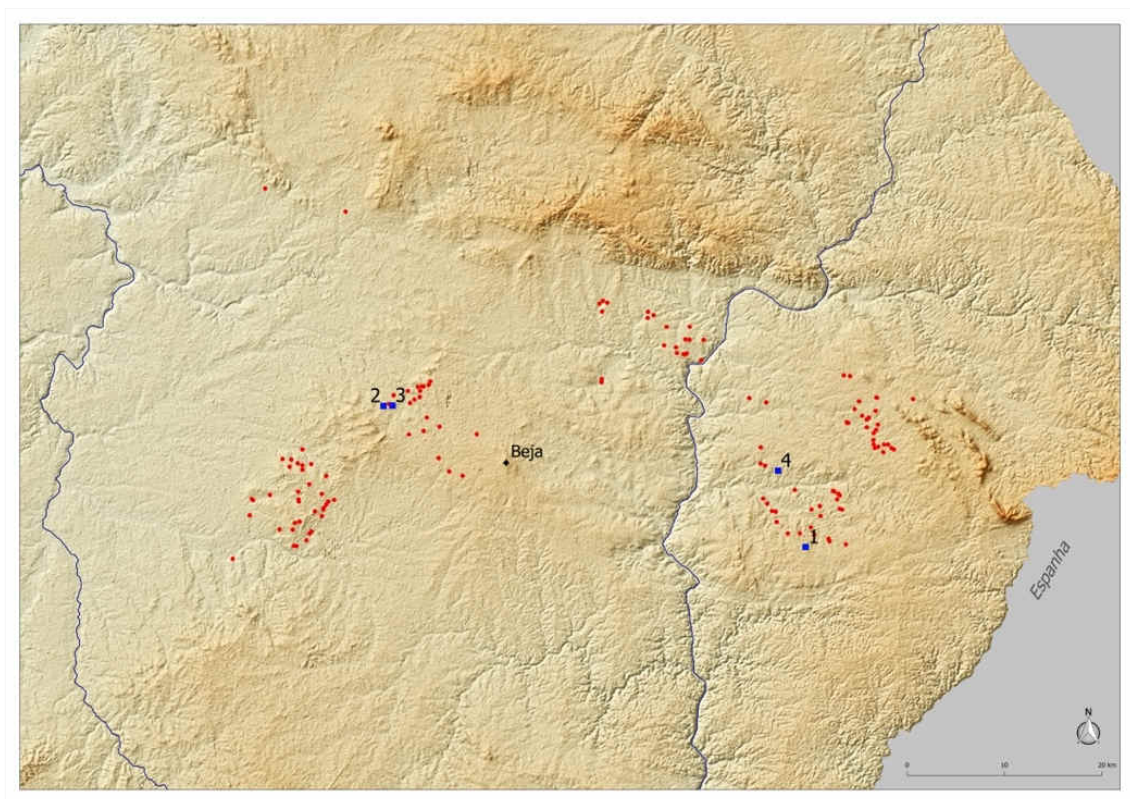


Figure 2 - Location of the 129 sites with negative architecture excavated by Arqueologia & Património Lda. The blue squares correspond to the sites presented in the text: 1 – Vale de Éguas 3; 2 – Monte do Marquês 15; 3 – Horta de Jacinto; 4 – Montinhos 6.

The six structures at Vale de Éguas 3 were also identified during a pipeline project. In the case of Horta do Jacinto, the pipeline allowed the identification of two structures (distancing around 500 m apart). From a stratigraphic point of view, it should be noted that the structures at these sites were identified in the top of the geological substratum (“caliço”, an easily cut type of limestone), after removing the upper deposits which had been disturbed by agricultural activities. Consequently, the stratigraphy articulating the relationship between the different structures is generally absent. In contrast, the interior of the structures presented various sequences of infilling, corresponding either to a single deposit, without an artefactual component, or to a sequence of overlapping sediment deposits, stone levels, with associated concentrations of artefacts, ecofacts and human and animal burials (Baptista & Gomes 2013; Gomes & Baptista 2017; see also Alves *et al.* 2014a; 2014b; Antunes *et al.* 2012; Porfírio & Serra 2016; Valera *et al.* 2014; Valera 2016; Santos *et al.* 2009 for similar sites).

The study of fragmentation we have been developing with these sites interconnects different moments of the archaeological process. We are trying to establish a dialogue between the analytical methods adopted during excavation and post-excavation, namely the study of artefactual components and revision of the stratigraphy. Our theoretical-methodological framework integrates the excavation and recording methods proposed by Harris (1991) and Barker (1977), Schiffer’s thoughts on the processes forming the archaeological record (Schiffer 1972; 1975; 1976; 1987), and Lucas’ reflections on the nature of the archaeological object of study (Lucas 2001; 2005; 2012). The work carried out by Thomas (1999: 62-88), Chapman (2000), Garrow (2012; Garrow *et al.* 2005), Chapman & Gaydarska (2007), and McFadyen (2006; 2016) are especially relevant in analysing and interpreting fragmentation processes. Within this conceptual framework, studying fragmentation becomes a heuristic and hermeneutic task seeking to expand the temporal and spatial relationships between the different elements of the archaeological record. We will show how the focus on fragments can be used to: define filling deposits of structures; revise filling sequences; and establish links between different structures. We will present two examples (two structures) from different sites to illustrate our reasoning. The examples will demonstrate how the study of fragmentation may bring us closer to temporal and spatial dynamics which would otherwise go unnoticed. In fact, the attention paid to fragments and their respective reassembly allowed us to understand the spatial and temporal limits of the units that form these structures and, thus, helped us characterise this architectural tradition of Baixo Alentejo’s late prehistory.

2. Fragments and breakage processes as a strategy to rethink the structures’ filling deposits

2.1. Structure 2 - Vale de Éguas 3

Vale de Éguas 3 presents a cluster of six pits: structures 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 had one or two fill deposits (Figure 3); structure 2 had five fill deposits and a deposition level containing a piece of ceramic plate (Baptista & Gomes 2012). The infill of structure 2 (Figure 4) is worthy of detailed consideration, in addition to the deposition context, the ceramic fragments within the lower fills invokes a specific fragmentation and distribution process which adds temporal and spatial depth to the stratigraphic sequence initially observed. The top of the fill was a clayey deposit, with the inclusion of small stones in the upper part [200]. Below this deposit, there was a similar one, but of a lighter shade [201]. A mid-level was defined during the excavation, due to the presence of part of a reinforced-rimmed plate which can be traced to the regional Chalcolithic. This vessel appeared to be positioned in a horizontal plane. Besides this larger fragment, five small fragments of pottery were also collected in this deposit, three of which corresponded together. The three-remaining fill deposits [202, 203, 204], were of clayey nature and distinctive colour, and contained assemblages of apparently randomly dispersed sherds. During the excavation of these three deposits, some of the fragments appeared to be similar and, later on, we confirmed that this assemblage corresponded to a single globular vessel. We also observed that the fragments of the

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base and body tended to be located within the first two deposits and the rim fragments within the last of the fills.

Looking closer at the fragmented character of this structure's ceramic components, we have identified three different things:

- A part (almost half) of a reinforced-rimmed plate (deposited in the top of [201]);
- An assemblage of fragments - of different sizes, freshly fractured and without abraded surfaces - from a globular vessel (distributed in the deposits [202, 203 and 204], and;
- A set of small sized unabraded fragments that did not match either of the above vessels (dispersed in [201]).



Figure 3 – Vale de Éguas 3, general view of the cluster.

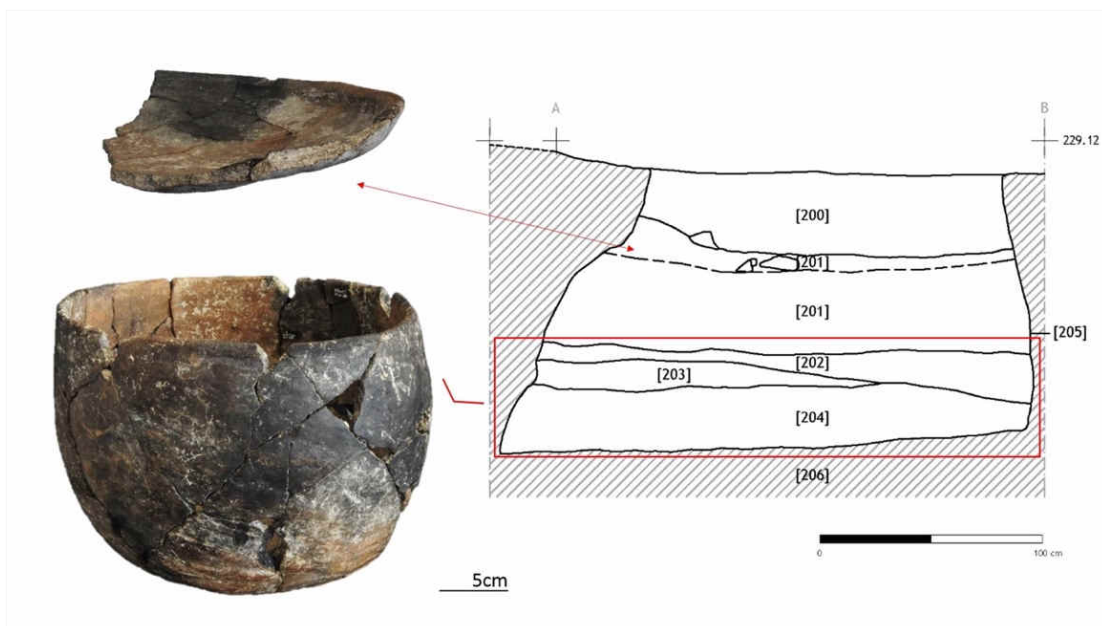


Figure 4 – Vale de Éguas 3, structure 2: stratigraphy and pottery.

These two vessels, and the way they were distributed across the different fills, forced us to rethink the characterisation of the different deposits, as well as the dynamics of this structure's infilling:

- The top part of the fill was polarised around the deposition of a reinforced-rimmed plate fragment. The plate seems to have participated in a fragmentation practice which turns a previous entity into, at least, two different agents, one of which ended up deposited in this structure. The other parts of the plate are absent from this structure. Once the plate was broken the different parts were not gathered together as had happened with the globular vessel from the lower deposits.
- This part of the fill also presented a set of small fragments that did not match either the plate or the globular vessel. These small fragments may represent residues of the fragmentation processes of these two objects or be part of a different vessel. In both scenarios, we may see these small fragments as residues of fragmentation and distribution practices which could have occurred prior to deposition and away from the pit.
- The bottom part of the fill presented three deposits, which were individualised due to colour divergences, but contained fragments of the same vessel. Despite the suggestion of different actions of infilling, we were able to identify a unity between these deposits through the presence of the vessel which, at some point, was fragmented. It is hard to imagine the practices in which such a sequence was produced; the fragmentation of the vessel occurred at a different time and place, prior to deposition and outside the boundaries of the structure, however in the moment of its deposition, the structure acted as a place to gather all the pottery fragments.

By paying attention to the fragmentation of the ceramics in this structure we may create an opposition between the top and the bottom deposits. The lower fills were about gathering all the fragments of a previous entity; each deposit is about a part of the vessel but the three deposits reconstruct its unity. The lower infills of the structure are a story of how a unity may be fragmented, distributed and then reunited in the same structure. Each deposit may be related to a different moment, and to a different practice, however they all relate to this previous unity that was fragmented. The upper fills are about the deposition of a part of a plate. The structure acted as a stage to receive such a part and store it as such. The upper and lower fills entailed different ways of fragmenting and distributing objects. Emphasizing fragmentation in this context made us rethink the individualisation of the structure's infilling, and expand the possibilities of characterising and interconnecting them. To the initial linearity that we recorded by individualizing the fills, we may add two cycles of infill: a first one connected to the globular vessel and a second one relating to the plate. The study of fragmentation allowed us to redefine delimitations and relationships between the different fill deposits and go beyond the temporal linearity and homogeneity with which we excavate and characterise the deposits. Furthermore, it enabled us to explore the temporal dynamics of the deposits, which appeared to be connected with the distribution of fragments and fragmentation practices of two ceramic vessels.

2.2. Structure 22 - Monte Marquês 15

The archaeological intervention in Monte Marquês 15 has identified a set of almost thirty structures, with an artefactual component dating back, in most cases, to the regional Chalcolithic (Baptista 2010; Vale *et al.* 2013). The filling of structure 22 was highly complex, consisting of levels of clayey deposits, levels of "caliço" fragments, concentrations of pottery fragments and remains of animal bone, and stone features (such as a ring of stones or a small sub-circular structure). Overall, the diversity and complexity of the elements comprising the infilling of this structure indicates a profuse horizontal and vertical compartmentalisation (Figure 5 and 6).

In order to summarise, we will not describe the entire sequence, and we will focus our analysis on the deposits at the structure's base (Figures 7 and 8), which contained a concentration of 499 fragments of pottery [2221], plus 80 more fragments in the deposit [2219] immediately above. The reassembly of these fragments resulted in a set of six vessels, five of which are

incomplete, and one complete vessel. Besides this set of vessels, we found 88 fragments with no correspondence; they could be part of the six vessels even if we couldn't refit it or they could belong to other vessels. It should be noted that, although there was no combustion evidence in the deposit surrounding them, some of these pieces were burnt. Furthermore, there were correspondences between burnt and unburnt fragments. The fragments showed signs of burning either on the surface or the edges, indicating that, despite belonging to the same unit, they were handled in different contexts after fragmentation.

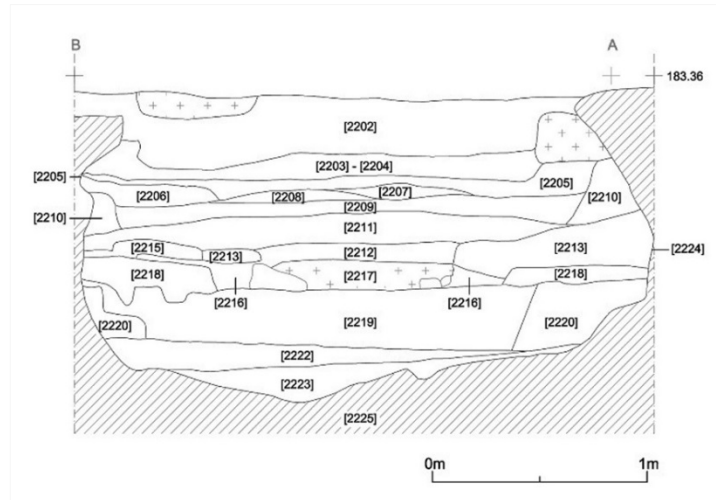


Figure 5 – Monte Marquês 15, structure 22: stratigraphy.



Figure 6 – Monte Marquês 15, structure 22: sequence of the main fills in the structure.

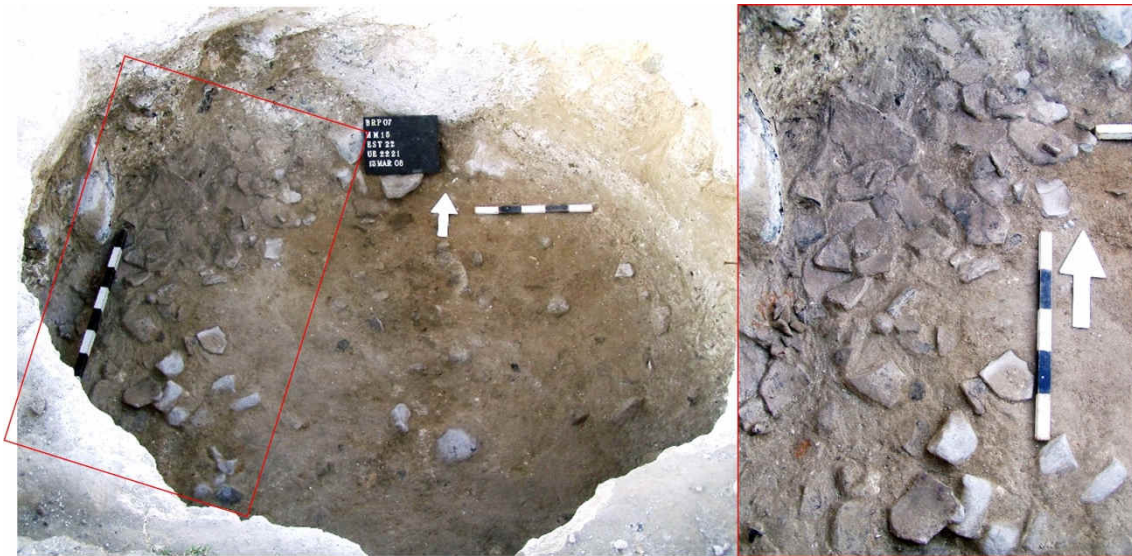


Figure 7 – Monte Marquês 15, structure 22: fills of the structure's base.

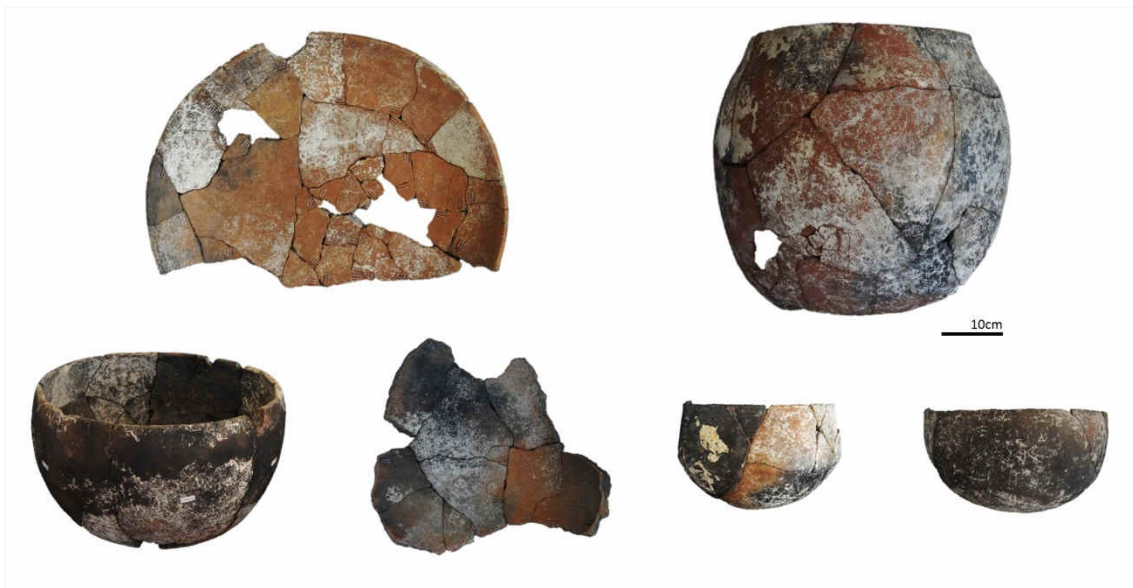


Figure 8 – Monte Marquês 15, structure 22: pottery from the fills of the structure's base.

Studying this assemblage of fragments has revealed that the filling unit pertaining to this excavation contained, at least, six vessels (Figure 8) indiscriminately deposited on the same level and already fragmented before their deposition. As mentioned above, since the burnt fragments matched with unburnt ones, these vessels may have had different treatments after their fragmentation and prior to deposition. In this connection, fragmentation makes us aware that the deposition of these ceramic fragments may be associated with their different uses. This possibility enables us to consider an intertwining of scenarios that exceeds the limits of this archaeological structure and whose configuration escapes our grasp. However, it should be noted that the structure acted as a way to gather different fragments from different entities in the same fragmented deposit. It could be argued, the structure acted as the catalyst for the emergence of a new entity; an entity made through the fragments of other entities.

It should be noted that in the structure of Vale de Éguas 3, the analysis of fragmentation revealed a single unit between three distinct deposits at the base of the structure, where fragments of the same vessel were distributed. In the case of Monte Marquês 15, the fragmentation revealed that the same unit – identified in the course of the excavation – contained different ceramic vessels, whose fragments may have participated in other scenarios. In other words, fragmentation has allowed us to restructure and rethink the way we work and how we question the set of practices within this architectural tradition. The infill practices, by intertwining with fragmentation and deposition practices, allowed the expansion of the entities created by the fragmentation. Structure 2 of Vale de Éguas 3 holds an entity in fragments in the lower deposits and a part of an entity in the top; structure 22 of Monte do Marquês 15 holds an entity made through the gathering of fragments of six different pots. These entities were created as a result of the fragmentation, deposition and architectural practices. Therefore, the delimitation and relationship of the fills should take into account how fragments create the possibility of exceeding the limits we construct to define a unity and relate it to other fills.

3. Fragmentation as a strategy to understand a structure's infilling sequence

3.1. Structure 1 - Horta de Jacinto

In Horta de Jacinto two structures were identified, containing an artefactual component that can be traced to the regional Bronze Age (Baptista *et al.* 2012). The filling of structure 1 presented two burial levels (Figure 9):

- at the base of the structure, demarcated by a ring of stones, there was a skeleton of a swine¹;
- in the upper levels there was a human sub-adult, deposited in a sitting position.

These burial levels form part of a stratigraphic sequence with several stratigraphic units, which can be systematised in five phases (Figure 10):

- Phase I ([113], [114], [115], [116] and [117]): corresponds to a group of stratigraphic units associated with a stone level located at the base of the structure. Its selection is based on the stony nature of the elements in this context. The presence of this material becomes especially relevant when we reach phase V;
- Phase II ([109], [110], [111] and [112]) corresponds to the group of units associated with the burial of the swine;
- Phase III ([108]): corresponds to a “caliço” deposit sealing the swine burial context and, simultaneously, serving as the construction material of the concavity where the subadult was buried;
- Phase IV ([104], [105], [106] and [107]): corresponds to the group of units associated with the deposition of the sub-adult;
- Phase V ([101], [102] and [103]): corresponds to the closing of the structure's fill. It consists of a stone level and a set of clay deposits incorporating fragments of pottery and lithics.

During the study of the artefact assemblage, we registered the exclusive presence of unabraded, medium sized ceramic fragments. Some of these fragments refitted, however, these correspondences appeared to be the result of post-depositional events, since the matching fragments were close to each other, suggesting fragmentation occurred after the breakage of the

¹ The morphological similarity between the Iberian wild boar and domestic pig makes the distinction between the two species very difficult.

vessels and once they were already within the structure. In the lithic assemblage, there was a connection between two fragments of a quern-stone (Figure 10); its fracture was fresh, indicating a short period between breakage and deposition inside the structure. This quern-stone was broken in two parts which were then put inside the structure at the top of the structure (Phase V - [103]) and at the base of the structure (Phase I - [115]). The fragmentation of this artefact is not a post-depositional phenomenon, as seen with the ceramics. On the contrary, the stratigraphic position of the pieces entailed different human actions: an intentional or accidental breakage of the quern-stone and an intentional or accidental distribution of the fragments within the structure. If we consider the social importance of fragmenting and distributing material and how this can reconfigure the meaning of such things, we may look at the use of this quern-stone as something that was used to give meaning to the beginning and the end of the infill of the structure; the pieces give meaning by becoming part of the stone structures that receive, hold and keep the corpses of an animal and a child.



Figure 9 – Horta do Jacinto, structure 1: left) human burial context; right) animal burial context.

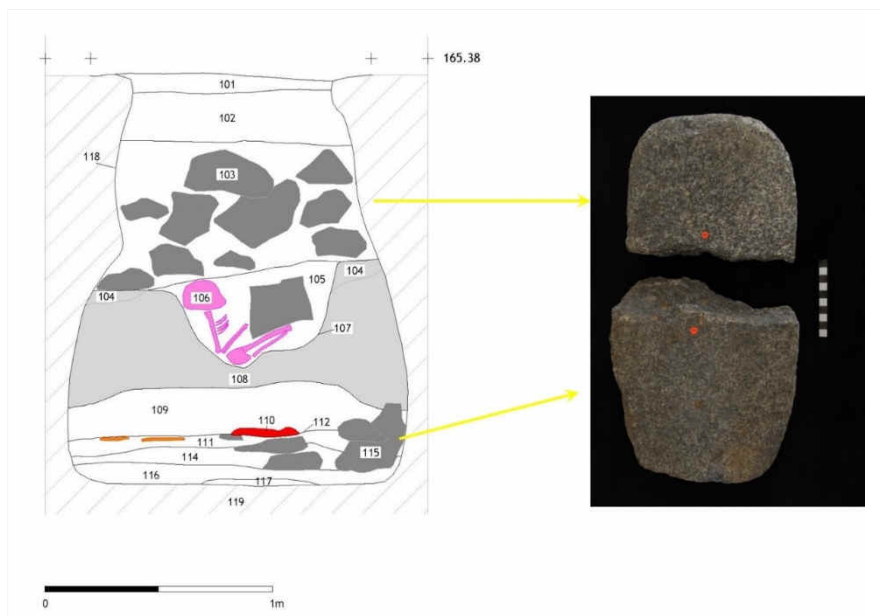


Figure 10 – Horta do Jacinto, structure 1: stratigraphy and refitting of a quern-stone, the parts comes from the upper and lower fills.

The refitting of this quern-stone makes us realize how fragmentation intertwines with the construction (or filling) of the structure. This action makes us believe that, despite the diversity of practices taking place within the structure's infilling, there may have been a common thread between them which, in a material sense, is formalised by the presence of half of a quern-stone at the base and the other half in the upper level of the filling. This leads us to think again about the linearity of the sequence of the deposits that we created while digging and recording the fills. This image of successive actions may have occurred within a cyclic temporality, something that started with the breakage of an artifact and that would end with the gathering of both fragments within the same structure. In thinking through the fragmented quern-stone we started to twist the initial linearity and expand our understanding of the temporality of the infill.

3.2. Structure 118 - Montinhos 6

The excavation at Montinhos 6 covered two hills. In this area approximately two hundred structures with different morphologies and chronologies were identified (Baptista 2013; Baptista & Gomes 2011). Structure 118 corresponds to a hypogeum dating from the regional Bronze Age, with a sub-quadrangular antechamber, two burial chambers and a pre-existing pit (Figure 11). In the course of excavation, we believed that the structure was used at different phases, that each chamber's burial took place at a separate time. Let us present the sequence observed in the field:

- During the excavation of the sediment filling in the antechamber, we were able to define the stone structure [11801] closing chamber 1 [11806]. After removing this stone structure, we were able to identify a burial context of a sub-adult, which had been deposited in a foetal position [11805] (Figure 12);
- The base of the stone structure closing chamber 1 was on top of a deposit with clay nodes. After removing this deposit, we began to see the stone structure [11808/09] closing chamber 2 [11811/14], within which there was the burial of a female adult [11812]. There was a meat offering in association with this individual [11813] (Figure 13).

Initially, this sequence suggested that the burial of the adult individual (in chamber 2) occurred before the burial of the sub-adult individual (in chamber 1).

During the excavation of the adult skeleton, we identified a fragment of an ulna from a different skeleton. In the sub-adult inventory, which took place a few days earlier, the left ulna was only represented by a small fragment (an absence which, at the time, we thought could be related to taphonomic processes). During the post-excavation study of these contexts, we tried to ascertain if these two pieces of ulna were parts of the same bone and, in fact, they were both part of the sub-adult individual buried in chamber 1 (Figure 14). This evidence forced us to review our original sequence. The removal of a segment of ulna from the sub-adult corpse means that this individual was already buried and already a skeleton. Therefore, given that the small portion of the ulna was *in situ*, this chamber must have been revisited when the adult was buried. This correspondence between the bones forced us to question the sequence of events suggested by the stratigraphy. During the excavation, and taking the stratigraphic sequence into account, we thought that the first burial took place in chamber 2. However, the fact that the adult's deposition contained a fragment of the left ulna of the sub-adult from chamber 1, means that the sub-adult (chamber 1) was buried before the adult (chamber 2). In this sense, the study of fragmentation has led us to consider that chamber 1 was reopened. The reutilization of chambers in these types of structures appears to be recurrent – as suggested by the presence of ossuaries and multiple burials (Baptista 2013; Porfírio & Serra 2016; Valera *et al.* 2014). However, the reopening processes do not always leave material evidence of such practices. In this case, the correspondence between the fragments of ulna suggests the reutilization of the same structure and establishes a link between different moments of burial.

In the two structures discussed in this section, fragmentation enabled us to revisit the sequence of fills recorded during the excavation. In Horta de Jacinto, the correspondence between the two parts of the same quern-stone suggested that, despite the diversity of contexts and spatial arrangements within the structure, there would appear to be a linear set of actions within the cyclic

temporality regarding the breakage and distribution of the fragments of an artefact. In Montinhos 6, the refitting between the osteological elements leads us to assume that the structure was reutilised in a way which, initially, we had no means of determining. This last case is significant because we are accustomed to interpreting these burial contexts as frozen depositions, sealed by stone structures. The fragmentation of the child's bone and its deposition within another burial context causes us to realize how dynamic such burial traditions might have been and how a new burial could activate older burials, demanding the opening of chambers and the touching of ancient corpses. In both cases, the emphasis on fragmentation made us rethink the infill of the structures and consider how memory can act upon the material world and how the material world creates the conditions of memory practices; and how the infill of these structures goes beyond the linearity of time we produce as we excavate.

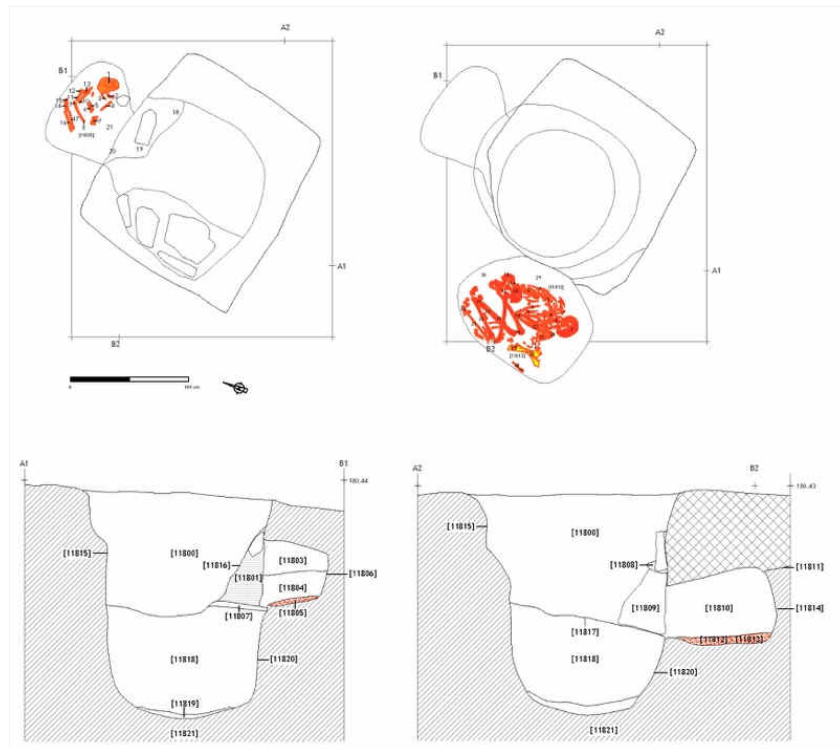


Figure 11 – Montinhos 6, structure 118: plans and stratigraphy.



Figure 12 – Montinhos 6, structure 118: chamber 1.



Figure 13 – Montinhos 6, structure 118: chamber 2.



Figure 14 – Montinhos 6, structure 118: refitting between the parts of the sub-adult's ulna.

4. Fragmentation as a strategy to establish links between structures

Thus far, we have seen examples where the reassembly of fragments from the same structure allows us to better understand its infilling process. We will now explore how the correspondence between fragments of pottery from different structures enables us to establish links between them. To that end, we will analyse a set of structures from Montinhos 6 which, overall, date back to the Bronze Age (Baptista 2013; Baptista & Gomes 2011). We will focus our analysis on two groups of structures: pits 34, 40 and 42; and pits 100 and 120.

4.1. Montinhos 6: pits 34, 40 and 42

In pit 34 (Figures 15, 16 and 17), the ceramic component consists of an assemblage of small abraded fragments, distributed across the first and second fill deposits ([3400] and [3401]), and a decorated fragment from a large sized vessel coming from the base deposit [3402]. In pit 42, the ceramic assemblages occurred at two different levels: in the first deposit 39 fragments were deposited in a stone level [4200], and near the base of the structure was a concentration of 65 fragments [4202]. During the reassembly of the 104 fragments of pottery from pit 42, we could recognize the presence of 26 distinct vessels. While trying to match these fragments, we realised that a fragment from pit 34 corresponded with a fragment from pit 42, forming part of a vessel. It should be noted that the fragment from pit 34 occurred in isolation, in a horizontal plane [3402], and the fragment from pit 42 was found in a deposit/level [4202] containing a group of fragments within which we could recognized several vessels.

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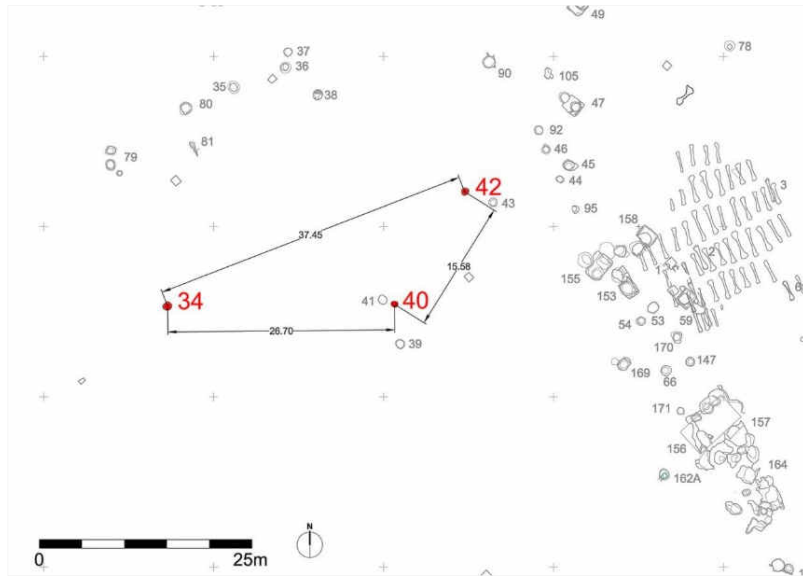


Figure 15 – Montinhos 6: pits 34, 42 and 40.

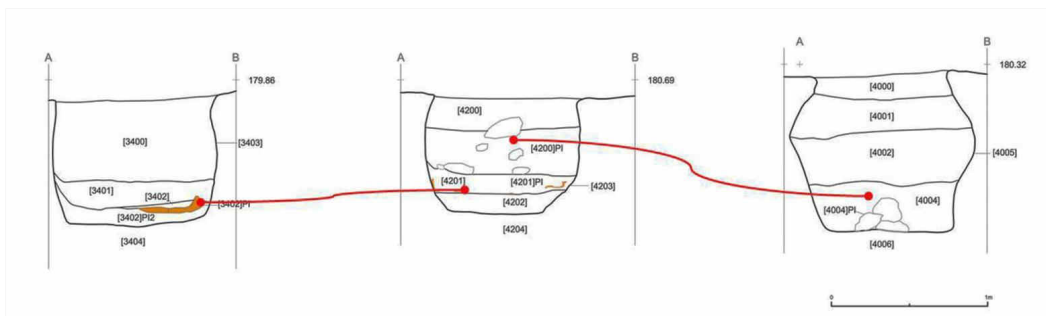


Figure 16 – Montinhos 6, pits 34, 42 and 40: stratigraphy.

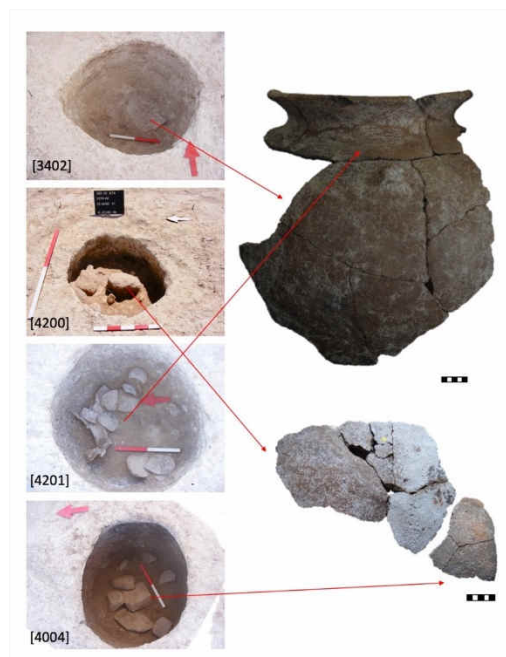


Figure 17 – Montinhos 6, pits 34, 42 and 40: refitting between sherds of deposits [3402], [4200], [4201] and [4204].

Refitting allowed the connection between pits 34 and 42 which were spatially separated; it enabled us to trace a line between them and add movement to an image which was initially static. This refitting permitted us to recognize a connection between two separated and different depositions: the deposition of a single fragment and the deposition of a group of fragments. By following the fragmentation processes we are gaining an image of movement between structures. A movement that entails an intertwining between the infill, fragmentation and distribution of objects. A movement that brought together these two structures and pit 40, as we will see below.

In pit 40, the ceramic component occurs almost entirely in a concentration of artefacts located at the base of the structure, where nine ceramic fragments, a quern-stone and a hammerstone were collected. During the refitting of materials regarding the assemblages of pits 40 and 42, there were correspondences between 3 fragments from the deposit [4004] and ten fragments from the deposit [4200]; these matches allowed us to recognize a larger fragment corresponding to a part of a vessel's body. It should be stressed that the fragments display cut marks, suggesting deliberate breakage. The correspondence between the pottery fragments from these three structures allows us to establish a link between these three architectural practices. Such a connection is evidenced by the fragmentation of ceramic vessels and their distribution across the different structures. It is hard to imagine the practices and processes that occurred prior to deposition outside these pit features and which contributed to the distribution of the fragments. We may see deliberate breakage, just as we may see intentional distribution of fragments. This might not answer the question of what people were doing in between these structures, but it allows us to understand the impoverishment of an image which privileges a classification of the pits according a static function.

4.2. Montinhos 6: pits 100 and 120

In pits 100 and 120, a similar situation was observed (Figures 18, 19 and 20). These two structures presented highly complex sequences of infilling with different levels of deposition of materials. The artefactual component of these depositions consisted of pottery fragments and nearly complete vessels. This indicates different fragmentation practices and distribution which, however relevant, must be discussed in a separate study. In addition to these more structured levels, ceramic fragments were also found in less structured fill sequences. The presence of fragments from the body of a vessel, decorated with vertical grooves, caught our attention when we were reconstructing these ceramic assemblages, as we found a fragment in pit 120 [12001] and a fragment from a less structured deposit in pit 100 [10005]. In this case, the correspondence of these fragments not only establishes a connection between both structures but also suggests a connection between two different forms (or processes) of incorporating ceramic fragments within the structure. The fragment in pit 120 seems to be intentionally incorporated in a deposition of ceramic fragment, suggesting a specific action and selection of the position of the fragment after the breakage of the vessel. In turn, the fragment in pit 100 seems to have gone inside the structure as a part of the deposit [10005] occurring alongside other dispersed small and unabraded fragments; the top of this deposit was then used as a surface for the deposition of a pot and a stag deer [10003/04].

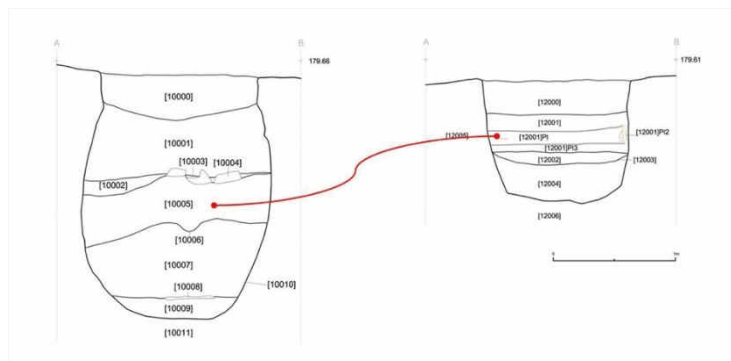


Figure 19 – Montinhos 6, pits 100 and 120: stratigraphy.

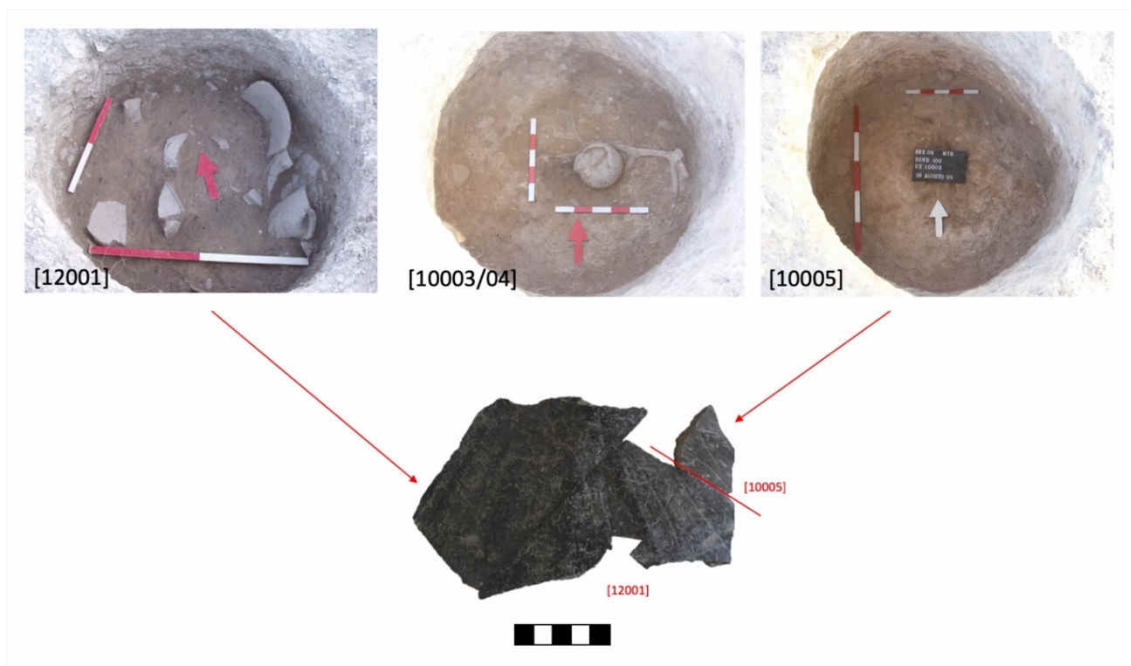


Figure 20 – Montinhos 6, pits 100 and 120: refitting between sherds of deposits [10005] and [12001].

Again, these correspondences demonstrate the intertwining of the fills of these structures; an intertwining which makes it difficult to envisage the social practices that produced such breakage and distribution of objects. Again, these correspondences demonstrate the intertwining of the fills of separate structures. In addition, the intentional and accidental distribution of fragments adds a spatial dynamic to this intertwining which makes it particularly difficult to classify events and envisage the social practices that produced such breakage and distribution of objects. A spatial dynamic putting together intentional and accidental distributions of fragments and whose order is hard to classify.

5. Final remarks

The results obtained in the reassembly of the abovementioned fragments expanded our initial vision of the structures. The study of fragmentation led us to revise the deposits and filling sequences individualised during the excavation process. During this revision, the reassembly of the fragments made us rethink the units we were formulating and demonstrated that, sometimes, different units could be viewed as an integral part of the same dynamic or moment of the structures' infilling. On other occasions, the same concentration of fragments can include several different vessels which, in turn, indicate other practices and dynamics that go beyond such congregations and their deposition inside the structures. Fragmentation has, thus, led us to reconfigure and rearrange the links between the different elements within these constructions; reconfiguring and rearranging the links between structures and practices. In this sense, the fragments performed as active elements, expanding the limits and possibilities of creating temporal and spatial unities. Fragments were active elements bringing their life cycle to the fills and reconfiguring the life cycle of the structures; they brought the memory of such cycles to the structures, expanding the spatiality of a structure's physical boundaries; fragments add memory to the structure and change its temporality. By recognizing the importance of how fragments participate in shaping time and space, one should question the part they may have played in framing the horizon of meaning in prehistoric communities (*e.g.* Chapman 2000; Chapman & Gaydarska 2007). However, the discussion of this horizon of meaning goes beyond the purpose

of this paper, whose objective is to highlight the importance of studying fragmentation to better understand the material evidence produced during excavations.

Before ending, we must say that we feel that this a fragmented paper, made with the fragments of an ongoing study. Our intention was not to develop a discussion on the meaning of fragmentation and distribution of objects. Instead, by considering the social dimension of fragmentation and how it links to the production of memory and architecture (e.g. Connerton 1989; Meskel 2003), our main propose was to share the fragments, to give emphasis to a particular characteristic of the structures: they hold fragments whose study help us to think beyond the linearity of stratigraphic sequences and beyond our initial questions (e.g. Lucas 2005; Schiffer 1987). Following the links of the fragments may not help us to construct well-defined social scenarios, but those links do enable us to appreciate the strangeness of past communities' temporal and spatial dynamics (Jorge 2014; Vale 2010). This strangeness challenges us to explore multiple ways to translate such differences; and made us made us more aware of that strangeness, made us write an paper that is less coherent than we would like; a fragmented paper. Even so, we think that by giving emphasis to the fragments, and to the fragmentation processes, we have expanded our possibility of understanding such diverse and complex realities. The focus on fragments contributes to a better apprehension of the temporal and spatial dynamics of this architectural tradition. The fragments allow a better understanding of the conditions under which the infill of the structures took place; about the conditions under which this strange world in negative came into being.

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