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Inferring Personhood through funerary evidence in Late Prehistoric Southeastern Iberia (3200-1500 BC)

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Supervisors:

Dr. Manuel Fernández-Götz & Dr. Guillaume Robin

PhD in Archaeology

The University of Edinburgh

2021
Signed Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Guillermo Díaz de Liaño Del Valle

Through others, we become ourselves

Lev Vygotsky
## Contents

**Preface:** .......................................................................................................................... 7

**Lay Summary:** .................................................................................................................. 9

**Abstract:** .......................................................................................................................... 11

**Acknowledgments:** ........................................................................................................ 12

**Chapter 1: Introduction.** ............................................................................................... 14

1.1. **Geographic context.** ................................................................................................. 14

1.1. **Background.** ............................................................................................................. 17

1.2. **Aims and objectives.** ............................................................................................... 20

1.3. **Justification.** ............................................................................................................ 22

1.4. **Limitations.** ............................................................................................................. 24

1.5. **Sources and methodology.** .................................................................................... 25

1.6. **The structure of this thesis.** .................................................................................... 26

**Chapter 2: A Brief History of Theoretical Archaeology in Southeast Iberia** ................. 28

2.1. **Conceptual frameworks for the analysis of archaeological paradigms.** ................. 29

2.2. **Archaeology in the 19th century: The development of the chrono-typological and**
    **techno-chronological systems.** .................................................................................... 32

2.3. **The southeast of Iberia through approaches with an idealist conceptualisation of**
    **culture.** ......................................................................................................................... 35

2.3.1. **The beginning of prehistoric archaeology in the southeast of Spain: The Siret**
    **brothers.** ..................................................................................................................... 35

2.3.2. **The cultural-historical school.** ............................................................................. 38

2.3.3. **The colonial model.** ............................................................................................ 40

2.3.4. **The crisis of the colonial model and the collapse of diffusionist models.** ........... 43

2.4. **Integrated conceptualisations of culture.** ............................................................... 44

2.4.1. **Functionalist archaeology.** ................................................................................. 45

2.4.2. **Materialist models.** ............................................................................................ 48

2.4.3. **Archaeological thought after 1985.** .................................................................. 51

**Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework. A brief history of the Archaeology of**
**Personhood, the structural-contextual model, and power in societies against**
**the state.** ............................................................................................................................ 53

3.1. **A brief history of personhood in archaeology.** ......................................................... 54

3.1.1. **Introduction to the study of personhood.** ............................................................ 54
3.2.2. The single spectrum models ........................................红豆87
3.3.3. The multiple spectrum models ........................................红豆87
3.2. Hernando’s archaeology of identity ........................................红豆87
3.2.1. General patterns in the construction of identity: Space and time, metaphor and metonymy, and why orality is a key element in understanding prehistoric identity. 70
3.2.2. Relational identity and the development of the fantasy of individuality. .... 76
3.3. Charles Taylor: The self in relation to human and non-human entities, and modes of experiencing reality ........................................红豆87
3.4. Concepts from the anthropology of personhood: Partibility, permeability and fragmentation practices ........................................红豆87
3.5. Conceptualising power and resistance ........................................红豆87
3.5.1. Power and resistance in societies against the state. .....................红豆89

Chapter 4: Personhood during the Chalcolithic .................................红豆94
4.1. General context .....................................................................红豆94
4.2. Los Millares .........................................................................红豆98
4.2.1. Introduction: .....................................................................红豆98
4.2.2. The Necropolis: ...............................................................红豆101
4.2.3. Interpretation: .................................................................红豆102
4.3. El Barranquete .....................................................................红豆107
4.3.1. Introduction: .....................................................................红豆107
4.3.2. The necropolis: ...............................................................红豆108
4.3.3. Interpretation: .................................................................红豆113
4.4. Almizaraque/La Encantada .....................................................红豆114
4.4.1. Introduction: .....................................................................红豆114
4.4.2. The Necropolis: ...............................................................红豆116
4.4.3. Interpretation: .................................................................红豆118
4.5. Personhood through the Chalcolithic funerary evidence ....................红豆120
4.6. Practices that emphasise relational personhood ..................................红豆121
4.6.1. The multiple functions of collective burials: resources and inequality. ....红豆121
4.6.2. Megalithic collective tombs, conceptualisation of the space and prehistoric grief .................................................................红豆123
4.6.3. Collective burials and identity: The dissolution of the person ............红豆124
4.7. The production and maintenance of partible personhood and the role of fragmentation practices ..................................................红豆127
4.7.1. Things that had to be killed: Ritual fragmentation of pots. .................红豆129
4.7.2. Things as part of people: Personal pottery in the construction of the partible self. ................................................................. 131
4.7.3. Death as a collective experience: Arrowheads as sacrificial parts of the self. 132
4.8. The production and maintenance of individual personhood. ......................... 133
  4.8.1. Different pathways leading to different deaths. ................................ 133
  4.8.2. Things that are powerful: Exotic objects. ........................................... 138
4.9. Non-human personhood in the Chalcolithic.............................................. 142
  4.9.1. From collective burials to cosmological beliefs: The ancestors. ............. 142
  4.9.2. Things that were people: Idols.......................................................... 143

Chapter 5. Personhood during the Argaric Bronze Age............................... 149
  5.1. Introduction to the Argaric Bronze Age in the southeast of Iberia. ................ 149
  5.2. La Bastida de Totana. ........................................................................ 157
    5.2.1. Introduction................................................................................. 157
    5.2.2. Funerary evidence: ................................................................. 160
  5.3. Cerro de la Encina. ............................................................................. 163
    5.3.1. Introduction: ............................................................................... 163
    5.3.2. Funerary evidence: ................................................................. 166
  5.4. San Cristobal. .................................................................................. 168
    5.4.1. Introduction: ............................................................................... 168
    5.4.2. Funerary evidence: ................................................................. 170
  5.5. La Almoloya.......................................................................................... 172
    5.5.1. Introduction: ............................................................................... 172
    5.5.2. Funerary evidence. ..................................................................... 175
  5.6. The production and maintenance of individualisation.................................. 177
    5.6.1. Individual burials. ....................................................................... 177
    5.6.2. Who gets to be buried? The representativity of individuality. .......... 179
    5.6.3. How do people get buried? Ritual diversity in the construction of individual personhood.................................................... 180
    5.6.4. The materialisation of class and inequality....................................... 185
  5.7. Metal ornaments in the Argaric world: Between individualisation and collective individualisation................................................. 190
    5.7.1. Ornaments in the Argaric World: .................................................. 191
    5.7.2. The role of ornaments in the construction of personhood: .............. 195
  5.8. The production and maintenance of collective individualisation.................. 197
    5.8.1. Feasting...................................................................................... 197
    5.8.2. Feasting as collective individualisation........................................ 201
5.9. The production and maintenance of permeability. ........................................... 203
  5.9.1. Single events and ritual consumption: Food, drink and vessels in funerary practices ................................................................. 204
  5.9.2. Everyday consumption: Bioarchaeological information from human remains. .... 206

5.10. The production and maintenance of partibility. ........................................... 208
  5.10.1. The gender of things: Gold and silver. .................................................. 209
  5.10.2. Objects as parts of people: Weapons, diadems and awls ............................ 210

5.11. Practices that produce relationality. ............................................................. 216
  5.11.1. The Argaric norm (I): The materialisation of dependent individuality and the unconscious relationality of the elites. .......................................................... 216
  5.11.2. The Argaric norm (II): Relational personhood in individualising burials. .... 218
  5.11.3. Relational personhood outside the Argaric norm: the ‘others’ and the reutilisation of Chalcolithic burials ................................................................. 218

Chapter 6: Discussion. Personhood and the Conceptualisation of the World in Late Prehistory. ................................................................. 226
  6.1. Personhood and the conceptualisation of the world in the Chalcolithic. ............ 226
    6.1.1. General characterisation of personhood according to the archaeological evidence ................................................................. 226
    6.1.2. Perception of the self in relation to non-human entities ............................ 230
    6.1.3. Stances of the self towards human entities ............................................... 232
    6.1.4. Conceptualising, representing, and experiencing the world in the Chalcolithic. 234

  6.2. Personhood and the conceptualisation of the world in the Argaric Bronze Age................................. 237
    6.2.1. General characterisation of personhood according to the archaeological evidence ................................................................. 237
    6.2.2. Perception of the self in relation to non-human entities ............................ 243
    6.2.3. Stances of the self towards human entities ............................................... 247
    6.2.4. Conceptualising, representing, and experiencing the world in the Bronze Age ......................................................................................... 250

Chapter 7: Conclusion and future research ............................................................. 252
  7.1. Overview of this thesis and its main contributions. ............................................ 252
  7.2. Future research. .............................................................................................. 256

Bibliography ............................................................................................................. 259
**Table of figures:**

Figure 1: The Iberian Peninsula .................................................................15
Figure 2: The Chalcolithic and Early-Middle Bronze Age in the Southeast compared with other areas of the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean ..............................................18
Figure 3: Metaphorical representation of the theoretical paradigms in the Archaeology of the Southeast as a phylogenetic tree ..................................................................................31
Figure 4: Portrait of Christian Jürgensen Thomsen ........................................33
Figure 5: Drawing of Schliemann’s excavation of Athena’s temple in Troy ..............................................................................34
Figure 6: Image of Louis Siret ..........................................................................37
Figure 7: Image of Pere Bosch Gimpera in 1927 ...........................................39
Figure 8: Picture of Martín Almagro Basch ..................................................41
Figure 9: Cover of Robert Chapman’s Spanish version of ‘Archaeologies of complexity’ ..................................................46
Figure 10: Cover of the influential book ‘La cultura de El Argar’, by Vicente Lull in 1983 ................................................50
Figure 11: ‘The Archaeology of Bronze Age Iberia. Argaric Societies’, by Aranda Jiménez et al ..............................................52
Figure 12: Graphic representation of the differences between Individual and Dividual personhood .....................................56
Figure 13: Cover of Chris Fowler’s ‘The Archaeology of personhood’ ..............60
Figure 14: Cover of ‘Parts and Wholes. Fragmentation in Prehistoric context’ by John Chapman and Bisserka Gaydarska .................................................................62
Figure 15: The multiple-spectrum model ........................................................67
Figure 16: Photography of Norbert Elias .....................................................78
Figure 17: Cover of ‘The Fantasy of Individuality’ by Almudena Hernando .................................................................79
Figure 18: Cover of ‘A Secular Age’, by Charles Taylor ................................84
Figure 19: Conceptual representation of the Structural-contextual model ........87
Figure 20: Portrait of Pierre Clastres in the 1970s ............................................91
Figure 21: Location of the Chalcolithic case-studies in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula ........................................95
Figure 22: Map of Los Millares ....................................................................99
Figure 23: Artistic reconstruction of Los Millares ca. 2800–2600 BC ...............100
Figure 24: Map of the tombs in the necropolis at Los Millares .......................103
Figure 25: Selection of grave goods from Tomb 40 at Los Millares .......... 105
Figure 26: Necropolis of El Barranquete .....................................................109
Figure 27: Tomb 9 of El Barranquete ..........................................................112
Figure 28: ‘Eye Goddess’ pottery from La Encantada I ................................117
Figure 29: Necklace Beads from La Encantada III ......................................119
Figure 30: Funerary ritual at Los Millares ..................................................125
Figure 31: Conceptual map of the paths between personhood and a ‘good death’ in the Chalcolithic ....................134
Preface:

Lay Summary:

This PhD Dissertation aims to study personhood during the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age (3200-1500 BC) in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. Personhood refers to what it means to be a person in a specific society, including how the self is conceptualised and what are its constitutive elements, -i.e., are objects part of the self? Are any non-humans such as objects, animals or supernatural entities conceptualise as persons as well? How is the body perceived? This topic has not been studied for the proposed area and chronology, despite being a central element to understand past societies.

The context and chronology of this research are particularly interesting for two reasons. Regarding the geographical context -the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula-, it has been chosen because it is a heavily researched area; there is vast evidence about the prehistoric societies that inhabited it. This wealth of information can be used to explore notions of personhood in these societies, as this task requires abundant data about their social, economic, and political features. The chosen chronology -Chalcolithic and Bronze Age, between 5200 and 3500 years ago- is particularly interesting because a remarkable increase in social complexity took place in the region. This means that in contrast to previous periods, in this moment labour specialisation would increase, and with it (and for reasons that are still debated) inequality would develop and become structural, something that would have important effects in the notion of personhood. While in relatively egalitarian societies personhood tends to be similar for every member of the group, given the fact that everyone performs similar tasks and have access to similar resources, the development of inequality allows the appearance of widespread differences in the social, symbolic, and economic status of individuals, thus enabling the development of varied types of personhood within the same society.

The methodology used in this thesis consists of the analysis of published archaeological literature about the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula (this is, books, excavation reports, scientific and academic articles, etc) rather than in the excavation of new sites or the scientific analysis of archaeological materials. This methodology has been chosen because the analysis of personhood is not based on the analysis of specific materials or the excavation of individual sites, but on the analysis of larger amounts of information about events taking place in
numerous sites. In this sense, this thesis constitutes a theoretical analysis of already published evidence, with the aim of bringing interpretation one step further to explore personhood.

This thesis demonstrates that personhood in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula during the Chalcolithic and the Bronze Age was radically different from contemporary personhood. For instance, personhood in the Chalcolithic world was heavily relational (this, is the self was defined in relation to the group), despite the appearance of incipient individualisation among certain members of society. Another important element of Chalcolithic personhood was the role of non-human entities, such as objects or supernatural entities, which could be part of the human self, but could also be conceptualised as non-human persons themselves. With the arrival of the Bronze Age, although personhood was still fundamentally relational, the importance of individuality increased remarkably, while the role of non-human entities in the constitution of the person changed. At the same time, and with the increase in social complexity, it seems clear that there were more types of personhood within the social group, depending on elements such as gender, social class, or where people lived.

But the importance of studying personhood goes beyond understanding what it meant to be a personhood in these societies. This PhD argues, following the theories of Almudena Hernando, that personhood is necessarily connected with how the world is perceived, conceptualised, and experienced. Thus, through the analysis of personhood, it is possible to approach the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age conceptualisations of the world. Despite their differences, these worlds would have been perceived as being inhabited by a multiplicity of human and non-human entities. Thus, the study of personhood in this region and chronology is fundamental in order to understand these societies in their own terms, without projecting contemporary understandings of identity.
Abstract:

This work explores, through the theoretical analysis of funerary evidence, notions of personhood during the Chalcolithic and the Early and Middle Bronze Age (3200-1500 BC) in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula.

In order to infer the main features of personhood, this work assembles a theoretical framework, based on the work of the theoretical archaeologist Almudena Hernando, combined with elements from the work of Charles Taylor, John Chapman, and several concepts from the Anthropology of Personhood. This theoretical framework allows to explore the general characterisation of personhood, mainly through the gradient individuality-relationality and the notions of partibility and permeability, but also explores the perception of the self in relation to non-human entities, the stances of the self toward other human beings, and the main ways of conceptualising, representing, and experiencing reality. The need for this framework is predicted on the principle of prehistoric personhood being radically different from contemporary Western notions of personhood, and thus being necessary to study it on its own. It is also based on the idea that simplistic, unilinear models of personhood where this trait moves from relationality towards individualism fail to acknowledge its complexity.

The results of this work suggest that personhood in the Chalcolithic was fundamentally relational, despite the appearance of incipient individuality, with partibility being an important feature and that non-human entities played an important part in the constitution of personhood. Moreover, it is likely that personhood was not exclusive of human beings, and that it was at least partially extended to non-human entities such as certain objects and ancestors. With the arrival of the Argaric Bronze Age, and still within a fundamentally relational personhood, individuality increased remarkably. However, this process of individualisation did not affect equally all groups within Argaric society, and while it seems that the elites became more individualised, there is clear evidence of widespread resilience practices. Both partibility and non-human personhood continued existing, although not in the exact same way, and permeability became an important trait of Argaric personhood. Finally, this work connects personhood with how humans relate to the world, exploring how personhood affects the way people engage with other human and non-human entities, as well as how reality itself could have been perceived, conceptualised and experienced in connection with the available features of personhood.
Acknowledgments:

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While many Spanish researchers have contributed to my thinking and have helped me walked the path towards writing this work, I have to offer special thanks to Dr. Almudena Hernando. It is because of her and her inspired and enlightening classes that I am now writing about archaeological theory and prehistoric personhood. Her work has shaped my understanding of Archaeology to a degree that can hardly be explained; it would require another dissertation. Many friends and colleagues in Archaeology have also contributed, in different ways and at different times, to make me a better researcher. Among them, Ana, Jorge, Ketzu, Juan and Emilio deserve a special mention.

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Special thanks to Victoria and our bunny, who have supported me during half of my PhD and the whole pandemic, encouraging me to go out and enjoy Edinburgh despite my increasing grumpiness.

Finally, me writing the acknowledgments of a PhD in Edinburgh, after having studied in Madrid, Sheffield and London, would have not been possible without my mum. It is simply impossible to do justice to how much I owe her: gracias madre, te quiero. The same goes for my brother, who has supported me in multiple ways, including lengthy discussion where he shared his vast expertise in Spanish cuisine.
Chapter 1: Introduction.

The aim of this thesis is to explore notions of personhood in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula during the Chalcolithic and the Argaric Bronze Age (3200-1500 BC). In order to do that, this dissertation assembles a theoretical framework (‘Structural-Contextual model’), based on the work of Almudena Hernando, which is then used to examine funerary practices in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. It is clear that personhood in Late Prehistory was different from contemporary identity, and thus is requires being study on its own terms in order to avoid projecting contemporary identity onto the past or explaining it away with simplistic unilinear evolutionary models. The results from this project suggest that personhood in the Chalcolithic was strongly relational, with partibility being an important feature and non-human personhood being an extended phenomenon. With the arrival of the Bronze Age, while personhood was still fundamentally relational, individuality became more visible, especially among those being buried under the ‘Argaric norm’. Partibility continued being an important trait, and the notion of permeability is documented as a new feature of personhood. Finally, this work examines how people, non-human entities and reality in general were perceived, represented, and experienced in relation to the available notions of personhood in each period.

1.1. Geographic context.

In terms of delimiting the area of study, the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula includes the provinces of Almeria, Murcia, Granada and the southwest of Alicante (see Figure 1). During the Bronze Age, the Argaric society expanded even beyond this area, reaching certain areas of Jaén and Ciudad Real.

The Southeast is located mostly within the Baetic mountainous system, which is made up by multiple mountain ranges reaching from Western Andalusia to the region of Murcia, Castilla La Mancha, and Valencia, in the East. It occupies different geographic sub-areas, which can be generally divided into a coastal façade, the pre-coastal depression of Murcia, the Granada highlands, and the inlands of Murcia.
The coastal façade, between Alicante and Málaga, extends up to the mountainous ranges of

Figure 1: Top image: The Iberian Peninsula, with the southeast highlighted. Bottom image: The southeast of the Iberian Peninsula in detail. Source: Google maps.
Sierra de Estancias, Sierra de Alhamilla, Sierra de Gador, and Sierra de las Alpujarras. This region presents scarce pluviosity and a general lack of permanent rivers, with seasonal waterways or ramblas of remarkable size and volume, such as Rambla de Tabernas or Rambla de Morales. Even rivers such as the Andarax and the Almanzora carry water only during certain periods, being dry at surface level in part of their trajectory for months every year. The pre-coastal depression of Murcia, which extends from Puerto Lumbreras to Orihuela, is limited in the east by the mountains of Carrascoy, Almenara and Enmedio, and in the west by Sierra Espuña and the eastern mountains of Sierra de Segura. This area contains several ramblas and the Segura, one of the few rivers with permanent waters in the area. These watercourses contribute to a more humid micro-environment in their surroundings, especially when compared to the general aridity of the coastal area. The inlands of Murcia present similar conditions to the pre-coastal depression, but their climate and landscape become more continental as they get closer to the Meseta Central (‘central plateau) and the highlands of the Sierra de Segura. The Granada highlands offer a remarkably different landscape, constituting a sort of natural fortress surrounded by the Subbetic and Penibbetic mountains where the river Genil is born. Given their altitude above sea level, the pluviosity is higher, although quite irregular, often in the shape of storms that make the Genil overflow and create floods.

Following the Köppen-Geiger climate classification, the southeast of Iberia is nowadays characterised by a hot-summer Mediterranean climate (Csa) in its western half, a semiarid climate (BSh and BSk) in the eastern side (Almeria, Murcia and Alicante), and a warm-summer Mediterranean climate (Csb) in the various mountainous ranges of the Baetic system, including Sierra Nevada, Sierra de Gádor and Sierra de Baza.

The prehistoric environment in the southeast of Iberia, which featured extensively in 1970s archaeological debates due to the hypothetical role of water control and irrigation in the appearance of social complexity, has been studied thoroughly since then. As a general characterisation (Aranda et al. 2015:62-64), it is possible to simplify it by stating that the landscape changed significantly between the third and second millennium BC, becoming significantly more arid and with less arboreal volume. The isotope concentrations in the palaeosol suggest that the vegetation cover in the third millennium BC was more extended than today, but it decreased during the second millennium BC. The analysis of carbon isotopes in carpological samples indicates that rainfall was more abundant in general during the third and second millennium BC, but the humidity rejects irrigation-based farming as a widespread
phenomenon. The pollen sequences suggest an important overall climate change in the region, as the warm and relatively humid conditions of the Holocene Climate Optimum became more arid, with a subsequent decline in the vegetation from humid environments and a general erosion process. The decrease in arboreal cover and the increase in grasses and shrubs might relate to the impact of human practices, which besides intensive farming might have contributed to the higher frequency of fires documented in the second millennium BC. The overall process of environmental degradation might have had serious consequences on human societies, and it might have even contributed to the collapse and depopulation of certain areas during the second millennium BC.

1.2. Background.

The southeast of the Iberian Peninsula has probably enjoyed the highest degree of archaeological attention in Spanish late prehistory. This is particularly true in relation to archaeological theory, as every major paradigm and approach has been employed to study the area. While the Iberian southeast for a long time constituted the playground of cultural-historical approaches, including their latest developments as ‘colonial models’, the current mainstream interpretations of the Iberian southeast during late prehistory are dominated by materialist paradigms. This historical variety of theoretical perspectives, combined with the relatively intensive field research that has taken place in the region since the 19th century, has contributed to a remarkable level of knowledge about its late prehistory, particularly in relation to its economic and productive organisation, its funerary practices, and the development of complexity and inequality in the region. Of course, this does not deny the existence of confronting interpretations with multiple issues, but it is possible to say that, in general terms, these debates are characterised by abundant empirical evidence, both new and from old excavations, and by relatively established interpretations that often agree on the basic characterisation of these societies.

However, there are certain aspects of late prehistoric societies inhabiting the southeast of Iberia that have received very little, if any, attention, due to the history of the research in the area, that has been dominated by Cultural Historical paradigms, first, and then by Functionalist and Materialist approaches. In this sense, the project exposed in these pages aims to offer the first specific and explicit approach to one of those ignored topics: the notion of personhood
among the societies of the Southeast. While it is possible to offer a wide variety of reasons why personhood is an important element that requires the attention of researchers, the main ones can be grouped as being ontological, methodological, and axiological.

Personhood is one of the unavoidable ontological categories structuring the being-in-the-world of humans. Personhood refers to key aspects of human experiences in every place and time, such as what does it mean to be a person? How do individuals relate to the rest of society? What is the role of objects and other non-human elements in the construction of human identity? How do different members of society perceive and conceptualise themselves, other human beings, and non-human entities? What is the relationship between the conceptualisation of self and the perception of the world? All of these questions are ontological, and without considering them, current understandings of past societies can only be incomplete, focusing on certain aspects of past societies (social, political and economic organisation, for instance) but without exploring some of the most intriguing and fundamental aspects of human experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/Chronology</th>
<th>Iberian Peninsula</th>
<th>Mediterranean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West (Portuguese Extremadura)</td>
<td>Central (Iberia)</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3200 BC</td>
<td>Foundation of Zambujal</td>
<td>Foundation of Los Milares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000 B</td>
<td>Foundation of Vila Nova de São Pedro/Vila Nova I (VNSP I)</td>
<td>Construction of the forts at Los Milares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2700 BC</td>
<td>Vila Nova II/VNSP II</td>
<td>Abandonment of Los Milares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2200 BC</td>
<td>Cjempozuelas variant of beaker Bell</td>
<td>Foundation of La Bastida and La Almoloya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700 BC</td>
<td>Proto-Cogotas</td>
<td>Maximum expansion of the Argaric World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1550 BC</td>
<td>Cogotas I</td>
<td>Collapse of the Argaric world</td>
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*Figure 2: The Chalcolithic and Early-Middle Bronze Age in the Southeast compared with other areas of the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean*
In relation to epistemological reasons, the failure to understand or consider the importance of the aforementioned questions constitutes a serious hinderance, having negative consequences in the interpretations of these societies. By default, if researchers do not possess some level of understanding about prehistoric identity, they tend to project their own personhood onto the past. This is a major mistake, as contemporary notions of personhood carry with them a whole way of conceptualising reality, and thus their uncritical application to the past risks interpreting the past according to parameters that would have not made any sense for the people in those societies. Thus, topics such as the development of complexity, the appearance of elites, the role of funerary practices or the importance of myths cannot be adequately grasped without explicitly acknowledging that people in the past were radically different from people in the present.

The third and final reason to study personhood relates to the previous one but also carries axiological value: the attribution of contemporary notions of personhood onto the past is, apart from being methodologically flawed, ethically questionable, as it implies that only one way of being a person exists or makes sense. This has been extensively criticised (i.e., Fowler 2004), and it often implies that the only valid notion of ‘human’ is that that has characterised the contemporary researcher (Braidotti 2013, Frost 2006). The failure to grasp the otherness of prehistoric personhood can thus be characterised as a form of ontological violence, as it denies any way of being a person that is not centred around the identity of the contemporary researcher.

It is important to summarise here that the raison d’être for this work is, then, the theoretical exploration of already published evidence in order to explore personhood, a topic that has barely received any attention. This work does not attempt to offer a systematic and in-depth analysis of the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age societies, but to study their notion of personhood through a detailed analysis of their funerary practices, and a general knowledge about their social, political and economic features and organisation.
1.3. Aims and objectives.

This thesis aims to fulfil three objectives, which are connected to each other and constitute a single, coherent project.

The first objective is to assemble a theoretical framework through which it is possible to explore prehistoric personhood, specifically late prehistoric oral societies in a European context. This framework is assembled, rather than elaborated, insofar as it is heavily based in the work of Almudena Hernando, and especially two of her books: *Arqueología de la Identidad* (2002), unpublished in English, and *The Fantasy of Individuality* (2017). Hernando’s model has provided the logic behind this project, particularly in terms of how relational and individual personhood are constructed and relate to each other, as well as their role providing ontological security to human groups with different degrees of socioeconomic complexity. Equally important have been her ideas regarding the parameters that humans use to conceptualise reality, and the available modes to represent that reality. While Hernando’s theories could be said to constitute more than half of the theoretical apparatus used here, the work of other authors has been combined with her insights in assembling of a theoretical framework. In this sense, theories and concepts from the philosopher Charles Taylor and his *A Secular Age* (2007) have played a central role in understanding how the self perceives itself in relation to both non-human entities and other human beings, as well as in what could have been the modes of experiencing reality available for human groups. Finally, John Chapman’s theories of fragmentation (2007, 2000), along with different concepts from current debates in the anthropology of personhood (especially the notions of partibility and permeability) have completed the theoretical framework used to approach personhood in the southeast of Iberia.

The second objective for this thesis, after constructing a theoretical framework, has been to put it to work, effectively attempting to infer personhood in the southeast of Iberia during the Chalcolithic and the Argaric Bronze Age. The characterisation of personhood offered here is, with most certainty, incomplete and inexact. However, and despite its incompleteness and limitations, this attempt to study personhood remains necessary and valuable for two reasons. The first one is that, through specifically engaging with prehistoric personhood on its own terms, the uncritical projection of contemporary, Western, post-industrial, and modern (á la Latour) notions of personhood onto the past should be, if not stopped, at least significantly reduced. This means that although the notions of personhood inferred here might not be entirely
right or accurately reflect it the way it would have been, at least they have a better chance of resembling it, considering that the theoretical model used here has been designed to specifically understand personhood in oral societies with high degrees of social and economic complexity and affluent material regimes. The second reason is the most obvious one: personhood was a key element of prehistoric societies, and current understandings of the past will never be complete if they do not include it. This is not an attack on other approaches or topics of research; archaeological understandings of the southeast of Iberia should not be a zero-sum game. Ideally, increasing current understandings of personhood should improve the way other issues, such as social organisation or inequality, are understood. Similarly, personhood needs to be approached using knowledge about social and economic practices. However, the specific potential of understanding prehistoric personhood is not limited to improving current explanations about other aspects of society; personhood is an important topic, one that relates to some of the most fundamental aspects of humanity: what does it mean to be a person in a specific place and time? What is the role that objects play in the constitution of the self? How were they different from us? Can we understand what it means to be a person in another place and time? Do we perceive the same world? Does everyone inhabit the same reality?

The third and final aim with this project is to bring personhood to the centre of academic discussions, something that this thesis attempts to do in reference to two academic, national, and language-bound traditions. In relation to the Spanish academic tradition, and focused on the southeast of Iberia, this work aims to promote discussions about personhood in general, a topic that has received little attention. Regardless of whether different authors agree with the arguments exposed here, the topic would enrich contemporary debates. Moreover, this particular thesis can serve as an introduction to how personhood is being approached in the English-speaking world. In reference to the English-speaking, UK-based academic tradition of studying personhood, while as a topic it has received significant attention in the last two decades, this project will hopefully bring something new to these debates, which is the use of a model that significantly differs from the posthumanist approach which seem to be mainstream now, and that perhaps be included within a New Humanism (for an introduction to posthumanism in Archaeology, see Fernández-Götz et al. 2021; for the proposal of a New Humanism, see Díaz de Liaño and Fernández-Götz 2021). In both cases, the usefulness of this thesis will hopefully go beyond its acceptance or rejection, contributing to new avenues of debate and being used, at least, as a construct to think against.
1.4. Justification.

The justification for this project is closely connected with its objectives. This thesis contributes to archaeological knowledge, theoretical archaeology, and the discipline in three main ways:

1) It provides the first explicit account of prehistoric personhood in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula during Late Prehistory, through the direct analysis of funerary evidence and in relation to current interpretations of the social, economic, and political life of late prehistoric societies in the Southeast.

2) It assembles a theoretical framework to study prehistoric personhood, based mostly on the work of A. Hernando, but with multiple addendums to increase its heuristic potential, making it one of the most complete and in-depth heuristic tools to approach personhood in late prehistoric Europe. This framework, which is labelled here as ‘Contextual-Structural’ model, is significantly different from the so-called Multiple-spectrum models that are currently mainstream in Archaeology, and which are closely connected to Posthumanist stances.

3) The final contribution of this project is the connection of two academic traditions, introducing current debates in the archaeology of personhood into the Spanish-speaking context, where they have not received significant attention, while also contributing to those debates in the English-speaking sphere from a peripheral perspective that is mostly novel for non-Spanish researchers, and which significantly differs from mainstream paradigms in the English-speaking world.

The rationale or justification for this project being developed in its current form, including its theoretical focus, its chronological, and geographical scope are due to three main reasons: the interests and strengths of the author, the current lack of any specific studies about personhood for the proposed area and chronology, and finally, the incredible wealth of available evidence in the proposed area and chronology, making it the best area for the study of personhood during the Late Prehistory of the Iberian Peninsula.

The primary focus on the theoretical aspects of archaeology, mostly in identity and particularly in notions of personhood, are explained in relation to the career of the author, whose trajectory includes a BA in Archaeology at Complutense University, where his dissertation was supervised by Dr. Almudena Hernando, and a postgraduate degree at Brunel
University London, where he studied an MSc in Psychological and Psychiatric Anthropology, and did participant observation among the Shuar in the Ecuadorian Amazon for his master’s dissertation about notions of personhood and its relationships with material culture in this Jivaroan group. The election of that particular postgraduate degree was due to the author’s interest in identity and personhood, and thus it was a deliberate election to acquire a richer anthropological understanding of identity, personhood, and emotions with the hope of being able to apply it to prehistory.

The election of the chronological and geographical scope of the project, this is, the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula during the Chalcolithic and the Early-Middle Bronze (3200-1550 BC) -the so called Millaran and Argaric societies-, was due to two main factors: the remarkable wealth of published evidence and interpretations of these societies, and the current lack of research about their notions of personhood.

Regarding the first one -the abundance of archaeological knowledge about these societies-, it is a requirement in order to approach their notions of personhood. The work presented here has been produced fundamentally through the analysis of funerary evidence and its interpretations, being then strengthened by their abundance. Moreover, several features of personhood require to be analysed in connection to different aspects of the social, economic, political, and symbolic world of the late prehistoric societies in the Southeast. Thus, the fact that the late prehistoric societies of the Southeast might well be the most thoroughly researched prehistoric groups of the whole Iberian Peninsula necessarily implies that they are the best candidates for the theoretical analysis of their personhood.

In relation to the second element -the lack of research about their personhood- is likely the result of the history of archaeological research in the area, as seen in Chapter 2. The topic of personhood has received little attention in Spanish Archaeology, especially beyond the realm of Theoretical Archaeology. However, several authors have recently started studying different aspects of identity in the Southeast, such as the relationships between gender and identity or the connection between funerary practices and individuality/relationality, both elements explored in different sections of Chapter 5. Therefore, it seems to be the perfect time to explicitly engage with personhood in the Southeast, as there is abundant available evidence to engage with the topic, and yet it remains severely understudied, besides some very specific aspects of it.
1.5. Limitations.

This project has three clear limitations. The first one is related to its material scope: this is not an exhaustive analysis of the archaeological evidence from the Chalcolithic and the Bronze Age. While general trends and specific sites and objects are analysed, a multiplicity of other elements have not been mentioned or are explored very briefly. The rationale for the inclusion of certain sites or types of evidence, and not others, is explained in more detail in the ‘Sources and Methodology’ section (section 1.5).

A second limitation of this work is its chronological scope, which ranges from the Chalcolithic (ca. 3300 BC) to the end of the Argaric Bronze Age (1500 BC), which corresponds to the Middle Bronze Age. It does not cover, then, the Late Bronze Age, which would have been an interesting element to include to demonstrate that the evolution of personhood cannot be reduced to unilinear ‘progress’ from relational to individualised personhood. With the collapse of the Argaric world, it seems that the ‘resistance practices’ against the individuality and inequality of the Argaric elites, ‘succeeded’, and as a result the degree of individualisation that societies in the southeast of Iberia were experimenting with clearly decreased, as analysed by Gonzalo Aranda (2015, 2012).

The third limitation is an epistemological one, implied in the nature of the kind of analysis that this work aims to do. Personhood is not directly observable through the analysis of the materiality of the past, and thus studying it is considerably more difficult than approaching technology, social and economic complexity, or even political and social organisation. In this sense, the exploration of personhood offered here can be characterised as a ‘strong interpretation’ in the sense proposed by Felipe Criado (2012:207-208). While a ‘weak interpretation’ is the one with a limited and non-ambitious heuristic potential, and where the interpretation does not require a strong subjective stance from the interpreter, the ‘strong interpretation’ implies the opposite: an ambitious heuristic potential and a strong exercise of subjective input – that is, of interpretation – from the researcher. This means that the interpretation of prehistoric personhood offered here attempts to recuperate prehistoric subjectivity, or at least approach past personhood without reverting to Western and contemporary models of subjectivity. This entails a double risk, as it involves a double interpretation. First, because the meaning and current interpretations of past societies are already an interpretation (particularly in the case of funerary evidence). But on top of that
interpretation, another layer of subjectivity is being used to infer personhood through these previous interpretations, and the subjectivity used in this second layer of interpretation is, as mentioned before, based on an alternative theoretical model that significantly differs from contemporary, Western and post-capitalist models of subjectivity.

1.6. Sources and methodology.

The methodology used for this project is the theoretical, critical analysis of published literature that can be divided into primary and secondary sources. As primary sources, the main ones are excavation reports and scientific publications focusing on the description and analysis of archaeological evidence. Secondary sources would be, in contrast, the interpretations of that archaeological evidence, in the form of research publications where the empirical archaeological evidence is contextualised and interpreted, with the aim of elaborating different theories and hypothesis that attempt to explain larger phenomena. These sources have been interpreted through the lens of the theoretical framework explained in Chapter 3. This framework explicitly aims to infer the consequences that particular phenomena -documented through primary sources or through their interpretation through secondary sources-, would have had in the construction, maintenance, and evolution of personhood. The methodology used for this PhD, then, has not involved the production of new empirical evidence through excavations or surveys, the analysis of archaeological materials, or the review of unpublished or inaccessible sources.

The primary and secondary evidence used here to infer personhood has been chosen in relation to two main criteria. The first one has been that of being representative of the current archaeological knowledge about the societies of the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. This means that although there is certainly a lot of information that has not been included or considered in the elaboration of this dissertation (as explained in section 1.4), hopefully the overall picture of the Chalcolithic and Early-Middle Bronze Age in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula is relatively rich and representative. The second one has been the completeness of the available evidence, this is, which sources allowed to offer a more detailed picture of the empirical evidence or its interpretations in order to infer personhood. This has affected particularly the selection of case studies, but also the analysis of particular features or processes of personhood. In relation to the case studies, the settlements selected (Los Millares, El
Barranquete, Almizaraque, La Bastida de Totana, Cerro de la Encina, San Cristóbal and La Almoloya) have been chosen due to being well documented, but also important and representative of the Chalcolithic and the Argaric Bronze Age. In this sense, both central and more peripheral, as well as large and small settlements have been included, with the aim of achieving an acceptable degree of representativity. Nevertheless, and while these settlements have been analysed in more detail both in their general features and in connection to the different phenomena from which personhood can be inferred, the primary and secondary sources used in this dissertation are not limited to these case studies. Thus, although they have received more detailed attention, the evidence available from other multiple sites has been analysed as well and it is used throughout this work.

The quality of the sources has also affected the inference of personhood in certain contexts. While most of the primary and secondary sources used here to infer personhood are well documented, certain elements whose documentation is relatively incomplete or has not been recorded in multiple sites have nevertheless been included. The rationality for the inclusion of these phenomena has been that, despite their relatively unreliability as sources, they allow to infer particularly interesting aspects of personhood that cannot be explored through other sources. This is the case, for instance, of certain fragmentation practices related to Chalcolithic pots (reviewed in sections 4.7.2 and 4.7.3), a phenomenon that was documented by the excavators of both Los Millares and El Barranquete, but which lacks clear parallels or any detailed analysis.

1.7. The structure of this thesis.

This thesis is organised in seven chapters, including this one. The second chapter, ‘A Brief History of Theoretical Archaeology in Southeast Iberia’, focuses on the different theoretical approaches that have been used to study the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula during late prehistory, also including a brief rationale of how these approaches have studied personhood or, more often, why they have not done it.

The third chapter, ‘Theoretical framework. A brief history of the Archaeology of Personhood, the structural-contextual model, and power in societies against the state’, begins with a short history of archaeological thought about personhood, reviewing its most important
debates and describing the main models available to study personhood in the English-speaking world. Then, it explains in detail the theoretical framework used to study personhood. It reviews in detail the work of A. Hernando, its main source of inspiration and foundation of the model, and then reviews other elements that complete the model, including certain concepts from Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*, ‘fragmentation theory’ by John Chapman, and several concepts from the anthropology of personhood, particularly the notions of partibility and permeability. It finishes with a short reflection on power and resistance in societies against the state (*sensu* Clastres), which seems necessary to understand general social dynamics in southeastern Iberia, a context characterised by a marked increase in social complexity.

The fourth chapter, ‘Personhood during the Chalcolithic’, offers a brief introduction to the Chalcolithic societies of the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula, illustrating them in certain detail with the case studies of Los Millares, El Barranquete and Almizaraque. Then, it proceeds to analyse in detail different processes and objects related to funerary practices, inferring how they would affect the development, maintenance, or modification of personhood in these societies, including the presence of non-human persons and the role of non-human entities such as objects in the construction of personhood.

In the fifth chapter, ‘Personhood during the Argaric Bronze Age’, the funerary evidence from the Early and Middle Bronze Age is examined, exploring personhood under the Argaric norm, but also among the groups that reutilised Chalcolithic burials.

The sixth chapter, ‘Discussion: Personhood and the conceptualisation of the world in Late Prehistory’, briefly recapitulates the main features of personhood analysed in previous chapters, to then explore, following the theoretical framework exposed in chapter 3, how the world could have been perceived and conceptualised in a manner coherent with both the notions of personhood and the social and cultural complexity attributed to the groups in the southeast of Iberia.

The seventh and last chapter, ‘Conclusion and future research’, includes a very short summary of the main objectives and results defended in this thesis, and then offers some thoughts on future research that could relate to this project, either continuing it, completing it, or improving it.
Chapter 2: A Brief History of Theoretical Archaeology in Southeast Iberia

The following chapter presents a brief review of the main theoretical approaches that have been used to study the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. This brief literature review is not so much an in-depth analysis of every author and theory that has been developed to study the southeast of Iberia, but an attempt to provide a minimal intellectual history of these paradigms that can serve as an introduction to the chapter’s key point: how and why these approaches have ignored issues of identity and, particularly, of personhood. While the general trend has been to ignore personhood as a topic altogether, this of course does not mean that these approaches have not worked within a specific understanding of what it means to be a person in late prehistory. The section finishes with the approaches employed after the late 1980s, as those are, with some modifications and late additions, the same perspectives that are being used today. A symbolic date for this ‘beginning’ of contemporary studies of the southeast of Iberia could be the publication of Vicente Lull and Jordi Estévez’s Propuesta metodológica para el estudio de las necrópolis argáricas (1986) for the Bronze Age, an article that even today is an obligatory reference. For the Chalcolithic, the equivalent could be the rejection by Robert Chapman (1981) of the hypothetical egalitarianism existing at Los Millares, proposed earlier on by Martin Almagro Basch and Antonio Arribas (1963). For a more detailed analysis of the history of archaeology in the Southeast, the work of Mederos offers detailed biographies of the main authors (1994, 1996, 1999, 2004), while the Martínez Navarrete offers a detailed analysis of the Bronze age as a paradigm in the 20th century Spanish archaeology (Martínez Navarrete 1989).

The chapter begins with short explanation of the conceptual framework used to analyse the different archaeological paradigms, to then explain some of the main features of Archaeology in the 19th century, focusing on the development of the chrono-typological and technochronological models. The rest of the chapter is divided into two main sections, corresponding to the archaeological paradigms working within an idealist conceptualisation of culture, and those working within an integrated one.

During the extended period where archaeological research has been conducted in the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula, numerous paradigms and approaches have been used by different authors to engage with the materiality of the past. To simplify this brief review of the literature on the topic, the classification proposed by Almudena Hernando (1988) is being followed. Hernando states, following the work of Juan Vicent (1985), that there have been two main ways of understanding the concept of culture within prehistory, and depending on them, it is possible to divide otherwise different archaeological paradigms into two main trends: those working within an idealist notion of culture, and those conceptualising it as integrated. The first group, which operates with an integrated notion of culture, characterises it as an external phenomenon to the individual, having its own features and dynamics. Conversely, the second or idealist group, conceptualises culture as the product of the conscious individual mind, and thus is regulated by individual acts.

An idealist conceptualisation of culture understands it as a mental phenomenon, composed by ideas and norms that are consciously shared by individuals. There are no general rules governing how culture works and evolves, and its functioning depends entirely on psychological laws that cannot be directly studied in prehistory. Thus, and to study prehistoric cultures, three concepts structure idealist approaches to prehistory (Hernando, 1987:172-173). The first one, historicism, refers to the idea that every culture is the result of its own historical circumstances; the second one, normativism, is based on the notion that the ideas (culture) of any given society ‘materialise’ as material culture, and thus through the study of objects it is possible to access some of those ideas. The third key concept is diffusionism, according to which the only way of explaining similarities between different cultures is through diffusion; this means that innovations only happen once, in one place, to then spread from there. Contrariwise, integrated conceptualisations of culture understand it as a whole, with multiple hierarchical and interrelated features. The modification of any of those features or relationships implies a change whose consequences can be felt in the whole system. This understanding implies that culture tends to have regularities, and thus this trend has focused on nomothetic research strategies.
As for how different approaches have related to each other, and to which extent they subsist in today’s theoretical landscape, the conceptual framework proposed by Manuel Calvo Trías (2003:307) is particularly useful. While other understandings assume that scientific disciplines evolve with the availability of new data and without external influence (i.e., in positivist historiography), or with the alternation of normal science and revolutions (Kuhnian model), or with phases of normal science which change imperceptibly slowly (Toulminian model), Calvo Trías defends that the notion of ‘ramified progress’ proposed by Wolfgang Stegmüller (1979), and based on a structuralist perspective, is the most productive approach to understanding Spanish archaeology (2003:312). This model proposes that science progresses in a ramified fashion, like an evolutionary tree, with the different approaches and paradigms becoming more and more separated due to the increased feedback from the growing data and the methodological and theoretical refinements being developed, until they eventually become incompatible and inconsistent with each other. This conceptualisation reflects the complexity of social sciences, where radically different paradigms are asking different questions to incomplete sets of data, which eventually can lead to a point where the same materials are being used to sustain incommensurable narratives. Stegmüller also uses the notion of ‘Kuhn’s loss’ (1979) to explain what happens with paradigms that become less fashionable: they do not disappear but are displaced into marginal areas within the discipline. It is even possible that some perspectives, fashionable once, lose so much prestige that they are labelled as barely scientific; they stop appearing in the most important journals, receive scarce attention from those in the academic institutions with more intellectual capital, and even science historians might stop writing about them, thus leading to the fantasy of their disappearance. Nevertheless, certain events can lead to a new popularity of these theories or at least parts of them, as the identification between researchers and paradigms is based on an attraction that is often connected to social and emotional values, rather than to their heuristic potential (Trigger 1992:18).

According to this conceptual framework, the different paradigms and theories that will be briefly described in the following section should not be understood as a succession, but as an evolutionary (phylogenetic) tree (see figure 2). To continue with the metaphor, the roots of the tree would be constituted by chrono-typological and techno-typological approaches, originating in the 19th century, while the trunk would be the cultural-historical school of thought, from which the large branches of various colonial models would emerge. Smaller branches would later emerge, representing the different functionalist/processual and materialist
approaches. These last elements, although remarkably different from the previous structure, would still be indebted to the roots, trunk, and earlier branches, which after all constitute a huge amount of material evidence and intellectual labour in the form of typologies, classifications, and earlier interpretations. It is important to remember, however, that the role of early cultural-historical and colonial approaches is not limited to supporting later ones, as these paradigms are still alive (although heavily refined, as it could be expected) and influencing certain aspects of current debates (i.e., the importance of colonial models to understand relationships between centres and peripheries of the Argaric world). A final note regarding the metaphor is that the image shows how the roots are ‘exposed’, as an allegory to the strong critiques that the chrono-typological and techno-typological models are starting to receive (see Hernando 2015).

Figure 3: Metaphorical representation of the theoretical paradigms in the Archaeology of the Southeast as a phylogenetic tree.
2.2. Archaeology in the 19th century: The development of the chrono-typological and techno-chronological systems

The origin of the archaeology of the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula can be traced back to the 19th century, despite the absolute lack of any institutional framework to train archaeologists or fund archaeological fieldwork. Nevertheless, two important events, both of them foreign in origin but with profound consequences in Spanish archaeology, would take place: the development of the chrono-typological and the techno-chronological systems, and the arrival of the Siret brothers to the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula.

During the end of the 19th century, prehistory, both as a concept and as a field of enquiry was fostered by the application of Darwinian perspectives. These approaches, while committing themselves with the Enlightenment’s mission of expanding human knowledge, were at the same time aiming to empirically prove the biological and cultural superiority of Europe (Lubbock 1865) and thus justify on moral and ethical grounds the civilising mission of European imperialism. But this process also had consequences at a smaller scale, as prehistoric archaeology was being used for nationalistic purposes within those European states; in Spain, for instance, attempts to connect contemporary Spain with an idealised past persisted until well into the 20th century (Ruiz Rodríguez 1990:308).

To classify human societies, techno-chronological and chrono-typological complexity played key roles, as it was necessary to establish the level of ‘primitiveness’ of non-contemporary cultures. In 1836, Christian Jürgensen Thomsen and Jens Jacob Asmussen Worsaae (1836, 1849 for the English version) had formulated their theory about the Three Ages (Stone, Bronze, and Iron), where they associated the use of certain technologies with historical progress, thus inaugurating the techno-chronological system according to which technology would be the key element structuring chronological conceptualisations of history. Later, in 1865, James Lubbock subdivided the Stone Age into two different phases, the Palaeolithic and Neolithic. This subdivision, although developed using material evidence as a reference, also included an economical classification of the evidence, with hunter-gatherers associated with the Palaeolithic and farmers to the Neolithic. It is interesting to remark that despite the future success of this unilinear evolutionary approach, during the 19th century some researchers had already challenged this model, suggesting that different technological levels could coexist during the same period due to socially restricted access to technology (i.e., Nilsson 1834).
As archaeological research was carried on, chronology needed to be developed to accommodate more objects, phases, and sequences, thus becoming more complex. The notion of a ‘Copper Age’ or Chalcolithic was not developed until 1861, when it was first conceptualised by Adolphe Morlot (1861), who had studied the use of copper in North American native cultures. Morlot ventured that before the use of bronze, the scarcity of tin might not have driven primitive societies to use copper alone in Europe. Nevertheless, the existence of a new age was not easily accepted, and during this period the debate between phases, ages and terminologies was constant. Lubbock, in his Prehistoric Times (1865), said that a Copper Age should not exist, while Francisco María Tubino, in his Estudios Prehistóricos (1868) was the first Spanish researcher that took interest in it. At the same time, in 1865 the Mesolithic was ‘invented’, when Thomas Johnson Westropp defended the need for an intermediate phase between Palaeolithic and Neolithic.

However, there were a few criticisms against these models. In the Spanish context, the first one to point out their weakness was Juan Vilanova y Pierta, who wrote in 1872 Origen, Naturaleza y Antigüedad del Hombre. In this book, he stated that these typological classifications did not consider the possibility of different technologies being contemporaneous, or how the use of one or another could depend on the available raw resources, or even contemplate the possibility of contemporary human societies with different degrees of technological development. Despite the appearance of these first criticisms, Oscar Montelius developed the chrono-typological method in 1871, which assumed that there was a sort of Darwinian evolution, in terms of increasing complexity, in prehistoric material culture. According to this, the careful analysis of the simplicity, functionality and decoration of an object would allow prehistorians to grade its antiquity, following a scheme of direct correlation between complexity and ‘modernity’. Importantly, this system presented a clear tendency toward diffusionism since its very origin, as every periodisation and comparison used previous evidence from a different area (regardless of the existence of any connection) to date the new

Figure 4: Portrait of Christian Jürgensen Thomsen by Johan Vilhelm Gertner in 1849. Source: Wikipedia.
evidence (Orihuela 1999:38). Although most of the researchers involved in this debate were more of an erudite than fieldworkers, the system also had an impact in fieldwork archaeology: in 1872, Heinrich Schliemann put into practice what would become the classic methodology of stratigraphic individualisation with fossil guides, inaugurating the practical validity of the chrono-typological paradigm.

Despite their early origin, both the techno-chronological and chrono-typological model have continued playing an important role in archaeological reasoning. The first one constitutes the central element structuring prehistoric chronology, with periods and phases that are characterised by the appearance of different technical innovations, such as the use of new materials (Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, etc). While these periods have other social and economic features associated with them (certain social complexity, different settlement patterns, etc), the fact that technology is the primary element to label time periods is quite telling about what type of elements are important for researchers, who are the ones creating chronologies. While the chrono-typological model has lost much of its original implications, once Montelius’ simplistic correlations have been overcome, it still establishes that objects and change are the main elements structuring chronologies, which again might be more indicative of the kind of elements that modern researchers are interested in (Hernando 2015).

In relation to the conceptualisations of identity and personhood within the techno-chronological and the chrono-typological models, the topic did not receive any explicit attention, which is not surprising considering the research context. The techno-typological model was not concerned with the individual members of society, let alone with ideas about what it meant to be a person. The techno-technological model, as well as the chrono-typological, are concerned fundamentally with the classification of human societies according to the complexity of their material culture from a unilinear perspective. Their lack of
engagement with issues of identity and personhood can be understood as an assumption that there is a single way of being a person: that of modernity, in whose construction 19th century archaeology played an important role. If there is only one way of being a person, and this model of person resembles the white, privileged man of 19th century society, and societies’ degree of civilisation is classified according to techno-typological and chrono-typological models, then the necessary conclusion is that prehistoric personhood could only be perceived to be primitive and incomplete, a middle stage between the ‘savage’ hunter-gatherer and the ‘civilised’ 19th century man.

2.3. The southeast of Iberia through approaches with an idealist conceptualisation of culture.

Slightly after the main features of the techno-chronological and the chrono-typological models were well established as the structuring elements of chronology and as reasoning devices for prehistoric research, different approaches with idealist conceptualisations of culture would arrive in the southeast of Iberia. This notable development was preceded by the presence of the Siret brothers, who would inaugurate ‘scientific’ research in the Iberian Peninsula. At the beginning of the 20th century, cultural-historical paradigms would become the dominant approach, and their centrality in prehistory was in part successful due to their capacity to be reformulated and adapt; their most notorious adaptations would be the colonial models, which maintained diffusionist mechanisms to explain change and an idealist conceptualisation of culture.

2.3.1. The beginning of prehistoric archaeology in the southeast of Spain: The Siret brothers.

Although some archaeological evidence was known as early as 1868, when Manuel De Góngora y Martínez published Antigüedades Prehistóricas de Andalucía and described the megalithic necrópolis of Dílar, in Granada (Román Diaz 1996:50), systematic archaeological research would not be carried out until the arrival of the Siret brothers, one decade later.
Born in Belgium, and belonging to a privileged, arts-oriented family, Henri and Louis Siret decided to become mining engineers and work abroad. Henri, the eldest brother, arrived the southeast of Spain in 1878, and since his arrival combined his professional activity with his hobby of studying and collecting the antiques that his workers were discovering while carrying out mining activities. Henri kept his younger brother well informed of his progress by letter until 1880, when Louis was able to join him in the southeast. When in 1886 Henri had to relocate to the Belgian Congo, Louis was left in charge of both the mining activity and the archaeological works, which he would continue throughout his life with occasional help from Henri. By 1887, they had already published *Les premiers ages du metal dans le sud-est de l’Espage*, a book that would earn them various awards and attract international attention to the southeast of Spain.

During his life, Louis Siret discovered, excavated, and documented multiple emblematic sites in the southeast of Spain, including Campos, Fuente Álamo, Gatas, El Oficio, Almizaraque, El Argar, El Garcél or Los Millares. The quality of his excavation and their documentation would set an example of meticulousness that would not be met until the late 20th century, although most of the interpretations of those early materials no longer have any support. Initially, the Sirets recognised three different and successive civilizations in the southeast of Iberia, which they identified with different ages: a Neolithic one, a transitional one, and finally the Metal Age civilisation (1890:319). However, shortly afterwards, in *La fin de l’époque néolithique* (1892), Louis eliminated the Transition period, integrating it into the Neolithic, that became divided into three phases: Ancient, Middle and Recent. The latter included those sites where traces of metallurgy were found. It was in this Recent Neolithic that the emblematic site of Los Millares, that later would become the most renowned Chalcolithic site in the southeast of Iberia, was included.

Due to the difficulty of establishing relative chronologies at the time, given the lack of other regional materials for comparison, Siret’s interpretations were based on analogies and comparisons with oriental materials, as eastern Mediterranean sites were better known, thus inaugurating the *ex oriente lux* tendency in the archaeology of the southeast of Iberia. Notwithstanding, this oriental evidence was not used as a mere reference to date the southeaster materials; Louis Siret assumed that any trace of material that could be like those in the East *must* had been brought to Spain by eastern travellers, conquerors, or colonisers. According to him, during the Recent Neolithic the Phoenicians had visited the southeast of Iberia, bringing
copper metallurgy with them, as well as an increased religiosity and trade (Román 1996:53). He would later add, in *L’Espagne prehistórique* (1891), that they also brought irrigation, weaving, the cult of the dead, and the use of ostrich eggs, thus linking those ‘foreign’ influences that he was observing in sites like El Gárcel and Los Millares with the archaeological evidence from Troy and Mycenae. Nevertheless, he also recognised that there was no direct evidence of contact between those civilizations and the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula (Román 1996:55).

For the Metal civilisation/age, his interpretation was different, as he could not identify any traces of oriental influence. That led him to defend its development as being autonomous and local (Mederos 1996:383). In this Metal Age he included some of the features that would later characterise the Argaric world: settlements in hills, very often fortified; inhumations in urns and stone cists, inside dwelling areas, the frequent use of metals for ornaments. (Siret 1906-1907). From 1906, Louis Siret started identifying the Peninsula with Turdetania, following ideas of Manuel Gómez Moreno (1905), and made technological innovations in the southeastern Neolithic dependant on external influences, especially from the Aegean and Troy (Mederos 1996:388). This claim was contested by Arthur Evans, who was excavating Cnossos at the time, and who stated that the Spanish Neolithic was not only independent in origin, but also earlier than the Aegean Neolithic, having started in the third millennium BC. While Siret did not accept Evan’s rebuttal, he accepted his date for the origin of the Neolithic. Evan’s refusal to accept the Aegean origin of the Neolithic in the southeast of Iberia was backed by two ideas: the fact that it would imply a very long Aegean Neolithic, and the lack of any strong material evidence to relate both contexts (Evans 1908:30). The debate between the possible Aegean origin of the Spanish Neolithic would remain still for decades, until Colin Renfrew demonstrated that the attempt of Beatrice Blance to connect both contexts was untenable (Mederos 1996:388).
In summary, although Siret’s grand interpretations of the evidence from the southeast of Iberia are no longer tenable, his influence cannot be overstated. His diffusionist proposals predated those of the cultural-historical paradigm, which would become hegemonic for half a century, and he also hypothesised that some sites such as Almizaraque could have been colonies, again hinting the potential of a colonial model that would become popular decades later. Siret’s model is also a good example of how diffusionist and evolutionist perspectives could coexist. But perhaps the most recognised aspect of his work was the quality of his excavations; Siret excavated numerous sites, including both Los Millares and El Argar, and the documentation of these sites was of extreme quality. Moreover, his unpublished work would be the foundation for some of the most important works on megaliths in the southeast of Iberia, such as the one by George and Vera Leisner (1943).

In relation to the study of personhood in this early phase of archaeological research, the same principles mentioned to explain 19th century archaeology still apply; there was a single way of being a person (that of the modern, white, privileged individual), and everything else would have been located somewhere in between that idealised human and the ‘primitive’. In the case of Louis Siret, his knowledge of 19th century ethnology, attested by the multiple ethnographic examples that he used, would have likely reinforced these views; it is also likely that he perceived Spaniards in rural Andalusia in a similar fashion, as can be inferred from the way he refers to them (Siret and Siret 1999 [1889]).

2.3.2. The cultural-historical school.

The expansion and institutionalisation of prehistoric research in the southeast of Iberia (and in the rest of Spain) was coetaneous to the arrival of idealist conceptualisations of culture through the cultural-historical paradigm. Both processes were supported and enabled by the creation of the Junta de Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas in 1907, the first large national institution to promote scientific research in Spain. The Junta funded research stays abroad for promising students, and in the case of prehistory and archaeology, most of them, including central figures of Spanish archaeology such as Martín Almagro Basch, Pedro Bosch Gimpera, or Juan Cabré, spent time in Germany, where cultural-historical archaeology was at its peak. Among these researchers, perhaps the most important one was Pedro Bosch Gimpera, who would occupy the first Chair in Primitive History in Spain in 1917, at the University of Barcelona. His role in Spanish prehistory cannot be overstated and has received
careful attention (Mederos 1999), as he was the first one to develop a general overview of Spanish late prehistory, which would become the ruling paradigm for more than half a century despite its highly speculative nature.

Bosch Gimpera had studied with Hubert Schmidt, who was at that time the main representative of the cultural-historical school in Germany. Schmidt had read Siret’s works on southeastern Spain and was particularly interested in it as a key area to explain phenomena such as Megalithism, the Bell Beaker phenomenon, and the origin of complex Bronze Age societies, for which the Argaric culture seemed a perfect example. He had even edited a book about late prehistory in Spain, titled Estudios acerca de los principios de la Edad de los Metales en España (1915), mainly based on Siret’s excavation data. Schmidt, as an expert in the archaeological evidence of both the Mediterranean and central Europe, had been the classifier of Schliemann’s materials from Troy, following Meyer’s chronology for Egypt. He was particularly interested in the so-called Eneolithic because he thought that, being the period between the highly isolated Neolithic and the continuously connected Bronze Age, it would have been a key period to understand the establishment of commercial and social networks in the Mediterranean area. For this purpose, he remarked on the importance of the Bell Beaker phenomena as a fossil guide (Mederos 1999:20-21). Schmidt believed that the cultural evolution of the Iberian Peninsula during the early phases of the Metal Ages was independent, and that the later contacts were due to the richness of the southeast of Iberia in metals, which would have attracted foreigners (Schmidt 1915:16-20).

The cultural-historical school, also called the ‘cultural circles school’, represented an extremely particularist systematisation of cultures. Its basic assumptions were based on the conviction that each culture was the result of a unique sequence of development, and thus the existence of similarities was always due to diffusion. Then, prehistory’s task was to locate the centre and origin of every circle, and from there its expansion, following Ratzel’s principle of
Anthropogeography (Trigger 1992:147, Orihuela 1997:16). The philosophical principle supporting this approach is normativism, according to which each culture is a set of ideas and norms that a human group share. Its transformation, therefore, does not obey economic or social laws, but psychological laws that cannot be studied for prehistoric groups (Hernando 2001).

Bosch Gimpera embraced the notion of cultural circles and argued against Siret’s ex oriente lux, and this has made some consider Bosch Gimpera the first evolutionist in Spanish prehistory. However, as a cultural-historical archaeologist, he was not an evolutionist at all; he was indeed a diffusionist like Siret, but the difference is that he thought that the southeast of Spain could be the origin of just some innovations. His diffusionism was in fact heavily dependent on foreign invasions or migrations, to the extreme that his diffusionism has been labelled ‘invasionism’ (Hernando 1988:43). His model proposed that there had been four cultural circles in the Iberian Peninsula: Cuevas, Almeria, Pyrenean and Portuguese Megalithic (Bosch Gimpera 1922), which were associated with specific physical features (i.e., dolichocephaly for the Almeria Culture, brachycephaly combined with dolichocephaly for the Cuevas culture, etc, Bosch Gimpera 1944). While these dangerous associations between culture and race was widespread during the first half of the 20th century (exemplified in the popularity of Gustaf Kossina’s ideas in Nazi Germany), Bosch Gimpera made an effort to not go further with this assumption: ‘In order to avoid misunderstandings, it is convenient to insist that, when identifying cultures with ethnic groups, we refer to peoples in the historical sense of the word, and we would not dare to mean peoples in the anthropological sense’ (Bosch Gimpera 1922:4-5). For him, a common ethnic substrate could be a factor to explain cultural similarities, but not necessarily the only one (Hernando 1988: 42-43). Bosch Gimpera defended that the Almeria culture would be the one occupying the southeast of Iberia, with Los Millares being located in the central stages of the Eneolithic, and the Argar in the Bronze Age, being the result of an autonomous development of the Eneolithic substrate (Bosch Gimpera 1920, 1969). Nevertheless, with the beginning of the Spanish civil war, Bosch Gimpera’s career would be interrupted, as he had to flee to exile in Oxford, first, and then México.

2.3.3. The colonial model.

After the defeat of the Spanish republic in the Civil War (1936-1939), and the arrival of the fascist dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, the situation of Spanish archaeology changed dramatically. On the one hand, funding would be even more scarce than before, and at the same
time, the influence of German archaeology became even stronger, at least until the late 1940s. Authors such as Bosch Gimpera, who was a leftist republican, had to flee the country, and Spanish archaeology inaugurated a period of personalism, with a regime of personal associations between a very few individuals and the totality of resources and intellectual capital in archaeology. An example could be Martín Almagro Basch, an archaeologist with fascist sympathies that at different points was director of the Museo de Arqueología de Cataluña, the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, and Professor at the universities of Compostela, Barcelona and Madrid (Mederos 2004). At the same time, the general impoverishment of the intellectual climate in the country affected the discipline, whose evolution became overtly political in connection with the Francoist dictatorship. An example of this process can be found in the excessive attention that votive and ritual objects received, in an attempt to prove that the religiosity attributed to Spanish peoples by the fascist dictatorship had been a feature of the Iberian Peninsula since the dawn of time (as in Almagro Basch 1950, or even Almagro Gorbea 1973a).

In terms of the development of archaeology, the general dynamic consisted of avoiding new grand theories, and adding new data to Bosch Gimpera’s model (or similar models, also based on cultural circles), and thus no theoretical breakthroughs took place, but a lot of new empirical evidence was added through a cultural-historical lens. Perhaps the best example of this dynamic was the work of George and Vera Leisner, a couple of German archaeologists. The Leisners (1949) recognised at least two cultural circles coexisting on the peninsula: on the one hand, the circle of the farming people, related with the Western European circle, and through this connection, also related with the Danubian circle and the Eastern Islands circle; on the other hand, a second circle, less interested in farming practices, and closer to African populations. The Leisners defended that they had different ethnic substrates, and strongly connected changes in the material culture with the interaction between different groups; where Bosch Gimpera thought that the increase in typological complexity could be explained in terms of evolution.
and chronology, the Leisners preferred to see ‘interferences’ from interactions with another group (Hernando 1988).

The Leisners (1949) returned to the *ex oriente lux* hypothesis, stating that different features of late prehistoric cultures in the southeast of Iberia have been brought by different oriental groups: the Cycladic-Cretans had brought the tholos collective burials, as well as some idols; the African-Egyptians fine works of flint, ivory idols etc, and the Eastern Mediterraneans brought the diffusion of the Bell Beaker, glass or metallurgy, and were even the creators of Los Millares (Leisner 1949:203). The Leisners represented, from a theoretical point of view, the transition between the German cultural-historical school and the colonial model that would become so popular within Spanish archaeology. They were still influenced by the cultural-historical approach, as they still spoke about ‘cultural circles’, and their works are clearly linked with historical particularism and diffusionism; however, rather than speaking of invasions and mass migrations, as Bosch Gimpera and the cultural-historical school did, their proposal established that the relationships between two contexts could be as simple as the presence of single, specific objects or practices, thus creating individual, normative parallels that were able to explain each and every foreign item. Among the multiple archaeologists that worked within a colonial model in the southeast of Iberia, the Edinburgh graduate Beatriz Blance deserves a special mention. She attempted to explain Los Millares, as well as other large Chalcolithic sites, as proto-colonies of Eastern Mediterranean origin which would have brought metallurgy with them, on the grounds of having a unique development that was too different from the neighbouring groups (Blance 1961:192-199).

The Leisners’ work has been critiqued often, for its lack of theoretical foundation (Martínez 1985), the weakness of the archaeological evidence used to establish their theories (Chapman 1981a) and its lack of clarity (Hernando 1988), but it is undeniable that their documentation of megalithic burials in the southeast of Spain was of high quality. Moreover, the arrival of the colonial paradigm, and the abandonment of the ‘invasionist’ thesis of Bosch Gimpera to start a discussion about the arrival of ideas, small groups and commercial relationships would also be to their merit (Hernando 1988:50). The remarkable success that the colonial model would enjoy during the following decades cannot be separated from the historical conditions of its production. The 50s and 60s were a time of decolonization, and Spanish history itself was rich in examples of colonialism (Hernando 1988:51). It is important to state that in 1956, the independence of Morocco, and its annexation of the Spanish protectorate in northern Africa,
lead to the progressive lack of interest in the area by Spanish researchers, which had previously been considered important insofar as it would have been connected to Spain (i.e., Almagro Basch 1946). Spanish archaeologists started paying attention to the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East, as other European archaeologies were doing, but the post-war situation meant that the discipline could hardly afford excavations abroad; thus, forcing Spanish researchers to work with the evidence produced by others.

### 2.3.4. The crisis of the colonial model and the collapse of diffusionist models.

Almudena Hernando points out that there were two main factors that would eventually lead to the successive modifications and crisis of the colonial model (Hernando 1988:53): the excavations at Zambujal (Torres Vedras, Portugal), and the appearance of radiocarbon dating. The first one, although having mostly regional consequences, would exemplify the process that colonial models would suffer in the future. The site of Zambujal was excavated by the German Archaeological Institute of Madrid in the 1960s, and the analysis of its materials established quite clearly that these were indigenous, with barely any possibility of establishing parallels as the colonial model used to do. This led different authors to offer *ad hoc* reformulations of the model, stating that it could have been a ‘factory’ rather than a colony (Sangmeister 1964:552), or increasing the role of the indigenous population in production (Vaz Pinto and Parreira 1979), and in general, to the unjustified proposal that the settlement was inhabited by some foreign individuals in a mostly indigenous settlement (Leisner and Schubart 1966). Regarding the appearance of radiocarbon dating, this method would prove scientifically that many objects that had been explained as a voyage from the East where in fact older than their Eastern counterparts, thus posing a nearly deadly blow to the *ex oriente lux* theory. However, and despite these major issues, the colonial model was not abandoned in the southeast of Spain for various reasons (Arribas and Molina 1984), among which is the fact that its proponents were the most prominent figures of Spanish archaeology, and because Spanish researchers initially disagreed with radiocarbon dating when these contradicted their theories (as in Almagro Gorbea 1973a:197-199).

While the colonial model eventually abandoned the notion of foreign colonies during the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age, it would reject abandoning idealist notions of culture or explaining change and evolution in non-diffusionist terms. Prominent authors such as W. Schüle (1986), M. Pellicer (1986), J.J. Eiroa (1986) and M. Fernández Miranda (1985)
continued working within cultural-historical and colonial-inspired models, although from now on embracing the potential that technological advances would bring to the discipline. Whether discussing colonies or cultural circles, their work started exploring notions of ‘punctuated diffusion’ to explain the rapid expansion of metallurgy in the Western Mediterranean, the generalisation of collective inhumation during the third millennium BC, or the appearance of somewhat similar fortifications at sites such as Los Millares and Kalandriani in Greece (Hernando 1988:56ff). Nevertheless, the multiple weaknesses of the model, combined with a new socio-political situation in Spain (including the massive expansion of higher education in the 1980s, with the subsequent creation of new archaeology departments) opened the door to new approaches based on the rejection of both diffusionism and cultural-historical and colonial models. These new perspectives would be based on non-idealist conceptualisations of culture and would include functionalist and materialist models.

Cultural-historical approaches, including colonial models, showed little interest in issues of identity, let alone personhood. The exception would have been, of course, ethnicity and racial categorisations, as these would have been some of the key categories supposedly structuring prehistoric groups. It is worth remembering, however, that the degree to which racial or ethnic categories would have been deemed central to determine the traits and trajectories of prehistoric groups would have changed depending on the context; the importance of race in the work of Kossina is not equivalent to the importance that Bosch Gimpera would attribute to it, and the racial classification of prehistoric people would be more important in the work of earlier researchers (like Bosch Gimpera) than in other cultural-historical approaches taking place in the 1980s (i.e., Fernández Miranda 1985). Overall, the importance attributed to race and simplistic notions of ethnicity would diminish with the passing of time, becoming issues of little interest for researchers working within those paradigms in the last quarter of the 20th century (note, however, that the current possibilities afforded by archaeogenetics are likely to change this).

**2.4. Integrated conceptualisations of culture.**

With the crisis of the colonial model, and of cultural-historical archaeology in general, new generations of archaeologists started showing interest in integrated conceptualisations of culture, which would understand it as a complex entity whose changes and evolution would
require mechanisms of explanation beyond diffusion. Two different paradigms arrived in the southeast of Spain with integrated notions of culture, the functionalist/processual and historical materialism. Both approaches had things in common, such as an explicit engagement with theory and a deep understanding of the importance of the environment, particularly for a context like the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. However, both approaches had remarkable differences as well. Functionalism characterised different phenomena as adaptative, as it conceptualised culture as requiring some sort of equilibrium that demands mechanisms to manage changes and modifications in its conditions of existence; this emphasis on stability has been used to criticise it as having conservative socio-political implications (Fontana 1982:168). Conversely, historical materialism understood conflict to be a core element of social change and was explicitly political in its explanations about the development of inequality.

2.4.1. Functionalist archaeology.

In a functionalist approach, culture is an extra-somatic way of adapting to the environment. The different aspects of each culture are explained as being adaptive, that is, as if they were all fulfilling a function that improves the working of the whole system (Gilman 1981:2). The logic of functionalist approaches is usually exemplified through the study of the elites, one of the key phenomena in late prehistory. According to functionalist approaches, the appearance and expansion of the elites would imply that they were fulfilling a useful function for society (redistribution of goods, coordinating complex tasks, etc), as only elements allowing adaptation and contributing positively to society would successfully develop according to functionalist logic. Regarding the functionalist/processual archaeologists whose work had a major impact in the 1970s and 1980s, it has been pointed out (Hernando 1988:59-60) that some of the most important ones were Colin Renfrew, Robert Chapman, and William C. Mathers.

Colin Renfrew did not conduct any fieldwork on the Iberian Peninsula, but his theses about the Aegean (1973, 1978) had a major impact in the interpretation of the southeast of Iberia. Renfrew defended, from a functionalist point of view, the beneficial role that the elites would have played in the distribution of resources, thus contributing to the general wellbeing of the community. Having rejected diffusionism as the main mechanism to explain change, Renfrew stated that any innovation can occur in any place, if the context has the proper conditions and society is willing to adapt to it. Following functionalist ideas, his work focused on
understanding the type of conditions that would have existed in a place to facilitate the development of innovations, whatever these were (megalithic burials, metallurgy, etc).

Robert Chapman’s thought was also characterised by functionalism (1987) although more recently he has become more sympathetic to materialist approaches. He focused on the differential access to critical resources, paying especial attention to how it would have affected social and funerary practices, especially as a mechanism to claim control of resources (1981). In the case of the southeast of Iberia, he identified as key resources water, copper and other resources related to the display of prestige (1982). According to Chapman, water control and irrigation would have been the main element driving cultural development in the southeast of Iberia (1975) and would have been the consequence of the aggregation of different populations, which in turn would have led to the appearance of part-time specialists, inequality and, lastly, social elites to regulate the increasing complexity.

Chapman’s review on the necropolis of Los Millares has been highly influential, providing the most comprehensive analysis of its burials and grave goods. He stated (1975) that inequality and lineage competition could be inferred through the analysis of funerary evidence, particularly in reference to the number of individuals buried, energy expenditure in the tombs and the variation and frequency of higher-input grave goods; this contradicted the view of the latest excavators, Martín Almagro Basch and Antonio Arribas, who had interpreted it as an egalitarian society (1963).

William C. Mathers would be another functionalist archaeologist arriving in the southeast of Spain in the early 1980s. He mainly focused on the environment and its impact on society, studying the evolution of local ecosystems, and how humans developed intensive economic strategies and specialisation (Mathers 1984a:1190). He also explored the role and evolution of exchange networks at a regional level, defending that they would have functioned not only to exchange goods, but also information and symbolic power in the context of increased competition between groups.
Mathers also defended, in line with Renfrew’s earlier interpretation, that megalithic tombs fulfilled a function of claiming land property in a context of increasing competition. He would also defend (1984b:20-21) that the diversity of practices during the Chalcolithic demonstrates the weakness of the elites, which had not been able to yet monopolise them symbolically. Mathers also explained the evolution of settlement distribution in reference to the environment, stating that the gradual occupation of foothills and mountainous areas was due to the lack of available land in more central locations. Equally, the distribution of settlements in the Bronze Age would have responded to the lands that had not been exhausted during the Chalcolithic, and sites such as Los Millares would have decayed due to the ecological limitations of its environment (Mathers 1984a:1181-1189).

Overall, the consequences of functionalist and processual approaches to the southeast of Iberia were overwhelmingly positive. The use of botanical and faunal evidence became widespread, and the relationships between people and the environment became a central topic. At the same time, these paradigms were explicitly theoretical, using multiple models from anthropology and, interestingly, from economics to reinforce their hypotheses. Nevertheless, in her detailed analysis of functionalist approaches in the southeast of Iberia, Almudena Hernando (1988) stated that they had several issues. The two main ones would be the lack of explanations about how the elites maintained and acquired power, as Functionalism is poorly equipped to tackle causality without being tautological. At the same time, most early functionalist models relied on the environment being as arid as it is today; this presumption, although understandable at the time, was proven to be incorrect, thus weakening the whole model (Hernando 1987:439-474).

The relationship between functionalist and processual approaches with identity and personhood is a complicated one, as could be expected from the multiple perspectives within these umbrella terms. Regarding the functionalist authors working on the Iberian southeast, perhaps the one that has engaged more clearly with identity has been Robert Chapman, if only to reject it as a research topic. In reference to Ian Hodder’s attempt ‘to break away from the tendency to impose modern western bourgeois values on ethnographic and archaeological data’, (Hodder 1982: 67), Chapman (1990:5) stated that it would be misconceived and inapplicable, as it cannot be studied scientifically. That would imply that the exploration of personhood, an equally intangible object of study, would be likewise rejected. However, this would only apply to the functionalist and processual approaches operating in the southeast of Iberia and is not an
inherent limitation of these perspectives. As it will be reviewed in Chapter 3, even some of the early work by Colin Renfrew was useful to study personhood, and cognitive archaeology, which unfortunately has not been used in the context of the southeast of Iberia yet, is clearly connected with processualism (Díaz de Liaño, 2017).

2.4.2. Materialist models.

Two main approaches exemplified materialist approaches in the southeast of Iberia: cultural materialism and dialectical materialism. Cultural materialism, represented by authors such as Antonio Ramos Millan (1981) adopted a type of cultural determinism according to which technological capacity and environment conditions would determine how society is shaped. In his model, the modes of production and reproduction, that is, demographics and caloric requirements to feed the population, would be the elements shaping social change. With the increase in population and thus, consumption, human groups would have to expand and intensify their production, eventually leading to competition between different communities and the appearance of a political economy that could manage the situation, with leaders such as ‘Big Men’ (Ramos Millán 1981). This approach has proved useful to understand the centrality of relationships of production shaping political economies, but its application in the southeast of Iberia was justified on the grounds of a hypothetical demographic pressure that might not have existed. At the same time, the model, that as Hernando points out (1988) is quite similar to the cultural determinism of Marvin Harris (1985), understands superstructure to be an epiphenomenon of infrastructure (that is, the production of food/energy and the reproduction of the social group, and their relationships, would determine political economy, social and political complexity, and ideology, religion, etc), which is a rather reductionist understanding of human behaviour.

Dialectical materialism has received more attention and has been since the late 1980s the mainstream paradigm in the study of the Argaric Bronze Age in the southeast of Iberia. It derives from Marx and Engel’s theory of cultural evolution, according to which changes in the superstructure of a society cannot be considered a direct expression of infrastructural changes. Instead, it is deemed necessary to understand the dialectical nature of culture, and thus both infrastructure and superstructure are entangled in a series of tensions and entanglement where they interact and shape each other (Kohl 1981:109).
The first author working within dialectical materialism in the southeast of Iberia was Antonio Gilman (1976, 1987a, 1987b). Gilman, who explicitly acknowledged his theoretical and political position in his writings, understood that the increase in social complexity and inequality occurring in the southeast of Iberia during the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age were the result of three elements: increased labour specialisation, especially in metallurgy; the appearance of stratified groups within society, and lastly, the increased militarisation of late prehistoric societies, with the development of warfare as attested by weapons and fortifications (Gilman 1987). Gilman, as opposed to functionalist authors, was interested in how the elites acquire and maintain power, and developed what has been labelled a ‘mafia hypothesis’ (1981). In this proposal, he analysed metallurgy, irrigation and Mediterranean polyculture as the possible elements that could have transformed relationships of production in such a way that could be profited by the elites. He concluded that both irrigation and polyculture would have affected relationships of production, as both required planning and a substantial investment before they could produce any benefit; these elements could have been the ones through which the elites would have coerced farmers into accepting their protection. On the other hand, he argues that metallurgy would have reinforced the status and ideological domination of already existing elites, rather than contributing to their appearance.

Perhaps the most well-known archaeologist in the southeast of Spain working from a material-dialectical perspective is Vicente Lull, who would be the first member of the research group established around the Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona (UAB), which currently includes authors such as Roberto Risch, Cristina Rihuete and Rafael Micó, among others. The popularity of this approach can be partially explained by its direct engagement with theory (that often transcends the southeast of Iberia and even the Bronze Age), a clear focus on studying the development of inequality and its relationship with relations of production, and the inclusion of the most advanced scientific methodologies available at each time (ranging from pioneering the use of statistics in the 1980s, to the widespread use of environmental data and isotopic analysis nowadays).

The model proposed by Lull combines the study of the economic model of the group, the materialisation of social relations, and the study of technology, which would combine the relations of production and the development of productive forces (Lull 1983). This materialist-dialectical perspective also combines different levels of analysis, ranging from the macro to the micro, in order to understand the social and economic models existing in the southeast of Spain.
Iberia. On the macro scale, it would be necessary to understand the ecological conditions of the landscape to understand the availability of resources, and this would affect the distribution of settlements. On the semi-micro scale, it would be necessary to understand economic production and reproduction, as well as social relations, in the context of the settlement. Finally, the smallest unit of analysis would be the household, where the analysis of the distribution of goods and activities, as well as a comparative perspective between different units, would allow the understanding of the scale of specialisation and inequality, and whether this last element has a social base, as in a stratified society, or an economic one, as in a class-based society (Lull 1983:452).

As can be expected from a dialectical materialist, Lull also offered a detailed explanation of how inequality appeared. In his model, metallurgy played a central role, as it forced the division of labour due to technical reasons, and thus also led the process of social division and stratification (1983:265), creating new social relationships that did not follow previous kinship relationships (1983:448). At the same time, the development of metallurgy required a certain demographic capacity (1983:267) but also certain specialist knowledge and organisational infrastructures (1983:446). All these newly shaped relationships could be inferred archaeologically, since during the late Neolithic or Chalcolithic the kinship group, either an extended family or clan, lived in a communal house which included within its walls both production and storage. On the contrary, during the Argaric Bronze, the house and its units were more divided to attend to the increasing complexity of social relationships, provoked by the evolution of the means of production, that is, the division of labour (1983:289ff).

Regarding the interaction between classes and settlements during the Argaric Bronze Age, it is characterised by the dependence between the various communities that come to have

Figure 10: Cover of the influential book 'La cultura de El Argar', by Vicente Lull in 1983. Source: Google images.
complementary production, among which is metallurgy that will lead, as indicated, to an incipient trade. The new system demands the control of resources and transportation, which would be exercised by a directing hierarchy (a military elite, for instance) that must be separated from direct production to move to the organization of the territory and to the defence of some interests, and that will also direct work with extra-economic coercion that will lead in chiefdoms. Thus, while much of the population will lose their ancestral ritual rights and bury themselves with little or no grave goods, the elites would concentrate power. The character of this political organization would be, according to Lull and Estévez, that of an state (Lull & Estévez 1986:451).

While materialist approaches have had a huge impact on the studies of the Southeast, being still today the mainstream paradigm to study the area, they showed little interest in studying identity. Cultural materialism, with its consideration of superstructure being an epiphenomenon of infrastructure, would consider that personhood is also an epiphenomenon, and thus it is not the priority of the researcher in order to understand past society. Regarding dialectical materialism, identity would not be explained away as an epiphenomenon of relationships of production, but explicit engagements with prehistoric identity have not been common. The exception would have been identity when in connection to issues of inequality and domination; in this sense, social identity (rank, class, eliteness, slavery, etc) has been explored more thoroughly. However, and despite this historical lack of engagement, certain recent publications (such as Lull et al. 2021) have timidly engaged with issues of partibility and the role of objects in the constitution of the person, as well as with topics of sexuality and gender (Lull et al. 2016)

2.4.3. Archaeological thought after 1985.

The popularity of materialist models would only increase in the following decades, as these approaches became hegemonic in the southeast of Iberia. As Chapman points out (2010:131-132), from 1985 onwards these models would continue being improved and applied, functioning as the backbone of multiple research projects used to research multiple sites such as Los Millares (Molina and Arribas 1993), Fuente Álamo (Schubart et al. 2001), and various sites in the Vera Basin (Camálich & Martín Socas 1999, Delibes et al. 1996) or Gatas (Chapman et al. 1987, Castro et al. 2000). These publications, and later publications by the same authors
and their research teams, constitute the main source of data that has been used in the production of this thesis.

Moreover, the work of some ‘mixed’ social approaches has also been used. These approaches combine postprocessual, feminist and postcolonial perspectives, combined with the use of the latest technological advances (isotopic analysis, radiocarbon dating, Bayesian modelling, etc) to delve deeper into the more social aspects of prehistoric societies. Among this variety of perspectives, the work of authors such as Margarita Sánchez Romero, Gonzalo Aranda Jiménez or Sandra Montón-Subías have been the most important in the elaboration of this work.

These new approaches are the first ones to explicitly engage with notions of identity beyond rank and class. Their insights are referenced and explored in the following chapters, but in general it is possible to say that they have made important contributions to the overall significance of both Chalcolithic and Bronze Age burials in relation to identity, and they have even started looking at personhood in very specific contexts, particularly in relation to female individuals (González Marcén 1991, Montón-Subías 2007, Sánchez Romero 2008a, 2007) and with the role of feasting in the construction of both elite and communal identity (Sánchez Romero & Aranda Jiménez 2008, Sánchez Romero et al. 2007, Sánchez Romero 2008b).

Figure 11: Cover of ‘The Archaeology of Bronze Age Iberia. Argaric Societies’, by Aranda Jiménez et al. (2014)
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework. A brief history of the Archaeology of Personhood, the structural-contextual model, and power in societies against the state.

The first part of this chapter is a brief review of how personhood has been approached from an archaeological perspective, including a general introduction to studies of personhood in anthropology and how these understandings have translated into archaeology. In relation to how personhood has been used in archaeology, and following the distinction proposed by Chris Fowler (2016), two types of approach are reviewed: the single spectrum model, and the multiple spectrum model. While these two models include within them most of the approaches used to explore personhood in archaeology in the English-speaking world, the theoretical framework used in this thesis, and exposed in the second part of the chapter, cannot be characterised as either, as it will be explained.

The model of personhood that will be used here is based on A. Hernando’s theories (2002, 2017) about identity in the past, with a few small modifications that further elaborate her proposal. These additions will come from the work of Charles Taylor and his *A Secular Age* (2007), as well as from the work by John Chapman and Bisserka Gaydarska (Chapman and Gayrdaska 2007; Chapman 2000) especially fragmentation theory and the key terms of enchainment and accumulation, useful to explain the relationships between people and things. Finally, the notions of partibility and permeability, common in the anthropology of personhood, will be used as well.

The label of ‘structural-contextual’ is intended to indicate the priorities of the model. If the ‘single spectrum’ model is characterised by being based on a single spectrum between the relational/dividual-individual, and the ‘multiple spectrum’ model is based on a wider axis of spectrums between multiple concepts, as well as in the rejection of any aprioristic hierarchy or structural relationship between these spectrums, the structural-contextual model emphasises the existence of structural relationships between different features of personhood, and their necessary relationships with the social and cultural context of the group.
The chapter ends with a short exploration of how power can be conceptualised in societies without a state. This short summary, based on anarchist views, has been considered pertinent, despite the topic of this thesis being personhood, due to the importance that inequality and the capacity to coerce/subjugate others have in the construction of personhood. Thus, while this work does not engage directly with current debates regarding the possible statehood of the Argaric world (or to a lesser extent, the possibility of Los Millares being a state), it considers the evidence used in these debates to explore the relationships between inequality and power imbalances and the construction of personhood. This issue is reviewed in detail in Chapter 6, especially in the sections connected with the stances of the self towards human entities (sections 6.1.3., and 6.2.3.).

### 3.1. A brief history of personhood in archaeology.

The following section begins with a general introduction to the study of personhood in anthropology, including its relationship with similar terms, a general characterisation of its meaning, and a brief explanation of some of the concepts usually associated with it. In relation to the study of personhood in archaeology, after a short review of some of the earlier attempts to explore it, two main models to study personhood are reviewed in certain detail: the so-called single spectrum model, used by John Chapman, and the multiple spectrum model, that includes more posthumanist approaches.

#### 3.1.1. Introduction to the study of personhood.

The notions of personhood, identity, and the self share a great deal of meaning, but they have been used extensively by many authors and thus their exact delimitation can often be blurred. Regarding the notions of identity and the self, Sokefeld (1999:419ff) makes a useful distinction. Identities are plural, often conflicting, context dependant, intersectional and frequently antagonistic; they are a cluster of different elements, ranging from sex, gender, social class, caste, age, kinship, affiliation of different sorts, etc. The self is quite different, as it is the narrative construct that manages these plural identities, lending coherence and continuity to the person’s experience despite the conflicting identities. Thus, both identity and the self are dynamic and in constant change, but the self constitutes a more stable idea,
structuring the person’s understanding of their interactions with the world, while their identity or identities tend to be more contextual, being emphasised or activated depending on the contextual needs of the person. In turn, personhood refers to all the ideas about being a person in a society, including diverse elements such as what are the boundaries of the person, what kind of entities are understood as being people, or what the constitutive elements of the person are. Both identity and personhood are dialogically constructed (Taylor 2007) or even poly-logically constructed (Smith 2010: 67), since in any human group there are different identity discourses affecting every person at the same time: ‘[Even] members of patriarchal, multi-ethnic, class societies, must orient themselves in accordance with the competing and complementary logics of each of those social characteristics and many more’ (Smith 2012:58).

There is overwhelming consensus among anthropologists that the concept of the person varies between societies (Shweder and Bourne 1984; Spiro 1993). An important milestone in this context was the work of Dumont (1980), who claimed that people in India could be defined as ‘hierarchical’, while Westerners were, on the contrary, ‘egalitarian’. Similar dichotomous distinctions were later developed, such as the ‘holistic’ person vs the ‘individual’ (Robbins 2002: 190); the ‘sociocentric’ vs ‘egocentric’ (Shweder and Bourne 1984) or, more generically, between dividuals and individuals (Marriot and Inden, 1977). However, these dichotomous characterisations were challenged in the late 1980s, when Marilyn Strathern (1988) showed that within this dichotomy, non-Western groups presented enough differences to avoid falling within a single category.

By the beginning of the twenty first century, it appeared as ‘current anthropological wisdom that all persons are both dividuals and individuals’ (Englund and Leach 2000: 229; also LiPuma 1998). The debate evolved, focusing on the relationship and causality of two terms, with Smith (2012) explaining that individualization is for some a by-product of modernity directly related to globalization and therefore unstoppable (Touraine 2002), while for others it is, at least in the Western context, historically and culturally specific, and its expansion is thus not inexorable (Taylor 2007, Castoriadis 1987).

What it means to be dividual/individual is quite possibly the most important topic in the anthropology of personhood, but again the definitions are broad, and authors often discuss different elements under a common label. The ‘individual’, as a particular type of person in the anthropological literature, is often seen as an indivisible person, with clear boundaries and some sort of core self, with any change or alteration of part of the whole turning it into a
different person, although it can also refer to a human being as a single biological entity, a connotation that often implies the projection of contemporary Western ethical values. By contrast, the dividual is considered divisible and fractal, made from different and interrelated parts, which can be altered without really affecting who the person is. Both concepts also have implications in terms of agency: while the dividual is considered to be socially embedded (i.e., an actor performing its social role according to a culturally determined script) the individual is believed to be an autonomous social actor (Sokefeld 1999:419; Spiro 1993:115).

![Figure 12: Graphic representation of the differences between Individual and Dividual personhood. Source: Fowler 2016:398.](image)

One of the main problems regarding this dichotomy is that of incommensurability. The notion of dividual has been constructed as a concept based on ethnographic studies of personhood in Melanesia, India and other historically located contexts, while the western notion of individual is based on an abstract, idealised concept (LiPuma 1998: 57ff). This characterisation of the individual in the West is based not on ethnographic studies, but on the philosophical outlook of liberalism (Ourousoff 1993), as well as on legal history and theology (Smith 2012:87). In a similar line, those studying the concept of personhood in non-Western societies tend to devote their efforts to study the most exotic features of personhood, instead of paying attention to ‘those conditions of encompassment that made possible the very enterprise of studying personhood cross-culturally’ (LiPuma 1988: 55). Nevertheless, and despite the criticisms aimed at these terms, it is still ethnographically productive to distinguish between many of the elements encompassed within both terms. It is essential to understand that these elements are not the extremes of a dichotomy, but rather a continuum whose emic and etic dimensions might be different. Different groups (and particular people within the groups) will attribute greater or lesser importance to the social structure when determining their degree of agency (Mageo 1995:283), and external observers will also produce discourses about personhood that contradict what particular persons perceive (i.e., the fantasy of individuality explained by A. Hernando in 2017, and reviewed in more detail in 3.2).
3.1.2. The single spectrum models.

What is currently understood as a single spectrum model is defined by Chris Fowler as a model characterised by the tension between dividual and individual personhood. These two modes of being a person would be the two extremes of a spectrum, and every society would provide frameworks to negotiate the features of both (Fowler 2004:157).

The origin of the single-spectrum model in archaeology can perhaps be related with the so-called ‘ideology of the individual’ proposed by Colin Renfrew (1974). This theory was developed to explore the relationships between socioeconomic complexity and political organisation, locating early complex societies (‘chiefdoms’) within a spectrum that goes from ‘individualising’ to being ‘group oriented’, depending on their socioeconomic complexity and the nature of their political organisation (following a positive correlation between complexity, inequality and an ‘individualising’ leadership and political organisation.). Renfrew’s model had more to do with socioeconomic organisation than with personhood, as this last element would be a consequence of the former.

In a manner, his analysis echoes that of Pierre Clastres (1989) discussing the tensions towards centralisation/fragmentation, although in Renfrew’s view the appearance of inequality and leaders remains unquestioned, while Clastres is intrigued about it and questions how it could happen. But while Clastres focuses on the process in terms of development/resistance towards the state, Renfrew briefly explores the features that these two models would have. Without explicitly talking about identity (even less about personhood), Renfrew’s terminology of individualising versus being group-oriented, although referring to where the surplus of resources goes, is indeed telling about identity at the same time: individualising chiefdoms are the ones with an individual leader, whose presence is clear due to higher-input goods, funerary practices, and architecture; in opposition, group-oriented chiefdoms are those where ‘the public works are impressive but the individuals [are] faceless and anonymous’ (Renfrew 1974:79). Thus, the ‘ideology of the individual’ could be an early example of single spectrum model, although one that understands personhood as a mere by-product of socioeconomic and political features.

From early on, some of Renfrew’s reasoning was criticised, particularly due to its unilinear evolutionary framework, its emphasis on concepts such as ‘chiefdom’, and the lack of archaeological data to sustain such a broad claim (Todd 1974, Tringham 1974). These
criticisms, although reasonable, might have placed an emphasis on the evolutionism of Renfrew’s article that was not there to begin with. Although the lack of evidence to support such a broad generalisation might be valid as well, might be useful to remember that Renfrew’s proposal was interesting due to its positive heuristic, rather than by making definite statements.

More recently, different authors have criticised not only his work, but also the connections he made between grave goods and identity. It is obvious by now that prehistoric societies did not share the Western, capitalist, and contemporary notion of ownership, and grave goods were not always the personal belongings of the deceased during life (Barret 1994:116; Parker Pearson 1999:85, Thomas 1999). Joanna Bruck (2004), among others, has demonstrated how the connection between grave goods and the deceased’s social identity is simplistic, and she has also pointed out how funerary practices (and grave goods) do not have to be about prestige and social hierarchies, but also about coming to terms with loss and discontinuity, something that is not mentioned in Renfrew’s article. At the same time, Bruck also questions why Neolithic people tend to be explained in terms of kinship, and then quite suddenly, with the arrival of the Bronze Age, people become individuals, being who they are because of their own features and traits, and perhaps not surprisingly strongly resembling contemporary individuals. Thus, the combination of projecting contemporary notions of individuality onto the past (Gero 2000), combined with simplistic connections between grave goods and the deceased, has been used to create successful prototypes such as that of ‘the chief’, ‘the warrior’, ‘the metalworker’ or ‘the archer’ (Bruck 2004:320).

Regarding the criticisms towards the ‘ideology of the individual’ model, there are a few points to be made. On the one hand, it is possible that its evolutionism has been over-emphasised and exaggerated. While the proposal is clearly evolutionist, Renfrew’s article is also quite nuanced, making clear that it is a working hypothesis whose value comes from its heuristic potential, which is clearly remarkable. However, from the 1970s when it was written, approaches characterised by evolutionism have experienced a strong backlash, usually due to the previous excesses of evolutionary approaches. The feminist critique of the article is equally interesting, as it can be applied to the paper but can at the same time illustrate the patriarchal bias in archaeological research. The issues when studying grave goods and status are not limited to simplistic inferences and overtly ambitious generalisations; they include the very questions that archaeologists themselves ask and the concepts that have received wider attention. Feminist archaeologists were pointing out how the discipline’s discourses about past
societies were propagating culturally particular ideas about gender in their interpretations of the past, ultimately providing justification for contemporary gender practices. Conkey and Spector (1984:6) already stated that the archaeological ‘invisibility’ of females is produced by false notions of objectivity and gender paradigms, and this applies to everything: is not that relational personhood did not exist or was less important, is that archaeologists, and thus archaeology, have always paid more attention to those issues that were important in the construction of their identity, which are those of hegemonic masculinities and individuality. As Bruck argues (2004:309) there has been an over-emphasis on questions of status and prestige. While she addresses the criticism to the literature on Early Bronze Age burial rites, it applies to the literature on late prehistoric mortuary practices in general. This emphasis on status and prestige should not and cannot be separated from the context of research, in which topics related with the elites and prestige have received an extraordinary amount of attention.

Archaeology, just like any other academic discipline, is far from being innocent, and has consistently legitimised the logic and worldviews of those in power. As Hernando points out (2013), for men in Western societies, and this includes the majority of practitioners of archaeology historically, relational identity, including their own, belongs to the realm of the unconscious, being thus difficult to conceptualise as it does not receive the same attention or symbolic importance as traits related with individuality, such as competition or power. The issues that have been central to the study of prehistoric archaeology, namely change, individuality, reason, power, violence, technical progress and economic growth, have been considered to be the goals of all human beings since the Enlightenment (Connel and Messerschmidt, 2005), but the reality is that they are a partisan element of Eurocentrism; they are the issues that have played a key role in the conscious construction of masculine identity in the Western world after the 17th century; thus, when focussing on those issues, archaeology is at the same time being Eurocentric and patriarchal (Montón-Subías & Hernando, 2018:459-460).

Going back to the Single spectrum model and its use in contemporary Archaeology, Chris Fowler, one of the most important archaeologists working on prehistoric personhood, explains that this model is characterised by the tension between dividual and individual personhood, which would constitute the extremes of an spectrum whose particular configuration depends on the frameworks provided by society (Fowler 2004:157). In his early works, still characterised by the single spectrum model, Fowler defended that identity is always
fundamentally relational, although in Western society, personal and individualised identity tends to be stressed over a relational one (Fowler 2004:7). At the same time, he acknowledged how personhood is always performative and generative, in the sense that people do not only reproduce a given notion of personhood but have the ability to affect or change that very concept as they decide to act in more or less orthodox ways (2004:37-38).

In his influential *Archaeology of Personhood* (2004), Fowler defended the existence of key features of modes of personhood that recurred in different cultural contexts, and how following authors such as Edward LiPuma (1998) and John Chapman (2000) would allow us to develop broad frameworks to compare personhood in different societies at different times. Among these concepts, the notions of indivisibility and individuality stand out, and they are the key defining elements of Western personhood (Fowler 2004:7), while dividual personhood, on the other hand, can be defined as composite, multiple-authored and has two main variants, partibility and permeability. Partibility implies a state ‘in which the dividual person is reconfigured so that one part can be extracted and given to another person’ (Fowler 2004:78) and is based on Marylin Strathern’s pioneering work in Melanesia (1988). But dividuals are not always partible, as they can also be permeable; in this case, people are composed by flows of substances and energies that move between them and other beings. This concept was originated in McKim Marriott’s analysis of the social interactions in Hindu communities (1976), as well as Cecilia Busby’s study of permeable notions of the body and personhood among a southern Indian Catholic community (1997). Although both concepts of permeability and partibility have played a key role in current debates in the anthropology of personhood, it is only partibility that has had significant impact in archaeology, mostly due to the work of John Chapman and Bisserka Gaydarska.

John Chapman and Bisserka Gaydarska, are, with the earlier works of Chris Fowler, the main representatives of the so-called single spectrum model (Chapman and Gaydarska 2015,
2011, 2007; Chapman 2000), and their proposals will be analysed in some detail, as it includes key concepts that will be used in this work. Chapman and Gaydarska (although sometimes Chapman also published alone) are interested in how personhood is constructed in relationship with objects, social relationships and personal skills. Their work is crucially important to understand how different dynamics affecting the relationship between people and objects (particularly enchainment, fragmentation, and accumulation) have a profound impact on personhood. They state that the concepts of enchainment, fragmentation (and perhaps accumulation) are structural, and thus they work at different levels: on the one hand, they are central to the relationship between people and objects, but at the same time, they also structure social relationships.

Chapman and Gaydarska believe that one of the missing elements to understand personhood is the importance of social roles and embodied skills. According to them (2011:22), there are three key elements to consider when conceptualising personhood: it is a life process, changing from birth to death; it is the embodiment of identities based upon relations with things, places and other beings; and finally, individual identities are grounded in different things such as social relationships, skills, capacities, etc. Their work is thus based on the dichotomy between individuals and dividuals: the relations with things, places and other beings produce relational identities, while other elements, mainly differentiated skills and social relationships (particularly those framed within accumulation) would produce individual identities. The use of this dichotomy, however, seems to be understood more as a theoretical construct than as an empirical reality, as they do not claim that both identities are mutually exclusive.

In their exploration of how individual personhood came into existence, Chapman and Gaydarska (2011) focus mainly on skills and specialisation, combining dynamic nominalist theory with the operational chain method. The dynamic nominalist approach is a form of agency theory developed by Michael Foucault (1979) which aims to reconcile structure and agency within a single mechanism through the attribution of a greater role to identity. The core of the approach, according to Ian Hacking (1995:247-248) is that categories of people come into existence at the same time as kinds of people come into being to fit these categories in a two-way interaction. Thus, it is at the same time a type of agency but also a structuring device: ‘it is impossible to draw a complete and nuanced picture of personhood in the past without including the individual skills acquired through the successful performance of social practices’ (Chapman and Gayrdaska 2011:25). Of course, this does not mean that the acquisition of skills
and competences is exclusive, as during late prehistory most people, even when having some degree of specialisation, would still take part into multiple activities and crafts. But Chapman and Gaydarska (2011) argue that the differences in the skills and competences in different individuals would lead to processes of individualization through the distinctiveness of embodied skills. They characterise at least fifteen types of personal skills that could be identified during the Mesolithic, arguing that individualising processes of personhood were present, if not well established, in foraging communities. A key point of their analysis is the consideration of settlement contexts in skill acquisition and skill building: the necessity of specialisation, as well as the possibility of interacting with people with different skills and competences, would clearly affect the degree of individualisation of any given person. At the same time, the acquisition of skills and experiences that would make someone different also depend directly on the exchange networks available in the community.

Besides a highly interesting model of personhood, the work of Chapman has become widely influential due to its analysis of things and relationships. Chapman’s work focuses on the structural relationships between different entities such as people, objects, and places, and about the material dimensions of these social practices (Chapman 2000:4ff). He believes that the environment is the structuring matrix for the constitution of identity, along with the objects they make and use. In turn, they all affect each other. In that sense, the longer one place is used, or a type of object is used, the greater their role becomes in the constitution of identity, as they play a key role in the maintenance of cultural memory. They also use the notion of objectification of Marx, in Daniel Miller’s adaption. Miller explains that when an object forms part of a person, the object’s values and status are also introduced into the person, through a process called sublation (1987). For example, objects of high-status can transfer their status or power to people, with the opposite process taking place too. Objects are then a key element in the construction of identity through consumption.
In his conceptualisation of things, Chapman (2000) defends that they are not produced, but rather reproduced, as their creation implies a personal contribution to their value, and that in turns depends on the value of the person creating it (and the relationship with the final user, it could be added). The development of his ideas turns around the theme of enchainment and accumulation as two main practices structuring social relations during late prehistory in his case studies, which are the Balkans during the Neolithic and Chalcolithic. He believes (Chapman 2000:47-48) that the same relationships of exchange that structure society have the potential to foster asymmetrical relations, as they produce indebtedness and long-term dependence, if not accumulation itself. Accumulation is carefully controlled in many societies, but at the individual and household level. But at some point, he defends, the introduction of certain materials, especially metals, allows the opportunity for differential acquisition through exchange. And these materials, due to their properties, are particularly useful in terms of fragmentation, which is a remarkable phenomenon in the Balkans.

Some of the most interesting elements of their proposal are the concepts of enchainment and fragmentation, which are interconnected since the former is created and materialised through the latter. Relationships would be materialised through fragmentation, as different objects would be conceptualised as a token of that relationship and then broken and kept by the different parts involved. The fragments would stand simultaneously as objects in their own right and as symbols of the once-complete object (synecdoche). Thus, the fragmented objects would have a fractal nature, as they would be intermingled with objects, people and landscapes through relationships. It also works at other levels, as enchainment does not only include the physical fragmentation of an item; giving away an object that is conceptualised as part of an assemblage would obey the same principle, for instance. Fragmentation practices are not restricted to objects; they can include human remains, where the deposition of certain bones stands as a par pro toto. Fragmented objects would also play a role through their absence, as the lack of a part would remind one of the shared experience and relationships with others. The notion of enchainment comes from Strathern’s Gender of the Gift (1988), where she discusses inalienability and enchainment. Inalienability denotes the absence of a property relationship, so to speak they do not have alienable, impersonal things at their disposal. Thus, objects can be acquired through enchainment, which involves a social connection with others. This is a core element of dividuality, as it allows the multiple constitutions of the dividual.
The notion of enchainment cannot be understood without reference to accumulation, as they are in opposition. If enchainment implies an exchange or token-giving that objectifies a personal relationship between entities (person and object, but also the one giving and the one receiving, including a social and symbolic bond), accumulation implies a new type of relationship, one where objects are alienable, and their exchange or possession involves a less personal relationship with them. Accumulation might be difficult to conceptualise as it happens at different levels as well, ranging from personal and household accumulation to kinship level accumulation, which can stand in direct opposition to the former. Chapman connects both notions of enchainment and accumulation as part of a tension in the appearance of inequality. He explains how in the Balkans the development of accumulation (to the detriment of enchainment) becomes possible only when surpluses come into existence, and higher-input grave goods and exotic materials start appearing more regularly, while fragmentation practices start disappearing; this could be interpreted as an increase in inequality (Chapman 2000:47). In terms of personhood, both enchainment and accumulation would have important effects. While the connection between things or people through enchainment are obvious, with the other entity becoming a constitutive part of the self, through accumulation the entities or objects that are being exchanged can also become part of the self, but not all of them would do it. Since objects can be alienable, the fact that they do or do not become part of the self would depend on several factors, such as the conceptualisation of objects themselves (their power, agency, etc), but in general they would play a smaller role in terms of materialising a relationship between entities.

However, the single spectrum model has been subjected to multiple criticisms in the last few years, mostly from authors that could be ascribed to the so-called multiple spectrum model. Fowler himself, in his more contemporary works, constitutes a good example of what the multiple spectrum model stands for, as well as what its main criticisms towards the single spectrum model are. He claims that the single spectrum model is too constraining (2016), something that authors such as Thomas (2004:125), Wilkinson (2013:425) or Brittain and Harris (2010:588) had already stated. He states that this is because:

‘[The single spectrum model] creates a single yardstick for measuring all features of personhood and presumes that yardstick to be able to operate effectively in all circumstances. It compresses together many axes of possible variation, so that the tension between individual and dividual oversimplifies the situation: there are many dimensions to personhood that this yardstick either does not measure or reduces to a singular form. This forces us to focus on
dividual and individual features of personhood as ‘packages’ that exist in opposition and are always present, and this repeatedly steers us back towards the societies upon which the model was based. This constrains the appreciation of different ways personhood can be relational.’ (Fowler 2016:399)

Fowler also echoes other criticisms that the single spectrum model has received, both in archaeology and anthropology. Sahlins (2011), for instance, defended that there was some confusion between personhood and kinship relations, and particularly between partibility and participation: ‘a category mistake of rendering the relationships of kinship as the attributes of singular persons’ (2011:13). According to him, the partible dividual contains elements of bourgeois individualism, in the sense of Western people being able to act differently in two contexts, presenting, in each one, partial elements of its identity as totals, and therefore being in different social contexts implying a certain degree of partibility. But for him, that does not imply dividuality, as it does not include elements from outside. Indeed, Sahlins states that bourgeois individuals are, in their intimate relationships, as dividual as Melanesians (2011:14).

Fowler’s critique (2016:400) has focused as well on the work of Chapman and Gaydarska in the Mesolithic and Early Neolithic in southeast Europe (Chapman and Gaydarska, 2011). According to Fowler, the problem with their approach is that it connects relational personhood with dividualism and equates individualisation with distinctive personal biographies and skill sets, produced by life. Fowler states that they present a compelling illustration of how tasks and skills relied on enchained, dividual relations, but criticises that they do not present any clear evidence regarding how these skills generate strongly individualised persons. For him, it is unclear which skills were bundled together as the province of a single category of person, and how the differentiation of people due to their skills, abilities and biographies would lead to the formation of individualistic personhood, something that, he claims, is often lost on ethnographic sources. Fowler states that it is true that prehistoric people were different from each other due to their skills, personal biographies, sex, gender, age, etc, but that there he does not see any necessary relationship between those differences and specific modes of personhood. As a counterargument, he revisits Marriot’s classic work (1976) where he documented the diversity within the community along with a strong intra-caste regulation, meaning that personhood differences depend on multiple factors and cannot be simply linked with one or two elements. Therefore, Fowler rejects the validity of the single spectrum model, and particularly its defence of any sort of evolutionary change, regardless of how gradual or
 nuanced it is (cf. Whitley 2013:396). Multiple spectrum models propose, instead, that it would be more productive to focus on how new and different ways of relational personhood emerged, depending on the material conditions (Fowler 2010:143-44; Harris et al. 2013).

3.1.3. **The multiple spectrum models.**

The newly developed alternative to the single spectrum model is what Fowler labels as ‘Multiple Spectrum model’ (2016:402ss), although it would encompass multiple approaches (Fowler 2016; Harris et al. 2013; Wilkinson 2013; Brittain and Harris 2010) whose main elements in common would be the rejection of single spectrum models, rather than the existence of a unified theory.

Multiple spectrum models should be characterised as relational, processual, and multi-modal (Fowler 2016). They distinguish multiple tensions between two terms, such as indivisible and divisible, inalienable and alienable, fractal and monadic, permeable and impermeable, individualist and collectivist, autonomous and embedded, etc (Fowler 2016:402). The one proposed by Fowler, undoubtedly the most developed approach, still relies on tensions between opposed terms, but rejects any aprioristic hierarchy, such as prominence given to the gradient individual/dividual in single spectrum models. He explains how some of these dimensions are important in some cases but not others, and how scale of application is also important, as some concepts are activated in relation to some members of the community and not others. Rather than establishing a general model where different variables are bundled together, he aims to understand how they come into existence, that is, what are the modes of action that produce individualisation, or permeability, etc.

Fowler offers an interesting and nuanced perspective about how concepts such as individuality can work differently in varied contexts (Fowler 2016:403); for instance, it can happen as ‘horizontal individualism’, where distinctiveness is appreciated but does not attach rank or value over others, but also ‘vertical individualism’, where this independence is competitive and aims to achieve a higher status and acquire more power. Similarly, he distinguishes between ‘horizontal collectivism’, where interdependence and group cohesion are valued greatly, and ‘vertical collectivism’, where the interdependence and group cohesion are limited to some groups over others (such as kin versus non-kin). Similar notions have been
developed by other authors, such as Yannis Hamilakis, who has used the term ‘collective individuation’ to refer to a group of people all eating and drinking the same meal together from similar receptacles (Hamilakis 2013:155), which could have a horizontal and/or vertical effect, depending on the inclusiveness of the event.

Following Tarlow (2010) and Harris and Robb (2012), Fowler defends (2016:405) how different ontologies of the body (which are then implicitly also about personhood) can coexist within the same society or even the same person. Ontologies of the body are constructed historically and culturally, and thus he exemplifies how people can, at the same time, conceptualise their bodies as machines (in a medical context) and also a vessel (in a religious one). According to him, a person may shift between quite disparate ideas and practices in the course of any given day. Even more, he brings forward Wengrow and Graeber’s (2015) example of how hunting, gathering and fishing communities living in highly seasonally varied environments experience dramatic oscillations in interpersonal relations, with different names being used by the same person at different points of the year, or how depending on the time of the year, different entities might be considered as human beings or not (Barraud et al. 1994:36-37). Personhood would then be modulated depending on the cultural context, changing during a lifetime, or even changing during different activities. This modulation would require, according to him, further research, in order to see how it intersects with different ontologies (á la Descola 2013). The terminology, in particular the notion of modulation, suggests that Fowler is not entirely convinced about the possibility of personhood radically changing during different activities or seasons.

Another example of the multiple spectrum model is that proposed by Darryl Wilkinson (2013). In his analysis of the personhood of an Incan ruler, Wilkinson criticises the single spectrum model and the dichotomy between dividuals and individuals but goes even further

![Figure 15: Graphic representation of some of the conceptual tensions that a multiple spectrum model could consider. Source: Fowler 2016:402](image)
stating that the idea of both elements coexisting in the same person (something that most authors agree with) implies not understanding the contradiction between both terms. In his case study, centred about the personhood of an Incan emperor, Wilkinson states that it is not possible to know what the Incan emperor was before analysing its figure (2013:421), as any aprioristic assumption about its status (dividual, individual, bounded self, etc) would imply the projection of a modern ontological framework. He explains how the Incan emperor would be a particular person that would not fit within those categories, someone whose ontological status would be contagious (as anything that the emperor touched underwent an ontological transformation to become part of him) and not limited to the physicality of his own body (as proved by the existence of the *wawqui* statues, made with nails and hair from the emperor and that were conceptualised as him, not just representations; Wilkinson 2013:422). Wilkinson also questions recent attempts to nuance Western individualism (i.e., Thomas 2000:13), stating that ‘Either being an individual is a reality of Western personhood, and while historically specific to the West, is as real a way of being-in-the-world as any other. Or, Western individuals are not really individuals, although that is how they imagine themselves to be. In reality they are relational and non-autonomous and thus Cartesian individuality is not an ontological reality for Westerners, but more like a form of false consciousness [...] the later version looks increasingly to resemble a fall narrative’ (2013:426). Wilkinson argues that the notion of relationality makes sense in the posthumanist sense (á la Latour 1993, Barad 2007), rather than as a mode of being that certain people would have and others would not.

The multiple spectrum model is yet to receive significant critique, although a few points can be made without entering excessive detail. The emphasis on differentiation among prehistoric people due to skills, abilities, and personal histories (Fowler 2016:400-401) risks projecting a Western trait, assuming that differentiation is always a key element of personhood, when the opposite is often the case in groups where relational identity is widespread: similarity and conformity are the elements that are emphasised in the construction of identity (Hernando 2015:35). On a similar line, the emphasis on how people would be able to change in terms of which metaphors embody their conceptualisation of the self (Fowler 2016:405) could be again a projection of contemporary Western identity, where fluctuations in how personhood is displayed or conceptualised change often; the issue here is that contemporary societies offer the cognitive, social, emotional and economic conditions to develop that fluidity, something that prehistoric societies would rarely do. Regarding the claim of certain groups and notions of personhood drastically changing depending on seasonality (Wengrow and Graeber 2015) needs
to be approached carefully, as the evidence is not always very clear and is far from being a widespread phenomenon. Finally, the rejection of any a priori assumptions, wide generalisations, and any sort of evolutionary perspective (i.e., Wilkinson 2013:421; Fowler 2016:401) also limits its heuristic potential.

3.2. Hernando’s archaeology of identity.

The main model that will be followed here is that of the Spanish theoretical archaeologist Almudena Hernando, and particularly her *Arqueología de la Identidad* (2002) and *The Fantasy of Individuality: On the Sociohistorical Construction of Modern Subjectivity* (2012 Spanish version, 2015 English version). With remarkable exceptions connected with Eastern European archaeology, such as John Chapman and Bisserka Gaydarska (2011) and Mihael Budja (2011), her work has remained largely ignored in the English-speaking debate about prehistoric personhood.

Hernando’s model is based on the structural relationship between different elements such as 1) the material control of reality, 2) how reality is perceived and 3) how identity is constructed. Hernando believes that every human society with a similar degree of socioeconomic complexity will have a similar structure of perception of reality, and thus a similar range of identity features and processes available. Hernando’s approach places a strong emphasis on comparison, as it argues that the cognitive structures of a human group relate to its socioeconomic complexity; thus, studying contemporary hunter-gatherers or slash and burn farmers can provide useful information about how reality was perceived in the past. This does not mean by any means that contemporary groups live in the past, or that unilinear evolutionary models with different stages of development (i.e., band-tribe-chiefdom-state) are correct. What Hernando aims to explain is that there are structural relationships between socioeconomic complexity, perception and cognition, and available modes of identity. She is then exploring the historicity and contextuality of certain types of personhood, parameters to conceptualise reality or modes of representation of reality, while rejecting the idea of projecting contemporary personhood in the West being similar to that of prehistoric past. Thus, her whole proposal, this ‘archaeology of identity’, is not about the analysis of archaeological remains, but a fundamentally theoretical project to understand the conditions that identity would need to
adopt in every society in order to keep the structural coherence of the material conditions that archaeological evidence provides (Hernando 2002).

Hernando explains that her archaeology of identity would not have a function or methodology to undertake an analysis of archaeological materials but would be instead a purely theoretical analysis of the conditions that identity would have had in each group so the logic underlying the structural coherence imposed by their material conditions is observed (2002:107).

3.2.1. General patterns in the construction of identity: Space and time, metaphor and metonymy, and why orality is a key element in understanding prehistoric identity.

The central idea structuring Hernando’s model is that identity and cognition cannot be separated from the material control that humans have over reality (predicting it, benefiting from it, etc). According to her, there are two main elements to consider when analysing how humans perceive reality and construct their identity: how they make sense of reality, that is, what are the ‘parameters to conceptualise reality’ (2002:52; 69-89), and how do they think about that reality, as in what are the ‘modes of representation’ of reality available (2002:53; 65-68). Hernando draws inspiration from authors such as Norbert Elias (1997), Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) and Alfred Gell (1996) to conclude that the main universal parameters to conceptualise reality are space and time. However, the perception of both space and time has some universal similarities (after all, humans are biologically one species) but also cultural differences (both concepts are in fact constructed culturally). In relation to the second ones, the ‘modes of representation’ of reality, Hernando follows David Olson (1994) and Eric Havelock (1996) to enunciate the existence of two main modes of representation of reality: metaphors and metonymies, which coexist within every human society, but whose development and prevalence is also culturally mediated.

When addressing time, Hernando follows Norbert Elias (1992:77ff) to explain some universal traits. For example, the concepts of present, past, and future, which are widespread with different variations, are psychological strategies to interpret and make sense of reality; what humans can experience is the present time of past events (memories), the present time of
contemporary events (perceptions), and the present time of future events (expectations). How time itself is conceptualised, and its importance in the perception of reality, varies culturally. For instance, in societies with high socioeconomic complexity, time is fundamental in order to coordinate labour, and thus tends to be favoured over space, the other parameter. Hernando exemplifies this recurring to the case of contemporary Western societies, where time, and the future in particular, are powerful elements that provide the ontological security that every human being requires to be able to navigate reality. The importance of change grows exponentially with the development of complexity, and with it, the role that the concept of future has. When change is valued positively, the future gains importance as a fluid concept, and the lack of certainty that it carries with it is ignored in favour of the possibilities that it entails. Nevertheless, this emphasis on time and change requires certain conditions to exist. In order to be able to conceive a future which is different from the present, two conditions implying bio-psychological and sociological factors are involved. The first one is the existence of a wish for something different, while the second one is the realisation of the potential to fulfil it; both conditions are connected with the social, political, and economic contexts of the society, and it is indeed easier to long for change when change can be conceptualised and where it is highly valued (that is, in societies with higher socioeconomic complexity).

Regarding space, Hernando follows the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) to explore this parameter of perception of reality, which Tuan defines as more stable than time. Space is the parameter of reality prioritised in those societies where ontological security does not come from change and the possibilities of the future, but in the maintenance of stability and the status quo with the world. This happens in groups where socioeconomic complexity is reduced, and thus the material capacity to control, predict and benefit from nature is more limited. Hernando emphasises that this does not mean that groups with lower socioeconomic complexity need to understand reality through space, while groups with higher socioeconomic complexity have a contingent relationship with it; in both cases space is a necessary parameter to think about reality. However, there is an important difference: societies with more socioeconomic complexity resort to references to represent reality that are not contained within that reality (that is, they use metaphors more often), while less complex ones use references that are part of it (metonymy), making it thus more difficult for them to conceptualise spatial realities that they have not yet been experimented with.
In reference to what Hernando labels as ‘modes of representation of reality’ (2002:52), she acknowledges the influence of Olson’s work (1994) to explain that humans have two fundamental ways of representing reality, metonymy and metaphor. In a metonymic system, the signifier used to represent reality (signified) is part of the reality being represented, while in a metaphoric one, reality and its representation are independent from each other. Olson argued that in oral societies (which necessarily include, but are not limited to, those with lower degrees of socioeconomic complexity), reality is mostly represented with metonymy, and only with the advent of writing systems, the representation of reality through metaphors became more widespread and even generalised. Hernando continues to explain that metaphor and metonymy are used differently, depending on the way of explaining phenomena that is being used. She states (Hernando 1999:54) that metonymic representation is more common for those phenomena whose causal, mechanical explanation remains unknown; in those cases, humans tend to explain the event in terms of human behaviour, projecting it onto the phenomenon, as it is the framework of reference whose rationality resonates and makes sense to the interpreter. On the other hand, metaphoric representation happens when humans know a way of explaining things using a logic which is independent from human beings, that is, being able to explain things without projecting human behaviour onto them. Both metaphor and metonymy exist in every human society, although their frequency varies. For example, metonymy holds a large power in the religious sphere in the Western world and is still the main mechanism used to approach ritual and death. In oral societies, although metonymy is widespread, metaphors exist and are commonly used in specific contexts, such as oratory, poetry, and ritual contexts.

Importantly, the degree of socio-economic complexity directly affects which things are represented metonymically or metaphorically. Complexity in terms of labour division and specialisation has cognitive consequences: people in the same group start having different cognitive experiences in their daily life, and inequality implies that people have so start interacting with those situated at a different level in the social hierarchy. This, in turn, leads to the need to interact with other people at different emotional levels, calculating the consequences of everyone’s emotions and actions to a degree which is not required in less complex societies in terms of socioeconomic organisation (where everyone’s cognitive experiences are similar, and nobody is significantly more powerful than others).

The use of metaphoric or metonymic representation has consequences regarding the emotional attachment with the world. Metaphoric representations are not reality itself, but only
a representation that stands for it. As Olson (1994:277) points out, Western society engages with the world through its representations (maps, equations, laws, etc), and in societies where metaphoric representation is widespread the occurrence of changes in the representation of reality is not a problem, since what changes is only a representation with which people have little or no emotional connection; moreover, Western societies tend to perceive change as positive. For example, when thinking about spaces, literate, contemporary Western societies think about physical maps, borders, GPS, or Google Maps; this means that they can think about the world to an extent impossible in the past, but at the same time, the majority of that world is known through a metaphoric representation, and thus modifying it is less traumatic. However, Hernando explains (2002:88ff) how it is exactly the opposite what happens in oral groups with a small degree of socioeconomic complexity. These groups, where metonymic representations are predominant, tend to know what they know through experience; when they engage with reality, they engage with it directly. So, when they think about space, for instance, they think about a space that they have seen, walked, dwelled, etc, or at least, a space that they have heard about by someone that has experienced it. That is why synonymic representations of reality tend to be characterised by a stronger emotional engagement with reality, because that reality is lived, not approached as a representation. And this is also why change is often viewed as negative among societies with a lower degree of socioeconomic complexity: change implies rejecting something to which they have established an emotional bond. This in turn creates the need to maintain things the way they are, because these groups know that they can survive in their current situation, but any change involves a risk which is difficult to assume. Changes risk orientation, but not only in the physical sense; it risks the parameters used to anchor the very being-in-the-world (Hernando 2002:81-83).

The use of one mode of representation or another (metaphor and metonymy) affects how the very two parameters to conceptualise reality are constructed. Hernando explains (2002:72-73) how the perception of time is culturally constructed, although some elements are universal; the distinction of time as a sequence or as a chronology is useful here. The first one comes from the direct experimentation of events, the flux of experiences as they happen. The second one, however, results in the interpretation of cultural parameters onto past experiences to conceptualise them in order and with some distance. The first notion is universal, while the second one can only exist in societies where individualisation exists, and there is a metaphorical, highly abstracted representation of reality that allows its conceptualisation beyond personal and inter-personal experiences (Leenhardt 1979:87-100). Hernando points out
(2002:73ff) that the perception of time has frequently been affected by power and social hierarchies, and as society divides, in the sense of Pierre Clastres (1981), the need for organising the productive system requires the development of more efficient modes of the representation of time. Those in charge of managing and coordinating production in a society tend to develop or get access to metaphorical representations of time earlier than other members of the social structure. Indeed, it is quite often the case where metaphorical and metonymic representations of time exist within the same society, and in particularly early instances of this use of metaphorical representations of time, they are usually understood in mythic terms, in relation with supranatural entities and divinities.

As Hernando explains, the use of metaphors and metonymy also affects how human groups perceive space, which is also structurally connected with socioeconomic complexity (Hernando 2002:81ff). Groups with lower socioeconomic complexity do not usually seek change, as it implies a great risk for their ontological security. That is why they prioritise space over time, as space is more static and therefore safer (Tuan 1977:179). The relationship with space in these groups, as it is experiential and based on human logic, is always embedded with emotions, and thus the environment plays a key role in their identity, providing an ontological security that is difficult to understand from our own perspective. Hernando references multiple ethnographic studies showing how hunter-gatherers and farmers without intensification conceptualise space and time through lived experiences, and thus metonymically (Thornton 1980:173 for the Iraqw of Tanzania; Dietler and Herbich 1993 for the Luo of Kenya; Bourdieu 1990 for farmers in Cabilia, Algeria; Grebe 1987 for the Chilean Mapuches, and Leenhardt 1979 for the New Caledonian Canaques). In these societies, and as the perception of space is based on experience, it tends to be anthropomorphic; the human body is always used as a reference, and it is the framework shaping perception (Tuan 1977:41).

Space is also perceived as a whole, not based in the dichotomies of the self/other and human/non-human; the world starts in them, and they are not different from their surroundings. Besides that, when there is a metonymic understanding of the space, signified and signifier cannot be separated easily due to their direct connection, which stabilises the meanings and values attributed to space. In the opposite situation, when the landscape is thought of through a metaphorical lens (that is, when the surroundings, populated with mountains, plants, animals and so on, become landscape, as something radically and categorically different from the person), the emotional connection with these elements is reduced. Here, signifier and signified
are not related to each other, and since the emotional connection is significantly smaller, changes in the space that is being conceived metaphorically are not worrying: they only affect symbols on an abstract plane, not a reality apprehended through an emotional attachment. Metaphorical references to think about time become more common in groups with larger socioeconomic complexity, making it thus possible to conceptualise spaces that have not been experimented with, while at the same time, and as their reality starts to be affected by changes more often, they start to prioritise time as the main parameter to conceptualise reality, as time is dynamic, while space is always more static.

The prevalence of one parameter to conceptualise reality (time versus space) and one mode of representation (metaphor versus metonymy) has profound consequences on what kind of discourse needs to be produced and maintained by the social group to obtain ontological security. This ontological security is obtained through a discourse that orientates the group and legitimises its present situation, but the kind of discourse required for this aim is radically different depending on the wider socioeconomic complexity of the group (and particularly, depending on if the group is oral/literate). Hernando explains that two of the main discourses of legitimation are myths and history (Hernando 2002:89ff). History is a legitimation discourse based on a linear, chronological concept of time and metaphoric representations of space, and as such it prevails in literate societies such as Western contemporary ones. Thus, its role to understand prehistoric groups should be purely methodological and monitored reflexively, accepting that chronological understandings of the passing of time are not an objective reality, but a Western, contemporary mechanism of legitimation through the artificial compartmentalisation of events according to culturally specific criteria. Conversely, to understand prehistoric societies it would be necessary to comprehend the importance of myths, which would be the equivalent mechanism in oral prehistoric societies used to obtain ontological security through discourses of orientation and legitimation.

Myths can be defined as the legitimation discourse used to explain those parts of reality whose logic is unknown, and that are perceived as threatening for the group. They do so through metonymic representations of time and, especially, space (Hernando 2002:89) Myths are then imaginary representations. The myth is the orienting and legitimising discourse which focuses on stable, essential instances. Myths dwell in an apparent absence of time, and the notion of space, represented metonymically, always occupies a more important role. Societies where myths are the most common legitimation (and orientation) discourse usually have a limited
control over their material conditions, which in turn means they do not entrust their survival on their capacity to understand and predict reality (that is, gaining more ‘objective’ information about it), but on their emotional engagement with it and on their capacity to please it (Hernando 2002:95). Societies where myths are predominant do not believe that agency rests within the individual or the person, but on the satisfaction of reality-nature’s needs. Humans then place themselves as objects in relation to the sacred subject (nature/non/human entities), whose agency is in fact recognised (Hernando 2002:95) Myths are fundamental to obtain ontological security as they ward off anxieties that are often unconscious; they are the things humans believe in without even acknowledging they do (Pannikar 1979:30).

3.2.2. Relational identity and the development of the fantasy of individuality.

Hernando states that relational identity is that which consists in seeing oneself as part of a greater unit, and through that, increasing one’s feeling of security in the face of a reality too complex and threatening to be grasped completely (Hernando 2017:42). As it can be seen, this notion of relationality is different from its usual meaning, where it is either associated with the relationships that constitute a dividual (Bruck 2001, 2004, 2006: Fowler 2004, Jones 2005, Chapman 2000, Chapman and Gaydarska 2007, 2011), or with relationality in the posthuman sense (i.e., as models where everything is relational, such as Wilkinson 2013 for example). Hernando’s model (2002) is more humanistic, focusing on the psychological, emotional, and cognitive importance of relationships between human beings, and especially between the self and the community. It also has to do with how humans obtain ontological security, which is what allows them to navigate a world whose complexity is necessarily overwhelming and needs to be eased.

Relational identity embodies the difficulty to conceive oneself beyond the relationships in which one is embedded. This does not imply that in societies with relational identity everybody is the same – that would be impossible – but that the main axis of their being-in-the-world, what provides ontological security, is the bond with other humans. Hernando (2002:60) exemplifies how relational identity works citing a paragraph from Leenhardt’s illuminating work about the Canaque of New Caledonia:
‘He is unaware of his body, which is only his support. He knows himself only by the relationships he maintains with others. He exists only insofar as he acts his role in the course of his relationships. He is situated only with respect to them. If we try to draw this, we cannot use a dot marked “self” (ego) but must make a number of lines to mark relationships: ab, ac, ad, ae, af, and so forth. The lines correspond to him and his father, him and his uncle, him and his wife, him and his cross-cousin, him and his clan, and so forth. In the midst of these rays, an empty space is circumscribed by a’s denoting the point of departure for relationships. These a’s are replicas of his body. The empty space is him, and this is what is named. […] If a man has a curse laid on him by an angry maternal uncle and is driven out of society, he feels “in perdition”. Having been obliged to flee, he no longer has any relationship through which to find himself again. Not even his speech manifests his being, because his being as no correspondence in society and answers to no recognizable personage. He suffers from losing his role in which he felt himself to be specifically a personage. He no longer exists socially. He needs to be able to be summoned; he must have a role and a name. This is the prize of his existence.’ (Leenhardt 1979:153-155).

This translates into the fact that the idea of having an inner self, separated, different and independents from its relationships, is less prominent whenever the degree of socioeconomic complexity is lower. Hernando’s main reference to explore the history of the self in the Western world is The Civilising Process, by the sociologist Norbert Elias (1997 [1939]). Hernando defends that relational identity is a structural and necessary trait of human beings, but in societies with a high degree of socioeconomic complexity and specialisation, some members can develop what she calls ‘dependent individuality’, or the fantasy of individuality. These individuals consciously and unconsciously deny the importance of the group and seek to obtain their ontological security not from the sense of belonging, but from their capacity to dominate reality through its rationalisation and its conceptualisation through metaphoric representations. Individualisation in general relates to power (Hernando 2017:57) since power involves the capacity to make others (both human and non-human) act in a particular way (Elias 1991:52) and that requires, in turn, being conscious of one’s own desires, and perhaps more importantly, believing that one’s desires are more important than anyone else’s.

It is important to remark that this fantasy of individuality is not inherent to any group with a high degree of socioeconomic complexity, and it is also related to cultural and historical trajectories. In contemporary China for instance, in both urban and rural contexts, relationality
can subdue individualistic tendencies despite the existence of the material and social conditions to develop strongly individualised personhood; it is just that the mechanisms of relationality (and particularly, the connection between morality and relationality) are stronger (Yan 2017).

Regarding how this fantasy of inequality comes into being, Hernando explains (2017:42ss, 2001) that, as societies become increasingly divided and specialisation develops, the persons that are part of them begin to develop more differentiable and diversified personal trajectories and biographies. Social division implies that different people have different skills and abilities, as well as different cognitive experiences during their daily lives, starting in turn to perceive that they are different from each other, as that difference in fact increases. Hernando (2017:52) follows Norbert Elias explanations (1997, 1992) of how, with the increase of social functions, comes an unconscious modulation of emotions in individual persons. The larger the group is, and the more interconnectedness that it is required to obtain goods and services, the more common that it is to interact with other people that are not socially close; this increased connectivity involves controlling the emotional display that people can afford in order to successfully navigate this myriad of social interactions. Elias called this the ‘civilizing process’ (Elias 1997) and it explains why there is a correlation between social division and the increase of distrust for other human beings: different social functions imply different daily experiences and interactions, different levels of control and knowledge about the world and also different degrees of power. Therefore, it can be problematic to defend that people in every human group explicitly value the distinctiveness of their biographies and personalities; it can easily become the projection of a modern trait; although diverse personalities and, to some extent, biographies exist in every

![Figure 16: Photography of Norbert Elias, key thinker in the work of Almudena Hernando and Charles Taylor. Source: Norbert Elias Foundation.](image)
society, to emphasise that diversity is a contemporary trait. Hernando is adamant in her affirmation that the identities that the members of a society can display can be as varied as the different functions and power inequalities in that society (Hernando 2017:73).

During this process of individualisation, and probably due to the increasing need to modulate and repress emotions, the very idea of the self developed (Hernando 2017:59-61). The concept of the individual itself did not exist in antiquity; even in the Middle Ages the word was used to talk about indivisible or inseparable entities but not about human beings (Elias 1991:160). It is undeniable that some highly individualised people existed in past societies, particularly among the elites of those societies with a higher degree of socioeconomic complexity, but they were the exception rather than the norm. However, the appearance of writing played a fundamental role in the development of individuality, as authors such as Walter Ong (2000), Eric Havelock (1986) and Jack Goody (1995) have explained in detail.

It would not be until the 17th century that individuality could be a defining trait of a considerable number of people in Western societies, especially those in the urban world. It was only then when the notion of individuality began being associated with the concept of person (Mauss 1991, Elias 1991), a connection that many authors still see as fundamental today. By the 19th century, Hernando explains, it is finally when most people in the Western world engaged with reality as individualised beings, and clearly prioritised mechanisms based in time and metaphor (reason over emotion, emphasis on technological change, dominion of nature…).

Figure 17: Cover of ‘The Fantasy of Individuality’ by Almudena Hernando. Source: Google images.
Hernando illustrates how this shift can be seen occurring in multiple spheres, with mythical (and thus, emotional and timeless) explanations of the world being substituted by discourses based on reason and the passing of time: Lyell’s *Principles of Geology* proved that the Earth had an old history of gradual changes, while Darwin explored, in *The Descent of Man*, and *Selection in Relation to Sex*, how humans could have appeared without the intervention of a divinity. *The Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels also explained contemporary Western society in reference to past changes, and even the individual self was to be explained in reference to the past with Freud’s psychoanalytic theories (Hernando 2017:56). However, the evolution of individuality in the 19th and 20th centuries that Hernando details (2017:58-60; 2000) is not the topic of this thesis. Moreover, and although individualisation can occur even in those societies where writing has not been adopted or invented, there are limits to the level of technological control over the world that oral societies can have, and the same applies to their ability to explain natural phenomena with causal, scientific logic.

The emphasis on orality is a key element of Hernando’s theories (2017:60-62). Following authors such as Ong (2000), Olson (1994) and Havelock (1986) she explores (2017:61ff) how writing is an intellectual technology, a ‘mechanism of individualisation’ (Ong 2000; Goody 1995) that radically transforms the way in which any society understands and relates to the world, and how society (and human beings) conceptualise themselves. As Jack Goody pointed out, ‘the shift to writing and then to print must be considered of critical importance in both formalising and increasing the flow of information that has been a precondition of many of the features that differentiate societies of the Neolithic and Palaeolithic from the “modern” civilisations that followed’ (1995:148). Hernando defends that writing is the most important system of metaphoric representation, and thus allows human beings to be individually connected to a reality that they have not experienced, while in oral societies, relationships with reality are more often metonymic (as humans relate with reality itself, which implies a lived, emotional connection).

It is important to understand that, with individuality, different meanings exist. On the one hand, it can refer to universal traits, such as the consciousness of being in a single entity somewhat separated from others, or the biographical perspective that human beings acquire with the passing of time. However, even these universal traits that human beings experience due to their cognitive and biological features are understood differently in different cultural settings. While they might constitute the backbone of identity among those individuals with a
strong ‘dependent individuality’, like most male members of Western society in the 21st century, those traits bear little importance in the self-definition of human beings from groups with a low degree of socioeconomic complexity. Hernando’s individuality refers more to the core element of being-in-the-world, to where ontological security comes from. In summary, Hernando defends that relational identity plays a key role in the constitution of personhood in any human being, but there are historical modes of personhood (such as dependent individuality) that can create a fantasy, an illusion of being able to obtain ontological security without the need of other human beings.

The role of writing in shaping the way we make sense of reality (parameters to conceptualise reality) and how we think about it (modes of representation) is central to Hernando’s arguments, and it illustrates how assuming common psychodynamics for oral and literate societies is undoubtedly a mistake. Humans in oral societies can only perceive reality in connection to subjective and emotional dimensions, as all knowledge has been acquired through experience, or at maximum, the experience and description of someone else (Hernando 2017:62). The situation is quite different in literate societies, where writing allows someone to relate to knowledge that has not been experienced by the self or anyone close, and which is also gained in the individual, solitary activity of reading, where the learner performs an exercise of isolation and abstraction that separates them from their immediate surroundings (Ong 2000:72-79). Therefore, writing is a tool of individualisation at different levels: it separates knowledge from experience, favouring metaphorical representations of reality over synonymic ones. This in turn leads to a less emotional engagement with reality, but in exchanges it widens the horizons of the possible knowledge, since knowledge becomes separated from the human and there are no limits to the amount of information that can be codified (written) and decodified (read) (Hernando 2017:62).

Hernando (2017:65) defends that individuality is, in emotional terms, a highly costly mode of identity. Individuality exists in a world where change defines existence, but that implies the constant anxiety of ‘never having fully become’. She indicates that individuality also occurs in a world which is understood through ‘objective’ reason and controlled technologically, and where very few phenomena are explained in human terms. Thus, human beings are left alone, with an emotional loss that is partially compensated by the sense of dominion and control over the world, as Elias put it (1987:68). However, Hernando goes further, claiming that human beings have never been able to fully pay the emotional price of individuality, because it is an
impossibility. Individuality assumes the possibility of freeing the self from the group, of connecting with the world only through reason rather than through emotions. Hernando states that this could never happen because human beings are not equipped with tools to comprehend reality only through that lens, since that would imply contemplating the vast complexity of reality and realising how insignificant they are, thus demolishing any ontological security about their place in the cosmos. Therefore, individuality is the only mode of personhood can only be a fantasy, a product of an imagined reality where individuals emphasise individuality at a conscious level, while still maintaining relational personhood at an unconscious one.


The work of the philosopher Charles Taylor, and particularly his *A Secular Age* (2007) offers powerful conceptual tools to think about personhood in the past, and it is especially useful insofar as it establishes contextual and structural relationships between personhood and the different modes of experiencing reality.

One of the areas of his work that offer more potential to approach prehistoric personhood without projecting contemporary notions of identity is the distinction between historical and universal traits of personhood. This applies especially to the notion of the porous self/porosity, which, according to K. Smith, could offer a somewhat closer image to the original ontological condition of what it means to be a human being (Smith 2012:60). And as Smith points out, this is not an idealisation of the Noble Savage again, but an acknowledgement of one of the very few traits of human nature that are clear: porous subjectivity is a necessary condition for socialisation, the main mechanism allowing human beings to survive and thrive: ‘recognising porosity as our ontological condition also illuminates the fact that becoming a buffered self is invariably an acquired condition; every human child enters the world open to the socialising forces of its cultural milieu [...] but, finally, human subjects can only become (more or less) buffered selves – or any other kind of self, person, etc – by internalising (sublimating) the values and norms of their particular cultural milieu, and this internalisation is only possible because they are intrinsically porous’ (Smith 2012:61).
At the same time, the work of Taylor fits surprisingly perfectly well within a framework based on A. Hernando’s theories. This is interesting, as their work was elaborated independently and without referencing each other, although both authors are heavily influenced by the civilising process proposed by N. Elias. For the theoretical approach proposed here, six different concepts are being borrowed from Taylor’s work and incorporated to the main theoretical background offered by A. Hernando. Among these conceptual tools, the notions of enchainment/disenchainment refer to two modes of experiencing reality; porous/buffered refer to how the self perceives itself in relation to non-human entities. The last two concepts used here are engaged/disengaged, which refer to the stances that characterise the relationships between the self and other human agents. Every pair of concepts should be understood as a spectrum, with both terms signalling the extremes, and a wide range of possibilities in between.

In relation to the modes of experiencing reality, the spectrum proposed by Charles Taylor is located between the notions of enchantment and disenchantment. The first one is the understanding and perception of the world as inhabited by multiple non-human entities (spirits, ancestors, divinities, daemons…) that have power and agency over human beings. The opposite element in the spectrum, disenchantment, occurs when the world is no longer perceive as being inhabited by these entities, whose agency is rejected. As Taylor put it: ‘As a mode of experience, rather than as theory, this [enchantment] can be captured by saying that we feel ourselves vulnerable or “healable” (this is meant to be the favourable antonym to “vulnerable”) to benevolence or malevolence which is more than human, which resides in the cosmos or even beyond it.’ (Taylor 2007:36).

Taylor made a careful effort to connect the individual with the perception of reality, noting that rejecting an enchanted world is unlikely to happen if individualised identity (or the buffered self) is not dominant: ‘disbelief is hard in the enchanted world. This is not so much because spirits are part of the undeniable furniture of things and God is a spirit, ergo undeniable. Much more important, God figures in this world as the dominant spirit, and moreover, as the only thing that guarantees that in this awe-inspiring and frightening field of forces, good will triumph. Of course, just this will mean that our relations with, feelings about God will probably be tinged with ambiguity, as they always are. But it will also mean that the prospect of rejecting God does not involve retiring to the safe redoubt of the buffered self, but rather chancing ourselves in the field of forces without him […] In general, going against God is not an option in the enchanted world. That is one way the change to the buffered self has impinged’ (Taylor
It is interesting to note how the idea of the enchanted world works neatly with the idea of the myth as a legitimating strategy mentioned by Hernando (2002), particularly in terms of how they are lived experiences that emotionally connect humans with the world, and it is therefore difficult to question or challenge them.

Regarding the boundedness of the person and to which extend human beings perceive themselves as individualised, separated entities, Taylor offers another perspective, one that goes further than the usual individual/dividual dichotomy and allows to connect his theory with Hernando’s emphasis on the emotional relationships that people establish with the world. He introduces this emotional dimension through the notions of porous and buffered selves (Taylor 2007:37-38). The buffered self is the one that not only feels separated from the rest of the world, bounded; it is the one that is able to take emotional distance from the world. Buffered selves, in Taylor’s theory, are characterised by the Cartesian dichotomy mind/body, and thus can relegate the world, the experiences and perceptions, to the body, ‘disengaging from everything outside the mind’ (2007:38). According to Taylor, for the buffered self ‘it comes to seem axiomatic that all thought, feeling and purpose, all the features we normally can ascribe to agents, must be in minds, which are distinct from the “outer” world. The buffered self begins to find the idea of spirits, moral forces, causal powers with a purposive bent, close to incomprehensible’ (2007:540). The other extreme of the spectrum would be the porous self, who understands itself in relationships to the world, and for whom the distinction between an inner, bounded self, and the rest of the world, would make no sense. This implies a connection with the world, since ‘the porous self is vulnerable, to spirits, demons, cosmic forces. And along with this go certain fears which can grip it in certain circumstances’ (Taylor 2007:38). This connects with Hernando’s ideas regarding how it is impossible to separate the perception and conceptualisation of the world and the self, with the degree of emotional attachment that connects both instances. Taylor explicitly links the porous, engaged self with the enchanted

![Figure 18: Cover of ‘A Secular Age’, by Charles Taylor. Source: Google images.](image-url)
perception of the world, as the boundaries of the self are unclear in an enchanted world populated with multiple entities, whose existence is independent from that of humans and whose agency is clearly perceived (Taylor 2007:33).

But this perception of the self and the world have other implications. The emotional connection that humans establish with the world are not only limited to non-human entities, but also to humans themselves. How the self is perceived and the degree to which reality is conceptualised as being independent and separated from human beings has profound consequences on the type of connections that humans establish when interacting with each other. In order to explain these last elements, these stances of the self towards other human entities, Taylor proposes the notions of engagement/disengagement, which further explore the emotional connection with the world (and with humans, in particular) beyond the subject. For Taylor, disengagement is the stance that leads towards the drawing of boundaries between the self and others, with a withdrawal of emotional, intimate connections with other people. He follows Norbert Elias’ thesis from *The Civilizing Process* (1997) [1939] and how as socioeconomic complexity increases, the idea of an inner self that is separated from the world comes into existence, triggering the gradual replacement of anxiety towards the non-human world with the mistrust of other human beings, whose behaviours and motivations start to appear foreign. This in turn had consequences regarding the nature of the relationships established with others. An engaged stance would enable relationships based on care, vulnerability, and openness, with a strong degree of emotional connection with other people. On the other end of the spectrum, however, a disengaged stance would imply the opposite, with the rejection of that openness and not allowing deep emotional connections to become the defining element of human relationships (which would be instead enacted through other mechanisms, such as joking, boasting, etc), and where these newly created emotional distances with other beings would promote the ideal of a self-reliant identity (Taylor 2007:137).

3.4. **Concepts from the anthropology of personhood: Partibility, permeability and fragmentation practices.**

The notions of permeability and partibility have their origin in the discussions about the body and gender in the dividual person of India and Melanesia. According to Marilyn Strathern, ‘in being multiple [the Melanesian person] is also partible, an entity that can dispose of parts
in relation to others’ (1988:185). Partible personhood is characterised by the person being composed of relations. These relations can include objects, other people and all sorts of entities, and these other elements are often the objectification or embodiment of those constituting relations, thus the boundary of the person going beyond the skin to include these other elements. There is often a process of homology between internal and external relations or parts.

For the study of prehistoric personhood, the possibility of assessing the role of objects in the constitution of the person is particularly important, and following the previously explained notions of fragmentation and enchainment proposed by J. Chapman, it is possible to infer how objects could play a role in the construction of personhood as mere objects, but also as the embodiment of relationships between persons and between persons and non-humans.

In contrast, the notion of permeable personhood was developed in the context of studying personhood in south India by different authors (Busby 1997, 1995; Marriot and Inden 1977) Here, persons are not internally divided, and thus are not composed by different elements that can be identified. However, they contain substances from different entities (mostly, their mother and father) but these are not separably identifiable in the body. Persons are co-extensive with their skin boundary, but they are not rigidly contained: they are permeable, as substances flow between persons creating connections and altering who they are. The substances have fixed properties, and they can change a person if the ratios of substances change as well. The importance of permeability in the study of personhood is connected with the existence of feasting and other consumption practices, where the consumption of specific things (food, drink, but also objects) would have contributed to the creation of certain aspects of personhood.
Although the main topic of this thesis is personhood, the theme of power (always accompanied by resistance) is central to current understandings of later prehistoric societies. While discussion about the development of inequality and the existence of the state have been central in the archaeology of the southeast of Iberia, the theories of power and perhaps more importantly, of resistance to power, are rarely explicitly addressed by the authors speaking of the existence of coercion, domination, and social classes (with notable exceptions, i.e., Aranda 2012). By default, and as most authors studying the Chalcolithic and Argaric Bronze Age have used materialist approaches (for example, R. Chapman 2003, Molina and Cámara 2005, Castro 2003, and others).
et al. 1998, Lull and Risch 1995, Gilman and Thornes 1995), the departure point has been that the economy/infrastructure has substantiated and preceded social and symbolic inequality, which is often taken for granted. However, discussions of power and resistance require more specific models to approach how power was articulated and, in clear connection, how resistance could have taken place. Thus, it seems necessary to offer a brief disquisition on the way power and resistance are conceptualised here. The difficulty with approaching power is that it is difficult to know where it is (Foucault 2012:42). Thus, any systematic approach to how power is created, exerted, maintained, or challenged within a social context or social group involves locating its action and its fields of action (Foucault 2012:19). Given the social and political conditions of late prehistoric societies in the southeast of Iberia, an anarchist approach to power might prove useful, insofar as it does not naturalise the existence of elements such as inequality or the state, and it privileges the symbolic dimension of inequality in order to understand its later developments.

The feminist and anarchist activist Starhawk (1987) has proposed the existence of three types of power: ‘power-over’, ‘power-with’, and ‘power-within’. The first would be characterised by the capacity to exert violence, coercion or to give orders; the second one would be defined by its capacity to convince people to follow a course of action without resorting to threats, and the last one would have to do with the traits and capacities of the individual to act. Later, the anarchist political theorist Uri Gordon (2010) reframed Starhawk’s proposal, changing the notion of power-within to power-to, which would refer to the potentiality of doings things, and which would substantiate both power-over and power-with. The notion of power used here is that of Gareth Pritchard (2020), who took Gordon’s and Starhawk’s work and further elaborated it. Pritchard rejects the notion of power-over due to three reasons: Firstly, it is imprecise, including both coercive and non-coercive power. Secondly, it is based on a vertical metaphor, which constitutes an obstacle to imagine social change, and finally, it is not explicitly clear on the importance of violence, as it does not acknowledge the aggressivity of coercive power. Instead, he proposed the notion of ‘power-against’. Thus, in Pritchard’s model (2020), power-against is the one that allows the actant to make other people do something that they would not want to do, in a context of coercion and the threat of something unpleasant happening to them if they refuse. The notion of power-with would be quite different, as it would be the one to suggest and to be listened to. It would be the kind of power that can mobilise action from other agents, but always voluntarily and without coercion. Finally, power-to would be the kind of power derived from one’s own capacities and contextuality. It would
include the capabilities, skills, resources, and relationships that allow the actant to act on a specific way. Power-to vertebrates both power-against and power-with, as it includes the capacity to coerce (having the monopoly of violence, controlling the means of production, etc) but also power-with (including leadership, charisma, expert knowledge, etc). Similar definitions of power-to have been offered by authors such as Amy Allen, who defines power-to as the ‘ability of an individual actor to attain an end or series of ends’ (Allen, 34-35), or Peter Morris, who defines it as ‘the ability to affect outcomes’ (2006:126).

Pritchard’s notion of power is thus highly relational, as it emphasises that two out of three types of power only exist within relationships. Even power-to, which is more based on the actant’s capacities, cannot be separated from social relationships. Moreover, power-to can only be social in prehistoric societies, as individuality as a trait would only be incipient, and even the most powerful individuals of the Argaric world would be powerful insofar as they occupy certain positions in a system of social, symbolic, and economic relationships, granting them different types of resources that they can then use as power-against or as power-with.

3.5.1. Power and resistance in societies against the state.

If the existence of power inequalities in the Chalcolithic seem likely, given the increase in social and economic complexity, and even more so in the Argaric Bronze Age, with the development of socioeconomic inequality and powerful elites, then the existence of resistance is a logical imperative, as humans are not willing to become someone else’s subordinates out of the blue.

The most popular approach to resistance in the social sciences is the one offered by James Scott. His studies of resistance against domination and the state in different contexts, mostly southeast Asia, has focused on the so-called ‘hidden transcripts’, or ways of resistance that appear outside the spheres of power. According to him, multiple contexts that have been misread as being characterised by submission and conformity are full of everyday resistance and dissidence (Scott 1985). Scott’s notion of resistance includes ‘acts as foot-dragging, dissimulations, false compliance, feigned ignorance, desertion, pilfering, smuggling, poaching, arson, slander, sabotage, surreptitious assault and murder, anonymous threats, and so on’ (Scott 2008:34), as long as they are perceived by the actants involved as having the intentionality of
resisting or dissenting from power (Scott 1990). Scott reviews Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, defining it as ideological or symbolic domination, and connects it with power inequality. In other words, domination requires a certain degree of conformity or legitimacy in the eyes of those being dominated (Scott 1985).

However, there have been criticisms of Scott’s approach, mostly due to his lax conceptualisation of what counts as resistance, which has been used to characterise trivial practices that the power barely notices as resistance (Brown 1996), and also because his model conceptualises power as a property, something that subordinated groups do not have and operate outside of. This obviates that power exists in all systems of relationships, and how its visibility and functioning depend on dynamics of dissolution/resistance that coexist in every society (Clastres 1974). A useful alternative on how to characterise resistance without turning it into an empty signifier is the one offered by Alfredo González-Ruibal, who classifies dynamics of resistance into a spectrum encompassing three concepts depending on their intentionality, capacity, and visibility: resilience, resistance, and rebellion (2014). González-Ruibal (2014:9) characterises Scott’s ‘hidden transcripts’ of soft resistance as resilience, defining it as the capacity to adapt, psychologically and socially, to power through the development of coping mechanisms. In turn, he defines rebellion as the organised, politically motivated action against power, often violent and perceived as a clear threat by power; in between, resistance would often take place outside of the hierarchical political structures, by those groups opposing the development of such structures, or their effective integration within them (González-Ruibal 2014:10).

The last element to consider is the specificity of power and resistance in the context of late prehistoric societies. The work of Pierre Clastres becomes invaluable here, and his work in Societies Against the State constitutes the most important treatise on how societies without a state are actively organised against the development of inequality. Societies, then, are not merely stateless; they are constituted against the state.

Clastres (1974:21) aimed to question the traditional conceptualisations of power as coercion and subordination; those are ways of exercising it, but they cannot constitute the model of power; if all power were always coercive and repressive, it could not work. He explained that every human group experiences dynamics of fragmentation/resistance, where different forces contribute towards the fragmentation of society (in terms of increasing complexity, increasing
inequality, etc) while other forces oppose those dynamics with resistance practices (that aim to cancel those fragmentary forces and produce instead more equality, less complexity, more collectivisation, etc).

Clastres explains how leadership in societies against the state is permeated by these dynamics against fragmentation, as the position of leadership depends entirely on the leader’s successful relationship with the group. Thus, leadership is something that must be earned and negotiated and comes with the responsibility of mediating in the group’s issues but does imply any authority to coerce others. Leadership in societies against the state is then, using Pritchard’s (2020) model, power-with, as it is based on persuasion and sustained on a rather precarious power-to, as the leader’s position depends on its skill and capacities (oratory, charisma, etc), as well as its relationships, which are often highly demanding as they are based on requesting favours, participating in costly gift relationships, etc. Clastres points out (1974:165-167) that the skills and features of the leader are fundamental to justify their leadership, as opposed to the relationship between leadership and authority in hierarchical political structures. In hierarchical political structures, occupying a position of power grants authority and thus the right to speak and be heard, while in societies against the state it is the ability to speak that allows certain people to become leaders, and that leadership is granted by and limited to the capacity to speak and be heard. There is then a clear distinction between the type of power-to existing in both types of society. Power-to in societies against the state is based on the person’s ability to mediate in conflict and has a strong relational component: its desire to incur in costly relationships to navigate and solve those conflicts. Power-to in hierarchical political structures, on the other hand, can be independent of the person’s skills, as their power-to does not necessarily emanate from their own traits and skills. But the relational component of their power-to, that is, the relationships to sustain and provide with the resources to exert power, are not costly, but beneficial for the group in power. Besides this, the existence of hierarchical
political structures tends to implicate power-against, which will correlate positively with the strength of inequalities.

Importantly, Clastres vigorously defends that the political relationship of power precedes and gives foundation to the economic relationship of exploitation. Alienation must be political and symbolic first, or otherwise would not be accepted (1974:210). In fact, he explains how exploitation and inequality are not allowed in societies against the state, which usually have strong non-spoken regulations against them that are acted upon as soon as anyone tries to obtain authority to coerce others (1974:211). Even when the mechanisms to stop individuals or groups from attaining coercing power (power-against) fail, often due to an asymmetrical balance in the capacity to exert violence, there is another practice of resistance against the state: leaving.

Leaving the group, which Paolo Virno labelled as ‘engaged withdrawal’, consists of the exodus or abandonment of the state or the hierarchical political structure. Virno claimed that exodus is in fact an exercise of power that does not become power-against (1996). Virno’s characterisation of exodus should not be conceptualised as an exit via the backdoor, nor hiding away: it is a measure that actively combats and deactivates the conditions of possibility of power-against in a particular setting (Squire 2015:510-511). In Virno’s own words, ‘Nothing is less passive than flight. The “exit” modifies the conditions within which the conflict takes place, rather than presupposes it as an irremovable horizon; it changes the context within which a problem arises rather than deals with the problem by choosing one or another of the alternative solutions already on offer. In short, the “exit” can be seen as a free-thinking inventiveness that changes the rules of the game and disorients the enemy’ (Virno 1996:199).

In relation to the development of hierarchical political structures and the state, Clastres (1974) indicates that there are two main phenomena that, historically, would have been able to bypass the mechanisms of resistance: demography and violence. On the one hand, demographic growing, after certain point, would have necessarily implied an increase in social complexity to organise production and conviviality in such large groups. And in relation to violence, Clastres pointed out, relying perhaps too much on examples of Amazonian hunter-gatherers, it is one of the only contexts where leaders in egalitarian societies would have real authority to coerce others, as during warfare their authority cannot be challenged.
The work of Clastres, of course, presents some weaknesses. One of the most common criticisms is directed against the idea of societies being against the state; how could they possible organise themselves against the emergence of something that they had yet to experience? This critique has been addressed by the late David Graeber, who pointed out that it is not the model who is at fault, but Clastres’ gender perspective. Graber explained that Clastres’ failed to see the one dimension of social life where Amazonian groups understand arbitrary, unquestionable power backed by violence: gender relationships (Graeber 2004:23). Thus, Amazonians were organising themselves not especially against a specific political structure, but against the possibility of someone having over them the kind of power-against that male individuals in their societies hold against their wives and daughters. Clastres’ explanation about demography might be, however, more problematic nowadays, due to the appearance of ancient megasites without clear evidence of social inequality, i.e., the Trypillia megasites in Ukraine (Chapman et al. 2019) or, at a smaller scale but closer in space, Marroquies in Jaén (Díaz-Zorita et al. 2020).
Chapter 4: Personhood during the Chalcolithic.

The following chapter is divided into three main parts. The first one is a brief introduction to the southeast of Iberia during the Chalcolithic (3300–2250 BC), including general information about its social and economic structures and their evolution. In the second part, the three Chalcolithic case-studies of Los Millares, El Barranquete, and Almizaraque are explored in more depth to offer a detailed analysis of the kind of knowledge available about this period, with a particular emphasis on funerary practices and their interpretation. In the third and main part of the chapter, the analysis of personhood through the review of funerary evidence takes place, focusing especially on the notions of relationality, partibility, individualisation and non-human personhood, which are the main features of Chalcolithic personhood that have been inferred.

4.1. General context.

In the immediately previous period, the Neolithic (5500-3300 BC), the available archaeological evidence for the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula is relatively scarce. The societies inhabiting the territory were not completely settled and had some degree of mobility. Their economy, that could be characterised as complex hunter-gathering guided by principles of general reciprocity, produced and accumulated a surplus of both food and other items. This surplus was used to make social distinctions of age, gender, and group affiliation; human groups were also involved in annual exchange networks which included both primary resources and finished products (Sanchez Romero 2000). Their subsistence was based on the combination of both wild and domesticated products, including plants and animals. There is no evidence of structural inequality, as no human group seems to have had any sort of exclusive control over any particular resources. Therefore, although they would not necessarily be completely egalitarian, inequality would not have been structural (Chapman 2003:142). Regarding their funerary practices, although the evidence is not abundant, different practices have been documented, most of them emphasising the communal aspects of funerary ritual. The documented practices include burials in caves, stone cists and circular tombs (Leisner and Leisner 1949). A well-studied example to illustrate funerary practices could be Cerro de la Virtud (Montero and Ruiz Taboada 1996), a settlement that appeared in the Neolithic and continued being occupied well into the Bronze Age. Its funerary evidence consists of a funerary pit, of 11 square meters, and includes at least 11 individuals, all of them but one adults. The
oldest male individual has been connected to five large vessels within the burial. The site has been interpreted in terms of serving as a symbolic reference for these mobile communities, that would not have invested much labour on the settlements, but that would have used this funerary location as a reference in the landscape.

In contrast, the Chalcolithic (3300–2250 BC) has been characterised in more detail due to the more abundant evidence available. In the Vera basin, one of the most intensively researched areas, the surveys indicate a remarkable population increase, passing from six Neolithic sites to at least 16 during the Chalcolithic (Delibes et al. 1996:165). Of these 16 new sites, only two were previously inhabited (Cerro de la Virtud and Almizaraque). The population in the valley would increase from a maximum of a few hundred people to around 1300–1600 (Castro et al. 1998b:71), but the distribution was irregular; one relatively large site, Las Pilas, occupying 5 ha, several medium sites such as Almizaraque and Zajara, which would occupy 0.5 and 0.3 ha respectively, and then a majority of smaller sites, that would occupy less than 0.1 ha (Delibes et al. 1996:165). Regarding the temporality of occupation of Chalcolithic sites, Las Pilas and Almizaraque seem to have the longest ones (Almizaraque having been occupied in the Neolithic), although it has been suggested that they were not continuously occupied (Delibes et al. 1996).

Figure 21: Location of the case-studies in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. Source: Google maps
In terms of settlement architecture, the Chalcolithic is marked by an increase in labour investment. Dwelling structures, which tend to be circular, have stone foundations, and defensive structures in the form of walls appeared in many of the settlements, including Los Millares, Las Pilas, El Malagón or Cerro de la Virgen. The communal tombs, despite being structurally similar to Neolithic ones, are larger (Chapman 2003:144). These differences in terms of labour investment have been explained in terms of the duration of their occupation and also the available labour in larger settlements (Castro et al. 1998).

Economic production during the Chalcolithic has been the centre of numerous debates, but in general it is accepted that it was based around the production of cereals and herding (Gilman & Thornes 1985). In the Vera Basin, sites seem to be distributed around two patterns: some sites, surrounded by non-irrigated land in the main basin of the valley, and then in the outskirts of the mountainous areas, were probably more directed towards the exploitation of mountain resources and naturally irrigated farming (Castro et al. 1994:104). Chapman has defended (2003:146) that besides Los Millares, there is no evidence for inequal access to production, although he believes that there was inequality. Access to production has been studied through the presence of hand grinders, axes, lithic tools and pits and vessels for storage, and the evidence seems to indicate that every site contained all these elements, thus most sites likely being self-sufficient. Micó (1990) has argued that at the local level, the switch in the location of the storage vessels (located outside and in public areas during the Neolithic) to the interior of structures during the Chalcolithic could indicate a new landscape or resource control and management, with these now being controlled by extended families or other kinship groups such as lineages. However, and in terms of regional inequality, Los Millares seems to be the clear exception to this generalised access to resources, as inside its defensive structures, in the so-called ‘Fortificación 1’, Molina et al. (1986) have located a large number of grinders and storage vessels, that would vastly exceed the local needs of its inhabitants, thus suggesting the role of the site as a central location in terms of storage and distribution of goods.

Regarding the production of general goods, Chapman points out that it was likely to be fundamentally local and with local sources (Chapman 1990:147-148). Copper was particularly abundant in Almeria, where Suárez et al. (1986:205) have suggested that 66% of the sources were located within 10 km of the sites. In his extensive research on copper, Montero (1993) has pointed out that during the Chalcolithic production was local, and on a small scale, with no evidence of mining, and that half of the production were tools, probably due to the recyclable
properties of copper tools rather than because of its quality compared with stone tools. Most sites had flint workshops (Siret 1948), although Ramos (1998) has argued that arrowhead production was probably quite specialised, as its production technique (production by pressure) would have required a remarkable degree of expertise. He has defended that it is possible that ‘Fortificación 1’ at los Millares, with its high volume of production, could have been one of the specialised workshops producing it, although its consumption would nevertheless be widespread, as shown by its common presence among the grave goods of most sites. Most sites have evidence for metal production and have no evidence for any sort of spatial limitation or specialisation in the production (Delibes et al. 1986), with the exception again of Los Millares, where there seems to be two workshops located in the outer fortifications (Arribas et al. 1985).

In terms of territorial and political organisation of the territory, Chapman (1990) has suggested that there were two levels of hierarchy between settlements, while Martin Socas et al. (1992-1993) have suggested three; both proposals have justified their models in relation to architectural differences and population sizes. It is likely, however, that this hierarchy did not imply a larger control of productive lands, as it seems that larger sites did not control larger amounts of farming lands than smaller ones (Chapman 2003:151). Several authors (Castro et al. 1998; Martín Socas et al. 1992-1993) have also argued that the importance that settlements gave to the visual control of resources, along with the increased investment in defensive structures, could suggest an intensification of social tensions and violent conflicts between groups. This would have resulted, for instance, in the appearance of levels of destruction in sites such as Campos, El Malagón and Cerro de la Virgen (Chapman 2003:153). In general terms, it seems that inequality would have existed, with different competing lineages having access to more resources. However, this inequality would have had more social than biological consequences, as bioarchaeological analyses have not shown important differences between individuals (Beck 2020). It is then likely that this inequality would have not become exploitation, and there would have been fluctuations between more egalitarian and more inequal social relationships during the whole Chalcolithic (Chapman 2003:154). This suggests that the dominating forms of power in the Chalcolithic would have been power-to and power-with, as power was unlikely to be inherited, and thus would have generally depended on the traits (i.e., charisma, leadership, etc) of the individuals within the kinship group. At the same time, that kinship group would have provided the power-with, offering its support to the different leaders. This does not mean, of course, that power-against did not exist. Violence in the Millaran world has been clearly documented, and the existence of fortifications cannot be
explained away as being purely symbolic. Nevertheless, and given the current knowledge about incipient inequality and group competition, it seems that power-against would have been limited, as most people would have had the support of their kinship group and there is no evidence of violence (and thus, the threat of power-against) being monopolised by any particular segment of society.

In relation to funerary practices, it seems that most of the ones occurring in the Chalcolithic already existed in the Neolithic, although during the Neolithic the variety seems to have been higher and the evidence less abundant. The recurrency of circular tombs, the predilect type of tomb in the Chalcolithic, is thus not an innovation, but a reinforcement of an already existing tradition. Burials took places outside the settlements, sometimes creating large necropolis. In some sites, such as Los Millares, burials seem to precede the foundation of the settlement by several generations, although in other places, such as El Barranquete, the sequence is less clear; there is no absolute dating demonstrating the precedence of the tombs over the settlement, but some of the burials are located within the dwelling space, which could point towards the fact that those burials were built before the settlement existed, or at least when the boundaries between necropolis and settlements were less strict. During the Chalcolithic, both necropolis and settlements tend to be closely associated in space, although the boundaries between both spaces were usually clear.

4.2. Los Millares.

4.2.1. Introduction:

The Los Millares settlement is located in Santa Fe de Mondújar (Almería), on a plateau at the confluence of the Andarax river to the north and the Huéchar rambla, a seasonal waterway, to the east. It has an extension of around 7 ha, and the necropolis is composed of 80 circular burial chambers on an extension of more than 13 ha to the west of the settlement. The settlement and the necropolis are surrounded by up to thirteen defensive forts on the nearby chain of hills around the plateau and the site occupies a strategic position controlling the routes between the interior and the coast (Arribas et al. 1987). The settlement has three wall lines and an inner citadel. The outer wall has smaller circular embedded structures, both towards the outside and inside, and has a fortified entrance that is both turned out and turned in.
The occupation of the settlement took place from 3100 BC to 2200 BC, and its maximum extension was reached shortly after its foundation, indicating that construction took place within a few decades, including all the walls. By 2500 BC, the settlement seems to have been abandoned, except the inner citadel, that would remain inhabited until 2200 BC. Around 2400–2300 BC the external forts were built and inhabited, coexisting with the citadel until 2200 BC (Molina et al. 2004). All the defensive structures were built using sophisticated design patterns that demonstrate a substantial understanding of metrics and geometry (Esquivel and Navas 2007:903).

![Map of Los Millares, including the settlement, the necropolis and the surrounding forts. Source: Aranda et al. 2020:104](image)

The archaeological history of Los Millares presents some difficulties due to its long history of research. Some of the earliest proper archaeological excavations in the Iberian Peninsula took place here, and unfortunately some of the information that they provided is now lost; at the same time, and due to the changing nature of archaeology and the different research interests of different teams and paradigms, some of the evidence that could be useful to understand funerary practices was not thoroughly documented. Los Millares’ first excavator was Pedro Flores, who started excavating in 1892 as the foreman of the Siret brothers. Flores
was in charge of the excavations, but the publications and interpretations were produced by Louis Siret (1893, 1913). A few decades later, George and Vera Leisner systematised and reinterpreted the evidence produced earlier, publishing it in 1943 (Leisner & Leisner 1943). The site would be abandoned until 1953, when another excavation started under the guidance of Martin Almagro Basch and Antonio Arribas. These excavations would last until 1957, and after a two decade’s break, would take place again in 1978. The latest team was directed by Fernando Molina and Antonio Arribas, who excavated the site during the 80s. If the number of excavations in the latest decades has been somewhat reduced, the research on the evidence has never stopped, with multiple researchers re-examining older evidence at the museums of Alicante and the Spanish National Museum of Archaeology (MAN); good examples of this are the skeletal analysis of Peña Romo (2011) or the new dating programme developed by the University of Granada (Aranda González et al. 2020).

Figure 23: Artistic reconstruction of how the settlement of Los Millares would have looked ca. 2800–2600 BC. Source: Iñaki Dieguez Uribeondo (https://idu-ilustracion.com/portfolio/#color)
4.2.2. **The Necropolis:**

The first excavations by Pedro Flores and Louis Siret documented 24 tombs, although they excavated more and identified at least 63 (located on a map that was not published by Siret, but by Almagro and Arribas later (Almagro and Arribas 1963: Figure 3). The synthesis produced by Leisner and Leisner documented the existence of 75 tombs and included a synthesis of the grave goods found by Siret. Their typology of tombs included the existence of two with round chamber, two caves, two stone cists, six passage graves with orthostatic walls and capstone roof, and 63 tombs of drystone construction with a false vault. The excavation by Almagro and Arribas documented at least eight new tombs and re-excavated many of the previous ones. It seems clear that certain types of grave goods within the tombs are under-represented, particularly undecorated pottery, baetyls, limestone and dentalium beads, flint arrowheads and certain types of decorated pottery (Chapman 1990:182). This is probably due to Siret’s lack of interest in those materials, as they were not useful to prove the oriental origin of the Iberian Neolithic and Copper Age. This implies that the list of materials available today is probably biased and underrepresents lower-input grave goods, thus limiting the scope and validity of any analysis of the grave goods of the necropolis.

For early chronologies of the necropolis, the first radiocarbon dates were provided by Almagro and Arribas (1959). Chapman compared radiocarbon dates, stratigraphies and the typological evolution of the structures to conclude that there is a general increase in tomb complexity over time (Chapman 1990:72-73). The most recent chronologies have been obtained through an extensive radiocarbon dating program modelled in a Bayesian framework, and included both the necropolis, the settlement and the surrounding forts. This program (Aranda et al. 2020) has shown that mortuary activity in the necropolis commenced around 3219–3124 cal BC, which is more than a century before the foundation of the settlement. The tombs were used at different times and with different intensities, between 3200 and 2200 BC.

There have been multiple analyses of the funerary evidence. Robert Chapman points out that despite the lack of detailed reports from the earliest excavations (Chapman 1990:184) it is possible to infer that the majority of higher-input grave goods, including metal items, idols, finely decorated pottery, ostrich eggshells or ivory were located inside the main chambers. However, there were a few exceptions such as the copper dagger found in the middle passage segment of tomb 30, the Beaker pot located in the middle passage segment of tomb 38, and the copper awl and callais beads found in the inner passage segment of tomb 25.
The excavations carried out by Almagro and Arribas found evidence of intentional cultural deposits: the entrances of tombs XIII and XXI were blocked intentionally, and in the central chamber of XXI there was a bone deposit which included groups of arranged human vertebrae and crania around the chamber wall. Sherds of the same pot were also deposited in different areas of the central and side chamber of XXI, in a practice that could be indicative of fragmentation practices (see J. Chapman 2007).

Chapman states (1990:188) that the average number of individuals per tomb is just under 20; there are only 12 tombs with more than 30 individuals, and four tombs have more than 50 individuals. Finally, one tomb has at least 114 individuals. He also explores what percentage of the total population would have been buried in Los Millares, calculating a total number of around 1980 individuals at least, if the numbers reported by the Leisners and Siret were right. Considering the lifespan of the necropolis and the size of the settlements, with several hundred individuals, that is a very low number. At the same time, most tombs were not filled, and very few non-adults were included, thus pointing towards rather restrictive burial practices. At the same time, the necropolis was being used before the settlement was founded, forcing the question of if the necropolis was mainly used by inhabitants of Los Millares or also others. This evidence has driven researchers to analyse the distribution of grave goods, and particularly the higher input ones, since their possession and exchange would undoubtedly affect prestige.

4.2.3. Interpretation:

The debate regarding the hierarchization of the Los Millares necropolis has gravitated between the perception of Los Millares as an egalitarian society or Los Millares as an example of incipient inequality. Almagro Basch and Arribas (1963) defended that the funerary evidence and the grave goods would suggest a rather egalitarian society, given the prevalence of collective burials and general scarcity of higher-input grave goods. R. Chapman, in his reassessment of their work (Chapman 1981b, 1981c) defended that in fact the situation was the opposite, as certain groupings of tombs could be identified to be different, containing more prestige goods and a larger investment of work. According to him, if it is true that the inequality in Los Millares’ funerary record was rather incipient or concealed, it was still possible to distinguish different tombs in terms of their energy investment and amount of prestigious grave goods; according to him, this would indicate that Los Millares would be experimenting a dynamic of competition between different lineages, rather than between individual people.
However, other authors (Micó 1993) questioned this understanding, and R. Chapman (2008) ended up revising his conclusions, diminishing the social inequality existing in the Chalcolithic at Los Millares. An overall issue here is that Los Millares has always been understood in relation to El Argar in the Bronze Age, and compared with El Argar, one of the most unequal societies in the Bronze Age, it is true that the existence of inequality in Los Millares could seem barely noticeable.

Nevertheless, recent studies on the geographical organisation of Los Millares (Molina & Cámara 2010, Cámara et al. 2010), the urban organisation of the settlement and the forts (Esquivel & Navas 2007), or the consumption patterns of animals (Navas Guerrero et al. 2008) points towards the existence of a strong social hierarchisation, as seems to be the overall tendency in other areas of the south of Spain (Nocete Calvo et al. 2010). For the case of Los Millares, Afonso et al. (2011) have proposed the need to undertake an analysis combining settlement patterns, urbanisms and differences in household consumption, energy expenditure in both dwellings and tombs, as well as different patterns of consumption and access to specific grave goods. Regarding this last element, Afonso et al. have combined the analysis of metal weapons, ivory items, ostrich eggshells, flint daggers, Bell Beaker, and decorated pottery (as

![Figure 24: Map of the tombs in the necropolis at Los Millares. The tombs are classified depending on their ‘wealth’ from A to D (A being the wealthiest, D being the poorest), and grouped in associations around ‘central’ tombs. Source: Afonso et al. 2011: 308.](image-url)
pointed out by Chapman 1990), plus arrows (Aranda Jimenez & Sanchez Romero 2005), stone vessels and idols (Camara Serrano et al. 2010) and other items if they were made from raw materials that needed to be transported from distant places (Morgado Rodriguez et al. 2009). Regarding this last point, it has been defended that stone daggers during the Chalcolithic could have a remarkable social significance (Martínez Fernandez & Saez Perez 1984:126-127), and Forenbaher has proposed (1999:108-109) that they reveal regular long-distance relationship between elites. With all these materials, Afonso et al. (2011:324) have combined all this information to elaborate a ranking of tombs, dividing them up to four levels of relative wealth:

- The first level (A) would include the central tomb of each group, containing metal weapons, daggers and an abundance of flint arrows, decorated pottery, stone vessels, ivory and idols. They often have baetyls and closed ceremonial areas.

- The second level (B) includes those very close to the first, and have metal items (not always weapons), daggers and several flint arrows, as well as some ivory and stone items. In these, the baetyls are in the passages or vestibules rather than in central spaces. An example would be tomb XXXVII. These two categories are the ones that according to Blance (1971) would include having a flat roof, rather than a corbel-domed one, due to their dimension and structure.

- The third level (C) would only contain a few metal items and sometimes decorated pottery. Although, some of them might contain other elements (like tomb III, having 80 arrowheads).

- Finally, fourth level tombs (D) do not include any metal items, and if they have any decorated pottery, it would be a Bell Beaker, which would suggest a temporal difference.

Regarding the existence of exotic grave goods, the main ones are ivory, ostrich eggshell, jet, amber and callais. Ivory and ostrich eggshell are of north African origin, while jet has no local source in Almeria, the nearest sources being in the Sierra Morena. Amber could be of Baltic origin, but a much closer source would be Agost, in Murcia. Callais belongs to the same stone family as lazulite and turquoise, and there are no local sources in the southeast of Iberia. Interestingly, it is extremely rare to document these materials within domestic contexts; the only exceptions are some ivory V-perforated buttons from Cerro de la Virgen, an ivory figurine from El Malagón, and a callais bead from Almizaraque. Regarding the other materials, none have been documented in domestic contexts. Moreover, these goods have been documented in a rather reduced group of tombs, as only 17, out of at least 83 tombs, included any of these goods. A similar pattern can be found regarding decorated pottery (either painted, with symbols
or in the Beaker style), which occurred in only 18 tombs. Chalcolithic copper objects have been found in only 32 tombs.

The most important observation which can be made is that several tombs contain a greater range and frequency of these higher-input grave goods than do other tombs. Tomb 40 is the clearest example: it contains the highest number of ivory and copper objects of any tomb as well as one example each of painted pottery and symbolic pottery. Although lacking finely decorated pottery and containing only one copper object, tomb 12 can also be distinguished in three ways: it has the second highest number of ivory grave goods, 800 ostrich eggshell beads, and the highest number of jet and amber beads. Tomb 7 contains four copper objects, jet, amber and ivory, and painted and symbolic pottery. Tomb 8 also contains grave goods of jet, amber, ivory and copper, but lacks decorated pottery. The distribution of arrowheads is also unequal, with certain tombs such as 40 presenting up to 85 arrowheads, while others like tomb 7 would present 34, and others none at all.

Figure 25: Selection of grave goods from Tomb 40 at Los Millares. Source: Fondo Gráfico del IAPH (https://repositorio.iaph.es/handle/11532/145287)
Thus, it seems clear that there are differences in the frequencies and distributions of prestigious objects between domestic and funerary contexts and between different tombs within the cemetery at Los Millares. Symbols of prestige and authority were reserved for the deposition of the dead and were preferentially available for deposition for the dead of a small number of groups. Although it was still a society based on kinship, as expressed in the communal burial ritual, some groups now have greater access to exotic goods and prestige symbols, suggesting the beginnings of ranking. At the same time, it is worth remembering that neither the tombs which had special side-chambers for the disposal of children is included in the group of prestige tombs, nor were the child burials marked by the presence of exotic grave goods (apart from jet beads in tomb XXI), thus suggesting that ascribed status would not exist.

Different authors have also explored if there are any differences regarding tomb morphology and energy expenditure in tomb construction that can be used to study inequality. Regarding tomb morphology, Chapman (1990:92-93) has argued that if it is true that half of the tombs containing prestige goods were associated with extra-tomb features, such as baetyl enclosures (tombs 5, 7, 15, 16, 23, 25 and 68), tomb enclosures (tomb 7), concentric stone walls outside the mound (tomb 16) or standing stones near the entrance (tomb 40), or outside the tombs (17, 18, 20, 37 and 43), other tombs with no prestige goods also had these features, being thus impossible to establish any connection. Of all these, only tombs 5, 7, 9, 16 and 40 had prestige goods.

A more instructive pattern is revealed by consideration of the energy expenditure involved in the construction of the tombs, which was studied by Chapman (1990:193-194). One measure of this energy expenditure would be the size of the main chamber, as this has implications not only for the labour and engineering skills involved in the construction of its walls and false-vaulted roof, but also for the energy involved in the construction of the surrounding mound (the strength and stability of which were vital to the support of the false vault). Within the ten tombs with the largest chambers, five can be considered as prestige tombs, being distinguished on the basis of their ‘wealthier’ grave goods (numbers 5, 7, 12, 40, 57). In fact, the largest tomb chamber by a significant margin is tomb 40 (6.4 m x 5.7 m), which also has the highest number of ivory and copper objects of any tomb, as well as ostrich eggshell beads. Then, and besides some discrepancies such as some large tombs not having prestige goods, or some prestige goods being located within ‘smaller tombs’, there is a degree of correlation between the frequency of prestige grave goods and the energy expended in tomb construction. Thus, as
Chapman demonstrated, the size of tombs might be more connected with the social status of the kinship group building it than with the amount of burials that would take place inside (Chapman 1990:194).

Regarding whether there is any spatial pattern in tomb location within the cemetery at Los Millares, all tombs containing prestige goods except tomb 57 are located within the inner half of the cemetery. Moreover, all of these, except tomb 63, are within 150 m of the outer settlement fortification, which shows a rather restricted distribution within the relatively large cemetery. Tombs with a lesser range and frequency of prestige goods, and those with none, are distributed around those that have more. It is also worth noting that the prestige tombs within the inner half of the cemetery include both earlier (e.g., painted pottery) and later (e.g., Beaker pottery and metalwork) material, thus discounting a chronological interpretation of tomb distributions. In contrast, the spatial distribution of the tombs has been used to emphasise the distinctions already marked in grave goods and energy expenditure between the occupants of different tombs.

4.3. **El Barranquete.**

4.3.1. **Introduction:**

The megalithic necropolis of El Barranquete (Nijar, Almeria) lies on a small plateau in the plains of Almeria, close to the Rambla de Morales, a small seasonal river, and barely 7 km away of the Mediterranean coast. It is located within the town of El Barranquete, which in turn belongs to the municipality of Nijar. It was discovered in 1968 by a Swiss Egyptologist, Charles Bonnet, who was spending his holidays in the area (Almagro Gorbea 1973:14-15) and excavated by Manuel Fernández Miranda and María Josefa Almagro Gorbea between that same year and 1971, being fully published by the latter in 1973 (Almagro Gorbea 1973a). The excavation revealed at least 17 megalithic graves, and 11 of them were excavated and documented. All of them were tholoi, tombs with chambers covered by false vaults. The tombs were covered by artificial mounds, supported by various concentric stone walls filled with soil and smaller stones. All of them were accessed through passages, and smaller chambers were common both in the passages and in the main chambers.

The original interpretation of the site was that its original inhabitants had sailed from the Eastern Mediterranean and arrived in the Iberian Peninsula searching for copper. El
Barranquete would, then, along with other sites such as Los Millares, be a privileged place to study the so-called Bronze 1, or the initial phase of the Metallurgic phase (now known as the Chalcolithic). Regarding the settlement, most of it was destroyed due to the successive farming of the area, although Almagro Gorbea states that it had a perfect location, in a small plateau protected in the south and southwest by the Rambla, while in the north there was a cliff that was probably higher than it is today. There are no traces of defensive structures within the settlement, but there are at least two promontories which contained tholoi inside the settlement (tombs 6, towards the north of the plateau, and tomb 8, located in the centre of the settlement). According to Almagro Gorbea, these would have been the first tombs built, perhaps the ones belonging to the first ruling elites (Almagro Gorbea 1973:20).

**4.3.2. The necropolis:**

The necropolis is constituted by small tumuli of stones and soil, disseminated along more than 3 kms following the Rambla de Morales. There are at least 15 tombs along 3 kilometres, and due to the hilly and rocky nature of the area, they have been less disturbed that other areas for farming.

Human remains have been located in different parts of the tombs, including chambers, side chambers, passages and even in the mounds. The deposits tended to be a mass of mixed human remains, usually incomplete and sometimes with evidence of small hearths and burnt bones (Díaz-Zorita et al. 2016). Due to the early nature of the excavations, some of the information regarding the taphonomic complexity of the deposits was never taken, being thus difficult to know to which extent the mixed nature of the remains is due to post-depositional processes or intentional.

In terms of grave goods, most of the burials are accompanied by small black or grey pots, smoothed or even polished, that were mainly used in funerary rituals and are not abundant in the settlement. There is also pottery belonging to the Argaric period in several tombs (tombs 4, 5, 9 and 11) especially in the upper levels of the burials. There is only one Beaker pot, located in tomb 11 and broken into different pieces. There is a great scarcity of bronze items, only found in tombs 1, 7, 9 and 11, although Almagro Gorbea indicates that the necropolis was probably looted in the past. Interestingly, there are no idols apart from the one in tomb 10, which is a striking contrast considering the number of idols and baetyls found at Los Millares;
Almagro Gorbea has interpreted this as either the result of the looting or perhaps the poverty of the site, which is remarkably smaller than Los Millares.

There are abundant faunal remains. This includes both domesticated and wild animals, and it seems that quite a few of them, such as rabbits or birds, ended up on site because of taphonomic processes. However, the remarkable amount of bovids, suids and ovicaprids are the result of direct human deposition, with no clear differentiation from the human remains included. It is not clear if they were the result of sacrifices, commensality practices or libations. Unfortunately, there is no clear evidence of Chalcolithic commensality in the southeast of Iberia, although the abundance of faunal remains here and at Los Millares would suggest that commensality was indeed happening (Diaz Zorita et al. 2016:92). It is also interesting to remark that there are multiple shells in the tombs (at least 19 in total) despite the fact that the multi-isotopic diet analysis suggests that the consumption of marine resources was not important at all.

In terms of the diet and physical condition of the inhabitants, the multi-isotopic analysis conducted by Diaz-Zorita et al. (2019) for the human remains of tombs 8 and 9 at El Barranquete indicates a diet consistent with a terrestrial C3 ecosystem. The δ13C or δ15N
results from El Barranquete indicate no evidence of the consumption of any marine proteins, despite the proximity (around 7 km) of the site to the sea. In terms of the intra-site analysis and comparison, El Barranquete is a suitable place for analysis due to its long period of use, with funerary activity that started around 3260-2925 cal BC (at 68% probability) and ended around 1245-875 cal BC (at 68% probability), and thus includes both the Chalcolithic and the Bronze Age. The isotopic ratios of people belonging to both the Chalcolithic and the Bronze Age show the same δ15N values, which, Diaz-Zorita et al. point out, means that meat consumption did not change significantly over time. They point out how the main differences between both periods are in the δ13C ratios, which were around 1% enriched during the Bronze Age. This would be consistent with Bronze Age subsistence practices, that involved an intensification of crop farming.

Regarding the physical health of those inhumated, it has been studied by Diaz Zorita et al. (2016). Maxillofacial pathologies are the most common, affecting the 63.29% of all dental pieces found. Remarkably, dental calculus is common (53.16% of all teeth) but cavities are very rare (2.53%). The percentage of cavities is remarkably lower than that of Argaric populations, probably due to the lesser importance of carbs during the Chalcolithic. Other conditions that appear frequently are osteoarthritis and, more rarely, musculoskeletal stress. However, the distribution of these conditions is not even, and tomb 8 in particular contains 86% of the individuals with osteoarthritis, 78.5% of the individuals with dental issues and 70% of the individuals with musculoskeletal stress indicators. Remarkably, the majority of those inhumated were adults, with only 15% of children younger than 13, and not a single individual above 60.

In terms of chronology, there were only four dates taken in the 1970s (Almagro Gorbea 1973), two from a timber post in tomb 7 (3340–2505 cal BC at 95% probability, and 3345–2580 cal BC at 95% probability) and two from human remains in tomb 11. These last dates were discarded at the time due to being considered too recent (900–1410 cal BC at 95%, and 990-1390 cal BC at 95% probability) and likely contaminated. These dates are now, however, understood to be the result of the ritual reuse of these megalithic tombs (Lorrio Alvarado & Montero Ruiz 2004, García Sanjuán et al. 2011, Aranda Jiménez 2013). In order to improve the available information about the El Barranquete necropolis, Aranda et al. (2018) undertook new datings of the site and analysed them through a Bayesian framework, since this methodology ‘combines evidence of absolute chronology with other forms of chronological
information, such as the stratigraphic relationships between the archaeological contexts that contain the dated samples. In accordance with these prior beliefs, this technique calculates a shorter probability distribution for every radiocarbon measurement and estimates the dates for the beginning and end of the phases or events in which the dates are clustered’ (2018:204). They realised that there were two main periods of use. In the first one, the activity for tomb 8 started in 2915–2640 cal BC (at 95% probability), likely in 2820–2680 cal BC (at 68% probability) and ended in 2460–2215 cal BC (at 95% probability), possibly in 2445–2315 cal BC (at 68% probability). The burial activity in the second phase began in 2205–1980 cal BC (at 95% probability) or in 2150–2030 cal BC (at 68% probability), which is consistent with the
date of c. 2200 cal BC, traditionally considered as a benchmark for the end of the Copper Age and the beginning of the Early Bronze Age (Aranda Jiménez et al. 2015).

However, the radiocarbon dates for tomb 9 present interesting challenges. The earliest mortuary activity detected comes from a human bone found in the passage and dated to around 2470–2300 cal BC at 95% probability. However, these remains were found very near to the surface, and the overwhelming rest of the remains belong to a later period ranging between 2295–2045 cal BC (at 68% probability) and an abandonment after 1690–1555 cal BC (at 68% probability).
probability). The period of use of this tholos would coincide then with the Argaric Bronze Age, when funerary practices were completely different. Thus, it is possible to affirm that tomb 9, despite belonging to a Chalcolithic necropolis, was used predominantly during the Argaric Bronze Age (Aranda et al. 2018), a practice of ‘reutilisation’ that will be explored in Chapter 5.

4.3.3. Interpretation:

The El Barranquete radiocarbon series began at the end of the fourth millennium BC (3260–2925) coinciding with the beginning of the so-called Copper Age, a period characterised by important cultural innovations, such as a remarkable population growth and aggregation, the intensification of agriculture, the appearance of copper metallurgy, and the expansion of supra-regional exchange networks. The end of the El Barranquete radiocarbon series occurred in the last centuries of the second millennium BC (1245–875) which means a very long period of funerary activity (between 1780–2405 years), only broken by a short hiatus around 1500 cal BC. This hiatus is fully consistent with the cultural changes that occurred in Bronze Age societies and is especially noticeable in southeastern Iberia. At that time, the distinctive Early Bronze Age society known as the Argaric culture (c. 2200–1550 cal BC) suddenly disappeared for reasons that are not well understood (Aranda Jiménez et al. 2015). Mortuary rituals in megalithic cemeteries such as El Barranquete also seem to have been influenced by these changes and stopped for a short period.

The new radiocarbon series from tombs 8, 9, and 10 have also strengthened one of the main conclusions that had been reached in previous studies: the importance attained by the continuity of ritual practices during the Argaric Bronze Age (c. 2200–1550 cal BC). This ritual continuity reached its peak during the Early Bronze Age, without any hiatus between it and the Copper Age. The scale achieved by this phenomenon has made it possible to formulate a fresh hypothesis that has shattered traditional assumptions, such as the supposed cultural uniformity of Argaric societies and the sharp discontinuity with the previous Chalcolithic communities. The mortuary activity in the megalithic tombs during the Argaric period has been considered to have formed part of the strategies of resistance to the process of social differentiation that characterized Argaric communities. The collective values materialized in these megalithic monuments were confronted with a process of social individualisation, the most conspicuous evidence of which is a funerary ritual characterised by individual inhumations inside

Attempts to consolidate deep social asymmetries would have conflicted with the desire to maintain ancestral cultural forms that opposed social division in favour of relational identities. Individuals engaged in these practices would conform to a different social group and would not self-identify as Argaric people; they used the collective ritual spaces as the perfect setting for manifesting their differentiated identity. The continuity of use of megalithic monuments would have emphasized a type of commemoration based on the invocation of the past and memory as a way of understanding the world; and it would have allowed these people to claim a more collective identity that excluded from their rituals the most characteristic symbols of the Argaric social elites, such as swords, halberds, axes, and diadems (Aranda Jiménez 2013). Argaric times can, therefore, be seen as characterized by significant social tension between endeavours to create a new social structure based on the emergence of a social elite and persistent resistance to this process.

This scenario brings us face to face with the complexity of the ritual behaviour performed in these megalithic constructions. Most of the evidence found in these tombs, such as the close correspondence between the radiocarbon series and the stratigraphic sequence, as well as the finds of skeletal remains in anatomical connection, supports the hypothesis that most of the interments were primary depositions. Later activity in the chambers, especially subsequent burials, would have involved reorganizing the earlier human remains in the form of ‘bone packages’ and the occasional use of fire. The data from tomb 9 suggest that these later activities could also have included the removal of bones to be placed elsewhere and even the secondary deposition of ancestral remains. If this were the case, these ritual practices challenge the assumption that links the dates of the first burials to the construction of the tombs.

4.4. **Almizaraque/La Encantada.**

**4.4.1. Introduction:**

The necropolis of Almizaraque (Cuevas de Almanzora, Almería) consists of three tholoi in the vicinity of the settlement of Almizaraque, that was discovered by Luis Siret and excavated by his foreman Pedro Flores in the first decade of the 20th century. Unfortunately, the results of this excavation were not published, and were thus unavailable until J.M. Almagro Gorbea
revisited the necropolis and published her results (1965), along with a synthesis of what Siret and Flores had done, based on their field notes and the previous synthesis by George and Vera Leisner (1943).

The settlement associated with the necropolis was located in a small elevation surrounded by marshlands, and the necropolis is barely 200 meters away, in another area with small hill-like elevations. By the time the necropolis was visited by J.M. Almagro Gorbea, two of the three tholoi had almost disappeared, and nowadays only one remains, with the other two having been completely eroded by farming practices. Siret made a distinction between Almizaraque (the settlement) and La Encantada (the necropolis), although nowadays both sites are usually referred as Almizaraque. However, in order to discuss the individual tombs, we will follow Siret’s nomenclature (Encantada I, II and III for the tholoi, and Almizaraque for the settlement).

Almizaraque had five phases of occupation documented by Delibes et al. (1996), during which its population would fluctuate but whose maximum would be around 50-70 inhabitants. The first phase occurred circa 2500 BC, when the first structures were built. These were small circular huts with wood and mud, and included numerous external features such as silos, storage pits and deposition areas. Some terracing also took place in the settlement, especially in the East side. It was during this first phase that metallurgy would appear, along with some beaker bell pottery and some bone idol figurines with the ‘Eye Goddess’ motifs. The evidence for technological developments were confined to ‘vaseovens’ with slag adhesions and fragments of partially reduced ore. It is likely that metal production took place as an independent and domestic production with local source exploitation as raw sources were abundant in the Vera Basin. This model, that would continue during the whole history of the settlement, is what Montero (1993) labelled as the ‘Almizaraque model’ as opposed to models claiming that there was a link between settlement location and metal production.

The first phase finalised with the destruction of the settlement around 2100. In Phase II, only the top of the site was occupied, thus reducing the inhabited area. However, the investment in the structure increased notably, as the dwellings are now larger circular structures with stone foundations and bases. Diverse features have been documented inside the structures, including furniture, large storage vessels, hearths, and stone grinders. In one of his few mentions of the unpublished site, Siret mentioned the existence of flint workshops (Siret 1948), which would likely exist in the initial phases. The remains of metallurgy increased in quantity, although its technological features remained the same. There is also increased evidence for farming,
although seafood and domestic animal consumption also increased. The intensified economic production would have likely affected the surroundings, increasing deforestation in an already delicate environment (Delibes et al. 1996:159).

Phase II did not last long, and in fact between Phase II and Phase V only several hundred years had passed, with Phase II started circa 2100 BC and Phase V finishing around 1900 BC. Before 2000 BC, most structures were abandoned and had collapsed, although some seasonal activity continued during Phase III in certain areas of the decaying settlement. The evidence suggests that metallurgy continued at a very small scale, and that there was a noticeable increase in the importance of hunter-gathering.

With Phase IV, the size and importance of the settlement greatly increased again, with multiple circular dwellings being built, although they would be smaller than during Phase II; now the settlement is surrounded by a wall that encircles the 700 square meters of the settlement. Agricultural production increased again, and metal seems to be more abundant, while lithic and bone industries are reduced in both quantity and quality. In the last phase of the settlement, which would have quickly followed the previous one, the overall size of the site increased, and the organisation patterns became more chaotic, with different areas remaining empty and more diversity in terms of sizes and features. The settlement was still surrounded by a wall, whose design was now straight. Previous trends like the decrease in quantity and quality of bones and lithics continue, and the evidence of metalworking is still reduced. The agricultural production also changed, with less cereals and more legumes. The late prehistoric settlement would be abandoned around 1900 BC.

4.4.2. The Necropolis:

The necropolis of Almizaraque is composed of three tholoi, La Encantada I, La Encantada II, and La Encantada III. La Encantada I (Almagro Gorbea 1965:37-48) is a tholos with a passage, chamber, and corbel dome. It is the largest of the three, and the only one remaining on site. Its remains include around 58 skeletons that have not been studied, and multiple items. Among these, there are a few metal objects including a fragmented bronze axe, a small ‘shaving’ blade, a bronze arrowhead, a bronze ringlet, the remains of two bronze hooks, and the fragments of several bronze awls and of a bronze bracelet. There are also several ornaments (three bone buttons and a soapstone bracelet) and a single bone tool (a spatula made with a
polished cubitus). The lithics include seven flint arrowheads and four flint bladelets, and the pottery includes different pots (at least nine), and a large fragment of a spherical, grey-brownish vessel with the decorated motifs of the Eye-Goddess.

La Encantada II, which has disappeared, was also a tholos, but in this case, it consisted of a chamber without a passage. However, the chamber included a double niche, where a niche was excavated or added to a previous niche in the chamber, containing overall the remains of approximately eight people (Almagro Gorbea 1965: 52). The materials found at La Encantada II are less rich, and they include a complete bronze awl, along with the fragments of another nine pieces that were probably awls as well. It also included 18 soapstone beads, another bone spatula, a stone ‘archer bracelet’, two flint blades and the fragments of four pottery vessels (Almagro Gorbea 1965: 54-64).

The last tholos, La Encantada III, has also disappeared, but consisted of a very short passage to a chamber with two niches. Although the estimated number of individuals is very imprecise, it contained a few bones in each niche, and then around 60 skeletons in the chamber (Almagro Gorbea 1965:63). The grave goods were numerous, including multiple ornaments (at least 177 beads of materials ranging from cowrie shells to soapstone, limestone and dentalium) and abundant lithics such as six flint blades, 11 flint arrowheads, three stone axes, and a stone fragment that could belong to a bracelet. The bone items included the fragments of at least 10 idols, a worked bone of unspecified function, and a wild boar tusk. The metals items are more limited, including a copper needle, a copper awl, and the fragment of what could be a copper bracelet. The pottery includes at least seven vessels, one of them decorated, and the fragments of several bowls (Almagro Gorbea 1965:65-79).

Figure 28: Fragment of pottery vessel, decorated with the ‘Eye Goddess’ or ‘ocular’ motif from La Encantada I. Source: Almagro Gorbea 1965:4
4.4.3. **Interpretation:**

Given the lack of publications by the initial excavators, an important part of the research of the settlement has been carried out exploring the materials deposited in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid (MAN). The collection at the MAN includes around 50 ‘houses’, although the delimitation of each area is rather imprecise and likely includes multiple levels and structures. However, one of the interesting aspects that has been documented is the presence of numerous idols within the settlement, especially in the ‘houses’ 3, 21 and 30 (Maicas Ramos 2007). There are multiple baetyl in house 3, ‘oculados’ (eye goddess motifs) in houses 21 and 30, and overall nearly 50 decorated long bones around the settlement, with 16 more long bones in the process of being made; this suggests that the site played an important role as a an idol workshop 2400-2100 BC (Maicas Ramos 2020:90). This poses a contrast with Los Millares or El Barranquete, where most idols, and especially baetyl, have been located within the necropolis. This would imply that either the artefactual regime at Almizaraque was different, with idols being a more important part of daily life among the living, or that the evidence is incomplete at both Los Millares and El Barranquete; this seems possible for El Barranquete, whose associated settlement has been destroyed and was not thoroughly excavated, but unlikely for Los Millares, one of the best documented sites in the southeast of Spain.

Regarding the interpretation of the settlement, its size and evolution suggest that it would have been a secondary settlement within the political and economic organisation of the Chalcolithic world of the southeast of Iberia. However, the relative richness of the tombs, which do not include the same elites that would have inhabited Los Millares but that would have included relatively powerful lineages, might suggest that the site’s centrality was greater than what could be expected given its size and features. Following the hypothesis presented by Calvín Velasco (in press) connecting tomb types and peripheral/central elites, the tholoi at Almizaraque, with their corbel domes, would have belonged to groups within the political centrality of the Los Millares group, rather than to the elites of peripheral groups within the Los Millares world.
In relation to the funerary practices, the lack of specific research on the funerary remains from Almizaraque and the limited quality of the available information constitutes an obstacle in terms of their assessment. The available information suggests, however, that the practices were akin to those of contemporaneous sites, with collective burials, limited grave goods that cannot be linked to particular individuals, and some sort of ritual that involved the cremation of certain bones; some charred bones were found at La Encantada I (Almagro Gorbea 1965:36) and some burnt bones were dispersed in the chamber of La Encantada II (Almagro Gorbea 1965:52). The existence of hearths was also pointed out by the original excavation by Siret, when he stated that La Encantada I ‘contained the bones of more than fifty individuals: very few kept the natural [anatomical] connections; all of them were placed there by hand, and in a few cases they formed small piles, partially carbonised by the action of small hearths lighted underneath them, inside the tomb, in the very same place the remains occupied’ (Siret 1907:428, in Lorrio and Montero 2004:111).

There is evidence of the necropolis of La Encantada being used after the Chalcolithic, despite the abandonment of the site. For instance, in La Encantada I, the broken bronze bracelet seems to be from the Late Bronze Age (Lorrio and Montero 2004:102,104) and there are also Roman materials from the II century BC, while in La Encantada III there are several beads in gold and faience, not included in Almagro Gorbea’s account (1965), that would belong to the Bronze Age (Lorrio and Montero 2004:106). These later reutilisations of the necropolis are attested by the radiocarbon date of CSIC-249, which dates a human bone from La Encantada I at 1190–1175 cal BC (Lorrio and Montero 2004:107).

In terms of the socioeconomic status of the necropolis, following Afonso et al.’s (2011) proposal, the tholoi of Almizaraque could either belong to the second level (B), or more likely to the third (C) as they include metal items, flint arrows, and some stone items, although they
do not include baetyls and have corbel domes, rather than the flat roofs common in the richest tombs (Balance 1971). Nevertheless, Afonso et al.’s (2011) categorisation includes other elements such as the presence and position of baetyls or the spatial relationships between tombs and towards the settlement that cannot be considered here, and thus the ascription of the Almizaraque tombs to either the second or third category (or the need to rethink categories for this type of necropolis) is open for discussion.

### 4.5. Personhood through the Chalcolithic funerary evidence.

The funerary evidence suggests the existence of at least four different trends in the construction and maintenance of personhood in the Chalcolithic. The four features of personhood that will be reviewed here, along with the practices that would emphasise, produce, or maintain them, are: individuality, relationality, partibility and non-human personhood. The notion of partibility is, as explained previously, one of the ways of constituting the self, including what type of elements or entities are part of it beyond the narrow understanding of the human itself, and has consequences on how the self is also perceived (as it will be explored in the discussion chapter). Regarding the existence of non-human personhood, this chapter will explore the potential of collapsing the dichotomy between object/human to approach certain objects, which might have been imbued with subjectivity and other traits that could grant them certain types of personhood.

The tension between individuality and relationality, both in the sense explained in the previous chapter, receive a slightly more in-depth treatment, as they are not only more important as structural and structuring elements of personhood, but are also easier to detect archaeologically.

The increase of socio-economic complexity, at a time where inequality was not entirely institutionalised, would correlate with the emergence of multiple biographies among the members of society. This diversity would be accounted for through the heterogeneity of funerary rituals available, but only to a certain degree; funerary practices are strongly collective and thus homogenising. The tension between practices that foment individuality and those that reinforce relationality is then one particularly important example of the mechanisms of dissolution/resistance that produce fragmentation within societies in the Clastrean sense.
(Clastres 1989). This tension between dissolution/resistance would have been managed, at least partially, through the symbolic world. And just as the political relation of power precedes and founds the economic relation of exploitation (Clastres 1989:198), the symbolic order precedes and founds the political one, even though they feed back into each other. The analysis of the relationships between relational and individual personhood is thus one of the key elements to understand not only personhood, but also the degree to which inequality could have been institutionalised in the Chalcolithic world: ‘Every society presents structural drives towards Division and Indivision. The way these drives are negotiated and balanced gives place to specific forms of complexity and differentiates historical trajectories towards a divided society and the State’ (Parcero & Criado 2013).


The main practice that emphasizes relational personhood and is visible through the analysis of funerary practices is the use of collective burials. This funerary practice is widely understood as implying the disappearance of the individual body and person, to be subsumed into an assemblage that can have different meanings, effects, and consequences but that, nevertheless, emphasises the collective.

4.6.1. The multiple functions of collective burials: resources and inequality.

Apart from emphasising the group, collective burials have been commonly understood as a political strategy to express ownership or access rights over restricted resources (Skeates 1995). One of the most common interpretations of collective burials is to justify control and access to resources, whose origin lies within the work of Arthur Saxe (1970) and Lynne Goldstein (1981). Saxe proposed that in societies where the access to crucial and restricted resources is justified through lineal descent, social groups tend to maintain formal disposal areas (such as necropolis) for their deceased, thus spatially connecting their dead with the resources. Goldstein went a step further, defending that the existence of bounded, permanent areas for the disposal of the dead would be a direct indication of a corporate group controlling those resources, that would be inherited by the descendants. It has been pointed out that this is not
always the case, and that sometimes the manipulation and disposal of the dead has more to do with ideological motivations and political negotiations (Morris 1991). Of course, the capacity to control these resources could be understood in terms of power, as it implies the control of social currency since the body can be ‘flagged as a highly visible social resource that could be appropriated to act as a focus for the communication of intended meanings related to social perception of the deceased by others’ (Sofaer 2006:20).

The role of control that great settlements and their necropolis in the southeast had been fundamental (Calvín Velasco 2019:26-27, Maldonado et al. 1991-92, Cara 1989, Camara 2001, Carrión et al. 1998). Los Millares, for instance, would have controlled quarries nearby. For El Barranquete/Tarajal, their immediate location includes particularly fertile areas for farming and herding, due to the direct control of watercourses. Nevertheless, the control that sites such as Los Millares or El Tarajal would exert was not limited to the areas that these settlements would control themselves. They likely acted as central settlements that controlled other settlements located in less optimal farming lands, but with direct access to mining of minerals and rocks. El Barranquete, for instance, has been connected to the small mining settlements around Cabo de Gata, which would include non-subsistence resources such as azurite, malachite, silver, dacite and andesite (Carrión et al. 1998). The connection would be based on a pattern of hierarchical settlements, with El Barranquete/Tarajal acting as the main site and the smaller ones being its mining satellites (Haro 2004). In the case of El Tarajal, although its size insinuates that it would have been of small importance, the richness of its tombs might suggest otherwise, with its elites being able to control remarkable resources.

These sites would at first exert control over a territory delimited by symbolic boundaries (Camara 2001), although later, some of that control would evolve into the development of small forts for sites such as Los Millares (Nocete 1989), while at El Barranquete/Tarajal the small mining sites would probably offer direct protection/control of the resources. It is important to remark that the control of these resources was not always directed towards an outside group, but instead took the form of intergroup competition. This intergroup competition, deeply dependant on the control of labour forces and the control/appropriation of livestock, would lead to the usurpation of the ownership of communal land (Afonso and Câmara 2006:136), and although it would not change the official ownership of the land, would in reality imply that larger, more powerful kinship groups would be able to benefit more from it. This hierarchy of sites would also have a symbolic dimension; Maldonado et al. (1997) have proposed that it is
likely that in areas where necropolises have not been found (such as the area of the Tabernas corridor), the elites were able to bury themselves in more symbolically important places such as Los Millares. Thus, becoming part of the ancestors at such a site would be one of the benefits reinforcing the control that central sites had over smaller settlements. This is perhaps what could be happening at Almizaraque, with its necropolis containing one or two tombs that would not belong to the local community, but to the surrounding groups, who would have decided to be buried there for whatever reasons.

4.6.2. Megalithic collective tombs, conceptualisation of the space and prehistoric grief.

However, according to Hernando (2002:153-156) megalithic tombs with collective burials also constituted a cognitive mechanism to allow the justification of claims over resources. In fact, claiming resources through the construction of megalithic tombs and collective burials can only make sense in specific cognitive frameworks that do not exist before farming. Only when the land is understood as a mean of production, rather than as a given by divine entities, it is possible to hold claims over its control. Genealogical kinship allows the justification of the possession of the land because it adds a temporal element, one that is likely missing in societies with classificatory kinship. Megalithic spaces are the first monuments that humans built because before, the landscape is sacred and thus it is not possible to conceive its modification at a large scale (Criado 1991). But with the construction of megalithic monuments, Hernando continues, the sacred character that was previously held by the landscape is transferred onto the megalithic structures. That is also the cause behind the widespread appearance of sacred symbols during the late Neolithic and Chalcolithic. Their appearance is connected to the desacralisation of the space (Hernando 2002:153) and that also explains why they are concentrated in the megalithic monuments, which now embed the sacredness that the landscape used to have.

It is also useful to remember that death and emotion played an integral part in the role of collective burials. This idea has been emphasised recently by Joanna Bruck (2004:319), who points out how funerary practices are not only about the social position of the deceased, but also about coming to terms with loss and discontinuity. It is also important to indicate, as Hernando does (2002:152) that the pain and emotional distress caused by death is culturally
constructed. Death in the Western world is particularly painful because, due to the development of a specific mode of individuality, the emotional attachment of Westerners with the world is reduced, and thus, the death of a loved one implies the tragic destruction of that already fragile emotional connection to the world. In groups where identity and personhood are more relational, the suffering caused by the death of a group member is more connected to the loss of part of the self and one’s identity, because identity and the self are more dependent on the collective; thus, when someone dies, that connection implies the death of part of the self, not of its emotional connection to the world. It is also important to remark, following Robert Hertz (1990:45) [1917] how in groups with a low degree of socioeconomic complexity death is not an instantaneous act, but a slow process that is often characterised as transformation rather than destruction, and that continues until the body has completely dissolved.

4.6.3. **Collective burials and identity: The dissolution of the person.**

Burial practices are part of the symbolic toolkit that prehistoric societies had to express identity and cosmological beliefs (Dolfini 2015). Collective burials express a principle of group solidarity and continuity, with the community taking precedence over the individual (Shanks and Tilley 1982). Multiple or collective burials act as a way of solidifying group identity, particularly in agricultural communities (Cauwe 2001). The dissolution of the individual into the communal pool of ancestors implies a new conceptualisation of the body (Dolfini 2015), one where it is more partible and permeable than before; it might even be possible to think of the ancestors as a metaphorical body, one that keeps receiving new incorporations through the absorption or consumption of different individuals, body parts of substances included in the burials (or discarded somewhere else). Duncan and Schwarz (2014) have proposed the conceptualisation of collective burials in terms of fragmentation and commingled assemblages, arguing that in collective burials it is the conglomerated whole that becomes analytically and culturally important; this happens because it is not possible to examine the individual, but it is possible to examine the social processes that make the assemblage important. Thomas and Tilley (1993:270), in examining commingled assemblages from Brittany, look at the artistic representation of collective burials as the ‘social whole, the body of the social collective, into which individual egos have merged.’ They see the use of human body parts in collective burial as similar to art, conveying social meaning, particularly illustrating liminality (an in-between
period of transformation). Archaeologically, the body is a signifier of social processes. What is buried with the body says a great deal about the relationship between the living and the dead.

The body of the deceased and its treatment are central in the process of becoming an ancestor. The decisions regarding the location and composition of tombs as well as the reuse of tomb and cemetery space and the inclusion of grave goods included in the assemblages is essentially used as a mechanism for the creation of social hierarchy and the maintenance of social control (Osterholtz 2016:33). In the three cases studies, and in the southeast of Iberia in general, the deceased were subjected to specific practices that are well documented, and that in general revolved around the fragmentation and dissolution of the body.

An example of the treatment of the deceased can be seen in tomb XXI of Los Millares, the only tomb newly excavated by Almagro Basch and Arribas (1963). The chamber contained a layer of nearly 0.5 meters of bones in some parts of the main chambers, including at least 20 crania and multiple long bones. Some of them appeared very close to their immediate bones.
(humerus with scapulae, crania and cervical vertebrae…) which could suggest, according to Almagro Basch and Arribas (1963:173) that at least some of the remains were brought into the chamber while some flesh was still attached to them. They defend that the remains would be placed in the centre of the chamber, and whenever more remains needed to be deposited, the previous ones would be displaced towards the sides. They provide as evidence the small collapse of a stone slab in the main chamber, which fell and blocked the access to some of the remains that were lying against the side of the chamber. The slab was found with more remains lying on it, which would indicate that despite the collapse, more remains continued being deposited in the chamber (Almagro and Arribas 1963:173). They also documented the existence of small hearths in the main chambers of the tholoi, that according to them would have been used for ritual purposes, such as libations and the burning of aromas during parts of the ritual. Moreover, they documented (1963:173) in a side chamber of tomb XXI the presence of two layers of ash, the first one containing small amounts of charcoal, burnt soil, fragments of schist and mica, and phosphates from organic materials (bone and wood), and the second one containing a larger amount of charcoal and non-carbonised plants. They suggest that this could be the remains of a small ritual bed made of wood and branches for the consumption of incenses or the incineration of bones.

However, Victoria Pena Romo (2011), in her analysis of the bone collection from Los Millares in the Spanish National Museum of Archaeology, offered a slightly different interpretation. According to her, there is an overrepresentation of metatarsal, metacarpal and phalanx bones, and abundant fragmented diaphysis of long bones and crania. At the same time, plain bones, such as spatulas, vertebrae and ribs are rare. She proceeds to explain this stating that the corpses were left in the chambers, and at some point, the weakest articulations (hands and bones) would separate from the body. Eventually, when another body needed to be deposited, the previous corpse, already a skeleton, would be moved as a package to the sides of the chamber, and covered or sprinkled with ochre from cinnabar minerals. The smaller bones from the hands and feet would be left at the initial place of deposition, while some of the packages would be burnt periodically, for reasons which would combine ritual but also space management. According to her, then, the underrepresented bones were probably burnt, as she states that there is no evidence to suggest that the skeletal remains deposited in the tombs were incomplete. She also states that for those bones that were supposed to be burnt but were not, it would be due to the ritual being incomplete, or because the human activity in the tomb had incrusted them into the floor. It is interesting to remark that similar patterns of conservation
have been noticed for nearby regions, such as the course of the Almanzora river, where a
differential patterns of bone presence has been documented during the Neolithic and Early
Chalcolithic, with a similar one at the beginning of the river, which decreases as it approaches
the estuary (Maicas Ramos 2005).

The presence of burnt or charred bones has also been documented at El Barranquete (Diaz-
Zorita et al. 2016) and Almizaraque (Almagro Gorbea 1965:36, 52), which suggests that it
would have been a widespread practice, if perhaps not as extended as Peña Romo suggests. It
is thus possible that the cremation of remains was a prescribed ritual for certain situations, but
considering the fact that not even a majority of bones in the Chalcolithic world of Los Millares
show evidence of this, it cannot be claimed that it was the normal treatment applied to all
remains.

The three cases illustrate this widespread phenomenon of the dissolution of the individual
through a ritual devoted to produce ancestors. The tombs contain multiple individual persons,
that through different rituals that include the fragmentation of the body and the cremation of
certain bones, are dissolved into an assemblage of collective elements, where bones, rituals and
objects are intertwined. In this entanglement of elements, the meaning and relationships that
the separate elements would have had before is substituted by a new one, where the different
elements are combined to give place to a new process where ancestors are created.

4.7. The production and maintenance of partible
personhood and the role of fragmentation practices.

A particularly intriguing aspect of personhood that can be explored through funerary
evidence is that of partibility, which is connected with the notion of fragmentation used by J.
Chapman in the previous chapter. Partibility refers to the idea of the body or, in this case, the
self, being composed by different elements, including relationships, human and non-human
entities, and objects. That is, the boundaries of the person go beyond the skin, breaking away
with monism and boundedness that characterises the self in Western thought (Busby 1997).
Fragmentation, as explained previously would refer to a particular way of conceptualising
entities and relationships (Chapman 2000). Fragmentation would materialise relationships
between the parts of a composed entity, and between different entities whose constitution
overlaps. The fragments in a fragmentation process simultaneously stand as objects in their own right, but also work as synecdoche, standing for the whole entity. Fragmentation works at multiple levels, ranging from the physical fragmentation of an item at the most basic level, to the metaphoric conceptualisation of an assemblage as a single entity, where the different elements are understood to work under the same compositional logic. Fragmentation goes hand-in-hand with enchainment, where a personal relationship is established and objectified through the fragmentation relationship.

The quality of the evidence preserved from the excavations at Los Millares, el Barranquete and Almizaraque is the main impediment to analyse the possibility of fragmentation practices and partible personhood. The results offered by Almagro and Arribas (1963), and J.M. Almagro Gorbea (1973a, 1965), despite being the best available evidence in relation to fragmentation practices, are not entirely conclusive. And yet, they offer some promising insights into the possibility of fragmentation practices. The existence of fragmentation practices would play a key role in understanding partibility, a fundamental aspect in the constitution of the Chalcolithic self, but also would greatly contribute towards the understanding of non-human personhood and the subjectivation of objects.

In the following section, three possible examples of fragmentation will be analysed. The first one is the existence of ritually fragmented pottery at Los Millares and El Barranquete; the second is the possibility of some pots acting both as technologies of the self and as fragments of people at El Barranquete. Pottery provides a great medium for symbolism and communicating common traditions. It holds groups together as it embodies and objectifies collective traditions, reinforcing them with symbolism, but also provides a medium to communicate fission and rapture; just as complete pots may represent integration and solidarity, broken ones can represent dissolution, fragility of relationships, the collapse or end of relationships, etc (Chapman 2000:43).

The third and last example of fragmentation will explore the possibility of conceptualising arrowheads not only as identity markers, but also as parts of the self that take place in collective burial rituals. It is important to remark that these examples, and particularly the first two, can be used to explore another dimension of personhood beyond fragmentation and partibility: that of non-human personhood. However, the issue of subjective objects, non-human entities and in general non-human personhood will be explored in more detail in the discussion.
4.7.1. Things that had to be killed: Ritual fragmentation of pots.

Almagro and Arribas (1963:174) explain that some pots at Los Millares were clearly fragmented and deposited in the entrance of tombs, an activity that they classify as ritual. Some of the pots documented at the entrance of the tombs were likely complete before being fragmented and deposited (for example, the pot with reference 5 in tomb X, lams. LXXV-LXXX, fig. 3, Almagro and Arribas 1963), while others (such as those referenced as 8 or 10, in Almagro and Arribas 1963:144) were likely incomplete before ending there. Almagro Gorbea (1973a:190) explains that at El Barranquete the situation was slightly different. While she also believes that pottery was used to make libations, the deliberate fragmentation of vessels in the entrance of tombs is not directly documented, but she explains that fragments of the same pots were found in different areas of the tomb, including the entrance and the mound. For example, in tomb 11 there was found a semi-spherical bowl, reddish-brown with a thin paste and thick mica temper. The walls are polished inside, and outside it has Beaker decoration with bands and zigzags. Fragments were found on the external part of the mound, while two fragments were found inside: one in the corridor and another in the chamber (Almagro Gorbea 1973a:174).

John Chapman (2000:23) explains that there are five main ways of explaining the presence of broken deposited items in archaeological contexts. The first one is that they broke during use, accidentally, and stayed there; the second one is that they were buried because they were broken; the third one is that they were ritually killed or fragmented and then deposited; the fourth is that they were dispersed for some sort of ritual, probably fertility, throughout the site; and the fifth and final one is that they were broken deliberately, to be used in relations of enchainment, and then buried. The fragmented pots documented at the entrance of many tombs at Los Millares (Almagro and Arribas 1963) could correspond to any of these explanations, although the excavators pointed out that the fragmentation was intentional, thus perhaps rejecting the first possibility. Due to their location in the entrance, the third and fifth explanations seem to better fit what could have happened at Los Millares. Regarding the possible ritual killing of the objects, there could be multiple of reasons for such practice. For instance, objects can be destroyed because they are polluted, due to their association with the newly deceased. This association can occur in multiple ways, such as the object becoming enchained through continuous use, or even the object being conceptualised as a composing
element of the person. Chapman (2000:25) states that ritual killings of objects imply that the objects are complete, and that could explain some of the evidence found at the entrance. However, those pots deposited there while being incomplete would need to be interpreted using other explanations, perhaps as part of enchainment relationships, where the vessel would have been conceptualised as the embodiment of a relationship between different entities.

Although it is usually understood that only objects that are killed ritually have to be treated in specific ways to prevent danger, even objects that were broken unintentionally might be treated in a ritualistic manner if there was a perceived power or danger by it being in an incomplete state (cf. Gosselain 1999:212). There is abundant ethnographic information about ritual killing of objects. Among the Gurensi and Kassena groups of Ghana, the bowls that women use to eat symbolise their persona and are ritually killed at their funeral. Interestingly, those bowls had no particular ritual importance in life, but they absorb the attributes of the deceased and cannot be used by anyone else. The Gurensi also use the smashed vessels as temper for new pots, establishing a connection between the deceased and new users (Smith 1989:61). Quite differently, the Asante believe that pots should not be broken intentionally due to their symbolic equivalence with a woman’s womb (Barley 1994:112). Ritual killing of objects was still happening in the United Kingdom not so long ago, and for example, the Lord Chamberlain of the United Kingdom had to break his staff of office, representative of the position, at the funeral of the ruling sovereign of the UK (Grinsell 1961:489).

The existence of different ritual practices involving the destruction of pottery are widely documented during late prehistory; John Chapman has extensively studied intentional fragmentation practices in the Balkans, and their existence has been widely debated for the Aegean context during the Bronze Age. However, this practice is not understood in the same way everywhere; while Chapman states that every vessel that was broken and left can potentially be considered as having been ritually killed, in the context of the Aegean there are more differences. Jerolyn Morrison and Douglas Park (2008:208) explain that ritual killing is a specific form of ritual breaking, which involves the destruction of specific parts of the vessel that are crucial to its functioning, while the rest of the vessel remains intact. Ritual smashing, on the other hand, would imply the general fragmentation of the vessel, without targeting any particular area. Multiple archaeological evidence of fragmentation practices. In the Swedish Neolithic, there is evidence of fragmentation practices in the Pitted Ware, Battle Axe and Corded Ware cultures (Larsson 2009), pars pro toto in wetland offerings of the Iron Age.
(Fabech 1991), smashed drinking vessels in the Aegean Bronze Age tombs (Hamilakis 1998) or extensive fragmentation practices in the Balkans during the Neolithic and Copper Age (Chapman 2000). In Greece, G. E. Mylonas, among others have shown that in the Late Helladic (Mycenean) period, especially at Mycenae and elsewhere in the plain of Argos, one of the last acts in the funerary ritual at chamber tombs was to drink a toast, or pour a libation, to the deceased from a stemmed drinking cup (kylix), or from several of them, and then shatter the cup against the entrance to the tomb. The fragments of many such cups have often been found at the entrance to these tomb (Mylonas 1957:76)

4.7.2. Things as part of people: Personal pottery in the construction of the partible self.

A different aspect of fragmentation can be seen in the existence of a type of black pottery described by Almagro Gorbea at El Barranquete (1973a:189). According to her, this would be a particular type of pottery, usually small black or greyish-black bowls, that would be carefully brushed and sometimes polished, and that might be the only grave goods that can clearly be connected with specific human remains. She states that they would have had a funerary function, considering that they were much more abundant in funerary contexts than in the settlement. She also claims that these vessels, that could be found in other contemporaneous ‘Bronze I’ settlements in Spain and Portugal (at Los Millares and Zambujal, for instance) but which could be connected to pottery on other sites as far as Greece and Anatolia, where its origin would probably lay (Almagro Gorbea 1973a:208).

Her claims present multiple problems. The supposedly Eastern origin of this type of pottery has no basis, and its funerary and ritual interpretation, based on its relatively larger presence in funerary contexts, is also vague. And although it is true there are more of these vessels in funerary contexts (up to 23 black, brushed and polished bowls in tombs 1-3, 6, 8, 9 and 11, and 26 greyish-black brushed and slightly polished bowls in tombs 1-7, 9 and 11) than in the settlement (18 based on the vague description offered in Almagro Gorbea 1963:206-207), the numbers do not seem solid enough to suggest that it was exclusively ritual.

However, other explanations might be worth exploring. A possibility could be that it was a sort of ‘personal pottery’, used by particular individuals in their daily life; both the scarcity and the ritual deposition in tombs could be explained in terms of intimate contact. Pots that were
used in daily life would, through the principle of intimate contact and appropriation, become extensions of their user’s person, and thus whenever they were broken they would have to be disposed of adequately, either by destroying them or perhaps smashing to turn them into grog to make new ones. Once the user dies, vessels would need to be deposed in a manner analogous to the user; if the person is being buried, then the pot, which is conceptualised as a part of the user, is being buried as well, and if the user’s final destination is different, the pot is receiving a similar treatment. In this case, the practice of fragmentation implies that a part of the person is contained in the pots.

4.7.3. Death as a collective experience: Arrowheads as sacrificial parts of the self.

A different fragmentation practice would be the one that could explain arrowheads. In the case of arrowheads, it has been argued that they are more weapons than tools during the Chalcolithic, and that they are one of the main elements to signal the emergence of warriors (Aranda Jiménez & Sánchez Romero 2005:188ff). Arrowheads would be the main element signalling the status of warrior, as blades are way less common (and more difficult to justify their status of weapons rather than tools), and metal weapons are incredibly scarce. Besides this, arrowheads, as mentioned above, are usually located in connection with the richest tombs, but not always, suggesting that the most powerful lineages would have access to more weapons/warriors, but would not have the monopoly of violence. Arrowheads could be conceptualised as technologies of the self (Foucault et al. 1988) in the sense that they would be involved in the constitution of warriorhood as a status, enabling particular persons to achieve that status. Arrowheads then would become fragments of the person as they are an extension that grants them a particular status, rather than through the principle of intimacy. The deposition of arrowheads in the tombs could then be explored in multiple ways; it is possible that when warriors died, their arrowheads were buried with them. Another possibility would be that when particularly powerful members of the lineage die, arrows from their followers and lineage members were included among their grave goods, in an example of fragmentation practice that would materialise a particular understanding of death. It is even possible that this practice signals a way of experiencing loss that includes relational personhood as well: the death of a member of the group is experienced as the loss of a part of the self, and thus that is materialised with the deposition of a small fragment of the self in the form of an arrowhead.

132
4.8. The production and maintenance of individual personhood.

4.8.1. Different pathways leading to different deaths.

All human societies have a notion of a ‘good death’ where death is evaluated with reference to an ideal way of departing the living world (Gnoli & Vernant 1982). In fact, most societies, if not all, have variants of that ‘good death’, or at least mechanisms to adapt and reconduct infrequent ways of dying, as well as the death of those that lived exceptional lives, into emotionally, socially and symbolically acceptable deaths.

During the Chalcolithic, just as identity was becoming more complex, so were ritual practices. This had at the same time consequences: as some individuals were starting to develop a more individualised identity, and power and inequality start to appear, group identity, likely in terms of genealogy and extended groups, needed to be further emphasised to counter that incipient individualisation. During the Chalcolithic, collective burials and other practices devoted to the maintenance and construction of memory were fundamental to maintain genealogical discourses, as they materialised the part of the community that very few people could remember due to low life expectancy (Robb 2007:66). At the same time, collective practices needed to be able to integrate individuals with more varied biographies and deaths, and thus this had a reflection on the small differences that can be found within the generalised burial practice, that was collective burial with secondary inhumation.

It seems unlikely that the different varieties of funerary practices found in the Chalcolithic tombs can be explained away in terms of ‘unfinished ritual’; funerary rituals constitute a liminal stage and the dangers associated with them would have been too obvious. It is more likely that the variety of ways in which remains are found in late prehistory is the result of different funerary practices and a more varied understanding of the body and personhood (Dolfini 2006:61). An important element to consider here is that of specific ritual status or circumstances. Relatively rare events can happen, and funerary practices can be particularly efficient mediums to deal with them (and make them visible for archaeologists) through
modifications of ‘normal’ funerary norms. Equally, the performance of exceptional funerary practices could be the answer to extraordinary life or death circumstances (Dolfini 2015:25).

Although it has become common place to indicate how these burial and reburial practices were part of daily life in late prehistory (Dolfini 2015:34), the reduced numbers of burials within the Chalcolithic tombs in the southeast of Iberia seems to suggest that the use of these tombs might not have been that common. Quite likely, death was part of everyday life, but the use of these tombs could have been the kind of event that does not happen that often. At sites

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*Figure 31: Conceptual map of the paths between personhood (in humans, subjective entities, and objects-as-part-of-persons) and the end of the lifecycle for those elements.*
such as El Barranquete, the number of final depositions in the archaeological register could indicate that they happened every few years, and even for places such as Los Millares, optimistic calculations indicate that no more than 3 people would be buried per year, even if the burials took place at a stable pace (Chapman 1990:187). For Almizaraque/La Encantada, the number of deceased in relation to the size of the settlement is quite remarkable; La Encantada I contained at least 58 individuals, while La Encantada II around 8 and La Encantada III more than 60. This suggests that, in the nearly 600 years where the settlement existed, the average could have reached almost five burials per year. And this is a very conservative estimation, given the fact that for several periods the settlement might have been out of use, or that an important number of deceased might not have been registered due to the poor state of conservation of La Encantada II and III. These numbers are significantly larger than the ones at El Barranquete, and even than Los Millares, despite the fact that both settlements were undoubtedly bigger. A possibility is that, just as it has been argued that Los Millares was able to ‘attract’ burials from peripheral elites, that would have been rewarded with being buried there, something similar could have been happening at the tholoi of La Encantada, which would have been used by powerful elites beyond those inhabiting the relatively small Almizaraque. This would support the hypothesis suggesting the centrality of Almizaraque in the Vera-Almanzora region, which would also include Purchena, Campos, and even Las Pilas, which would develop significant importance in the Bronze Age (Molina & Cámara 2005:102-106).

What seems clear is that the remains of most of the deceased are not inside the tombs, and we lack any evidence to suggest that they were in them at any given point. Among those that ended up in the tombs, there are clear gaps, such as the clear underrepresentation of children, but also likely of teenagers, which constitute a large group of the population in premodern societies. In any case, considering the reduced number of people being buried, along with the extreme fragmentation and poor quality of the available funerary evidence, any analysis of funerary practices in the southeast of Iberia during the Chalcolithic can aim to be preliminary and exploratory at best. In terms of who is being buried, the poor conservation of the remains in most sites is a major obstacle when attempting to study the sex of the deceased. In terms of sex, the quality of the evidence prevents us from any further interpretation. Peña Romo’s analysis of the remains from Los Millares was able to identify 3% of males and 3% of females (2011); the original report from el Barranquete excavation (tombs 1-7) indicated 19% males and 1% females (Botella Lopez, 1973), which seems problematic. The more detailed analysis of tombs 8, 9 and 10 from El Barranquete was able to identify a 13% of the remains as
masculine, and an 8% as feminine (Diaz-Zorita 2011). Given these numbers, it seems clear that in the current state of knowledge it is not possible to make any meaningful inferences about sex.

Regarding the age of the deceased, again, the available information is unfortunately quite fragmentary. For El Barranquete, the combination of the original report (Botella Lopez 1973, in Almagro Gorbea 1973) with the recent research by Diaz-Zorita et al. (2016) has provided quite a lot of information regarding age. With a MNI of 140, 56% were young adults, 10% middle-aged adults, and 6% mature adults. 15% were children, and 14% were juvenile individuals. The information for Los Millares is much more fragmentary, as only a small fraction of them have been researched. Unfortunately, part of the collection of human remains disappeared in a fire while being studied in the 1960s. The most complete available research about the human remains is that by Victoria Peña Romo (2011), where she analysed the remains contained in 47 of the tombs, the ones preserved at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (MAN) in Madrid. Her research states that with a MNI of 161, 64% were adults (with 3% of them being identified as mature/senior, less than 2% of the overall total), 11% being juvenile, and 19% being children, with 3% being less than a year old, while the age of nine individuals could not be determined. Overall, both numbers are similar, with most people being buried as young or middle-aged adults, and a very small percentage of between 3-6% being mature or senior.

Perhaps the most striking element in these Chalcolithic burials is the reduced presence of children. The combination of both Diaz-Zorita et al. (2016) and Botella López (in an appendix in Almagro Gorbea 1973) studies indicates a total number of around 140 individuals for El Barranquete, but less than 15% of the deceased are children. A similar percentage has been found at Los Millares (19%, according to Peña Romo 2011). It seems quite clear that these figures underrepresent infant mortality, as it is calculated that infant mortality during the Chalcolithic in the southeast of Iberia would be around 35% (Jiménez Brobeil et al. 1994). In contrast, in the immediately subsequent period, the Argaric Bronze Age, the representation of children in burials is remarkably higher: 57% for Gatas (Castro et al. 1995), 46% for El Argar (Kunter 1990) or 42% for Cerro de la Virgen (Botella López et al. 1986). Regarding the disposition of children in the burials, at El Barranquete, however, children have been located mixed with adults in every context: two in the chamber of tomb 8 mixed with another eight adults, one in the main chamber of tomb 9 with six adults, one in the niche with six adults, and one in tomb 10, in the corridor, buried with an adult. At Los Millares, in contrast, they are
separated into their own niches. According to Leisner (1943), children had been located in tomb 20, where the remains of at least 11 found with beads were located in a niche on the right side of the corridor. In tomb XXI, excavated by Almagro and Arribas, the remains of five more children were found in another niche in the corridor. In this case, described in more detail, the excavators found four crania belonging to children with numerous grave goods. These included 13 flat limestone beads, six flat beads made in jet and slate, and 55 perforated sea snails of different types (Almagro & Arribas 1963:160). Despite this seemingly abundant exhibition of adornments, it is worth remembering that none of the tombs at Los Millares where children were found belongs to the group of prestige tombs, and the grave goods associated with them, apart from the jet beads in tomb XXI, did not include any prestigious or exotic grave goods.

The main practice for adults that were buried inside the tombs is secondary inhumation in the form of the de-fleshed remains being deposited in the middle of the tombs. After some time, and perhaps to deposit new ones, those remains are displaced towards the sides of the chamber, where they are sometimes carefully deposited but other times not so much. In some exceptional tombs, the number of individuals has given place to the development of ossuaries, but in the majority only a few are documented. It is possible that this is due to the not uncommon practice of burning bones, which has been interpreted as ritual (Almagro & Arribas 1963) but also useful to manage the tomb’s space (Pena Romo 2011). While hearths are documented in the majority of tombs (Almagro & Arribas 1963; Almagro Gorbea 1973), burned bones at Los Millares were documented in only 22 out of the 47 tombs conserved in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Pena Romo 2011:84). Since this practice was not taking place with all funerary remains, there might have been other strategies to empty some of the tombs, without discarding the possibility of them never receiving that many depositions. Some of the remains also have evidence of the use of ochre, particularly on the skull, and cinnabar on the long and flat bones (Pena Romo 2011:81). This evidence is also rare, suggesting that it might not have been a widespread practice; perhaps it could have been one of the ritual practices devoted to dealing with something uncommon yet familiar enough to receive a standardised treatment.

Burial and funerary practices, as the materialisation of cosmological beliefs, can reflect local variables as well. Widely shared cosmological, symbolic, or moral principles can be ritually enacted in a variety of ways or occur in particular locations and not others because of local traditions. For instance, the sort of ‘pillows’ or stone ‘caskets’ surrounding some individuals at El Barranquete could be indicating one of these local practices, as there is no evidence of it
happening at Los Millares. Another local difference could be the treatment of children, which on a structural level would be similar (they are underrepresented everywhere, and thus their limited access to the funerary treatments that are archaeologically visible is limited everywhere in these societies) but that at the local scale would imply differences: as mentioned before, children are physically separated at Los Millares, where they are located in their own chamber without adults (and the only evidence is their skulls) while at El Barranquete they are mixed with adults in less separated spaces.

The use of space also responds to cultural frameworks that are unclear. The tombs and their different parts are not being used with the same frequency and for the same purpose. On the one hand, tomb 40 at Los Millares has reported at least 114 individuals buried, but the majority of tombs in the necropolis have less than 30, and a significant number have less than 10. The idea of using side chambers is also cultural, as very often they exist in tombs where the main chamber is far from overflowing and seldomly filled (Leisner & Leisner 1943:550-551). At the same time, the grave goods included in a tomb do not depend on the number of burials. For instance, tomb 40 at Los Millares is considered high-ranking and includes 114 individuals, but tomb 12, which is the richest in the whole necropolis, only includes 12 individuals. Tomb 7, relatively rich, had 50 skeletons on it, while tomb 13, with no grave goods, included more than 50 skeletons.

### 4.8.2. Things that are powerful: Exotic objects.

The presence of exotic objects has been used as one of the main indicators to argue for the inequality of the society inhabiting Los Millares. Exotic objects are those that either come from ‘far’ away, or that are very scarce, and thus not found in the majority of burials. The Los Millares area itself had limited lithic resources, and there is very limited evidence to suggest their exploitation; very few rocks were good raw materials for knapping, and flint was basically non-existent (Afonso et al. 2011:300)

Afonso et al. (2011) explain that the main exotic objects at Los Millares, for example, have been found in those tombs that have been labelled as having a higher status (tombs A and B in Afonso et al. 2011:326). They contain the majority of lithic arrowheads are made from stone from the Subbetic mountainous system and the Iberian Pyrite Belt, and also contain more arrowheads. Other materials also considered exotic are the jaspers from the Cabo de Gata area,
likely controlled by El Barranquete/El Tarajal, or the cupriferous ore used to produce metal items, that likely came from the mountains of Gádor and Alhamilla. Nevertheless, the most remarkably exotic materials found at Los Millares are undoubtedly those made from ivory and ostrich eggshells. Regarding the presence of ivory, its origin produced some discussions. Siret argued that it could come from hippopotamus and elephants (Siret 1913). It seems however that the consensus is that it comes from African elephants (Loxodonta Africana) that disappeared from Africa at a later date (Mederos 1994:144-146). The majority of goods produced were buttons or beads. In reference to ostrich eggshells, ostrich populated the Algerian and Moroccan Sahara at least until the nineteenth century. There is evidence of their presence at Los Millares, in line 4 of the fortifications (Peters and Driesch 1990:70) where two fragments were found. Also in tomb 12, 800 ostrich eggshell beads were found, and in tomb 63, an undermined number of beads, ranging from 21 (Leisner and Leisner 1943:25) to 5 (Almagro & Arribas 1963:118). This evidence thus indicates that although the majority of ostrich eggshells and ivory were found in funerary contexts, not all of them were. The general understanding of the evidence was that ostrich eggshell and ivory could only be found in funerary contexts (Harrison and Gilman 1977:102), but Mederos (1994:145-147) points out that some of these items have been found in settlements as well. As for amber, three beads were found in tombs 7, 5 in tomb 12, 1 in tomb 63, and 1 in tomb 74 (Leisner 1943, in Mederos 1994:150).

Exotic goods have usually been analysed in terms of prestige and the establishment of commercial networks. It is likely that contact with areas such as the Subbetic mountains, or even the Iberian Pyrite Belt, near Huelva, was more or less frequent. In the case of the Cabo de Gata area, where jasper was obtained, the area was probably controlled by El Barranquete/El Tarajal, which was part of the same social and cultural horizon. The case of the north African artefacts, however, presents differences. Their presence is actually scarce, located in only a few tombs, and the distance to the sources, combined with their scarcity, suggests that contact with the providing groups were only sporadic.

The presence of these types of goods in tombs has usually been explained in terms of prestige and power of the individuals that owned them. Due to the nature of collective burials, and the impossibility to connect particular grave goods with specific individuals on most occasions, the notion of ownership has sometimes been transferred to the collective group to which the individuals would belong. Thus, for the tombs at places like Los Millares,
archaeologists haven’t talked about particularly powerful individuals as much as about powerful lineages, that would be able to invest more time and energy in the construction of the tombs. In a similar vein, larger groups would be able to produce more resources (although it is unclear what), and therefore exchange them to obtain those incredibly exotic ones from northern Africa. Here, instead of offering another perspective regarding what is being exchanged, or how the gift economy among the elites worked specifically, it will be explored what happened to those objects, and particularly how they were understood, why they become grave goods, and what their connection is with personhood.

Particularly exotic goods, such as ivory and ostrich eggshells, had remarkably distinct historical trajectories and biographies. They had come a long way, and in the process of acquisition it was necessary to interact with non-neighbouring groups. Their social life was also very different from that of other objects: only a few people were probably able to interact with them on daily basis, and their significance also prevented them from being in contact with most objects. It is possible that their ownership was not completely individual or collective, since they would belong to particular individuals only as long as they represented or headed those lineages. And as happens with inalienable objects in multiple societies (Hugh-Jones 2013) it is likely that their fate, once their owner passed away, was different from that of other objects.

Powerful inalienable items in relatively opulent object regimes, such as the one existing in the southeast of Iberia during the Chalcolithic, tended to acquire more power with time, being protected and curated. They could have absorbed some of the traits of the user, and in turn project those traits back to new users. Thus, the objects would have shared a connection to the genealogy of the group, and quite likely some of the past users would have even become ancestors. Their presence, being so remarkably distinct and clearly inalienable, would not have economic but symbolic value, and thus their contribution to inequality and dissolution in the group would happen at a symbolic rather than economic level. The presence of these powerful items could add to a feedback process, where already remarkable individuals acquire power through the ownership of these objects, which in turn increase their subjective capacities due to being in contact with the most prestigious individuals in the group. Thus, these powerful items would have played a key role in terms of allowing the creation of the cognitive and symbolic framework where inequality could make sense and be justified.
Regarding their own trajectory and deposition, the evidence we have is rather limited. The evidence for ivory is limited to funerary contexts and the same was traditionally defended for ostrich eggshells (Harrison & Gilman 1977:102). However, some eggshells have been found in settlements as well (Mederos 1994:145-147), which would suggest that these exotic elements spent time in the settlements before being deposited in the burials. And as for causes to explain their deposition, powerful objects can be deposited for a multiplicity of reasons. They could have become too powerful, to the point of the group deciding to take them out of circulation to avoid symbolic risks. It is also possible that their life cycles ended for other reasons, and thus they were deposited in the group tombs, as objects to belong to certain individuals but more likely as something in between humanness and object, as they were powerful objects with strong subjectivities.

From a more material point of view, the access and ownership of these resources would have been one of the main indicators of power in a group, and thus of inequality within society. Thus, their deposition in tombs could have been one measure to counter that pulsion of dissolution. However, most of these interpretations are structured around the notion of death being a completely different sphere from life. In reality, it is likely that death and life were not conceptualised as radically different, and that the entities that we classify as dead, such as ancestors, buried individuals or grave goods, were considered to inhabit a plane of existence which was not radically different. Regarding their deposition, it would probably need to be explained more in terms of the type of object/entity they were, rather than the material. Thus, personal ornaments, such as beads, would probably be part of a person in a fragmentation relationship, if perhaps particularly powerful parts due to the exotism of the material, while idols, whether made in stone or ivory, were conceptualised more as beings than as things. In either case, they are examples of how signifier and signified, or meaning and medium, are not
randomly given. Particular materials were indeed perceived as being different, and thus anything that was made out of them would probably be more powerful than the average item.

4.9. **Non-human personhood in the Chalcolithic.**

4.9.1. *From collective burials to cosmological beliefs: The ancestors.*

The appearance of ‘the ancestors’ as a category of being, as a non-human entity seems to relate to the appearance of farming. Levi-Bruhl (1985:88) pointed out that in early farming societies, the land belongs to the social group, which includes both those alive and dead. Herbert Spencer also emphasized the tie between a sedentary farming lifestyle and ancestor veneration. He believed that ancestor worship was the ‘root’ of every belief system, an evolutionary stepping-stone in the history of religion, with ancestors being transformed into deities along the way (Spencer 1916). Jack Goody’s study of the LoDagaa people of Ghana also stated the connection between ancestor worship, death rituals and inheritance, including land. Goody saw how ancestor shrines were used as flexible mnemonic devices to remember and model social relationships in the past and present (Goody 1962), that would materialise genealogies used to claim rights and properties. Friedman’s work (1975), based on a reinterpretation of Edmund Leach’s (1954) study of the Kachin of Burma, explored how lineage leaders use ancestors to naturalise unequal access to resources, justifying how surplus can only be acquired through kinship connections with the ancestors that would make them successful. Successful lineage leaders would be able to become chiefs, with this often leading to them receiving tribute and work obligations that they would redistribute through feasts, but also to some claims for even more power that would lead to more stratification and even the development of states (Friedman 1975:172-194).

Nevertheless, the most detailed approach to the association between land ownership and ancestors was the one by Maurice Bloch for the Merina of Madagascar (1982). The Merina built megalithic, collective tombs with a secondary burial ritual, the *famadihana*, that established the deceased as an ancestor. The process of ancestorship implies the transformation from a named individual into a common and undetermined collective of ancestors connected with living descendants and the agricultural land associated with the tomb. It is also part of an ideology of descent promoting a social order, where the elders have the authority to mediate between the ancestors and the living.
As Erica Hill and Jon B. Hageman state (2016a:30-31) ancestors are clearly connected to power, whether social, political, religious, economic or of any other sort, and can work at different scales, from the household to entire ethnic groups. They are flexible, being able to act as the locus of conservatism and resistance, but also to adapt to major changes. They can be used to reinforce status quo and authority, usually by senior members, but can also be manipulated to either promote inequality or to resist fragmentation. They are conceptually tied to the landscape and its resources, thus being fundamental to negotiate relationships between different groups or segments of society.

It is important to point out that the ancestors do not exist as a metaphorical justification of the present circumstances of any given segment of society, although they might as well serve that function. Ancestors are thought and perceived metonymically, and thus they are perceived as real members of the group: they are people, just of a different kind.

**4.9.2. Things that were people: Idols.**

The study of idols has been quite partial. On the one hand, they have been thoroughly classified and categorised (Almagro Gorbea 1973b), but there has been little attempt to explore their meaning systematically. There are multiple types spreading not only around the southeast of Iberia, but around the whole southern half of the Iberian Peninsula. They range between the simple, cylindrical or truncated cone idols without decoration (traditionally known as baetyl), to different types of plaques with or without decoration, and finally the anthropomorphic ones. In general terms, lithic idols are predominant in the Atlantic façade, with cylinders, plaques and decorated baetyl being almost exclusive from there. In the Mediterranean façade, those made in bone are more popular, especially those using phalanges and long bones (Hurtado Pérez 2008, Almagro Gorbea 1973b).

Multiple meanings have been proposed to the variety of idols, ranging from being resources and repositories of social order, sacred symbols, or protective amulets, although the most common interpretation nowadays is the one vaguely connecting their meaning and function with ancestors and genealogies (Bueno Ramirez and Soler Diaz 2020).
Idols have been documented in the three case studies, although with remarkable differences. For Los Millares, where idols have been documented both at the necropolis and within different structures in the settlement (Almagro and Arribas 1973), its more interesting aspect could be the presence of multiple baetyls both inside and outside tombs, while for Almizaraque/La Encantada it would be the remarkably high number of idols found in a relatively minor settlement. In fact, more than 50 finished idols made from long bones (and 16 in preparation) have been documented at the site, leading to the hypothesis of the site having an ‘idol workshop’ (Maicas Ramos 2020:90). This included the presence of 10 bone idols at La Encantada III, despite it being an only somewhat wealthy tomb. At El Barranquete, however, only one idol, a plaque-idol of slate without decoration, was found at tomb 10. This section will focus on the interpretation of two types, baetyls and anthropomorphic idols, although hopefully the perspective proposed here could be helpful to approach other types.

At Los Millares, the majority of the so-called baetyl idols were found outside the tombs, at the entrance, although some of the other idols were located inside the graves. Some of those found outside were found in enclosure spaces (Almagro and Arribas 1963:166). Next to tomb 16-VII 45 baetyls were located inside a rectangle of stones; tomb IX-5 had 18 baetyls in a small enclosure outside, and in tomb VII-7 two large orthostats delimited another enclosure outside the tumulus with twelve baetyls. The Leisners (1943) also stated that in tombs 25 and 68 there were baetyls outside, near the entrance, while in tombs 15, 16-VIII, and 23 their location has not been detailed. There is no connection between the number of baetyls and those inhumated: tomb 15 had four inhumated and four baetyls, but in tomb 23 there were 6 baetyls for 25 inhumated, and in tomb 16, there were 45 baetyls for only 20 inhumated. There are also vague mentions about some of these baetyl idols being painted or decorated with ochre (at least in tombs VII and IX, but probably in more). Regarding their interpretations, baetyls were
explained away in a vague and dangerously evolutionist fashion by the excavators, who proposed that they could be ritual and have some sort of role as ‘soul stones’, similar to those used by ‘contemporary primitives’ (Almagro and Arribas 1963:175). However, more contemporary explanations have connected them with the cult of ancestors (Bueno Ramírez and Soler Díaz 2020) or with a symbolic sphere that the elites in the south would share, especially if they have ‘oculado’ motifs (Hurtado 2008:8-9).

However, there are other possibilities to explore the role and function of idols, and in particular their relationship with personhood. Without rejecting any of the traditional explanations exposed above, it might be interesting to break away from the conceptualisation of idols as things, even if their function is to connect the human and the divine. Thus, this section will argue that it is fruitful to conceptualise idols (baetys in this case) not as objects, but as non-human entities with personhood.

The idea of objects, and in particular rocks, being living beings is far from uncommon in multiple societies, although in the Western, post-industrialised world the dichotomic separation between live entities and objects is perceived to be very clear, at least conceptually. In his seminal research about the Ojibwa of North America, Alfred Irving Hallowell (1960) asked an old member of the group if the stones surrounding them were alive. After careful consideration, the man resolutely answered ‘No!’; to then add ‘… But some are’. This simple statement illustrates how complex the categorisation of non-human entities can be. For the Ojibwa, the fact that stones are alive does not depend entirely on an aprioristic ontological classification like the one functioning in the Western world. In principle, stones are not alive, but the Ojibwa recognised that there is a multiplicity of situations and contexts where stones can act as something else, and thus the ontological status of stones, as well as other entities, is not entirely

Figure 34: Baetys outside tomb VII/7 at Los Millares. Source: Almagro and Arribas 1963:175-176.
based in their present state and qualities, but also in the capacity that things have to become something else.

The exact way in which non-human entities, such as stones, can be perceived to be alive depends on the cultural context. Certain kinds of stones, for example, are considered to grow and breed in Hawaii, although it is unclear if they have any degree of subjectivity (Beckwith 1972). In the Caribbean islands of Martinique and Saint Lucia, it is commonly accepted among farmers that pebbles and stones grow and change during their lifetime. Stones grow because they absorb the nourishment and nutrients from the soil and water, just like plants. Pebbles are often conceptualised in a similar fashion to seeds, and when they fall into a river they develop (Feller and Blanchart 2010:281-282). Despite the apparently strong dichotomy between living beings and things that currently exists in Western thought, this has not always been the case. Pioneering researchers from the 17th and 18th centuries, such as Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton, considered stones and metals to be closer to plants than to inanimate objects. Newton believed that minerals and metals grew after absorbing nutrients from the environment, while Bacon stated that iron, when cut into smaller pieces and watered, would grow. Similar beliefs survived among rural farmers in Suffolk and were documented well into the 20th century (Evans 1965).

In his introduction to an edited volume on Amazonian theories of materiality and personhood, Fernando Santos-Granero (2013:3) states how there are three key elements to consider in order to understand things that things can be more-than-things. The first one is their subjective life, that is, analysing if they have a subjective dimension and how it would manifest. The second is the social life of things, which focuses on how they interact, particularly beyond the dichotomy of object/subject. Finally, the historical life of things examines their biography and social history, as well as the genealogy of how they come to be what they are. This approach could be useful to understand how idols can be conceptualised beyond the object/subject dichotomy and in reference to personhood.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of baetyls at Los Millares were found outside of the tombs, but in clear connection with the tombs, either laying against the entrance/mound or contained within an enclosure connected with the tomb. These locations provide significant information about the social life of baetyls, as it is either preventing them interacting with the remains inside or including them among them. In the first case, baetyls are not allowed to interact with the final deposition of human remains, nor with the grave goods or the processes
that take place within the tomb, namely the use of small fires to likely burn some of the bones and offerings. Baetyl could have been in contact, however, with the ritually fragmented pots that were smashed at the entrance of the tombs and would somehow witness all the movement around the burial. This could suggest, for instance, that baetyl were not considered appropriate to be part of the process happening inside the tomb but were nevertheless connected with the overall ritual. Their position however remains clearly liminal, as they are in the necropolis, guarding or watching the tholoi, but without being part of the process taking place inside the structure itself. This particular placement suggests that baetyl indeed had a subjective dimension that would make them ideal to witness the ritual process, but would prevent them from becoming ancestors, which is likely how the main process happening inside the tombs would be understood. The situation of baetyl would then be analogue to that of most people in the Chalcolithic, that would likely participate in funerary rituals but without becoming ancestors (at least, through their deposition and treatment in the tombs).

Regarding the baetyl that were included within the tombs, it is possible that they were understood as something connected to the deceased (just as any other grave goods), but it is equally likely that they were themselves buried there. In this case, their social world would have been completely different, being direct participants in the process through which individual beings would be dissolved in the tombs to become ancestors. In this case, their conceptualisation would be more akin to those that indeed became ancestors, although they would have been subjected to an entirely different funerary ritual, without being fragmented or burned. A possibility is that the status of baetyl, just as that of people, would have depended on their biographies and relationships with the group, and thus their place of rest (and ontological status in fact) would depend on multiple elements. It is thus possible to state that baetyl had complex biographies, where their status and properties would have

Figure 35: Baetyl (and other elements) from tomb 12 at Los Millares. Source: Museo Arqueológico Nacional.
changed. From stones, they would somehow manage to become something else, and that selection was probably not innocent. Baetyls thus would be stones but stones whose potentiality to be something else was eventually recognised. They were subject to some changes, giving them their shape as idols, and after that, not much it is known from their life experiences, until they appear either at the entrance of tombs or inside them. The fact that at Los Millares most of them are found at the necropolis suggests that baetyls had to be ritually disposed of, but that does not mean that they could have not be part of the life in the community before that moment.
Chapter 5. Personhood during the Argaric Bronze Age.

5.1. Introduction to the Argaric Bronze Age in the southeast of Iberia.

Between 2250 BC and 1550 BC, the Argaric society inhabited an area of more than 50,000 square kilometres between the Vera basin, the south of Murcia and Alicante, the west of Granada and the northeast of Jaen (Lull 1983). The emergence of the Argaric Bronze Age society in the southeast of Iberia had profound effects on the archaeological record, as it involved new patterns of settlement and different types of monumental structures within some of those settlements.

The abandonment of the Chalcolithic sites in the Vera basin, and the new occupation of hilltops, was already documented by the Siret brothers (Siret and Siret 1890:315). Many emblematic settlements of the Chalcolithic world, such as Los Millares or Almizaraque, were abandoned, and the number of sites decreased from more than 200 to barely more than 50 (Martin Socas et al. 1999). However, the overall population increased; for example, in the Vera basin, the most heavily researched area, the 1300-1600 people that inhabited it during the Chalcolithic increased to between 1700 and 3400 in the Argaric Bronze (Castro et al. 1994), in a process that has been defined as being a population aggregation (Castro et al. 1999a).

Meanwhile, the foundation of new sites such as El Argar and La Bastida has put into question the existence of cultural continuity between both periods. However, the ongoing excavations at sites such as Cerro de la Virgen (Schule and Pellicer 1966), Gatas (Lull et al. 2011a) and Lorca (Martínez and Ponce 2002) have proved the continuous sequence of habitation. Despite their continuous existence, these sites, as well as new settlements, present very different structures; the circular huts, separated and in open areas that constituted the most common form of dwelling in the Chalcolithic, gave place to rectangular and trapezoidal houses, with multiple internal divisions close to each other. The location of sites also changed, with hilltops settlements becoming one of the characteristic features of the Argaric world. The reasons behind this new phenomenon are unclear, and traditional explanations based on the existence of conflict or the need to control metallic resources have remained underdeveloped.
Moreover, new sites located on the plains or at the foothills such as Herrerías (Brandherm 2000) or Illeta del Banyets (Soler Diaz 2009) have been documented in the last two decades, along with other smaller plains sites without any trace of defensive structures (Verhagen et al. 2007). Thus, although the access to resources would have undoubtedly played a role in the establishment of sites such as Peñalosa, a metallurgic settlement with workshops for the production of copper ingots and goods, this logic was far from being a general pattern. The size of the settlements does not seem to be directly connected with access or control over larger extensions of farming land. Quite the opposite, it seems that some of the smallest settlements had access to more farming land than the largest centres (Chapman 2003:156).

Regarding the appearance of new monumental spaces, many hilltop settlements saw the development of specific areas that would concentrate large buildings and sometimes be delimited by walls. It has been argued that walled citadels served defensive purposes for the elites (Molina and Camara 2009). In relation to the existence of fortifications, although it has been argued that some enclosures and structures at different sites, such as Cerro de la Encina, had defensive functions (Molina 1983), this idea has been questioned, as they would not offer...
enough room for the inhabitants of the site (Aranda Jiménez et al. 2015:51). One possibility is that at least certain fortifications protected only the elite’s residential areas, although the evidence from sites such as Fuente Alamo or Cerro de la Encina, with opulent graves located both inside and outside the acropolis, would oppose this reasoning, as the elites were distributed around the site rather than behind the walls. If defence was the purpose of all these structures, there would have been two different defensive strategies: one mobilizing the whole community against an external enemy and another involving only the social elites against other social groups within the same village. The first model is supported by evidence from sites such as Peñalosa and La Bastida, which had large fortification systems enclosing the majority of the settlement. At Peñalosa the protection system consisted of a stone wall buttressed with bastions and with narrow access corridors (Contreras and Cámara 2002). The recently discovered (2012) fortification at La Bastida has parallel stone walls with towers shaped like truncated pyramids and bastions flanking a narrow entrance corridor. Its sophisticated design and complex construction has been related to possible eastern Mediterranean contact (Lull et al. 2014). Both cases are exceptional, because they are the only two sites in the whole Argaric territory with fortification systems enclosing a large part of the inhabitation area. Nothing similar has been found at other Argaric sites.

Nevertheless, fortifications are not the only monumental structures within Argaric settlements, and the function of many of the largest buildings remains unclear. At Fuente Alamo, for example, Risch (2002) has defended that the massive structures in the ‘acropolis’ could have a workshop for cereal grinding, stating that this location would have concentrated labour force, technology of production and raw materials. At the same time, some of the buildings within the massive complex would have had a strong symbolic meaning, as multiple copas or delicate drinking vessels were found in the graves within the dwelling structures at the top, suggesting that it could have been the dwelling area of the elites (Pingel 2000).

It is likely that territorial organisation related to settlement hierarchisation. Larger settlements would have centralised power (El Argar, La Bastida, Cerro de la Virgen, Cerro de la Encina), as they were complex proto-urban centres that would have controlled larger territories with dependent sites. This model, based on the existence of a state (Lull and Risch 1995), is also questioned by some authors. Legarra-Herrero (2013) has defended that there were only two levels of hierarchy, and that smaller sites would mostly expand the hinterland of larger ones, although he explicitly rules out the possibility of the Argaric world constituting
a state. Aranda et al. (2015: 57) point out that the hypothesis for a rigid settlement hierarchisation needs further support, as the coexistence of settlements of different sizes in the same region at the same time is not proof enough of political interdependence.

In relation to the economic structure and production in the Argaric world, it was similar to that of the Chalcolithic, although at a larger and more intensive scale. Gilman and Thornes (1985) proposed, using site catchment analysis, that settlements progressed, from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age, towards the best-suited locations for irrigation-based agriculture. However, Chapman (1991) criticised their study, pointing out that controlling land with irrigation potential and farming it are not the same thing. For instance, sites such as Gatas, a settlement with remarkable potential for wet farming, but whose potential was only partially used to grow some legumes and flax (Castro et al. 1999b). Argaric communities practised extensive dry cereal farming, especially barley due to its superior resistance (Buxó 1997, Montes 2011). For the Vera Basin, it was likely that this evolved into monoculture of barley in the agricultural intensification of the final Argaric period (Lull et al. 2011), all of this accompanied by the horticulture of legumes with a smaller degree of importance. Aranda et al. (2015:78) point out that this model seems likely for the Vera Basin, but that in other areas such as the inlands of the southeast of Iberia, the environment would have been less arid and agriculture would have

Figure 37: Map showing the evolution of Argaric territory between 2200 and 1750 BC. Source: ©ASOME, UAB - Knipper et al. 2020
been more diverse, with more wheat and a rotation of cereals with legumes such as peas or beans. The alternation of legumes and cereals were to keep the soil fertilised (Rovira 2007). The presence of fruits such as figs, grapes and olives were also registered in the archaeological record, the same as flax, that was probably cultivated for the purpose of textile manufacture.

Aranda Jiménez et al. (2015:71) indicate that the large variation in the size of the samples of remains from different sites constitutes a problem in terms of developing a comparative framework to understand animal consumption in the Argaric world. Aranda et al. (2015:72-77) indicate that the analysis of faunal remains from different settlements suggests the clear preponderance of domesticated animals, as wild mammals only account for 10% of the remains identified, except at the site of Peñalosa, where they are 25%. They include rabbit, deer, Spanish ibex, wild boar, and Spanish lynx. The main domestic animals documented in the Argaric world are sheep, goats, cattle, horses and pigs. Ovicaprines are the most abundant, but percentages range between 65% of the total remains at Fuente Alamo, to Peñalosa, with only 27%. Those consumed are both adults and infants, indicating that the consumption of secondary resources such as wool and milk was probably common. The second type of remain that is more common is cattle, although it accounts for more potential meat yield (around 60% of the total). The presence of horses is quite uneven, with most sites not reaching 5% but then some such as Peñalosa with 17%. The presence of a majority of adults, as well as the pathologies in the phalanges, suggest that horses were used for both meat production and traction. Pigs offer different numbers as well. Their number decreases through time at Cerro de la Encina and Cuesta del Negro, while it increases at Gatas. In general, they were not very common, and the age of the animals indicates that meat consumption was their main goal.

Gatas constitutes a good example of what production in a valley settlement looked like. From the beginning, cereals are predominant, particularly barley. The evidence of grinders and other stone tools would indicate a growing production of cereals, and after 1700 BC, barley had become the monoculture. Similar sequences seem to be happening at other sites as well, such as Fuente Álamo (Stika 2000). The prevalence of barley makes sense due to the aridity or semi-aridity of the landscape, as well as dry land cultivation with fallow periods. Leguminous plants, on the other hand, require more water, and thus predominated only in settlements located within particularly humid environments in the south of Murcia (Castro et al. 1994). Both barley and wheat were cultivated in dry land farming in the settlements on top of hills or
on the hill foot, while leguminous beans were cultivated in more humid settlements near rivers and deltas (Araus et al. 1997).

In terms of means of production, it seems that lithic tools were commonly used for agricultural production, and the evidence suggests an exponential growth compared with earlier periods. It also seems that production took place both in dwellings but also in specialised workshops, such as the ones at Fuente Alamo or Gatas. Aranda Jiménez et al. (2015:79) explain that current calculations for sites such as Fuente Alamo indicate that the grinding stones there could have processed enough cereal to feed around 1000 people, an amount that could have increased up to 1800 at the end of the Argaric period, while the population would have been around 200-400 according to the size of the settlement. This would imply that external labour was employed at Fuente Alamo to process cereal, although the conditions and consequences of that labour remain unclear.

Despite the major role of stone tools in the production and process of food, the use of metal has been one of the paradigmatic elements of the Argaric Bronze Age. The number of metal items, the majority found within funerary contexts, increased dramatically from the Chalcolithic period in the same area (Montero 1993, 1994). Personal ornaments, among which bracelets, pendants, earrings, diadems, or beads are included, constitute up to 50% of the total amount of metal items, while tools (axes, knives, daggers, awls, saws, arrowheads and chisels) make up to 42%. Weaponry only represents 1.7%, being mostly swords and halberds, but overall, tools and weapons represent 75% of all metal used (Montero 1992, Chapman 2008). The distribution of metal objects is not even, with a majority of objects concentrated in the largest sites of the Vera Basin, such as Fuente Alamo and, especially, El Argar, which present the largest concentrations of tombs. Regarding the evidence for its provenance, it is likely that metal was often from local origins and did not require mining, just as it happened in the Chalcolithic. However, in the Bronze Age there is evidence of mining as well, as it has been documented in the Linares-La Carolina area, and near Peñalosa, the only site with abundant remains of all the stages of metallurgical production (Moreno 2000).

The use of metal was far from being restricted to tools. Around 60% of personal ornaments were bronze, and the majority of tools were made of arsenic copper (Murillo-Barrosso et al. 2021). Given the lack of functional advantages, other factors should be considered to explain the expansion of bronze alloys. Their appearance around 1800 cal BC seems to be connected to an increased importance of ornaments, that would function as age, gender and status social
and symbolic markers. The scarcity of tin would have increased the social value of objects made with it (Murillo-Barroso et al 2014). Alongside copper and bronze, gold and, to an even greater extent, silver metallurgy was very important in Argaric society. Gold was known to Chalcolithic communities, although the number of gold items was low during both the Chalcolithic and the Bronze Age (Hernando 1983). By the end of the 1980s, only around 16 Argaric gold objects were known in total (Montero 1991), a figure that has barely increased in recent years. All objects made in gold are personal ornaments, some of them exceptional, such as the gold diadem from Caravaca de la Cruz with a decorated discoidal appendix (Perea 1991; Pingel 1992). Equally remarkable is a bracelet from Grave 75 at Fuente Álamo, due to its remarkable morphology and a casting process involving a bivalve mould with a level of technical precision that suggests the use of advanced measuring instruments (Perea 2012).

The role of silver is also remarkable, to the extent that some researchers have defined the Argaric period as a Silver Age (Cauwe 2003). Recent estimates calculate a total of more than 700 silver objects found in the Argaric Bronze Age (Bartelheim et al. 2012), with personal ornaments such as diadems, bracelets, rings, and earrings being the most abundant items, followed by rivets associated with halberds, swords, and daggers/knives. Among the personal ornaments, diadems are probably the most exceptional silver ornaments. Nine have been recovered so far, most of them from sites in the Vera Basin (El Argar, El Oficio, Gatas and Fuente Álamo) with the exception of the newly found silver diadem at La Almonoya in Murcia (Lull et al. 2021) and all from female burials. Trace element analysis shows that all silver used in Argaric objects was native (Bartelheim et al. 2012), and it is likely that the mine of Herrerías in the Vera Basin could have been a major source of native silver (Hook et al. 1987, Arribas et al. 1989, Montero 1993, Montero et al. 1995, Hunt 1998).

Regarding the social implications of metallurgic production, they have been a major topic of discussion since 1970s. Antonio Gilman (1976, 1987) pointed out that metallurgy only played a secondary role in the development of social inequality, since it did not require full time craft specialisation. According to him, metallurgic production would have intensified as a result of social stratification, but the increase in social inequality would have been the result of changes in farming production, not of metallurgic production. Conversely, Vicente Lull (1983) defended that metallurgy would have led to full time craft specialisation, as well as produced the circulation and exchange of both raw materials and finished goods, a process that would have triggered social stratifications. While this debate has continued, it has ramified the
discussion of the degree of specialisation required to produce metal items, the political and
geographical organisation of the production and the socioeconomic relationships between
producers and consumers (Aranda et al. 2015:89). In the current situation, the evidence towards
the conceptualisation of metallurgy as an activity carried out in the domestic sphere might be
slightly more solid, with part time specialists working to meet local needs. The use of bronze
and silver would have been aimed at the production of goods with clear symbolic and
ideological value, rather than improved efficiency as tools (Montero and Murillo-Barroso
2010).

But production was not restricted to metal items. Pottery undoubtedly played a large role in
everyday production, and it seems that there were specialist artisans with the knowledge and
skills to produce wares according to different yet strict cultural norms; the ritual assemblages
consumed by the elites would be the finest expression of their craft. However, these specialists
also produced pots and vessels for other sectors of the community, although the exact scale of
their practice is unclear; it has been suggested that it was a household industry (Colomer 2005),
with only a few families carrying out the activity. And it was a part-time, seasonal task that did
not require complex workshops or specialised technologies such as kilns or potter’s wheels. At
the same time, there is abundant evidence of a more unskilled production, which has been
linked with domestic everyday pottery (Ayala 1991, Van Berg 1998), with evidence of learning
processes (Sanchez Romero 2008) or even with the explicit rejection of certain ritual norms
and canons (Albero and Aranda 2014).

Apart from pottery and metal items, the Argaric world also made extensive use of exotic
materials, particularly ivory for ornaments found in burial contexts. These items tend to be
concentrated in the lowlands of Almeria, Murcia and Alicante, and they are scarce in inland
regions (Lopez Padilla 2009a). Most ivory items are V-perforated buttons, but there are also
bracelets, beads, pendants, combs and handles for daggers. It seems that there were production
workshops at several places such as El Argar (Siret and Siret 1890), Lorca (Lopez Padilla 2012)
and Illeta del Banyets (Belmonte and Lopez Padilla 2006). The provenance of the ivory seems
to be varied, ranging from African elephants, the most common, but also includes Asian
elephants (at Gatas and El Argar) and even hippopotamus at Illeta del Banyets.

The importance of funerary practices in Argaric research cannot be overstated, as it has been
central in most debates about economy, social inequality and political organisation. Until
recently, debates and research regarding Argaric funerary practices have focused on the so-
called ‘Argaric norm’, the practice defined by tombs located inside the settlements, usually below the dwellings themselves. Burials under the Argaric norm tend to be individual inhumations, although double ones are relatively common. The Argaric norm has also been characterised by the extraordinary wealth of some of the tombs, including multiple pottery and metal grave goods. Notwithstanding, more recent studies have pointed out how the Argaric norm, although widespread, was not the only ritual practice taking place in the Argaric funerary world, as the reutilisation of Chalcolithic megalithic tombs seems to have had a large impact.

The evidence pointing out this reutilisation keeps growing (Lorrio and Montero, 2004; García Sanjuan, 2005b, 2011; Aranda et al. 2013), suggesting that it was a widespread practice, but even today these funerary practices that deviate ‘too much’ from the Argaric norm are still conceptualised as something belonging to the ‘others’ in the Argaric world. These ‘others’ would then be conceptualised as either minorities, oppressed people that occupied the area before, or other groups within the Argaric society that have refused to integrate themselves fully into the symbolic order of the Argaric elites. And yet, their situation in terms of power is difficult to assert, insofar as some of the reutilised chalcolithic burials include wealthy grave goods that would only be available to the Argaric elites, thus making it difficult to assert if these ‘others’ were subalterns or, instead, another society/social group living within the Argaric world but keeping to their own cultural frameworks.

5.2. La Bastida de Totana.

5.2.1. Introduction

La Bastida is located in the municipality of Totana, Murcia. It is a 4.5 ha hilltop site, 450 m above sea level, where the Tercia and Espuña mountain ranges collide and around 3 km north of the Guadalentín river floodplain.
The site has a long research history, with the first excavations taking place in 1869 under the supervision of the engineer Rogelio de Inchaurreandieta (1875), whose results soon had an impact in the international scene, receiving the attention of international figures like Emile Cartailhac (1886). The site was also excavated by Louis Siret and Pedro Flores in the last quarter of the century (1887), and was later excavated by Juan Cuadrado in the 1920s. The excavations continued after the Civil War, under the guidance of the fascist archaeologist Julio Martínez Santa Olalla (Martínez Santa-Olalla et al. 1947), where it was linked to the Argaric world. After several decades of inactivity and abandonment of the site, which suffered the destruction of important areas due to reforesting practices that bulldozed entire sectors of the

Figure 38: La Bastida de Totana (Murcia). Contemporary photograph (2005) and reconstruction by the ©ASOME-UAB team (http://www.la-bastida.com/LaBastida/?__locale=en)
settlement, excavations and research were restarted in 2008, including not only la Bastida but also nearby settlements in the area, by a team from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

So far, more than 80 architectural structures and 230 graves have been documented, indicating that the settlement was founded around 2200 BC and inhabited continuously until 1600 cal BC. La Bastida presents three constructive phases where the settlement changed greatly (Lull et al. 2018:318-26). The first phase of occupation (2200–2025 cal BC) is poorly conserved, due to the Argaric constructive activities in later phases. The most numerous structures are small huts, documented mostly in the lower area of the hill. These huts are built using different constructive techniques, but in general they use stone bases and posts to sustain roofs. All huts present or are associated with destruction levels, likely by fire that put an end to their use. However, huts are not the only structures present during this early phase. For instance, room 35/36 (H35/36) is a 6 m wide, 14 m long structure, with a trapezoidal ground plan and two floors that required posts in the centre of the room. There is a continuous bench against the walls of the whole room. The material evidence found in the room includes a great vessel fitted in the ground, a zoomorphic clay figurine, a copper ingot, several ivory buttons, a bone arrowhead and a lithic tool to fabricate arrow shafts. Given the lack of materials to prepare or consume food, it might seem that the building had a collective character, although perhaps not necessarily for the whole community. But the contrasts between the huts and H35/36 are not the only ones, as quite recently, both defensive structures and a large water storage system have been documented. The defensive structures include at least two lines of fortifications, with at least five towers that could have stood up to 6 m tall on the perpendicular to the ravine of the Barranco Salado, and another line to the south, with at least four towers. Regarding the water storage systems, they would have captured and stored rainwater in a cistern of around 13,000 litres, that would have included a drainage system leading to the Barranco Salado. There are no funerary remains from this earlier period.

The second phase starts immediately after the destruction episode of the previous one and would last until around 1800 cal BC. During this period, the settlement developed the traditional Argaric structures, with multiple structures on artificial terraces, with long trapezoidal ground floors with rounded corners and stone walls. These dwellings are remarkably larger than the previous huts, and the use of local stones is widespread. The use of space has also changed, as dwellings are now areas of production, consumption and funerary areas as well. Dwelling structures have different rooms inside, and floors are made with pressed
soil, and often include diverse benches and hearths. Among the dwelling structures, material culture such as grinders and other lithic tools were common, as well as pottery, mostly for storage and house consumption. The building H35/36 continued being used, with small reinforcements in the structure and, according to the material culture, a similar function. During phase 2, new structures were added at the top of the settlement, although most of them have been destroyed by the reforestation that took place in the 1970s. It is from this phase that the only burial from the area comes from a chamber with the remains of a middle-aged woman, muscular but without osteological stress. Her grave goods include vessels (type 5 and 6 in Siret’s typology, which are associated to the elites), a copper dagger and a copper awl, and some pieces of bovid meat, which would indicate that she belongs to the ruling class. Most burials are from this phase. An example would be the burials under department XIX, with two infant burials in an urn and a cist (BA 40) with a double inhumation. This double inhumation included an adult woman with a cooking pot of unusual shape and a copper awl, while the second individual was an adult male with a halberd and a dagger, both of them copper, and a carinated vessel and a portion of bovid meat.

In phase 3 (1800–1600 cal BC), urban development had completed, with the whole surface of the hill covered in buildings and artificial terraces. New buildings were incorporated, following the patterns of phase 2, but with generally a bigger architectural density. Some structures seem to be, apart from dwellings, specialised in copper metallurgy, grain processing, butchery and bone work, or storage, most of them around the water storage facility that was adapted and enlarged, being able to store around 300,000 litres. Several burials have been documented during this period, and the majority of them are urns. In phase 2 some tombs belonging to the first social group were documented (BA-40, BA-60). However, burials of categories 3 and 4 are common, which could be explained due to the excavations taking place in a recurrent area, on the slopes and lower areas of the hill. The abandonment of the site took place around 1600 cal BC. However, there are no signs of destruction in those latest levels, as opposed to nearby settlements such as La Almoloya or Tira del Lienzo, with destruction levels associated with the abandonment of the site.

### 5.2.2. Funerary evidence:

When attempting to assess the funerary evidence from La Bastida, one of the most important challenges is the variety of sources. Here, rather than an exhaustive analysis, some of them will
be briefly analysed. The analysed ones were researched at two different times in history: burials from the excavations between 1944–1950 were conducted by the members of the Seminario de Historia Primitiva, and the burials found by the latest excavating team, that of the Project La Bastida, associated with the Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona, took place between 2008 and 2011.

During the excavation of the Seminario de historia Primitiva del Hombre (1944–45) several tombs were discovered, belonging to diverse social classes (Lull et al. 2015a:164-165). Most of the tombs are type 4 urns. Among them, some present abundant grave goods, including metal objects. For example, tomb 1 included an adult, with several vessels (types 1, 4 and 7), a copper awl, a pendant, and six beads for a necklace (three of them bone, two copper, and the last one seashell). Tomb 18 also contains an adult, and two type 5 vessels, but interestingly one was immediately outside the burial. It also included two silver pendants, and nine beads for a necklace (four stone beads, four seashells, and one bone). Tomb 24 also presents an adult, and the grave goods include a copper bracelet, two copper pendants and a necklace, although we do not know the material or number of beads. Tomb 37 presents a juvenile individual, with vessels of types 3 and 7, and a type 5 outside. It also included a copper axe an awl, and a so-called archer’s wristband made of stone. It also included a copper bracelet, three pendants (two in copper, one in silver), and three rings, two of them made in silver. It also included 32 beads from a necklace, combining stone, bone, ivory and seashell, and finally some flint, an ivory ringlet, as well as some undetermined animal remains. Tomb 52 includes two adults, with an external type 1 vessel and types 2 and 8 inside. It also included an axe, two daggers (with two and three rivets), two rings and a pendant, all of them of unknown materials, but possibly copper. It also included 43 beads, the vast majority bone and a few of them stone. Tomb 80 included two urns facing each other, and between them there were three adults, one of them male. The grave goods included three external vessels (one of them type 5), and a type 8 inside. It also included a dagger and an awl, and two copper bracelets. Regarding non-metallic elements, it included a ten-bead necklace of bone, stone and undetermined teeth, and an ivory ringlet and a bone awl.

Nevertheless, many tombs have less abundant grave goods. Tomb 39, that was likely a cenotaph without human remains, only included an external type 5 vessel. Tomb 41 only had a juvenile individual with an external type 5 vessel, while tomb 42 had a single adult with a type 2 vessel inside, and a type 2 and 5 vessel outside. Tomb 45 again presents two type 4 urns
facing each other and contains a single adult with two vessels outside the tomb, F5 and F8. Many of the tombs, however, do not include any grave goods, and there seems to be a strong connection between the lack of grave goods and the presence of infants. Tombs 5, 6, 7, 8 and 44, for instance, were all urns (types 4 and 5), and all of them presented infants without grave goods.

More tombs were discovered in the last year of the Seminario’s fieldwork, in 1950 (Lull et al. 2015a:179-193). These tombs present similar evidence. What they labelled as tomb 3 of the campaign is an urn burial, with a single adult and numerous grave goods. It included a dagger with two rivets, an awl, a silver pendant and a silver ringlet. Tomb 6 had two individuals, one male and one female, and included a type 7 vessel, a dagger and an awl, and two pendants. Tomb 12 was a cist instead of the more common urn, and was sealed with a slab. It contained a single adult, with a type 5 vessel, a dagger and an awl, and two ornaments, a copper pendant and a ringlet. On the poorer spectrum, tomb 5 included a type 1 vessel and a single adult individual. Tomb 4 included two adults, one of them male, but only a type 7 urn.

Among the tombs excavated between 2009 and 2011, their analysis is enlightening (Lull et al. 2011b:64-66) for instance, urns constitute 80% of the burials. Although the majority of them appear in horizontal positions, and are sealed with a gypsum slab, there are two with urns facing each other. The most common urn is type 4 (60%), and this type of urn seems to be connected with the individual being buried. F4 urns were used with all kinds of individuals, while F2 and F5 were used only for children. There is also evidence of cenotaphs, or urns positioned under
dwellings and including grave goods, but without any human remains, something that has been documented at other sites such as Lorca (Martínez Rodríguez 1995:74). Other types of graves include cists (seven in total), pits (three cases) and a special one, called a chamber, which is a square pit with postholes in each corner and, quite likely, a cover and some slabs enclosing it. Interestingly, the only grave located on top of the hill (BA 60) is a chamber, with an adult female and numerous grave goods, including a type 6 vessel linked with the elites, a copper dagger with three copper rivets, a copper awl, remains of bovid meat, a rounded fragment of goethite and two shark teeth. It is interesting to point out the absence of cavachas, which are common elsewhere except in Murcia.

The majority of tombs found at La Bastida during these latest campaigns include individual burials, with only a quarter of them being double burials. This seemed to be a pattern independent from the container used. Double inhumations always contain differently sexed adult individuals, although some of them have an adult and a child, or even two children. However, tomb 18 is an exception, with two adult males. Their grave goods included a type 5 vessel outside the burial, a vessel with burnt barley, a copper axe, a copper dagger with three rivets, a silver earring/ring, and remains of ovicaprid and bovid meat. In general, the analysis of the 40 tombs found between 2009 and 2011 reveals that a slight majority of them (24) include grave goods of some type, and up to 11 of have a vessel outside but connected with the tomb. The majority of tombs with grave goods include awls, daggers and axes, with suggest a majority of intermediate categories in Lull and Estévez’s categorisation (1986). The only tomb that could belong to the elites so far is tomb B60, although multiple other tombs include cattle remains, which can be used to argue for their inclusion among the elites. Interestingly enough, all adult tombs include some grave goods, while all the tombs without any belong to infant individuals, which constitute around 50% of the total number of deceased.

5.3. Cerro de la Encina.

5.3.1. Introduction:

Cerro de la Encina is located in the municipality of Monachil, near the city of Granada, on the right side of the Monachil river that comes from Sierra Nevada. The settlement is situated over a large and steep hill bounded by two ravines that separate it from its clear surroundings and grant it a strategic and defensive position.
The site was researched in the 1970s and 1980s, when the Bronze Age Argaric phase, as well as a later one after the collapse of the Argaric world were found (Arribas et al. 1974, Molina 1983). The settlement would have occupied a central position in the spatial organisation of the Argaric world in the Vega of Granada, supervising and controlling other smaller settlements that would have exploited specific resources. The centrality of the Cerro de la Encina settlement is justified due to several factors (Aranda and Molina 2006:47-48), which include its considerable dimensions (12 ha), its defensive features, which combine the natural defensive location and a monumental stone enclosure in the most inaccessible area. The site’s centrality is also justified by the wealth of the settlement, as reflected by the grave goods included. It was inhabited uninterruptedly between 2000 and 1450 cal BC, when the settlement suffered a fire that preceded the abandonment and collapse of the Argaric structures (Aranda and Molina 2005:171).

Although it has suffered considerable erosion, there is still evidence of some of the structures and terraces (Aranda and Molina 2005). The settlement included diverse terraces, some of them reinforced by stone walls. These same walls served as outer delimitations for several structures,
mostly dwellings with different areas for grinding, storage purposes and weaving. Besides its natural defences due to its location, Cerro de la Encina also possessed important defensive structures. In the highest and most inaccessible area there was a succession of large stone enclosure walls, of rectangular shape and considerable monumentality (Aranda and Molina 2006:48-49).

Being one of the largest sites located outside the core of the Argaric world, the site has played an important comparative role. For instance, its abundance of double burials has been used to assess hypotheses about matrilocality in the Argaric world. In the traditional core of the Argaric territory, the Vera region, some authors have discussed the existence of extended families and matrilocality based on the prevalence of women being buried first in double burials (Castro et al. 1993-1994, Lull 2000). However, at Cerro de la Encina, and in the majority of sites in the area of Granada, the evidence does not clearly suggest matrilocality, as the first person buried in multiple tombs is more often a male, or both depositions are contemporaneous. Cerro de la Encina also includes specific formal particularities that would have carried a high symbolic content and that differentiate it from the settlements in the core of the Argaric world. This is the case of the *copas*, or chalice-shaped vessels, as the ones found at Cerro de la Encina have square bases, which is an uncommon element, particularly considering the high degree of standardisation of ritual pottery in the Argaric world (Aranda 2004). Another element of particular interest from this site would be the economic specialisation in horses, which represent more than 50% of the local faunal remains (Driesch 1974), while the majority of sites show an abundance of bovids and especially ovicaprids.

With the collapse of the Argaric world, and after a hiatus in the occupation and use of the settlement, a different group would come to inhabit it during the Late Bronze Age. Despite the difficulties due to the erosion on site, several foundations of have been found, corresponding to oval-shaped large dwelling structures. Although the surroundings and the place where the structures are placed are terraced, the labour investment is remarkably smaller than in the Argaric period, and the entity of the structures is smaller as well, with most of them being huts of mud and wood. There is no discernible pattern in the distribution of the structures. Several other structures, perhaps rectangular enclosures have been documented but their function remains unknown (Aranda and Molina 2005:177-178).
### 5.3.2. Funerary evidence:

Regarding the funerary record, it follows the typical Argaric funerary norm, with burials located within the settlement and under the floors of dwelling structures, and consisting of mostly single and double inhumations in cists, pits, urns and artificial chambers cut into rock, known as covachas. This last type is the most common in the settlement, although all of them are documented. The necropolis contains 22 burials, 17 of which have been excavated systematically. The five remaining were excavated and published by Juan Cabré (1922) and Tarradell (1947-48) and seems that those tombs had been plundered.

The wealth of the tombs is quite diverse (Aranda and Molina 2006:51). Tomb 21 is a remarkably rich covacha with a young adult male and a young adult woman, having a copper dagger, four copper bracelets, two silver bracelets, two silver earrings, one copper ring, one silver ring, one copper awl, one silver hair-pin, one copper knife, two copper beads, two necklaces with stone beads, one archer bracelet, seven pots, and three cattle offerings.

![Tomb 21 at Cerro de la Encina](image)

*Figure 41: Tomb 21 at Cerro de la Encina. Source: Aranda and Molina González, 2005:173.*
Burials of Cerro de la Encina necropolis. M = male, F = female, CH = children, YO = young, A = adult, S = senile, Y = year, G = gold, S = silver, C = copper, br = bracelet, ne = necklace, dag = dagger, kn = knife, be = beads, ear = earring, pot = pottery vessels, st = stone, orn = ornament, cat = cattle, ovi = ovicaprid, off = offering

| BURIAL NUMBER | BURIAL TYPE | INHUMATION/S
SEX AND AGE | GRAVE-GOODS |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 6</td>
<td>COVACHA</td>
<td>1FA/1CH 4Y</td>
<td>1 C. awl, 3 pot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 7</td>
<td>PIT</td>
<td>1CH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 8</td>
<td>PIT</td>
<td>1CH</td>
<td>1 G. br., 1 C. dag., 5 C. rivets, 4 S. nails, 1 pot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 9</td>
<td>CIST</td>
<td>1MA</td>
<td>2 G. ear., 1 C. dag., 4 pot., 1 cat. off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 10</td>
<td>COVACHA</td>
<td>1M/1FA/1CH 2–3Y</td>
<td>1 C. dag., 2 C. br., 1 S. br., 1 C. awl, 3 C. ear/rings, 1 S. ear/rings, 12 pot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 11</td>
<td>COVACHA</td>
<td>1MA/1FA</td>
<td>1 S. br., 1 C. awl, 1 bone awl, 1 st. orn., 1 pot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 12</td>
<td>COVACHA</td>
<td>1YO/1FA</td>
<td>1 S. br., 1 S. orn., 1 st. orn., ne. st. be., 5 pot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 13</td>
<td>COVACHA</td>
<td>1FS</td>
<td>1 C. dag., 1 C. awl, 1 bone orn., 2 pot., 1 cat. off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 14</td>
<td>COVACHA</td>
<td>1MA/1FA</td>
<td>1 pot., 1 ovi. off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 15</td>
<td>PIT</td>
<td>1MA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 16</td>
<td>PIT</td>
<td>1MA/1FA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 17</td>
<td>PIT</td>
<td>2A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 18</td>
<td>COVACHA</td>
<td>1MA/2FA</td>
<td>1 C. axe, 1 C. dag., 1 S. br., 1 C. awl, ne. st. be., 4 pot., 1 cat. off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 19</td>
<td>PIT</td>
<td>CH 9Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 20</td>
<td>COVACHA</td>
<td>1MA/1FA/1YO</td>
<td>1 S. br., 1 C. awl, 3 S. ear/rings, ne. st. be., 5 pot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 21</td>
<td>COVACHA</td>
<td>1MA 20–22Y/1F 16–17Y</td>
<td>1 C. dag., 4 C. br., 2 S. br., 2 S. ear., 1 C. ring, 1 S. ring, 1 C. awl, 1 S. hair-pin, 1 C. kn., 2 C. be., 2 ne. st. be., 1 archer br., 7 pot., 3 cat. off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURIAL 22</td>
<td>CIST</td>
<td>2CH 3Y</td>
<td>1 ne. st. be., 3 pot.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 42: Burials at Cerro de la Encina and their grave goods. Source: Aranda and Molina 2006:51.

Tombs 8, 9, 10, 12 and 18 are also relatively wealthy. Tomb 8 is a pit that contains one child and a gold bracelet, one copper dagger, five copper rivets, four silver nails, and one pot. Tomb 9 is a cist with a single male, but contains two ceramic vessels of carinated shape, a chalice-shaped pot, a parabolic pot, a long copper dagger with two rivets for the hilt, and two gold earrings, as well as a cattle meat offering. Tomb 10, another covacha with one male, one female, and one child, includes one copper dagger, two copper bracelets, one silver bracelet, one copper awl, three copper earrings, one silver earring, and at least 12 pots. Tomb 12, another covacha with a young individual and a female, includes among its grave goods one silver bracelet, one silver ornament, one stone ornament, one necklace with stone beads, and five pots. Tomb 18 is a covacha with one male and two females, including a copper axe, a copper dagger, a silver bracelet, a copper awl, a necklace with stone beads, four pots and a cattle offering. Among the ones containing some grave goods but without that level of wealth, burial 6 is a covacha with a female and a child and includes a copper awl and three pots; burial 14 contains a pot and an ovicaprid offering, and burial 22 is a cist with a stone bead necklace and three pots. Finally, there are several tombs such as 7, 15, 16 and 17 where no grave goods were found.
There seems to be a spatial logic in the distribution of grave goods. Within the southwestern slope of the site, the western area contains the richest burials, and the differences among them might be more connected with age and gender than to status. In the south and central area, the tombs contain barely, if any, grave goods, suggesting that those spaces were inhabited by those with less resources. This has also been corroborated by the skeletal analysis conducted, which indicates that remains in tombs with less or without grave goods tended to have stronger muscular development and more osteoarthritis and periostitis, in opposition to richer tombs (Jimenez Brobeil and Garcia Sanchez 1989-1990). The site is also particular in terms of the high number of double and triple inhumations, presenting a higher percentage of them than other sites, which could be a specific trait of the site or the region (Aranda and Molina 2006:55).

5.4. San Cristobal.

5.4.1. Introduction:

The settlement of San Cristóbal is located on top of a hill in the meadows of Granada, in the municipality of Ogíjares. It is an area crossed by multiple rivers, including the Genil, and within the area that serves as a border between plains and the hills that lead to the Betica mountain range. While the settlement has been known by the locals for a long time, due to the appearance of pottery and human remains, it would not be until the 1980s when research took place with the publication of the study of a covacha tomb with grave goods (Fresneda Padilla et al. 1987-88). Then, in the 1990s and 2000s, several excavations took place in the municipality due to the demographic pressure produced by urban development, as the town belongs to the metropolitan area of Granada.

At least three periods of occupation have been documented in the settlement, with the earliest one being Neolithic. After a period of abandonment, the hilltop would have been occupied again, this time by Argaric people. Finally, the last occupation period belongs to a late Roman necropolis of around the sixth to seventh centuries AD (Fresneda Padilla et al. 2001).

The excavations of the Argaric settlement have focused on the higher area and the west slope of the hilltop, although the highest area was very disturbed due to the construction of water tanks. So far, the documented area of the settlement occupies around 0.6 ha. This indicates that it was a small settlement, especially when compared with Cerro de la Encina, the
closest Argaric settlement. Despite the settlement being located in a hilltop, this one does not present natural defences besides the height, and it seems likely that the location was based on its control of the immediate surroundings, that present optimal farming conditions. It seems that San Cristobal, together with other nearby small settlements such as Cuesta de los Chinos (Fresneda Padilla et al. 1985) and La Quinta (Fresneda Padilla et al. 1987-1988) would be small hamlets or villages with a clearly agricultural function.

The dwellings at the site are poorly conserved, but it seems that they used the natural slope of the hill, combined with small walls and posts to raise their structures, and that they had a pavement of gravel and tamped down soil. The majority of walls and structures have completely disappeared, and the only evidence is the remains of wall foundations. However, many of the burials, located under the dwellings, are still preserved if perhaps not in the best condition.

Some of the pottery documented in the site presents Bell Beaker motifs and shapes, which suggests that the site, and indeed the whole area, located quite far from the traditional Argaric nucleus, would constitute areas of hybridisation and contact between different groups (Aranda et al. 2012:146). This process has been documented in nearby sites such as Las Peñas de los Gitanos (Arribas Palau and Moina González 1979), or even Cerro de la Encina (Aranda Jimenez 2011) where Argaric pottery cohabits with bevelled-edge plates.

Figure 43: Grave goods from burials 8.1 (1), 8.2 (3,4,7,8), 8.4 (5-6), 9 (10-11) and 10 (12-13). Source: Aranda et al. 2012: 150.
5.4.2. Funerary evidence:

Regarding the Argaric burials, they have been studied by Aranda et al. (2012:148-156). Fourteen have been documented so far, but one of them was heavily plundered. Nine of them are single burials, while four of them are double. The human remains are poorly preserved, but it has been possible to document at least 17 individuals, of which three are children, five are women and four are men.

The majority of burials are covachas: tombs 6, 9, 10, 12 and 17 and 18. Tomb 6 includes an adult inside and a metal blade and three rivets, all made in bronze, a bronze bracelet and a polished carinated vessel. Burial 9 contains a carinated vessel and burnished surface, and a blade of arsenic copper. The whereabouts of the human remains are unknown, as they could not be located in the museum of Granada. Burial 10 is occupied by a single individual, poorly conserved, and two carinated vessels (vessels 12 and 13). Burial 12 contains a complete male individual, flexed and laying on the right side, and a completely disarticulated one. Grave goods are two metal objects of arsenic copper, an awl and a blade, and two burnished and carinated pottery vessels (Figure 10: 1, 2, 3, and 4). Burial 17 is occupied by a male, deposited in a flexed position and on his left side. Grave goods contain an arsenic copper blade with two rivets, and an interesting assemblage of small copper pieces, circulate the majority of them, that look like nails and probably accompanied an element made with materials that have disappeared. Burial 18 is the last covacha, although in this case the covacha is closed by a small wall. In the covacha itself there is a double burial, with a female laying on her right side, and an undertermined individual. Grave goods included only two pots.

There are also several pit burials. Four of them (8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4) are an assemblage that partially overlap. Burial 8.1 includes a female individual in a flexed position, decubitus on the left side, and the loss of several teeth (incisors and canines) have been documented post-mortem. The only grave goods are four rivets of arsenic copper. Burial 8.2 includes one female with a bronze awl and four seashell beads around the cranium; two of them are cipraea, another a glycymeis and one gasteropod molusk. Burial 8.3 is an adult male with a burnished carinated vessel. The last element of the assemblage, 8.4, includes a female individual, a stone bead and
an exceptional bronze piece. This piece is a metal plate, rectangular with rounded corners, measuring 7.5x2.5 cm. Apart from the assemblage, burials 28 and 29 are also pits. Burial 28 is a double one with a male adult and an infant. Two vessels are the only grave goods, although interestingly one of them has a handle, something uncommon. Burial 29 is a pit burial that includes an unidentified individual, but likely a teenager or young woman with no grave goods.

Tomb 7 is a slightly different one, as it is the only one inside an urn, a pithos incrusted in a wall. It contained two individuals, quite incomplete and fragmented, one of them female and the other likely an infant around four years old. The grave goods include a bowl and a vessel, a bone bead and one bronze earring.

The funerary evidence from San Cristobal offers a picture which is quite different from that of larger sites. None of the burials here belong to the elites, at least following Lull and Estévez’ model. At the same time, there is a remarkable abundance of double burials, many of which contain infants.

Figure 44: Vessels from the settlement area (1-6) and grave goods from tombs 6 and 7 (7-13). Source: Aranda et al. 2012: 147.
5.5. La Almoloya.

5.5.1. Introduction:

This settlement is located in the septentrional foothill of the Sierra Espuña, in the municipality of Pliego, Murcia. It occupies the majority of a small plateau, 585 metres above the sea level, and has a total extension of around 3100 square meters. The location offers a strategic position with great visibility and direct control of the fertile lands surrounding the river Pliego and the water resources from the Sierra. The site was first excavated in a brief intervention during 1944, directed by E. Cuadrado and J. de La Cierva, neither of whom were archaeologists. Although several burials and a house were discovered (Cuadrado 1945), the settlement would not be excavated again until 2013, despite suffering the constant activities of looters, who excavated several tombs and sold multiple objects to private collectors. Between 2013 and 2015, three excavation campaigns took place with a team from the UAB, and multiple dwellings and almost a hundred tombs were documented, along with workshops, storage rooms, a cistern and a large building that the excavators have described as the first courtroom in continental Europe (Lull et al. 2015b:40).

Figure 45: East view of La Almoloya in 2015. These are the structures that existed in the third phase, 1750-1550 BC. Source: Lull et al. 2021:333.
Three phases have been documented for the occupation of the settlement between 2200–1550 BC. During the 2013–2015 excavations, the third phase received most of the attention, and thus the evidence regarding the first and second is quite partial and preliminary. During the initial one, that would have taken place between 2200–2000 BC, dwellings have both curvilinear and straight features, and their mud walls are sustained by foundations made with irregular stones. The roofs are made of plant matter and mud, and the economy seems to have been based on herding and hunting (Lull et al. 2015:46-48). During the second phase, that would last until 1750 BC, the accumulation of structures made the plateau more horizontal, as previously there was a strong slope in the eastern side. Not much is known of the architecture during this phase, but several burials have been documented, allowing researchers to establish the presence of three social groups in the settlement: elites, which would total around 10% of the population, ‘citizens’, which would be the majority (50%), and the lower class, constituted by either slaves or servants, making up to 40% of the population (Lull et al. 2015:52-60).

In the third and final phase (1750–1550 BC), which gave the settlement its current appearance, different structures constitute a complex aggregation of buildings with small and narrow alleys. Structures have straight features and present multiple rooms, and some of them are significantly larger than others; the combination of structures and very narrow open spaces occupy the whole plateau. During this phase, the so-called courtroom was erected. It is the largest room at the settlement, occupying 127 square meters and being divided into two areas. Both floors and walls were covered by several layers of clay and lime plaster, and the roof was supported by a line of posts in the middle of the room (documented by post holes) and additional support coming from beams/posts connected to the walls. There was a long bench along the walls of the room, where around 50 people could sit, and the room also contained a sort of podium with a large hearth in front of it. The bench in the area near the podium was also more elevated than at the sides of the room, allowing certain people to occupy seats which are more visible. The room has no evidence of crafts or food production, and contains a combination of humble burials, whose occupants suffered multiple pathologies related to physical overwork (Lull et al. 2015:84), with extremely lavish ones. During the third and final phase, the economy is predominantly based on cereals, especially barley. The large amount of loom weights documented in multiple structures, combined with the textile evidence (linen) found in several tombs, suggests that the craft of delicate linen textiles would have played a significant role in the economy of the settlement. There is also evidence of small/medium scale metallurgic production, including a mould, a crucible and copper slag. The
site also presents a large quantity of stone tools, which are more abundant than in other contemporary sites and that have been explained in connection with woodworking. Another particular element of the site is the presence of a workshop specialising in deer antlers, that were being used to produce loom weights, spatulas or picks. The end of the third phase was probably sudden and violent, as documented through the presence of destruction levels and food resources left behind inside of collapsed structures.

Figure 46: On top, a 3D reconstruction of the ‘courthouse’, H9E, and on the left, its plan. (Lull et al. 2015:76-79).
5.5.2. Funerary evidence.

There are a total of 76 documented burials, which contain 86 individuals. The slight majority of the burials are urns (39), followed by cists (32). La Almoloya has a relatively high number of double burials, as these constitute 15% of the total, when this percentage is usually around 10%. The count of individuals includes 54 adults, 28 infants and a single juvenile individual. In terms of sex, there is a clear overrepresentation of females, with 37 adult females and only 24 male individuals. It has been pointed out that the number of infants and juveniles is unusually low and explained in terms of relatively good life conditions for the majority of the inhabitants (Lull et al. 2015b:132). At the same time, the paleoanthropological evidence suggests of different health conditions and physical trauma among the adults (Lull et al. 2015b:134).

In terms of the evolution of funerary practices in the site, it seems analogous to those documented in other places with small exceptions. During the second phase (2000–1750 BC), grave goods allow us to distinguish three social groups. An example of an elite burial could be AY-71, also called ‘the halberdier’, a male individual buried with an F5 vessel, a halberd and a cow meat offering, while an example of a ‘citizen’ burial could be AY-21, a double burial that included an adult woman and a newborn child; both skeletons are hugging, and the grave goods include a copper awl, a copper blade and a sheep meat offering. However, the most important funerary evidence from La Almoloya is undoubtedly the ‘princely’ burial from the courtroom. This burial (AY-38), dates to around 1650 BC, consists of a large vessel sealed with stone slabs, and contains a middle-aged male and a younger adult female. Ancient DNA analysis has showed that both individuals were biologically unrelated, but that they had shared offspring, as confirmed by a
mutual first-degree relationship with a female infant buried under a nearby building (Lull et al. 2021:334).

The osteological analysis of the remains revealed that the female suffered multiple congenital anomalies, including the absence of the twelfth rib, only sex cervical vertebrae, a fusion of the fourth and fifth sacral vertebrae, the shortening and bending of the left ulna, and periostitis of the sternal section of the ribs that probably caused a pulmonary infectious process that might have killed her. The male exhibited a traumatic injury of the frontal bone, that had healed before death, and activity related skeletal markers that point to intensive, long-term physical activity; likely horse-riding (Lull et al. 2021:334-335).


In terms of grave goods, which include tools, ornaments, and pottery, their quality in the Argaric world might be unparalleled (Lull et al. 2015:99). In the detailed description of the tomb, Lull et al. (2021) describe the presence of three vessels, one a bowl and two carinated
vessels, the smallest of which also presented extraordinary features, with silver sheets decorating the full circumference of the rim and surrounding the carinated body. The tools documented were also quite extraordinary: a knife with four silver rivets, and an awl whose wooden handle is covered in silver, something which has not been documented anywhere else. Regarding the ornaments, these are the most abundant elements. They include four ‘ear stretchers’, two in gold and two in silver, and a total of another ten earrings entrenched with them, eight in silver and two in bronze. There are also 3 bracelets, two in silver and one in bronze, and two silver rings. There are beads for what it would have been a necklace, with beads made in amber, bone, seashell, ivory and semi-precious stones. Two other silver body ornaments were found on top of the women’s chest, although their exact function is unclear and they might have been attached to the clothes, some of which have been preserved and seem to be high-quality pure linen fabric. But the final and most extraordinary element in the whole grave is probably the silver diadem, quite likely the highest marker of prestige in the Argaric world.

5.6. The production and maintenance of individualisation.

5.6.1. Individual burials.

Individual burials play a central role in the construction of individualised personhood. If in the Chalcolithic, collective burials were understood to be the main symbolic, ideological and identitary tool to dissolve the individual being into the pool of ancestors (and thus reify the importance of the group), the role that individual burials play in the Bronze Age is equally important, but with opposite effects. The persons interred in individual burials are usually in anatomical connection, laying on their side and with the legs flexed, without any generalised evidence of fragmentation or bone selection/processing. However, there are some individuals that are presented in a ‘package’, that is, the bones artificially deposited together after having been loose (for example, this is quite common with the second inhumation in double burials, Lull et al. 2016a:39-41).

Individual burials emphasise the importance of particular persons, but also materialise a new dimension of social organisation, with the locus of social structures moving away from the extended kinship groups of the Chalcolithic to the household units of the Bronze Age. The
individuality being thus produced and maintained through individual burials is then quite incipient, as those being buried would do it due to their status within those household hierarchical structures. At the same time, as it will be explained, the diversity of individual burials available in the Argaric Bronze Age might be proof of the diverse fragmentary forces that these societies where experimenting with at different moments and places. Thus, although it is possible to state that individual burials were an individualising practice, these individualities would include a multitude of meanings, that would share elements in common (mostly, the centrality that certain individuals would have in the Argaric cosmology) but also differ significantly both in time and geographically, as they would be the result or would be connected with different local and regional traditions and would respond to local and regional phenomena.

When speaking about individual burials, and their role in the construction and maintenance of individual personhood, it is important to state how this individuality was quite incipient, and the principle of representativity, and even the *pars pro toto*, would strongly apply. Although this will be analysed in more detail later, those buried represented a small percentage of the population, between 14% and 20% of the total population (Robert Chapman 1991, Barthelheim 2012). This means that only certain individual persons are being buried. The scale of burials is considerably smaller than in the Chalcolithic, as burials are now beneath the floor of the family dwellings where relatively small units of the population would live. This means that the very few individuals being buried have probably been chosen because of their status, biographical features or traits in the context of these smaller kinship units. It is thus likely that these few individuals that end up being buried would somehow represent or stand for their smaller units, and then their own burial would be, at the same time, and individualising event where single persons are honoured, but also a phenomenon where the contextuality and relationality from which the individual comes from is being celebrated. Nevertheless, and despite the obvious connection between the individual and the collective frame of reference for that individuality, it seems likely that the role that burials would have in the production of individuality was considerable. Whatever the reasons for the selection and celebration of a single person, it is that single person who is being subjected to the ritual, accompanied by diverse (and often valuable) grave goods, and perhaps more importantly, the one that will be lying beneath the floor of the house, with all the symbolic connotations that the act might have.
An important phenomenon that requires mentioning is that of double burials, relatively common in the Argaric Bronze Age (around 1/10 burials are double, according to Lull et al. 2016a). This type of burials would not necessarily be problematic in terms of interpretation, due to the fact that in most cases, there is an important time lapse (at least two-three generations) between the interred. This would mean that, very often, the people being buried ‘together’ would have not met each other, although the characteristics of the first inhumation would often play an important role affecting the second person inferred (Lull et al. 2016a:35-37), as it will be seen. This time lapse between the inhumations has been interpreted in terms of genealogical relationships and affiliation, and thus would not necessarily imply a reduction in the individuality of the burial, just a symbolic engagement with the previous ritual.

5.6.2. Who gets to be buried? The representativity of individuality.

Despite the abundant presence of burials in Bronze Age settlements, it seems clear that there was a selection process and the majority of individuals were not buried. Robert Chapman (1991) established that less than 20% of the population were being buried in the main sites in the Vera Basin, and more recent calculations, such as that by Martin Bartelheim (2012) who point out that it was around 14% of the population for Fuente Alamo.

Although it is true that during the initial Argaric bronze Age only adults were buried, quite early on children started being included as well, and there is no evidence suggesting any type of discrimination of sex, age or social status in terms of who is being buried. The overall low number of burials has been explained in connection to the reutilisation of Chalcolithic tombs, that would constitute an alternative funerary strategy (Aranda et al. 2018), as evidence of very restrictive access to funerary ritual that would only include those recognised as Argaric (Montón-Subías 2010a), or due to the existence of a funerary ritual based on commemoration and ancestor recognition practices, which would require few burials (Barthelheim 2012).

Regarding the paleodemography of the Argaric world, the evidence suggests fair representation, with a similar balance of men and women and an accurate reflection of high infant mortality. Children represent 57% of the inhumations at Gatas (Castro et al. 1995), 46% at El Argar (Kunter 1990) and 55% at Lorca (Rihuete et al. 2011). The evidence also suggests high female mortality, probably due to complications during childbirth, meaning that those males that survived childhood had a longer life expectancy than women. As it can be expected,
very few members would have reached very old age, and less than 10% of the burials correspond to individuals older than 60 years old. Interestingly, although the representation of women is slightly higher than that of men for the whole Argaric territory, its distribution is uneven (Lull et al. 2016:33). Sites such as El Oficio have an underrepresentation of them, with only 34.8% of women buried, while others such as La Almoloya had an overrepresentation of them (60.5%). Nevertheless, the majority of sites present relatively even balances (at El Argar, it is 50.8% male and 49.2% female, and at La Bastida it is 47.2% male and 52.7% female, according to Lull et al. 2016:33).

The presence of double burials would have had an important impact on who is being buried, although its exact logic is not completely understood. Double burials were more common at certain sites (for example, around 25% of the burials at La Bastida according to Lull et al. (2012), but more than half of the burials at Cerro de la Encina, following Aranda et al. (2008). Given that there are not any chronological or class-based indicators to explain the prevalence of double burials, it might seem that the logic of their use would depend on local conditions and contexts. What is undoubtedly true at the moment is that, in double burials with adults, the second interred would always be of a different sex, thus indicating a taboo or preference to avoid the symbolic connection between the new burial and the old one as being exclusively male/female.

It seems that the fair representation of all sexes, ages and social classes even extended to those who were not natives from the settlements where they were buried. Cranial morphology from El Argar has been used to argue that the variability among men is five times higher than for women (Buikstra and Hoshower 1994). This could suggest matrilocal residential patterns, and perhaps reinforce the hypothesis for the matrilineal kinship units (Castro et al. 1993-94, Lull 1997-98), although some recent stable isotope analysis did not indicate any mobility among the population of Gatas (Zorita et al. 2012).

5.6.3. How do people get buried? Ritual diversity in the construction of individual personhood.

Single burials are the most widespread common funerary practice in the southeast of Iberia during the Bronze Age. At la Bastida de Totana (Murcia), they constitute 87.9% of all burials (Lull et al. 2016a:33), and similarly high percentages occur at Peñalosa (Contreras et al. 2000).
and La Almoloya (Lull et al. 2016a:33). However, at Cerro de la Encina (Aranda et al. 2008) individual tombs make up to a mere 32% of the total, with a majority of double burials that are also relatively common in other settlements of the Argaric world. However, double (and even triple) burials, despite not being unheard of in the Argaric world, cannot easily be categorically separated, as it is not infrequent that the burials they contain are not contemporaneous, with one inhumation taking place decades after the other.

Most bodies are found with anatomical connections in a flexed, decubitus position, which probably means that bodies were displayed or left to rest for enough time to allow rigor mortis to disappear. As Aranda et al. point out (2015:118) there is no conclusive pattern for the side in which bodies are disposed. At Cerro de la Encina, females are on their right side and the majority of males on their left (Aranda et al. 2008), similar to what happens at Fuerte Alamo, where additionally it has been pointed out that those men were deposited on their right side because they were senior or juvenile and thus not warriors (Schubart 2004). However, at Gatas, a left lateral deposition predominates regardless of sex (Castro et al. 1995), and the same happens at Lorca, where the right side is used for only a few women and children (Rihuete et al. 2011). In some cases, certain bones show traces of red pigmentation, which was originally explained in terms of cinnabar use to paint fabrics (Siret and Siret 1890) and that is explained as being for

Figure 49: Main body positions according to sex. Superior half (BA79, AY21) are females and inferior ones (BA85, AY10) are males. BA is la Bastida, AY is la Almoloya. Source: Lull et al. 2016: 46
both textile pigmentation and post-mortem treatments (López Padilla et al. 2012, Germán Delibes 2000).

Regarding tomb typologies, there are four main types of tombs in the Argaric world: cists, covachas, pits and urns. Covachas (‘little caves’) are small caves cut into rock; urns are ceramic vessels (usually types 2, 4 and 5 in the Siret brothers’ typology), pits are holes in the ground, and cists are pits covered or delimited with stone slabs. Most burials are located within the settlements, although there are some exceptions, like the cist burials outside villages documented by Arribas (1952). Although they are not exactly burials, as they do not contain human remains, cenotaphs probably had funerary significance. They have been located only in Murcia and Almeria (Ayala 1991, Martínez Rodriguez et al. 1996), and they are urns placed under the house floor, sometimes with grave goods, but without human remains.

Multiple explanations have been offered to explain the choice of burial types, although the main explanatory hypotheses have revolved around chronological and geographical factors. Beatriz Blance (1964) suggested that Argaric chronology could be divided into two periods, according to the statistical correlation between burial types and grave goods. The initial one, or Argar A (1700–1400 BC) would have a primacy of cists, while during the Argar B (1400–1200 BC) pottery urns would be more useful. However, this was a very early work and chronologies for the Argaric Bronze have changed dramatically. More recent works (Lull 1997-98) suggest that in the Vera Basin, covachas were the oldest type, with cists appearing shortly afterwards, around 2000 BC. Urns and cists appeared basically at the same time (ca. 2000–1950 BC) and both remained in use until the end of the Argaric world. In terms of geographical differences, Lull and Estévez (1986) established that all four types exist within all the geographical distribution of the Argar, although pits were more common in inland areas and urns were used predominantly in the Vera Basin. Apart from these general patterns, it seems that the choice of burial type might have been connected to regional differences, perhaps due to earlier local traditions. Inhumations were sealed or ‘contained’ with all sorts of materials, ranging from pots and fragments of pottery to greenstones like diorite and gabbro (Lull 1997-98). Among the most exceptional elements used, the ‘stelae’ used at Fuente Alamo, are particularly interesting, as their features are between those of ‘stelae’ and some types of Chalcolithic idols, and indeed have been interpreted as a continuity of the Chalcolithic baetylts (Risch and Schubart 1991).
In relation to grave goods, up to 40% of the tombs have none, but out of those that do have grave goods, the most common elements are pottery vessels and metal items. Interestingly, funerary pottery includes not only the vessels that people would use, but also specific types that seem to be connected with funerary ritual purposes, and that have not been located outside of funerary contexts. Among these, the most important ones are vessels that can be associated with the presentation and consumption of food and drinks, such as goblets, carinated vessels and bowls, as well as the storage of small amounts of liquid in bottles and lenticular and biconical vessels. Along with this, meat offerings are also common (Aranda and Montón-Subías 2011). Among the metal objects, the most abundant ones are personal ornaments (bracelets, earrings, rings, diadems, beads) made of copper, silver, and, more rarely, gold. Functional tools such as awls, daggers/knives, and less frequently, axes, were also widespread, and the vast majority of them have been found in burials. Conversely, the presence of specialised weapons like swords and halberds is very rare, despite the role that they have played in the interpretation of the Argaric world. In terms of the analysis of grave goods and their social implications, some objects are statistically linked with gender, and it will be analysed later. However, the most fruitful analysis has been that of grave goods and social class. The pioneering study by Vicente Lull and Jordi Estévez (1986) is still canon to a great degree, and has allowed researchers to divide Argaric tombs in different categories depending on their wealth.

The location of tombs, both at the local and regional level, seems to be connected with hierarchical considerations. Central settlements (such as El Argar or La Bastida) would present larger concentrations of them, while other sites would present smaller amounts or have certain population groups seemingly absent. For example, both Fuente Alamo and Gatas show a clear scarcity of young male individuals, especially those ritually associated with the dagger-axe, which would probably be buried somewhere else, perhaps El Argar, which would be considered as the capital of the Vera Basin (Castro et al. 1993-1994). At the same time, people from more central sites could have sometimes ended up in minor settlements. This has been the explanation for tomb 3 at Los Cipreses, which includes stone metalworking tools despite the lack of evidence for any kind of metalwork taking place in the settlement. It has been hypothesized that the individual was probably from the nearby settlement of Lorca (Delgado and Risch 2006), and for whatever reasons, he might have ended up at Los Cipreses, exemplifying burial preferences where kinship or residency bonds are unclear.
However, this pattern of ‘burial attraction’ towards the more central sites might not have been widespread in the whole Argaric territory and was perhaps a particular phenomenon in the Vera basin. In the Granada basin, for instance, Cerro de la Encina, which has we have seen is a large hilltop settlement with monumental buildings, includes plenty of high-status tombs, while the nearby Cerro de San Cristóbal, a small village in the lowland area, lacks them. In this case, as it would happen in many others, there would be a correlation between the settlement importance and the socioeconomic status of its inhabitants (Aranda et al. 2012).

Regarding the location of tombs within settlements, Fuente Alamo is a perfect example, as the elite tombs are heavily concentrated at the summit and on the eastern slope of the settlement; 14 out of the total 16 tombs with silver objects in the whole settlement are located in these areas (Pingel et al. 2003). Moreover, the majority of grave goods at the whole site come from the tombs in this area, which also includes monumental buildings (in fact, two graves concentrate more than half of the total amount of metal objects). The very few tombs at the summit and on the eastern slope without grave goods are the ones with children. In general, the rest of the tombs found in the settlement rarely have grave goods, and when they do these are limited to one or two pots and very few metal objects (Risch 2002). However, the recent discovery of tomb 111 (Schubart et al. 2004) on the southern slope, where an elite female burial in a pottery urn and with wealthy grave goods that include pottery vessels and numerous metal objects could disrupt the clear relationship between space and hierarchy.

An important element to discuss in some depth is the relatively common presence of double burials in the Argaric world. At La Bastida, around 25% of burials are double (Lull et al. 2012:64), and a similar percentage occurs at Peñalosa (Contreras et al. 2000). However, at the systematically excavated tombs at Cerro de la Encina (Aranda and Molina 2006:50-51), the combination of double and triple burials makes up to 64.7% of the tombs, and double burials alone constitute 47% of all the tombs. Most tombs contain two adults, that tend to be of different sex, although a smaller percentage contains adults and juveniles or adults with infants. At La Bastida, for example, there are 17 double burials: 11 contain two adults, one contains two juveniles, two contains the combination of adult and infant, and three more contain a couple of infants (Lull et al. 2016:35). At Cerro de la Encina, there are seven double burials; three containing two adults, two containing an adult and a juvenile, one containing an adult and an infant, and one with two infants (Lull et al. 2016:35). Cerro de San Cristóbal contains three double burials, one with two adults, and two with an adult and an infant (Aranda et al. 2012),
and La Almoloya contains 11 double burials, eight with two adults, two with an adult and an infant, and one with two infants. (Lull et al. 2016:35).

Double burials were subjected to multiple ritual rules. No burial with adults or juveniles could be inaugurated by an infant, and among those with adults, they systematically included adults of the opposite sex. There have been multiple debates regarding who was buried first in double burials, and what the meaning of this phenomenon would be. For example, at La Almoloya, in burials AYC-1 and AY-44 (both with two adults in cists, and belonging to the third social group), females were interred before (Lull et al. 2016:39) while AY-15, AY-24, AY-26, AY-27, and AY-42 had males first (belonging, in this case, to the third, fourth and fifth social groups).

Originally, it was postulated that matrilineality could be defended thanks to the predominance of women being interred first in double burials (Lull 1997-1998:74). However, more recent evidence seems to suggest that both possibilities were equally likely, thus suggesting the possibility of bilateral affiliation (Lull et al. 2016:42). And yet, Lull et al. (2016:42-43) point out that females might have had a leading role in the symbolising of the genealogical relations expressed in double burials, as traditionally female objects are way more common in those tombs, to the point that more than half adult double tombs contain only female items.

5.6.4. The materialisation of class and inequality.

The existence of social classes in the Argaric world, and the possibility of identifying them through the analysis of funerary practices and grave goods, has become one of the cornerstones of Argaric research. The foundational publication on the topic, whose relevance remains almost unchallenged, is that by Vicent Lull and Jordi Estévez (1986). Through the statistical analysis of hundreds of Argaric tombs, they established the existence of four social categories. The first category contained the most valuable grave goods, such as halberds, swords, diadems, gold and biconical vessels (type 6 in Siret’s typology). The second one included frequent personal ornaments, such as rings, earrings, necklaces and bracelets, as well as some types of pottery, mainly copas. The people within these two categories would have been the elite of the Argaric society, although it is important to remark that the first category would have only included men, while the second one also included women and children. The third category of graves included those with several metal items, such as awls, daggers or axes, with or without pottery.
Personal ornaments are found here occasionally, but they have lesser quality. The interpretation by Lull and Estévez is that they were citizens with full rights, but did not belong to the elites. In the fourth category, it is possible to find a single metal object or pottery vessel, and it corresponds to those living in Argaric society but outside of the Argaric kinship bonds. The last and final category is that of graves with no grave goods at all, and is associated with foreigners, captives or slaves. However, these categorizations have been slightly modified with the development of new radiocarbon dates (Lull et al. 2011a). During an initial period (2200–1950 BC) only adults and senior individuals were buried in cists, covachas and pits. The wealthiest tombs included halberds, type 6 vessels, and short swords for males and daggers or awls associated with pottery and ornaments for females. For those outside the elite, tombs had a single item, and then finally the poorest tombs would not contain any grave goods. For the second period, (1950–1750 BC), the overall number of burials increased, and child inhumations make their appearance. Grave goods from the previous period see new objects appearing, such as long swords, axes, and copas. Finally, for the final period (1750–1550 BC), the four classes originally described by Lull became consolidated, although some objects change their adscription. Long swords replace halberds, and diadems become the marker of females in the second category. For the third category, axes become the new symbol of masculinity, including both adult and juvenile men and possibly even children.

But social classes are not constructed only in reference to grave goods; privilege would have had an embodied, physical dimension that would be visible at the osteoarchaeological level. There seems to be a connection between the wealthiest grave goods and a lower incidence of osteoarthritis and musculoskeletal stress. At Cerro de la Encina, males and females with more lesions due to muscular stress are found in burials without metallic grave goods (Aranda et al. 2008), but in other places like Fuente Alamo, the evidence seems weaker, with individuals with good health being found in both rich and poor tombs. This could indicate that the presence of grave goods is not entirely connected with social class, but more with the social functions carried out by the deceased, and that in the case of Fuente Alamo, all individuals belonged to privileged groups (Bartelheim 2012). At the same time, it is important to realize that the same structures could have contained the burials of both healthy and unhealthy individuals, and that the interpretation of these remains is not always straightforward. For instance, the ‘courtroom’ at La Almoloya constitutes the perfect example: it contains both people with relatively good health and others suffering multiple conditions and marked musculoskeletal stress. AY-38, the richest burial, contained a relatively healthy male and a woman suffering from various health
conditions. And in the same room, the closest ‘burial’ was AY-5, next to the hearth, who was a middle-aged male whose remains appeared without a tomb, but just stuck in-between layers of the floor. His skull was separated from the floor’s surface by a mere centimetre of soil, and a stone had been violently lodged into his mouth (Lull et al. 2015b:120-122).

However, other dimensions of inequality are still poorly understood at the Argaric world. A clear example would be food consumption; while it is clear that funerary rituals included either bovid or ovicaprid meat depending on the social rank of the deceased (Aranda and Montón-Subías 2011, also see next section), stable isotope analyses carried out recently have failed to significantly demonstrate differential access to food. Zorita et al. (2012), in their analysis of Gatas, found no evidence of differential patterns of consumption between individuals; quite the opposite, diet was rather uniform, and cereal-based for everyone. However, at Peñalosa, the analysis of trace elements in a sample of 14 individuals indicated that males consumed higher quantities of meat in general, and then a variety of vegetable consumption, while females showed greater diversity overall, with some consuming a great deal of meat and others almost none, but with females also consuming fish and seafood (Alarcón and Sánchez Romero 2012). This difference is interesting in terms of gender, but again, fails to demonstrate significantly differential access to food depending on social class.

The existence of social classes would undoubtedly contribute towards a dynamic of individualisation, as it is the most paradigmatic example of social fragmentation sensu Clastres. It would imply, at the same time, the existence of different groups of interest within the society, groups that would occupy different positions of power and would have different weight in terms of social, economic and political power. At the same time, these social classes would have not only different material realities, but also remarkably different cognitive and everyday experiences, which would effectively reinforce the notion of being different from the majority among the powerful.

There are elite objects that few people could possess and that would have directly contributed towards individualisation, towards the feeling of being special and different from the majority of the social group. This would be the case with those items that are clearly associated with elite burials and that are recognised as markers of social class, such as diadems, elite weapons (halberds, first, and then swords), and in general objects made in silver and, especially, gold. The role of many of these objects in the constitution of personhood goes beyond markers of individualised identity, and as it is argued in another section, it is more
productive to explore them as constitutive elements of certain types of individualised personhood, that is, as parts of the individualised self.

But it is possible to go further in the analysis of objects that very few people had, as the Argaric world presents some items that are truly exotic, that only a handful of people had and, in some cases, could have even been unique. To claim the uniqueness of particular objects in the archaeological record is, at the very least, a risky assertion. But given the large amount of Argaric burials known, it might be possible to cautiously state the probable uniqueness or extreme rarity of certain phenomena and items in the funerary record.

An example of a unique object could be the assemblage of 44 small gold cones in a female burial at San Antón de Orihuela (López Padilla 2006), which likely belonged to a particular set of clothing that seems to be unparalleled. It is possible, of course, that similar clothing existing in other places but used materials that have not survived; yet the combination of being the only
piece of this nature, combined with the use of gold, makes it an extraordinary piece. Similarly extraordinary would be whatever object that lay in grave 17 of Cerro de San Cristóbal, where at least 83 copper nails have been documented. It has been interpreted as the remaining evidence of a large object made in wood or leather, which would not have survived except for the nails (Aranda et al. 2012). But exceptional finds are not limited to metal items.

Although the use of lithics in the Argaric world is widely documented in manufacture areas and dwellings, their presence as grave goods intentionally deposited in funerary contexts is remarkably less common. An example could be the set of polished stone tools from grave 3 at Los Cipreses, which includes two anvils, a perforated polished stone (usually interpreted as an archery wrist guard) and a large sharpening/polishing stone. This set has been associated with metal work and the maintenance of metal tools (Delgado and Risch 2006) in part because it was found in association with a piece of scrap metal. Moreover, there is no evidence of metalwork in the settlement, making the presence of the set even more extraordinary. The individual from grave 3 also had more ‘standard’ grave goods, including a halberd and a knife of arsenic copper, and a bovid meat offering; this combination of elite objects could imply either that the link between metalwork and the elites was possible, or that the elites could have had grave goods not personally connected with them in order to vinculate themselves with a productive process of great importance, which is one of the possibilities advances by Delgado and Risch (2006:36).

Among those objects of which only a handful exist, and explicitly ignoring diadems, awls with silver decoration or silver parts could be a good example. The latest one was recently found at La Almoloya (Lull et al. 2015), but it is not the only one. Another one was documented at grave 7 in Fuente Alamo (Siret and Siret 1890), and three more have been documented in Alquife (Arribas 1966), Villares de Andujar (Carrasco et al. 1979) and Gatas (Siret and Siret 1890), reaching then a total of five in the whole Argaric world. Regarding the stone tools for metal making found at Los Cipreses, it is obvious that the use of these tools was widespread or, at least, not infrequent. What might have been infrequent, however, is whatever did happen for these items to end up in burials. A possible explanation could be that those using those tools usually did not receive burial under the Argaric norm; after all, less than 20% of the population did. Another possibility is that these particular items were not fit for the purpose of joining the deceased; that could mean that those working as metalworkers, or wearing stone wrist guards, would be buried with other grave goods, or perhaps without any kind of grave goods. All these
stone tools were more common in domestic and crafting settings than in funerary contexts, and thus it is important to question what would have happened for certain individuals to be buried with them, especially considering that the Argaric norm, although quite diverse, was at the same time quite prescriptive in terms of grave goods. It is then logical to conclude that something extraordinary might have happened to allow these individuals to be buried with these particular grave goods, and in those extraordinary circumstances is where another dynamic of individualisation can be materialised.

5.7. Metal ornaments in the Argaric world: Between individualisation and collective individualisation.

The role of ornaments in the Argaric world is a complex one. While personal ornaments existed in the Chalcolithic, especially in the form of stone and seashell beads, the range of existing personal ornaments would increase dramatically during the Argaric period, including not only more items, but also more complex technologies and, perhaps most importantly, new materials and types.

The very concept of ‘personal ornaments’ is problematic, as in the eyes of the contemporary Western observer they automatically suggest the primacy of their aesthetic importance, usually based on their visual properties. However, this conceptualisation adds difficulty to their analysis, as it hinders our capacity to understand their effectiveness (sensu Stockhammer 2019) and reduces their importance in past societies. Personal ornaments were likely to fulfil a wide variety of functions, including, among other things, the indication and display of status, rank and achievement, the provision of protective powers, facilitating communication, or even being personal objects whose display and exhibition in daily life would have no relation to their aesthetic qualities (Baysal 2019:3-4: Abadía and Nowell 2015:967).

Nevertheless, and although personal ornaments do not serve a clear function in relation to subsistence practices, it is important to emphasise that their importance within particular cultural and social frameworks can be equally important, if not more. The status of personal ornaments as necessary objects should not be questioned lightly (Baysal 2019:13-14), as there are numerous anthropological examples of groups and contexts where they play a fundamental role. One of the classic examples is their function as protection against the evil eye, which has
been documented in multiple societies (see, for instance, Aby-Rabia 2005, or Hernando et al. 2019). Ornaments can be used to signify and display gender in culturally sanctioned ways (Sciama and Eicher 1998) at both community and regional levels and play an important role in terms of producing and maintaining identity, whether individual or dividual (Casella and Croucher 2011). They also connect the present with the past, either as a deliberate mechanism of social cohesion, an intentional conservative practice, or just through the materialisation of continued practices (Lucas 2005:83). Personal ornaments also connect different people and places, as they embody and contain the essence of the people that made them, used them, or gifted them (Chapman 2013). Regarding the display and meaning of ornaments, it is useful to remember that their logic and symbolism are familiar for other members of the society with whom they share practices and traditions, while their connotations and symbolism might make less sense for those outside their world (Bailey 2017:834).

It is important to bear in mind that death can be conceptualised in different ways, and not necessarily as the last step of the individual being’s journey (Bolger and Wright 2013:379, Erdal 2015), and thus the ornaments appearing in funerary contexts (which are the vast majority in the Argaric world) should not be assumed to serve the same function that they had during everyday life. At the same time, personal ornaments from funerary contexts are more likely to be studied, possibly creating a bias that overemphasises the importance of the afterlife and the role of ornaments in it (Baysal 2019:19).

The evolution of personal ornaments in the Bronze Age combines the continuation and adaptation of old traditions alongside the introduction of innovative objects and practices. The continuation of previous ones tends to be poorly studied due to the emphasis that archaeology has traditionally placed on innovations. Nevertheless, this process, that Perlès (2013:293) has defined as the ‘arrhythmia of change’ is critical to understand the continuities, the practices that have not changed that much and which might be actively functioning against fragmentary drives (i.e., change and the increase in inequality) in society.

5.7.1. Ornaments in the Argaric World:

Personal ornaments are one of the most important elements of material culture within the Argaric world. They constitute the most numerous metal object in the Argaric society, making up to nearly 50% of all metal objects (Montero 1994). This is particularly remarkable, as metal
ornaments are completely absent in the Chalcolithic (Murillo-Barroso and Montero 2012). The earliest metal ornaments were rings and earrings, documented as early as 2000 BC; bracelets appeared a bit later, around 1950 and up to 1600 BC, and necklaces were the latest element to appear, with the first ones documented around 1850 BC (Aranda et al. 2015:32).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Chalcolithic</th>
<th>Bronze Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bracelets</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bracelets (silver)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bracelets (gold)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rings</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rings (silver)</td>
<td>349</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rings (gold)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beads</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beads (silver)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beads (gold)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diadems</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>1538</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 51: Comparison of metal ornaments in the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age*

The lack of metal ornaments during the Chalcolithic has been explained in terms of technological knowledge and symbolic value. Copper was the only metal whose production
was technologically possible, but in the southeast of Iberia, it had not reached a high symbolic and hierarchical value in the Chalcolithic (Garcia Sanjuan 1999), perhaps due to the relative ease of copper acquisition and production.

Indeed, the increased presence of metal objects and, in particular, metallic personal ornaments has been usually studied from the more economic and technical perspectives, focusing on the role they played in the development of specialisation, inequality and social hierarchies (Gilman 1976, 1987, Lull 1983, Lull et al. 2010, Lull et al. 2009, Contreras and Cámara 2002), material provenance and mining techniques (Moreno 2000, Moreno and Contreras 2010, Moreno et al. 2010, Montero and Murillo-Barroso 2010, Hunt et al. 2011), or how objects were made (Montero 1992, 1994, Rovira 2002, Delgado and Risch 2008). Indeed, it is mainly through the analysis of objects that some of the technological innovations and aesthetic preferences can be witnessed. For example, annealing was developed as a technique to finish ornaments, giving objects more ductility and making them more malleable (Aranda et al. 2015:84), and while most tools and weapons were made of arsenical copper, bronze was favoured for personal ornaments nearly 60% of the time (Murillo-Barroso et al. in press); there is also evidence of materials being treated to display desired characteristics, as can be seen in the reddish colour of copper being progressively lightened by adding more tin to display a brighter, more gold-like colour.

While gold was uncommon, silver was quite abundant, and the Argaric world constitutes an unparalleled example of silversmithing in the European Bronze Age. More than 700 silver objects have been documented, of which the most frequent are bracelets, rings, earrings and, on a smaller scale, diadems (Aranda et al. 2015:88). Diadems are the most special one, with eight found so far at the Vera Basin (El Argar, El Oficio, Gatas and Fuente Alamo) and all of them from feminine burials. The morphology of silver ornaments is like that of objects made in arsenical copper, bronze, and gold. It seems that native silver was used, probably from local sources such as the mines in Herrerías (Hunt 1998). Sites in Granada and Jaen, such as Cerro de la Encina, Peñalosa, Cuesta del Negro and Cerro de la Virgen, used silver from the area of Linares and Alcudia Valley rather than from Herrerías, showing that the use of local materials was extensive (Bartelheim et al. 2012).

A small number of remarkable ivory items have been documented as well. They are mostly located in the lowlands of Almeria, Murcia, and Alicante, while the inlands (Granada, Jaen) seem to have a very restricted access to these resources (Aranda et al. 2015:103-104). The most
common ivory items are the v-perforated buttons, of which there are more than a hundred, followed by bracelets, beads, pendants, and a few combs. Regarding their production, workshops and areas of waste dumping have been located at El Argar (Siret and Siret 1890), Lorca (Lopez Padilla 2012) Fuente Alamo (Liesau and Schuhmacher 2012) and Illeta del Banyets (Belmonte and Lopez Padilla 2006). The origin of the ivory is diverse, including African and Asian elephants, but also hippopotamus. The exchange of ivory probably took place within a complex network that would bring it from overseas, to then be processed in places such as Fuente Alamo and Illeta dels Banyets (Schumahcher 2012). Personal ornaments have not been left aside within the debates regarding social asymmetries in the Argaric world. Quite the opposite, ornaments, and particularly those fabricated in metal, have played a central role in the discussion due to their status as higher-input grave goods. The original classification by Lull and Estévez (1986) saw diadems as prestige goods that would define a belonging to the first social class, while most metal ornaments such as rings, earrings, pendants, necklaces and bracelets, and especially those made in silver, would define the second class. The presence of ornaments in the third social category is not unheard of, but usually a single object is included, and they tend to be made of copper or bronze.

However, ornaments are not only useful to differentiate between social classes within the same settlements, but to also differentiate between them. An example could be the comparison between the sites of Cerro de la Encina and Cerro de San Cristóbal (Aranda et al. 2015:133). The first one is a large hilltop site with monumental buildings, while the second one is a nearby lowland village of a smaller scale. While at Cerro de la Encina higher-input graves are abundant, including multiple personal ornaments in silver, very few grave

*Figure 52: Earrings and bracelets in a male inhumation, tomb 21 at Cerro de la Encina. Source: Aranda et al. 2015:126.*
goods have been found at Cerro de San Cristóbal, and among the grave goods no personal ornaments were found. This could be another indicator of the connection between the type of site and the status of its inhabitants (Aranda et al. 2012). In this line, the restricted access to personal ornaments has been interpreted in terms of being means of ideological coercion (Lull et al. 2009, 2010). The fact that ornaments (mostly earrings, rings and bracelets) have been found in children’s graves has been used to argue for the existence of hereditary and unequal transmission of property (Aranda et al. 2015:159).

5.7.2. The role of ornaments in the construction of personhood:

This increased production of metal ornaments during the Bronze Age, according to Murillo-Barroso and Montero (2012), was driven by their consumption due to social and symbolic reasons. They state that in the previous Chalcolithic there was little need for individualisation, and ornaments responded more to the need of personification. According to them, in the Chalcolithic people were buried with all of their personal items, but due to the dissolution of the individual in the collective tomb, these objects did not stand out, as they would have a personal, lived value, rather than a hierarchical, display-based one. However, in the Bronze age, and due to the need of greater individualisation, ornaments would play a different role, one that would emphasise differentiation and hierarchy (Murillo-Barroso and Montero, 2012:66).

This is an undoubtedly interesting proposal, and it seems obvious that individualisation, as a general identitary phenomenon, had greater importance in the Bronze Age than in the Chalcolithic. However, not all personal ornaments were fulfilling the same function or doing so to the same degree. While symbolically and socially restricted objects, such as silver diadems and gold objects clearly contributed to the development and display of individuality, the majority of bronze items, including earrings, pendants, and bracelets would rather contribute to the production of collective individuality, as their role reinforcing the adscription to relatively privileged social groups would be greater than their role as

Figure 53: Ornaments from tomb 459 of El Argar. Source: Siret & Siret 1890.
elements differentiating certain people as individual beings. And on the opposite spectrum, some personal ornaments, especially those fabricated with more widely available materials such as stone or shells could be reinforcing more collective and relational notions of the self and would play a role more centred around the display of widely distributed ideas about the larger social body and its epistemes, rather than promoting differentiating traits. The use of malacological remains for personal ornaments was also widespread, and the evidence from shellfish suggests that they were gathered post-mortem. Beads and pendants are the most common elements, and they were produced using a wide range of small gastropods including conidia, columbellid, dentaliid and cypraeid. The use of malacofauna, although more common in the coastal regions (Gatas, Fuente Alamo or El Argar), has also been documented in inland sites such as Cuesta del Negro and Cerro de la Encina (Altamirano 2012). It is not uncommon to find shells combined with beads made of other materials (Ruiz Parra 1999, Manhart et al. 2000, Jover and Lujan 2010). This suggests that a wide range of people would have had access to personal ornaments produced with malacological resources, although the distribution patterns suggest that its meaning and symbolism would have been geographically dependent to some extent. It is also important to point out that the presence of non-metal personal ornaments does not prevent the inclusion of metal ones, and indeed the artefactual regime would allow for the combination of both elements. However, the ideological importance of personal ornaments was not limited to those being buried following the Argaric norm. Gold, and more commonly silver ornaments, have been found deposited in cave and megalithic burials, although not a single diadem has been located in these burials outside the norm (Aranda et al. 2015:175).

Among the ornaments that clearly contributed to the creation and maintenance of individualising dynamics are those made in gold and silver. Gold is undoubtedly the least

![Figure 54: Gold Diadem from Caravaca de la Cruz. Source: Spanish National Museum of Archaeology.](image)
common one, and less than 20 gold ornaments are known (Montero 1991). All the objects made in gold are shaped in spiral forms, being bracelets, rings, and earrings. However, there is a small number of even more extraordinary gold items, such as the diadem from Caravaca de la Cruz, with a decorated discoidal appendix (Pingel 1992), the gold bracelets from grave 75 at Fuente Alamo, whose production involved technological advancements such as the use of a bivalve mould that would have required precise measuring instruments (Perea 2012) or the previously mentioned 44 small gold cones with holes in the base found at San Antón de Orihuela (Simón 2009). These gold objects would have been extremely rare, and it is even possible that some of them were unparalleled in the rest of the Argaric world. In this sense, those wearing or using them would have felt distinctly different from everybody else, as these items would have made them different not only from the general social body, but also among the very elite.

5.8. The production and maintenance of collective individualisation.

5.8.1. Feasting.

Feasting is a specific kind of ritual that attains social and symbolic meanings quite different from those associated with regular, everyday food consumption (Aranda and Monton-Subías 2011:130). The consumption of food is important at multiple levels, from structuring everyday time to acting as a catalyst of social relationships. On a more symbolic level, food and commensality also provide societies with a medium to display symbols and metaphors (Sherrat 1996, Parker Pearson 2003). Communal consumption of food and drink plays a role in the construction of social order both because of its physiological effects and its psychological and emotional ones (Sanchez Romero et al. 2007). Feasts are important ritualised events as they contribute to establishing and maintaining alliances and bonds of social solidarity, the mobilization of labour, and strengthen the links with supernatural beings and the ancestors. Feasts also constitute a particularly useful arena for arbitrating disputes, soliciting favours, compensating transgressions, or publicly enacting punishments and sanctions (Hayden 2001).

Feasting has numerous socio-political dimensions, since it is a domain of action where social relationships are negotiated, the struggle for power unfolds and economic and political objects
are pursued, while ideological representations of social order and authority are reproduced but also contested (Dietler 2001). Hayden (2009:29) points out how funeral feasts in traditional societies are the most single and costly event in the history of a family, where most available resources are spent, due to the emotional connotations associated with death and the significance of the moment to connect with the ancestors and assure the spiritual wellbeing of the kinship group.

The evidence for feasting in the Argaric world is abundant, especially through the frequent presence of meat offerings in tombs. Aranda and Montón-Subías (2011) have analysed evidence from 57 burials from 9 different settlements and found out that around 35–40% tombs include faunal remains, and the majority of those tombs (89.6%) include remains of a single animal (and those with more than one animal are never individual tombs). Ovicaprids are present in 59.6% of the tombs with faunal remains, with bovines in 40.3%. Other animals such as pigs only appear in 1.7% of the tombs, and horses also appear in a 1.7% of them. Regarding non-domesticated species, red deer is the most common one, appearing in 3.5% of the tombs. This evidence suggests that ovicaprids and bovids are overrepresented in mortuary contexts due to cultural reasons. The only faunal element present in these tombs were the limbs, and mostly long bones such as tibiae, femora, humeri, ulnae and radii; the number of rear limbs is slightly higher (58.3%) than forelimbs (41.6%). Statistical tests such as Chi-square showed that there was a significant association between tibiae and the coastal area of the Argaric territory (Murcia and Almeria) while humeri and femora were predominant in the inland area (Jaen and Granada). Animal remains were usually found articulated, indicating that they were introduced into the tombs as complete pieces of meat. Non-adult animals were the preferred ones, and there seems to be no temporal or spatial pattern for the general appearance of faunal remains in burials. Only a small percentage of the animals (limbs) seem to be ending up in the burials, which are assumed to include small scale feasts. However, the sacrifice of animals such as cows would undoubtedly produce large amounts of food (i.e., a 450 kg bovid would become around 270 kg of food), which would signify that either the feast is significantly larger than it is usually assumed, or most of the food is processed to be stored, or that the same food that is consumed in the ritual feast is also consumed in non-ritual contexts.

Aranda and Montón-Subías believe (2011:135ff) that the appearance of limbs in the tomb would represent the participation of the deceased in the funerary meal itself. Regarding possible associations between the deceased and the faunal remains, there is no evidence of gender
playing any role, which is interesting since gender tends to be one of the determining categories in the performance of ritual feasts (Goody 1982). The evidence suggests however that age did play a role, as no children under twelve were buried with cattle, only ovicaprids (Aranda and Esquivel 2007).

In terms of analysing the scale of the feast, Aranda and Montón (2011) point out that the evidence is restricted to the single household, which is where the tombs are located, but that considering the sacrifice of animals, the feast probably involved a larger group. This would create a sense of communal belonging and reinforce a sense of collective identity among the group of attendees sharing food and sensory experiences (Sánchez Romero and Aranda Jimenez 2008:85), but the differential access to meat and other elements, such as funerary pottery, also implied that feasts were key elements in the construction and management of hierarchical relationships. The ritualization of specific practices of consumption has traditionally been a way of naturalising differential access to resources, and thus the analysis of the goods involved in funerary ritual feasts can show if that inequality has materialised in the archaeological record.

In order to explore the relationship between offerings and grave goods/wealth, Aranda and Montón-Subías used a discriminant analysis that showed a clear correlation between cattle remains and tombs that are traditionally labelled as wealthy (Lull and Estévez 1986). Their analysis indicated that cattle meat is often found in the burials of the so-called upper categories (1 and 2 in Lull and Estévez 1986), with the exception of children, that independently of their grave goods never have cattle. For the third category of socioeconomic wealth, some have cattle and some have ovicaprids, but the presence of cattle is usually paired with the presence of more higher-input goods in the tomb (such as silver ornaments), thus indicating one of the wealthiest members of the category. Aranda and Montón (2011:142) read this in terms of upwards social mobility and challenging power, as those in this position would be trying to

Figure 55: Correlation between age of the deceased and type of meat offerings. Source: Aranda and Montón 2011:138
consciously associate themselves with the elites. For the fourth group, only sheep or goat remains were present, and not infrequently the piece of meat is the only grave good.

In the Argaric world, pottery found in funerary contexts indicates important variations in terms of access to it, and funerary pottery is often different from the one found in other contexts (Aranda Jiménez and Esquivel 2006:120). The comparison between both types has proved that those connected with mortuary practices tend to be more standardised, as well as including some specific shapes and morphometric and technological patterns (Lull 1983, Contreras and Cámara 2000, Arnada 2001). In general, those vessels that are associated with the funerary ritual are usually located within those tombs that present more higher-input grave goods (Aranda Jiménez and Esquivel 2006:120). At sites such as Cuesta del Negro (Contreras et al. 1987-88) or Cerro de la Encina (Aranda 2001), pottery such as *copas*, bottles or lenticular bowls are associated with wealthier tombs. This pottery can also present technological properties that are not common in the pottery found elsewhere. This includes very depurated pastes, very polished surfaces that look metallic, and especially low-temperature firing (Contreras et al. 1987-88), which produces pieces with very limited hardness and thus not very useful for continuous manipulation or use. Nevertheless, the appearance of this kind of pottery in funerary contexts is not extended to all types of tombs, and tombs that have been associated with lower socioeconomic status usually have pottery that is the same type that could be found in dwelling contexts. This has led researchers to believe that there was a process of production of standardised pottery that was controlled by the elite, that would be the only one with access to it for funerary purposes (Aranda 2004).

Moreover, the fitting of this funerary pottery for commensality events has been pointed out (Aranda and Esquivel 2006:121). These vessels all emphasise the presentation and consumption of food and drink. The most typical form is the carinated vessel (Castro et al. 1993-1994), but also bowls and serving platters, both relatively ‘open’ vessels that display their content. Another typical element are the *copas*, something that has been considered as one of the defining elements of the Argaric culture. Finally, other elements that are associated with these feasting contexts are the ones called bottles, which have difficult access to their interior but also prevent evaporation of the contents and facilitate the serving of their contained liquids through their curved rim. Among the funerary pottery, shapes tend to be more stylized as well, with higher gravity centres, less stability and a general lack of toughness, while everyday wares tend to be lower and more stable.
In terms of the use of these recipients, the content analysis performed on some vessels at Fuente Alamo and Cuesta del Negro provides useful information. Several vessels from tombs 68 and 111 at Fuente Alamo were analysed finding that a *copa* contained wine or pomegranate juice, and two small carinated vessels contained poppy (Juan-Treserras 2004), while a vessel from the necropolis of Cuesta del Negro contained grape juice (Molina et al. 1975). The use of alcoholic and narcotic substances reinforces the commensality associated with these vessels, as they reinforce sensory experiences and ease social interaction (Dietler 2001).

5.8.2. **Feasting as collective individualisation.**

Collective individualisation, as explained in a previous section, is the process in which persons come to realise their distinctiveness from most of the social group. However, this distinctiveness is not based on their own individuality as independent subjects but is mostly dichotomic and relational; it is a distinctiveness based on the notion of belonging to a collective, while that collective is not accessible or inclusive towards the majority of society. It is dichotomous as it is based on the separation from the collective, and in the process, the collective becomes an Other; it is relational because it is not sustained yet by the fantasy of individuality, as the identity being reinforced still revolves around belonging, but just to a more restricted group.

Argaric funerary feasting is a prime example of collective individualisation. As a feast, it is a collective event in the life of the community, but the household scale of the funerary ritual quite likely implies restrictions to the size of the event. While in the previous Chalcolithic funerary rituals would likely involve larger groups of people, as megalithic tombs represented whole kinship groups, it is likely that Argaric funerary rituals had a more reduced scope. Nevertheless, the precise scope of the feasting is difficult to assess. The distribution of space in the Argaric world suggests that events would likely take place in or around the household, given the lack of larger, communal open areas within the settlements (although it is possible that places such as the large communal building at La Bastida played a role here, despite the lack of specific evidence connected to feasting). One of the elements that can be problematic regarding the scale of funerary feasts is the sacrifice of animals. The sacrifice of a cow or a goat can easily feed large groups of people, as an adult cow can be processed to produce slightly more than half of its weight for usable cuts of meat, and usually no less than around 1/3 of the total weight of a lamb or goat can be turned into usable meat cuts. It is true that some of the
animals sacrificed were not adults yet, and in the case of the ovicaprids at least, that could indeed reflect a small-scale feast. According to Aranda and Montón Subias (2011:136), the majority of ovicaprids sacrificed were infants or juvenile, while most cattle were subadults.

![Figure 56: Representation of an elite funerary feast in the Argaric world. Source: Aranda 2016:32.](image_url)

The current interpretations of faunal remains in burials imply that ritual feasting could have been a restricted event, something that would only happen at certain funerary rituals. Further restrictions would also apply, as there seems to be a clear connection between tombs with higher-input grave goods and the presence of bovid remains, while the rest would have ovicaprids, or nothing. In terms of what this implies, it has usually been understood in terms of prestige, with bovids being restricted to funerary feasts associated with wealthy members of society (Aranda and Montón 2011). It is possible that the criteria for animal selection was a
symbolic one, with bovids having some degree of symbolic significance that ovicaprids would not. It is also possible that the selection of animals relates to the practicality of the feast: wealthier members of society would sacrifice larger animals for their ritual feasts, being thus able to feed a larger group of attendants, which could perhaps include their followers, neighbours, or other people with whom they would have a social or economic connection. In any case, the evidence seems to indicate that funerary feasts were restricted, both in terms of which groups were able to organise funerary feasts at all, but also in terms of who was invited, and which food was being consumed.

Considering then how funerary feasts were affected by these restrictions, it is possible to argue their role as practices of collective individualisation. They are, at the same time, allowing certain members to differentiate themselves for the wider social body, which is not allowed to organise or partake in these celebrations, while contextualising this differentiation within a group context that emphasises belonging and a certain degree of ritual and social privilege.

5.9. The production and maintenance of permeability.

As explained in Chapter 3, notions of permeability were developed in anthropology while discussing gender and the body in India (Daniel 1984; Marriot and Inden 1977; Busby 1997). The discussion was framed in contrast with Melanesian personhood, in the context of debating differences within dividual personhood. Melanesian personhood was regarded as partible, with persons being multiply constructed with body parts and elements from both genders. As Strathern famously put it, ‘In being multiple, [the Melanesian person] is also partible, an entity than can dispose of parts in relation to others’ (Strathern 1988:185). But the Indian case was different, as there, persons were not conceptualised to be internally divided. Instead, every individual would contain both male and female substances and essences, that are not separable. The body is considered to have permeable boundaries, and thus the substances can flow between different persons, making connections.

However, the notion of permeability used here is slightly different, as it is severely restricted to practices that can be documented on the archaeological record, and thus is basically limited to consumption events and patterns. Permeability in the archaeological record of the Iberian southeast refers to the importance of incorporating/absorbing different elements into the self,
and quite importantly, modifying the self in the process. Then, permeability implies the likeness of diverse practices becoming one of the constitutive, defining elements of personhood. The consumption of food and drink is potentially connected with the notion of permeability of the self’s boundaries as it emphasises the importance of incorporating specific substances, either on regular bases or sporadically but in a framework of ritual consumption. The consumption of specific food and drink would then actively contribute to the construction of certain types of personhood, as different persons are consuming different things in a socially and symbolically sanctioned way.

The main elements that will be briefly analysed here to argue for the importance of consumption in the construction of personhood, and thus, for the existence of practices that would produce permeable personhood, can be divided into those that would be connected with funerary ritual, and thus based on single events of consumption, and those based in everyday consumption practices, that would have long lasting effects on the human body but whose existence might not be displayed in highly visible practices such as funerary rituals. The analysis of permeability through single events would include any evidence of ritual consumption of faunal remains during funerary practices, the analysis of content in funerary vessels, and the existence of grave goods specifically designed for ritual consumption in funerary contexts. Regarding sustained consumption patterns, it could be explored through the analysis of bioarchaeological evidence from human remains, as well as the faunal and plant evidence from non-funerary contexts that could point towards the existence of differential consumption patterns in different Argaric settlements or within the same settlements.

5.9.1. Single events and ritual consumption: Food, drink and vessels in funerary practices.

Regarding the evidence of ritual consumption of meat during funerary practices, Aranda and Montón-Subías (2011) have analysed evidence from 57 burials from nine different settlements. They found out that around 35-40% tombs include faunal remains, and the majority of those tombs (89.6%) include remains of a single animal (and those with more than one animal are never individual tombs). As already mentioned, the evidence strongly suggests the overrepresentation of ovicaprines and bovids due to cultural reasons, as well as a clear selection of limbs for the funerary deposition.
While only the limbs would be included in the tombs, the sacrifice of animals such as cows, even non-adults ones, would undoubtedly produce large amounts of food, which would signify that either the feast is significantly larger than we tend to assume, the food is processed to be stored, or the same food that is consumed in the ritual feast is also consumed in non-ritual contexts. Aranda and Montón-Subías believe (2011:135ff) that the appearance of limbs in the tomb would represent the participation of the deceased in the funerary meal itself. Regarding possible associations between the deceased and the faunal remains, there is no evidence of gender playing any role, which is interesting since gender tends to be one of the categories in the performance of ritual feasts (Goody 1982). The evidence suggests however that age did play a role, as no children were buried with cattle, only ovicaprids (Aranda and Esquivel 2007).

In order to explore the relationship between offerings and grave goods/wealth, Aranda and Montón-Subías used a discriminant analysis that showed a clear correlation between cattle remains and tombs that are traditionally labelled as wealthy (Lull and Estévez 1986). According to their results, it is possible to observe that the ritual consumption of specific meats during funerary feasts occurred in all social groups, although it seems that the practice would have been more important among the wealthiest members of society. This would suggest that although the relationship between consumption and identity was widespread in the Argaric world, its ritual performance would have played a larger role among the more privileged social groups.

In relation to the content analysis of vessels found in funerary contexts, the evidence is, again, rather limited, but the analysis performed to some vessels at Fuente Alamo and Cuesta del Negro provides some useful insights. Six vessels from tombs 68 and 111 at Fuente Alamo were analysed (Juan-Treserras 2004). The *copia* contained wine or pomegranate juice, and the two small carinated vessels contained poppy. A vessel from the necropolis of Cuesta del Negro found grape juice (Molina et al. 1975). The use of alcoholic and narcotic substances reinforces the commensality associated with these vessels, as they reinforce sensory experiences and ease social interaction (Dietler 2001). At Castellón Alto (Parras et al. 2011), beeswax and vegetable and animal fat were found in several vessels in tomb 121 using mass spectrometry and gas chromatography. The vegetable fat was probably vegetal oil from flax, while the animal fat could have been milk, and the tomb also had bones of a milk producing ruminant, quite likely an ovicaprid. The existence of grave goods, specifically designed and produced for the ritual consumption of food and drink in funerary contexts, but not during daily life, suggests that
consumption practices would play a remarkable role in the construction of personhood. Funerary pottery is often different from pottery found in other contexts (Aranda Jiménez and Esquivel 2006:120).

As explored in the previous section about feasting, the evidence for funerary feasting is different from everyday objects, thus suggesting the great importance of feasts as single events of consumption with a clear rituality. This can be perceived more clearly in higher-input tombs, where the grave goods associated with feasting copas, vessels, bottles…) present distinct aesthetic properties, both in how they look and in how they ‘present’ their contents, as well as a higher degree of standardisation and fragility (Contreras and Cámara 2000; Aranda 2001; Contreras et al. 1987-1988).

**5.9.2. Everyday consumption: Bioarchaeological information from human remains.**

While it seems clear that single events such as ritual feasting played a key role in the construction of partible personhood, the bioarchaeological evidence to suggest different and sustained patterns of food consumption, regardless of their cause, is considerably more limited.

A recent stable isotope analysis of 75 human individuals from La Bastida and Gatas (Knipper et al. 2020) indicated very similar stable isotope compositions of males and females at both sites, thus suggesting that at both sites, both sexes had similar access to the available resources (Knipper et al. 2020: 22). The study also looked at social differences and found that while there was no evidence of social differentiation connected with food consumption at
Gatas, there could be limited evidence of differential access to food resources at La Bastida. The majority of individuals analysed showed similar isotope values, indicating a similar diet for most of the population, but certain individuals belonging to elite burials (tombs BA 60, BA 40/1 and BA 40/2, and to a lesser degree, BA 12/1) had higher δ15N values, which would suggest larger consumption of animal-derived proteins.

Another comparative analysis of stable isotopes at three different sites in Granada and Jaen (Cuesta del Negro, Baeza and Úbeda) by Molina et al. (2019) found that there seemed to be a greater consumption of animal proteins by males than by females, although the differences were so small that they were not statistically significant. However, according to them, the correlation between social class/rank and access to ‘better’ food sources would have been more important, as they found out that δ15N levels were higher (and statistically significant) between adults from elite burials (group 1) and the rest of the population.

The analysis of 11 individuals from Gatas (which included four adult males, four adult females, and three subadults) was analysed recently (Diaz Zorita et al. 2012). Carbon isotopes have indicated a very uniform, cereal-based diet, with no variations between individuals (Diaz Zorita et al. 2012). However, an analysis of 14 individuals from Peñalososa shows a different picture. In this case, sex variations have been found, with males consuming higher quantities of meat (and different degrees of vegetable consumption), while females showed greater diversity, with some consuming high amounts of meat while others almost none, and with females in general consuming more fish and seafood (Alarcón and Sánchez Romero 2012). The connection between the male elites and access to better food has also been supported through non-isotopic approaches. The skeletal analysis of human remains from Fuente Álamo revealed that males located in certain elite graves (for example, tomb 75) seemed to be taller than the average, having been conspicuously well-fed and without evidence of heavy labour (Kunter 2001:419-420).

Overall, it seems that the evidence to suggest sustained differential access to food resources is still quite preliminary and contradictory. Although sites such as Peñalososa, Úbeda, Cuesta del Negro and Baeza present some evidence of males having access to more animal proteins, the evidence is still quite minimal, and only statistically significant at Peñalososa. The isotope analysis conducted for the populations of La Bastida and Gatas reject any correlation between sex and differentiated access to food, and thus it is clear that it would not have been a widespread phenomenon in the Argaric world, and perhaps ought to be understand in terms of
social and symbolic dynamics affecting only certain sites (i.e., local traditions). Regarding the connection between social class and food consumption, the evidence might be slightly more clear at sites such as La Bastida, Cuesta del negro, Baeza and Úbeda, although it tends to be limited to certain individuals belonging to the top of the social hierarchy, and without any remarkable difference between the so-called ‘citizens/warriors’ of the Argaric world (group 3, which is supposed to make up to 50% of the population) and the lower classes (group 4, which is usually characterised as servants/slaves).

5.10. The production and maintenance of partibility.

In the previous chapter, it was explored how partibility was an important element of personhood in the Chalcolithic, with fragmentation practices and objects that would be constitutive of the self and stand for it. It also seems that, as stated in this chapter, permeability might have become an important element of personhood in the Bronze Age. However, that does not mean that partible personhood disappeared altogether; indeed, the evidence suggests that it still played an important role in the construction of personhood. Although it is likely that partibility and the logic of fragmentation were quite widespread in the Argaric world, just as they were in the Chalcolithic, the funerary evidence from the Bronze Age suggests that partible personhood might have become less important for the overall population, to become instead particularly relevant in connection with certain collectives. Partibility, thus, would have not been just a general trend of personhood, but a feature that, despite being widespread, would have served to emphasise other aspects of personhood, such as individualism or relational identity. It is also important to state that partibility seems to be deeply connected with gender in the Bronze Age, as either the possibility of things being conceptualised as subjective, or things being constitutive elements of personhood, do so from a gendered perspective.

Indeed, the relationship between partible personhood and gender is particularly interesting. Genders are not universal, and gender status is not necessarily fixed or permanent, which means that it might have to be negotiated, performed and maintained culturally and socially (Conkey and Gero 1991). Material culture plays a fundamental role here, as objects are part of the process, and sometimes are conceptualised as possessing a gender themselves, either because they acquire it by the principle of contamination, or because they are characterised as subjective entities. The gender of things can depend on multiple features, ranging from cosmological
beliefs and worldviews to materiality itself; they can also depend on relational aspects, such as
the interaction of objects with different genders or their own functionality and connection with
gendered tasks. Thus, objects can simultaneously represent and stand for gender, but also affect
it (Sorensen 2006, 113).

Besides their connection with gender, objects that are conceptualised as partible fragments
of the self can also contribute to the individualisation or relationality of the self. In the Argaric
world, some items associated with the elites, such as specialised weapons or diadems,
contributed to the individualisation of certain individuals; the act of being associated with these
restricted items would contribute to the creation of a different person, one whose status would
have been out of reach for the majority of the population. But in a similar way, objects could
be constitutive elements of people and contribute towards their relationality, allowing them to
become parts of a collective. An example could be the presence of awls, which in general terms
are understood to be the main grave goods of females across the whole social spectrum. In both
cases, the combination of object + person would modify the personhood of the human, if not
constitute a new type of subject, with different affordances, capacities, relationships and status
and whose identity cannot be reduced to a person with a particular object.

5.10.1. The gender of things: Gold and silver.

If there is any explicit connection between particular materials and genders in the Argaric
world, it is between gold/masculinity and silver/femininity. In their seminal study, Lull and
Estévez (1986:449) already pointed out that male grave goods were associated with the
presence of gold objects, while silver was more clearly connected with female grave goods.
Besides the gender association, silver was notably more abundant with a proportion of gold to
silver items of around 1:40, according to Montero (1994). Interestingly enough, during the
same time period, the opposite was happening in the southwest of the Iberian peninsula, where
gold objects were more common than silver ones (Armbruster and Parreira 1993) and the same
items made in silver in the southeast of Iberia (ornaments, mainly) were made in gold in the
southwest (Perea 2005). Given that both resources were similarly available in both regions
(Hunt 2003), it is only possible to conclude that it was a cultural choice.
Moreover, the connection between materials and gender also affected preferred artifactual types, as the main silver object that is only associated with females is the diadem, while gold bracelets can only be found among the grave goods of male individuals (Perea 2012:92). All the diadems located are made in silver, with the exception of the gold one found at Caravaca de la Cruz (Murcia), which also presents decoration, something that silver diadems do not have. Unfortunately, this diadem has no context, being thus impossible to connect it with any gender. However, its decorated motifs have been interpreted in connection with solar motifs (Perea 2012:93), as opposed to the silver ones, whose plain features could be linked instead with the kind of light offered by the moon (Perea 2012:92-93). It might be problematic to assess whether there is enough evidence to suggest that some materials were then conceptualised as male or female based on this evidence, as it seems to only apply to certain objects, since both males and females used gold. There are multiple possibilities in terms of interpreting this; there could be, for instance, an association between gold and masculinity, and silver and femininity, but an association that would not operate in ornaments in general, as these are the objects that usually do not follow it. It could also be the case that the significance of certain objects transcended the dichotomy between material and typology. In this case, for example, the concept would not be ‘diadems’ made in ‘silver’, but ‘silver diadems’ as a whole entity whose configuration cannot be challenged. Nevertheless, the evidence is quite abundant and contradictory, as even diadems can be made in gold (as in the problematic case of Caravaca de la Cruz), and male burials include hundreds of silver elements. It seems then safer to conclude that there might have been symbolic rules regarding the association between certain objects, materials and genders, but that just as those rules existed, there were mechanisms to avoid them, or exceptions could be made, perhaps to materialise extraordinary circumstances.

5.10.2. *Objects as parts of people: Weapons, diadems and awls.*

The importance of certain objects such as weapons, diadems, and awls in the conceptualisation of prototypes of the Argaric subject has already been mentioned. Weapons have traditionally played an important role in the construction of not only of Argaric identity, but of the Argaric world; the Siret brothers (1890) already pointed out that weapons were one of the indicators of male burials and that the Argaric society was violent and warlike. Nowadays, institutionalised violence and warfare are still considered to be key mechanisms to explain social complexity in the southeast of Iberia (Lull et al. 2017; Cámara & Molina 2011).
The presence of weapons has been thoroughly documented. Daggers have been found in male tombs during the whole Argaric chronology, and the first specialised weapons, halberds and swords, appear between 2200-1900 BC. Between 1950-1750 BC, long swords made their appearance, and by 1750 BC and until 1550 BC, they substituted other specialist weapons. However, the very category of weapons in the Argaric world is now under scrutiny. If the presence of daggers and axes were used by Lull and Estévez (1986) to define a whole category of individuals as ‘warriors’, now their warrior-like status is being questioned. The difference between daggers (attributed to males and thus, ‘weapons’) and knives (attributed to females and males of nonwarrior status (i.e., children), and thus being ‘tools’) might be collapsing; some authors have suggested that given their morphological similarity, they should simply be characterised as blades (Brandherm 2003) that are present in all types of burials independently of the sex of the deceased (Sanahuja 2007). At the same time, the frequent repairs and maintenance evidenced in many blades seems to suggest everyday use, which would indicate their use as tools rather than weapons (Brandherm 2003). Another element contradicting the status of blades as weapons is that the evidence of skeletal trauma points towards blunt objects, rather than blades, axes, swords or halberds, as the main elements used to exert violence (Aranda Jiménez et al. 2009).

At the same time, even specialised weapons such as swords and halberds are under discussion. Their number is very reduced; only 74 halberds (Lull et al. 2017) and 14 swords have been documented in total (Aranda Jiménez 2015), which seems a remarkably low amount for a supposedly bellicose society that lasted 700 years. Moreover, this low number cannot be explained away using recycling, as volatile elements such as arsenic, that would have disappeared, are still present on specialised weapons (Montero Ruiz and Murillo-Barroso 2010). Furthermore, the very effectiveness of these weapons in combat has also been questioned; the vast majority did not show any evidence of having been used, and microhardness studies suggest that they would not have been particularly fit for combat (Murillo-Barroso 2013), although several researchers still maintain their status as active weapons (Moreno & Cortés 2015). Importantly, the very conceptualisation of warfare in the Argaric world is under discussion, with several authors pointing out that the combination of weapons and fortifications suggests widespread violence (Lull et al. 2014; Moreno and Contreras 2015) while others are exploring the conceptualisation of a highly ritualised warfare that fits with the lack of evidence of trauma and used weapons (Aranda 2018). However, a simple point still remains: an important number of males belonging to the Argaric elite were
buried with weapons. Even if these weapons were not functional or were not the kind of weapons used in everyday warfare, they were still the symbols of physical coercion before anything else (Ruiz Zapatero 2015:xviii).

Leaving aside the relationship between weapons and warfare in the Argaric world, an aspect of their existence that deserves more attention is their connection with personhood and power. In relation to this, it has been suggested that weapons might have been used as individualising elements that would have differentiated a reduced number of people from the rest of the community (Aranda Jiménez 2018: 339). In addition, the fact that specialised weapons were often associated with mature or old adults, rather than those in the prime age for physical combat, would further suggest their role as elements of power and status rather than as weapons. Aranda Jiménez (2018:340) also explores the fragmentary nature of Argaric weapons, pointing out the remarkable differences in terms of shape, size, weight, and use of metals for different parts of them (silver and copper for rivets, silver and gold for hilts, arsenical copper or tin-bronze for blades). This could suggest the usefulness of an approach based on the notions of biography and fragmentation to analyse how weapons ‘were made from different parts as a result of their multiple social relationships’ and insists on the fruitfulness of exploring how ‘personal and artefactual biographies would have been interconnected insofar as people make weapons, but weapons also make people’ (Aranda Jiménez 2018:340).

The fact that specialised weapons, or at least the majority of those found in a funerary context, would have had a very limited role in actual warfare only increases their importance as constitutive elements of personhood. On the one hand, only a handful of individuals belonging to the elite were buried with them, which suggests that either the status of ‘average’ warriors did not need to be displayed in funerary contexts (perhaps because it was implicit in being able-bodied male adults), or because the actual number of warriors was rather limited, and thus the combination of a very low percentage of the population being buried, along with a low percentage of warriors, would mean that only a handful of them were buried in each generation. Going back to Aranda’s reference to weapons and social relationships, and given the role of funerary rituals in terms of materialising social relationships, it is possible that the presence of weapons in funerary contexts served a purpose more connected to reminding those in attendance of their allegiance or allyship towards the household or social group to which the deceased belong; that could explain the need of including weapons, as the sort being reinforced or materialised was a connection with violence and military power, but could also explain why
the weapons used were not ‘real’ ones. Furthermore, this practice could be the materialisation of a taboo limiting the presence of ‘used’ or ‘experienced’ weapons in burials, an idea that would be reinforced by the general lack of actual blunt weapons, which are the ones that would have been used to cause the trauma documented archaeologically. In any case, this reasoning would suggest that the presence of weapons would not be as important in the construction of a warrior’s identity, but in the construction of a leader’s one, and hence their role as elements contributing towards individualisation.

In relation to diadems, as mentioned previously, they have been found exclusively in female tombs with the exception of the gold diadem from Caravaca de la Cruz, that lacks any sort of context. There are at least nine silver diadems documented in the Argaric world (Montero 1994:213). The vast majority are located within the Vera basin; five come from El Argar (tombs 51, 62, 398, 454 and a house), one from El Oficio (tomb 7), one from Gatas (tomb 2), one from Fuente Alamo (tomb 9) and the last one is the recently found one at La Almoloya. In general, diadems are assumed to be an indicator of status; the Sirets had already stated (in a sexist fashion) that women buried with diadems would have been sovereigns or the wives of chiefs (1887:163). Diadems are found in only the richest females’ tombs, those who would belong to the elite (Lull & Estévez 1986). The logic applied to weapons can be similarly used to explore the importance of diadems in the construction of diadems; it is not simply that powerful females had access to diadems; instead, it is that the very power and being of those females could not be separated attending a division of subject/object. Diadems are the least common type of object that existed in the Argaric world without being unique, which combined with the high status of the women associated with them, clearly indicates that their status would have been very elevated. Thus, diadems would be remarkable aids in the construction of individualised personhood, contributing towards the uniqueness of those associated with them. One of the issues with diadems is how to explain the low amount of them. There are a few possibilities: either they were objects that would have circulated for a long time before being included in a burial, making them particularly special and powerful through the principle of contamination, or their mere existence was very restricted, with their creation being only allowed to ‘become part’ of particular females that fulfilled very specific criteria. A final possibility would be that diadems were more abundant, but for whatever reasons could not be deposited in burials often and had to be disposed of elsewhere, likely destroying them. This possibility would also imply their powerful status, but the fact that no broken diadems have been found would suggest the
complete recycling, which would indicate a particularly strong conceptual separation between the notions of material/product.

Both elements, specialised weapons and diadems, would have been important elements in the conceptualisation of power. Weapons would have embodied power, both physically and metaphorically, through the principle of fragmentation. On one level, the presence of weapons in burials would remind the community that a particular individual had authority and power in himself. But on another level, that power only comes through the weapon being part of something else, which could be the representation or threat of violence. Thus, a ceremonial/ritual weapon would be, on the one hand, signalling the agency of a particular individual, but at the same time, connecting that agency to something larger, which would have been the threat of violence. The case of diadems would have been slightly different. Individuals with weapons were relatively uncommon, but not so unique that the rest of society did not interact with them or knew them. But given the extreme scarcity of diadems, which are only located in the Vera basin (El Argar, Fuente Alamo, El Oficio and Gatas) with the exception of the problematic gold one at Caravaca, and the newly found one at La Almoloya, the celebration of a burial where a woman with a diadem is included would have been extremely rare, and thus their embodiment of power would have been quite different. If diadems were more abundant but only deposited in exceptional cases, that particular ritual might have been special due to those special circumstances; if diadems were as scarce as the archaeological evidence suggests, then those events would have happened only once every several generations, being an event that only a few people witness but where someone regionally known is laid to rest, and thus having an impact on a large community.

A rather different example of the connection between personhood, fragmentation and gender can be found in awls. Awls, as opposed to diadems, were the single most common element of
grave goods made from metal in the Argaric world (ornaments would be more abundant, but also include diverse elements). It has been stated that Argaric grave goods belonging to females showed fewer changes in time than those linked with males (González Marcén 1991), and awls were the main element that materialised that continuity: they existed as the most common grave goods for Argaric women, without any significant modifications or typological variations, for 700 years (Montón-Subías 2007: 255). Moreover, their presence seems independent from the social category that the women occupied, being present even in non-adult ones. As artifacts, awls are the most common metallic element that appears outside of funerary contexts, although the awls documented in funerary contexts seem to be longer and have been produced for this purpose (Montón-Subías 2007:256). Awls have been interpreted, besides their obvious functionality, as elements of relationality and continuity (Montón-Subías 2010b, 2007) due to their widespread presence among females of all social status; one of the few elements that would connect women as a collective within the socially and hierarchically fragmented Argaric society. However, it has been argued (Pérez Ibáñez 2011:74) that awls should not be characterised as markers of feminine identity and equality alone, as there might be small morphological and material differences (especially the use of silver versus copper/bronze) between them that could relate to the social status of the deceased. So far, only five awls with silver parts have been found: the four from Fuente Álamo, Alquife, Los Villares de Andújar and Gatas (Aranda et al. 2015:125) and the recently discovered one from La Almoloya. Compared with the absolute number of awls, more than 400, it is likely that silver awls represented extraordinary circumstances, rather than their role as standard class indicators.

Nevertheless, the widespread presence of awls among the grave goods of females could suggest that they were parts of the self that would contribute towards the relational aspects of personhood, emphasising the importance of being part of a large collective and materialising key aspects of femaleness. At the same time, it is important to remember that not every female was buried with an awl. This indicates that this relationality could potentially be restricted not only to those that were buried and had grave goods, already a minority within the Argaric world, but also to certain women that could have had or attained particular traits (perhaps a particular ritual status or belonging to certain kinship structure, etc) which the awls would have materialised. These traits, however, would have been attainable by women belonging to different social classes.
5.11. Practices that produce relationality.

During this chapter, multiple aspects of personhood in the Argaric Bronze Age have been analysed and discussed in certain detail. It is possible that the emphasis granted to processes like individualism or collective individualisation has produced the image of a society where individualisation is widespread and relational identity is disappearing; and yet, that impression would be a mistake. The Argaric Bronze Age is a society where personhood is strongly relational. It is true that individualisation, as a phenomenon, is more visible and has greater importance than in the Chalcolithic, but there would be nothing remotely similar to individuals in the contemporary sense. For instance, it seems unlikely that the very idea of the self as a bounded entity existed at all, given the importance that both partibility and permeability would have had, even (and perhaps particularly) among the elites who were involved in multiple individualisation dynamics. Something similar would have applied to the notion of agency; agency the way it operates in the Western, contemporary world, is based around intentionality, disenchantment and the self-perceived capacity (real or not) to affect the world; but in an oral society, the separation between the self and reality, and the emphasis on individual capacity to affect the world, might not have made any sense. In this last section of the chapter, the importance of relational personhood, and of some of the dynamics reinforcing relationality, will be analysed. This analysis will be divided into two parts; the first one will include some of the activities and process producing and maintaining relationality within the Argaric norm, while the second part will explore those processes outside of the Argaric norm, within a context of practices that have usually been deemed as residual but that have recently attracted attention.

5.11.1. The Argaric norm (I): The materialisation of dependent individuality and the unconscious relationality of the elites.

The Argaric norm, as seen in this chapter, is usually seen as the materialisation of individuality, as it substitutes the previous collective burials with individual ones and where the connection between the individual and their associated grave goods is clear. This individualisation is also contextualised in a society where there are clear social and economic inequalities, as clearly indicated by the differential access to prestige grave goods, but also by other means, such as bioarchaeological information. As already mentioned, that individuality
that is being produced by multiple processes, such as the fragmentation of society, the development of socioeconomic inequality, or specialisation (and their cognitive consequences), cannot be compared to contemporary individuality. With the same logic, it would not be equivalent to contemporary dependent individuality (Hernando 2017), but it would be a step closer to this modality. As Hernando points out, ‘emotional connection with one’s group is an indispensable part of all human identities. In fact, it is so important that its outsourcing through gender relations is insufficient for persons with dependent individuality, who will also perform their own connection through unconscious mechanisms that remain unacknowledged by social discourse’ (Hernando 2015:97). There are multiple phenomena in the Argaric Bronze Age that can be conceptualised as the outsourcing of emotional connection; a clear example would be the acts of collective individualisation like feasting, where individuality is being produced but in a group context, and where the act of belonging (and excluding) must have been clearly conscious.

An important issue would be the characterisation of the Argaric norm, and to which extent is the materialisation of dependent individuality, or another type of individuality. It would seem possible to conclude that the burials following the Argaric norm are an outsourcing of emotional connection, that is, they have a hidden relational dimension, if one accepts that they were the unquestioned funerary practice in the Argaric funerary world. In this case, they would be, at the same time, powerful tools of individualisation, as they consciously reinforce the importance of the individual through a single burial where social inequality and personal biographies/attributed circumstances are displayed, but also mechanisms of relationality, where a similar ritual is followed and the ascription to the group is materialised and performed. Needless to say, the weight that the Argaric norm would have in its unconscious dimensions of relational practice would be greater among the most privileged in society. In oral societies, interpersonal differences are constructed through the body and through actions much more than in literate societies (Treherne 1995), and thus the establishment of a set of graves goods that separates the elite from the rest plays a fundamental role in the development of a shared identity among those that are separating themselves from the rest of society.
5.11.2. The Argaic norm (II): Relational personhood in individualising burials.

Awls have been found in all the Argaic regions throughout the Bronze Age. As Aranda et al. (2015:157) point out, the awl was a common element both in tombs and in dwelling areas, and it can be found in tombs belonging to diverse social and age categories, but mostly female. This contrasts with the goods linked with males, that show more variability over time. The connection between awls and maintenance activities is quite clear, and it would have played a key role in the construction of relational identity, becoming a key element to denote continuity and stability (Montón Subías 2007, 2010). Among these daily activities would have been leather working, textile weaving, basketry, and the maintenance of all of them. This fits with the musculoskeletal evidence, where stress markers indicate lesser female mobility and a life possibly restricted around the settlement itself (Aranda et al. 2009a). Nevertheless, some awls, like the silver one found at tomb 7 of Fuente Alamo, are interesting, as they are reinterpreting an everyday object that most females would have had but that would have been made for ritual purposes. But womanhood as a dimension also has different levels, as not every woman had awls, and then they are made in different materials (bone, copper, and even silver) and other items such as diadems, which are feminine as well, are found in very few tombs and almost exclusively in the Vera Basin, which points out towards another level of regional exclusivity.

5.11.3. Relational personhood outside the Argaic norm: the ‘others’ and the reutilisation of Chalcolithic burials.

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, one of the defining elements for the Argaic Bronze Age is the so-called Argaic norm of funerary practices. This is based on single or double inhumations of complete individuals in anatomical connection, inside dwelling structures and with quite specific material culture. The Argaic norm is partially defined in opposition to previous Chalcolithic practices that, as already explored before, were
characterised by communal burials with very few grave goods and different degrees of disarticulation and completeness of the human remains.


However, this clear separation between both traditions has always been more conceptual than factual and has likely had negative effects in terms of understanding the funerary and symbolic diversity of the Argaric world. In this sense, the presence of Argaric material culture within funerary spaces that were considered Chalcolithic has been known for a long time. The pioneering work of Luis Siret already indicated the existence of Argaric grave goods in earlier contexts (1891), and George and Vera Leisner had echoed them, offering an account of multiple Argaric grave goods within supposedly Chalcolithic structures (1943). With the excavation and detailed publication of large Chalcolithic sites in the second part of the 20th century, the presence of clearly Argaric objects within originally Chalcolithic burials became clear at sites such as Los Millares (Almagro and Arribas 1963), El Barranquete (Maria Josefa
Almagro Gorbea 1973a), Las Peñas de los Gitanos (Arribas and Molina 1979, Mergelina 1941-1942), Laborcillas and Gor (Sánchez and Spahni 1959), La Encantada I/Almizaraque (Siret or Pantano de los Bermejales (Arribas and Ferrer 1997). There is evidence of at least 63 funerary contexts where Chalcolithic burials (megalithic tombs, artificial and natural caves) in the southeast of Iberia have been reused during the Bronze Age; this reutilisation has been documented with the presence of Argaric grave goods, akin to the majority of those which appeared in Argaric tombs (and within the settlements) in Chalcolithic tombs (Aranda 2015:133). The way in which megalithic Chalcolithic tombs were reused during the Argaric Bronze Age depends on the site. It seems that, in most cases, the rituals were just performed inside the monument or nearby, and the corpse and grave goods were left inside the chambers, whereas the Chalcolithic remains of people and grave goods have been put to rest earlier. In other cases, the new inhumations included modifications of the Chalcolithic tombs; this happened for example at tomb 5 at El Barranquete (Almagro Gorbea 1973a), where two Argaric individuals were inhumated in the mound of the tholos, not in the chamber. Another example could be Las Peñas de los Gitanos (Montefrío, Granada), where the chambers of several tholoi were modified to adapt them to the inclusion of cists (Mergelina 1941-1942).

For instance, the necropolis of El Barranquete, analysed in the previous chapter, is one of the places where this phenomenon has been more thoroughly documented. Almagro Gorbea (1973a:205) documented the presence of Argaric pottery (types 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 in Siret’s classification) in tombs 6, 8, 10 and 11. Although pottery was the most abundant Argaric element found, the presence of two blades with rivets was also documented during her excavation. Almagro Gorbea (1973a) also conducted some radiocarbon datings for tombs 7 and 11. The results from tomb 7 (CSIC-81 4280 ± 130, 3340–2505 cal BC at 95% probability and CSIC-82 4300 ± 130, 3345–2580 cal BC at 95% probability) showed a Chalcolithic chronology, within the range of what was expected. The results from tomb 11, however, were quite different (CSIC-201B, 2570 ± 100, 900–410 cal BC at 95% probability and CSIC-201A, 840 ± 100, 990–1390 cal AD at 95% probability) and were discarded as likely being contaminated.

The site was revisited again more recently by a team from the University of Granada, whose research this time focused on radiocarbon analysis of several elements, including human remains from tombs 8 and 9. An extensive new radiocarbon series, modelled in a Bayesian framework, shows that despite the settlement and necropolis belonging to the Chalcolithic,
funerary practices continued during the Bronze Age. Human remains from tomb 8 have been dated, in what was called ‘layer I’, to around 2205-1980 cal BC (95% probability), or 2150-2030 cal BC (68% probability), which would mean their use was slightly after the beginning of the Bronze Age (2200 BC). Moreover, it seems like these Bronze Age depositions are taking place after a hiatus of between 150-420 years at 95% probability, with the last inhumations taking place around 1415-1315 cal BC (68% probability; Aranda et al. 2018:205). Regarding tomb 9, a single radiocarbon date falls within the Copper Age (ETH-66528, 3905 ± 25, 2470-2300 cal BC at 95% probability), and were found only 11 cm below the surface of the passage, so it has been interpreted as a secondary deposition of ancestral remains (Aranda et al. 2018: 208). Apart from this one, it seems that funerary practices mostly took place between 2295–2045 cal BC (at 95% of probability) or in 2210–2070 cal BC (at 68% probability) and continued until between 1735 and 1445 cal BC (at 95% probability), probably in 1690–1555 cal BC (at 68% probability) (Aranda et al. 2018: 208). These dates correspond with fully Argaric chronologies, which would mean that some of these megaliths, while having a Chalcolithic origin, were used as intensively, if not more, during the Argaric Bronze Age.

Figure 60: Argaric grave goods in tomb 8 of the Chalcolothic necropolis of Pantano de los Bermejales (from Aranda 2015:135, after Arribas and Ferrer 1997)
In terms of addressing this evidence, the interest generated by it, as well as the reasoning to explain it, has kept up with the times. Although the presence of grave goods from the Argaric Bronze Age within the traditional Chalcolithic was documented quite early, as mentioned above, its meaning received little attention. It was either explained away as ‘residual practices’ or, more commonly, as part of the process of acculturation of indigenous Chalcolithic populations under the newly arrived Argaric influence. These explanations were included within colonial frameworks (Aranda 2012:100). The Siret brothers defended that if the Millaric Chalcolithic was connected with Phoenician influences or migrations, while the Bronze Age was the product of a powerful invasion that took over (Siret 1906-1907). Their model used the search for metals as the main force driving migrations and conquests, and later models from other authors would use similar mechanisms. For instance, Martínez Santa Olalla et al. (1947) defended that the search for copper and especially silver had driven Anatolians to colonise Spain. With the crisis of Cultural-Historical models in the 1970s with the arrival of functionalist and materialist models, autochthonist models gained momentum, and change between groups started being explained in terms of what Aranda labelled as ‘Acculturation-Expansion’ (2012:102). The origin of the Argaric world was considered to be an autochthonous development, that from the core at the Vera Basin would then expand through all the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula, either occupying empty areas or through the acculturation of those living there. This can be seen for example in the work of Arribas and Molina (1979) who suggested that the presence of Argaric grave goods in Megalithic tombs could be explained as the first stage of the acculturation process; then these practices would be abandoned to practice burials under the Argaric norm, and finally Argaric culture would be fully accepted. The same logic has been applied until relatively recently, with authors such as Ferrer and Baldomero (1979) and Aguayo (1986) explaining Argaric grave goods in megalithic tombs as the materialisation of acculturation.

It was quite recently that this process and its explanation were revisited, and a new explanation was devised. This new explanation would mainly consist of interpreting Argaric goods within Chalcolithic tombs as signs of continuity, rather than as elements of change. Thus, they could be used to infer the reutilisation or continued use of those tombs, rather than as elements that would signify the arrival of a new cultural group that would dominate or substitute the Chalcolithic one. Then, these continuities could be interpreted as resistance practices against the arrival of a new cultural framework. Aranda (2015:133) points out that the analysis of resistance practices has barely received any attention in the narratives about
social complexity in the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. He explains this in terms of the emphasis that modernity has placed on change and innovation, that has ignored what James Scott labelled as hidden discourses (2003) to focus instead on the construction of a ordered narrative with periods and cultures understood through the lens of techno-typological complexity (Hernando 2012). Aranda goes on to explain how this traditional discourse has been questioned recently, mostly through the exploration of how some traditionally Chalcolithic practices from the third millennium BC continued during the second, where there is supposed to be a cultural rupture with the arrival of the Argaric Bronze Age (Aranda 2013, 2014, Aranda and Lozano 2014). Although there are some preliminary studies analysing hybrid domestic contexts where both Chalcolithic and Argaric traditions coexist (Aranda et al. 2015), it has been the funerary world that has offered more information regarding the continuity of Chalcolithic practices during the Bronze Age.

Figure 61: Argaric goblets found in tomb 5 of El Barranquete due to reutilisation of the tomb in the Bronze Age. Source: Almagro Gorbea 1973:92-93.

The current situation is that the scale and context of this resistance remains quite unclear; it could have been a resistance from peripheral settlements against the arrival of Argaric authority and integration (and with it, the possible development of a state) in the sense proposed by Ramos Millán (2012). According to his proposal, this would constitute real resistance, sensu González-Ruibal (2014) against the power-against of the Argaric world. It would even be possible to explore this situation as an ‘engaged withdrawal’ as explained in Chapter 3, although it is unclear to which extreme they would have been integrated and then ‘exited’ the
Argaric world. It is also possible that this resistance ought to be contextualised within the cultural diversity that Aranda (2013) defends, according to which the Argaric Bronze Age would have been populated by both Argaric and non-Argaric populations with different social and symbolic dynamics but with a similar materiality. Aranda’s postcolonial frameworks explicitly acknowledges the subordinated position that non-Argaric peoples could have occupied, while at the same time explores their agency and resistance in the symbolic and ritual sphere, which would have been materialised by this reutilisation of Chalcolithic burials. This resistance would take place against the process of fragmentation that the Argaric world was experiencing, where the reification of inequality and the rise of individuality would be part of the same process. This resistance, which might be better characterised as resilience following González-Ruibal’s model (2014) would then consist of continuities and reinterpretations of traditional funerary practices where the importance of the community and ancestral cultural values are made visible and reinforced in clear confrontation to the opposite process taking place among Argaric populations (Aranda 2014: 268-269). Reutilised Chalcolithic tombs would thus become the arena to symbolically oppose the individualisation that the increasing inequality was favouring, with surpluses being now invested in exclusive commensality events and metallurgy that would act as a symbol of individuality (Aranda 2015:136).

An important element to understand this reutilisation is the type of grave goods that accompanied the inhumations, as they are the main way to address the identity of the deceased. The materials used as grave goods seem to be the exact same ones used in the Argaric world, but with clear restrictions and additions that differentiate them from grave goods within the Argaric norm. Among the objects that were not included, the main ones are specialised weapons (halberds and swords) and diadems, none of which has been documented in a reutilised burial. The same could apply to axes, of which only one has been documented (at tomb 10 of Los Eriales). But other elements from the Argaric world, that did not appear among the grave goods following the Argaric norm, were introduced in these reutilised tombs, perhaps most importantly metal arrowheads. These have been documented within Argaric settlements but did not appear in burials. Among the objects which appear in both types of burials, the main ones would be pottery, mostly carinated bowls and copas, but also metal ornaments, blades and awls.

These funerary practices would have likely played a relevant role in the construction of personhood, especially due to the contrast with the Argaric norm. The people that were
reutilising Chalcolithic burials lived in the Argaric world, and according to the grave goods that accompanied some of them, they had the possibility of belonging to rather privileged groups. While they did not use any of the most exclusive items that are usually linked with the ruling classes, some of them were buried with *copas*, ornaments and several metal objects, which would have definitely connected them with the elites. Their choice of burial reflects then a conscious effort to differentiate itself from the Argaric norm, and it seems logical to think that the most distinctive aspects of the Chalcolithic burial (the importance of the collective, the connection with ancestors, and overall, the dissolution of the individual) were highlighted during these reutilisations. This phenomenon is particularly important, because it proves that while individualisation, at a cognitive, biographical and experiential level can be unavoidable in a context of socioeconomic complexity and inequality, its conscious emphasis in detriment of relational identity (that is, what Hernando calls the fantasy of individuality) is not a necessary consequence of socioeconomic complexity.

The diversity and cultural heterogeneity of these practices has been used to challenge the existence of political structures of a state level, with their supposed capacity to enforce cultural cohesion on a territory economically exploited and ideologically and physically controlled (Aranda 2014: 26). In fact, the maintained and intense reuse of megalithic graves (and caves) during the Late Bronze Age (Lorrio and Montero 2004, Lorrio 2008), as funerary practices, combined with the evidence of less fragmentary social organisation in the Late Bronze Age that resembles Chalcolithic societies (Molina 1983, Carrilero and Aguayo 2001) would suggest that the reutilisation of megalithic tombs and collective funerary practices were more successful that Argaric ones, at least in terms of continuity, as they existed throughout the whole Chalcolithic period and survived the Argaric Bronze Age (Aranda 2012:114-115).
Chapter 6: Discussion. Personhood and the Conceptualisation of the World in Late Prehistory.

This chapter is divided into two main sections, one for the Chalcolithic and another one for the Bronze Age. Each section starts with a brief review of the general characterisation of personhood according to archaeological evidence, as elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5 about the Chalcolithic and the Bronze Age. Then, there is a more detailed analysis of the main features of personhood, including how the self was constituted, perceived in relation to non-human entities, and its stance towards human entities, as inferred from the material evidence and through the interpretation with the theoretical approaches proposed in Chapter 3. Each section finally concludes with an exploration of some of the elements that would have been central to the conceptualisation of personhood, but which would have lied outside the realm of personhood itself: the parameters to conceptualise reality, the modes of representation of that reality, and the modes of experiencing it.

6.1. Personhood and the conceptualisation of the world in the Chalcolithic.

6.1.1. General characterisation of personhood according to the archaeological evidence.

Personhood in the Chalcolithic would have been strongly relational, although several practices reflected and contributed to the development of incipient individuality among certain members of society. The notion of partibility, as showed by the several fragmentation practices taking place, would have been quite important in the conceptualisation of the self. At the same time, it seems that the boundaries between human and non-human could have been quite blurred, with several objects being considered at least as possessors of subjectivity, while others could have been constitutive elements of human personhood. Thus, personhood would have likely included an amalgam of human entities (the core of personhood and the main frame of reference) and objects and non-human entities, all of whom would have enjoyed different types of personhood and different degrees of subjectivity.
The main element of personhood that can be directly inferred from the funerary evidence is relationality. It is important to remember that, as explained in Chapter 3, all personhood is always necessarily relational; however, the visibility and emphasis placed on that relationality is culturally and socially dependant. While funerary contexts are a favoured arena for the display and/or occultation of personhood, as well as for its production, maintenance, and challenge, the available modes of personhood in any given society are structurally connected with socioeconomic complexity in the sense proposed by Hernando (2002, 2015). The main funerary evidence to explore the importance of relational personhood is the prevalence of collective burials, where single persons (mostly adults of both sexes) were dissolved and incorporated into the pool of communal ancestors. This process can likely be interpreted, among other things as a mechanism of resistance (sensu Castres 1974) against the social fragmentation and individualism that the increasing socioeconomic complexity was producing. At the same time, it would reflect how ancestors, or at least some of them, were created as a specific type of persons, ones whose ontological condition would have been somewhere between human persons and other types of entity. It is likely that the dissolution of the person in a megalithic tomb was only one of the ways of achieving a ‘good death’ in social, cultural, and symbolic terms, given the fact that most of the population did not go through this process. The diversity of rituals documented in funerary rituals, which included diverse practices of skeletal deposition and manipulation, the use of ochres, stone pillows, ritual hearths, and different types of grave goods, suggests that the biographical complexity of the members of the community required/favoured the existence of diverse strategies which could account for and ritually sanction this diversity. Moreover, a very small percentage of the population would have been buried, and not everyone was taking part in the process (which excluded children in particular). At the same time, and despite its clear role in the invisibility of possible economic inequalities produced by socioeconomic complexity, collective burials still exhibited the socioeconomic differences between different lineages, thus materialising the complex and contradictory dynamics of fragmentation and resistance that Chalcolithic society was experimenting.

If relationality was the main trait characterising personhood, the notion of partibility also seems to have played an important role. There is clear evidence of the importance of fragmentation practices at different stages of funerary practices, which affected not only human remains but also certain objects. Moreover, it is likely that the logic of fragmentation, sensu Chapman (2000), applied to different spheres of Chalcolithic subjectivity, including the
probable conceptualisation of persons as composite entities, and the relationships between different entities, where the principle of *pars pro toto* would have been reflected the compositional nature of those different entities. Some of the instances where partibility and fragmentation can be seen are the ritual fragmentation of pots, documented mostly at Los Millares; the presence of so-called personal pottery, which has been suggested to be the only grave goods clearly associated with the remains of particular individuals at El Barranquete (Almagro Gorbea 1963), and even the possibility of interpreting arrowheads as ‘sacrificial parts of the self’, thus being the materialisation of fragmentation practices at different levels: as objects composing the person, but also as examples of the *pars pro toto* and the meaning of death in relational societies.

Despite the clear centrality of relationality in Chalcolithic personhood, there is also evidence of different processes leading towards different degrees of individualisation in Chalcolithic society. While the evidence discussed here is related to the funerary context, non-funerary evidence is equally illuminating. For instance, the remarkable socioeconomic complexity and labour specialisation of the Chalcolithic world, and the existence of inequality (both between lineages, but also within the smaller units that would constitute lineages) would imply, following Hernando (2002, 2015) that people’s understanding of how different they are from other members of the group would be increasing, given their diversity of biographical and cognitive experiences, which would have important consequences in terms of the conceptualisation of the self’s agency or the emotional repression required to navigate socioeconomic complexity. Among the funerary evidence that can be used to infer dynamics of individualisation, one of the most important ones is the existence of different pathways leading to different deaths. The diversity of ritual practices, within the umbrella of collective burials, suggests that there were multiple status and biographical differences which were required to be dealt with in ritual terms to achieve a ‘good death’. The existence of exotic objects that very few people would possess or interact with could be another indicator, as the effort required to obtain them would have been remarkable and it was likely that their extended and complex biographies contributed to the construction of particularly powerful and individualised persons.

The final aspect of personhood in the Chalcolithic that has been analysed is the existence of non-human persons. In this aspect, ancestors would have likely played a central role, and the information regarding the material aspects of their ‘creation’ is quite abundant in the funerary
record. But non-human personhood was likely extended among other entities, including particular objects like idols, whose deposition and features might suggest the attribution of subjectivity.

In relation to the role of sex and age in the construction of Chalcolithic personhood, the evidence is quite limited. Both females and males seem to be similarly represented in collective burials, although the conservation of human remains from this period is generally limited, as it is explained in section 4.8.1. Interestingly enough, children were significantly underrepresented in collective burials, although still present. Moreover, infant individuals would be inhumated following different patterns and at different locations depending on the necropolis, i.e., they are in their own niches without adults at Los Millares, while they are mixed with adults at El Barranquete. Similarly, at Los Millares for instance, they would not be located within any of the richest tombs, but they would nevertheless have grave goods, mostly beads from different materials. Thus, it seems that there would be no difference between males and females in terms of being buried and becoming an ancestor, but this would not entirely apply to children. While children were buried and thus would have the chance of reaching a ‘good death’, or even becoming ancestors, the specific way in which that would happen would vary significantly between sites and would be generally limited. The possibilities of interpretation of this phenomenon remain varied, ranging from the possibility of children achieving a ‘good death’ through means that only rarely would involve burials, to the opposite, with children being generally excluded of the notion of ‘good death’ and of ancestorship, except for limited circumstances which would be dealt with following local traditions.

The perception of the self in relation to non-human entities, as explained in Chapter 3, focuses on the emotional connection that humans have with the world surrounding them. It can be characterised as a gradient between porosity/buffering (Taylor 2007:37-38), and although it relates to concepts which seem to encompass similar meanings, such as the permeable/bounded individual, it is distinctively enough to require its own terminology. The porous self is the one that can be characterised as strongly connected, in emotional terms, to the world, to which it is vulnerable/healable. Multiple entities such as spirits, demons or cosmic forces are understood to have power over the person, and thus human persons must navigate a world with which they feel deeply connected and that has a great capacity to affect them. The relationship with this world would be, using Hernando’s terminology, more metonymic than metaphorical, since there is an emotional bond with the world. The opposite side of the spectrum would be the...
buffered individual, which would be the one that considers itself separated from the world. The buffered self can be better conceptualised when thinking about the Cartesian mind/body dichotomy, as this dichotomy allows the subject to attribute agency to the mind and deny it to the outside world, which includes the physical. Consequently, the buffered self does not perceive the world as being populated by multiple entities that have power over it, since the locus of agency is the individual’s mind.

According to current archaeological discourses about the funerary world in the Chalcolithic, some of the most important non-human entities would have been ancestors, whose ontological status could probably be summarised as another type of personhood, being thus part of the social group (Levy-Bruhl 1985) but whose temporality would be more liminal, connecting the past and the present (Goody 1962). In terms of personhood, it seems clear that the role of ancestors would have been clearly relational, as their very existence would be constructed upon the dissolution of individuals. Furthermore, the existence of ancestors would have had other effects in the fission-fusion dynamics of the social group; it is likely that one of the roles that ancestors could have had was that of connecting the living descendants of a particular lineage to the space connected with their burial, and perhaps even to agricultural lands. This would have constituted a powerful dynamic against the dissolution of the social group, as the bond between human people and the space-bound ancestors would have affected their capacity to fragment from the social group. And yet, at another level, ancestors in an affluent society with competing lineages could have also acted as a tool of fragmentation, naturalising the competition between kinship groups, and justifying inequalities. Nevertheless, and considering what it is known about the Chalcolithic world, it seems that their role would have been more relational than individualising, and thus their overall contribution to the social group would have been more connected to resistance against social fragmentation.

Regarding the personhood of ancestors, it is quite difficult to characterise – o begin with, due to being non-human, but also because ancestors would have contained, literally and metaphorically, multitudes. Ancestors, as powerful non-human entities, might have been attributed a degree of agency and intentionality that suggests their individualism, but at the same time, their powerful agency would have had strongly relational results. This agency would have connected the lineage with a particular place, while also acting as guardian of the social order, which ancestors would have enforced through the assimilation and dissolution of certain individual members of society.
At the same time, the relationship between living people and places through ancestors would also relate to power and symbolism beyond the access or use of land. An example of this occurs at the necropolis of Los Millares, where some of the members of affluent lineages from more peripheral settlements would have been buried, in a move that would illustrate how the association of their ancestors with the particular symbolic world of Los Millares could have been more important than their connection with their own local landscape.


The emotional connection that humans have with the world is not restricted to non-human entities, but also, quite obviously, to humans themselves. The terminology that Taylor uses would be engagement/disengagement (2007:137), which again can be conceptualised as a spectrum. The engaged self would be the one whose main stance towards other human beings is based on emotional connection and will thus be willing to engage in more ‘profound’ relationships, which are those where there is no need to repress one’s own emotions. On the opposite side, the disengaged self is the one where the main stance towards other humans is based on the drawing of strong boundaries, withdrawing or limiting strong and emotional connections with other people. Disengagement would be connected with a perception of the self which is self-reliant and individualist, while engagement would favour deeper relationships based on emotional openness, vulnerability and care. These stances of the self are one of the products of, among other things, the increase in socioeconomic complexity and inequality. This process is inspired by Norbert Elias’ ‘Civilizing process’ (1997) [1939], where the German sociologist related the development of an inner self, separated from the world, with the rise in social complexity and inequality, which would move the focus of human anxieties from non-human entities towards humans. Thus, to analyse the stances of the self towards other human entities, it is fundamental to understand the degree of inequality existing in society, and in particular the extent to which that inequality could be translated into violence and coercion, or power-against.

While some authors have characterised the Chalcolithic society in the southeast of Iberia as a tributary state-like entity with social classes, clear inequality and coercion (Molina and Cámara 2005), others such as Pedro Díaz del Río and Pedro V. Castro indicate that it seems more likely that it was a society with factional competition between emergent lineages. These
lineages would have the power to invest collectively in monumental architecture (such as fortifications or megalithic tombs) but would have lacked stable political institutions (Díaz del Río 2004), and thus inequality would have been limited to the existence of larger lineages which could access more resources and invest more in their tombs (Castro et al. 1998). In fact, this would allow the explanation of the end of Los Millares as a process of disaggregation in the context of tensions between fission-fusion and fragmentation/resistance that existed within this society, with the abandonment of most of the settlement and the occupation of the outer forts indicating the momentary triumph of fission (Díaz del Río 2004:95). Another author that strongly opposes structural inequality and the existence of exploitation in the Chalcolithic is R. Chapman (2008), who suggests that there is no evidence of any restriction or unavailability of fertile land, and that the visual relationship between sites and territories, and their political control, is yet to be demonstrated. Similarly, it has been pointed out that the availability of production tools and their distribution were widespread (Risch 2008), making it then quite difficult to suggest that anyone within Chalcolithic society had the means to systematically exert power against other members of society (Chapman 2008:205). This argument has also been extended to include women, for which there is no archaeological evidence of subordination (Castro et al. 1998c:

54-55). Nevertheless, and despite the lack of evidence for coercion within Chalcolithic groups, it is quite likely that violence, especially between different groups, was not unheard of. In this sense, Cámara and Molina (2013) have argued that the fortifications at Los Millares, and the analysis of weapons suggest the existence of violence, despite the lack of evidence of violent trauma in skeletal remains. In the case of the fortifications at Los Millares, besides their multitude of roles and meanings ranging from group-making through collective efforts to symbols of power, it seems clear that a defensive and strategic function was considered in their design. In relation to weapons, and despite the general scarcity of close combat weapons in the Chalcolithic, the abundance of arrows, which seem to have been highly regarded as grave goods and would also be one of the few elements requiring craft specialisation, can be informative about Chalcolithic warfare. In this sense, the presence of multiple arrowheads located around the entrance area at Los Millares might be evidence of an attempted assault (Cámara and Molina 2013).

While Chalcolithic society was affluent in its material resources, it has been pointed out that this richness could be characterised by its diversity rather than by the existence of standardised
elite goods, and this diversity would have been a key element to avoid the development of strong inequalities in the southeast of Iberia during the Chalcolithic. Thus, despite the larger capacity that some lineages would have had to gather and consume resources, the incredible diversity of funerary practices and grave goods might have been a deliberate strategy to prevent that abundance from becoming wealth differences (Risch 2018:59), acting then as another resistance practice against social fragmentation.

Thus, the lack of clear social inequality outside of lineages, and the prevalence of relational personhood would suggest that Chalcolithic people had a mostly engaged stance toward other human beings, as the need to navigate social interactions with people who would have power-against other members of the group would be minimal. Nevertheless, those whose identity was becoming more individualised, and especially if that individuality were dependant, would start to adopt more disengaged stances, as they would be placing more importance onto their own situatedness. The presence of inequality between different lineages, and perhaps even between different members of those lineages (especially in terms of age/gender), would also suggest the growing importance of disengagement. Successfully navigating a socially fragmented society implies that the person must have the ability to know how to act among the members of the different groups within. This would require controlling what one says, does, or conveys to a degree that would have not been necessary in the Neolithic.

6.1.4. Conceptualising, representing, and experiencing the world in the Chalcolithic.

The representation, conceptualisation, and experimentation of reality are three closely related elements which necessarily maintained a horizon of coherence in the Chalcolithic. As explained in Chapter 3, Almudena Hernando (1999, 2002) proposed two modes of representation of reality following Olson (1994): metonymy and metaphor. Metonymy, where the signifier used to represent reality relates to or belongs to the reality being represented, is the prevalent mode of representation in oral societies. Conversely, metaphoric systems are those where there is not a relationship between signifier and signified, and they are more common in literate societies, due to the widespread presence of writing and other systems of abstract representation. The key aspect of both metonymy and metaphor is that they affect the emotional attachment of the subject regarding what is represented. In metaphoric
representations, as reality is not what is being engaged with, but its representation, there is little emotional connection between what is being represented and the subject. But the exact opposite happens in metonymic representations, where the representation of reality takes place through something that belongs to that reality. This means that in an oral group, where metonymic representation is predominant, the engagement with reality is mostly through reality itself, not through a symbol that stands for it. What is known, thus, is known through experience. If someone is thinking about space, for instance, the representation of that space will likely be one that has been experienced; it is known after having walked it or dwelt in it, or at least after hearing about it through someone that has done those things. Thus, an emotional connection has been established with that representation because it has been lived. And as Hernando explains, this relates to the negative perception of change among oral societies: change means rejecting something to which there is an emotional connection, and risks the main mechanisms used to obtain ontological security (Hernando 2002:81-83).

The perception of time and space in the Chalcolithic world would be mostly metonymic, but with some instances were metaphors would have been prevalent. The multiplicity of supernatural entities would not then be present in a multitude of natural elements (animals, rivers, mountains) but would likely be somewhere more localised The Chalcolithic space is one that is mostly domesticated in terms of Criado (1989), and thus is not indiscriminately sacred. Certain artificial elements have become the locus of the sacred (i.e., tombs, idols, etc), but within a landscape over which a cultural conceptualisation is being imposed (Criado 1989:85), and where only some natural elements were sacred.

At the same time, the socioeconomic complexity of society would allow certain people to travel to other distant lands in the southeast of Iberia itself and even beyond for trading purposes, thus expanding their understanding of the world and allowing them to begin developing metaphorical representations of space, while the experiences of the majority of people remained attached to a particular space to which they had strong emotional bonds. And yet, it is likely that ontological security was still more connected to space than to time. While in all likeness Chalcolithic societies had remarkable astronomic knowledge (Hoskin 2015), their conceptualisation of time could hardly be metaphorical, and thus for example the past beyond what people can remember (several generations perhaps), would likely be a mythical time to which people would connect at an emotional level. The existence of myths would then
be one of the main discourses of Chalcolithic groups to legitimise their present, serving to orientate them and provide them ontological security (Hernando 2002:89ff).

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that myths located in the timeless past would have not been the only mechanism of legitimation available for Chalcolithic groups. The very existence of megalithic tombs and ancestors, for instance, would constitute powerful legitimating mechanisms for the group and, perhaps especially, for the different kinship groups. Ancestors would link present lineages with the past, a past that is still mythical but whose construction and maintenance incorporates now a more specific temporary dimension through the genealogical kinship between ancestors and lineage. Similarly, megalithic tombs should be understood as a way of emphasising the time that passes or flows, as opposed to the suppressed time that often characterises mythical thought among hunter-gatherers (Lévi-Strauss 1976).

In relation to the different modes of experiencing reality, in Chapter 3 it was explained how, according to Taylor (2007), there is a spectrum that goes from enchantment to disenchantment. Enchantment consists of a world inhabited by a multiplicity of non-human entities, such as spirits, ancestors, divinities, etc, and these entities are perceived to have, at least in some cases, power and agency over human beings. On the opposite side of the spectrum, a disenchanted reality is that where the existence of these entities has stopped making sense, and thus their agency is thoroughly rejected. How reality is experienced is the result of a multitude of elements, including personhood, the constitution of the self, the perception of the self in relation to non-human entities, the stances of the self towards human entities, and the parameters to conceptualise reality and modes to represent it. Charles Taylor (2007:41) established the relationship between the modes of experienced reality, personhood, and the perception of the self in relation to non-human entities, proposing that an enchanted world is less likely to be perceived among individualised, buffered selves, who situate the locus of agency in the mind of the actant and establish boundaries separating it from the rest of the world. Conversely, the enchanted world is the only mode of experiencing reality that makes structural sense among groups where relational personhood and the porous self are dominant, because it allows these groups to develop ontological security through their emotional connection to the entities inhabiting the world.

The Chalcolithic peoples of the southeast of Iberia would have inhabited an enchanted world, as it would be the only mode of experiencing reality that maintained structural coherence
with their personhood: fundamentally relational, partible selves, at least partially porous towards non-human entities, and adopting an essentially engaged stance towards other human entities. The Chalcolithic world would then contain a multiplicity of powerful non-human entities, and it is quite likely that Chalcolithic peoples recognised non-humans as the main locus of agency.

And yet, several processes contributing towards the disenchantment of the world were already taking place. For instance, the construction of both megalithic burials and monumental settlements, along with the appearance of idols, signals the transference of the sacred from the world and its non-human inhabitants towards cultural spheres, as humans gain control over the material reality surrounding them. Similar effects towards the disenchantment of reality would have the incipient development of individuality, which would slowly render relational personhood less visible to highlight instead the self and attribute it increased agency and centrality in the cosmos.

6.2. Personhood and the conceptualisation of the world in the Argaric Bronze Age.

6.2.1. General characterisation of personhood according to the archaeological evidence.

Personhood in the Argaric Bronze Age would have been fundamentally relational, although several practices reflected and contributed to the development of different degrees of individuality and collective individuality among wide groups within the Argaric society. The notion of partibility, already existing in the Chalcolithic, would have remained important, and permeability would have become a rather important feature of personhood, particularly in relation to ritual funerary commensality. The boundaries between human and non-human would have been blurred, as objects played an important role in the constitution of the self, and certain objects could have been understood as possessing subjectivity/personhood. However, it is important to remark that personhood would have varied depending on the social class and the location of residence of Argaric peoples. Moreover, it seems that wide groups of people living within the Argaric territory decided to reject the Argaric norm, and the analysis of their funerary practices suggests that their personhood would have been different from those...
following the Argaric role, i.e., being for instance more relational or attributing more importance/power to non-human entities such as the ancestors.

The funerary evidence for the Argaric Bronze Age has been characterised by the existence of the so-called Argaric norm, consisting of individual inhumations under dwelling structures inside the settlements. These burials would present a great diversity of shapes (urns, cists, covachas or pits), and include a wide range of grave goods, ranging from nothing to large assembles of metal items and ceramics. Given the strong contrast with the previous Chalcolithic burials, where most traces of individuality had been erased, the Argaric norm indicates a clearly individualising practice (Aranda 2012). Individual burials following the Argaric norm seemed to have been restricted to a small percentage of the population (probably less than 20%), but were quite representative, including children and infants, similar percentages of males and females, and individuals from all social classes, if the presence of grave goods can be used to infer the presence of social classes.

But the role of the Argaric norm as an individualising process is not limited to the presence of individual burials, but also to the wide diversity of practices it encompassed, thus allowing the social group to ritually accommodate the complexities of Bronze Age society. A multiplicity of practices has been documented: the presence of double and triple burials, the variety of ways in which skeletons were deposited in different regions and settlements (sometimes in connection to sex), the use of different tomb types (usually responding to chronological and territorial trends), the location of the tombs within the settlement, or the overrepresentation/underrepresentation of certain groups in different settlements. Equally important in this development of individualisation would have been the existence of social classes, whose existence is mostly supported through the presence of grave goods (Lull and Estévez 1986). These grave goods would have evolved with time, but in general, there were several elements associated with the elites (weapons, gold and silver items, diadems, type 6 vessels), others linked with an intermediate category (different pottery types, axes/knives, awls, and sometimes ornaments or a single metal item), and poorer categories (with only pottery or nothing at all). On a similar line, the presence of certain extremely rare grave goods would also contribute to the individualisation of individuals whose circumstances would have been deemed extraordinary, such as the assemblage of 44 small gold cones included in the clothing of a female in San Antón de Orihuela, or the set of polished stones for metal work from grave 3 at Los Cipreses.
Some types of objects, however, despite being grouped in a single etic category by archaeologists, contributed towards different types of personhood. That could be the case with ornaments, which are the most common type of metal object in the Argaric Bronze Age. Some ornaments, mostly silver and gold diadems, were clearly associated with the highest elites of the Argaric world and would have had clearly individualising roles due to their symbolically and socially restricted status. However, most metal ornaments, including rings, earrings, pendants, necklaces, and bracelets, would be associated with the second and third social classes, and their role would have been one of collective individualisation rather than just individualisation. They would have fulfilled a role of adscription to privileged groups, rather than differentiating individuals. Conversely, the existence of ornaments made in stone or shells, common in the Argaric world among both rich and poor tombs, might have directly contributed to the maintenance/visibility of relational personhood, as they would have been widely available and thus might have embodied widespread values which were not limited to any particular social group.

However, the element connected to the funerary world that most clearly contributed to processes of collective individualisation was feasting (Aranda and Montón-Subías 2011). Feasting has been documented in around 35% of Argaric tombs through the presence of numerous meat offerings inside the tombs, and there is a clear connection between the social class ascribed to the tomb, and the type of meat: cattle for the elites, and ovicaprids for the rest. Considering the motley architecture of Argaric settlements, and the household dimension of burials, it seems that funerary feasting would have been a rather restricted event. This, combined with the clear association between type of meat offering, feast-associated grave goods (i.e., copas) and social class, would likely indicate that feasts played a major role in the development of a shared identity within the attendants, while at the same time excluded most other people.

An interesting element related to the constitution of the self that can be clearly documented in the Argaric Bronze Age but not in the Chalcolithic is the notion of permeability. Permeability would make reference to the importance of incorporating different substances or elements to the self, and modifying the self in the process. Permeability, thus, can be documented if the consumption of specific food and drinks are consumed in a framework of ritual consumption. In the Argaric Bronze Age, the most abundant example of ritual consumption is the presence of funerary feasts, where the status of the burial would have affected the type of meat being
consumed. The importance of ritual consumption is further emphasised by the fact that funerary pottery tends to be different (more delicate) than the ones found in domestic contexts, thus suggesting the ritual importance of consumption during funerary feasts (Aranda and Esquivel 2006). However, it seems that the consumption of particular food and drink is important at the ritual level, rather than as daily life practice; different isotopic analysis have shown that, in general, there is little evidence of sustained differential access to food resources in the southeast of Iberia, and whether it would relate to social class or gender (Díaz-Zorita 2011; Molina et al. 2019)

Continuing with the constitution of the self, partibility, that was already important for Chalcolithic personhood, is still present. It can be argued that the role of objects as constituting elements of the person would be fundamental in connection to gender, as can be documented through certain associations in the funerary record (i.e., awls associated only with women, or axes, swords and halberds with males). The case of awls is particularly illustrative, insofar as they might have been constitutive elements of gender, which are always associated with female bodies across the social spectrum (Montón-Subías 2007), but which are not located in all female tombs, thus perhaps suggesting that while awls were always constitutive elements of certain type of femaleness, it would have also been possible to have a female body without being associated with them. But objects were not limited to being constitutive elements of gender, but also of social class or even power. For instance, the association between male elites and close-combat weapons such as swords and halberds, of which less than a hundred exist, might be more indicative of the connection between weapons and the construction of personhood among leaders than of their importance in combat. Similarly, diadems would have been constitutive elements of a particular type of person, a special type of female leader, which would have been extremely uncommon.

While it seems clear that personhood has become more diverse and complex in the Argaric Bronze Age, and that individuality has become considerably more important than it was in the Chalcolithic, personhood in the Bronze Age was still fundamentally relational. In order to explore the materialisation of relationality in the funerary record, it is necessary to analyse two elements: relationality within the Argaric norm, and relationality outside of it. Regarding the Argaric norm, it is important to state that, although its dimension as an individuality practice has been highlighted, it would have also unconsciously embodied relationality through the sense of belonging to a larger group. In this sense, the very existence of a norm, as a group of
shared practices that were socially and symbolically sanctioned to deal with death, would constitute an example of the (perhaps unconscious) relational dimension of personhood that humans need to obtain ontological security. In this sense, it is quite important to remember that while the Argaric world would have reached a degree of social and economic complexity unseen in the Iberian Peninsula, it still was an oral society where specialisation was limited to certain tasks, and thus individuality, despite its growing importance, was structurally limited. However, the existence of the Argaric norm itself is not the only example of relationality permeating Argaric funerary practices; the presence of certain grave goods that would emphasise the importance of the collective (and belonging to it), rather than the individuality of the deceased, would clearly contribute towards the maintenance of relational personhood, as a sort of resistance against the individualising practices that were being highlighted during funerary practices. Among these objects, the most important would have been metal awls, which as stated before, would reinforce collective identity among women from different social classes in the whole Argaric territory. Other elements that could contribute would be non-metal ornaments or certain types of common pottery, which would have been available to everyone and thus would have materialised the deceased’s belonging to the group, rather than their special status.

However, the existence of relational personhood is also documented outside the Argaric norm. The best evidence for this practice is the reutilisation of traditionally Chalcolithic funerary spaces during the whole Argaric period, a practice that used to be conceptualised as marginal but that was indeed common and widespread. The reuse of these ritual spaces, where the collective and the connection to ancestors were being reinforced, should be understood as a resistance practice against the individuality that was permeating Argaric burials (Aranda 2015). Further proof of this would be the absence of the grave goods connected with the Argaric elites (weapons and diadems), and the recuperation of certain items that were common grave goods in the Chalcolithic but disappeared from Argaric tombs, such as arrowheads. Thus, this type of practice, which would be preferred by a significant part of the population using Argaric culture, would be highlighting the importance of relational personhood, in clear opposition to the practice of the majority or, at least, the ruling elites.

The relationship between sex, age and personhood in the Argaric world is significantly complex. There is strong evidence pointing out that the everyday existence of males and females would have been different, including their grave goods and their musculoskeletal
conditions. In relation to this last element, the analysis of 110 individuals from Argaric sites in Granada carried out by Jiménez-Brobeil et al. (2004) clearly indicates that females presented less muscular development and skeletal stress in their upper body and legs, thus indicating less physically demanding everyday activities. This pattern would be consistent with the possibility of women dedicating large amounts of time to maintenance activities, which would include food preparation, textile work and, in general, all the activities that are necessary for the wellbeing and care of the members of the community (Picazo 1997). Regarding grave goods and their connection with sex, and as mentioned in chapter X, awls seem to be a clearly exclusive grave good for women, something that would have undoubtedly contributed towards relational identity, but which quite likely would have had associations with certain elements of womanhood or femininity, insofar it was exclusive of women regardless of their social class, but which not every woman would have had.

In relation to age and personhood, the practices within the ‘Argaric norm’ are clearly different from those in the Chalcolithic: the presence of children in Argaric tombs is clearly representative, thus suggesting that the personhood of children, at least in its relationship with death, would have not been radically different from that of adults. However, there were important differences in relation to grave goods, as it has been pointed out (Sánchez-Romero 2007:187-189) that the younger than infants/children were, the less likely they were to have grave goods. In those cases that infants/children presented grave goods, they would have ornaments made in stone, shell and bone more frequently than adults, and in no case they would possess any of the higher-input grave goods associated with the elites, such as weapons or diadems, not cattle meat offerings, also associated with the elites (Sánchez-Romero et al. 2007). Another interesting difference between children and adults would have been the presence of ‘poorly’ made artefacts, such as the ‘toy vase’ found in the burial with two children at Cerro de la Encina (Aranda and Molina 2006), which have been interpreted as a toy or the product of a learning activity from the children. Another example, interpreted differently, would be found in tombs 34 and 36 at Gatas, which included infants associated with pottery of remarkably low quality. This has been interpreted in terms of the infants having been somehow excluded from standard funerary practices, and then this exclusion compensated by their household, which would have attempted to provide similar grave goods (Colomer 2005). It is important to remark, however, that this is only the case for those buried following the ‘Argaric norm’ and might not be applicable to reutilisations of Chalcolithic sites during the Bronze Age. While the evidence to explore age and personhood outside of the ‘Argaric norm’ is generally scarce, tomb
9 at El Barranquete, used only during the Argaric Bronze Age, included only an 11.76% of children, a number that is clearly more similar to Chalcolithic practices than to Argaric ones (Sánchez-Romero 2018:141-142).

6.2.2. Perception of the self in relation to non-human entities.

To explore where the person in the Argaric Bronze Age would be in the gradient of porosity/buffering, it would be necessary to know whether non-human entities were conceptualised as existing, and then what their power over human persons would have been.

The existence of non-human entities in the Argaric world has not received much attention; there have only been a few mentions regarding the possible way in which the dead, as a type of ancestor, could be used to justify present inequalities or property rights. Lull has proposed (1997-1998:73) that just as funerary rituals were taking place in the private sphere of the household, those taking care of the burial would have been the ones fundamentally interested
and benefitting from the ritual (although the grave goods would not depend so much on the household itself, but on the social class to which the household belongs). This would only make sense if the consequences (both positive and negative) of whatever happens after death can only affect the household unit. As Bartelheim indicates in relation to burials in Fuente Álamo (2012:347), tombs were thought to commemorate the dead person, with whom those alive would want to keep a link. Tombs would then materialise strong family ties between the past and the present, serving as a connection, first, among the live kin of the deceased, and then, with the passing of time, allowing descendants to establish genealogical relationships in reference to the individuals that still rested under their dwellings. This interest in establishing a genealogical connection with the deceased seem to be confirmed by double burials, the majority of which were not contemporary (Lull et al. 2013). They have been interpreted as symbols of consanguinity and ancestry (Lull et al. 2016a:38), symbolising the transgenerational connection between places and specific lineages, perhaps even in relation to property (Lull et al. 2016a:51).

However, there are several elements which would allow a further exploration of the conceptualisation of non-human entities related to death (and which can be called ancestors given the lack of a better word) under the Argaric norm. Two main elements seem particularly relevant: the first one is the participation of the deceased in funerary feasts, which is attested through the ubiquitous presence of meat offerings inside tombs, sometimes accompanied by purposely designed vessels (Aranda and Montón-Subías 2011). The second one would be the inclusivity of funerary practices, which included representative figures of people of all sexes and ages as opposed to the Chalcolithic, where children were clearly underrepresented. However, the degree to which the participation of children would be equal to that of adults is difficult to assess; Lull et al. (2005) have pointed out that, at least in terms of grave goods, children had less than adults, even those that belonged to the elites. For example, some infants have been assigned to classes 1 and 2 in Lull and Estévez’ (1986) classification due to the presence of multiple metal items, but they never include the most valued items such as weapons or diadems. Similarly, children associated with the third class, that of ‘full members’ of the Argaric society, present fewer grave goods than adults and mature individuals of the same social category.

Thus, while the status of ancestor was open to individuals regardless of sex and age (although strongly limited, as only a small fraction of people would have been buried), the
material goods of accompanying infants would have been less important for that stage than in the case of adults. At the same time, the dead, at least during the liminal phase of being buried, were able to eat (since not all tombs include meat offerings, it seems more likely to suggest that they could eat, but it was not required). Importantly, the dead ancestor took part in the funerary feast, but there is no evidence of them being fed afterwards with libations or offerings once they have been buried; this would suggest that either the dead ancestor does not need any worldly food to sustain themselves, or that they are being fed in another manner (for example, among Andean, Quichua-speaking populations, it is not uncommon to think that through the act of eating in a ritual context, one person is also nourishing relatives that are far away, and dead ancestors, see Weismantel 1991). Another element to suggest the limited agency of the dead is the gruesome fate of the individual labelled as AY5 at La Almoloya, whose remains were deposited without a proper burial in the so-called ‘courtroom’ of the settlement, and whose violent death seems further emphasised by the stone lodged in its mouth (Lull et al. 2015b). This would suggest that for whatever reasons, the inhabitants of La Almoloya did not fear any harm caused by that individual in the afterlife, for which could be there multiple reasons. Perhaps only the dead subjected to certain rituals could have agency, or their agency could be controlled through certain measures, such as the lodging of the stone in its mouth. It is also possible that the agency of the death through some sort of ancestor status was only granted or recognised among those who were identified as persons, a status that AY5 might not have enjoyed.

However, it is likely that the ancestor associated with the Argaric norm was not the only type of non-human entity in the Argaric world; moreover, it is unlikely that they were the only type of ancestor. In this sense, the reutilisation of Chalcolithic burials during the Argaric Bronze Age, the tombs of ‘the others’ in the Argaric world, would necessarily mean that other type of ancestors also existed, and their features would have been remarkably different. While the dead connected to the Argaric norm inhabited the house, thus sharing the space with the living within the settlement, those buried in ancient megaliths, in a ritual that likely mixed old traditions and new elements, would have dwelt in a different place, outside the settlement in a humanised or domesticated landscape. Then, while the ancestors ‘outside the Argaric norm’ inhabit a rather domesticated landscape, the Argaric ones live in the house within the settlement, which would be the most domesticated space conceivable. Although not much is known about the particular ritual involved in the reutilisation of megalithic tombs (besides its existence, its chronology and the grave goods used), it seems likely that the ritual would have
been more public, as it would have taken place without the space constraints of the household and the Argaric settlement. Moreover, the most important difference would be in terms of what the role of the ancestors is, which would have had important consequences in terms of personhood. On the one hand, the function of the ancestors under the Argaric norm is still unclear, although it is likely that it linked the living inhabitants of the household with one or two specific, physical ancestors, and thus would have a rather limited power, perhaps protecting the household or serving as a genealogical reference for living kin. On the other hand, ancestors outside the Argaric norm would have been connecting the living with the distant past and dissolving the individual into an imagined pool of distant ancestors that inhabited the landscape in a time so remote that it could only be understood in mythical terms. And while the individuality of Argaric ancestors was materialised through the association of particular persons with the household, the opposite would be happening outside of the norm, with the individuality of those buried being dissolved.

The contrast between both phenomena would increase the meaning of burials outside the Argaric norm, as they would be taking place against the normal practices of the Argaric society. And while Aranda (2015) has defined this as a resistance practice, its exact definition would be difficult to assess. It might be better to think of it as resilience, a way of coping with the individualism of the Argaric norm in a context of unequal power relationships. Its duration would suggest that, as a practice, it remained unchallenged by the Argaric power, and thus resilience might be more appropriate than resistance. But at the same time, the grave goods indicate that in some of the burials, rather exclusive metal items and fine pottery were included (although weapons and diadems were never part of these reutilisations). Thus, it is quite likely that these burials did not only include ‘subordinated’ groups, at least regarding the consumption of higher-input grave goods. It is possible to conclude then that the tensions between social fragmentation and resistance, between individualisation and relational personhood, were also taking place in connection to non-human entities, as the ancestors that different groups in the Argaric world – those under the Argaric norm, and those being buried against it – would also be involved in the tension.
6.2.3. Stances of the self towards human entities.

Approaching the stances of the self towards other human entities during the Argaric Bronze Age entails a major risk, which is that of participating in the debate over the status of the Argar as a political structure. This issue needs to be clarified, as it has important consequences on the type of stance that people would adopt towards other humans: if the Argaric world constituted a state, its elites would have been able to ‘easily’ exert power-against other members of society. Conversely, if the Argaric world was not a state but a stratified society or a complex chiefdom, then the exertion of intragroup violence, although still possible, would have come at a larger cost for those doing it.

Before reviewing the debate about the Argaric state, there are several points that could be made in relation to socioeconomic complexity and labour specialisation. The most important point is, as already mentioned and in accordance with Hernando’s theory, the increase in social and economic complexity, especially in terms of labour specialisation, would contribute to the development of individuality, which in turns favours a more disengaged stance towards other human beings. Similarly, the increase in the size of settlements would also hinder the person’s capacity to meaningfully interact with every other member of the group. Moreover, the inequality that clearly existed in the Argaric world would also contribute towards the need for individual persons to manage their own emotions and their display. This is because when some members of the group have more power than the others, the developing of certain social skills (in fact, different social personae) is a requirement to successfully navigate social encounters which are potentially dangerous due to the imbalance of power. And of course, if inequality is a key element to understanding the degree of engagement/disengagement that people have within a social group, the existence of power-against, that is, the capacity of certain members or groups to impose their will onto others, would play an even larger role.

The debates regarding the characterisation of the political structure of the Argar have been thoroughly reviewed by Aranda et al. (2015:150ff). Most researchers justify the statehood of the Argar due to its role in the institutionalisation of socioeconomic differences resulted from the existence of established social classes (Lull and Risch 1995). The status of the Argar as a state would also be reinforced by the presence of relations of production that would benefit a minority who would enjoy the surplus (Castro et al. 1998). At the same time, that exploitation would be legitimised by symbolic and ideological domination, but also ultimately backed by the threat of physical coercion/aggression by the warrior classes formed by/entangled with the
elites (Lull et al. 2017, Lull et al. 2009). Other arguments used to further defend the status of the Argar as a state have been the existence of a warrior group with weapons such as swords and halberds (Lull et al. 2009, Moreno and Contreras 2015) in the Argaric world, the hierarchical relationships between different sites (Arteaga 2000), or the role of certain fortified settlements both controlling large hinterlands and materialising the power of the Argaric dominion (Lull et al. 2014).

Against the hypothesis of the existence of the Argaric State, perhaps the most prolific author has been Antonio Gilman (2008, 2013) who would instead characterise it as a chiefdom or stratified society. This would imply the existence of certain coercive power and exploitation from the elites, especially because of the agricultural intensification, which would have forced farmers to invest in the land and thus remove the possibility of fission, making them subject to coercion and exploitation. However, it would reject its status as a state due to the lack of state-like elements such as temples, writing, palaces, etc. Other authors such as Antonio Ramos Millan have also defended the status of chiefdom, stating that the existence of hilltop settlements after 1800 BC could be explained as a resistance practice against the political integration that larger settlements would be attempting to enforce. Martin Bartelheim (2012) has gone even further, questioning the relationship between social class and grave goods, and stating that differences in grave goods would respond to social functions, rather than to social classes. The Argar, according to him, would have had a social system dominated by kinship relationships, not by class. Even the relationship between violence and the existence of an Argaric state is being challenged, as it has been pointed out that fortifications in the Argaric world would have defended settlements from other territorial neighbours, or even the elites within certain areas of the settlement from the rest of the population, but that in no case it is possible to observe any kind of relationship between fortifications and a hypothetical border against groups beyond the Argaric territory (Serrano 2012).

Going back to the theory of power and resistance proposed in the Chapter 3, it might seem that there is evidence of clear power-against existing in the Argaric world, but only in certain, particular contexts such as the unburied individual from La Almoloya (AY5). However, the presence of power-against is not exclusive of the state, and in the Argaric world it is unclear whether the capacity for violence and coercion was monopolised by the state, or even by the elites. For instance, the recent realisation of the amplitude and importance that the reutilisation of Chalcolithic tombs had challenges the symbolic control that the elites living under the
Argaric norm would have had. At the same time, and as seen before, food access seems quite similar between both the elites and the rest of society (outside of funerary feasting), and even musculoskeletal stress is inconclusive in demonstrating that the elites were able to avoid hard physical work. It seems likely, then, that while occasional power-against existed in the Argaric world, it was kept in check by a network of class and kinship relationships, and thus it is unlikely that the elites would have been able to enjoy it without having to carefully calculate the consequences of their actions.

Overall, the existence of some degree of power-against in the Argaric world, combined with remarkable socioeconomic complexity, would probably mean that the self is more disengaged towards other human beings than in the Chalcolithic. At the same time, that level of engagement/disengagement would vary depending on the circumstances and the community where the person lives. For instance, a person living in San Cristóbal, where a few dozen people would have lived, and where there is no evidence of elites (either because they were not there, or because they were being buried at the nearby Cerro de la Encina) would likely be more engaged than someone living at la Bastida de Totana or La Almoloya, which were not only larger settlements, but also places where the elites would have dwelt, and where inequality would have been stronger. The inhabitants of settlements such as San Cristóbal would have only had a limited need to modulate their emotion and behaviours depending on who they interacted with, as it would have been a small community with little social differentiation, and thus it would be possible to know everyone well; thus, the risk of being coerced or suffering power-against would have been limited.

A different situation, however, would be happening to someone living at La Almoloya, one of the centres of Argaric power. This is the type of community where the elites would have been more likely to use their power-against other members of society. This of course also means the level of engagement/disengagement of the person would depend not only on where they live, but also of their more personal circumstances, such a kinship/class. While the defence against coercive/violent power among those belonging to the more marginalised groups in the Argaric world would have often been limited to resilience practices, others with more power could have chosen different responses, ranging from resistance – i.e., the ‘engaged withdrawal’ proposed by Ramos Millán (2012) – or open rebellion. In this sense, it is useful to remember that many Argaric settlements had an interior line of fortifications inside, which have been interpreted as a separation from the rest of the settlement, rather than as a defensive position.
against a foreign attack. Equally suggestive is the fact that while the end of the Argaric world was probably violent, as attested by the destruction levels in its largest settlements, it was not substituted by another socio-political structure of similar entity, but by a phenomenon of fission and an important decrease in social and economic complexity in the area. In conclusion, then, while disengagement would have increased in the Bronze Age compared to the Chalcolithic, its degree would change depending on the situation of the person, particularly where they lived, their social status, and the capacity that other people would have to use power against them in their daily life.

6.2.4. Conceptualising, representing, and experiencing the world in the Bronze Age.

The perception of time in the Bronze Age and the Chalcolithic would have been mostly metonymic, as in the Chalcolithic, although it is likely that metaphoric representations were gaining importance accordingly to the increase in individuality that part of the Argaric world was experiencing. For those living under the Argaric norm, the landscape would have been heavily domesticated, with settlements being the locus of both human and non-human agency. Given the lack of systems for abstract representation, it is likely that metonymic representation was still clearly hegemonic. It is also probable that time as a parameter to conceptualise reality was gaining importance, as it can be inferred from the functions that the dead would have fulfilled under the Argaric norm. This, in turn, would affect one of the main mechanisms to obtain ontological security in oral societies: myths. In the Chalcolithic, myths would have likely been located in a kind of timeless, mythical past. This would correspond, for example, with the way ancestors worked. Individuals were dissolved into ancestorship, joining the pool of plural, non-individualised non-human beings. But in the Argaric Bronze Age, this process would have probably led to becoming an ancestor in singular, somebody individualised even in their non-humanness, and with whom the living could establish a more or less real, and effectively tangible (since they are buried under the floor of the house) genealogical relationship.

Meanwhile, the populations rejecting the Argaric norm and reutilising Chalcolithic burials would have a different relationship with myths and the past. In their reutilisation, they would be connecting with a past so ancient that it would be mythical, despite the physicality of the
tombs and their remains. The perception of the landscape by these groups would then be different, and the non-human entities inhabiting it would be different from the ones that those following the Argaric norm would perceive. Those rejecting the Argaric norm would then inhabit a landscape where non-human agency does not necessarily inhabit in settlements, and where the connection with the landscape would have probably be stronger and deeper; their landscape would be, so to speak, less domesticated than the one perceived by their properly Argaric neighbours. And yet, time would now play a more important role, even for them, than it did in the Chalcolithic, as the reference to time and the past would be one of the key mechanisms to separate them from Argaric peoples, and thus its importance as a parameter to conceptualise reality would be more significant.

In relation to the enchantment/disenchantment of the world, people in the Argaric world would still inhabit a mainly enchanted world, as this would have been, still, the only mode of experiencing reality that would have maintained structural coherence with their personhood, which would have been fundamentally relational (despite the increased individuality) and partible. However, those living under the Argaric norm might have been inhabiting a world that they would have been perceived as slightly more disencharmed than those outside of it. This would correspond to the (hypothetical) reduction of the agency attributed to non-human entities, such as ancestors, and would be supported by the increased importance that settlements had as the locus of agency, life, and death. Contrastingly, those rejecting the Argaric norm would have likely inhabited a more enchanted world, although perhaps not as enchanted as the Chalcolithic one. After all, settlements would have probably increased their role providing ontological security for them as well, and they would be living mixed with peoples who might have challenged their understanding of the enchantment of the world.
Chapter 7: Conclusion and future research

7.1. Overview of this thesis and its main contributions.

The main objective of this work was to study personhood in the southeast of Iberia during the Chalcolithic and the Argaric Bronze Age (3300–1500 BC). While personhood has enjoyed remarkable attention in anthropology, becoming a central topic of debate in multiple discussions about identity in multiple societies, its treatment in archaeology has differed. For instance, and as explained in the first part of chapter 2, it has been fundamentally ignored by the vast majority of archaeologists working in the southeast of Iberia. However, the study of prehistoric personhood has received significant attention in the English-speaking world, whose main discussions and models are summarised in the second part of chapter 2.

In order to study personhood in the southeast of Iberia, chapter 3 offers a theoretical framework, labelled as a ‘structural-contextual’ model, that relies substantially in the work of Almudena Hernando, and which is completed by different concepts and theories from the work of Charles Taylor, John Chapman, and the anthropology of personhood. This model, as opposed to the multiple-spectrum models that dominate current archaeological debates about personhood, is based on the belief that there is a structural relationship between the available types of personhood and the socioeconomic complexity of a society. Thus, the structural-contextual model offered here is purposefully fitted to study oral prehistoric societies with a high degree of socioeconomic complexity. This structural-contextual model is structured around the ‘perceived’ gradient of relationality/individuality. According to this framework, relational personhood is structurally and ontologically necessary in every human being, but with the development of certain types of individuality, it is possible that this last element becomes more emphasised in the conscious construction of identity, thus falling into the ‘fantasy of individuality’ that Hernando has reviewed elsewhere (2017). Other important features of personhood that are included within the model are related to the constitution of the self (as a partible/permeable/bounded entity), the perception of the self in relation to non-human entities (which would be the gradient between porosity and buffering), or the available stances of the self towards other human beings, which are contained within the gradient of engagement/disengagement. The structural-contextual model, however, proposes going even further, allowing the connection to personhood with elements outside of it, such as the parameters to conceptualise reality (space and time), the different modes to represent that
reality (metonymy and metaphor), and the varied modes of experiencing reality (the gradient between enchantment and disenchantment).

The structural-contextual model is put into practice in chapter 4, where different features and traits of Chalcolithic personhood are inferred through the analysis of funerary practices and their associated materiality. It seems clear that Chalcolithic personhood was fundamentally relational, as attested by the collective burials and the type of grave goods included in them; however, there are some elements suggesting that different processes were contributing towards the development of certain individualisations, which would be the product of the different pathways available for Chalcolithic persons, but also an effect of the presence of certain exotic and powerful objects. Outside of this gradient relationality/individuality, two main features of Chalcolithic personhood have been inferred. The first one is partibility, which can be indicated by fragmentation practices at multiple levels (including human remains and grave goods), or by the likely role that certain objects had in the constitution of personhood. The second feature is the attribution of personhood to certain non-human entities, which would include ancestors but also certain objects such as idols.

The following chapter, chapter 5, explores how personhood changed in the southeast of Iberia with the arrival of the Bronze Age and the appearance of the Argaric world. The presence of individuality can now be more clearly attested through funerary practices, where the clear prevalence of single burials and the existence of a strong and clear hierarchy of grave goods suggests the greater importance of individualising practices. Another element that gains importance in the Bronze Age is collective individualisation, which can be clearly attested through funerary feasting and grave goods, and which suggests that quite often individualisation was explicitly connected to notions of belonging to certain groups. But the role of feasting was not limited to the construction of collective individuality; it can also be used to infer the presence of permeability, which had not been documented in the Chalcolithic, and which would suggest the importance of ritual consumption in the constitution of personhood. Partibility, which quite likely was an important trait of personhood in the Chalcolithic, still exists, as can be documented through the role that certain objects had in the constitution of particular types of personhood. However, and despite all this features, the most important element of Bronze Age personhood would still be its relationality, which although it had decreased its visibility after the Chalcolithic, was still the central element to define the self. Importantly, all these traits present numerous nuances that would have not existed before; it
seems clear that the socioeconomic complexity of the Argaric Bronze Age had profound consequences in the personhood of Argaric people. Different elements such as living in one type of settlement or another, social class and gender would have affected the specific personhood of Argaric individuals. But perhaps the greater element affecting personhood was the existence of funerary practices ‘outside’ of the Argaric norm. These widespread practices, consisting of a reutilisation and reinterpretation of Chalcolithic burials, would suggest that the personhood of an important segment of the population was considerably more relational, in a phenomenon that can be characterised as a resilience practice against some traits of Argaric personhood.

Finally, chapter 6 discusses all the aforesaid features of personhood in the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age, to then proceed to explore, through the theoretical framework from chapter 3, other elements that could not be directly inferred from the funerary record: the perception of the self in relation to non-human entities and the stances of the self toward other human beings, as well as the parameters to conceptualise reality and the modes to represent and experience that reality.

Chalcolithic people in the southeast of Iberia would have inhabited an enchanted world, where space would have been more important than time in order to conceptualise reality, and where metonymy would have been more frequent to represent it than metaphor. This world would have been inhabited by multiple powerful non-human entities, and it is quite likely that agency would have been perceived to be located within these non-human entities, rather than among human persons. This is the only mode of experiencing reality that would have made sense for the Chalcolithic person, which would have been fundamentally relational, partible, at least partially porous towards non-human entities, and in general having an engaged stance towards other human beings. And yet, some processes happening in these societies, such as the development of a certain degree of individuality, would be contributing towards the disenchantment of reality.

With the arrival of the Bronze Age, although people in the southeast of Iberia would have still perceived the world as fundamentally enchanted, it is likely that it was so to a lesser degree, considering that individuality (and the agency that this feature of personhood implies) was more developed than ever before and people were also more buffered than in the Chalcolithic. However, the conceptualisation, representation and experimentation of reality would have
varied significantly between those following the Argaric norm, and those consciously rejecting it, who would be perceiving the world as more enchanted, in consonance to their more relational personhood. While both the Bronze Age and the Chalcolithic had non-human entities which likely enjoyed subjectivity and personhood, the evidence that non-humans related with the dead (that is, ancestors) suggests that Argaric and Chalcolithic (or those outside the Argaric norm) ancestors were significantly different, with the later probably being conceptualised as more powerful.

In relation to the main contributions of this PhD to archaeological knowledge of the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula and to the Archaeology of Personhood, this work had three main objectives:

1) The assemblage of a theoretical framework, specifically designed to study prehistoric personhood in complex oral societies with affluent material regimes in Late Prehistory.

2) The use of that framework to study personhood in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula during the Chalcolithic and Argaric Bronze Age. In this sense, this work aimed to elaborate the first explicit account of personhood in these societies, exploring its main features and traits, through the analysis of funerary evidence and in connection to other aspects of these societies.

3) Contributing to two debates in different academic spheres. On the one hand, starting the debate about personhood in the Southeast during Late Prehistory in Spanish Archaeology; on the other hand, contributing to current debates about personhood in the English-speaking world with a new proposal, the ‘Structural-Contextual’ model, that significantly differs from the Multiple-Spectrum model that dominates contemporary debates.

In relation to the fulfilment of these initial goals, the first two ones have hopefully been clearly fulfilled. The theoretical framework assembled here and based on the work of Almudena Hernando with important contributions from the work of Charles Taylor, John Chapman, as well as several contributions from the Anthropology of personhood, constitutes a new ‘Structural-Contextual’ model that can be successfully used to analyse personhood in prehistoric societies without uncritically projecting contemporary notions of identity. The second aim has also been fulfilled, as this work constitutes the first explicit analysis of personhood in the Southeast during the Chalcolithic and Argaric Bronze Age. Whether other researchers agree with the interpretations proposed here, this work will hopefully become a
starting point in the generalisation of the debates about personhood in the Archaeology of the Southeast. In relation to the third element, that goal is yet to be fulfilled. This work will hopefully be recognised as a valuable contribution in both academic traditions, but until its publication it will not be possible to know the level of engagement that it will provoke from other researchers, thus being impossible to determine the fulfilment of the third goal just yet.

7.2. Future research.

The directions that future research could take are multiple, as this project is just an initial approach to personhood in the southeast of Iberia during late prehistory. However, it is possible to suggest no less than five different research avenues to continue and improve the study of personhood in the southeast of Iberia.

Firstly, it would be useful to broaden its scope. This should take place at two different levels: expanding the time frame of this work and carrying out similar projects to understand personhood in other contexts in the Iberian Peninsula. Regarding the expansion of the chronological scope of this project, it would be extremely illuminating to include the Late Bronze Age, as it seems that the groups inhabiting the southeast of Iberia after the collapse of the Argaric world developed different funerary and cultural practices that might have related to more relational notions of personhood (Aranda Jiménez 2012:114-115). Equally useful would be to study notions of personhood among other late prehistoric groups in the Iberian Peninsula during the Chalcolithic and the Bronze Age, as that would allow researchers to explore how the differences between prehistoric groups might have affected personhood.

Secondly, the type of research carried out here would also benefit from having a more detailed understanding of those living in the southeast of Iberia and using Argaric material culture but burying themselves outside of the Argaric norm. While some researchers are gathering abundant information about this practice (i.e., Aranda 2015; Aranda et al. 2018) some details are not entirely clear. Was it consistent independently of the type of Chalcolithic burial site being used? Are there regional trends? Exactly which elements of Argaric society are being brought, and which elements of the Chalcolithic are being reused and reinterpreted? What was the magnitude of the phenomena? Were they eating the same? Where were they living? Can it
be compared with stable isotopes from other sites to try and establish where they lived? Was it representative?

The third research avenue of which this project could strongly benefit would be the increase, improvement, and refinement of the bioarchaeological information available about food consumption, particularly in relation to differential patterns of consumption. While the sites providing evidence about this topic is rapidly increasing (Cuesta del Negro, Baena and Úbeda by Molina et al. 2019; La Batida and Gatas by Knipper et al. 2020; Gatas by Diaz Zorita et al. 2012; and Peñalosa, Alarcón and Sanchez Romero 2012), the overall evidence is not complete enough to explore differential patterns of consumption in detail. This would allow, for instance, to definitively state if differential consumption related to gender was widespread, thus allowing researchers to explore in more depth the relationship between permeable personhood and gender. Equally interesting would be the possibility of understanding if permeability was also affected by the social status or geographical provenance of the individuals.

A fourth research avenue could be connecting with increasing current understandings about the relationship between age and personhood among certain segments of society in the Bronze Age remains unclear. For instance, among those buried outside the ‘Argaric norm’, this is, those that revisited Chalcolithic funerary practices/sites during the Argaric Bronze Age. The main exception is tomb 9 at El Barranquete, whose chronology is entirely within the Bronze Age, and thus has provided useful evidence (Sánchez-Romero 2018). This information suggests that among those rejecting the ‘Argaric norm’, the inclusion of children in funerary rituals and burials would have been heavily restricted, as it would have happened in the Chalcolithic. Further information about other reutilisations, particularly about their exact chronology and the infants/children included in them, would help understand if this was a recurrent practice or an isolated event at El Barranquete. The larger implications would also be interesting, suggesting that the relationships between childhood and ancestorship was another element of differentiation between those following the ‘Argaric norm’ and those rejecting it.

The fifth and final possibility, and perhaps the most ambitious one at a theoretical level, would be the review of what is currently known about sex/gender and the Argaric world. In this sense, a theoretical framework based on queer theory (i.e., Moral de Eusebio 2014) would be particularly fruitful. Research on sex/gender in the Argaric world has relied on the aprioristic dichotomy male/female as if it were given, ahistorical and universal categories (Agarwal 2012).
Instead, it would be more productive to analyse how sex is codified and understood in each concept (Alberti 2001). This could prove particularly useful to illustrate non-dichotomic conceptualisations of sex/gender in the Argaric world, hopefully allowing a rich exploration of how different notions of sex/gender would have worked in the past. Contemporary studies have focussed on connecting the sexual characterisation of skeletal remains as males/females, to then study the connection of that dichotomy with other elements (diet, musculoskeletal stress, grave goods, etc). However, if the departure point is not the assumption of two existing sexes, but the open exploration of how different elements (skeletal features, grave goods, funerary practices, musculoskeletal stress, etc) it might be possible to obtain a more accurate image of how sex/gender was conceptualised in the Argaric world. This could perhaps help explain some well-known irregularities in the funerary record, such as the fact that in many sites there are general tendencies about the resting side where individuals are deposited, but irregularities are also common, or the possibility of grave goods being indicative of more than two sexes (i.e., why some female skeletons have awls and others do not? Does the existence of musculoskeletal evidence of maintenance activities relate to particular grave goods? This approach might also help explain and contextualise various ‘transgressions’ registered in the Argaric world, such as the male in a feminine position (and facing another male buried at the same time) at tomb 18 at La Bastida, or the female laying ‘on the masculine side’ in tomb 23 at the same site (Lull et al. 2016).
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266


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