

## ANTA DO MONTE DOS FRADES \*\*\*



**LOCALIZAÇÃO E ACESSO:** Estrada St.ª Eulália/Elvas. Do lado esquerdo e ao km 68, no caminho que segue para o Monte dos Frades. Acesso pedestre.

## CONTEXTO HISTÓRICO

Até ao Neolítico a região de Elvas seria povoada apenas por pequenos bandos de recolectores. Não domesticavam animais nem plantas e desconheciam o hábito da fixação à terra.

Lentamente terão surgido mudanças. Por essa época, a natureza animal e vegetal começa a ser controlada; o nómada vai-se sedentarizando e surgem novas técnicas, como a pedra polida, a olaria e a tecelagem.

As suas povoações situavam-se em locais abertos, sem grandes condições naturais de defesa, mas que permitiam um certo controle da paisagem envolvente; depois de instalados num local, ali permaneciam até ao esgotamento das terras. As suas cabanas eram construídas a base de pedras, canas e ramos, por vezes revestidas a barro.

Os monumentos megalíticos são o que de mais palpável nos resta a testemunhar a vida espiritual dos seus construtores, e as novas relações sociais baseadas numa maior organização e interdependência. Para além do esforço físico que implicava erigir-las, era imprescindível a existência de excedentes alimentares, que permitissem disponibilizar parte da comunidade para um trabalho não produtivo. A perpetuação desta produção excedentária implicou, por sua vez, e a longo prazo, o aparecimento dos primeiros povoados fortificados.

A separação dos ofícios, ou funções especializadas do trabalho comunal só se iria progressivamente implantar com a introdução da metalurgia e consequentes alterações da vivência social, realçando prestígio e poder aos seus conhecedores, e abrindo decisivamente caminho às primeiras formas de diferenciação social.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Up to the Neolithic the region of Elvas was populated by small groups of hunter-gatherers. They did not engage in cultivating or stock breeding nor did they live a sedentary life.

Slowly some changes occurred. By that time flora and fauna started to be controlled. The nomad became sedentary and new techniques such as polished stone, pottery and weaving were developed.

Their villages were located in open spaces, places without any particular defence conditions. However they had a certain control over their surroundings. After settling in one place they remained there until all the natural resources were exhausted. Their huts were built with stones, canes and branches and sometimes covered with clay.

The megalithic monuments are the living proof of the spiritual life and of a new social organisation based on community dependency. Besides the physical strength required to build such a monument it was necessary to have a food surplus that enabled them to have part of the community working on something that was not productive. As a result of the food surplus fortified villages were created on the following centuries.

With the development of metallurgic techniques life in society began to change. The specialisation in functions of the community work and the prestige given to those who possessed a special knowledge opened the way to first forms of social differentiation.

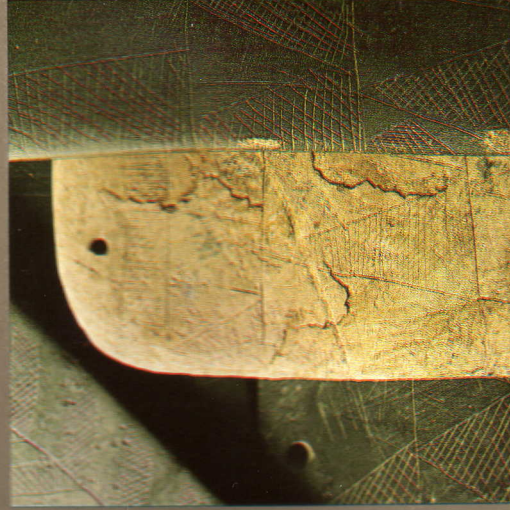
## WHAT IS THE MEGALITHIC CULTURE

In Western Europe and particularly in Portugal men built, over 5000 years ago, with the strength of their arms remarkable structures. These complex constructions in stone were destined to lodge their dead. These and other monuments like the menhir and cromlech, also with sacred meaning related with cults of fertility and renovation, have become known as megaliths — from the Greek words *mega* and *lithos*, that is, great stones.

The antas, places of collective burial reflect a spiritual time marked by the notion of collectivity and of co-operation. With the Neolithic, and the flourishing of farming societies new bounds of dependency and obligation appeared among the men of each community.

Of variable types and dimensions, with or without a corridor of access to the chamber, they were often capable of lodging hundreds of dead. The bodies were placed inside the anta accompanied by funerary artifacts, specific and symbolic, sacralised by the burial. Among several items there were nonfunctional replicas, objects of daily use and objects of worship. Some of the worship objects were icons that eventually symbolised Mother Goddess of farming communities.

The antas were, totally or partially, covered with earth and pebbles thus forming an artificial hill, designated by the name round barrows or tumulus, used to rise the flag stones of the cover. The antas were born through the believes of the living and were the marks of the memory of their ancestors.



Placas-Ídolo

ELVAS

