
Convergent trends, parallel roads: rock art and megaliths in the Tagus basin

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Résumé

The assessment of the Tagus valley rock art has mostly clustered around chronology, the vicinity to megaliths playing an important part in such debate. While there are insufficient evidences to assert the two main archaeological variables (time and direct spatial contacts), assessment of the iconography, the visual impact and the associated archaeological materials, allows for interpreting possible structural functions of both, and these would suggest not only a difference (which might be explained by complementarity) but a substantial divergence: the landscape setting not only the rock art carved cycle predates megaliths and persists until later moments, but the moments of major carving efforts seem, also, to correspond to an earlier Neolithic and to a later Bronze age. In this sense, a displacement from the river pathways up to the hills seems to occur as part of the megalithic spread, and this would be a fundamental strategic shift in mobility patterns and land use, also expressed through displacement from a landscape primarily focused on the riverine economy (and rock art carvings substantiating it) into a landscape focused on soil intensification economy expanding inland, combined with growing long-distance interaction with Mediterranean regions, including Northern Africa, during the Chalcolithic.

Mots-Clés: Convergent trends, parallel roads, rock art, megaliths, Tagus basin

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