

Chapter 12

Space and Time in the Architecture of Prehistoric Enclosures: The Iberian Peninsula as a Case Study

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Introductory Remarks

After decades of research, the existence of an *enclosure idea* in prehistoric Europe is widely accepted nowadays (e.g., Andersen 1997; Burgess et al. 1988; Darvill and Thomas 2001; Gibson 2002; Jorge 2003a; Márquez-Romero and Jiménez-Jáimez 2010; Valera and Evangelista 2010; Varndell and Topping 2002). However, a good number of key issues remain under discussion. The following was originally brought up by Evans (1988) and recently revisited by Whittle (2006: 21): were prehistoric enclosures built with a preconceived plan in mind? Were their particular layouts predesigned?

Tim Ingold's definition of architecture in terms of 'building' and 'dwelling' (1995) played a part in this debate. His work allowed a better understanding of how people organize and transform the world around them, serving as an inspiration for archaeological studies of the prehistoric past (e.g., Jorge 2006). Ingold (1995: 66) defended that, from a 'building' perspective, "worlds are made before they are lived in; or in other words, that acts of dwelling are preceded by acts of world-making". Thus, architecture is predesigned, and thinking comes before building. According to Ingold, however, there is another way to

conceive architecture, which he calls ‘dwelling’. Following Heidegger, he states that “the activities of building—of cultivation and construction—belong to our dwelling in the world, to the way we are. . . . To build is in itself already to dwell” (Ingold 1995: 76). That is, “design does not precede dwelling, and we do not impose form through the implementation of a pre-conceived plan on a passive world” (Pollard 2006: 44).

However, these remarkable concepts have to be very carefully used in the study of prehistoric enclosures. Otherwise, as Whittle (2006: 21) points out, they may bring about a new generalization about building that relegates past people “to a kind of agency-less lack of purpose”. Moreover, the dwelling perspective cannot explain, by itself, the striking similarities between hundreds of European prehistoric enclosures. Thus his conclusion:

While many monuments demonstrably go through changes of plan, over extended periods of time, and in that sense perhaps never reached final form, I do not see that it need be universally true that each phase of building was carried out without a sense of design. (Whittle 2006: 21)

The text that follows aims to reflect briefly on this on the basis of the archaeological evidence from a specific geographical context: the Iberian Peninsula. More precisely, the Perdigões ditched site (Reguengos de Monsaraz, Portugal), where a team from the University of Málaga is currently conducting fieldwork, has emerged as a perfect testing ground for examining the problem.

It is obvious that understanding space (place, architecture, landscape) and time (events, temporality, chronology) in prehistoric enclosures is crucial to clarifying the issue. Thus, in the first part of this chapter, and after exploring the idea of enclosure, we shall review the various architectural traditions in the creation of said monumental spaces. This

will allow us to identify recurrent features in Iberian and European enclosures, as well as characterize what will be referred to as ‘family likeness’ as a sign of some kind of geographically widespread principles. In the second part of the chapter, we will address the question of time. Relying on the works of Braudel (1986 [1958]) and our own experience at Perdigões, we will try to recognize traces of individual events and long-term processes in prehistoric enclosures. Ultimately, we aspire to moderately balance *dwelling* and *design*, *habitus* and *agency*, and *longue durée* and *courte durée* in the building of Iberian prehistoric enclosures.

The Idea of ‘Enclosure’

In the context of human life and social interactions, if a particular *space* receives some sort of meaning or significance, then it becomes a *place* (Tuan 1979). Western European prehistoric enclosures were places that acquired their meaning by virtue of two widespread architectural procedures: cosmogenesis and monumentalization.

To limit something is to create a cosmos. Through the act of cosmogenesis the undefined space becomes ordered and clarified, turning into a place-where-things-happen. In a defined space, there is a simple but revealing dialectic between *inside* and *outside* (Bachelard 1994 [1957]: 250–270). Demarcated spaces help bring human beings together, create identities, and build a sense of community: entering an enclosure and living significant experiences in there must have favored the development of strong interpersonal ties. But, like a coin with two sides, limits also bring about social exclusion. The fact that enclosures were delimited places tells us that a certain change of status—a passage—was required for

access to the inside, most likely because the outside was seen as chaotic and asocial by nature.

In Bourdieusian terms, an enclosure is a *social space*, a system of positions in which social agents try to keep or (re)negotiate the social distances between them (Bourdieu 1987: 147–166). For that reason, groups and individuals do not tend to distribute randomly or carelessly across their interior. Quite the contrary, as ethnographic accounts show us, an enclosure is a *microcosmos*: the arrangement of people and things often mimetically reproduces the social order in its entirety. The way the *Mapuche*, indigenous inhabitants of southern Chile and southwestern Argentina, organize their ceremonial centers, with their *rucas* (houses) laid out in a fashion that strictly follows the distribution of groups and territories in the wider landscape, is a good example of this (Andersen 1997: 306).

In addition, the manifest disproportion between the enclosed area of many Late Prehistoric European enclosures and the amount of space that, in principle, would be required for most activities in prehistoric societies suggests that one of the purposes of the construction of prehistoric enclosures was the monumentalization of an open space. Definitely, for most sites, their size and the magnitude of their architectural elements seem to point in that direction. It could be argued, then, that the considerable effort invested could be sanctioning the particular meaning and significance of an enclosure. As a public symbol, social life inevitably structured itself around the monument. Visibility must have contributed to this, as well: monumentality attached importance and preeminence to the place by turning it into a focus of visual attention, a reference in the landscape. All in all, we could say that, just like a tumulus or mound stressed the relevance of a closed space, and a monolith served

as a marker for a specific point in the landscape, a prehistoric enclosure monumentalized an extensive, meaningful area.

Finally, we ought to point out that cosmologic and astronomic principles often played an essential role in the layout of these enclosures, adding new dimensions of meaning to each place, and suggesting that its construction and use must have taken place in compliance with astrological prescriptions (Márquez-Romero and Jiménez-Jáimez 2010: 492). This appears to be a constant feature of European (e.g., Bertemes and Northe 2007; Pollard and Ruggles 2001) and Iberian enclosures, with several demonstrated cases in the Southwest (Valera 2008).

All things considered, it should be obvious that Neolithic Europe saw the rise of new conventions or rules that determined how an open space should be monumentalized, whether it be with ditches (ditched/causewayed enclosures), earth (banks), big stones (stone circles), timber posts (timber circles/palisade enclosures), walls (walled enclosures), or a combination thereof (e.g., henges). The act of enclosing was probably an architectural language, shared and intelligible for many European communities, from the Early Neolithic to the Bronze Age (Scarre 2001: 24). We shall focus now on Iberian enclosures, exploring their architectural principles ([Figure 12.1](#)).

Architectural Principles (I): Iberian Ditched Enclosures

In the Iberian Peninsula, most prehistoric enclosures known to date were built in the fourth and third millennia BC. These were ditched enclosures, that is, spaces demarcated by U- or

V-shaped ditches dug in the ground. Ditch depth varies, but typically ranges between 1 and 7 m, whereas their width may exceptionally reach 20 m. The layout of such enclosed places is almost invariably circular, although some may have been defined in part by natural features, giving them a more irregular shape. For instance, the inner circle at La Pijotilla made use of a small river to enclose the interior area (Hurtado 2008), Carmona was placed in the border of a plateau (Lazarich et al. 1995), and the Papa Uvas enclosure limits were completed with the coastline (Martín de la Cruz and Lucena 2003). With very few exceptions (e.g., Delibes and Herrán 2007), Iberian ditched enclosures are not as causewayed as their European counterparts. They show, however, well-defined gates or entrances, namely clear gaps in the otherwise continuous ditch, usually no more than three, uncommonly up to five (e.g., Ditch 1 at Perdigões). Some entrances are arranged in a more complex way, following widespread models like that of the ‘crab’s pincers’ (*pince de crabe* in French, *pinza de cangrejo* in Spanish), which can be seen at Fuente de la Mora (Díaz-del-Río 2004), or less frequent designs like that of ‘inbrex’ type, that has recently been discovered at Perdigões (Márquez-Romero, Valera et al. 2011).

The enclosed surface area is extremely variable, ranging from 0.5 to more than 70 ha, with estimates that surpass 100 ha for the remarkably large sites of Marroquíes Bajos (113 ha; Zafra, Castro and Hornos 2003) and Valencina de la Concepción (around 400 ha; Vargas 2003; Costa et al. 2010), where researchers have not been able to determine the limits and layout of the enclosure(s) as yet. It is not uncommon to see several ditched enclosures constructed in the same place, sometimes arranged in a concentric fashion, other times overlapping one another. In either case, available chronological data point to ditches that share space but not time, since the majority of those ditches date from different centuries or

millennia—that is, of course, in the rare case that such features have been successfully dated. This makes us think of a typical ditched site as a sort of a palimpsest rather than a chronological unit. We will come back to this point later.

Normally, the inside area of an Iberian ditched enclosure dated in the fourth or third millennia BC does not show any visible traces of above-ground features: no houses, no buildings, no walls of any kind. Instead, hundreds or even thousands of pits of various shapes and sizes appear scattered all across the enclosed space. Most pits are from 1 to 3 m in diameter and 30 cm to 2 m deep, but there are some (few) examples of larger pits that reach diameters of more than 5 m and a depth of more than 3 m. Banks made of earth are supposed to be part of the enclosure architecture. Although no direct evidence of them has been found yet, results from recent geophysical surveys carried out at Perdigões show an ‘empty’ strip (i.e., space without pits) that extends parallel to the so-called Ditch 2, which hints at the presence of an inside bank at some point in the past (Márquez-Romero, Valera et al. 2011).

Certain sites, such as Marroquies Bajos, do indeed possess houses and walls, in addition to ditches and pits, but the alleged simultaneity in the use of both walls and ditches, and really the temporality of the whole site, is currently under intense debate (Zafra, Castro and Hornos 2003).

Another intriguing feature of the Iberian ditched enclosures is an asymmetrical distribution of archaeological deposits. Although the total amount of items (potsherds, prismatic blades and other flint tools, flint knapping waste, broken quern stones, animal and human remains, complete or incomplete, etc.) recorded in every enclosure is in most instances vast, nearly all evidence comes from ditch and pit fillings. This is consistent with the multiple traces of secondary deposition and deliberate filling documented. Currently

known data seem to point toward pit and ditch fillings being the outcome of deliberate human actions. Besides, filling assemblages do not always look like something compatible with the modern notion of rubbish, since they usually contain nonrandom associations and dissociations between objects such as human and animal remains (complete or not), potsherds, and so forth.

Architectural Principles (II): Other Iberian Enclosures

To a lesser degree, other architectural techniques were employed to build enclosures in Late Prehistoric Iberia. Palisades, for instance, although rare, are worthy of some attention. Belatedly recognized by European research, the delimitation of a place using wooden fences or walls is now acknowledged as a widespread practice during the Neolithic on the Continent and the British Islands (Gibson 2002). There are only a couple of identified cases in the Iberian Peninsula. One of them is at La Revilla del Campo, located in Spain's *Meseta Central*, where a double palisade circumscribes a small area of only 0.06 ha (Rojo et al. 2008). The other encloses an estimated surface area of 0.15 ha and was discovered at the Portuguese site of Perdigões thanks to a magnetometry survey (Márquez-Romero, Valera et al. 2011).

Stone walled enclosures, on the other hand, constitute a common feature of the Iberian Copper Age (third millennium BC). Very much unlike ditched enclosures, usual topographic locations of walled sites include flat hilltops, cliff edges, or high rocky tors. Variability in size is noticeable: whereas most sites do not surpass 1 ha, there are some

monumental exceptions, like Los Millares (6 ha), San Blas (30 ha), or the walled phase at Marroquíes Bajos (see above) (34 ha). They normally comprise more than one wall line, and every wall, built in masonry style, is composed of two faces with gravel filler between them. Sometimes, adjacent to the outer side of the walls are found circular buildings, the so-called 'bastions' and 'towers' we just referred to. Occasionally, gates or entrances may show morphological resemblances to the aforementioned 'crab's pincers', but making use of stones as raw material and masonry as building technique instead of ditches dug in the ground. The enclosed space is occupied mainly by what appears to be circular huts with stone masonry foundations and floor deposits, whereas walls and roofs could have been built employing perishable materials.

It has lately been pointed out the likely existence of a different kind of enclosure in the Bronze Age of the Iberian Central Plateau, with examples such as Castro de la Plaza, Pico del Águila, or Cuesta de la Horca (Rodríguez and Moral 2007: 779), which may reach up to 17 ha in size. These Bronze Age sites have enclosing walls up to 200 m long, 22 m wide, and estimated heights of 3 to 4 m, composed of irregular stone bricks and unevenly distributed mud. Such enclosures tend to be located on hilltops and cliff edges, so that walls do not define circular closed spaces, like those of earlier enclosures, just by themselves. Rather, they fill the gaps between natural features, like rivers, cliffs, ravines, and such (a model known in France as *éperon barré*). Entrances are few, usually no more than one, and consist of a simple interruption in the wall line. The general scarcity of huts or any other domestic structures inside suggest brief and sporadic stays rather than permanent occupation.

Family Likeness: Related Enclosures in a Broader Geographical Context

The scenario outlined above does not differ much from what can be seen in the rest of Western Europe. Most enclosures have features that are individually distinctive, but with a clear ‘family likeness’ that can be inferred from recurrent patterns in enclosure layout and archaeological deposit formation, namely pit and ditch filling (Márquez-Romero and Jiménez-Jáimez 2010). Only the predominance, in the last decades of the twentieth century, of an overly locally focused archaeology in Spain and Portugal has delayed the general acceptance of such an idea. This assumption is not new. Years ago, A. Whittle (1977: 329) wrote that “enclosures with ditches and banks were a feature of Neolithic cultures in western Europe from the end of the Linear Pottery culture onwards”. In our view, after three decades of research, Whittle’s statement turned out to be quite accurate. Today, we could argue that western European Neolithic and Copper Age uniqueness lies, above all, in the profusion of enclosures and, most notably, ditched enclosures.

The oldest enclosures known date back to the Early Neolithic (sixth millennium BC) of the Mediterranean area and central Europe. Most of them were ditched enclosures, but their shape was not always a circle, so we can find elliptical, spiral, and even roughly rectangular layouts; ditches were either continuous or causewayed. Traces of houses, both circular and rectangular, have been identified in certain sites, although their spatial and temporal relationship with the enclosing ditches is usually in need of further analysis (Márquez-Romero and Jiménez-Jáimez 2010: 275–277). In southern Italy and Sicily, enclosures were built as early as the first half of the sixth millennium BC (Skeates 2002;

Tiné 1983; Whittle 1996). The tradition began a little later in the Iberian Peninsula, but still in the sixth millennium BC, with examples like Mas d'Is in the east (Bernabeu et al. 2003), La Revilla del Campo, a palisade enclosure, in the *Meseta* (Rojo et al. 2008), or Los Cascajos in the north of the Peninsula (García and Sesma 2001). By that time, enclosures were also being constructed in central Europe, in the context of the *Linearbandkeramik* culture (Andersen 1997; Keeley and Cahen 1989; Meyer 2002; Mordant and Mordant 1988; Whittle 1977; 1988; 1996).

Enclosure building continued in central Europe from the fifth to the fourth millennia BC, in line with the development of Neolithic cultures like Cerny, Rössen, Stichbandkeramik, Lengyel, or Michelsberg (Andersen 1997). But it was in the fourth millennium when the tradition of demarcating spaces by way of (interrupted) ditches dug in the ground reached a considerable part of Europe, from the north to the Mediterranean, and from central Europe to Ireland, in parallel with the emergence and spread of megalithic monuments. In Jutland and southern Scandinavia, enclosures are known as *indelukke* (Andersen 1997; 2002; Thorpe 2001); in central Europe as *unterbrochene Erdwerke* (literally 'interrupted earthworks') (Andersen 1997; Meyer 2002; Starling 1988); and in France as *enceintes fossés* (Burnez and Cassen 1966; Jousaume 1988; Scarre 1998). Finally, in the British Islands (Briard 2000; Gibson 2002; Harding 1998; Oswald et al. 2001; Pryor 1998), recent research has shown that the so-called *causewayed enclosures* appeared in the Early Neolithic (c.3800 BC), and prehistoric peoples kept building them for about three hundred years (Whittle, Healy and Bayliss 2011). Generally speaking, ditched enclosures dating from this period do not present traces of houses or walls; quite the contrary, they usually contain only pits. Their shape is circular in most cases, but there are examples of sites delimited by

natural features, such as rivers or cliffs, like the well-known archetype of the *éperon barré* ('cordoned off spur') typical of Neolithic France.

It is important to note that, unlike other European regions, where ditched enclosures all but disappeared c.3000 BC, it seems that, in the Iberian Peninsula, sites surrounded by circular ditches were constructed and used for much longer, reaching the last third of the third millennium BC. In Iberia, Valencina de la Concepción (Costa et al. 2010), Papa Uvas (Martín de la Cruz and Lucena 2003), La Pijotilla (Hurtado 2008), and Perdigões (Lago et al. 1998; Márquez-Romero, Valera et al. 2011; Márquez-Romero, Suárez et al. 2011) in the southwest; Martos (Lizcano 1999) and Marroquíes Bajos (Zafra, Castro and Hornos 2003) in the high Guadalquivir valley; Les Jovades and Arenal de la Costa (Bernabeu 1993) in the east; and Moscatel, Casetón de la Era (Delibes et al. 2010), Gózquez de Arriba, Las Matillas, and Fuente de la Mora (Díaz-Del-Río 2004) in the Meseta are some of the most outstanding ditched enclosures from the fourth to the third millennia BC.

The third millennium BC (Copper Age) saw the advent of new architectural principles in the construction of Iberian enclosures. Restricted geographically to the Iberian Atlantic Façade and southeast, stone-walled enclosures include what appear to be circular houses and other domestic features. But they are also one of the most controversial topics in Iberian archaeology. Traditionally perceived as 'fortified settlements' with 'bastions' and 'defensive towers' (Almagro and Arribas 1959; Molina et al. 2004; Zafra, Castro and Hornos 2003), it has been claimed, in the last decade and a half, that they could just be a special form of enclosure (e.g., Jorge 1994; 2003b; Márquez-Romero and Jiménez-Jáimez 2010; Whittle 1996). Among the seventy known walled enclosures, a few of them stand out: Los Millares (Molina et al. 2004) and the later phases at Marroquíes Bajos (Zafra, Castro and Hornos

2003) in the southeast; Los Vientos (Piñón 1987), Castelo de Santa Justa (Gonçalves 1989), San Blas, and Palacio Quemado (Hurtado 2008) in the Guadiana basin; and Castanheiro do Vento and Castelo Velho in the Duero basin (Jorge 2003a). The geographical distributions of ditched and walled enclosures partially overlap each other, making it safe to assume that they somehow shared the same spaces in the Iberian Peninsula for more than 500 years (Márquez-Romero and Jiménez-Jáimez 2010).

Looking at the big picture, the beginning of the end for Iberian enclosures took place in the last centuries of the third millennium BC, when both walled and ditched enclosures saw a progressive decrease in human activity until complete abandonment. After that, there are some examples that date back to the Bronze Age, in the second millennium BC, like the aforementioned walled enclosures in the Meseta (Rodríguez and Moral 2007: 779), and even to the first millennium BC (e.g., López and Suárez 2010), although by then the idea of enclosure and its expression in the Peninsula is much more difficult to trace.

A tradition that lasted almost 4,000 years and covered most of western Europe was obviously subject to regional variability and transformations over time, so it should not be surprising to identify geographical and chronological peculiarities, the addition of new features, and the disappearance of others. But for a long time, at least from the sixth to the third millennium BC, there were comparable ideas of enclosure, ubiquitous architectural patterns, and analogous formation processes.

Time and Design in Prehistoric Enclosures

At this point, it should be reasonable to say that we can make inferences only about Iberian enclosures, particularly those dating back to the fourth and third millennia BC, under the assumption that most of them shared certain features with one another and with their European counterparts: circularity, enclosing ditches, scarcity of houses and other domestic features, pits, complex depositional practices, astrological alignments, and so on. This prompts us to think of the existence of a set of common ideas and actions. On the other hand, variability was very marked within the limits of these basic principles. Neither the ‘building’ nor the ‘dwelling’ perspective can explain this fact on its own, so we need to find a way to avoid such a dichotomy—which is, by the way, what Ingold intended in the first place.

With that goal in mind, we shall make use of several well-known analytical categories. First, we will borrow from Braudel’s time perspectivism (1986 [1958]; 1991) the notions of *histoire événementielle* and *longue durée* in order to discern the materialization of the ‘event’ and that of the ‘structure’ (in the Braudelian sense of the word) from the archaeological record at prehistoric enclosures. Second, we will use two concepts that have gained a lot of traction lately in archaeological studies: ‘habitus’, introduced by Bourdieu, and ‘agency’. Our intention is, in a way, to combine ‘building’ and ‘dwelling’ in a compromising solution that might be useful, at least in theory.

The Annales School time perspectivism is a familiar reference for many archaeologists (e.g., Harding 2005; Hodder 1987; Lucas 2008; Whittle, Healy and Bayliss 2011). To understand the scope of our approach, it should be noted that the notions of ‘event’ and ‘structure’ are not intrinsic to the passage of time, so, in that sense, “the categories upon which time perspectivism relies are surely unhelpful” (Harding 2005: 94): the absolute chronology and the specific sequence of events at a particular site can only be clarified at the

moment by way of a coherent radiometric dating program (Whittle, Healy and Beyliss 2011), which clearly exceeds the objectives of this chapter. Having said that, *histoire événementielle* and *longue durée* can actually be valuable to understand the rhythms and scales of time in the history of every site.

Braudel (1986 [1958]: 66) claimed that time comprises a mass of facts, some exceptional, some obscured by repetition, which constitute the domain of *histoire événementielle*. Prehistoric archaeologists have repeatedly searched for particular events in the archaeological record, but the aggregate nature of said record makes it a difficult task (Lucas 2008: 61). Still, most ditched enclosures offer the possibility of getting close to the short span, given the presence of numerous deliberately formed archaeological contexts—that is, ditch and pit fillings.

We shall follow Lucas (2008: 62–63) in his dissection of the act of deposition and its relationship with past events and behaviors. Thus, regarding pit and ditch fillings, we distinguish between things and their arrangement. Concerning the former, the biography (Gosden and Marshall 1999) of each individual object may be different. Artifacts and ecofacts contained, for instance, in a pit are the surviving remains of a number of events that occurred before their deposition in the pit. Archaeologists may or may not be able to reconstruct the biography of each and every one of them in its entirety. But there is one thing they have in common, and that is their involvement in the actions that directly resulted in the assemblage we see today. Hence, if we focus on the organization of things, that is, the depositional context, instead of just the objects, we will find out that there is at least one event that can be archaeologically identified: the act of deposition.

We know that the material remains of events and actions were in continuous movement in the prehistoric past; sometimes, even archaeological deposits were routinely or exceptionally altered or removed by the same people who created them, for a variety of reasons. According to Lucas (2008: 63), a certain degree of irreversibility is a quality of most surviving archaeological contexts: the fact that we can effectively define an assemblage tells us that the actions that produced it were not neutralized by subsequent activities. In our opinion, pits and ditches are, for the most part, closed contexts arranged relatively quickly and in a specific way by deliberate human actions. This is also the reason why only in rare occasions the artifacts and ecofacts in them would be taken somewhere else. This gives their fillings a higher degree of irreversibility than that of the majority of archaeological deposits, which, in turn, brings us back to our original statement about the possibility of reconstructing individual acts of deposition that occurred at prehistoric enclosures. Ditch 1 at Perdigões, where we could observe not only the human-driven character of the filling process, but particular depositional events as well, some of them necessarily executed from within the ditch itself (Márquez-Romero, Suárez et al. 2011: 172), provides a good example ([Figure 12.2](#)).

Events are closely related to variability in these assemblages. Sediments and objects are combined in such a variety of ways that the chances of finding two pit or ditch fillings with the exact same composition are extremely slim. This is probably indicative of the multiple circumstances surrounding the depositional act, like its specific time and location, the life history of the items included, the predepositional events, the actors responsible and their purposes, and so forth. Some of these factors belong to the realm of ‘agency’, that is, the way human actions are enabled within larger social systems (Dornan 2002: 304).

But if we put too much weight into variability, we may not be able to create concepts and therefore not be able to think about the past. Actually, it could be argued that variability here is somewhat deceptive, as it can make archaeologists overlook the aforementioned common depositional patterns. Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' (1977 [1972]) as a set of guidelines acquired through the experiences and practices of everyday life and not necessarily conscious, allows for an infinity of possible answers within a limited number of principles (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 109). When we are examining the multiple depositional practices, we have to take into account that, as in other spheres of human activity, habitus does not really dictate 'what to do' or 'what can be done'; rather, it determines 'what cannot be done'. In other words, there are general principles that make the existence of unique, unrepeatable gestures or actions—the domain of human agency—possible, but that also prevent random or arbitrary behaviors. Using Chomsky's 'generative grammar' as an analogy, we could say that such depositional practices are the product of some kind of 'rule-governed creativity' (Chomsky 1970: 22).

The same idea can be applied to enclosure layout, since enclosures are subject to some degree of variability themselves. Every enclosure was constructed in unique circumstances by people with distinctive motivations and under specific conditions. This explains the more or less significant differences in shape, size, and features between them. But whatever those dissimilarities are, there are always limits to what can be done, and those limits are defined by the habitus. It is from this point of view that the recurrence of features such as enclosing ditches, circularity, astrological alignments, pits, deliberate depositions, and so forth—the 'family likeness' we just mentioned—makes sense, even giving us archaeologists the possibility of making cross-cultural, comparative studies like the one

carried out by Parkinson and Duffy (2007). The slow pace at which the habitus may change also serves as an explanation of the longevity of the European prehistoric enclosure tradition, while at the same time opening the door to Braudel's notion of *longue durée*.

Getting back to the original issue of preconceived plans in the construction of European prehistoric enclosures, we must question the validity of the 'building' versus 'dwelling' dichotomy, much like what Whittle did, although in the terms we just described. In our view, an archaeological site as a whole is the outcome of many daily or special events and practices, accumulated over time. As such, prehistoric enclosures were in a state of flux: ditches were built and abandoned not much later, entrances were monumentalized and dismantled, more and more pits were dug and backfilled, and so on. In this sense, we agree with Evans's (1988: 89) point that we should think of the "acts of enclosure as an event or activity rather than as a stable or lasting construct". But we also think that some sense of design existed here, as demonstrated by the family likeness found in most of them. The key, for us, is that design decisions were not the sole result of individual or collective agency, but the combined effect of agency and habitus, and therefore, not necessarily a discursively conscious action.

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Figure 1. Different Neolithic/Copper Age Iberian ditched (a: Xancra; b: Outeiro Alto; c: Santa Vitória; d: Venta del Rapa; e: Perdigões; f: Moscatel) and walled (g: Castelo Velho) enclosure layouts (drawn by the authors from data published on a: Valera and Becker 2011, Figure 3; b: Valera and Becker 2011, Figure 7; c: Valera and Becker 2011, Figure 7; d: Lechuga et al. 2011, Figure 3; e: Márquez-Romero, Valera et al. 2011, Figure 5; f: Delibes and Herrán 2007, p. 149; g: Jorge 2004, Figure 3).

Figure 2. The event and the *longue durée* at Perdigões (photos by the authors): (a) magnetometry, which gives us a clear view of the accumulative nature of the archaeological record over time; (b) an individual pit; (c) traces of structured deposition within Ditch 1; and (d) multiple small pits within Ditch 1 filling.