

ABSTRACT

This survey sets out to present a detailed study of the mesoneolithic settlement of Cova Fosca cave, which is situated in the Ares del Maestrat region of the province of Castellón (Spain).

The special characteristics of its material culture, as well as the geographical location—an inland mountainous area at 900 metres above sea level—give this site a relevant importance towards a greater, more panoramic understanding of the Ancient Neolithic period in the western Mediterranean sea well.

The Ancient Neolithic period of the Iberian Peninsula, and to be more precise, that of its eastern coast, has been systematized with reference to the appearance of cardial type ceramics which have been considered as "leading fossils" essential for determining the first phases corresponding to early human settlements showing economical development with agricultural and pastoral activity.

This discernment came about with the study of sites with an abundance of cardial type ceramics, such as the one in the Arene Candide¹ cave, outside the Iberian Peninsula, and also the Cova de l'Or, cave on the Mediterranean coasts.² The wealth of such settlements, along with the absolute dates obtained from them, was suffice to consider them as the first representative sites of the initial phases of the western Mediterranean Neolithic period, and its chronology is fixed inside the first part of the V millennium. On the other hand, the appearance of the first characteristics of a highly assimilated cereal agricultural economy confirmed the supposition of a foreign, external contribution by means of more advanced Neolithic cultural transmission influences, typical of the Near-East, which were apparently initiated in a more ancient chronological period.³

1. BERNABO BREA, L., *Gli scavi nella caverna delle Arene Candide*, Inst. internazionale di studi liguri, v. 1 y t. II, Bordighera, 1956.

— *Il neolitico a cerámica Impresa e la sua diffusione del Mediterraneo*, Revue d'études ligures, XVI, págs. 25-26.

2. TARRADELL, M., *El país valenciano del neolítico a la iberización*, Valencia, 1962.

PELLICER, M., *La cerámica Impresa del neolítico Inicial en el Mediterráneo occidental*, Zephyrus, XV, págs. 101-124, Salamanca, 1964.

FLETCHER, D., *Museo de Prehistoria de la Diputación Provincial de Valencia*, Círculo de Bellas Artes, Valencia, 1974.

MARTI OLIVER, B., PASCUAL PEREZ, V., GALLART MARTI, M. D. et alter, *Cova de l'Or (Beniarrés, Alicante)*, Serie trabajos varios n.º 65, S.I.P., vol. II, Valencia, 1980.

MARTI OLIVER, B., PARDO, R. y SEGURA, J. M., *Cova de l'Or (Beniarrés, Alicante)*, vol I, Trabajos Varios del S.I.P., n.º 51, Valencia, 1977.

FLETCHER, D., *La labor del S.I.P. y su Museo en el pasado año*, Memorias anuales de 1975 a 1979, Diputación Provincial de Valencia, 1976-1980.

3. FLETCHER, D., *Nuevos datos sobre las relaciones neolíticas entre las costas españolas y el Mediterráneo oriental*, A Pedro Bosch Gimpera, págs. 167-174, Mexico, 1963.

Not only the theory of Eastern origin but also that of the presence of cardial ceramic beds in Southern Spain and North Africa have been convincingly upheld until quite recently, with a theoretical base which was paramount to explain the beginning of the initial phases of a Neolithic process on the western Mediterranean.

However, it must be stated that the basis of this paradigm, bearing in mind recent discoveries, is provisional and too schematic, since we cannot establish, as yet, the relationships, parallels and cultural transfers that might have taken place with eastern groups as far as the western Mediterranean.

The Neolithic phenomena can be summarised in accordance with the following factors: sedentarism, climatic change, economy of production, ceramic appearance, new bone industry, tool evolution, housing structures, change of eating habits, demographic growth and an increase of relationships within social groups.

We now intend dealing with these factors and analysing each one carefully. Firstly, it has to be said that sedentarism does not appear to be the only determining factor, as this type of permanent settlement began to take shape from the Upper Paleolithic Age onwards; particularly in those settlements with enough natural resources to supply ample plant gathering and hunting grounds. This opinion has been expressed by Testart,⁴ in the sense that a sedentary trend existed, which was as important as the nomadic trend among gatherer-hunter groups. Anthropologists Watanabe and King⁵ both agree that these groups may have been sedentary, provided the exploited territory could offer a wide variety of exploitable biotic resources, depending on seasonal phases, and where minimum feeding sources could be guaranteed.

Another of the main factors studied by some prehistoric researchers, such as Gordon Childe, is the climatic factor. The change in climate was responsible for environmental adaptation and the consequent exploitation of resources that were offered. The importance given to the climatic factor as the driving force of new Neolithic economies is based mainly on the observation of the phenomena that took place in the Near East. In fact, the special environmental circumstances of the Fertile Crescent region brought about a rapid development of herbaceous plant species and wild cereals, and from whose observation early gramineous cultivation arose, which would have appeared earlier in this place, while in the rest of the western circummediterranean regions they appeared later.

Nevertheless, this is, in our opinion only a partial reason, since the climatic change also influenced Southern Europe and North Africa, and wouldn't always be the decisive factor for economic changes; that is to say, in most cases human groups would have gone on living within the boundaries of typically Epipaleolithic or Mesolithic subsistency ways, al-

4. GUILAINE, J., *La neolitización de las costas mediterráneas de Francia y España*, Cuadernos de Prehistoria y Arqueología Castellonenses, 3, págs. 39-50, Castellón, 1976.

TESTART, A., *Les chasseurs-cueilleurs ou l'origine des inégalités*, Soc. d'ethnographie, Paris, 1982.

5. WATANABE, H., *Ecology of the Jomon people: stability of habitation and its biological and ethno-historical implications*, *Ziwinigaku Zasshi* 74:78-84, 1966.

— *Subsistence and ecology of northern food gatherers with special reference to the Ainu*, Lee R.B. y I. De Vore ed. "Man the Hunter" Aldine Atherton, Chicago, 1968.

— *The Ainu*, Bicchieri, M.G. ed. "Hunters and gatherers today", New York, Londres, 1972.

KING, C. D., *Chumash inter-village economic exchange*, *Indian Historian* 4 (1), 31-43, 1971.

— *Nations of hunters? New views of California Indian societies*, *Indian Historian* 5 (4):12-7, 1972.

though they followed an environmental adaptation process. This is confirmed, for instance, by hunting habits which show that the rabbit became one of the most hunted species of animal, substituting the intense hunting of other large herbivores. At the same time both fishing and plant gathering also increased. The outcome of the new landscape of Holocene gave rise to some biotopes, which were appropriate to certain species together with the appearance of a new forest covering, specific to a warm and wet climate and tending to become drier. The natural environment would have offered new exploitation possibilities for epipaleolithic groups, which would have adapted gradually to these resources, and finally have been forced to carry out a control of them; not only of the most essential and abundant animal species (control = early - domestication = domestication), but also the most suitable plant species (control = early - cultivation = agricultural exploitation). In fact, what the climatic factor did was to contribute to the adaptation process leading in turn to greater exploitation of natural resources. However, the progressive climatic change did not independently bring about economic reorganization; several millennia would have to go by before the new Neolithic culture became totally adopted by the Mesolithic populations. The determining factor of the appearance of the new Neolithic culture is due to the complete adoption of both agricultural and pastoral production. Such an economy is based on the total knowledge and employment of two systems of production. The domestication of certain species of animals and the cultivation of some species of plants. Both systems would have undergone an evolutive process, which we do not suppose were acquired by "borrowing" or by means of imposition from further developed cultures.

That is to say, the introduction of some production schemes, which were introduced from external sources and against the interests of the group, or by economic cultural change or adaptation - highly appraised by spreading trends.

If we first consider domestication, it seems that it could have been developed from a cultural Mesolithic horizon that some authors refer to as the Early-Neolithic phase, and which we prefer to consider as "Meso-neolithic". The presence of domesticated animals in meridional Europe has been confirmed as going back as far as the VII millennium. Eg. in the Castelnoviense de Châteauneuf (France) phase,⁶ the shelters of Moita do Sebastiao and Cabeco da Arruda (Portugal),⁷ also in Northern Europe; the Mesolithic sites at Starr Carr (England)⁸ and Seckenberg-Moor (Germany)⁹ both dated around the VIII millennium (7500 B.C.), and indeed in Maglemosa (Denmark) in the VII millennium (around 6500 B.C.).¹⁰

6. DUCOS, P., *Le gisement de Châteauneuf-les-Martigues et les problèmes de la domestication*, Bull. du Musée d'Anthropologie préhistorique de Monaco, 5, págs. 119-133, 1958.

— *Le mouton de Châteauneuf-les-Martigues*, "L'élevage en Méditerranée occidentale", Actes du Colloque Internal. de l'Inst. de Recherches Méditerranéennes, C.N.R.S., págs. 77 y ss., Sénanque, mai, 1976.

7. ROCHE, J., *Le gisement mésolithique de Moita do sebastiao, Muge, Portugal*, Instituto de Alta Cultura, Lisboa, 1972.

8. HARCOURT, R. A., *The dog in prehistoric and early historic Britain*, Journal of Archaeological Science, 1, n.º 2, págs. 151-175, 1974.

DEGERBOL, M., *On a find of Preboreal domestic dog (Canis familiaris L.) from Star Carr, Yorkshire, with remarks on other Mesolithic dogs*, Proc. prehist. Soc., 27, págs. 35-55, 1961.

SIMPSON, D. D., *Economy and Settlement in Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Britain and Europe*, Londres, 1971.

CLARK, G., *Prehistoric Europe: the economic Basis*, Londres, 1952.

CLARK, J. G. D., *Excavations at Star Carr*, Londres, 1954.

9. GUILAINE, J., *Sur les débuts de l'élevage en Méditerranée occidentale*, "L'élevage en Méditerranée occidentale", Actes du Coll. Internal. de l'Inst. de Recherches Méditerranéennes, Sénanque, mai, 1976.

10. GUILAINE, J., *Sur les débuts de l'élevage...*, Op. Cit., págs. 39-48.

Something similar took place with the application of agriculture, although it proved to be more difficult than animal domestication. It seems that the first cultivated plants were **Triticum** and **Hordeum**. This shows that the first kind of cultivation must have been undertaken in areas where these plants would otherwise thrive naturally. However, apparently there is evidence of wild grass gathering taking place during the Paleolithic period (Old Stone Age),¹¹ shown by verified finds of millstones with grinding traces in South African sites, one of which dates back to 48900 B.C.,¹² and also in Europe, as well as in Australia, dated as 20000 B.C.¹³ Laminas with patina and millstones have been found in some sites at Nubia (dated between 13000 and 10000 B.C.)¹⁴ from the Late Upper Paleolithic Age and the African Epipaleolithic Age; and even remains of **Pennisetum** have been discovered at the Mauritanian site in Tichit Walata.¹⁵ All this denotes the exploitation of "gathering techniques", which goes far back and is not only limited to the Near-East, in other geographical areas with similar climatic conditions. While it is certainly true that the most convincing evidence of wheat and barley cultivation can be detected nowadays in Asia Minor from the VIII millennium, Ali Kosh, Hacilar, Tell Ramad, Tell-es-Sawwan, Perico and Beidha¹⁶ and also on the Eastern Mediterranean from the VII millennium at Nea Nikomedia and Knossos.¹⁷ It must also be said that Western chronologies, while showing a difference of approximately I millennium, do not imply an obligatory diffusion within the East-West axis, but explain its development by means of self-contained cultural mechanisms. This is so, since the substratum of economic production of Paleolithic origin would be strongly fixed in the way of living of the European Mesolithic populations, and particularly those established in Western circummediterranean regions; although it may well have originated due to fluctuating climatic changes that occurred during the first Holocene period, delaying the process in question and favourable indeed for the growth of these types of grasses... Nevertheless, evidence to verify the cultivation of monoccum, barley and wheat (among others) in the VI and V millenniums has been found in Italy (Renrina and Passo di Corvo)¹⁸ France (Châteauneuf, Gazel, Couthézon and Riou),¹⁹ in Spain (Or, Sarsa and Zuheros),²⁰ and even signs of specialized "gathering" or

11. JARMAN, H. N., *The origins of wheat and barley cultivation*, en "Papers in economic prehistory", Ed. Higgs, E., págs. 15-26, Cambridge, 1972.

REED, C. A., *Origins of agriculture*, Ed. Mouton, La Haya/Paris, 1977.

— *Origins of agriculture: Discussion and some conclusions*, Reed Ed., 1977.

— *A model for the origin of agriculture in the Near East*, Reed Ed., 1977.

12. KRAYBILL, N., *Pre-agricultural tools for the preparation of foods in the Old World*, en Reed. C. Ed., pág. 495, 1977.

13. ALLEN, H. R., *The Bagundji of the Darling basin: cereal gatherers in an uncertain environment*, en "World Archaeology", 5, págs. 309-322, 1974.

14. WENDORF, F., SCHILD, R., *The use of ground grain during the late paleolithic of the lower Nile valley Egypt*, en "Origins of African plant domestication" Harlan, J. R. et al. (Ed.), págs. 276-277, La Haya/Paris, 1976.

WENDORF, F., *Late paleolithic sites in egyptian Nubia*, en "The prehistory of Nubia", t. II, Wendorf. F. (Ed.), South. Methodist. Univ. Press, págs. 943-945, Dallas, 1965.

15. DESMOND CLARK, J., *A Pré-historia da Africa*, pág. 210, Lisboa, 1973.

MUNSON, P. J., *Recent archaeological research in the Dhar Tichit region of south-central Mauretania*, en "West African Arch. Newsletter", 10, págs. 6-13, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1968.

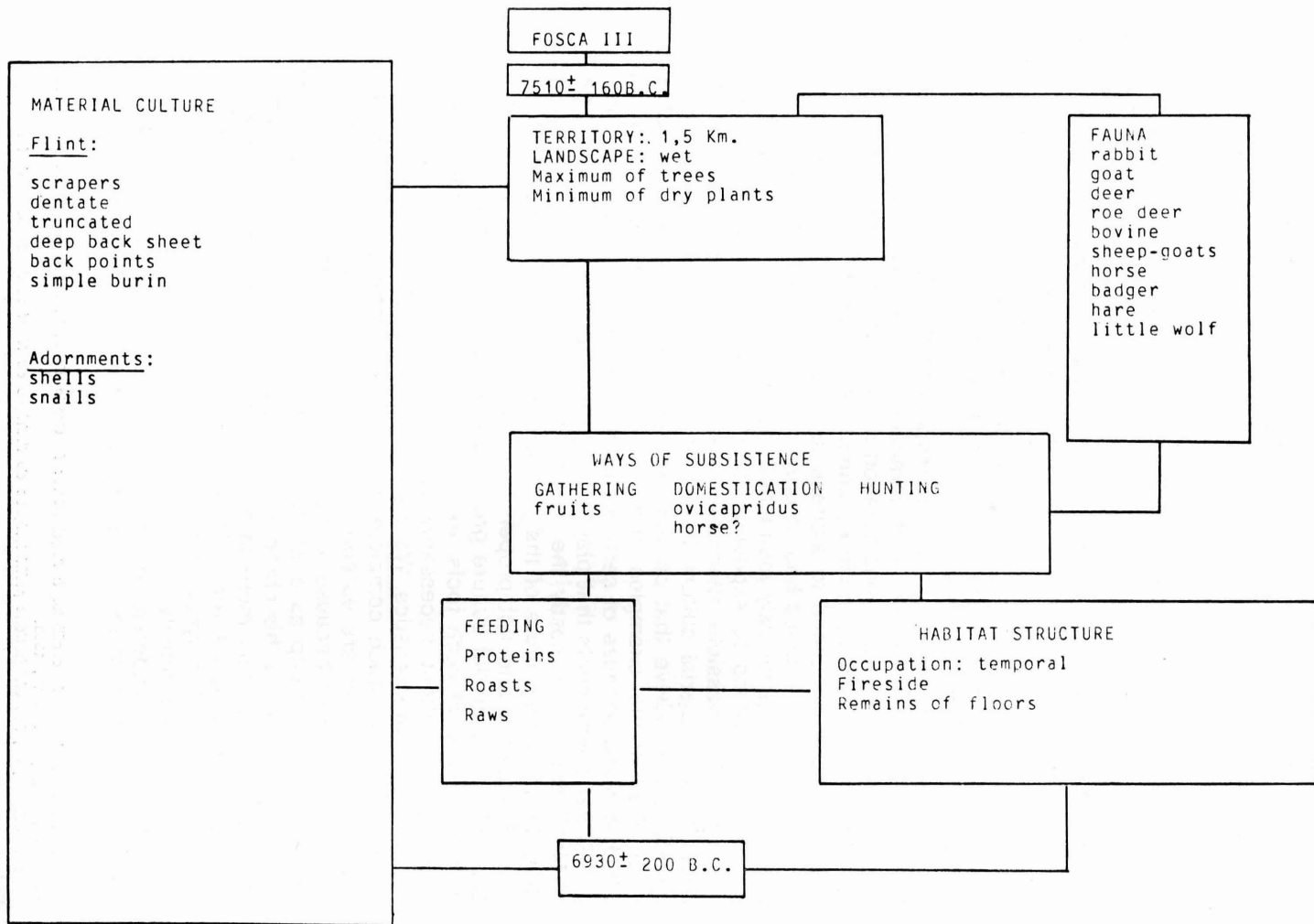
16. JARMAN, H. N., *The origins...*, Op. cit., págs. 16, 17 y 21, 1972.

17. JARMAN, H. N., *The origins...*, Op. cit., pág. 24, 1972.

18. JARMAN, H. N., *Early Crop agriculture in Europe*, en IX Congrès UISPP, Coll. XX, préirage, págs. 116-144, Nice, 1976.

19. GUILAINE, J., *La neolitización de las costas mediterráneas de Francia y España*, en "Cuadernos de Prehistoria y Arqueología Castellonenses", 3, pág. 42, 1976.

20. GUILAINE, J., *La neolitización...*, Op. cit., pág. 42, 1976.



early cultivation from the IX and VIII millennia at the French site of La Balma de l'Abeurador,²¹ as well as at some Saharian sites, where we can observe the presence of millet, cucurbitaceous and lotus tree in the Algerian sites at Merriet²² and the Mauritanian ones such as that at Dhar Tichitt.²³

So, agriculture then appears within a very similar cultural-economic frame to the one presented by domestication, and whose origin does not lie in the Neolithic period but it is at this time when this new activity was found to be in a completely acquired stage or else assumed by human groups. It must be said then that the economic factor of production that characterized the Neolithic period did not start here but, in fact, came to an end; since the necessary experiences of trial and error had already taken place and would now lead on to the "putting into practice" of new methods which would have developed a cultural systematization known today as the "Neolithic Revolution".

The main guideline given with respect to the Neolithic material culture, is the presence of the first ceramics, and, although we can, on the whole, confirm this fact, consideration must be given to the fact that certain Neolithic economic cultures completely ignored pottery production. With this point we intend to express the irrelevance that, in our opinion, the presence of ceramics had, if only in the Early Neolithic stages, together with other, previously mentioned factors.

What we intend to expound and question in our study is the existence of other possible alternative answers with respect to specific aspects of the material culture belonging to Mediterranean Neolithic communities. We believe that cardial ceramics represents only one of many cultural-economic examples produced by these complex communities, which evolved because of certain cultural and economic antecedents.

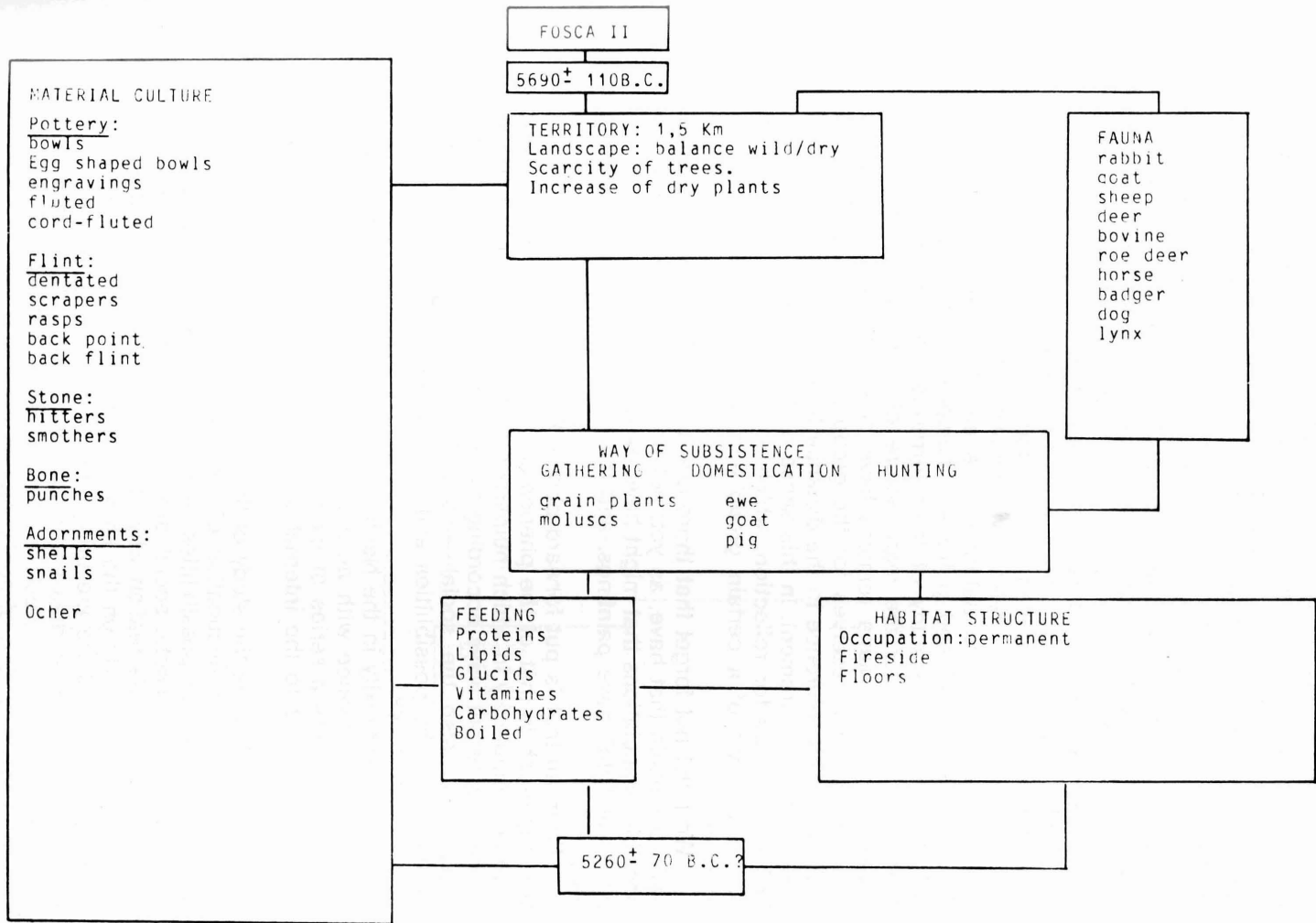
Other components that played their own part in this dynamic process of Neolitization are mostly the rest of the tools that, with the ceramics, form the material culture of the period. These tools are, more often than not, disregarded and not properly analysed as elements that shape and complete the material culture group of the various Neolithic phases. Generally, studies of such tools are restricted to an "independent look" at each object without necessarily taking into consideration other "sets" with similar characteristics. We are referring specifically to the lithic and bone industries, which complete the Neolithic material background, and that in our opinion are essential, not only as the typical elements they represent, but also because it is possible to infer from them the process followed by the group as a whole, linked to their own function of enormous importance on this chronological-cultural horizon. We consider that the lithic industry has more information to offer than that of the bone. On the other hand we are able to make out the relationship held with earlier Epipaleolithic types and to what extent these reflect a definite kind of economic activity.

All things considered, the lithic industrial complexes are, in their own right, more important for the information they contain, more so in fact

21. VAQUER, J., *De la cueillette à l'agriculture: la Grotte de l'Abeurador*, en "Dossiers de l'Archéologie", 44, juin, págs. 18-19, 1980.

22. CAMPS, G., *Les civilisations préhistoriques de l'Afrique du Nord et du Sahara*, Ed. Doin, pág. 236, Paris, 1974.

23. CAMPS, G., *Les civilisations...*, Op. cit., págs. 225 y 256, 1974.



than the ceramic decoration; as this type can only offer the possible relationship and influences taking place at the time of manufacture.

We must also taken into account other components such as: — the action of possible variation/change of eating habits due to advantages of production under the new economic system, culinary treatment of food, demographic increase of social groups and higher intensification of relationships between neighbouring communities; factors which are highly relevant if the initial structure of things and the subsequent stability of the Neolithic process in a specific area is to be understood, as they belong to the basic economic frame being researched.

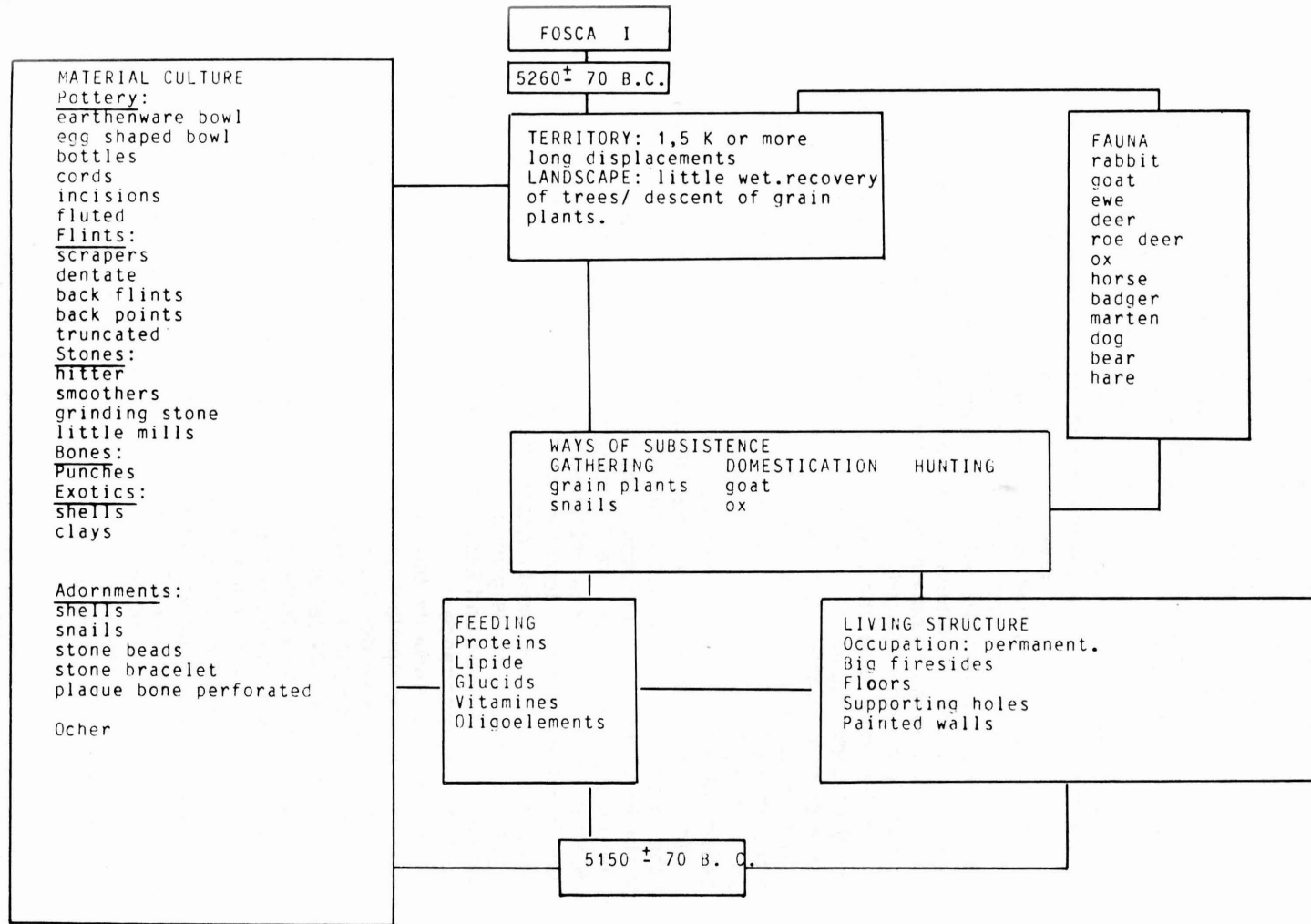
Such components are not always easy to analyse, but a general panorama can be appreciated through fauna and botanic (carpologic and pollinic) food remains —relatively unknown until the present day. Ceramic analyses carried out to determine the earth's mineral components have shown the chemical and petrologic composition of their lithic industry. This has eased the study of their territorial mobility in search for raw materials required for the manufacture of their production tools. Malachologic and wild fauna remains have been located from their journeys in search of food reserves for the group and information has also been facilitated with reference to the distance they travelled within their social, geographical environment. In this sense a study of their territory may bring to light grounds for reflection, which would complete the reconstruction of the life-style of a certain group and their contacts with other social groupings.

We must not forget that there are aspects in the Mediterranean Neolithic peninsula that have, as yet, not been researched in depth; such as possible associations that might have existed between rupestral art, exemplified in "life" cave paintings, and the location of settlements within the area.

From all that is put forward above, the most obvious conclusion that we may reach is that of the phenomenon of Neolitization as a process of extreme complexity in which numerous factors are brought into play, operating in different ways according to the geographical area in which they appear and also the social—economic response of a specific human group, given the possibilities and alternatives offered by the environment in which they live.

Such complexity in the Neolithic process is not easily comprehended unless we commence with an accurate study of a completely excavated site, which offers a series of exhaustive information and can provide us with data related to the internal dynamics of the social group under research.

Our aim here is the study of the Paleohabitat of Fosca, by habitat we mean not only the occupation of the settlement, but also the immediate environment and its possibilities of economic exploitation; in a word to inter-relate the dialectic social group/environment/survival exploitation resources. That is the reason why the basis of our investigation has been focused fundamentally on the knowledge of the site's "early-environment". And we believe that we are bringing forward a body of data, suitable for contrast with other studies and which, we hope, will prove a useful contribution to general conclusions shaped into a synthesis of such a crucial period in the evolution of social human groups.



The results obtained at Cova Fosca from the analysis and study of its homogeneous stratigraphic sequence show neolithic ceramic levels placed without a break in continuity over a non-ceramic cultural base of a clear epipaleolithic substratum. On the other hand the radiocarbon data also offers a homogeneous and clear chronological correlation from the VIII to the IV millennium; the non-cardial ceramic stages that are more clearly defined belong to the VI millennium —5690, 5260, 5150— as the surface of the IV millennium —3765— ceramic stage showed alterations due to clandestine removal and contained poor presence or cardinal ceramics. The interest in these ceramic stages lies not only in their antiquity, but especially in the decorative types of their models, if only taking into account the aspect of their material culture. In fact we must underline that cardinal decoration was unknown at Cova Fosca in the VI millennium, however they did decorate with engravings, incisions, plastic decoration, grooved or fluted and others, but a poor and scarce presence of cardinal ceramics was located and stratigraphically verified in the upper levels, as has already been mentioned.

On the other hand, the study of faunistic remains shows evidence of a gradual domestication process that developed from a hunting economy of subsistence —7510/6930— where the first stages of relative control of some species (upto the point of taming *ovicapridus*, among others) can be traced —5960/3765—. Nevertheless, we believe that Estevez's specialised investigation explains these controversies surrounding "early domestication" at greater length, and we therefore refrain from doing so.

The climatic process, the vegetation and the gradual transformation of the material culture, together with the environment in a context of open air shelters with "life paintings", situated inside their area of influence or territory of subsistence, are the most relevant assessments that can be made from the Cova Fosca settlement. Of all of them, perhaps the one which is worthy of most interest in the process of Neolithization in general is that we are facing a "social group" that, without giving up hunting and, as yet, not shepherds, is protagonist of an economic change, not only gradual, homogeneous and independent but also without any internal cultural break of importance.

The process towards the new Neolithic economic stage could not have been, in our opinion, similar in different Mediterranean areas and would probably have developed as a specific evolution, with distinct cultural characteristics in each settlement. In this sense Cova Fosca represents a determined model of "behaviour", this evolution *in situ* would be due to a group of environmental factors that, no doubt, would have affected the life of the human groups, but they, in turn would have changed them by means of a reflexive process, producing, dialectically, a double answer which would have functioned in different ways depending on the environment.²⁴ But this would also have been conditioned by the accumulation of experiences acquired by the specific social group in its immediate past; their systems of production and technological advances would have been the final consequences of the changing process situated within the Meso-Neolithic chrono-cultural frame.

24. CARBONELL, E. y ESTEVEZ, J., *Avanç de la teoria de la bidercció*, en Cypsela, II, Girona, 1976, págs. 1-6.

The fact that stands out most clearly is the existence of human groups which had reached a high neolithic status, with full knowledge of a more varied, elaborated material culture; as is reflected in the important settlement of Cova de l'Or. On the other hand they do not seem to be directly complex economy, represented by cereal agriculture as well as a more related to some mesolithic substrata, but to previous incipient neolithic processes that allowed a qualitative leap of full Neolithization. For this reason this type of site (Or) does not seem to correspond nor represent the early stages of the Old Neolithic Age, but its latter stages, within the same period —as a final evolution of the same; which in a process that hypothetically lasted around a thousand years from 5500 till 4500 B.C., allowing for the assimilation of new techniques of economic exploitation, ranging from the domestication of animals to that of profitable plant species.

So we believe that the evolution towards the New Neolithic period came into being from the epipaleolithic substratum onwards. The need for new economic sources, in the face of a new climatic environment, that necessarily limited the variety of animal species, as well as the knowledge gained from hunting experience in the Paleolithic Age, encouraged from specialised hunting a control of some species of animals. This led to the taming of the most suitable ones, which was the initial stage in the Neolithic process; if by Neolithic we are to understand deep changes of an economic nature, culminating with the extension of more elaborated resources which take from in the knowledge of agriculture.

In our opinion the Neolithic Age, as a period marked by the establishment of new economic forms, would start at the beginning of the VI millennium and reach its highest peak in the V millennium, with total command of the new agriculture and cattle acquisition. It is symptomatic that the absolute dates we are in possession of (VI millennium), tie in within certain limits with, both sites found in the South and East of the Iberian Peninsula. We cannot believe that all of them are mistaken and that their right dating would correspond to the Middle Neolithic Age, as has been said. Also, we are unable to set any chronological limits from partial aspects of their material culture, such as ceramic decoration.

In short, we consider that nowadays the Old Neolithic Age is being considered as a more complex phase, related to previous epipaleolithic substrata and not as an external process derived from "foreign" contributions from other groups.

Finally, we must emphasize the possible relationships between the human groups from the Old Neolithic Age and the sets of cave paintings in the so-called "Levantine style". The close territorial associations which we have looked at the Cova Fosca site cannot be the only ones that would be established in the future in other settlements. In this sense we have already raised the hypothesis about the possible relationships between different Neolithization phases and different painting styles, in which figures are more related with the new economic bases with hunting activities. This fact leads us to believe, on a hypothetical basis for the time being, that within the Old Neolithic process, which we are proposing, with an approximate duration of one millennium (5500-4500), an initial phase of representations is still preserved, the main reason being the relationship with hunting activities. This would correspond to the "dynamic stylized style" stage (5500-5000) while a second stage would begin with represen-

tations of a more domestic nature, typical of the one reflected in the "schematic style" (5000-4500) which would probably continue until more recent stages with the "macroschematic style". The two styles, the schematic and the stylized may represent these two cultural groups that can be guessed as belonging to the Old Neolithic Age, one of them rooted in the epipaleolithic substratum and the other which surpassed traditions of the past with well-defined economical bases. It is probable that in an advanced phase of this process, from the IV millennium onwards, both cultural traditions joined together to form one, interrelating with each other, as is apparently shown from painted shelters, done so in a schematic way showing superpositions in a peculiar stylised style, not generally characteristic of those found in the Valencian region. Such examples are to be found in the south in the south and especially in the south-east of the peninsula. We believe that future research will prove, even more clearly, that these hypotheses, relative to the understanding of the evolution, chronology and dating of Levantine cave paintings, are closely linked to the initial processes of Neolithization. This aspect, in turn, will undoubtedly lead to a better understanding of the initial stages of the Old Neolithic Age and help us in our quest to discover whether there were two different cultural groups or, indeed, as we believe, they reflected two evolutive stages within the same process.

