

REVIEW OF / RECENSIÓN DE: Alfredo González Prats y Alberto J. Lorrio Alvarado. *El poblado calcolítico de Les Moreres (Crevillent, Alicante)*. Universidad de Alicante, Servicio de Publicaciones. Alicante, 2023, 376 pp., ils. ISBN: 978-84-9717-823-5.

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This detailed monograph marks the publication of excavations carried out on a Chalcolithic occupation settlement site from 1988-93. This occupation preceded cremation burials of Late Bronze Age date discovered in 1982. In the main part of the text, the editors give a detailed presentation of the settlement's location, layout, periodization, materials, chronology and context. Specialist studies presented in appendices range from building techniques and materials through individual categories of finds, to absolute dating and the placing of some pottery within a much wider Mediterranean context (of which more below). The editors and contributors should be commended on the quality of the plans and materials in black-and-white and colour illustrations.

The excavations revealed the existence of three phases of occupation during the second half of the third millennium cal BC with oval and circular structures, initially with stone foundations and later with a superstructure of wooden post and mud construction. Traces of stone-built defensive walls were also found (although a comparative illustration of the excavated plans of defensive and domestic structures in all the Chalcolithic sites in the Murcia region would have been helpful). Structural preservation at Les Moreres could have been better (not the excavators' fault!), but the contributors try to be ambitious in their reconstruction of activity areas, especially for textile production. The most frequent finds are those of pottery (with Beaker sherds found throughout the occupation sequence).

Great attention is devoted to 38 sherds of red monochrome pottery (see the main text and Appendix 8), interpreted as being used for the consumption of food and drink. The best parallels for such pottery in the second half of the third millennium cal BC are argued to be in the western part of the Turkish peninsula, within the context of trade networks linking the immediate area of the Near East to the Aegean during this period. Such networks, it is argued, stretch further to the central Mediterranean islands of Sicily and Lipari, where red monochrome pottery is also found. This material and its interpretation take me out of my comfort zone (not being a Near Eastern archaeologist), but I am reminded that the interpretation of the 'independent development' of third millennium BC cultures, both within the Iberian Peninsula and between Iberia and other areas of the Mediterranean for which I was partly responsible (e.g. Chapman, 1991), is now rather dated. In his magisterial tome, Cyprian Broodbank (2013, pp. 258-9) proposes four maritime networks that link the far east to the far west of the Mediterranean in the third millennium BC. The evidence for interaction and population mobility/stability (as seen, for example, in isotopic analyses of artefacts, raw materials and human remains) within the Iberian Peninsula during the third and second millennia BC now creates a more fluid picture of connection and change at this time. But if the interpretation of an East Mediterranean origin of the 'imported' monochrome holds water, what was this small number of potsherds doing in this area of eastern Spain? What did their presence signify in terms of interaction within and between local communities in south-east Spain at this time? It would be interesting to know the authors answers to these questions.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Broodbank, C. (2013). *The Making of the Middle Sea. A History of the Mediterranean from the Beginning to the Emergence of the Classical World*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Chapman, R. (1991). *La Formación de las Sociedades Complejas*. Barcelona: Editorial Crítica.