

# Hillforts, rocks and warriors: breaking boundaries with the past, building boundaries with the present

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**ABSTRACT** – *During the Late Iron Age, monumental stone statues of warriors were established in the northwest of Iberia, ‘arming’ landscapes, which ultimately encouraged specific types of semiotic ideologies in the region. This paper deals with how these statues on rocks not only worked in the production of liminality in the landscape – creating transitional zones on it – but also how they functioned as liminal gateways to the past, absorbing ideas from the Bronze Age visual culture up to that of the Late Iron Age in order to create emotional responses to a new socio-political context.*

**KEY WORDS** – *liminality; performativity; iconography; Late Iron Age; north-western Iberia*

## **Gradišča, kamni in vojščaki: podreti meje s preteklostjo, postaviti meje s sedanjostjo**

**IZVLEČEK** – *V času mlajše železne dobe so na območju severozahodnega Iberskega polotoka začeli postavljati monumentalne kamnite kipe vojščakov, ki so ‘oborožili’ pokrajino in nazadnje tudi spodbudili poseben tip semiotskih ideologij v regiji. V članku razpravljam, kako so ti kipi v pokrajini delovali ne le kot produkti liminalnosti – z ustvarjanjem prehodnih območij – ampak so delovali tudi kot liminalni vhod v preteklost, tako da so sprejeli ideje iz vizualne kulture od bronaste dobe do mlajše železne dobe in s tem izzvali čustvene odzive na nove družbeno-politične kontekste.*

**KLJUČNE BESEDE** – *liminalnost; performativnost; ikonografija; mlajša železna doba; severozahodni Iberski polotok*

## **Introduction**

The communities of north-western Iberia underwent critical changes in their socio-material structure during the second and first centuries BC. Subsequently, a much more hierarchical and complex social system was adopted there. A crucial factor in this transformation was the presence of Rome in the region through its commercial, exploratory and military activity. Maritime trade – inherited from Phoenician routes in the Atlantic – encouraged social and territorial differences through the asymmetrical access of the native people to Mediterranean commodities. Meanwhile, the growing pressure of the Roman army in the region from the second century BC, as well as the par-

ticipation of people from the northwest in wars and military expeditions beyond its borders, entailed the definite transformation of the socio-political structure of the local communities.

The effects of trade and war stimulated, ultimately, the transformation of the Northwest within what can be defined as a ‘tribal zone’ (González 2009), that is, a peripheral and unstable area affected by the Roman state, but not under its political and administrative control (Ferguson, Whitehead 1992). Just as Ferguson and Whitehead have pointed out, in these contexts, the state used a combination of coercion (mi-

litary threat) and enticement (opportunities to interact) to establish control over the local population. In north-western Iberia, this double interaction implied a rupture in 'ontological security' (Giddens 1991), provoking an escalation of competition in the form of intertribal conflict (González-Ruibal 2006–2007). Archaeological evidence shows that the expansion of Rome had irreversible effects on these local communities. Firstly, the population regrouped into large settlements (synoecism). The population not only increased, but also became socially more heterogeneous. Secondly, the monumentalisation of defensive enclosures (encastellation of the landscape). Hillforts became the visual references of a strongly defended landscape. And thirdly, armed groups appeared within communities (militarisation). Interaction with Rome stimulated the development of chiefdoms in the northwest, as was the case elsewhere where Rome was involved on the periphery of the Empire (Mattingly 2002).

A monumental art emerged in this context. Large warriors made of stone, which embodied the local elites of these chiefdoms, were placed in hillforts. They consist of groups of thirty-four outsized statues made of stone. Most are more than two metres high, in some cases reaching almost 4 metres. Therefore, they are truly monumental sculptures, without parallel in Iberia. They represent males with a short sword or dagger, a small round shield (*caetra*), torc, bracelets (*viriae*), decorated belt, and dress (Figs. 1–2). Their emergence was closely linked to the reconfiguration of the social and emotional space of the communities living in Late Iron Age hillforts. The aim of this paper is to argue that there is not simply an elite identity behind these visual images – which are traditionally said to be its results – but that this identity is performatively constituted by the very visual images working in a liminal context. To ensure this, attention will be paid, through socio-material and iconographic paraphernalia, to how the communities of these hillforts handled liminality to build evocative spaces that allowed them to manage their anxiety in the face of the changing situation.

## Replacing emotions in the landscape

As stated by Clifford Geertz (1973), material activities such as icons and ritual were 'public images of sentiment' that structured and reflected the emotional experience of the people. A dialectical logic governed this interweaving: social relationships created material relations and vice versa. Emotions are at the centre of this dialectic. The physical, formal, aesthetic or semiotic characteristics of objects and material forms were active agents in the production of being-in-the-world of communities (Damasio 2000; Gosden 2005; Fleisher, Norman 2016). These characteristics can channel the intentions of individuals and affect others in a strategic manner (Gell 1998); they can be 'gateways' to the past (creating memories), 'bridges' that allowed the meeting of points in space (creating places), and they could filter and animate ideas or values on their own (cre-

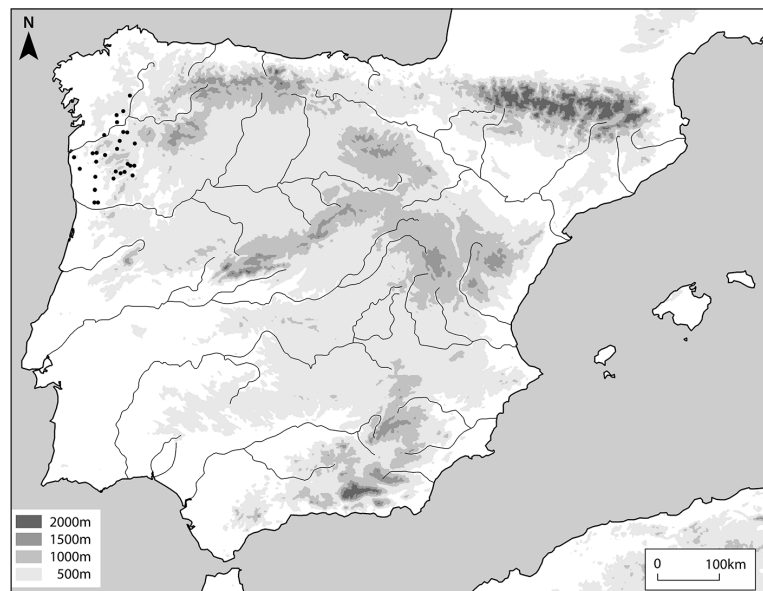


Fig. 1. Distribution map of warrior statues.

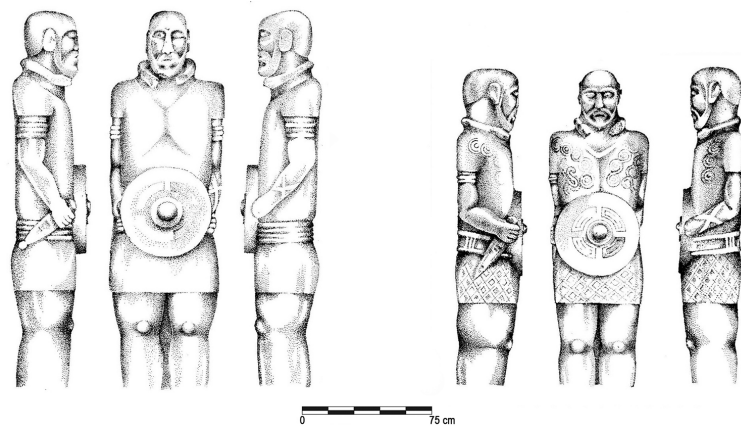


Fig. 2. Warrior statues from Lezenho, Vila Real, Portugal (modified after Silva 1986).

ating a kinetic moral) (*Latour 2005*). Agency is situated in the resources of time/space; agency is a being-in-the-world whose actions carry the past into the future (*Barrett 2000.61*).

The materiality generates links between individuals, communities, events and places, and works ultimately to create society. The capacity of the statues to become active participants in the world of the living is undeniable. More than simple representations of reality, they became social agents. They could be ascribed features and capacities that are usually considered characteristic only of human beings. For this reason, rather than being preoccupied with how this iconography reflects social constructions, our interest lies in trying to understand how they were involved in the construction of society. Their location in the landscape is the key in this regard. The warrior statues were located in relation to two topographical elements: the walls of hillforts and rocks. The double connection allows them to be linked with two types of liminality, respectively: one temporal, the other spatial. As a result, the iconography worked in the creation of what Oliver Harris (*2010*) has called 'emotional and mnemonic geographies' that orientated bodies, created memories and evoked feelings in the landscape. The emotional and moral power of this performance helped to build the sociability of individuals and local communities in the Late Iron Age. It has been many decades since Malinowski (*1948.90*) argued the psychotherapeutic quality of rites of passage. Such rituals give people social support in confronting the anxiety they may feel when facing new social changes. These affective capacities were the result of the overlapping of two scales of reality: the socio-political context in which they operated (macro-scale level) and the physical context in which they emerged (micro-scale level). In the first case, I am referring to a context that has



**Fig. 3. Rocky landscape: hillfort of Saceda, Ourense, Spain.**

been defined as a tribal zone, which characterises the region of north-western Iberia from the end of the second Iron Age; and in the second case, I am referring to the socio-materiality of the hillforts, walls and rocks.

### **Rocks: breaking boundaries with the past**

Generally, statues do not autonomously transmit their meaning; nor are the places where they are displayed neutral settings. The relationships between the iconography and their socio-material surroundings play a key role in the creation of meaning. In this sense, the stone warriors were inextricably attached to the rocks – a feature characteristic of the landscape – as well as the architecture of the hillforts (Fig. 3). Here, diverse metaphoric and mnemonic processes highlight relationships and connections of different types, contributing to the formation of a tangible sensibility and morality in connection with liminal landscapes. Material signifiers, unlike other types of signifiers, typify or produce something by association or by sharing similar attributes (*Tilley 1999*). Physical attributes and uses of material culture do not fully delimit the symbolic dimension of material forms, although they do play a significant role in their sense and meaning. In this way, the set comprised of the rock and the warrior should work on two levels: the rock as the 'place' and the stone as 'material'. Both elements represent two key vectors in creating the meaning of this type of iconographic installation.

Ontological security is related to the distinction between space and place. Cartesian coordinates define space without having any real significance for the individual. However, a 'place' is made from 'living', and is an accumulation of feelings and emotions in which individuals develop a ritual routine and, ultimately, their ontological security (*Giddens 1991*). In this sense, the reconfiguration of this ontological security operated at a liminal level. At the end of the Iron Age, the rocks in question were powerful places of memory, functioning as gateways that connected local communities with the past, updating warlike ideologies in order to face the new situation of instability.

The relevance of rocks in the prehistory of north-western Iberia is the key to understanding why they were

chose as the location for the warriors. Rocky ledges functioned as places for numinous, religious and ritual activity for communities during the Bronze Age (Bradley 2000; 2002). Rock engraving, as well as the deposition of arms and prestige items, were among the common socio-material practices that helped to monumentalise them. The meaning of the engraved rocks in prehistoric times has been interpreted by three basic proposals. The first hypothesis argues that the engraving of weapons played an important part in the construction of rocky ledges as places where rites of passage occurred. More specifically, the weapons depicted on the rocks would have been closely related to aggregation, the ritual gathering of warriors (Vázquez 2000). According to this hypothesis, they were a key space in the production and legitimisation of warriors. The second hypothesis considers these spaces as numinous places where local communities carried out rituals. The depositing of prestigious items in the rocks reflected the consolidation of elites, who made offerings to the gods to seek their support. As noted by Kristian Kristiansen (2000.115) for similar cases, such ceremonies could have been communal, but through offerings hidden in the rock, the leader would obtain a sacred position as a representative of the gods. Richard Bradley (1998; see also Alves, Comendador 2009) has proposed that the engravings of arms on the rock could also have functioned as metaphors for ritual deposits. Whatever the case, this line of interpretation has led to defining the role of the rocks as places of connection with the gods and the legitimacy of elites. Finally, the third hypothesis, perhaps the most traditional, considers the petroglyphs as mere territorial markers (Bradley 1997).

To move forward, two ideas must be assumed to provide the phenomenological framework. Firstly, in our view, the engravings and rocks had to work together both materially and conceptually: as pointed out above, the material environment cannot be considered as a simple backdrop that had no significant relationship with the weapons that are represented. Conversely, these monuments should be seen as 'armed' rocks rather than as engravings on the rocks (Fig. 4). Secondly, the 'armed' rocks do not merely have a communicative or representational logic in the landscape, but an enactive one. They were generators of thought and action dur-

ing prehistory; they 'armed' landscapes. From the beginning of the Bronze Age, individuals were forced or encouraged by the 'armed' rocks to assume beliefs or moral visions related to weapons and the violence in which they were trapped. Or, they spread warrior morality and emotionality in the landscape of the Bronze Age and Iron Age.

Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by custom and convention (Turner 1969). As such, during the Late Iron Age, rocks were to be conceived as an 'abode of the ancestors'. As sacred places, rocks served to generate worlds of difference, entered by the faithful to engage with the reality of a transcendent order. Sensations of transcendence may be encouraged through material forms that transcend 'ordinary human frames of reference in space and time', and material images that seem to derive from sacred domains (Garwood 2011.275). Thus, they would have functioned as a powerful locus for legitimation and empowerment, creating a physical and psychological connection between the present and the past. Taking into account the different interpretations stated above, it seems logical to think that the location of the stone warriors on the rocks at the end of the second Iron Age is associated with a retro-ideological meaning, a re-enactment of ancestral practices and legitimisation of the new elites.

The second factor mentioned earlier is related to the metaphoric value of stone as a substance, which adds depth to what has just been proposed. The appreciation of stone as a sensually potent material has re-



Fig. 4. 'Armed' rock from Agua da Laxe (Vincios, Spain) (photo by X. Pereira).

curred throughout history, as the anthropological literature confirms (Hamilton et al. 2011). Due to characteristics such as hardness, resistance and perdurance, this material has usually been linked to the bodies of men, acting as a material metaphor of lineage and ancestry (Parker Pearson, Ramilisonina 1998). In the case of the stone warriors, the iconographic installation should have generated performative effects to give the impression that they were an inseparable part of the landscape. A double mechanism functions here. On the one hand, the location of the statue on the rocks produced an exceptionally powerful metaphoric setting, creating the impression that the warriors had sprouted from the rock itself (Fig. 5). On the other hand, the substance of the warrior came from the rocks, since the stone that created him was extracted from the rocky ledges of his own landscape; therefore, it could generate a strong phenomenological meaning: the body of the warrior for its substance, and liminal location as an intrinsic part of the immutable and timeless realm of the landscape (rocks) as opposed to other changing aspects. For the local community, this ensemble must have underlined a temporal depth in the landscape.

### Walls/thresholds: making boundaries with the present

I would like to focus now on the other material setting with which the stone warriors are associated: the enclosures. A powerful connection between a number of elements is produced here: while walls created differentiated ontological spaces (exterior/interior), doorways were a sort of transitional space between both domains. As a result, within a regional context of instability and conflict, entrances become unstable places, perceived or experienced by the community as anxiety zones (Alfayé, Rodríguez-Corral 2009). Liminality is put into practice in this spatial environment through at least three types of socio-material strategies.

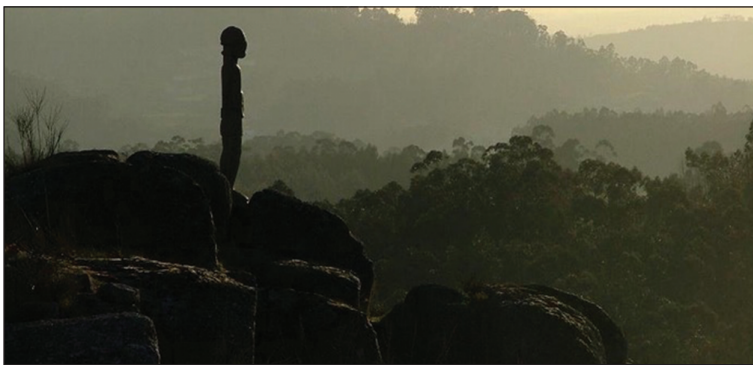


Fig. 5. Stone warrior on rocks (Sanfins, Portugal).

### Monumentalization and prophylactic rituals

The first strategy is connected to the monumentalization and ritualisation of the material forms of the enclosures. At the end of the Iron Age, the dimensions of the settlements – in some cases, twenty times bigger than Early Iron Age hillforts – grew considerably as a consequence of population growth and processes of synoecism (González-Ruibal 2006–2007). From this moment on, their boundaries and thresholds were monumentalized, and life inside remained, more than ever, visually hidden and protected from the exterior world (Fig. 6). Taking into account that the hillfort was the only type of settlement in this region, it can be argued that its architecture encouraged a very specific type of panoptic topography that determines a particular experience in this landscape. Life now appears to exist within the walls, underlining the strong boundaries between the interior (the community) and the exterior (the other).

The rituals performed in the context of the borders and threshold are defined by two notions: protection and transfiguration. The frequent discoveries of deposits and material images on walls and entrances in prehistoric settlements (Edmonds 1993; Gheorghiu 2003; Hingley 2006; Alfayé Villa 2007) suggest that liminal architecture became spaces that needed prophylactic and foundational ritual practices (González-Ruibal 2006–2007; Alfayé, Rodríguez-Corral 2009; Rodríguez-Corral 2009.178–180). In the Northwest, along the same lines as the deposited metal objects found immediately next to the walls in forts such as Saceda (González-Ruibal 2005), their purpose may have been as supernatural protection of the walls (Alfayé Villa, Rodríguez-Corral 2009). Moreover, despite the acidity of the soil, human bones have been documented in the settings of the walls and entrances of hillforts, such as La Campa Torres (Gijón) (Maya, Cuesta 2001.295), Castromao (Celanova) (García 2004.10), San Millán (Cualedro) (Rodríguez, Fariña 1986.62) and Baroña (A Coruña) (Calo, Soeiro 1986.35). In Chao Sammartín (Grandas de Salime), one of the settlements that had an earlier monumentalization, a cist containing a human skull was built near the gateway to the acropolis during the early Iron Age (Villa, Cabo 2003). Possibly, a conceptual link existed between the human skull in this deposit and the group of human heads carved in stone and associated with the walls



**Fig. 6. Aerial view of San Cibrán de Las hillfort, Ourense, Spain (photo by T. Arqueos).**

and entrances of hillforts at the end of the Iron Age. Therefore, ideas, rites or socio-material practices that were petrified at this time appear to have had much deeper roots.

### ***Rituals and liminality***

Outsiders are significant, as Anne Haour has pointed out, because they do not quite ‘fit’. “*The significant quality of an outsider is a position on the threshold: an in-between, dangerous state*” (Haour 2013.12). The liminal zone is potentially dangerous, as the individual is between social roles. Thresholds involve individuals crossing critical points where different levels of reality – physical, political, cultural, religious – converge. Mobility in the enclosure environment requires processes of adaptation and transformation, which are conventionally called rites of passage (Van Gennep 1909). The encounters between divergent identities are complex and problematic, and in these socio-material contexts of intersection, two notions, which intermix and confound, conceptualised the half-open space that needed to be managed and negotiated: hospitality and war. In the ancient world, for example, the term *hospitium* shared its Latin root with *hospes* (the foreigner) and the *hostis* (the enemy). Under these circumstances of stress and encounters with the exterior world, cultural and socio-political negotiations required a culturally recognisable presentation or an easy and interpretable translation for the participants (Inomata, Cohen 2006). This contributed to breaking the circle of the community at different levels – religious, political, emotional, *etc.* – and established social relationships between members of the community and those welcomed into it (*hospites*).

The individuals who arrived or left the hillfort had to perform a sequence of ritual acts. Their execution allowed a dialectic game consisting of externalising and internalising the culture, and through highly significant and emotional actions, underlining the process being carried out. These rites highlight and validate changes in a person’s status. A number of deposits made up of weapons and ritual items seem to indicate the performance of rites of passage (Bradley 1998b). The ritual deposition of weapons was a common practice on the slopes or near the walls of the hillforts. This is the case, for example, of the deposit of daggers discovered outside the hill-

fort of Sofán (López 1989), or the deposit of Montefortino helmets – the same type as those worn by the warrior statues – located in the hillfort of Neiva. In the latter, just a few metres from where the Montefortino helmets were deposited, a set made up of two situlas and three metallic glasses were also found. Feasts also became a significant element in the negotiation of the liminal boundaries between the community and ‘the Other’. In addition, the deposition of small objects, such as beads or spearheads at the entrance of hillforts like Saceda (González-Ruibal 2005.277), can be interpreted as minor rituals carried out by individuals when crossing the threshold of the hillfort.

Transition rites often involve a period of segregation from everyday life, a liminal state of transition from one status to the next, and a process of reintroduction to the social order with a new standing. In the access zones to the settlements, buildings with so-called *pedra formosa* (literally, beautiful stones) (Fig. 7) were erected and used as saunas (Rodríguez-Corral 2009.189–193). Their architectural designs and structural features must be interpreted in terms of the spatial organisation of ritual performance. These buildings are liminal places due to their location at the entrances, and their semi-subterranean architecture with internal divisions. Movement within the sauna involves a synaesthetic transformation. Bodily sensations demand a very specific type of movement – going through a small opening in the *pedra formosa* – and take the individual from light into darkness, from cold to heat, from dry to wet or *vice versa*, even bringing changes of odour (sweat and grease) and sound (inner echoes) (González-

*Ruibal 2006–2007*:575; *Rodríguez-Corral 2009*: 189–193). Whether the *pedra formosa* divides and creates areas of privacy, change or sensorial creation or not, the same symbols and pattern on the surface of the houses and the warrior bodies at the entrances appear precisely there, working at that liminal moment where the synaesthetic surrounding of the individual mutates and is transfigured. Thus these buildings seem to be linked with specific rites of passage and transformation in the context of hillfort entrances.

### ***Visual images and liminality***

The third socio-material strategy is connected with iconography. The material collective consisting of the stone warriors on the rocks next to the walls and gateways, provided a crucial scenario for theatrical events with strong emotional content. This setting encourages specific types of mobility and interaction between the bodies of the participants and material forms of the hillfort. In this sense, three characteristics were common to any participant in this context: first, the participant is outside the hillfort; second, he approaches the settlement going towards its gate, the most critical point, where, as he moves from one ontological space to the next, a space of anxiety emerges; and third, this observer views the statue in motion, altering position as his viewpoint gradually changes during his approach.

This iconography reinforced the experience of participants in the liminal zone of the hillforts. While the strategy of the warrior on the rock was to destroy borders with the past (memory place), the strategy of the warrior next to the wall and gateway was to

emphasise boundaries against ‘the Other’ in the present. In this context, the static body of the warrior on the rock seems to require an observer in motion. In contrast with the movement of the observer, the material logic, hieratism and symbolism underline the stationary position of the warrior, which emanates from the rock itself. This is where the size of these statues ought to be taken into consideration. Most of these figures are over two metres high (*Calo 2003*:15). Their outside dimensions might increase their power in the liminal context: firstly, because their magnitude would emphasise the values and power of the warrior, and secondly, because it could be seen by anyone approaching the hillfort from a distance. In what way does the materiality of the stone warriors put liminality into practice? The stone warriors acted as efficient mechanisms for intensifying some aspects of reality. Against a background of growing unrest, reordering and confrontation in the late second century BC, after Rome had entered north-western Iberia, the performativity of these images in the liminal context of the entrances to the hillforts makes them powerful actors and negotiating agents.

The material images were involved in the task of emotionalising and empowering these places of transience (Figs. 8–9). Frequently, the aesthetic qualities have been interpreted as a consequence of Roman provincial art, following the theory of traditional Romanisation. The lack or presence of aesthetic traits such as naturalism, movement or realism have led some researchers to consider the statues as imperfect forms of provincial art (*Almeida 1974*; *Calo 1994*). Nevertheless, various works have recently criticised approaches that interpret provincial or peripheral aesthetics to the Roman world as an incapacity to achieve or assume a Classical canon (*Webster 2003*; *Gosden 2004*; *Hodos 2009*; *Hingley 2009*; *Revell 2009*). This approach obscures the logic of local values and, therefore, the alternative modes that iconographies may have outside the metropolis or of states that influence peripheral areas (*Rodríguez-Corral 2012*). If this is so, in the context of provincialism, it is even more evident in the context of a tribal zone, such as emerged in north-western Iberia. In other words, in the context of tribal society, aesthetic logics, similar to that of semiotic logics, often mediate emotional relationships, and



**Fig. 7. Iron Age ritual sauna from the hillfort of Briteiros, Portugal.**

allow communities to manage reality through a system of values.

We must think about these statues from a 'situated' aesthetics/iconography. The very aesthetics of the warriors, moving away from Roman naturalism towards hieratism, could work in playing a part in the construction of a local identity. Materiality, through a series of characteristics such as solidity, firmness and size can, as already stated, be essential in the performative construction of an image. The aesthetic canon, however, may also evoke a powerful social reality. The simplification of the body of a statue is a strong act of concentration. By presenting a minimalist, standardised image of the warrior, an essential and regulatory image is created for one sole purpose: all protagonism is given to iconography – the weapons, gestures and symbolic motifs of clothing – as a key to the efficiency of the image itself set in a liminal zone.

One of the most outstanding features of the warrior is the position of the shield: the warrior is holding it in front of his abdomen, showing it to the visitor arriving near the entrance area to the hillfort. Owning a shield shows independence, and announces a willingness to defend the same, acting as a material metaphor of protection. Its loss, as pointed out by Bruce Lincoln (1991), involves the renunciation of the defeated group of social boundaries previously maintained. This is consistent with the view of the



**Fig. 8. Modern copy of the stone warrior from the hillfort of San Cibrán de Las (Paços de Ferreira, Porto, Portugal) on the outcrop where the lower part of this statue was discovered (photo by S. Felloza).**

shield as a movable border separating oneself, the group and the territory from the other. The right hand is of great significance to indigenous sociality, because it is used to represent the most important gestures and materiality in these pre-Roman societies. The right hand is the channel for peace and for war: firstly, it can be used to shake hands with another individual, whether as a personal act or on behalf of the community (*fides*). It also carries the sword, and is the bearer of violence and of the capacity which an individual and, by extension, the community has – to defend oneself and subdue the other. Both these aspects convert the right hand into a material metaphor on which to work and with which to act in the negotiation of the reality of these communities.



**Fig. 9. Modern copy of one of the stone warriors from the hillfort of Lezenho places on the rock (Vila Real, Portugal) (photo by CEDIEC).**

We know from Strabo's 'Geography', among other sources, that the pre-Roman communities of this region chopped 'the hands off prisoners and consecrated the right hands' (3, 3, 6). Amputating the right hand of the enemy caused not only humiliation, but, as Sextus Aurelius Victor points out (*De Vir.* III, 58), it also played a part in trials of courage. Diodorus Siculus (*Historias* 12, 56, 5) narrates that in the battle of Selinunte in 409 BC, mercenaries coming from Iberia carried bunches of hands tied to their belts and the heads of enemies stuck on their spears. There is an iconography centred on the symbolic significance of right hands and



shields in the context of the indigenous populations of Iberia, which has also been documented (*Alfayé 2004*). In another instance, on the stela of Palao in Alcañiz (second to first century BC), a vexing and dishonourable act of denying burial to the enemy by the victorious warrior is depicted. A horseman is carrying a spear and a caetra, while at the feet of the horse a corpse is being devoured by vermin. Around the third century BC, this settlement was besieged and burnt, and its inhabitants were murdered. The skeletal remains confirm that the people of this settlement endured mutilation practices involving the amputation of hands and decapitation.

It seems obvious that the violent mutilation of these parts of the body acquires the consideration of a synecdoche amongst the Iberian communities in the Late Iron Age: the right hand as the signifier of the social capacity of individuals renders them useless if it is amputated. In summary, if we accept the relevance of the shield at the front in the creation of a differentiated space against the enemy/foreigner and of the right hand as material metaphors of independence and the political and military capacity of individuals, it then makes sense that the warriors on the walls of the hillforts adopt the two gestures. The right hand always holding the dagger or carrying an unsheathed sword makes the warriors work as active images in the construction and protection of the liminal space.

### Conclusions

Late Iron Age iconography worked in connection with liminal places in order to co-create and performatively maintain the ideology of an elite in a new socio-political context that I have described as a tribal zone. Culture is to a large degree enacted. The emotional and cultural life of people is shaped by the scenarios in which that life develops, as well as those values culturally associated with the physical world. Thus, if the emotional lives of individuals are given by their physical relationships with other bodies and material forms, then objects, bodies and emotions are difficult to separate from each other. In Late Iron Age hillforts, they were produced and held through the body-materiality interaction in liminal zones. Or, in other words, a number of socio-material strategies put liminality into practice, allowing people to experience emotions and values in a way that often cannot be conveyed by words.

I have examined how emotions are produced, channelled and evoked performatively through ritual ac-

tions, material forms and iconography in the context of hillfort enclosures. In this sense, the stone warriors worked as forms to strengthen group feelings about themselves and their history in a particular context of resistance to the interference of Rome in north-western Iberia. Through a series of socio-material relations, they acted as reservoirs of experiences and memories, both ordinary and extraordinary, and as powerful actors building society. Their ability to act locally and pre-predicatively in a general context of anxiety and ontological insecurity came from a double liminal game: their participation in the management of a temporary and special liminality.

The warrior on the rock is an update of the 'armed' rocks that appeared in the Northwest landscape during the Bronze Age. As areas that were sacred, ritual and iconic, these 'armed' rocks helped to place a moral warrior in the landscape. At the end of the Iron Age, in a setting of insecurity, uncertainty and interaction with Rome, this idea became strong once again, but now the warlike iconography moves from engravings to sculptures on rocks. The three-dimensional form adopted at this moment matches the new monumental scenarios of the hillforts, working together to construct strong emotional and cognitive landscapes. Put more simply, the warriors in relation to the rocks helped to establish emotional and liminal links to the past - underlining the temporal depth of the landscape and the ancestral and religious dependence of the community - while in relation to the walls and entrances to the settlement, they stressed liminal ruptures with the present, producing zones of differentiation with the other that require rites of passage to cross.

In summary, the complexity of the iconography, the link between the stone warriors and the bodies of their observers, the ancestral and numinous strength of the rocks from which they originated, as well as the rites and other actions performed in the surroundings of the individuals put liminality into practice. The setting made people approaching a hillfort aware of the liminal power of the whole performance. The aesthetic and semiotic values were felt in the body as emotions. Therefore, the impact of the formal qualities of the socio-material group formed by walls, rocks and warriors in the bodies of individuals outside that community could produce a range of liminal feelings such as awe or fear, while they could also generate feelings of security and comfort in the members of the community.

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