

A MONUMENTAL LANDSCAPE



Bretal Menhir, in the town of Ribeira

It is striking that Neolithic peoples devoted so much effort to constructing architecture for the dead – built with a monumental purpose – and so little to architecture for the living. The choice of location for building a field of barrows during this stage of prehistory was not random. The burial mounds follow landscape, symbolic and practical criteria, with a very characteristic pattern.

Menhirs or parafitas

These were enormous stones erected by humans during the Neolithic period. They stood in open spaces and served as landmarks or territorial markers, defining routes and spaces for gatherings and rituals. They were authentic stone beacons that guided and united the community.

Visibility and control of the surroundings

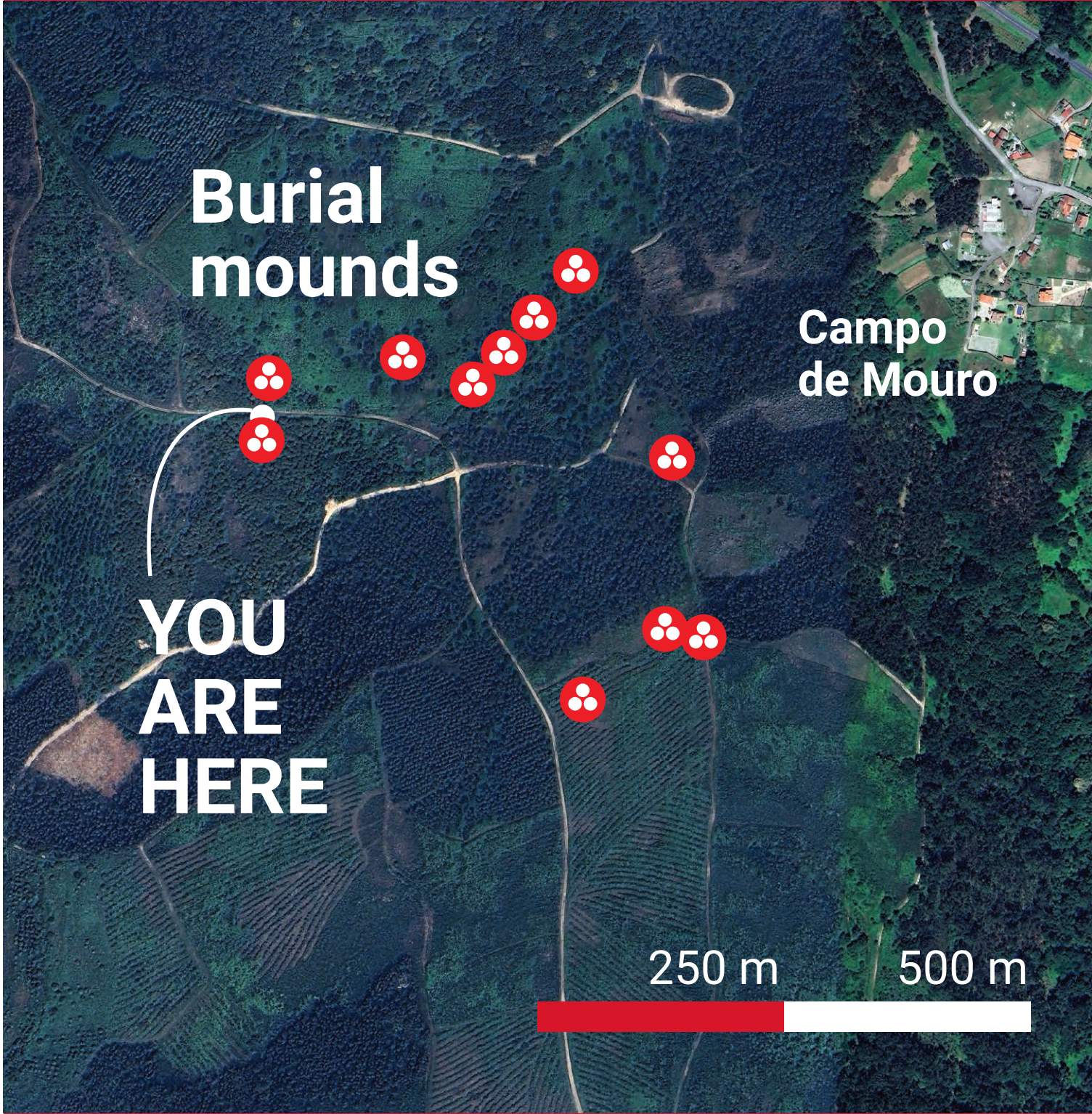
They are strategically located to provide a panoramic view of the territory, possibly with territorial or symbolic value. The mámoas are always visible from the area in which they were built.

Transit routes and communication

We often find them aligned or forming necropolises near natural transit routes: ancient roads, mountain passes or divides between river valleys.

Spatial Organisation

Mamoas rarely appear in isolation, but are organised according to certain patterns:



Burial mounds

- In the region of O Condado, groups of 2 to 10 burial mounds are common, often distributed along a plateau or mountain ridge.
- They are interpreted as collective burial sites built and reused over hundreds of years by the same clans or human groups.

Alignments or axes

- Some mámoas are aligned, possibly following ancient ritual paths or functioning as territorial markers.
- Not all mámoas have a burial chamber and corridor, but those that do include the east-facing dolmen.

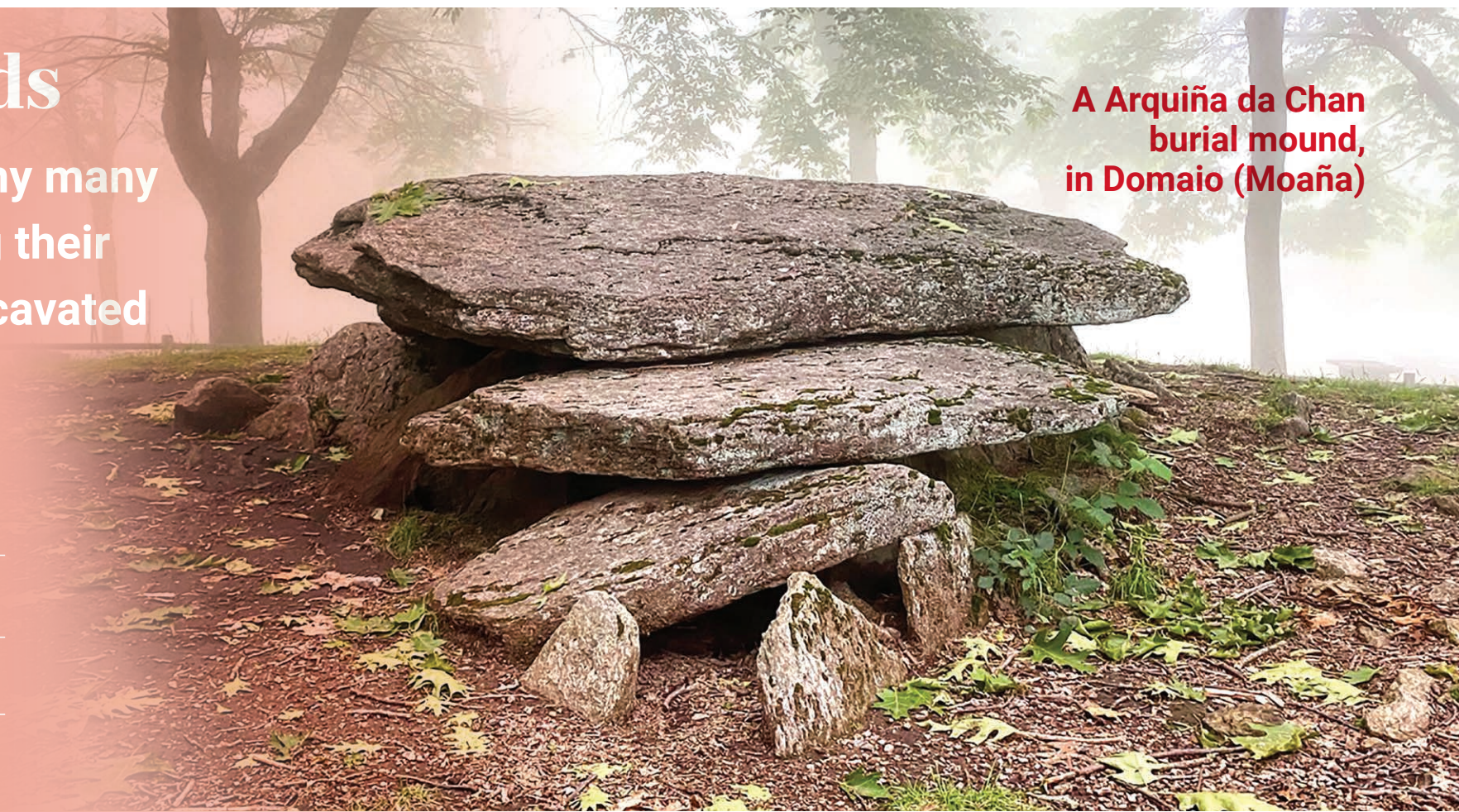
Individual, but related to other structures

Some mámoas are isolated but close to settlements contemporary to these burial grounds. Also, areas of cultivation and other symbolic elements (water springs, menhirs or standing stones, stone circles, etc.).

Excavated burial mounds

These are very scarce today, which is why many questions remain unanswered regarding their archaeological characterisation. The excavated burial mounds closest to the Neolithic necropolis of Santomé are as follows:

Name	Location
King's burial mound	Vilaboa
A Arquiña da Chan burial mound	Domaio (Moaña)
Casa dos Mouros of Candeán	Vigo



A Arquiña da Chan burial mound, in Domaio (Moaña)



Recreation of the interior of a Neolithic hut

A Neolithic hut was a small community hub: a warm space made of mud, wood and straw where people lived, worked and shared. Inside, grains and fruits were stored in wicker baskets, food was ground on large stones, meals were cooked over an open fire and people rested on animal skins. Everything was simple but functional. These early homes showed how humans learned to cultivate, store and create life around the land.

En resumen

Age	North-western Neolithic (c. 4500–2500 B.C.)	Function	Funeral, ritual, territorial, symbolic
Location	Plateaus, ridges, mountain ranges, watersheds	Visibility	High, with visual control of the landscape
Organisation	Grouped in necropolises, aligned or on axes	Material	Earth, stone, burial mound. Sometimes with armour and megalithic chamber.

