



# Neolithic Seafaring and Maritime Technologies shaped a New World of Megalithic Societies (4700-3500 cal BC)

## Rapports

### Informations projet

**NEOSEA**

N° de convention de subvention: 949424

[Site Web du projet](#)

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Ce projet apparaît dans...



## Periodic Reporting for period 2 - NEOSEA (Neolithic Seafaring and Maritime Technologies shaped a New World of Megalithic Societies (4700-3500 cal BC))

Période du rapport: 2022-05-01 au 2023-10-31

### Résumé du contexte et des objectifs généraux du projet



NEOSEA is a comparative study of early megaliths and megalithic societies in Europe (4500-3500 cal BC). It seeks to analyse and explain how trans-cultural maritime exchange shaped the Megalithic Ages.

My previous results suggest, that long-distance maritime connections were far more prevalent in Neolithic Europe than previously supposed. My hypothesis is that maritime journeys and new skills in shipbuilding began in Europe ~2000 years earlier than in the Bronze Age as previously proposed. The origin of seafaring began within sea-mammal-hunting societies in Northwest France, who developed maritime technologies in order to follow whales, an economy that formed the basis for the first monumental megalithic constructions. These megalithic societies refined their maritime skills to an extent that enabled them to build seaworthy vessels and travel long distances along the coasts of Europe and over the seas. The new maritime skills mobilised seafaring elites to trade exotic raw materials such as green stone and expand their power and a new religion. Taken together the results may produce a completely new understanding of the technological, social and religious complexity of megalithic societies. If the proposed research sustains my hypothesis, NEOSEA will establish a new paradigm for the rise of seafaring and advanced maritime technologies, the maritime mobility of megalithic societies and the emergence of megalithic architecture among sea-mammal-hunting societies in Northwest France.

To test the proposed maritime mobility the project's innovative methodology will refine megalithic radiocarbon chronologies in Europe down to historical dimensions (~20-year increments), employ ancient DNA (aDNA) and strontium/oxygen isotope analysis from a representative number of megaliths, as well as an innovative sampling of environmental DNA (eDNA) in regions without bone preservation.

## Travail effectué depuis le début du projet jusqu'à la fin de la période considérée dans le rapport et principaux résultats atteints jusqu'à présent



Since 2020, we have carried out several excavations in Europe. The aim of the fieldwork was to obtain sample material for C-14, multi-stable isotopic and organic residue analyses, ancient DNA, and environmental DNA.

These excavations included two early megalithic tombs in the Monchique Mountains in Portugal, the megalithic tomb La Plance á Puare on the French Atlantic island Ile d'Yeu and a megalithic tomb in the Tuscan megalithic necropolis Valdiloria. We have also documented rock art with Stone Age boats at Nämforsen and Lycksele. The organisation and management of the NEOSEA project were strongly influenced by the pandemic these first years and required some re-planning regarding the sample acquisition, the field trips and the planned excavation. The project resulted so far in collaborations with megalith institutions in Europe such as the archaeological departments of the University of Faro, Sassari, Nantes and Granada, then the Museo Geologico in Lisbon and the Globe Institute in Copenhagen for aDNA and eDNA sequencing. Moreover, me and my team visited museums and archives for permits and sample collection all around Europe. Most of these samples are already in various laboratories. The next step will be the analysis of the results.

## Progrès au-delà de l'état des connaissances et impact potentiel prévu (y compris l'impact socio-économique et les conséquences sociétales plus larges du projet jusqu'à présent)



The NEOSEA project is still in the data collection phase. We are looking for human and animal bones and charcoal from megalithic contexts all over Europe. A major part of the sample collection is realized and we are expecting at the end of the project to synchronize contemporaneous early megalithic regions along the coasts to reconstruct probable sea routes and a maritime-spread scenario for the earliest megalithic tradition.

We will be able to specify early megalithic maritime connections, patterns of mobility and cultural and genetic admixture in all its variations, determining how these imply travels, expeditions, and migrations of people. These findings will lead to new theories about the social organization of these seafaring societies and the socio-economic forces which were driving them. We will be able to make statements on seafaring capabilities, the green stone trade, sea mammal hunting strategies and the investment of economic surpluses into monument building,



La Planche á Puare Ile d'Yeu. The NEOSEA project is excavating this dolmen in June 2022

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