

*The municipality of Marsalès welcomes you at Borie Neuve burial site  
and recommends you to visit :*

## **The long barrows of the Wolf's House.**

### **Monuments for the living and the dead.**

More than 200,000 years ago, the first funeral rituals started to be done, then new ideas emerged and customs gradually evolved : Human beings buried their dead.

Some 7,000 years ago in Périgord, our hunter-gatherer ancestors faced the arrival of new populations and discovered agriculture and farming. Later, as they kept on using new methods, it allowed them to settle. Both keeping in touch with nature providing them a good life, and without forgetting their ancestors, with ideas coming from the atlantic coast, they staked out their territory using stones which are going to remain unaffected over the years: menhir (tall stones put in a vertical position)...

The Neolithic society (6,000 and 2,000 years BC) sometimes interpreted symbolic gestures towards dead people as a unique architectural and cultural dimension. Huge megaliths monuments were erected so that they could be easily seen, with huge burial chambers (dolmens) used to preserve and keep the human remains of individuals of the group.

A dolmen was built according to varying techniques depending on the region itself and required a major collective effort. Everything was taken into consideration to find the right place to implement it. It depended on the other megaliths around, the local topography of the site, the visual coverage of the area, its geographical location in the area and other elements such as : dowsers used to find a seam of water under the tomb. They also used to choose carefully the right stones which came from specific quarries : for Marsalès dolmens but sometimes more than 6 miles far away for other dolmens in Dordogne. The axis and opening of the monument could be linked to special astronomic moments ( solstice sunrise or sunset for example).



*Poulnabrone Dolmen Ireland at summer solstice.*

At some times, early peoples fully integrated ancestors into their lives and around them. The group used to choose the people whose remains (or a part of them) would carefully be let into the dolmen, with specific elements such as polished axes, flint tools, jewelry elements ...and offerings (vases) discovered during diggings.

A place of worship for the practice of some rites used to be held.

Traces of external constructive development and interior decoration could be found.

The repetitive use of the monument sometimes allowed to find reduced bodies and tidied bones.



*Material found during digs in past centuries in Grézac à Auradou (Lot et Garonne) funeral aisle and displayed at Sauveterre-la-Lémance museum.*

These monuments should be more than just a tomb at that time when beliefs and customs were closely linked, these memorial sites used to be places of religious life, sites of memory, and astronomy tool ...developing social and political life.

Even after their builders' death, some of these monuments were still used as tombs at least until the Metal Age.

However, in the late Neolithic, people seemed to be willing to consider dead people differently and to « close » these contact tools. These monuments were forgotten.

Some of them, thousands of years ago, were deconsecrated, partly removed and filled...

Erosion kept on sculpting them. Quarrymen and all sorts of builders made use of them.

Fabulous media for one's fantasy (mainly in the XIXth century), these ancient religion witnesses were christianized, destroyed or called devil's stones « Pierre du Diable », « Fairies stones », or known as being a sanctuary for dangerous animals as the wolf « Oustal del Loup ».

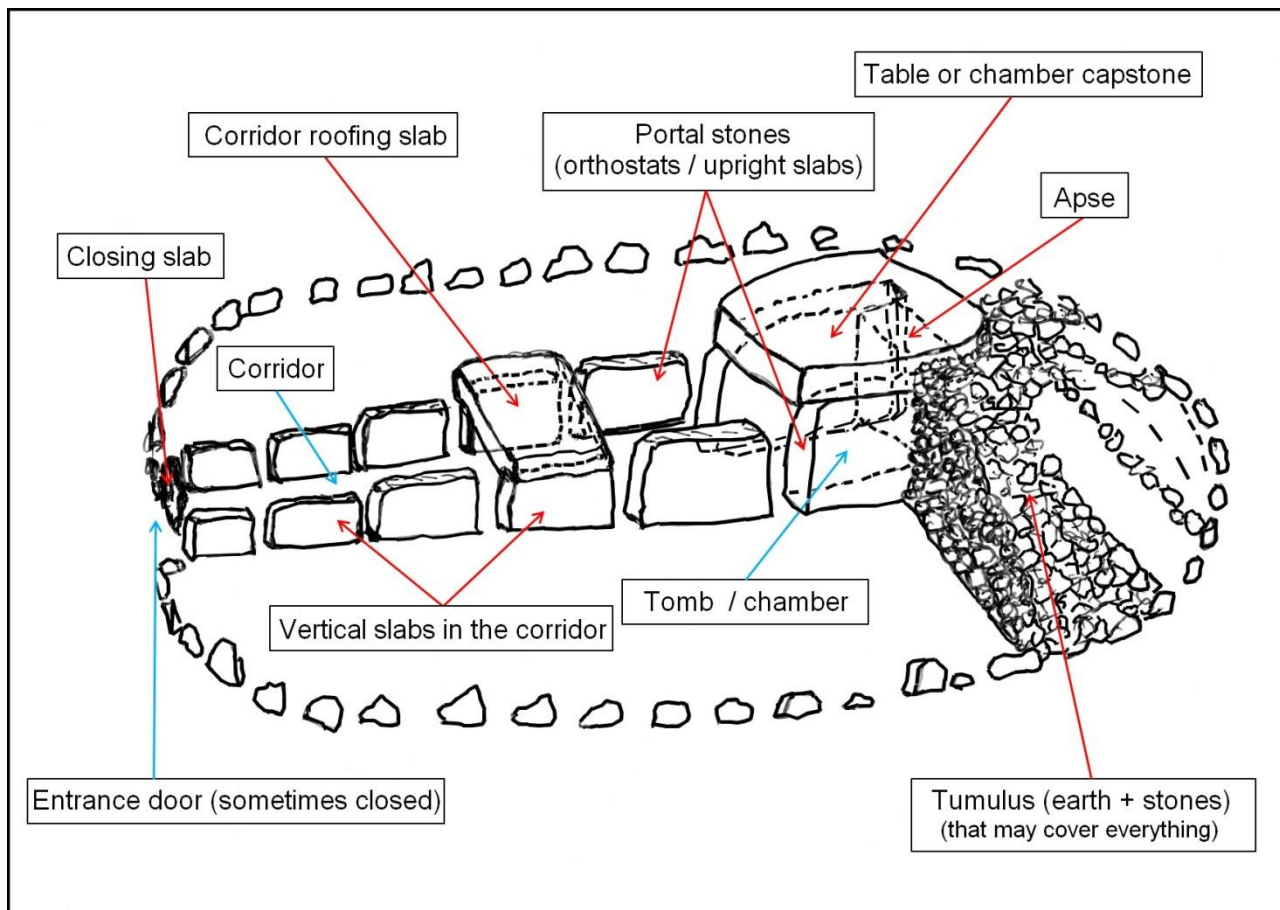
The enigmatic side of these structures has always triggered the attention of people.

The reckless excavations made by treasure seekers destroyed their contents and wiped a part of our history for ever.

These two Megalithic aisles were created in the late Neolithic period (between 3,500 and 2,000 BC ). They were used as collective tombs. They are part of **the long barrows known as « d'Aquitaine »**, a different kind of simple dolmens created after dolmens with corridors.

The long barrow known as « d'Aquitaine » is composed of a **thin tomb** preceded by **an access aisle** as large as it. Several **large slabs of stone covers** were placed on two **vertical stones that served as feet**. The stone covers and the corridor height were being reduced from the tomb to the entrance door. A stone was sometimes used to separate the two parts. The ground was leveled or even paved to welcome the dead or the human remains.

These graves were usually surrounded or even covered with piles of earth and stones cleverly arranged making a **tumulus** which looked like a kind of artificial cave.



These historical data and interpretations are consistent with the state of knowledge in 2023.

To keep this amazing heritage, our village bought the fields and the monuments to the former owner. Marsalès Fathers thus started to carefully develop the site to allow present and coming generations to learn how our ancestors from Perigord were living and behaving.

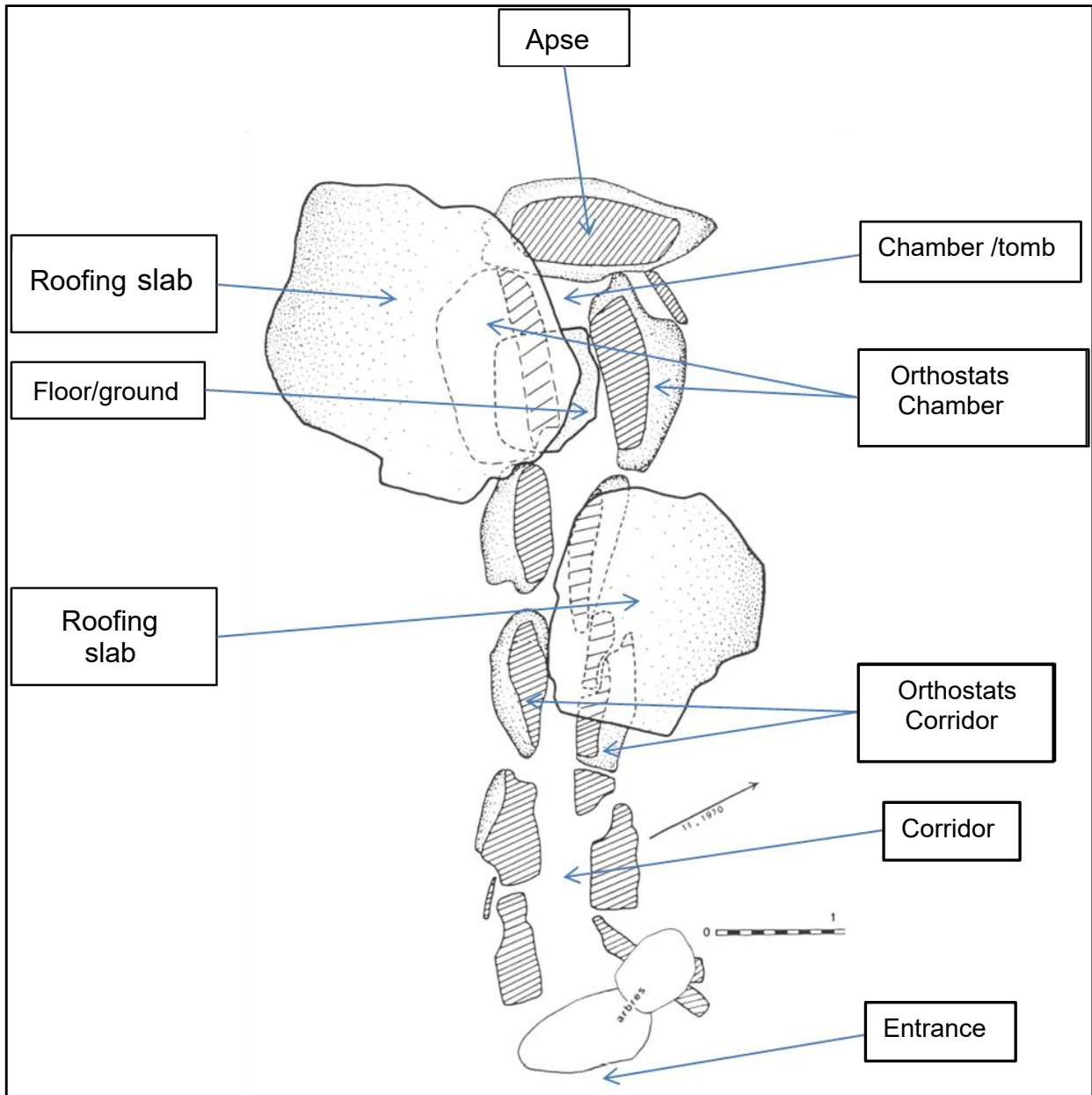
We must remind you of the French Law : any kinds of digs, soil surveys, explorations are regulated and subject to official authorization. Anyone finding fortuitous objects must inform the Town Hall, material which can't belong to his inventor but which belongs to the State.

The archaeological group of Monpazier

Financé avec le concours du Département de la Dordogne dans le cadre du Budget participatif Dordogne-Périgord



## The long barrow known as the « Oustal del Loup » n° 1



from Jean CLOTTES 's sketch ...

This long borrow, overgrown and damaged by tree vegetation was cleaned out.

It is now about 7m50 by 45/50 cm wide. It must have been 9m90 from the apse to its entrance.

It is oriented 123 degrees to the north.

It is made of large chalcedonian limestone slabs which emerge in the surrounding forests. Chalcedony, a mineral composed of flint, a microcrystalline variety of quartz (SiO<sub>2</sub>).

The burial chamber is 1m30 high with its two orthostats longer than those in the corridor (1m50) ; it is closed on the west side with a slab called « the apse ». The floor is made of a smaller slab.

2 rows made of 4 orthostats form a degressive height barrow towards the entrance. Other slabs must have been destroyed by strain . This barrow is partly filled.

Two huge slabs still remain as a roof :

- one over the chamber on the left side.
- the other one over the corridor on the right.

Huge stones litter the barrow, they may be parts of the roof with no ways of reverting to their earlier position.

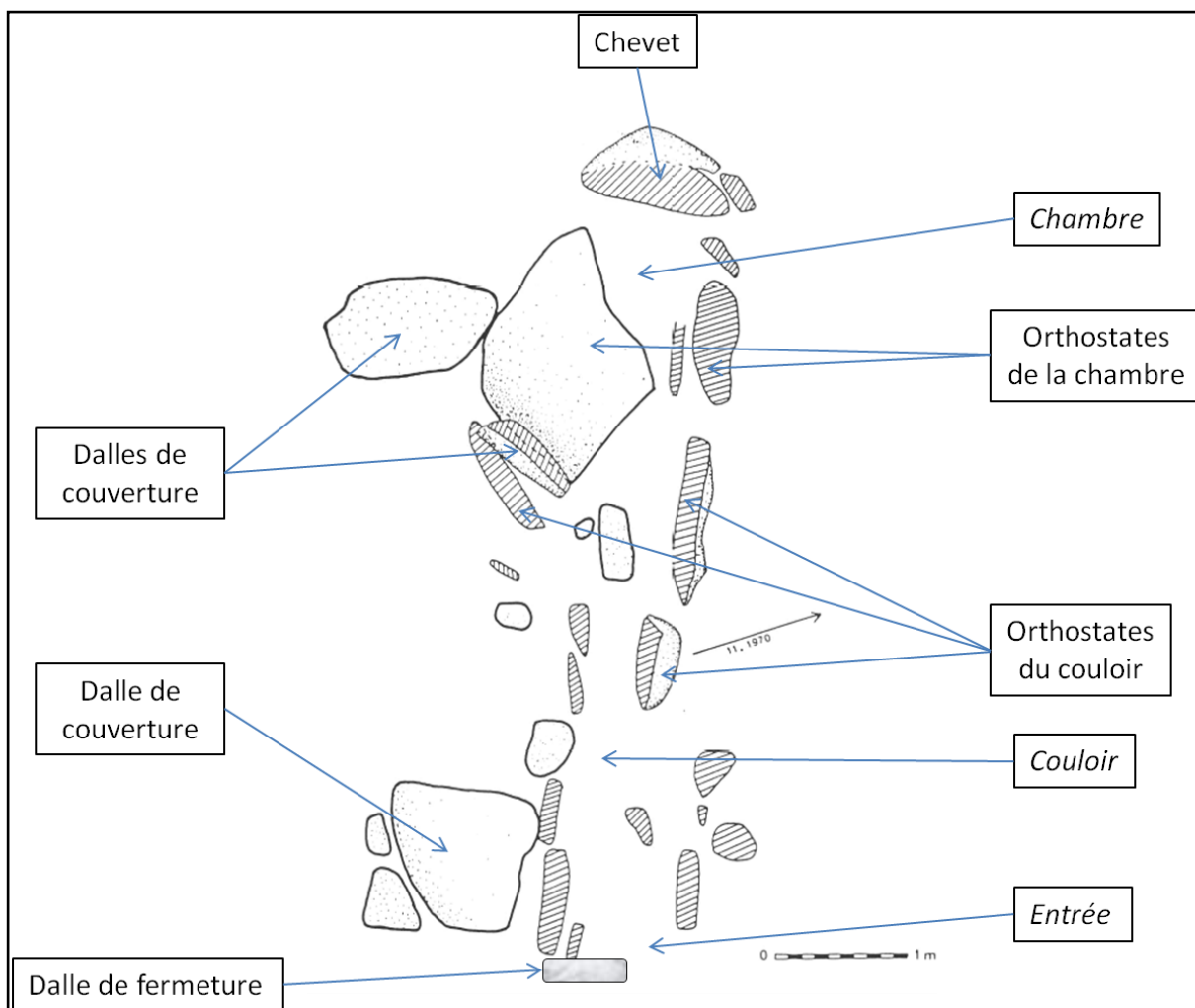
The barrow (a mound of earth + chalcedonian limestone blocks) is rather collapsing and deteriorating. It is now a 15 m by 10 m long oval but was certainly less wide when the monument was built.

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## The long barrow known as the « Oustal del Loup » n°2



from Jean CLOTES 's sketch ...

It is 6m45 by 60cm wide in its narrow part.

It is oriented 123 degrees to the north like its neighbour and located on the same seam of water running under the tomb.

Its slabs are made of limestone with local flint and its tumulus is made of mounds of earth and chalcedonian limestone blocks put together to strengthen the vertical slabs.

A chestnut tree grew in the burial chamber lifting and removing the slabs. This chamber is closed with an apse slab. Two vertical slabs were put to build its sidewalls : one still exists whereas the other one was lifted by the tree.

A roofing slab lies in the south part on the tumulus.

Another roofing slab is also on the tumulus at the entrance.

The corridor which is backfilled is delimited by small vertical slabs (orthostats).

We seldom see two barrows so close one each other and with the same architecture.

It could have been built later than the first one.

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