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A Round Iron Age: The Circular House in the Hillforts of the Northwestern Iberian Peninsula

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A Round Iron Age: The Circular House in the Hillforts of the Northwestern Iberian Peninsula

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Abstract

This article provides a diachronic synthesis of domestic space in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula from recent prehistory through the High Middles Ages. Within the theoretical and methodological frameworks of landscape archaeology and the archaeology of architecture we propose an updated social reading of the archaeological record based on new data collected in the course of recent archaeological investigations at different sites in Galicia. We propose several hypotheses from this perspective concerning different issues linked to northwestern domestic architecture, including the origins of the round house in recent prehistory, the development of an Iron Age architectural style, the symbolic background of these houses, and the impact of Romanization on what eventually becomes the architecture of the High Middle Ages in this part of the Iberian Peninsula.

Keywords

Galician Iron Age, hillforts, circular house, domestic space, archaeology of architecture, landscape archaeology.

The old house is deserted here,
the old house stands in silence, asleep.
The old house used to be so nice, before,
standing there, it was so nice.

Now it is deserted,
rotting in silence,
what a waste of houses,
a waste of hours.

"The old house", Frantisek Bass (1930-1944).
A child interned by the Nazis at the Terenzín concentration camp. Killed in Auschwitz.

1. Introduction

Unlike other cultural aspects of the Iron Age in the Iberian Peninsula, an updated summary of the domestic architecture of the so-called *Cultura Castreña*, or Hillfort Culture, in

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the northwest has not yet been produced (Figure 1). The last monograph on this topic is that of Romero Masiá (1976). This deficiency affects archaeological research in the Iberian Peninsula and represents a major limitation for foreign researchers focused on the issues related to domestic space during this period as well as those interested in studying the typical circular houses found on hillforts and their similarity to the Iron Age dwellings of the Atlantic area. In fact, to date very few papers on this subject have been published in English[2], and most of those deal only tangentially with domestic space (Blanco et al. 2003; Criado and Parcero 1997; González Ruibal 2006; Parcero 2003; Queiroga 2003; Sastre 2002).

Figure 1. Location of study area in Europe.

Studies of the Iron Age house in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, from the excavations of Martins Sarmento in Briteiros and Sabroso in the 1870s to the present, are an accurate reflection of the historiographic evolution of the archaeology of the northwest (Ayán 2002). Until the 1980s the dominant socio-cultural German School represented the traditional

perspective regarding the Hillfort Culture, a perspective that still has some defenders in the scientific community. According to these parameters, the objective of "hillfort archaeology", conceived as a scientific practice and a political tool, is the definition of a cultural group distinct from the rest, conceived as a living organization and defined by a number of "objective" formal characteristics: a scattered environmentally specific territory, the predominance of the circular shape in settlements and structures, the absence of town planning, a specific type of traditional craftsmanship in precious metals and a unique ceramic tradition. In particular, this archaeological perspective developed out of the Asturian and *minhoto* regionalisms of the last third of the nineteenth century, especially the Galician cultural and political nationalism of the 1920s (Ayán 2005a, 2006; Díaz Santana 2002; González Ruibal 2006-2007; Marín 2005).

According to this organic-historicist approach, the presence of a culture in the northwest that is different from other cultures of the Iberian Peninsula can already be attested in proto-historic periods and represents the origin of Galician ethnicity. According to Galician archaeology, there is total continuity between Iron Age Celtic civilization and the traditional rural world in this region. Influenced by the Hamburg School, most of the research into hillfort houses during the central decade of the twentieth century was focused on the study of the historical continuity between Iron Age dwellings and domestic vernacular architecture, which supposedly retains ancient building techniques in remote mountainous areas on the borders of Asturias, Galicia and León (García y Bellido 1967).

In the 1960s there was a reaction against these Celtic theories, reflected in the appearance of the more neutral term *Cultura Castrexa* or Hillfort Culture, and in the acceptance of an endogenous origin of the Galician Iron Age communities through Mediterranean and central European influences. In spite of these changes, however, archaeological research has continued to encourage a typological and formalist approach to the interpretation of hillfort houses. The houses in the fortified settlements have been conceived as study subjects in themselves, like *fibulae*, *torcs* or ceramic vessels, rather than as a social construction; they are viewed as an architectonically functional form within the context of a cultural landscape. During the 1970s hillfort archaeology was particularly obsessed with temporal parameters; dwellings were sectioned to expose internal stratigraphic profiles and the first radiocarbon dates were obtained. All of these methodological approaches were combined with the formal classification of the houses, in the form of ground plans and territorial distribution studies. It was not until the 1980s

that the foundations of a social archaeology of hillforts were laid under the delayed influence of British functionalist spatial archaeology (Clarke 1977, 1984; Hodder and Orton 1990).

This historiographic trend has placed a number of significant conditions and limitations on the archaeological record available for the study of domestic space in Iron Age northwestern Iberia, resulting in a situation that typically surprises European colleagues: even though northwestern Iberia has produced the largest number of excavated settlements, almost nothing is known about hillfort social organization. The archaeological documentation of proto-historical archaeological sites in the northwest is so deficient in significant ways that to a large extent it is impossible to analyze the built environment at these sites. The resulting paradoxical limitations on the investigation of the Iron Age in the northwest have been exacerbated by an approach that pays little attention to the technological, functional and symbolic aspects inherent in any domestic architecture. As M.D. Fernandez Posse has correctly pointed out:

> What is really sad is that such attitudes have been maintained in spite of the most meaningful and abundant building records in peninsular proto-history: we only have to compare the small areas that have been excavated in the Iron Age settlements on the plateau at those times with the many hillforts that have already produced evidence of large open-air areas within their built nuclei. So far the analysis of such structures, especially studies regarding the inner structure of the hillforts, has not surpassed the morphological level of Cuevilla's[3] work (1998: 78) [author's translation].

Even the information from recently excavated hillforts reflects this phenomenon, replicating the limitations and gaps that are a direct consequence of traditional field archaeology, which has been concerned mainly with exhuming architectonic structures. The old archaeological excavation work focused on exposing wall courses in order to get a clear sense of the ground plan of the structures within archaeological sites. Possible spatial relationships between buildings were not considered, nor were the positions of features found within structures a concern.

This practice—still applicable today in projects that developed within the framework of classical archaeology—results in the loss of important information, especially a lack of proper contextualization of finds. This deficiency makes it impossible to speculate on the internal organization of housing areas or to identify different activity areas. In addition, no data are available regarding structures or smaller building elements (such as internal room dividers or postholes) that could be used as a foundation for hypothetical reconstructions of the domestic sphere.

These deficiencies combined are also an obstacle to functional interpretations of hillfort structures. As a result, ignorance regarding the rules governing the arrangement of the domestic trousseau leads archaeologists to assume that every excavated structure is an individual house, without paying attention to the possible spatial interrelationships within a housing group. Also, and despite the perennial obsession with stratigraphic profiles, no complete stratigraphic sequences exist on which to posit the possible evolutionary development of the built environment within the hillforts. The combination of all these factors prevents an in-depth analysis of the domestic area and seriously complicates any attempt to supersede the descriptive and typological direction in which traditional archaeology has continued to develop.

However, since the early 1990s a number of factors have led to an improvement in the archaeological record available for the hillforts. First of all, it is worth mentioning the application of modern excavation technologies and updated recording conventions (in the form of the Harris matrix, for example); secondly, at a theoretical level the contextual and/or post-processual analyses that resulted from the development of research directions in landscape and architectural archaeology have had a positive impact; and finally, the involvement of a new generation of archaeologists in cultural resource management has resulted in regionally-based projects that have allowed the documentation of previously unknown archaeological sites. In particular, several major archaeological lacunae in our knowledge of the Iron Age cultural landscape have been filled in this way, including evidence for farming terraces and hillfort mines as well as the earliest settlements in the plain that were not fortified during the Roman occupation.

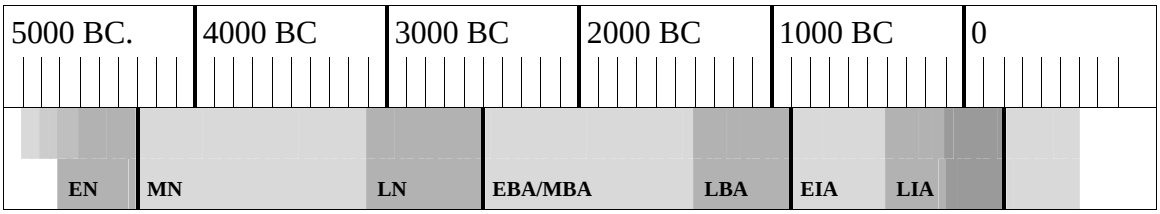
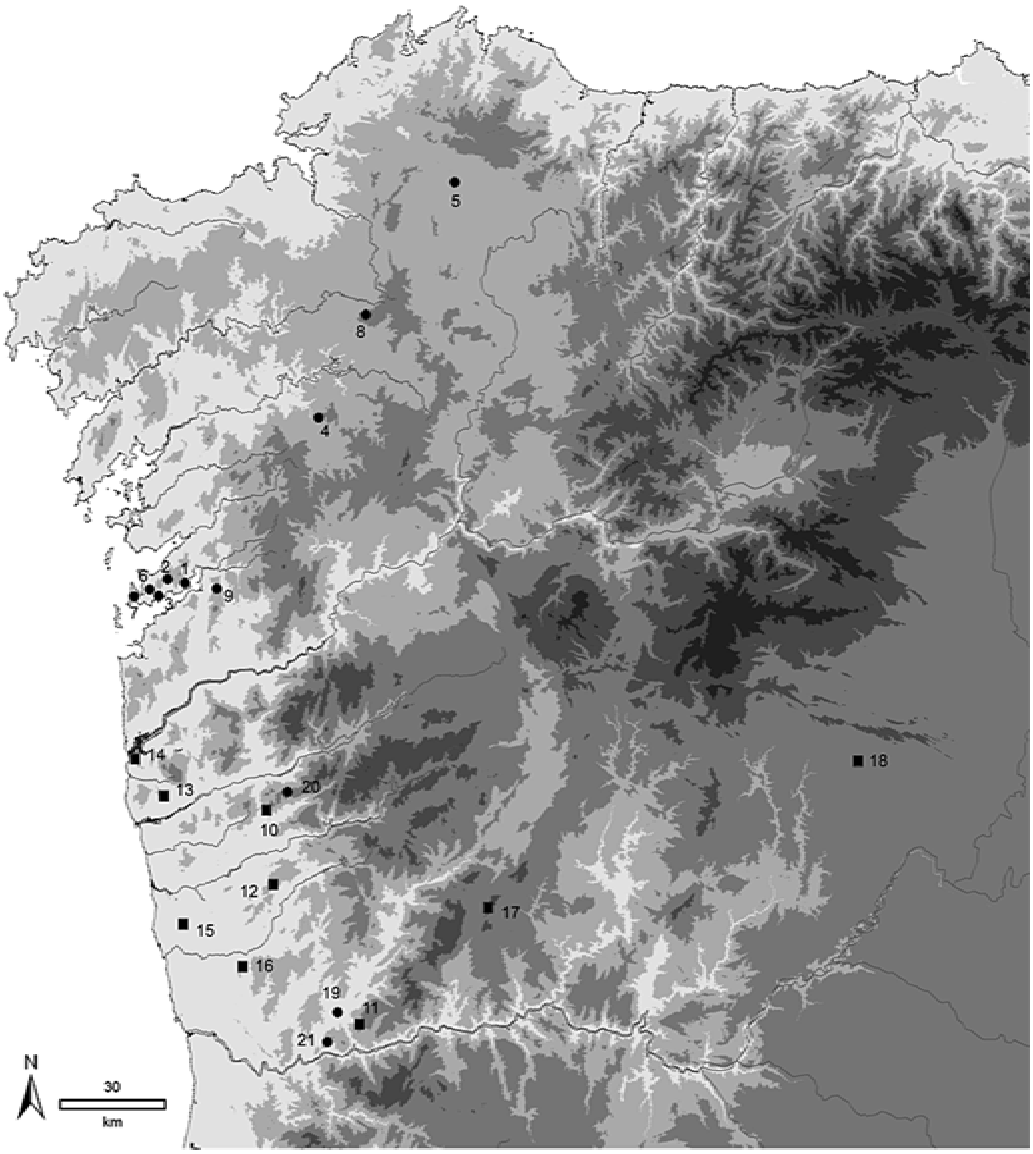


Table 1. Periodization of the northwestern Iberian Peninsula: Recent Prehistory and Protohistory (calibrated dates; LAr, IEGPS, CSIC-XuGa proposal). Key: EN (Initial Neolithic); MN (Middle Neolithic/Megaliths); LN (Late Neolithic); EBA/MBA (Early/Middle Bronze Age); LBA (Late Bronze Age); EIA (Early Iron Age); LIA (Late Iron Age).

This historical context and these new discoveries are the starting point for this article, which provides a very specific perspective for those specialists who do not know at first hand the range of material available in relation to Iron Age hillfort spatial analysis in this region. A chrono-cultural diagram outlining the phases that are commonly accepted for the northwest by

most researchers is presented above (Table 1). Included in this updated diachronic synthesis of Iron Age architecture and domestic space in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula are maps showing hillfort distribution patterns and the locations of the archaeological sites mentioned in the text (Figure 2).



1. O Regueiriño; 2. Montenegro; 3. Os Remedios; 4. Zarra de Xoaquín; 5. Vilalba; 6. Os Leguiños; 7. O Fiadeiro; 8. A Lagoa; 9. Monte Buxel; 10. San Julião; 11. Castelo de Matos; 12. Monte da Falperra; 13. Citânia de Briz; 14. Coto da Pena; 15. Monte da Saia; 16. Monte Padrão; 17. Castelo de Aguiar; 18. La Mazada; 19. Bouça do Frade; 20. A Santinha; 21. Lavra.

Figure 2. Map showing the main prehistoric sites mentioned in the text.

2. Before the hillforts: domestic space in recent prehistory

The archaeological record of the northwestern Iberian Peninsula is substantially limited by the highly acidic soil, which is inimical to even minimal preservation of most ancient archaeological remains, whether osseous, metallic, or organic. Another important limitation is the almost total absence of information about domestic space in the recent prehistory of this area. The fact that most of these prehistoric settlements are invisible as well as poorly preserved, together with their location on slopes with light soils without much stratigraphic depth, means that archaeological research has traditionally been focused on mortuary ritual, which is monumental and visible in the form of Neolithic megalithic tumulus and cist burials of Bronze Age date.

2.1. The relative invisibility of domestic space in recent prehistory

During the past fifteen years, excavations undertaken in the context of lineal subsurface projects (turnpike roads, modern two-lane highways, gas pipelines) have helped to identify a great number and variety of previously unknown domestic structures and have thrown some light on this archaeological gap (Lima Oliveira 2000).

To summarize, the nature of domestic space during the Early to Middle Neolithic (the beginning of the fourth millennium BC) is practically unknown. There are a few documented remains, like the archaeological sites of O Regueiriño (Moaña, Pontevedra) (Lima Oliveira 2005) that refer to small temporary camps with ephemeral housing that was only occupied for short periods of time (Bello and Peña 1995: 112; Lima Oliveira 2000: 46), based on the paucity of material remains and structures. There was minimal investment in building resources and the building materials used were generally perishable. These temporary camps, which left few traces in the landscape, have contributed to the relative invisibility of domestic space during the megalithic phase of the Neolithic. This situation changed during the Late Neolithic in the third millennium BC (Suárez Otero 2002: 12-3). Therefore, the historical evolution of these Neolithic farming societies is characterized by a great variability of settlement forms on a regional scale. Primitive hamlets appear (Vicent 1991) in the form of more permanent settlements with more evidence for internal complexity in the late Neolithic. Examples include the archaeological site of Zarra de Xoacín (Lalín, Pontevedra) (Aboal et al. 2004-2005) with its burned stone structures, foundation trenches and postholes, and the monumental archaeological site of Montenegro

(Moaña, Pontevedra). Here the extent of occupation is reflected in the archaeological structures as well as in communal activity areas within a permanent hamlet with roofless houses, ditches used to store agricultural products, a great number of postholes, small demarcation trenches and compartmentalization of space—all the material hallmarks of a typical settlement of that time. In this case, however, we would like to emphasize the fact that the most obvious remains of houses are in the form of circular depressions three to four meters in diameter, with foundation trenches and postholes.

The same pattern can be seen nearby in the contemporary archaeological site of Os Remedios (Moaña, Pontevedra). Here, on an artificial platform delimited by a surrounding palisade, an extensive domestic space was laid out in the form of a permanent area with ditches, burned structures and paving in which the foundations of a circular house roughly 4.5 meters in diameter are clearly documented based on imprints of postholes located on the edge of the foundation trench (Figure 3). Similarly, most of the postholes assigned to the first occupation of the settlement are circular or oval (Bonilla and César 2005: 56).

Figure 3. Hut floor, Os Remedios settlement (Bonilla and César 2005: 56).

This is a construction type that ultimately establishes itself as the standard template in the recent prehistory of the northwestern Iberian Peninsula. The stability of this architectural pattern suggests the existence of communities with a cultural tradition that was symbolically based and reproduced a spatial logic marked by circular visibility patterns. In this sense, it seems significant that these Neolithic societies built their commemorative stone tumulus structures on the same circular plan as their settlements and houses.

The Montenegro archaeological site exhibits this socio-spatial logic as well. In the upper part of the settlement, coinciding with a terrace along the foothill down to the Ría de Vigo a monumental circular area about 20 meters in diameter was documented with its main entrance facing southeast (Figure 4). The edge of the southwestern quadrant is defined by a line of stones thrust into the ground while the granite rock outcrop naturally defends the remainder of the site. Inside is a circular posthole structure (Gianotti and Cancela 2005: 51) that echoes the

organizational model of Neolithic tumular space, with the following characteristics: circular shape, dual and asymmetric organization of space, entrance facing the rising sun, incorporation of natural elements in monumental architecture and concentration of ceramic and lithic material in the southern part of the structure (Criado and Villoch 1998, 2000; Mañana et al. 2002). It is suggested based on this that there was a formal, regular pattern in these agro-pastoral communities in which the circle was used in funerary architecture as well as in monuments erected for social gatherings[4].

Figure 4. Inhabited area of Montenegro settlement (Photo LAr, IEGPS, CSIC-XuGa).

2.2. Hamlets and dwellings during the Bronze Age: the weak imprint of a primitive rural society

Domestic space during the Bronze Age is still a mystery in most of the northern Peninsula (Blas Cortina 1984: 71). In Galicia, the excavation record is so poor that it was almost impossible to outline even a minimal characterization of the settlements of this period up to a few years ago (Fábregas and Meijide 2000: 71-2). In fact, on the eastern Cantabrian coast where cave occupations have survived, remains of circular dwellings have been documented on some of these archaeological sites, for example at the Cantabrian cave of Mirón or the Basque cave of Iruaxpe III (Arias and Armendáriz 1998: 61-2). During the second millennium BC in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula regional variability was extensive, with different occupational strategies coexisting while the social environment was gradually developing from the first primitive rural societies to the birth of fortified settlements during the Iron Age (Méndez and Rey 2005: 95).

Broadly speaking, the settlements documented for the Late Neolithic and Bronze Ages tend to exhibit an occupation-abandonment-reoccupation cycle in the same areas. While this recurrent process does not indicate permanent settlement it also is not consistent with an entirely mobile way of life. Rather, settlement during this period follows a regular pattern, with a gradual

but significant impact on the environment that created territories and gave a meaning to predefined points within these territories over time, ultimately developing into permanent settlements (Criado and Martínez 2005: 94).

This period of transition coincides with the adoption of a much more diversified settlement pattern than in previous periods, and it suggests the consolidation of a dual model of territorial occupation that survived until the introduction of hillforts in littoral areas, as in the case of the O Morrazo Peninsula (Méndez and Rey 2005: 104). In that area, the settlements followed two clear siting patterns: on the one hand, locations near catchment areas or near the coast, and on the other hand locations on hillsides at higher elevations, on small peneplains and terraces, but always at a threshold of 400 meters above sea level.

During the first half of the 1980s the first archaeological sites of this type were documented in O Morrazo, including the settlements of Lavapés and Illa de Barxés (Peña Santos 1985: 74) on the Mesa de Montes hillsides. The best known of these sites is Lavapés, which clearly dates to the Early Bronze Age[5]. Except for several houses that are oval in plan—one of which reused the bases of several flat millstones in its construction—and certain groups of stones that were arranged intentionally, no elements related to posthole bases were documented (Peña Santos 1985: 76).

Inland in the northwest from the Early Bronze Age on settlement locations are directly related to humid catchment areas that were periodically and intensively reoccupied. That is why they can be defined as areas of accumulation rather than as individual settlements (Méndez 1994: 87). These areas of accumulation were connected with basins, usually had a *braña*, or permanent summer camp/pasture in the lower part, and were located in mountainous areas suitable for clearing for farming. They also tended to be in an outlying position with respect to the valley and were linked to important migration corridors. The room structures suggest a type of settlement that was not permanent, with houses made of perishable materials. Cattle pens were also made of perishable post fences (Méndez 1995a: 70-1).

The archaeological sites of A Lagoa (O Bocelo), O Fixón (García Lastra 1984; Suárez Otero 1995, 2002: 18) and Os Laguiños (Morrazo) (Mañana and Chao 2005: 61) are good examples, based on non-permanent occupation of a vast basin, with circular dwellings made of perishable materials and conjoined enclosures for cattle (Figure 5). For its part, the settlement of Os Torradoiros (Vázquez Liz 2005: 67), with an associated cultural area in the form of a

necropolis), shares these characteristics, with an elliptical domestic structure 5.74 x 4.89 meters in size and a stone foundation.

Figure 5. Hut floor, Os Laguiños settlement (Photo LAr, IEGPS, CSIC-XuGa).

These communities ensured their survival by practicing hoe or primitive plow agriculture and by exploiting nearby pastures for their bovine livestock, which determined settlement location (Méndez 1994, 1998: 176-8). There are a variety of structures in these settlements (pits, lineal ditches, dwelling foundations), evidence of longer stays and greater settlement stability in this area. The areas given over to cleared land agriculture are quite close to one another and there are demarcation ditches, presumably to separate the housing areas from the farming and pasture lands (Lima Oliveira 2000: 47). All these signs of segmentation of domestic space suggest the social division of the landscape into plots (Criado 1993: 38-41).

2.3. Progressing toward fortification

In the course of the Bronze Age domestic space became more complex. The Early and Middle Bronze Age communities lived in small hamlets that have left very little trace in the landscape and reflect great mobility resulting from a self-sufficient economic system. Power was marked in places of worship, in caves and metal ore deposits. This partly explains the absence of a mortuary record and the monumental nature of domestic space during this period (Jorge 1988b: 92-94, 1990: 225-31).

It was during the period known as the Late Bronze Age that more economically and socially complex communities appear in close proximity to these earlier sites, apparently in response to bronze metallurgy and exotic prestige goods exchange (Martins 1990: 199-201; Méndez 1995b: 77). In southern Galicia and northern Portugal the development of the different socio-political units was asymmetrical; open settlements coexisted with new settlements located on hilltops. These were fortified settlements engaged in exchanges along the Atlantic coast that controlled the exploitation, manufacturing and distribution of metallic goods (Jorge 1990; Martins 1987, 1990).

The archaeological record reflects this dual pattern in the organization of domestic space (Martins 1985: 218-9). The conditions were favorable for increased sedentism related to a complex agro-pastoral economy based on a system of planting crops and leguminous plants on a rotation basis. This was also when new plant domesticates, such as broad beans, were introduced. As part of this process, many open settlements spread throughout the present provinces of Pontevedra, Ourense, Minho and the Douro Littoral, documented by pits dug out of the rock creating a new spatial conception: a landscape divided into plots (Gonçalves et al. 1978, 1980).

A paradigmatic example of this trend is the archaeological site of Bouça do Frade (Baião, Porto) (Figure 6). It is situated on the southeast slope of a hillock, controlling the bottom of a valley. It can be considered an open settlement because it is not fortified but is located near a river without prevailing defensive worries. At this settlement the occupational surface was

Figure 6. Hut plan, Bouça do Frade (Jorge 1988a: Fig. 15).

characterized by a number of ditches dug out of the rock (reused as garbage dumps), postholes and some domestic structures of a transitory nature containing artifacts such as boat-shaped millstones, ceramic receptacles for storage, transportation and cooking as well as flint tools (Jorge 1988c: 53-7, 60). The final period of intensive occupation took place during the eighth century BC (Jorge 1988a: 134).

The same pattern can be seen in the neighboring archaeological sites of Monte Calvo and Lavra (Baião, Porto) (Figure 7). At the former, which lacked any kind of defensive structure, a number of pits had been dug into the bedrock and several postholes correspond to an open, probably temporary settlement Gonçalves 1981: 86-7, Fig. 4). At Lavra, during the second period of occupation, some pits dug into the substratum were recorded, along with the remains of burned seeds, burned structures and postholes (Sanches 1982, 1988: 126-7, Fig. 1, 1995) .

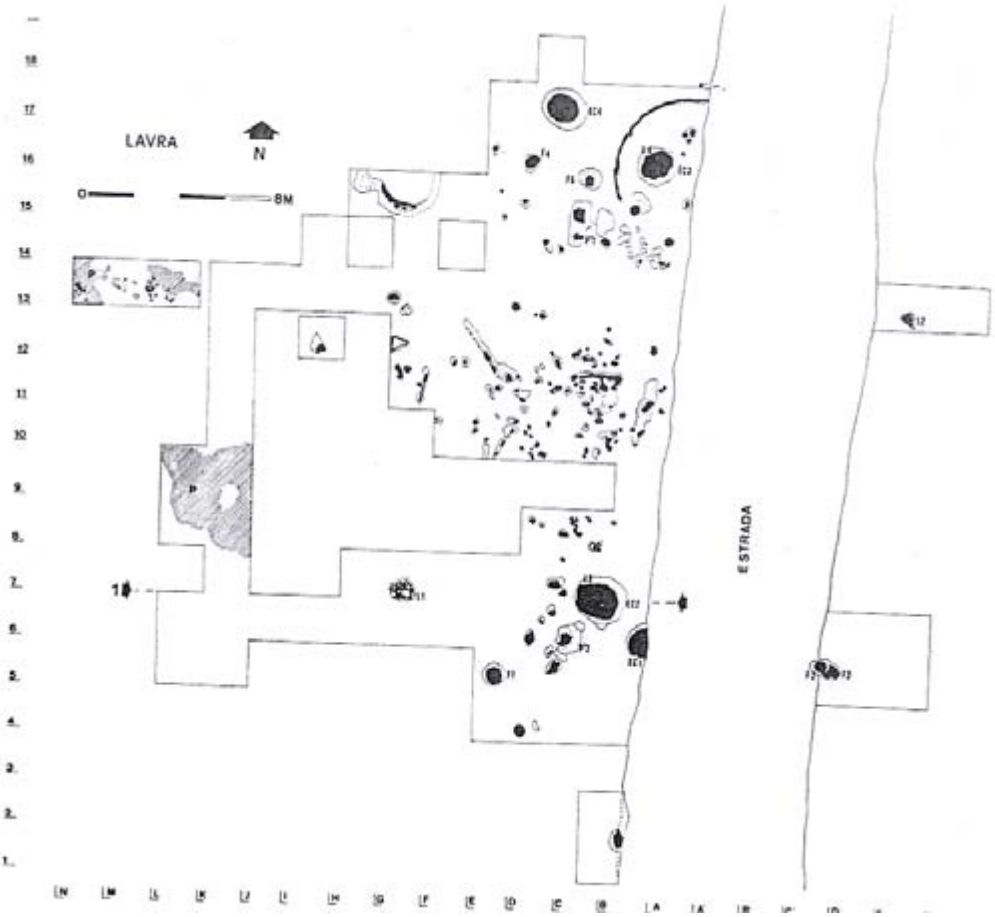


Figure 7. Plan of excavated area at Lavra settlement (Sanches 1988: 126-7, Fig. 1).

These settlements belong to a cultural context that was doubly influenced, on the one hand, as part of a Late Bronze Age cultural interaction sphere in the northern plateau, with an economy based primarily on agro-pastoral practices that is characterized by storage ditches and decorated pottery of the Cogotas I type (Jorge 1988c: 68); on the other hand, exhibiting some features of the Late Bronze Age Atlantic coast area, such as the decorated pottery of Baiões type and local products such as wide horizontal rimmed cups. The archaeological site of Monte Buxel in southern Galicia (Lima and Prieto 2002: 78-86) is the best example of an open-air settlement

from the Late Bronze Age. It featured nine globular pits used for plant food storage, especially cereal grains, with a combined capacity of 1000 - 2000 liters. These archaeological sites represent the climax of productivity and production of agricultural surplus by the communities settled in the northwest in recent prehistory (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Hypothetical reconstruction of a Final Bronze Age settlement by A. González Ruibal (2006-7: 100, Fig. 2.14).

Between the tenth and ninth centuries BC in northern Portugal hilltop settlements with natural as well as artificial defensive systems began to appear, such as S. Julião, Barbudo, Coto da Pena, Faria, Roriz, S. Jõao do Rei, Monte da Saia, Santa Marta de Falperra, Monte do Padrâo, Facha, Castro do Peso, Castelo de Aguiar, Santiago de Lagarelhos, Alto da Caldeira or Castelo de Matos (Martins 1987: 745-51) (Figure 9). These proto-*castros* were related to the increase in trade and exchange in the Atlantic coastal area due to the exchange of metallurgical products. Communities were differentially affected by these varied economic interests, which gave rise to a system of

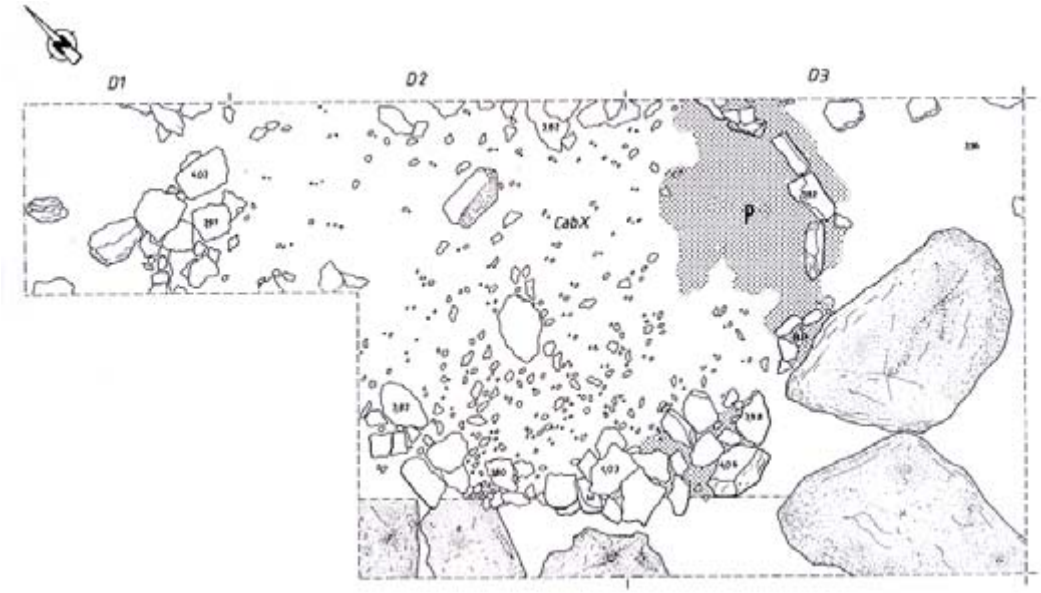


Figure 9. Hut plan, San Julião (Bettencourt 2000d: Plate IX).

interdependence that created a more heterogeneous society, with multiple settlement strategies and internal configurations linked by interregional cooperation (Jorge 1988b: 97).

The best-known settlement of this type is the hillfort of S. Juliâo, located in the central basin of the Cávado River (Figure 10). Its monumental defensive system composed of earth and stone ramparts and an outer ditch dug out of hard coarse-grained bedrock demarcates an upper platform that is laid out as a residential area. The test excavations documented traces of a possible dwelling from the first phase of the occupation. This house is defined by a number of stones arranged between two rock outcrops. Section 3 is within the settlement area adjoining the slope and consists of remains of two rooms. These rooms are demarcated by stone circles with perishable superstructures (Martins 1985: 202-203, Plate IV 12; 1988: Plate XLVII). Inside the rooms there are several levels of clay and gravel paving, as well as traces of some hearths. House 1 seems to have been no more than five meters in diameter (Martins 1990: 123-5). The area between the houses and the slope was used as a garbage dump. During the second stage of occupation the housing area was reorganized and some houses with circular paving were

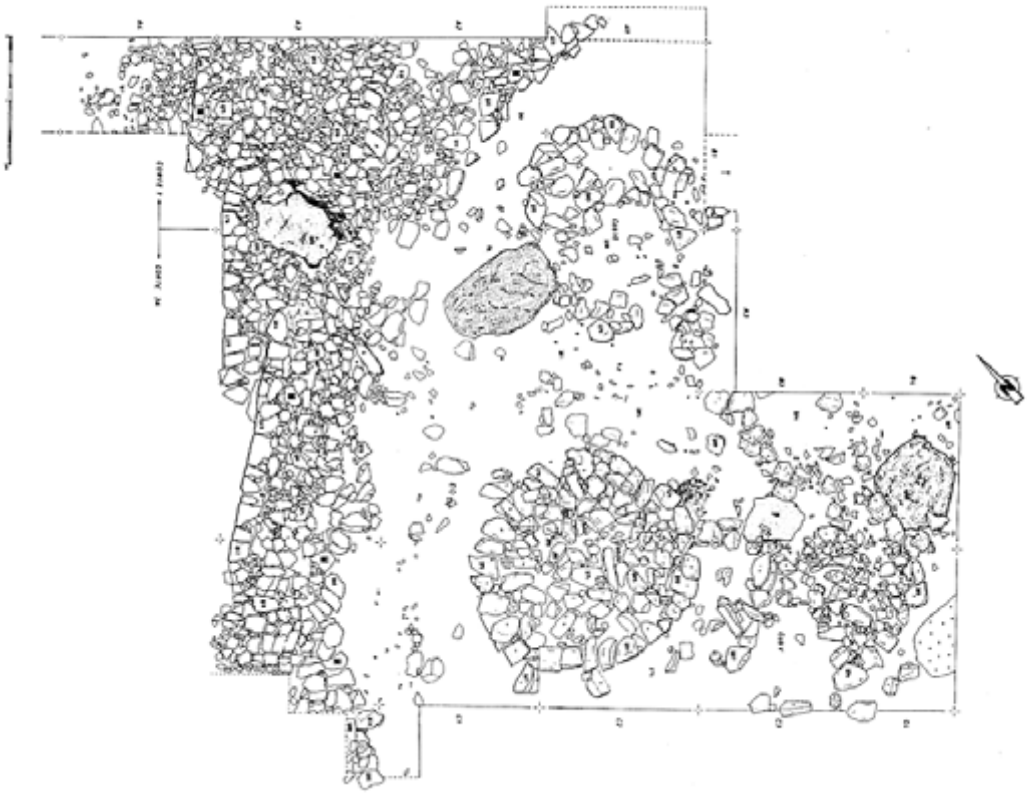


Figure 10. Hut plans, San Juliâo (Bettencourt 2000d: Plate V).

constructed, one of which contained a hearth and postholes immediately on top of the previous structure. Radiocarbon dating assigns the construction of the slope[6] to between the tenth and ninth centuries BC (970-810 BC), while the second stage of occupation of one of the dwellings[7]

was dated between the ninth and eighth centuries BC (860-740 BC) (Martins 1985: 216-7, 1986).

The excavations that took place at this site between 1989 and 1996 (Bettencourt 2000d) clarified the occupational sequence further. During the first phase of the Bronze Age (S. Julião Ia) the housing area extended across the upper platform, and the house foundations were about four to five meters in diameter. These houses were built using local granite, oak posts and leguminous plants for roofing material as well as walls (Bettencourt 2000d: 105). In the second occupational phase in the ninth century BC the settlement was provided with a monumental fortification system. Excavation on the acropolis yielded evidence for structures with gravel paving demarcated by stones, one of which was 5 to 5.50 meters in diameter. In later structures these stones were smaller, 3.50-3.75 meters in diameter, but the floors continued to be covered with gravel and the entrances faced south-southeast (Bettencourt 2000d: 106).

The oldest occupational level at Castro do Barbudo (Vila Verde) can be assigned to the same horizon, as the radiocarbon dating[8] of a pile of burned wood from a probably domestic structure proves. However, this could also have been part of a palisade documented in Level 2 Section 4 (Martins 1989: 66, Plate XL, 2). In general we can say that the defensive aspect of the site was not the predominant concern in its location, since the settlement is on the hillside rather than the summit. This is also the case at the site of Alto da Caldeira (Baião, Porto) (Jorge 1981: 72-3).

Another settlement located in an elevated position that has been studied in detail is Castelo de Matos (Baião, Porto). This settlement was an important metal production center with long distance trade connections, as evidenced by the discovery of a piece of amber (Queiroga 1984). A gravel pavement was uncovered under the walls of the medieval castle that was part of a circular house on a platform laid out as a residential area (Figueiral and Queiroga 1988: 141-2, Fig. 4).

The settlement of A Santinha (Amares), located on a low peak in the Cávado River basin belongs in this settlement category as well. The occupation documented on the acropolis and on its south slope can be assigned to the tenth century BC (Bettencourt 2001: 43-5), and according to the excavator, the types of structures, their arrangement as well as the pottery types and other macro remains support the hypothesis that the upper plateau was a community area. Here there was a big dwelling with stone foundations containing pits used to store agricultural products (cereal grains, cruciferous plants, leguminous plants and fruits). The same area was used as a

metallurgical workshop (Bettencourt 2001: 44). Dwellings built of perishable materials such as oak beams, saprolite and unfired clay occupied the southern slope. The second phase of occupation dates to the beginning of the Early Iron Age and involved a reorganization of the settlement, with larger storage structures and greater agricultural diversification.

In the settlement of Sola (Braga) the second Bronze Age phase of occupation is documented in the form of the foundations of a circular house that had reused part of the Late Neolithic wall. This house foundation consisted of overlapping stones, marked by a number of postholes of different sizes (Bettencourt 1991-1992: 103, 2000e).

All of these proto-*castros* were rich in metal items in the form of weapons, ornaments, and tools used in community rituals; they controlled the tin ore resources, agricultural land and the extensive road systems that facilitated supraregional trade (Fábregas and Ruíz-Gálvez 1994). This is also seen in areas[9] like León and Zamora, western Asturias and the provinces in Galicia, where archaeological fieldwork has increased in the last few years. In the northwestern part of the northern plateau there is a bipartite settlement pattern, with settlements located in the plain or in the mountains and occupied during the formative phase of the Cogotas I culture following the traditional chronology (Celis Sánchez 2002a: 98); these sites are known only from their posthole remains. The period from the end of the tenth century to the end of the ninth century BC, the formative phase of Soto de Medinilla, marks the longest period of occupation of housing groups. Post structures, silos, granaries, circular dwellings, the first palisades and the development of a building technology using clay have all been documented (Celis Sánchez 2002a: 103). Examples include the hillfort of Mazada in Zamora (Gallegos de Campos) (Esparza and Larrazabal 2000), Los Cuestos de la Estación in Benavente (Celis Sánchez 1993) and the hillfort of Sacaojos (Misiego et al. 1999) (Figure 11).

In western Asturias, the development of the Navia River Basin Archaeological Project has resulted in a complete rewriting of the occupational history of the area as it was known before the early 1990s. Until then, some interpretations even suggested that there had not been a Hillfort Culture here before the Romans. The most recent research has documented the existence of fortified settlements by the end of the Bronze Age at sites like the hillfort of Chao Sanmartín (Villa 2002a: 162-4) and the fortified settlement of Os Castros (Taramundi) (Villa 2002a: 178-9, Plate 7). A pseudo-rectangular house with rounded corners was built on the plateau of Chao Sanmartín that was eight meters long and five meters wide. This level of occupation dates back

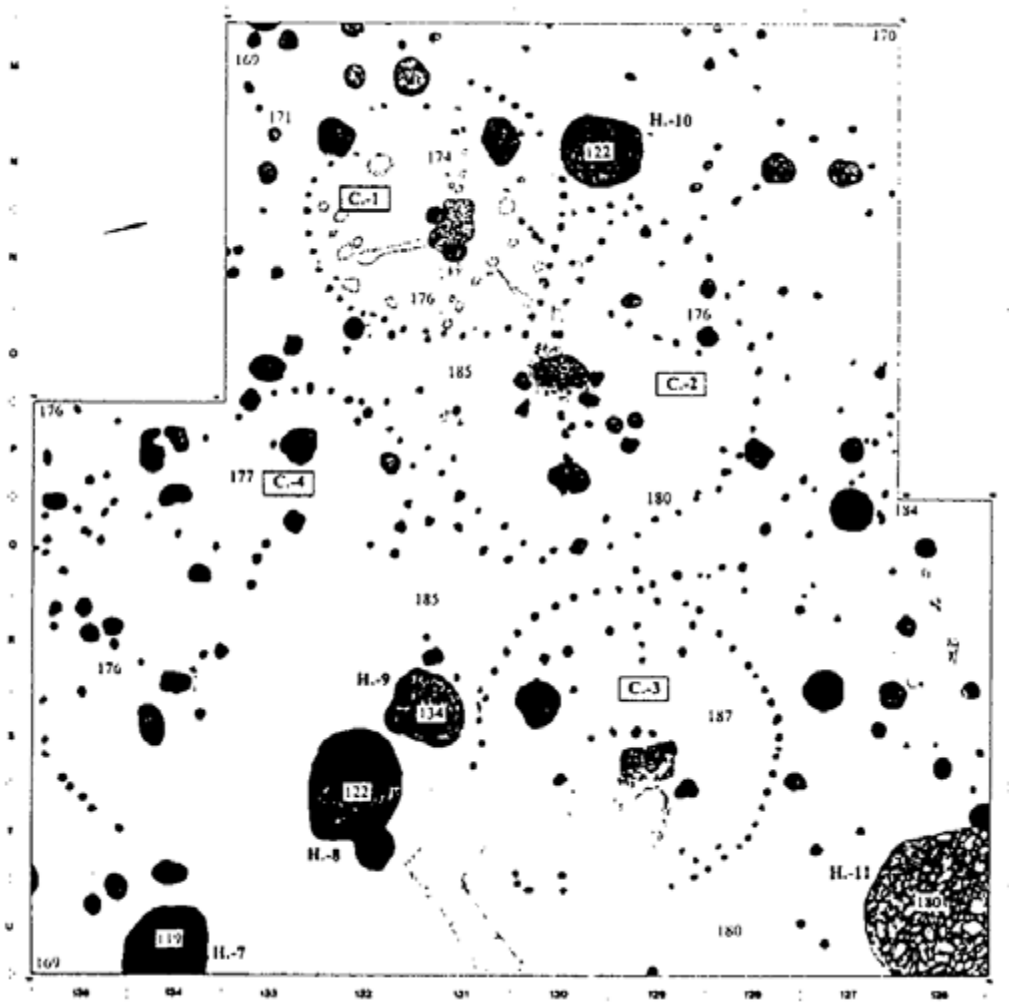


Figure 11. Hut plans at the hillfort of Sacaojos (Misiego et al. 1999: 53).

to[10] the second half of the eighth century BC. The structure contained plain pottery vessels as well as a round wooden disc decorated with plates and bronze strips (Villa 2002a: 161, Plate 1).

The Galician provinces, an area that has not been investigated much from an archaeological perspective, also gradually made the transition toward fortified settlements during this period. The archaeological site of A Carballeira do Espírito Santo (Chapa, Silleda, and Pontevedra) is a good example of the general pattern seen in domestic space during the Late Bronze Age in those areas, which were far away from the dynamic developments that characterized the Rías Baixas and northern Portugal. An open housing area, roughly 106 meters (east-west) x 50 meters (north-south) in size, was situated on a shelf sloping slightly to the east toward the Escuadro and Toxa River valleys at this site, with a wide vista from SSE to NW. This open, unfortified Late Bronze Age settlement[11], built from perishable materials with pits,

postholes and demarcation ditches, is just 50 meters away from the Castro of Chapa, an Iron Age fortified settlement. The most significant feature documented at A Carballeira do Espírito Santo was a circular foundation trench roughly 40-60 centimeters wide surrounding a structure about 4.40-4.30 meters in diameter with a possible entrance in the center of the southwest wall and a small posthole in the center of the western side (Aboal et al. 2003: 46) (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Hut floor, Carballeira do Espírito Santo settlement (Photo LAr, IEGPS, CSIC-XuGa).

By the end of the Bronze Age the nomadic settlements in the Galician provinces had moved into the fertile bottomlands of the valley. While the addition of fortifications monumentalized these previously open settlements defensively, the internal organization of domestic space and the small circular dwellings constructed of perishable materials were retained from previous periods, as can be seen in the earliest levels of the excavated Galician hillforts from the eighth to fifth centuries BC. We are now beginning to find some Bronze Age settlements that are the immediate predecessors of the hillfort domestic space plan. Up to now, these sites have been presumed to be located on the plateaus of the fortified settlements themselves and some stray bronze finds suggest a certain continuity with traditional Atlantic Bronze Age metallurgy. The archaeological record described here leads us to uphold the existence of a structured cultural tradition throughout recent prehistory. Based on the available archaeological evidence, there is marked continuity between the Bronze Age communities and the first fortified settlements that retained the basic organizational characteristics of domestic space first seen in earlier periods (Martins 1985: 220; Parcero et al. 2007: 167-8).

The problem of the origin of the circular house in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula is in line with this pattern as well. This is part of a formal typologizing debate regarding the reconstruction of the evolution of the hillfort that has continued throughout the twentieth century. It reflects the Celtic invasion theories of culture history (García y Bellido 1941) and is based on an overemphasis on the effects of the East and the Mediterranean on cultural developments in the Iberian Peninsula (Almeida 1965: 203-4; Calo and Sierra 1983: 34-5; García y Bellido 1971: 25-

35) as well as the concept of integration via a proposed Atlantic *koiné*.

The existence of a roundhouse tradition in the Atlantic area from Galicia in the south to Scotland in the north has been expressed by a number of authors, especially Cunliffe (1997: Chapters 7 and 8). Henderson argues that "the occurrence of circular settlements along the western fringes of Europe and their widespread and exclusive use in the British Isles have led a number of authors to suggest that the circular form may represent one visible aspect of a cultural tradition, distinct from the rest of the European continent" (2007: 309). The most recent contributions to this debate question the existence of an ancient tradition dating back to the Neolithic period. They argue that the appearance of the circular house is coterminous with the emergence of settlements located on hilltops during the Late Bronze Age (González Ruibal 2006-2007: 99-100; Silva 1986: 35-6). We suggest that the new archaeological excavations, especially in Galicia, have clarified the evolution of domestic space in recent prehistory, clearly demonstrating the continued existence of circular huts in open settlements and the existence of settlements on elevated landforms in different regions[12].

3. House, family and community in the Early Iron Age

During the Bronze Age human settlement in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula consisted of small open villages of huts and wells made of perishable materials, at the most demarcated by relatively shallow perimeter ditches. There are a few exceptions in some southern areas where settlements are occasionally found on prominent landforms. These new fortified settlements not only represent a novel form of habitation, but they eventually became widespread spatially and remained the dominant settlement type for a long time, as is proved by the fact that the hillfort is still the only type of settlement known from the first millennium BC (Carballo and González 2003: 40; Parcero et al. 2007: 144).

This process of fortification began during the tenth and ninth centuries BC in the littoral and southern regions of the northwest and spread progressively throughout the entire peninsula at different rates in different areas (Alarcão 1992: 44-5). Although the information we have regarding the development of fortified domestic architecture from its origins up to its final abandonment as a cultural tradition is incomplete, we can outline the developmental sequence at those sites whose occupational stages have been studied in detail (Figure 13).

One hypothesis is that the Phase 1 domestic architecture followed the existing cultural

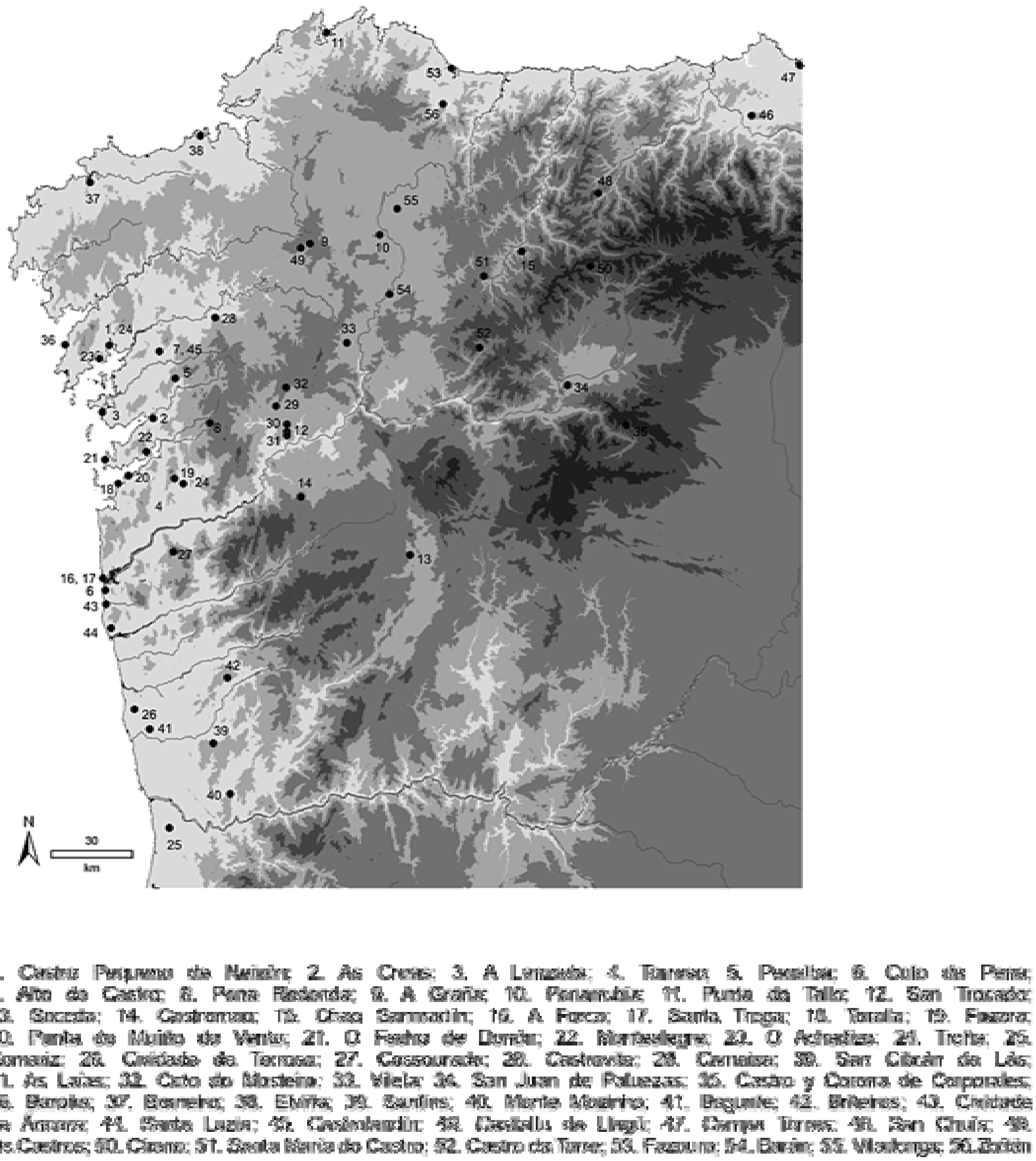


Figure 13. Map of main hillfort sites mentioned in the text.

pattern of the Atlantic Late Bronze Age, with most circular houses constructed of perishable materials. This would support the idea of continuity between the Bronze Age and early Iron Age traditions (Bettencourt 2000a: 84.5), which is also exhibited in the ceramic assemblages (Cobas and Parcero 2006: 79-85; Cobas and Prieto 1998: 161) and in the proximity of the new settlements to the old open villages (Parcero 2003: 276). The main break with this earlier tradition occurs when fortifications appear, a phenomenon that influenced the settlement as well as the group, whereas the domestic space inhabited by individual families still reproduced previous spatial and architectural patterns.

During this initial stage of the hillfort period there was a clear predominance of small, fortified settlements of less than one hectare, with a single enclosure that usually took advantage of the natural conditions of the surrounding terrain. Evidence for architectural planning can be seen clearly at sites like the hillfort of As Croas in Pontevedra (Peña Santos 2000: 154-5), which was abandoned during the building phase. The site is about one hectare in size, with an upper area and a lower terrace curving around the summit that is protected by a parapet enclosing most of the domestic structures. The masonry wall is about 180 centimeters thick and about one meter and a half high; it was constructed of stone from the settlement itself (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Hut floor, As Croas hillfort (Peña Santos 2000: 158).

Sites like As Croas demonstrate how the spatial demarcation of these settlement followed a defensive strategy: the building of a defensive ditch and the material used to raise parapets and walls came from the material extracted by the construction of the ditch. The domestic architecture then used the inside wall course as a spatial reference without recourse to individual foundations. The buildings were clearly adapted to the morphology of the terrain, although at some sites terracing modified the natural landforms. Within the walls the distribution of the houses was apparently arbitrary depending on the settlement topography, suggesting that the structures either exploited the land individually or formed groups that followed natural shelves or slopes.

Within the domestic area small circular houses between three and five meters in diameter were built from perishable materials that followed a curve established by an irregular stone base on which was placed a straw-clay surface or *pallabarro*. The hearth is usually in the center of the house, so rooms for various domestic activities[13] were arranged around the *lareira* or hearth.

The first dwellings of this type were documented in the 1970s on hillforts located in Rías Baixas, for example the archaeological site of O Castro Pequeno de Neixón (Boiro, A Coruña), which underwent several decades of excavation but whose field records have, unfortunately, not been well published (Acuña 1976). However, the data we have outline the occupational sequence of one of the first fortified settlements, as well as evidence for important metallurgical activity

during the Late Bronze Age (Álvarez et al. 2005; Ayán 2005a: 67; Rey 1992: 167). At O Castro Pequeno a series of house areas could be documented, from buildings that used perishable materials to circular houses with schist stone bases, adobe and straw floors and thatched roofs of straw. These can be dated back to the seventh and sixth centuries BC, in line with the architectural remains exhumed at another littoral site, A Lanzada (Acuña 1976, 1977; Calo and Sierra 1983: 35; Fariña 1983: 34). The people who dwelled in O Castro Pequeno used a masonry technique that exploited the schist and quartzite blocks available from the Neixón deposits as building materials. The houses, each with a central hearth, were all the same size, although there are some indications for the existence of a larger house nine meters in diameter (Balil 1971: 13) (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Hypothetical reconstruction of residential area of Castro Pequeno de Neixón (Álvarez et al. 2005: 112).

From 1980 on, new excavation techniques were applied with greater methodological rigor, resulting in a more reliable archaeological record for understanding the nature of domestic space as conceived by the first inhabitants of the hillforts. For example, the occupants of the hillfort of Torroso (Mos, Pontevedra), which has produced evidence of outstanding metallurgical activity during the seventh century BC, made use of masonry architecture and erected individual houses within a large area otherwise free of buildings during the sixth occupation phase at the site, the first time this is seen in the Galician hillfort world (Peña Santos 1992: 93, Fig. 21) (Figure 16). One of these houses has a circular plan, another a spiral plan and a third a combination of the two plans, replacing earlier circular structures that were all built using perishable materials during the fourth and fifth stages of occupation, and which are attested only by a few postholes, paving and some burned structures in a central location (Peña Santos 1992:

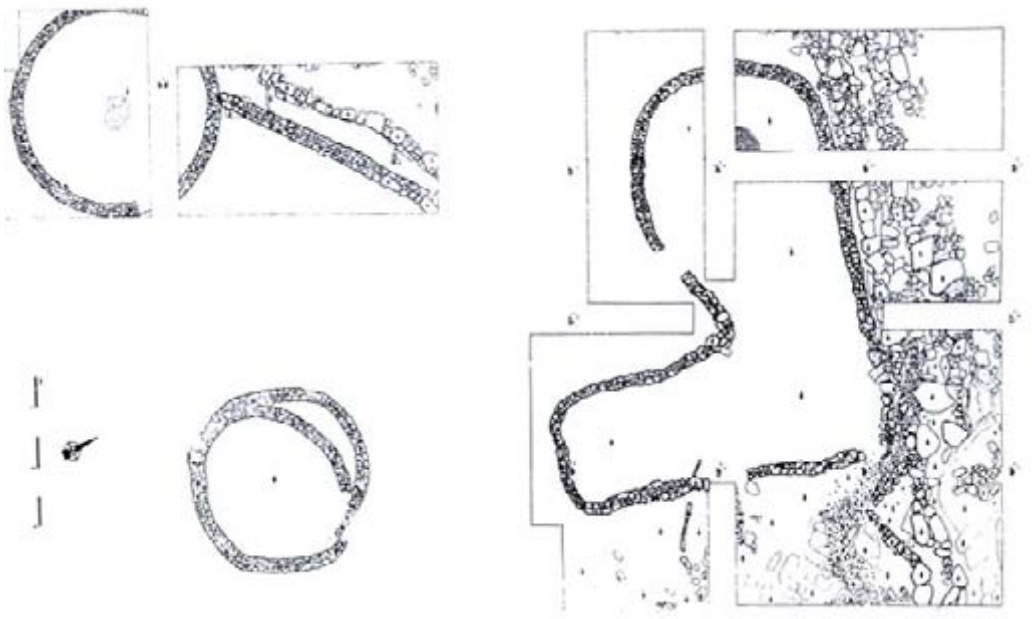


Figure 16. Plan of excavated domestic area, Torroso hillfort (Peña Santos 1992).

18). The circular house, which was 7.20 centimeters in diameter, was built using a double masonry wall course, with more elaborately worked stones and a better finish in the external face. Clay and saprolite were used as mortar. The walls were 40 centimeters wide and lacked any type of foundation, being built directly on the occupational surface (Peña Santos 1992: 18, Fig. 22 and Plate 22). The other stone structures used the same technique, although their sizes differ; the spiral house is five meters in diameter while the mixed plan house is more than 15 meters along its longest axis[14].

This domestic architecture in the Rías Baixas appears to have developed due to the monumentalization of the family unit, a strategy that exploited a new technical resource, the use of masonry as a tool to build houses and defensive systems combined with a traditional way of building houses that was culturally determined, the circular house shape. This domestic architectural model was also adopted in the southwestern area of present-day Galicia based on excavations carried out at hillforts like Penalba (Álvarez Núñez 1986), As Croas (Peña Santos 2000), Pena Redonda (González Ruibal 2004a, 2005a) and Alto do Castro (Parcero 2000a: 64-5), which share some characteristics: isolated houses with an average diameter of five meters and a housing area characterized by a significant amount of open space between the structures.

The Castro of Penalba (Campo Lameiro, Pontevedra) was a stable settlement with an agricultural and harvesting economy in the Late Bronze Age until it was destroyed by fire

(Álvarez Núñez 1986: 61, 1991: 41). It was then rebuilt using new building methods typical of the Iron Age, with a housing area made up of circular house bases between five and five and a half meters in diameter with a central hearth. Subsequent rebuilding episodes maintained the original arrangement, with successive fireplaces placed on top of earlier ones (Álvarez Núñez 1989: 38) (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Hut floor, Penalba hillfort (Álvarez 1991: 39).

At the aforementioned Castro of As Croas (Salcedo, Pontevedra), two test excavations carried out in the upper part of the central enclosure documented a circular wall that was 40 centimeters thick and excellently made, with a house plan similar to that at Torroso. The internal paving was made of saprolite while the outer paving was made of small stones. This level of occupation dates back to the seventh and sixth centuries BC, corresponding to the construction of the settlement (Peña Santos 2000: 155-60).

For its part, the site of Pena Redonda (Pontecaldelas, Pontevedra) presents certain aspects of interest due to its unusual location on a terrace in a foothill region with associated caves as well as the documentation of a long occupational sequence. The oldest housing area consists of the remains of a circular dwelling built with stones and perishable material that can be assigned to the last years of the early Iron Age[15] with two stone-built houses dating to the following period (González Ruibal 2004a: 20-32). The oldest hut is demarcated by a not very deep trench with a few postholes that seem to have originally been built with branches instead of posts, considering the reduced depth of the postholes. The excavator has argued (González Ruibal 2004a: 30-1, Fig. 20) that it is formally comparable to the oldest level of occupation of the hillforts of A Graña (Acuña and Meijide 1991: Fig. 1) and Falperra (Bettencourt 2000b: Table IX) (Figure 18). Another level of occupation from this period was documented at the fortified settlement of Alto do Castro (Cuntis, Pontevedra). Here a circular stone house that had been devastated by fire was excavated. The radiocarbon dates for the burned roof beams (CSIC-1934, cal BC 410-370, two sigma) indicate that the construction and occupation of this domestic structure occurred before the end of the fifth century BC (Parcero 2000a, 2002a: 64-5).

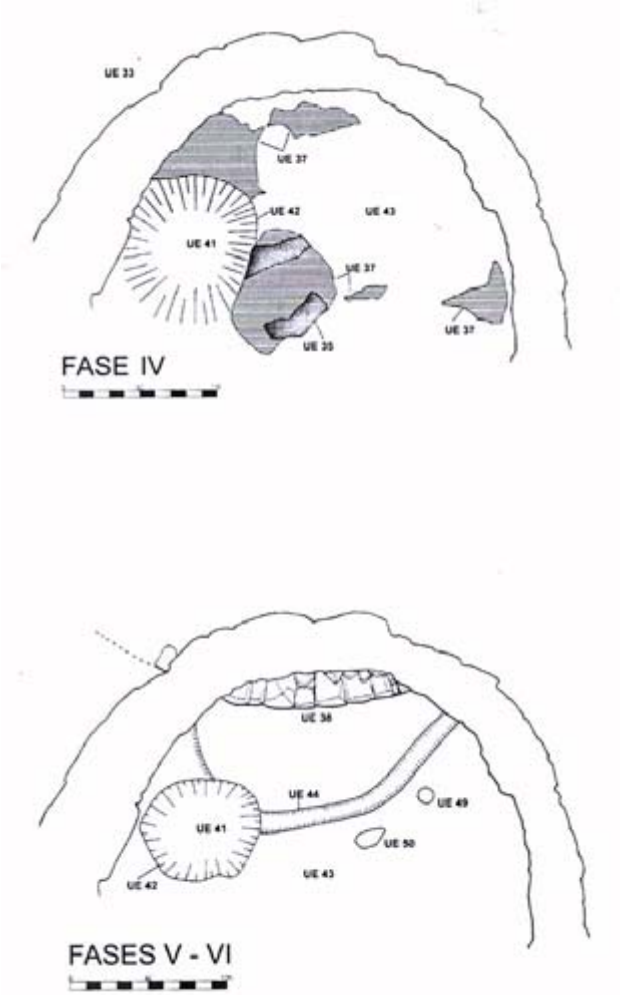


Figure 18. Early Iron Age levels of occupation (Phases IV-VI) at Pena Redonda hillfort (González Ruibal 2004a: Figs. 15, 20).

On the other hand, the oldest level of occupation is relatively poorly documented throughout the southwest during the sixth and fifth centuries BC on the rock outcrops of some hillforts that were densely occupied, such as Montealegre (González and Rodríguez 2006; Losada Diéguez 1927) or Troña (Hidalgo 1985: 27). Some sites in the Galician provinces and in the northern coastal region assigned to this phase were also explored using test cores. These documented the existence of perishable architecture, establishing a construction pattern that would continue into the following period. Examples include the sites of Castro de Lobos and Castro Pedro (Penedo and Rodríguez 1991: 202-5), Penarrubia (Arias Vilas 1979), Penedos do Castro (García Valdeiras 2004: 120), Punta do Tallo (Ramil 1989: 60-1), San Trocado (Carballo and González 2003: 39), As Laias (Álvarez and López 2000), Saceda (Carreño 1991: 60; González Ruibal 2005b) and Castromao (Orero Grandal 2000: 181). In the latter hillfort, evidence of pottery was uncovered on the plateau and in the wall foundations, some wares of Alpiarça type, others with a coarse temper and some that may have come from Greece; bronze tools, including the pin of a pivot fibula and the bow of another long pin together with the remains of wooden posts (Calo and Sierra 1983: 34) indicate a level of occupation that can be assigned to the seventh and sixth centuries BC.

The site of A Graña stands out within this group of Phase I fortified settlements (Acuña and Meijide 1991: 54; Meijide 1990). The earliest level of occupation that could be documented was a house floor with walls of perishable materials that were demarcated by a trench. Some remains of posts and stakes were found at this site as well. A clay hearth was placed in the

approximate center of each house, demarcated by three big stones lying on their sides and a central posthole. Radiocarbon analysis of a charcoal sample from one of the postholes (Gd-6074) resulted in a 2,650±100 BP date for the posthole and another sample from the fireplace (Gd-6068) is within the same range at 2,610±70 BP (Meijide 1990: 114-5) (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Hut floor, A Graña hillfort (Acuña and Meijide 1991: 51).

Archaeological remains dating to the early Iron Age are also known from Asturias hillforts (Villa 2003: 115-9) like Olivar and Camoca (Villaviciosa) (Camino 2003: 165-6) as well as several along the Navia River basin, including Os Castros de Taramundi, San Chuís in Allande and especially the aforementioned Chao Sanmartín. At this last site, on the hilltop plateau a fortified settlement with a defensive ditch and palisade was established at the end of the Bronze Age between 801 and 778 BC. Three unique features were documented here (Villa 2002b: 151-2; Villa 2003: 116-7; Villa and Cabo 2003: 144-6), including a large house with rectangular plan and rounded corners (12.50 x 4.40 m). This contained some fragments of a large bronze disc 110 centimeters in diameter consisting of a piece of wood decorated on both sides with copper alloy plates and fixed with rivets and nails. Similar bronze pieces were found outside the upper enclosure at the site. It was possible to document the existence of older structures made of perishable materials (Figure 20). Secondly, a deep recess in a wall was used as a tomb. This was contemporary with the monumental enclosure around the acropolis. Finally, a pyre was discovered that was also used during the eighth century BC sheltered by a rock. Chao Sanmartín

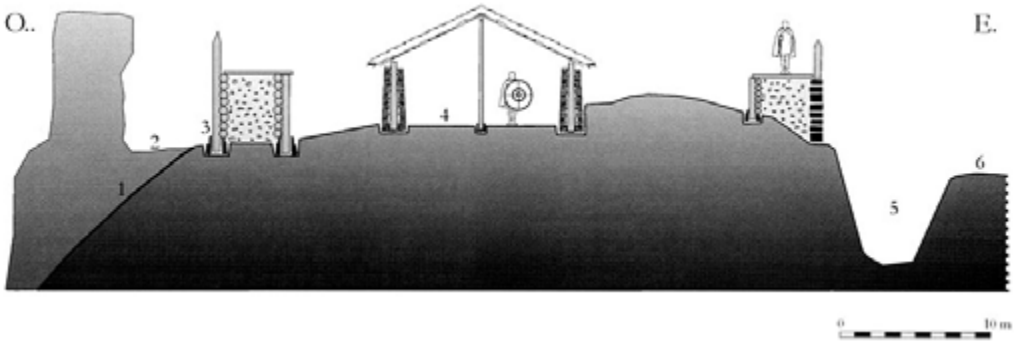


Figure 20. Hypothetical reconstruction of the upper enclosure of Chao Sanmartín (Villa 2003: 140; Fig. 2).

is a good example of these early fortified settlements and opens up the possibility of new approaches that stress the symbolic nature of cultural space in this type of settlement during this initial phase.

A similar process could be documented in some areas of León and Zamora during the early Iron Age. Circular houses with painted benches, hearths, central postholes and conjoined granaries became quite widespread during this period. The characteristics of the houses were standardized in terms of size and technology, as can be seen at the hillforts of San Juan de Torres, Villacelama, Camarzana, Manganesos de la Polvorosa, and La Mazada (Celis Sánchez 2002a: 101-8). It is important to highlight the extensive sequence documented at Los Cuestos de la Estación (Benavente, Zamora) during the early Iron Age (Celis Sánchez 1993) (Figure 21).

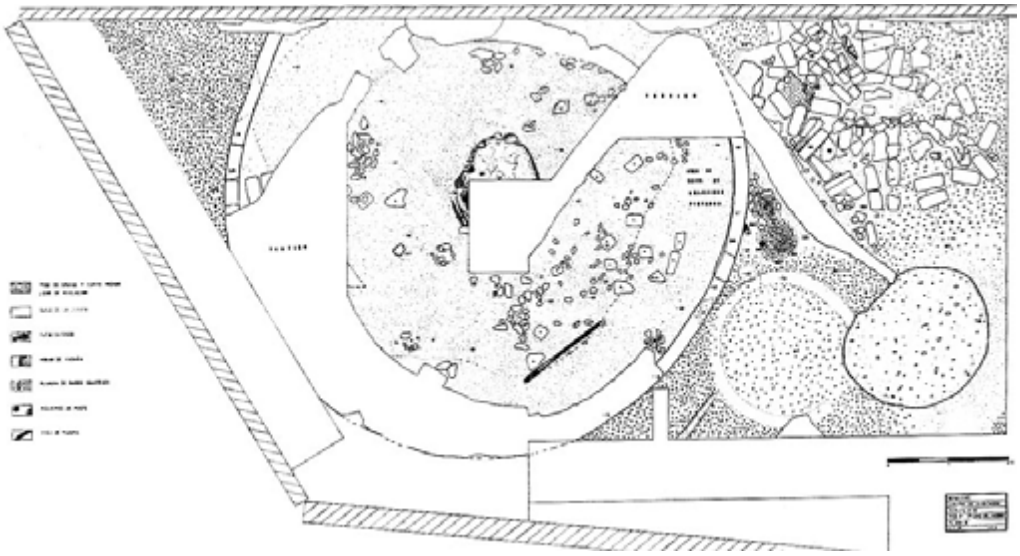


Figure 21. Plan of Phase VII at the settlement of Los Cuestos de la Estación (Celis 1993: 106; Fig. 7).

The first level of occupation in the area that was tested consisted of a circular house made of perishable materials, on top of which there was another housing area with trenches, hearths and stamped clay floors. Successive phases were marked by the superimposition of circular adobe houses, with Phase 6 the most important because of the appearance of a rectangular house (Celis Sánchez 1993: 102-4, Plate 6). During Phase 7 there was a major reorganization of domestic space in the settlement, and this was also when a large circular adobe house with plastered walls 8.40 meters in diameter was constructed. Fourteen layers of paint were documented in this house, and there was an oval hearth in the center of the structure. The postholes outside the house indicate that there used to be outer reinforcements to support the roofing system. During Phase 8, another house was placed on top of this last large structure. This

was a smaller house (7.50 m diameter), with a foundation base made of a course of adobe with a bench in the northeastern part of the wall and a central hearth decorated with spatula-applied paintings (Celis Sánchez 1993: 107-8, Plate 8, Fig. 9). During the last period of occupation (Phase 9), the existing domestic architecture was replaced by a large rectangular structure.

To finish this virtual tour of the northwest we have to return to the question of the origins of the fortification phenomenon, and we have to focus on the paradigmatic Castro of Coto da Pena (Caminha, Viana do Castelo), situated at the confluence of the Coura and Miño Rivers. In the oldest occupation level at this site, which dates back to the middle of the ninth century BC, a circular house was excavated (House I) (Silva 1986: 34-5, Fig. 16, E-F). This structure[16] was built directly on bedrock, and in some parts of the perimeter it is possible to see some shallow cuts in the rock where the walls were located. The house plan is an elongated shape oriented north-south, with a curvilinear profile, about six meters (north-south axis) by 4.5 meters (east-west axis). The walls are about 60 centimeters thick and are formed by two courses of small stones with many stabilizing wedges cemented with saprolite mortar and quartzite pebbles. Some ceramic fragments of the Baiões type were found together with some metallic objects, including a sickle and a sheet bronze container. This is why the excavator assigned it to the same occupational level as the Castro da Senhora da Guia (Baiões), which also had a smelting facility in the upper portion of the site. Paving and circular clay hearths belonging to circular houses built of perishable materials were found here as well (Silva 1986: 35).

Generally speaking, despite the paucity of evidence, we can outline a number of formal regularities in the arrangement of the domestic architecture during Phase 1. First, we see a characteristic in this early phase that is typical of hillfort settlements, with isolated houses that do not even share walls. This isolationism, in the case of these circular structures, was partly an artifact of the use of the conical roof, which made shared walls a problem for the normal evacuation of water around the whole perimeter of the house. The topographic and climatic conditions combined with the circular shape made a more or less orthogonal arrangement of the buildings impossible. What we have is an apparent lack of spatial arrangement of the structures, with many unused gaps between the houses and very narrow alleyways that made unimpeded movement quite difficult. The spaces that were used as passages are characterized more by the absence of structures rather than by any qualities expected of spaces that joined one or more buildings. From a structural point of view, the architectural methods used were relatively

homogenous, and no significant size differences are seen. The housing areas of these settlements were characterized by their internal permeability, a low rate of built space, freedom of movement within the settlement, the existence of open space between the houses and the absence of a hierarchical system of arranging the settlement space.

The sociological interpretation of this spatial pattern has tended to stress the fact that all of the architectural approaches appear to have adopted this spatial isolation pattern, with its suggestion of independent family domestic units. The lack of dividing walls and the consistent presence of open spaces between the houses implies that domestic space was not maximized, since semi-detached houses would have saved space as well as making construction more convenient. In this regard, the hillfort model contrasts with the spatial arrangement found in other geographical areas during this period of the Iron Age, such as the Iberian Culture.

There are some considerations that may help us understand the logic of this spatial arrangement. The hillfort, as a monumental marker and visual reference point in the landscape, stresses residential development and reinforces the community identity. The internal area of the enclosure can be considered the realm of communal family acitivity, since they are not likely to have segregated their households spatially if there had not been a need to define the different domestic areas, given the absence of evidence within the enclosure for a hierarchical organization. In addition, the inner spatial arrangement suggests that demographic pressure was absent, coupled with a low level of social competitiveness and the apparent predominance of the community over the family. The fact that there are no dividing walls inside the houses suggests an open internal domestic space without subdivisions; this uniform use of the interior space may reflect a high level of internal cohesion within the parental unit as well as an absence of privacy. At the same time, the fact that there is only a single area in which all everyday activities take place seems to argue for relatively little socioeconomic complexity.

The dwelling is a shelter as well as a production and consumption unit; most daily work is carried out inside or around it. The possible activity areas, including cooking, manufacturing of tools, storage, and sleeping, follow a radial arrangement around the hearth. The *lareira* (hearth) is the central focus of the house and its inhabitants. It is a reference point around which all other objects and people are organized, with the fire supplying the vital light and heat required for domestic life. All this indicates the existence of communities, like those found on the hillforts, which shared beliefs and developed rituals to maintain the beneficent power of the

hearth. There are no data confirming this hypothesis, but the important role that the hearth obviously played as a basic element for all the houses of this period is clear. At some sites the archaeological evidence indicates that in the houses that had undergone some rebuilding, the hearth kept the same position, which could also point to its symbolic nature.

Anthropological research emphasizes the fact that the house in pre-modern and pre-industrial societies had great symbolic significance for the people living in it; it was not just a roof over their heads, but it also expressed and represented, as if in microcosm, their concepts of society and the world around them. In this regard, archaeological research has worked out some of these symbolic and cosmological aspects in different prehistoric contexts, for example in the ritual orientation of houses and hearths, or in the discovery of a spatial pattern defined by a binary system that reproduces cosmological concepts.

However, the cosmological influences in this respect have perhaps been expanded out of proportion, similar to the drastic reversal that took place in Britain in Iron Age studies, which decided the binary opposition functionalism vs. ritualism in favor of the latter. These trends culminated in the formulation and spread of the cosmological model, described in its most developed form by Parker Pearson (1999). The foundations of this model were laid by Wait (1985) and Boast and Evans (1986) with respect to the potential ritual associations of roundhouse orientation, and were continued by Hill (1988, 1989, 1996) in his studies of orientation in southern England. Ideas about roundhouse entrance orientation were tested by Alastair Oswald (1991, 1997), who concluded that in the British Iron Age orientation was dominated by ritual concerns, specifically sun worship, as indicated by the predominant east or east-south orientations. This trend culminated with the suggestion that life inside the Iron Age roundhouse was ritually structured. The cosmological model was welcomed with a certain amount of caution by several authors but a process of deconstruction has already begun. One example is Brück (1999a: 325), who has indicated how such work has inadvertently strengthened the functional/ritual dualism in archaeology, while Hunter (1999) has contested claims regarding a left/right distribution of finds in wheel-houses of Scotland. Both Brück (1999b) and Webley (2003) stress the diversity actually expressed in the archaeological record and warn against synthetic and essentially static models that deny human agency. Furthermore, recent testing of the model at site level showed the archaeological evidence to be considerably more complex than the model might suggest (Hodgson et al. 2001). Woodward and Hughes (2007) and Pope (2003)

found the model wanting when it was tested against large datasets. Finally, Pope (2007) has shown that the use of domestic space in prehistory was not generally dictated by sun-based belief systems reflected in roundhouse entrance orientation, but that the people designing roundhouses had both structural and spatial concerns in mind. According to this view, the ordering of space within the roundhouse tends to reproduce that created by the architecture itself: the roundhouse form allows the possibility of organizing space along center/periphery lines, which could be explained as hearth-inspired, but also as a conscious organizing principle, while front/back may be a more subconscious mechanism, associated with the desire for light and the potential for contact/ privacy. Pope also welcomes the recent move in prehistoric studies away from structuralism, replacing the functional/ritual, structure/agency and male/female dualisms with concepts of practice and identity. The deconstruction of structuralism and the acceptance that there is no one reading of the archaeological record—that meaning is wholly dependent on context—signals that we have finally entered the post-processual phase in prehistoric studies (cf. Hodder 1989: 70).

However, with respect to hillfort domestic architecture there is an important empirical problem when trying to reach cosmological conclusions of this type. The architectural shape of the circular house, apparently part of a strong cultural tradition that predates the Iron Age, may be the reflection, on a micro-spatial scale, of the cultural landscape. Thus, there could be a correspondence between the different spatial areas of the Castro Culture landscape, as follows:

- Housing space
- Spatial arrangement of structures within the settlement
- Economic territory that shapes and organizes the settlement
- Cultural, symbolic space[17] (Figure 22)

The round house could, as suggested by Parker Pearson (1996:19), act as "a microcosm of the Universe". It could thus be viewed as a metaphorical representation of the spatial arrangement of community territory, organized during Phase II following the model of a concave landscape. This is suggested by research in

Figure 22. Ritual structure of Guidoiro Areoso (Rey 1995: 12).

landscape archaeology in Galicia as well (Criado 1993; Parcero 1995), which the author considers compelling.

The round plan shares the round shape of the walled military enclosures, which in their turn coincide with the round shape of the land exploited directly by the community, where all the economic activities necessary for survival are carried out: cultivated lands, pasturage for animals, extraction of raw materials. The hillfort, a monumental milestone built to be visible and to make visible, occupies a central position and the other economic spheres that make up the land directly controlled by the settlement are arranged around it. This landscape model consists of two primary spatial areas: a core zone consisting of the settlement, arable land and pasturage, and land in the peripheral waste ground that serves as a boundary with other communities.

Thus, we suggest that in this initial stage the hillfort societies underwent a process of territorialization and domestication of the landscape. From that starting point a circular spatial model was created to organize material reality, which probably initiated a similar restructuring of the society itself. The social space of the hillforts then was organized by means of strategies intended to stress the identity and cohesion of the community with respect to the outer world: a visible and monumental settlement with restricted access thanks to the wall built around the settlement that simultaneously concealed and isolated the housing area.

This new materiality is consistent with the decline of the hierarchical society that characterized the Late Bronze Age, in which elites who had contact with the Atlantic world based their prestige on the control of bronze metallurgy. During Phase I there was a *caesura* in the process leading to the emergence of a stratified society; the forms of acquisition and display of power were going through a crisis during this period, and the community was seen as more important than the leaders (Carballo and González 2003: 40; Parcero 2002b: 231-2). Within this context of growing productivity and surpluses, the system used by these communities to keep these resources from being monopolized by particular individuals or groups increased the sense of exclusion and rivalry with respect to other communities while redirecting the internal clashes toward the outside world. Potential clashes that might have resulted from conflicts over the disposition of surpluses were resolved by investing those surpluses in communal construction projects represented by the building of the settlement and its walls (Parcero et al. 2007: 180-2).

To summarize, it is important to highlight four phenomena that influenced the construction of domestic space during the early Iron Age, which also, in our opinion, define it:

1. On the one hand, the emergence of these fortifications marks the appearance of a stable settlement pattern, the beginning of a sedentary way of life in which the connections of the community were symbolically monumentalized within the housing area, and where a significant investment was made in the built environment. However, the houses of this phase still followed a building tradition seen in earlier nomadic settlements during the Bronze Age. This clear continuity with the Late Bronze Age can be seen in the siting pattern of the first hillforts, which are located in areas with great visibility and very close to the previous period's housing areas (Parcero 2000b), as well as in the pottery traditions (Cobas and Prieto 1999).

2. On the other hand, this period was the beginning of a gradual process of monumentalization of housing, which followed to a large extent the formal pattern of the architectural imprint of the Bronze Age.

3. The early Iron Age was characterized by architectural polymorphism and the presence of a great number of regional variations on the construction of domestic space (Jorge 1988b: 97-98; Peña Santos 1992: 21-2, 2000: 159-60). The dynamic area of the Rías Baixas seems to have been an exception, since the proto-monumentalization process that took place there did not occur in the provinces or on the northern coast, where architecture made of straw and adobe continued to be used long into this period.

Within this context, we suggest that the hillfort architectural style in the northwest was already in place by the first phase of the Iron Age, based on a pattern of formal regularity that consisted of different codes of material culture that were consistent with each other and with a specific logical pattern. This is what defines and differentiates these fortified settlements from Iberian fortresses or from hillforts in the British Isles.

4. Domestic space during the late Iron Age: the consolidation of the *castros* house pattern

During the second phase of the *castreño* or hillfort period, which has conventionally been dated back to the fifth and fourth centuries BC, the settlement organization model became consolidated due to the widespread shift to stone construction for domestic buildings (Almeida 1984). It is clear that sites like Montealegre, Troña, and As Laias o Castromao had a long sequence of occupation, and the rooms were accordingly extended. The most elevated portion of the settlement was typically the place chosen for early Iron Age settlement, but in the late Iron Age there is a tendency to construct terraces upon which new houses were built that adjoined the original *croa*, or central part of the *castro*.

Most of the houses excavated from this period, regardless of the building material used, follow the same basic pattern: a circular or oval plan, about four to five meters in diameter with roofs made of rye straw or plant branches from scrublands such as broom or gorse. Inside the houses there was usually a hearth, a place to store the grain and the domestic trousseau. Divisions within the houses are not common. In order to maximize the available space (about 20 square meters) some houses appear to have had a kind of attic built with light materials. This has many ethnographic parallels in later northwestern vernacular architecture, for example houses in La Corona de Corporales (Sánchez-Palencia and Fernández Posse 1985: 95), Santa Trega (Patiño 1989: 59), and in the later mining hillforts of Chano and Cervantes (López and Álvarez 2000). This architectural model reflects family units with an average of four to five people per house[18] (Camino 2002: 144-6).

It is quite clear that during this period there was a gradual process of artificialization and monumentalization of domestic space. These processes can be seen in the new settlements that emerged during this period (A Forca, Fozara, Cortegada, Coto do Mosteiro, Recarea, Cameixa, As Orelas, Castro Grande de Neixón) and were a response to the socioeconomic changes that resulted from the occupational model mentioned previously.

Once again, the areas of Rías Baixas and northern Portugal are a good example of this architecturalization process of domestic space. The settlements were located on the old Phoenician and Punic trade circuits and as a result they experienced major economic development due to the gradual development of trade relationships coupled with a major population increase. We are only now beginning to identify a process of proto-urbanization in these hillforts. They became central places at which goods moving through the territory along these trade routes were distributed. The convergence of these roles may explain the complex morphology exhibited by most of these sites during this period. This included larger built areas as well as a reduction in the communal, public space. This process can be seen in the archaeological evidence uncovered at Forca (Carballo 1987), Toralla (Hidalgo 1995), Fozara (Hidalgo and Rodríguez 1987), A Lanzada (Suárez and Fariña 1990) and at the recently excavated Castro da Punta do Muíño do Vento (Acuña Piñeiro 2006), Facho de Donón (Schattner and Suárez 2004; Schattner et al. 2005; Schattner et al. 2006), Pena Redonda (González Ruibal 2004a, 2005), Montealegre (Aboal and Castro 2006), O Achadizo (Rubinos et al. 1999) and the Castro Grande de Neixón (Ayán et al. 2005) (*vid infra*).

There is some contextualized evidence in northern Portugal at the *castros* of Coto da Pena and Romariz (Silva 1986: 37-43), Cividade de Terroso (Póvoa de Varzim) (Flores and Carneiro 2005) and Cossourado (Paredes de Coura) (Matos da Silva 1995-97). Cividade de Terroso is one of the best-preserved fortified settlements in the Douro-Minho Rivers area, and the ruins found there date to the late pre-Roman period. However, some circular stone buildings that appear to map[19] family units can be dated to the fourth and second centuries BC (Silva 1986: 39-40, Plate XVIII) (Figure 23). The walls consist of two parallel courses with gravel fill, while the paving is made of saprolite; occasionally they are decorated with circle, braid or brush designs. Rectangular or cylindrical stone bases were placed in a central position on these pavements to support posts (Flores and Carneiro 2005: 73, 110-2). This occupational phase ended in a conflagration, probably related to the 138 BC raids of Decimus Junius Brutus (Flores and Carneiro 2005: 73, 113) (Figure 24).

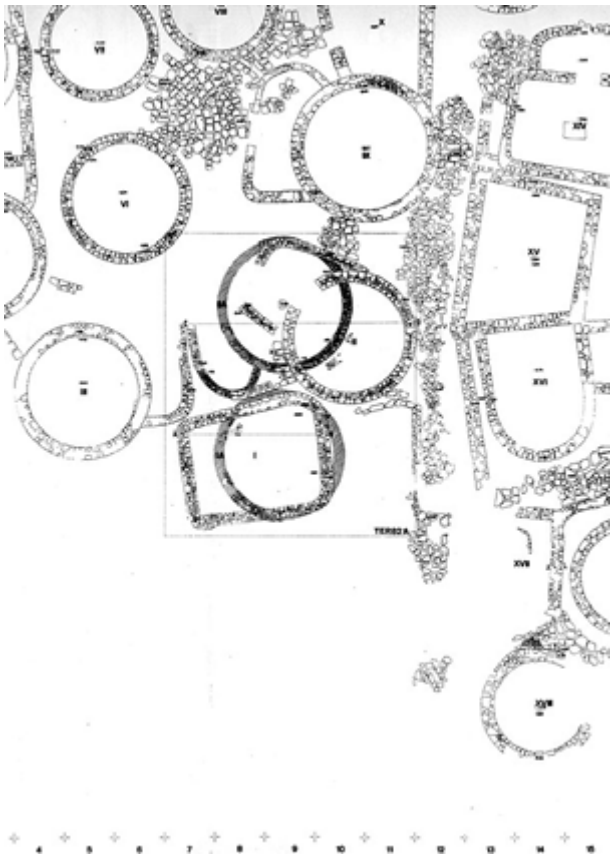


Figure 23. Plan of Early Iron occupation levels at Cividade de Terroso (Silva 1986: 39-40; Plate XVIII).

Figure 24. Excavation of a late Iron Age hut at Cividade de Terroso (Flores and Carneiro 2005).

The settlement of A Cividade de Cossourado (Paredes de Coura, Viana do Castelo district), looking out over the river Coura valley, has a surface area of 10 ha. It gives the

impression of great monumentality, enhanced by three defensive walled enclosures. The domestic area excavated during the 1990 dates to the fifth and second centuries BC and features circular and oval structures whose dimensions contrast with the average size of other houses in this region at this time (Gouveia and Matos 1998/2000: 25, Fig. 1) (Figure 25). The circular houses exhibit careful treatment of the walls, which have both outer and inner faces, whereas the oval structures are rougher and not as meticulously built (Matos and Gouveia 2004: 5). In both cases, based on the archaeological evidence, the roofing system consisted of a superstructure resting on wooden posts laid across the walls with an external covering of broom or gorse. According to the excavators, the circular structures were the location of housing and domestic activities, while the oval structures were associated with craft working, storage and the shelter of animals. In the southwestern area of the site, next to a circular tower, an oval building with an internal bench could be documented that has been interpreted as a meeting place for the community[20] (Matos and Gouveia 2004: 6) (Figure 26).

Figure 25. Cossourado hillfort (Photo LAr, IEGPS, CSIC-XuGa).

Figure 26. Oval building with a built-in bench documented at Cossourado hillfort (Photo LAr, IEGPS, CSIC-XuGa).

In Galicia, the site of A Forca has yielded interesting data regarding domestic space in this area between the fourth and second centuries BC. Despite the limited extent of the area investigated at this site, the information presented is quite significant, consisting of open tiled areas, water channels, a high building density per square meter, as well as different types of building plans and granite masonry walls (Carballo 1987: 107-10). The site reflects a clear architectural polymorphism, with a number of circular huts four and a half meters in diameter as well as some square or rectangular structures with rounded corners (Figure 27). Excavations at this site, which was constructed in the first half of the fourth century BC and abandoned during the second half of the second century BC, has contextualized material remains of controversial

Figure 27. Plan of domestic area at A Forca hillfort (González Ruibal 2006-2007: 351; Fig. 4.46, from an original drawing in Carballo [1987]).

date, such as circular mortars, the use of square house plans, braided decoration, fibulae with a long bow and without a spiral (*longo travesaño sem espira*), and vitreous paste eyed beads, all of which are related to a great number of imported Punic materials (Carballo 1987: 140-1).

Following the coastline, we arrive at the Vigo River, where we find the Castro de Punta do Muíño do Vento, excavated in 2001 and 2002 at the time of the construction of the Maritime Museum in Vigo. The site was occupied permanently from the seventh century BC until the first century AD; it was located on a sandy substrate in which a hoard of bronze axes and two rings, dating between the sixth and the fifth centuries BC was found. Two circular huts were documented here, built from perishable materials with thick tamped clay floors that retain the postholes of the uprights that supported the roof. Both structures were associated with large quantities of Iberian-Punic[21] ceramic material and can be dated to the sixth and fifth centuries BC. In the following centuries, the settlement's domestic space became monumentalized by the construction of circular stone houses with clay floors and central hearths (Acuña Piñeiro 2006: 44) (Figure 28).

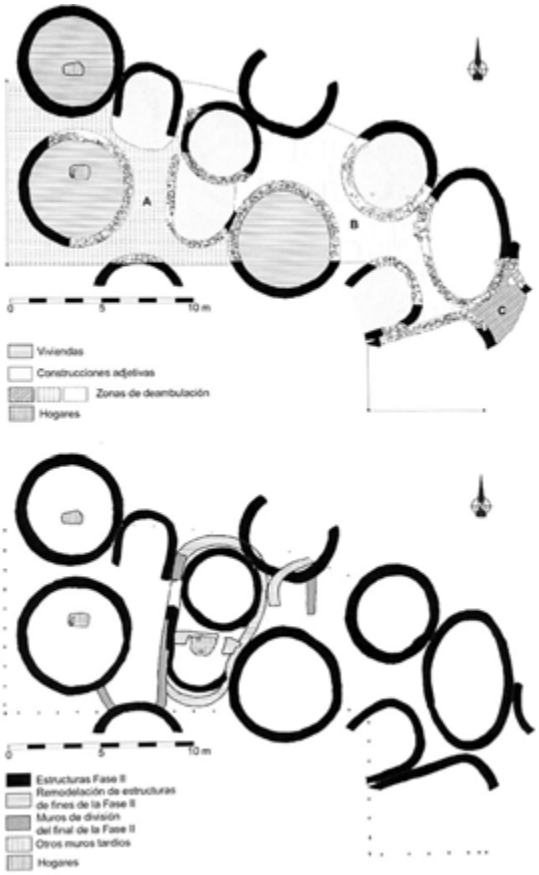


Figure 28. Plan of domestic area at Castro de Punta do Muíño do Vento, Cabo do Mar hillfort (Gonzalez Ruibal 2006-7: 354; Fig. 4.48).

This type of domestic architecture became quite widespread in this area around this time,

as can be seen at a neighboring hillfort located on the island of Toralla (Vigo), where two circular huts were partially excavated (Figure 29). The huts were built using granite and quartzite masonry, and are between six and six and a half meters in diameter, with central hearths and doors facing south (Hidalgo 1995: 195, Plate 1); the oldest level of occupation dates to the fourth and third centuries BC. We see the same phenomenon on the inland hillforts, in pre-littoral areas linked to the Vigo River and the Meridian Depression, such as in the northern and eastern areas of the earliest enclosure of the hillfort of Troña (Hidalgo and Rodríguez 1988: 135), the hillfort of Fozara (Pontеareas, Pontevedra) (Hidalgo and Rodríguez 1987), the second stage of occupation in the fourth and third centuries BC at Alto do Castro (Cuntis, Pontevedra) (Cobas and Parcero 2006: 104-5, Figs. 18-21), and the second stage of occupation at Pena Redonda, where a major reorganization of this densely populated settlement was documented in the form of five circular huts. These huts are organized in a monumentally planned and crowded space that is very characteristic of this period in the Rías Baixas region (González Ruibal 2004a: 58).

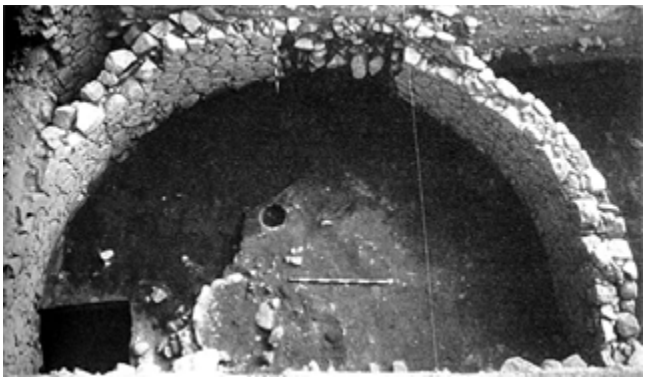


Figure 29. Hut foundation and floor, Toralla hillfort (Hidalgo 1995: Plate 1).

The same dynamics are seen to the north at the littoral hillforts of O Facho de Donón (Cangas do Morrazo, Pontevedra) and A Lanzada (O Grove, Pontevedra). The first of these exhibits a long-term occupation from the Late Bronze Age to the Roman Period (Figure 30). The sanctuary devoted to the god Berobreo was built at this time (Fariña and Suárez 2002; Schattner et al. 2004: 26). The trenches of the 2003 excavation campaign uncovered the first oval structure at this site, with granite masonry walls about four and a half meters in diameter and an east-facing door. The expansion of the excavated area uncovered a series of circular or oval domestic structures as well as a D-shaped house plan that was rectangular with rounded corners (Schattner et al. 2006: 173, Fig. 3).

Figure 30. Aerial view of the excavated area at Facho hillfort (www.castrenor.com).

A Lanzada is still an exceptional case in the context of other northwestern domestic architecture. A housing area was found in the so-called Level II suburbium, unprotected by any visible defensive system (Suárez and Fariña 1990: 316); most of the structures have irregular trapezoidal plans with curved wall faces that combine curved and straight lines and are associated with hillfort pottery of fourth and third century BC date as well as material of Punic origin. Recent studies have suggested a Mediterranean influence for this suburbium at A Lanzada, which would explain these architectural peculiarities (Suárez and Fariña 1990: 332), but another possibility is that the area was a temporary habitation for Punic merchants in this area (González Ruibal 2004c, 2006b).

To the north but still in Rías Baixas we find the Arousa River and the hillfort of O Achadizo (Boiro, A Coruña). The suburbium excavated here included an interesting housing area located up against the settlement wall consisting of a circular hut with successive levels of occupation and related deposits of debris. The stratigraphy of this structure allowed the reconstruction of most of the occupational sequence of the site from the early Iron Age to the Galician-Roman period (Carballo et al. 2003: 100-2; Rubinos et al. 1999). The settlement reached the peak period of occupation during Phase II between the fifth and the second centuries BC (calibrated dates) (Rubinos et al. 1999: 154).

The sociocultural processes that we have been describing, which are characteristic of Rías Baixas and northwestern Portugal, seem to have had no parallel in the rest of what was to become northern *Gallaecia*, where a different sociospatial model appears to have been established, at least based on the limited number of sites excavated in this area. The most important of these is the hillfort of A Cidá de Borneiro (Cabana de Bergantiños, A Coruña) (Figure 31 and 32). Seventy-five percent of its housing area has been excavated, uncovering about 32 buildings, most of which have round plans, a central hearth that partly supports the roof and a central post. Most have central hearths that are part of the structure supporting the roof with a post embedded in the floor (Romero Masiá 1992: 132). Based on the arrangement of these houses, above all the ones located in the central part of the settlement, we can say there was a tendency to form small groups of houses, representing different family groups (Lestón 2006: 19). Until recently, only one level of occupation dating to the late Iron Age had been documented. The hillfort was abandoned by the end of that period.

Apart from the littoral or prelittoral areas, there are two other northwestern regions

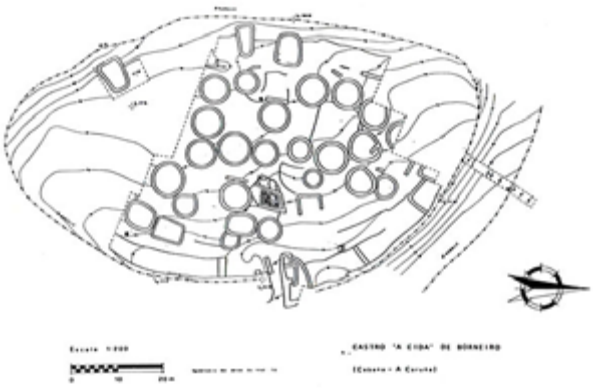


Figure 31. Plan of Borneiro hillfort (Romero Masiá 1992: 132).

Figure 32. Aerial view of Borneiro hillfort (Lestón 2006: 19).

further inland that have been studied in depth, thanks to systematic CRM projects as well as excavations of the fortified settlements. The work carried out by X. Carballo at Terra de Trasdeza, the first of these sites, clearly demonstrates that the hillforts in this area are part of a different local tradition, with more domestic architecture built using perishable materials. Other examples include the initial stage of occupation at Castrovite to the second century BC (Carballo 1998: 12-3; Carballo and González 2001) and the third century BC occupation documented in the lower part of the hillfort of Cortegada, where the first stone houses coexisted with an architecture built with perishable materials (Carballo 1996: 354).

Territorially speaking, there is less monumentalization of domestic architecture as we move from west to east. The Meridian Depression served as a boundary for the distinctive local tradition of Rías Baixas that could have been cultural (Carballo 2003), separating different lands, but with a domestic architecture still directly connected to the previous tradition, as can be seen in the occupational levels during this period at the hillforts of Graña (Meijide 1990), Cameixa (López Cuevillas and Lorenzo Fernández 1986), Coto do Mosteiro (Orero Grandal 1988), A Moura (Samos, Lugo) (Rodríguez García 1999) or Vilela (Taboada, Lugo) (Álvarez et al. 2006) (Figure 33). The occupation at the last of these sites can be dated to the fourth and

Figure 33. Excavated floors of huts constructed of perishable materials at Vilela hillfort (Álvarez et al. 2006).

third centuries BC, with rectangular, round-cornered houses built entirely from perishable materials (López et al. in press).

It is within this context that we must consider the complex hillfort of As Laias (Barbantes, Ourense), which overlooks the Miño River near Ourense. The occupation of this settlement during the late Iron Age produced the material remains of buildings scattered across the rocky hillside where it is located, including some remarkable terracing work. Generally speaking, the remains of houses with hearths were built into the rock face of the mountain, which in some cases resulted in alignments of houses on different levels, and sometimes a house floor was cut directly into the mountain face itself. In some cases the house walls served to control the erosion of vegetation and clay facing, while in other cases the houses were protected by stone foundations. Masonry constructions were also documented, in one case with a central hearth. On one of the terraces a complete occupational family unit was excavated on a horizontal surface thanks to a strong retaining wall. This consisted of a circular hut with a high-quality light clay floor, a central hearth and some wall bases made of clay. This hut was linked to a courtyard or auxiliary area that was quadrangular in plan with a stone foundation (Álvarez and López 2000: 528-9).

The research project in Las Médulas, southwestern León province, developed during the last few years by one of the CSIC research teams under the supervision of F.J. Sánchez- Palencia and M. Dolores Fernández Posse, has also produced quite interesting evidence for internal spatial distribution and the social interpretation of the architectural record of hillforts in this area during this period. The main aim of the project in question is the study of Roman Imperial development of a mining landscape in this area, especially the changes this would have produced in the native socio-economic structure and its influence on the coordination of new settlement strategies, including the occupation of the area and its exploitation (Fernández-Posse et al. 1994; Sánchez-Palencia et al. 1996; Sastre 1998). Within this larger context, most of the research has focused on the excavation of two pre-Roman hillfort sites: Corona de Corporales (Sánchez-Palencia and Fernández-Posse 1985, 1987) and San Juan de Paluezas, which were occupied beginning in the third century BC, and on the analysis of the archaeological evidence for these two settlements (Fernández-Posse 2001). The interpretative framework is based on the comparison of the anthropological model of rural societies to the archaeologically documented evidence from the site (Fernández-Posse and Sánchez-Palencia 1998) (Figure 34).

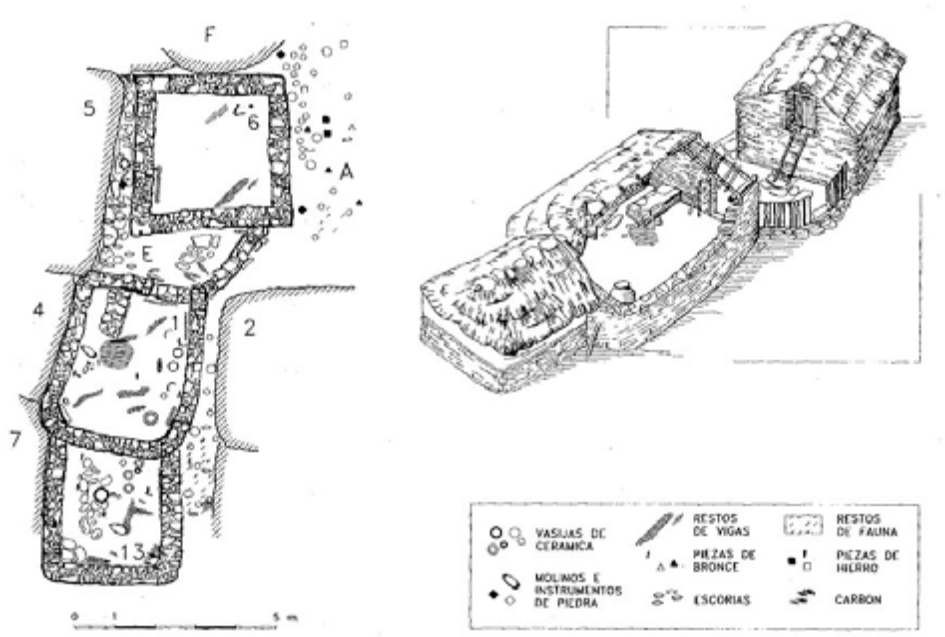


Figure 34. Reconstruction of a domestic unit at San Juan de Paluezas hillfort (Fernández-Posse and Sánchez-Palencia 1998: 132; Fig. 3).

This architectural study has tackled the structural analysis of the remains based on the quality and characteristics of the materials used, as well as effort and resource investment, coupled with the functional analysis of the different buildings found, which included shops, storerooms, houses, stockyards, yards, etc. and their spatial relationship with other settlement features such as roads, accessibility routes, attachments, spatial demarcations, etc. This research has contributed to our understanding of these sites and has made it possible to identify a local building tradition that made use of schist as a raw material and had square and/or rectangular plans as the fundamental cellular unit and a distinctive feature of domestic space (Figure 35). Also documented is the individualization of nuclear family units, self-sufficient entities in terms of production and consumption that were separated from other units and lived in a domestic area made up of different attached large rooms, of which the storerooms were the most important.

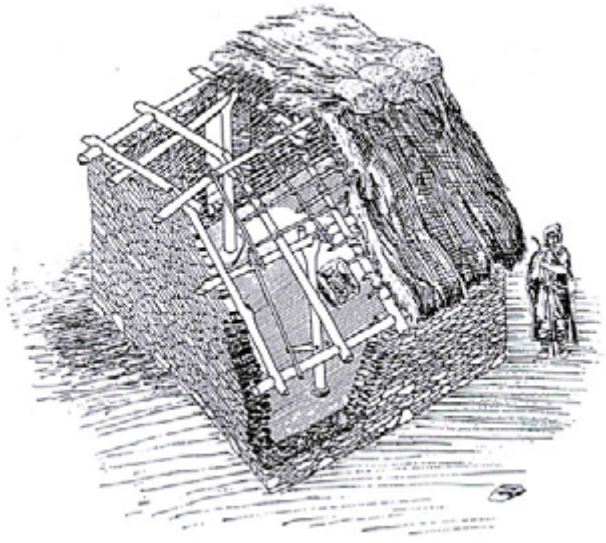


Figure 35. Hypothetical reconstruction of a hut at Corona de Corporales hillfort (Sánchez-Palencia and Fernández-Posse 1987).

In western Asturias the archaeological record is quite detailed thanks to several systematic excavations carried out on sites in the Navia River basin where domestic architecture is characterized by the use of circular, elliptic or rectangular house plans with rounded corners as well as the use of slate and schist joins combined with clay. Dividing walls were not used, resulting in the tangential juxtaposition of independent wall courses in cases where buildings were in close proximity (Villa 2003: 120). This architectural model was used in the fourth century BC at Chao Sanmartín, Monte Castrelo de Pelou, which was occupied from the fourth to third centuries BC, at Os Castros (Taramundi), at the hillfort of San Chuís, where huts with stratigraphic evidence dated back to the fourth and first centuries BC were found, and at the littoral hillfort of Cabo Blanco (El Franco), where some dwellings were documented dated between the fourth century BC and the first century AD (Villa 2003: 120-1) (Figure 36).

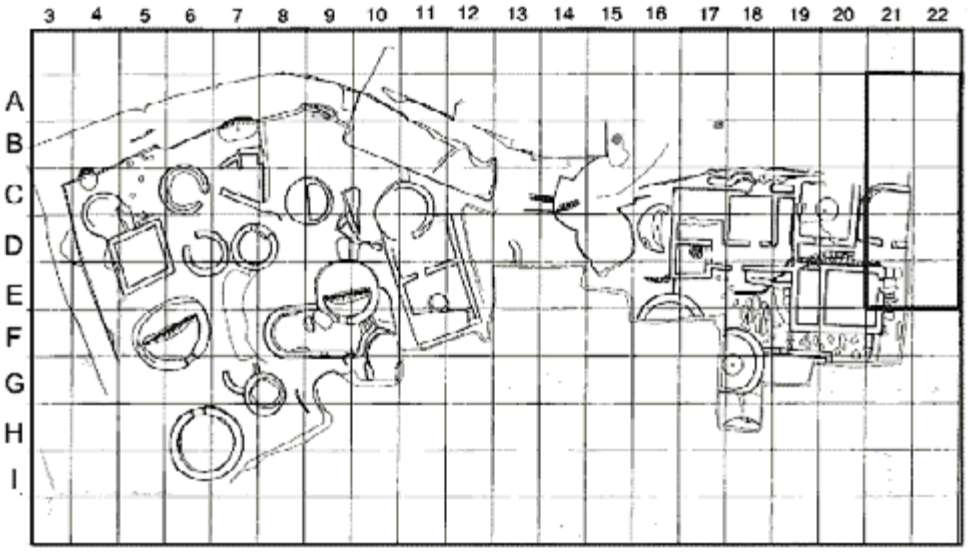


Figure 36. Plan of San Chuís hillfort (Jordá et al. 2002: 19; Fig. 2).

We must keep in mind all this regional architectural variety, as well as the existence of local building traditions and different rates of socio-economic evolution, if we hope to outline a number of more or less widespread tendencies characteristic of domestic space at this time. The interpretative framework that follows is aimed at highlighting the social and cultural guidelines that have a bearing on the constructive process of the architectural record as the material expression of culture. We are far from defining a model for domestic space in the northwestern Iron Age, but some hypotheses can be generated.

First of all, we must highlight the significant stability of the internal organization plan of the hillfort settlements. This plan survived into the late Iron Age and its origins probably date

back to the first millennium BC. We can verify the continuous repetition of a dwelling plan that is characterized by a well-defined type of house, as can be seen at hillforts like Borneiro (Romero Masiá 1987) or Baroña (Calo and Soeiro 1986) (Figure 37).

Figure 37. View of Baroña hillfort (Photo LAr, IEGPS, CSIC-XuGa).

For their part, the fortified settlements of the late Iron Age have some relatively homogenous features, such as the retention of the ditch as the first element demarcating the living area and the increasing complexity of the defensive system over time, with the appearance of other types of walls, including the compartmentalization of structures in hillfort units in western Asturias as early as the fourth century BC (Villa 2000, 2003).

The restructuring that took place in these settlements during this period included the extension of the living area and the rebuilding of houses in stone, but according to the same construction plan as before. It seems that a particular type of settlement model was consolidated and stabilized during this time—the hillfort or permanent settlement—in response to the socio-economic needs of a growing rural population that had become permanently established in the region they were exploiting.

There seems to have been a marked demographic increase during this period that could have resulted in increased competition for land, initiating a gradual social segmentation process, a dynamic that has been characterized as defining every rural society (Chayanov 1986; Shanin 1976; Wolf 1982): the ideal of autarchy that had supported the family unit of production and consumption was confronted by the imperative of social cohesion within the settlement imposed by defensive needs and the collective labor requirements that characterize a survival economy.

Seen in this context, the stability of the model may be explained by the need to legitimize that continuity in the settlement through the repetition of architectural elements like dwelling types at a time of increasing social competitiveness. Paradoxically, the individualization of the family unit contrasted with the role played by the settlement itself as a reference point for the creation of social identity. This would explain the considerable regularity found in the built areas

of these sites, and from this we can deduce that there was great cultural integration and harmony when it came to observing the rules and values of the community's everyday life.

So, in the intermediate stage of development of the hillfort world there was a clear architectural model accepted by the group, a style that was the result of a cultural tradition respected by the community. Related to this, the domestic hillfort architecture has some of the defining features of what anthropologists have called primitive architecture (Guidoni 1989; Rapoport 1972). In this type of tradition-oriented socio-cultural formation the development of architectural design is based on the technical knowledge available to the community. Hence any member of the group would be able to build their own house. However, there was always a pre-determined model pre- or proscribing certain aspects of the design that also met most of the cultural, physical and maintenance requirements. This is typically a uniform model allowing little innovation and with a predominantly standardized shape.

According to A. Rapoport (1972: 15-6) this construction pattern is totally lacking in theoretical or aesthetic pretentions; it is a non-specialized and open-ended adaptation to the conditions imposed by the settlement location and the microclimate; it is also characterized by a respect for any existing structures and by the presence of an established common heritage and a hierarchy of values to which the construction activity adapts itself point by point. Therefore, in such societies, including traditional rural ones, cultural tradition imposes a rigid system of control over the construction of a house, establishing a model everyone recognizes, which explains the absence of designers or specialists. Also, in these communities there is no difference between magic and work, religion and the secular realm, ritual and secular use of space; all the material culture manifestations reflect the cosmovision accepted and shared by the group. The domestic architecture, the building shape, is a physical incarnation of that logic, of that tradition; the house and the everyday activities carried out inside it symbolically exhibit the metaphorical and ontological foundations of the particular worldview of its inhabitants (Parker Pearson and Richards 1994).

We therefore suggest that hillfort house architecture was mainly influenced by socio-cultural factors. Its long survival was due to a strong cultural tradition that perpetuated that architectural style because it met the social and symbolic needs of the hillfort societies perfectly. This is the only explanation we can propose for the long survival of this type of building; Romanization and the gradual abandonment of the indigenous tradition that supported this model

ultimately resulted in the replacement (although not definitively) of this type of construction with a different one. Domestic hillfort architecture appears to reflect a style of construction and a technology belonging to a different social reality than that of communities in the previous period.

There also was a clear spatial division between individual domestic units in the hillfort communities, which were conceived as isolated housing areas with more control over movement and access. In some cases they were internally divided into different zones with different functions, indicating the appearance of a new type of courtyard house that would become quite popular in southern Galicia. Control over access to the buildings was increased with the use of hallways and decoration appears on thresholds, lintels and jambs in special cases; the visibility of the house was emphasized more and the external walls were more carefully finished. Both of these phenomena seem to have taken place during the last stage of the late Iron Age.

In our opinion, this period marks the final social sanctioning of a construction tradition in the form of an architectural style that would not undergo important technical modifications until the Roman period. This architectural tradition was used as a tool to shape a social structure that followed a socio-economic logic defined by a specific process: the increase of agricultural exploitation during this period, cause and consequence of the consolidation process of a rural society and economy. The structures for storing crops became more common as did structures built to store surpluses. This can be seen at sites like Castrovite (Carballo 1998: 13-6), in the upper area of the hillfort of As Laias, where many storage structures with large amounts of carbonized grain were found dating to the late Iron Age (López and Álvarez 2000) and in the upper area of the Castro Grande of Neixón (Boiro, A Coruña) (Ayán in press).

The success of these communities resulted in increased demographic pressure and competition for resources; the population increase transformed the configuration of the hillfort enclosures into a chaotic conglomeration of clustered dwellings. There was a need to consolidate group identity that directly competed with the self-assertion process of the family units that were the production and consumption units within this economy. Access control, house monumentalization and the need for attached areas such as hallways were understood as spaces in which people could carry out their individual domestic activities.

This model is reflected in domestic units, especially the circular dwelling that was like a microcosm (as the hillfort is like an *imago mundi*) of social space, although the dichotomy displayed in this case was the opposition between the family unit and the community. Hence the

main aim of the architectural solutions, regardless of the environmental conditions, was to achieve the total isolation of the house. The house in the hillfort is a physical reincarnation of an ideal environment: the rural ideal of survival, of self-sufficiency, that governed the life of a family unit conceived as a production and consumption body. For its part, the hillfort was the physical expression of that same ideal: the settlement as the identity framework of a close-knit rural community. Both are devices that perpetuate and enable that ideal, exhibiting that worldview and the way of life supporting it. This is the reason that we can talk about a distinct hillfort architecture today.

Some communal architectural elements that appeared inside the settlement at this time are spatially differentiated, such as the communal hut dating to the late Iron Age at Chao Sanmartín (Villa and Cabo 2003: 152), identical to those at Coaña, Mohías and Pendía that were replaced during the late Roman empire with a monumental area like a square paved with slate and decorated with continuous benches along the north and east walls. Huts with oval plans, continuous benches and no evidence of domestic activity were documented in northern Portugal as well, for example a structure at the well-known Briteiros hillfort that is about 11 meters in diameter (Figure 38), and at the aforementioned and somewhat smaller hillfort of Cossourado in Paredes de Coura, which was occupied between the fifth and second centuries BC (Matos da Silva 1995-1997).

Figure 38. Communal structure at the Briteiros *oppidum* (www.castrenor.com).

On the other hand, the hypothetical evolution of a hierarchical social organization and the eventual emergence of the Germanic society that created a divided landscape (Parcero 2002b: 175-82, 229; Parcero et al. 2007: 216-7) contrasts with the standardized and homogeneous houses, with their self-sufficient family units, of this earlier period (Camino 2002: 150) (Figure 39). However, these structures do not reflect an egalitarian society; evidence of a system of rank and class can be seen in the housing culture, as in other parts of the Celtic world (Brañas 2005; García Quintela 2007), one of a number of similarities between the Atlantic zone and central Europe, where a wood-based architecture, built with perishable materials, also housed a

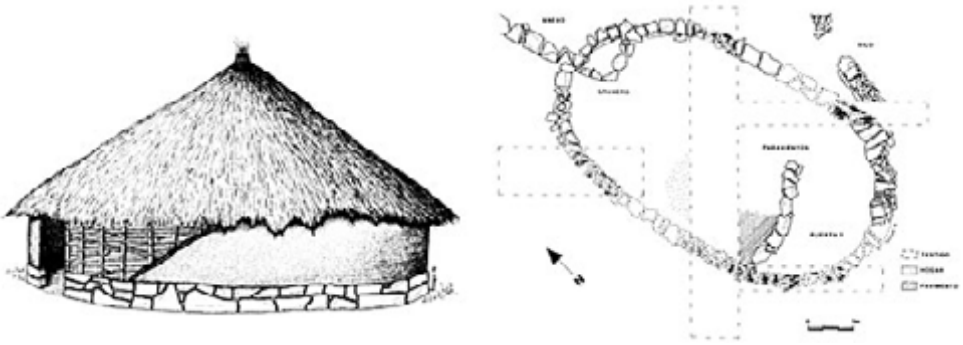


Figure 39. Hypothetical reconstruction of a Moriyón hillfort hut structure (Camino 2002: 145; Fig. 2).

hierarchical society. This can be seen in the archaeological assemblages found in some tombs and in the Greek and Roman sources[22].

5. Oppida and courtyard houses in the late Iron Age

Certain sites in littoral and southern areas, including Santa Trega (Peña Santos 1984-1985, 1988, 1989, 1990), Troña (Hidalgo 1987), Elviña (Ayán 2001; Bello 2006), Castromao (Orero Grandal 2000), Saceda (González Ruibal 2005a) and S. Cibrán de Lás (Álvarez et al. 2004) were located in areas that were part of the trade route system and began to undergo significant economic development due to the development of trade relationships and an increase in population beginning in the second century BC. This proto-hillfort development process spread across a wide area (Almagro 1994, 2002), and is clearly documented in northern Portugal at sites like Briteiros, Sanfins, Cividade de Terroso and Santa Luzia. The convergence of these factors may explain the complex morphology of most of the sites located in the *bracarense* area.

As mentioned previously, the current discussion focuses on the origin and chronology of these oppida, since most researchers believe that this development process is typical of a change of era, encouraged and promoted by the stability supposedly brought to the northwest by Rome. In this sense, the Roman influence is thought to have shaped the hillfort domestic landscape, especially in southern Galicia (*Conventus bracarense*), characterized by the development of the orthogonal city plan, the introduction of square and rectangular house plans, the introduction of decorative motifs in houses and complex defensive systems, the construction of infrastructure, including areas for public use, and the improvement of stone building techniques (Acuña 1977; 1996; Almeida 1984; Balil 1971; Blanco 1960; Maluquer 1975; Romero 1976). The chronology was interpreted as the result of a change of era and these settlements were defined as Galician-

Roman settlements (Peña Santos 1988).

Today, thanks to the significant progress made in research and the recovery of new material in the course of the past 15 years of excavations, we have enough data to revise this historiographic model and to incorporate the concept of *oppida* dynamics in the northwest into the discussion of the general evolution of the Iron Age along the Atlantic coast and in central Europe (González Ruibal 2005: 268-9; Parcero et al. 2007: 224-5). These major settlements should not be automatically interpreted as the product of Romanization, but as the result of an endogenous evolution or a late progression of the city concept introduced from the Mediterranean regions to the northern and western parts of the Iberian Peninsula (Parcero et al. 2007: 238-41).

We propose that during this late stage (from the end of the second century BC until the Roman period) there emerged, in specific areas, a series of large central places that reached a significant degree of monumentality and exhibited a complex spatial organization in line with a very characteristic model of domestic architecture. There also were significant technological improvements in hillfort architecture that demonstrate an increased use of iron tools to work the stone. This process explains the explosion of stonework during this period, which is reflected in a diversified final product that included different types of tools and a different treatment of the stone itself. All of this resulted in an increasingly complex defensive system in which settlement walls were made entirely of stone whose inner and outer faces exhibit irregular masonry decoration and/or the marks of polygonal or pseudo-reticular tools.

The domestic spaces also increased in size in response to larger numbers of people. About one thousand people are calculated to have inhabited the oppidum of S. Cibrán de Lás, for example (Yolanda Álvarez, pers. comm.), resulting in the reorganization of the interior of the settlement and of domestic space (Figure 40).

Figure 40. Excavated area of the *oppidum* of San Cibrán de Lás (Álvarez et al. 2004).

The interior organization of settlements during this period was based on an east-west axis, possibly due to southern influences, but more likely the product of a

monumental materialization of the architectural pattern that had already developed in the late Iron Age at sites like the Castro Grande de Neixón (Ayán et al. 2005) or Castrolandín (Ayán et al. in press), where a central wall encircles a number of rock outcrops situated in the northern part of the settlement, with two entrances, one facing east, the other facing west.

The excavation of the defensive ditches continued to be the main source of stone for the erection of the stone architecture and the walls remained the primary referent for the organization and coordination of the settlement. On the other hand, the walls achieved an unprecedented monumentality, with the external facing stones worked with picks and helicoidal tools. Apart from its undeniable defensive and coercive functions, directed both outward and inward, the architecture clearly represents a polysemous and multidimensional sign that occasionally becomes true monumental scenery, a symbol of prestige and identity.

A proto-urban settlement type appears to exist in northern Portugal with an internal spatial organization based on divided groups of buildings identified as family areas or courtyard houses, the habitations of individual families living in the settlement (Almeida 1984; Silva 1986). One of the best-studied examples is a group of housing units excavated between 1978 and 1980 in the hillfort of Cividade de Ãncora (Caminha, Viana do Castelo) (Silva 1986: 48-51, Pl. XXVII) (Figure 41). The central architectural element consists of three circular buildings, one of which had a hallway, as well as a building with a sub-rectangular plan and a furnace, which were arranged around a paved courtyard containing a tank or fountain. According to the excavator, the main domestic activities (eating and sleeping) took place in the circular unit, which had carefully built walls and paving, as well as plaster decoration; hearths and individual benches were arranged around the walls, which surround an open-plan area without supporting posts, like the other circular structures. The rectangular structure had a similar function, also with

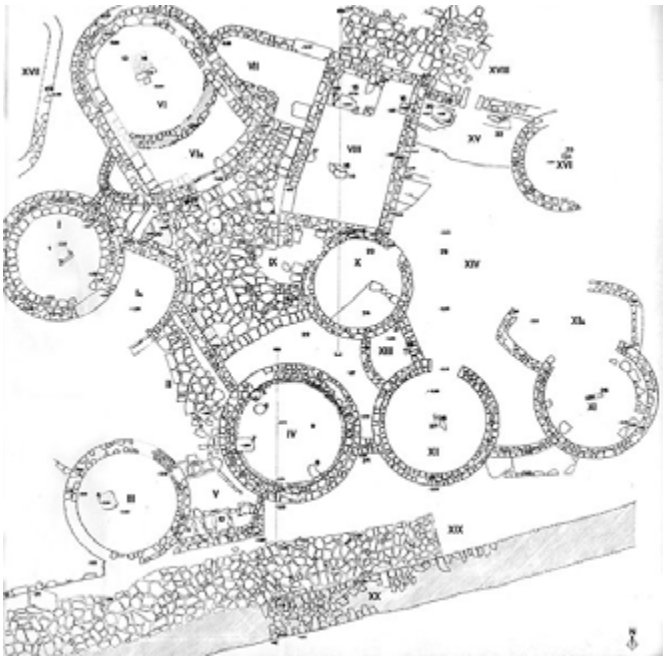


Figure 41. Plan of excavated area at Cividade de Ãncora (Silva 1986: 48-51; Plate XXVII).

a hearth, two individual benches and a bread oven. The house with its atrium and continuous benches attached to the walls was clearly a meeting place for the three resident nuclear families (Silva 1986: 49). The residential complex included an attached funerary area (quite rare in the northwest) with cremation cist burials (Silva 1986: Plate XXVII).

The architectural structure of the courtyard-house is well-known thanks to the experimental archaeology carried out by A. Coelho in the city of Sanfins. The occupied space in this *oppidum* was orthogonal, and about forty housing areas were documented within it that the excavators interpret as domestic family units (Almeida 1984; Silva 1995) (Figure 42).

Figure 42. Reconstruction of a domestic unit in the *oppidum* of Sanfins (Sande 2006: 76).

The functional interpretation of the rebuilt area, which consists of a confined space containing three circular houses and a large rectangular structure facing a central courtyard, was based on a formal analysis that examined three variables: the quality of the construction, the presence or absence of decorative motifs, and the domestic assemblage in each building. According to these criteria, the circular shape of the enclosure, which has a hall like an atrium, a central hearth and a *triskelion*, or great triple spiral decoration, on one of its walls, can be understood as a prestigious building that may have been used as a meeting place and/or a domestic sanctuary. This type of housing unit, composed of *páteo, composta e lacha* according to the Mediterranean pattern, also incorporated several buildings with different functions, such as a kitchen/bedroom, silo/*hórreo* or raised granary, and threshing yard floor (Figure 43). It would have housed a large family, a self-sufficient production and consumption unit along the lines of the process observed in the intermediate stage, as at the site of San Juan de Paluezas, but exhibiting a greater degree of monumentalization.

Figure 43. Hypothetical reconstruction of a domestic unit at Cividade de Terroso (Flores and Carneiro 2005: 125; Fig. 7).

The same link between the organization of domestic space and family structure has also been found in southern Galicia, thanks to the interpretation of the architecture carried out by A. de la Peña in the city of Santa Trega (Peña Santos 1988, 1990) (Figure 44) as well as work that is being carried out at the moment at the site of San Cibrán de Lás where a number of family neighborhoods have been recently excavated (López et al. 2004). This *oppidum* (Lansbricae)

Figure 44. Plan of domestic area in the *oppidum* of Santa Trega (Peña Santos 1989: 163).

follows the previously defined orthogonal plan model and was built at one time, which suggests that there was a division of the land before the houses were constructed. The spatial layout of the site consists of an oval upper area, walled and of symbolic or ritual character (some inscriptions devoted to indigenous gods and singular architectonic structures were found) and a second housing area organized around the family units known as courtyard-houses. This basic occupational unit (about 220-260 square meters in size) was made up of different clustered structures that shared dividing walls and common entries. They were separated from the other units in such a way that each family's housing unit did not share a main wall with any other structure (López et al. 2004: 88-94). Each courtyard house consisted of a room that was used as a kitchen and connected to other domestic rooms, in addition to one or more buildings used as auxiliary areas for domestic activities, a storeroom or granary and a neat room that was

sometimes tiled or paved, much larger than the others and sometimes had a hearth (Figure 45).

Figure 45. Excavated kitchen of a domestic unit in the *oppidum* of San Cibrán de Lás (Photo by Terra Arqueos, S.L.).

This courtyard house model developed differently, with different variants, in the southern hillfort world. The domestic area on the western slope of the Montealegre hillfort is a good example of this versatility[23] (Moaña, Pontevedra) (Ayán and Blanco 2006: 353-69) (Figure 46).

The spatial organization of the environment, of the internal areas of the settlement, of the houses and the other buildings, reflects the everyday life of its inhabitants, and may be the key to understanding the type of family structure predominant in the large southern sites during the late stage of the Iron Age. However, until now the lack of comparanda for family or kin group structure[24] in the northwestern settlements and the absence of attempts to apply anthropological models and contrast them with the archaeological record in this area has hampered progress in this regard. At S. Cibrán de Lás, Sanfins and Castromao (Nieto et al. 2005) it is quite clear that the basic social unit was the extended family. In this sense, during this period in the northwest we are confronted by the existence of different socio-economic regimes and a significant degree of regional variability.

In any case, previously documented social developments reach their peak during this stage. The individuality of the family unit inside the settlement clearly demonstrates the ideal of

Figure 46. Excavated hut floor at Montealegre hillfort (Aboal and Castro 2006: 107; Fig. 14).

self-sufficiency that is typical of rural societies. There was also a strategy of separating the housing areas as well as using other architectural methods of actively obstructing internal circulation routes, for example, by placing steps at entrances, or building projecting buttresses. Also, access control is stressed by the paving of atriums and vestibules and through the construction of well-defined thresholds using large, well-crafted granite slabs. Circulation intersection areas typical of structures with significant internal compartmentalization are also found. The only possible route into the housing structure is very carefully controlled. Restrictions established by the social unit protect the housing area. The houses are separate and confined architectural elements consisting of three main zones that can be defined as public, semi-public/semi-private and private.

This segmentation process was apparently related to a clear strategy of house

monumentalization reflected in much more careful masonry work in the walls, sometimes using mortar in the joints, as well as more careful work on the inner wall faces, often including plaster decoration. During this late stage of development the use of decoration in architecture also spread throughout the southern regions (Carballo 1996). A good example is the house of Camalus in Briteiros with its notable decorative elements that seem to indicate the presence of a social hierarchy in which the house had become a prestige symbol (González Ruibal 2006a).

On the other hand, the proto-urban appearance of these oppida also implies the existence of canalization and drainage systems, including fountains and cisterns (Lás, Elviña), as well as the construction of public buildings, meeting centers (Briteiros) and communal structures such as the hillfort saunas known as *pedras formosas*. All these indicators, including the hillfort decorations, were traditionally considered indigenous imitations of Roman models following the conquest (Calo 1993-1994). This does not agree with the archaeological evidence recovered in the last few years, for example in the hillfort saunas. Recent excavations, verified by radiocarbon dating, have demonstrated the pre-Roman origin of these buildings and their cultural significance in western Asturias (Villa 2002a).

In this regard, we must stress the fact that this urbanization process cannot be documented for the whole territory, since most hillforts in the first century BC were only between a half and one hectare in size, although new rooms are attached to the main buildings and wall facing begins to appear in domestic architecture during this period. The hillfort of Castrolandín is a good example (Suárez Otero 2006) (Figure 47). It was built *ex novo* sometime during the second century BC, probable as a result of a process of synesis related to the neighboring settlement of Alto do Castro (Cobas and Parcero 2007). The new settlement, situated in the Meridian Depression, is an example of a synthesis of the local tradition of the Rías Baixas, southern influences and inland territories, such as Tabeirós y Trasdeza. This is reflected in the ceramic types, the decorative patterns and the domestic architecture found at the site. In fact, a first stage of occupation with huts made from perishable materials was followed during the first century BC by a reorganization of domestic space that included the construction of stone houses with attached hallways, following the *bracarense* prestige model.

This process, as we have been stressing in this section, exhibits peculiarities in the different northwestern regions. For instance, the western and central Asturias hillforts are arranged according to an alveolar city model (Berrocal et al. 2002: 120-8) that developed

between the fourth century BC and the second century AD. This phenomenon can be seen at Castiellu de Llagú (Oviedo), part of which was excavated in 2001 (Figure 48). The housing area contains about 50 circular structures laid out as irregular family units that were scattered but organized and connected to one another by linear communication areas that are always adapted to the subsoil morphology. This spatial organization was less confined and tightly organized than the courtyard-houses of the *bracarense* zone and was much more scattered than the hillforts in the El Bierzo region that developed in Llagú between the second century BC and the beginning of the second century AD (Berrocal et al. 2002: 126).

Figure 47. Excavated domestic unit at Castrolandín hillfort (Photo LAr, IEGPS, CSIC-XuGa).

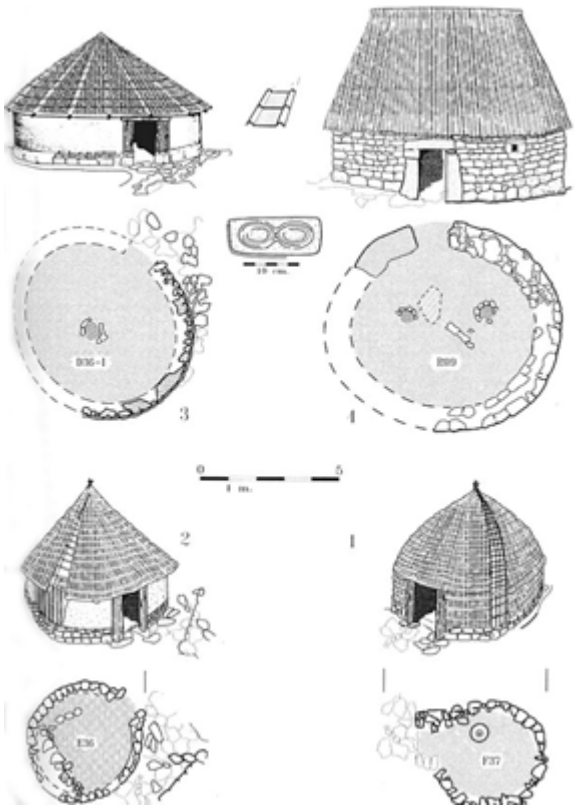


Figure 48. Plans and hypothetical reconstructions of several types of domestic structures at Castiellu de Llagú hillfort (Berrocal et al. 2002: 120-8).

6. The *casa nostra*: Romanization and domestic space in the northwestern hillforts

The generational reshuffle that took place in northwestern archaeology beginning in the 1960s consolidated a conflicting opinion regarding the Celtic paradigm coined by F. López Cuevillas (1989). The diachronic problem of the *Cultura castreña*, or Hillfort Culture, was

interpreted from a foundation of false scientism that was never explained in practice, since this apparent break with tradition hid a theoretical-methodological continuity in which the stratigraphic sequences had no place. However, under the influence of Classical archaeology a temporal perspective has emerged that can define exactly and unanimously the beginning and the end of the Hillfort Culture. For example, the already mentioned periodicity proposals of Acuña (1977: 251), Arias (1985: 24), Bello and Peña (1995: 188), Calo (1993: 59) and Maluquer (1975: 273) would identify the Romanization process as beginning in 19 BC, with Augustus' restructuring and/or the reforms of Flavius marking the beginning of the end of the *Cultura castreña*.

However, excavations carried out at the hillfort of Viladonga (Castro de Rei, Lugo) by M. Chamoso Lamas (1977) confronted Galician scholarship with evidence of the survival of the hillfort as a settlement type in later years, a survival of the tradition in rural areas within the Galician-Roman provinces. This circumstance made clear the need for a comprehensive research strategy that could assess the real scope of Romanization in the northwest, as well as other variables that were not considered before, such as settlement dynamics and the clear regional differences that undermined the monolithic and ahistorical image previously assigned to the hillfort environment (Romero Masiá 1976).

From this transition in the historiographic framework the archaeological-historical reality of the hillfort phenomenon was finally tackled. The evidence pointed toward a certain amount of continuity in the way of life and in the construction of the social space in these rural communities. The population movement to the plain mentioned by the Classical authors is a phenomenon that is coeval with the survival of the hillforts, and both processes are the mainstays of a particular form of Romanization specific to Galicia, known as the *Castrexo Final* or late Hillfort Period, or *Galician-Roman Castrexo*, that is the Galician-Roman Hillfort Period, the beginning of the second century to the fifth century AD (Arias 1985: 25). The goal was to provide a model for the settlement pattern of this late Hillfort Period or *Castrexo Final*, as well as to define its evolution based on archaeological evidence recovered in the last several decades (Acuña and Arias 1983: 263-4; Arias 2002: 131-4; Palol 1977: 163; Villanueva 1993). In this sense, and according to the accepted paradigm, the following evolutionary sequence is proposed for the occupation-abandonment-reoccupation process of the northwestern hillforts (Arizaga and Ayán 2007: 484):

1. Permanent abandonment of some hillforts between the Roman conquest and the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

2. Survival of fortified settlements in littoral zones and near road intersections and the construction of hillforts with a new settlement plan in gold exploitation areas such as the eastern mountains and the Lor, Navia and Sil River valleys.

3. After the Flavian period, there is another abandonment process as well as the emergence of new settlement types, including *villae*, *vici*, and *fora*, followed by an intensive occupation of valley bottoms and the appearance of open, unfortified settlements.

4. The crisis during the third century revitalized some hillforts, which were defended again after that period, such as Viladonga, S. Cibrán de Lás or Cidá de Castro S. Millán. Also, there is a late reoccupation (based on small coin hoards and late ceramic material) of sites of clear strategic importance, such as Santa Trega, A Peneda do Viso, A Lanzada (in Pontevedra), Castro Lupario, A Graña (in A Coruña), in Lugo province the hillforts of Castreliño de Montemaior (Abadín), Barán (Paradela), Penadominga (Quiroga) and Os Castros de A Devesa (Ribadeo) as well as Santomé, Castromao and Outeiro de Baltar in Orense.

   In northern Portugal, hillforts like Fiães (fifth to sixth centuries), Curalha (which survived up to the sixth and seventh centuries), Monte do Castelo (Vila Verde, Braga), Castelo de Lanhoso, Guifões, and Monte Mozinho o Sanfins were militarily reoccupied, and according to Ferreira de Almeida (1992: 10; 1993), may have been settlements occupied by the *burgarii*, as described in the High Medieval sources and documented in other parts of the Iberian Peninsula.

5. During this period the combination hillfort-*villae* plan as the focus of Galician-Roman rural space seems to have been effective. This can be seen in some outstanding examples like A Peneda do Viso (hillfort)-A Portela (*villae*); Toralla (hillfort)-Toralla (*villae*); Facho de Donón-Pipín (*villae*)- hillfort of Chaira-Castillós, Penadominga-Cigarrosa; Viladonga-Doncide, Proendos (hillfort)-Proendos (*villae*); the hillfort of Graña-Agro de Nogueira or Vilar da Graña (hillfort)-Vilar da Graña (*villae*) (Arias Vilas 1992: 201-4; 2002).

   This sequence is situated in an empirical record that is clearly out of context in most cases, although it seems to accurately outline the most important processes that took place after the Roman conquest. However, in our opinion what needs to be discussed and reexamined is the interpretative framework used up until now to deal with the phenomenon of the survival of this type of settlement and the problem of the real impact of Romanization. This question still arouses a great deal of passion and limits the focus of researchers in the northwest, most of whom opt for extreme views that favor deep and definitive changes in the cultural landscape of the northwest following the arrival of the Romans[25].

From our point of view, this perspective is directly influenced by archaeological practice in the context of a formalist and typological research tradition that considered the hillfort as an object of study in itself, an architectonic approach that defines the identity of an archaeographic construction delimited in time and space: the *Cultura castreña.* By contrast, we suggest that hillfort architecture reflects a basic technology as well as serving as a tool for social reconstruction, acting both as a catalyst and a product of social action, a cultural technique that constructed the social scenery. The architecture copies the society's internal logic, creating a spatial structure and spatial relationships that reflect that specific social pattern. As a consequence, a settlement like the hillfort and domestic architecture like the circular hillfort house, are not first of all merely architectural elements, but rather constitute material beings that play an important role in the social makeup of the archaeological reality; secondly, architecture is a multidimensional and polysemous form of material expression that is redefined and reused not only by the hillfort population, but by other socio-cultural formations. That is, the spatial structure created by the fortified settlement is the result of a specific society, which, by means of certain spatial and architectonic technologies, reproduces the prevailing socio-cosmological pattern (Ayán 2003).

Our approach to interpreting continuity in the hillfort settlement form in the northwest after the Augustan conquest of the area takes into consideration the fact that this settlement type served different functions influenced by specific socio-economic contexts (Fernández Mier 1999: 42). In this sense, the hillfort of Borneiro is not equivalent to the Roman mining hillfort of O Courel in the first century AD any more than the Late Empire hillfort of Viladonga or the *castella tutoria* that Hidacio refers to in the fifth century (Candelas 2004: 79) are comparable to the villages of Castrosante or Castroncelos today. Their inhabitants were not and are not *castreños* simply by virtue of living in a hillfort; rather, they were, respectively, Iron Age peasant-warriors, indigenous individuals working in the Roman Imperial mines, Galician-Roman people and Galician peasants of the early twenty-first century.

Having said this, we propose to outline a re-reading of the process involved in the evolution of domestic space under the influence of Romanization according to specific criteria. With the change of era a new model of spatiality emerged in the hillfort settlements, which were still used as habitation areas during the development of Galician-Roman society. To illustrate the change that took place during the first century AD we will use the example of housing areas

excavated in the hillforts of Montealegre (Moaña, Pontevedra) and Castrolandín (Cuntis, Pontevedra) as well as the well-known city plan dating from the Roman period at the Asturias hillfort of Chao Sanmartín (Villa 2002a: 167-73).

Due to its strategic location, the hillfort of Montealegre (Aboal and Castro 2006) during the two centuries before the Augustan conquest took in quantities of goods from the Late Republican Roman trade (González and Rodríguez 2006); the housing area at the site during this period was particularly impressive. Montealegre was an early participant in the trade network with the Mediterranean Sea region; it also continued to be occupied after the Roman conquest, like many other important settlements in Rías Baixas, including the hillfort of A Lanzada in Vigo, the hillfort of Alobre and the Castro Grande de Neixón. In the first century AD a major reorganization of city layouts and architecture took place in the main settlements that were strategically located close to the main communication roads running toward the interior of Galicia. This marked continuity included a considerable reorganization of domestic structures and the built area, a phenomenon perfectly exemplified at a micro-spatial scale by the second level of occupation on the western slope of the hillfort of Montealegre (Ayán and Blanco 2006: 365-9) (Figure 49). A new habitation structure was placed on the remains of the previous occupational unit, and the ruins of other abandoned structures were used as garbage dumps or as outside activity areas, completely changing the old plan and the orientation of the houses. A new building area with an east-west orientation disrupted the traditional traffic routes of the pre-Roman settlement with its open central area. Despite the limited nature of the area investigated by the emergency excavation, we were able to document a square room that undoubtedly belonged to a compartmentalized rectangular house. Next to it, there was another dismantled structure connected to this new domestic unit that may have belonged to a building used as a storeroom.

Figure 49. Plan of domestic space in the western part of Montealegre hillfort (Ayán and Blanco 2006).

This Galician-Roman house dates to the first century AD and exhibits the main changes that

occurred in hillfort architecture during the change of era, particularly in the realm of technology such as the construction of the *caín*, carefully worked masonry walls with square corners, innovations such as the use of *tegula* (tiles) as roofing material and a new spatial pattern defined by very large rectangular houses. The changes in domestic architecture included additional innovations in housing assemblages: the spread of the use of the revolving circular mill, the use of Roman table ceramic wares, both everyday and *terra sigillata*, storage amphorae inside the houses -- all of these are clear signs of new patterns of behavior in daily domestic work. Room 9 was used as a kitchen and could be accessed from another of the rooms. It was a segregated and defined area that did not repeat the characteristic multifunctional space of the pre-Roman house, but rather served as the setting for specific activities. Likewise, the kitchen was divided into two activity areas. On the left was the kitchen itself and its associated features, including a hearth and a mortar embedded in the house floor, which still survive. These elements are also seen in the basic assemblage, in close proximity to small braziers, found in the kitchens of the courtyard-houses of the oppidum of San Cibrán de Lás (López et al. 2004). The right-hand area of the kitchen, although the deposit had been disturbed, may have been used as a place for storing ceramic pots and pans.

The last level of occupation of the Castrolandín hillfort supports the scenario we have outlined here. This fortified settlement represents the evolution of hillfort domestic space in this part of the Meridian Depression between the end of the second century BC and the first century AD. The earliest domestic architecture of perishable materials is followed by a much more monumental, stone-built space during the first century BC and the introduction of the *bracarense* courtyard-house model (*vid. supra*). The superimposition of architectural structures is a consistent feature in the southern portion of the upper enclosure at this site, where the domestic spatial pattern of the first century AD is maintained even as a bath complex and an important *mansio viaria* are established at the foot of the hillfort.

In this last level of occupation the house has a rectangular plan of 35 square meters, 8.20 meters (north-south axis) by 4.40 meters (east-west axis), facing north-south, with double faced, gravel filled masonry walls. They used local granite with a colorful grain for some final touches *in situ*, particularly reused pieces such as pestles and fragments of boat-shaped mortars. There is a west-facing entrance with a paved threshold that is 90 centimeters wide. Inside the structure two hearths were built against the northern and southern walls, respectively. Unlike the house in

Montealegre, this structure must have had a thatched roof, since no remains of tegula (tiles) were documented (Figure 50). These two examples, Montealegre and Castrolandín, repeat a pattern[26] that is also seen in the structure found at Os Castros (Toques, A Coruña) (Penedo and Rodríguez 1995) and in the hillfort houses of A Graña (Toques, A Coruña) (Meijide 1990).

Figure 50. Excavated domestic area at Castrolandín hillfort (Photo LAr, IEGPS, CSIC-XuGa).

Figure 51. Aerial view of domestic space at Chao Sanmartín (Villa 2002b: 168; Plate 2).

The Chao Sanmartín hillfort is another paradigmatic reflection of the changes brought about in hillfort domestic space in western Asturias by the coming of the Romans (Villa 2002a: 169-70) (Figure 51). In the newly constructed built area at this site during the first and second centuries AD (approximate date range) the free-standing circular houses are replaced by orthogonal spaces that are compartmentalized by permanent partition walls into rooms of 22 by 26 square meters with entrances that do not conform to the settlement's internal street system. On the other hand, the use of existing structural additions became widespread. At the same time, new complex housing units were built that exhibited many construction improvements, including the addition of a second story in the houses. Decoration became an important activity, including the use of mortars in paving following vitruvian techniques, as well as wall paintings. Access control was increased and privacy was better protected; keys and locks were in use for the first time (Villa 2002a: 170). The same pattern can be seen at the hillfort of San Chuís (García and Adán 2000).

To summarize, what we see during this period is a form of spatial organization that has begun to distance itself from the domestic architecture of the pre-Roman period. The use of the square house plan appears to have been a way to maximize the internal space available, since a circular construction plan does not make the most efficient use of housing space. Straight lines

allow a more organized distribution of the houses, which are attached to one another by means of dividing walls. The rectangular shape also facilitates the creation of internal divisions within domestic structures. The compartmentalization of internal space involves the demarcation of different areas as well as the creation of physical spatial limits, and as a consequence there is a greater amount of privacy, which is preserved by a strict control over access to these buildings. The segmentation of the domestic area reflects a significant degree of socio-spatial complexity as compared to the single spatial unit represented by the circular dwelling.

In addition, access from outside the house is not direct; there are now some architectural elements that interfere with and limit the unrestricted movement of people, functioning as access control mechanisms. Several types of building elements served this purpose, including atria, hallways, stone stairs and projecting buttresses just in front of the entrance. Another completely new aspect that is worth mentioning is the arterial arrangement of activity areas around the central hearth, or *lareira*, which is invariably placed against the wall, next to or just in front of the door. The terracing and preparation of the sites prior to construction increased in the settlements, and internal circulation was improved through the use of recesses, stairs and small paved roads.

All of these elements clearly reflect a formal rapprochement with the Mediterranean city model. Nevertheless we must point out that these formal and technical changes did not radically alter the hillfort domestic spatial concept. The same patterns may have been repeated, but always adapted to completely different architectural structures. Based on ethno-archaeological studies it is clear that while many cultures may replace the old architectural forms, this is usually the result of changing prestige values and recognition of the benefits of the new foreign architecture rather than the complete replacement of the previous socio-spatial mental template, the worldview that ruled the traditional use of domestic space.

It is generally accepted that the hillforts inhabited during the first century AD exhibit the signs of acculturation to be expected in a society socio-economically governed by Rome. However, this acculturation process developed differently in different geographic areas. For example, in southern Galicia and in the littoral settlements there are significant city planning and architectural transformations, whereas other areas in the Roman *Conventus lucensis* (northern Galicia) retained their local traditions while incorporating the material innovations introduced by Romanization. In this sense, both continuity and change characterize the change of era. On the

one hand, Galician-Roman settlement architecture reflects the transformation that is occurring in the underlying socio-spatial logic of these communities; on the other hand, strong indigenous architectural influences are still clearly expressed. The circular houses continue to monopolize the kitchen areas of the large oppida, and the hearth zone remains the significant symbolic referent of the house. The interpretation of this phenomenon then must be approached from a dual perspective (Figure 52).

Figure 52. Plan of hillfort of Castromao (Orero 2000: 180; Fig. 2).

As we have explained elsewhere (Ayán 2001), it appears that during this period the conceptual model of the pre-Roman domestic area still survived in outline. The changes that occurred due to contact with Rome certainly had an influence on domestic architecture and building techniques; however, the hillfort circular house type, in terms both of the shape of the structure and the shape of the settlement, remained in use despite the fact that the culture that had produced them and given them shape was gradually changing. This explains the coexistence of the traditional house and the new house types; the old architectural forms were replaced in most cases due to the prestige and quality associated with the new architectural forms rather than the inadequacy of the previous model, which remained valid.

On the other hand, this coeval housing pattern reveals the incipient break with the traditional model at some sites more than others. Rural communities are an important part of the new economic framework, characterized by cereal agriculture, an increase in craft activity and the coordination of trade networks that benefited from the new road links built by Rome in Galician territory. However, adaptation to a new institutional, religious and ideological context was part of this relationship; in this regard Romanization ushered in deep changes and a restructuring of world-views, including the concept of the family in hillfort society.

These changes were gradual but substantial, the result of a process of acculturation that undermined the legitimacy and stability of the pre-Roman architectural tradition. The new spatial

model became consolidated thanks to the policy of integration developed by the Flavian dynasty, the driving factor behind this social change, promoting measures such as the granting of *ius Latii*, a new tax and census system, as well as the privatization of land (Villanueva 1993). This new socio-political framework culminated in the organization of rural settlements based on the model of the *villae* and led to the abandonment of the hillfort, and its system of spatial organization, as the main settlement model around the end of the first and beginning of the second centuries AD. At that point a new rural landscape of open settlements in valley bottoms emerged that retained its indigenous material culture, for example the *vicus* at Agro de Ouzande in Silleda, Pontevedra (1–132 AD) recently excavated in Terra de Trasdeza (Aboal et al. 2002).

On the other hand, during this period many fortified settlements were built in mining areas to house the people working in the gold mines. In these areas during the change of era a new settlement model became widespread, organized according to Roman Imperial interests and based on previous planning, as the excavations carried out at the mining hillforts of A Torre in O Courel (Álvarez Núñez 1995-1996), Santa María de Cervantes in Os Ancares (López and Álvarez 2000) and Chano in the Cúa River valley in León (Peranzanes) (Celis Sánchez 2002b) have shown. The latter hillfort is located on a rough breakwater over the Cúa River, and its inhabitants had to terrace the area in order to build there (Figure 53). Excavations conducted here focused on the northern village, where some seventeen circular houses were documented (Celis Sánchez 2003: 26-8) constructed using slate slabs with well-faced walls originally up to four meters in height and about 3.5 and 5.5 meters in diameter. The walls were 40-60 cm wide and the entryways faced either east or south (Celis Sánchez 2002b: 192-3, Plate III). Pavements, hearths, continuous benches in some structures and even niches in the interior walls were also uncovered. Some of these niches apparently contained wooden larders, while others were located in the upper wall courses, suggesting the existence of a second floor or attic under the conical thatched roof. Radiocarbon dates from features within Huts I and II and the building that contained a small hoard of Iberian coins trend around the second

Figure 53. Wall courses of hut structures at Chano hillfort (Photo LAr, IEGPS, CSIC-XuGa).

century BC with an estimated interval from the fourth to first centuries BC (Celis Sánchez 2002b: 204). This demonstrates that both these features and traditional architecture continued to be used in some of the new settlements established under the Romans during the change of era.

The same building model is documented in the mining hillfort of Santa María de Cervantes (López and Álvarez 2000): the layout of the hamlet and the domestic assemblage are standardized, buildings are independent of one another, there is an absence of dividing walls, adaptation to the space is determined by the fortification system and terraces, streets and squares are absent, and there are narrow spaces between the occupational units, although some rectangular houses with rounded corners were documented as well (Figure 54).

Figure 54. Plan of domestic space of Cervantes hillfort under a medieval cemetery (Blanco 2003: 57).

When looking at these settlements, it is quite striking that the Romans reused the hillfort architectural tradition to design a new spatial model in economically significant areas still inhabited by indigenous communities whose material culture had survived to some extent. We notice again an ambivalent relationship between continuity and change; on the one hand, the architecture of these mining hillforts shows the transformations that were occurring in the socio-spatial template and in the social structure of these communities; on the other hand, the survival of a strong indigenous architectural tradition is also in evidence.

These settlements are a product and at the same time another agent of the Roman impact on the landscape, characterized by intensive farming, the introduction of industrial mining and the creation of a number of infrastructural services, including the building of road networks.

These mining hillforts have a complex morphology and their defensive systems often were built using mining techniques; this was a new type of settlement based on economic interests and the product of a particular political climate. We say a specific political climate because by the third century AD, based on the current state of research, this mining system and its associated settlements had been abandoned (Rodríguez 1994: 172). In the context of our historical evolutionary narrative, the crisis of the third century AD seems to have been the point at which a new cultural landscape emerged, manifested by widespread reoccupation of earlier fortified settlements (Novo Güisán 1992). As A. Gutiérrez (2002: 301) has pointed out, interpretations of this phenomenon have traditionally emphasized, sometimes even contemptuously, its temporary and episodic character, referring to it as a marginal housing survival characterized by residual and erratic reuse for the purpose of temporary shelter (Arias and Cavada 1979: 96-9; Maya 1989: 131), as a response to the invasions and social instability characteristic of the late Empire, or as a reflection of the movement into these areas by late Roman and/or Germanic groups.

This would be explained to a great extent by attitudes typical of traditional Classical archaeology, which considers the late Classical period as a time of decline, defined by a "back to the mountains" mentality and the existence of a domestic architecture built with perishable materials. As Azcárate and Quirós point out (2001: 289): "the domestic architecture in the High Middle Ages shows a specific production cycle that is motivated by certain general socio-economic conditions". The fact that these assumptions are not self-evident leads to interpretations—quite frequent in the Spanish historiography of the late Classical period—that identify these types of structures with bandits, German troops or provisional shelters for undesirable characters, the decadent image of a villa transformed into a *tugurium*, or slum.

There are also some examples of perishable materials and late use of lignite architecture in the Galician hillforts, and these have been considered residual settlements as a result. However, in the last two decades excavations carried out in this part of the northwest have documented the existence of occupational levels with contextualized materials that exhibit a much greater degree of standardization and stability during this period than previously thought.

On the other hand, the survival of the hillfort as a housing area during the fourth and fifth centuries AD is not only documented[27] in mountainous or outlying areas; there are some hillforts on the coast[28] that exhibit the survival of previous trade connections and the existence of imported material from the Mediterranean (Naveiro 1991), as well as hillforts connected to road

systems, such as A Peneda do Viso in the Meridian Depression, the hillfort of Laias in the Miño River basin, related to the municipality of *Lais* as referred to quoted by Hidacio (Álvarez and López 2000), and the Santomé hillfort in the same area (Peralta et al. 2004).

Clearly, during the late Empire *Gallaecia* represented a complex and regionally specific cultural context. Although, for example, a booming salt-related trade network is documented on the coast, with associated *villae*, and similar salt-producing installations are also seen inland, usually at the bases of hillforts, there are wide areas where there is no evidence for Roman farming installations, or mining, nor evidence for site specialization, as M. Fernández Mier has pointed out for Asturias (1999: 96). In these areas the hillforts survived as occupational places and the recognition of this phenomenon forces us to reconsider the deterministic and unilinear sequence represented by the generally accepted three-stage model of hillfort development: hillfort-*villae*-High Middle Ages settlement.

In this sense it is necessary to generate a spatial archaeology model that eschews using ethnic and typological concepts, classifying the open and fortified settlements of this period as part of a developmental process that progressed from the ancient world to the feudal world, while attempting at the same time to consider the social background of the documented survival and reoccupation phenomena within the framework of a social archaeology of production (Azkárate and Quirós 2001: 53). The rural communities in the northwest underwent a significant transformation of their production system, and experienced major cultural changes with the introduction of Christianity. It is within this structural framework that it is possible to gauge the real impact of Romanization and to explain the eradication of the old settlement model and the shift to the socio-economic world of the High Middle Ages.

The survival and/or reuse of the hillforts should not be viewed as an indigenous[29] revival due to the collapse of the Empire, but rather should be seen as a settlement pattern that had never completely disappeared. The existence in the northern part of Lugo province of hillforts inhabited from the second to the fourth centuries AD, such as Fazouro[30] (Foz, Lugo) (Barbi 2006), Zoñán (Mondoñedo) (Vigo García 2005) and de Viladonga (Castro de Rei, Lugo) (Arias 2000; Arias and Durán 1996; Ayán 2003) in close proximity to *Lucus Augusti*, cannot solely be explained as anomalies in the Romanization process (Figure 55). The architectural conservatism manifested in these late hillforts is more in keeping with a process of acculturation characterized by the renegotiation of identity against the symbolic background of indigenous

material culture (González Ruibal 2003).

While the changes due to this acculturation process are substantial, they did not completely replace the life ways of the people who controlled the hillforts that Hidacio mentioned in the fifth century AD (Candelas 2004: 78-9). This means that, despite the existing gaps in the archaeological record, the hillfort apparently continued to be the main settlement model in *Gallaecia* throughout its history, since at the beginning of the High Medieval period most people still lived in typically indigenous settlements dating to the pre-Roman period (González and Brañas 1995: 90-93).

Figure 55. Plans and features of structures at Viladonga hillfort (Arias 1985: 12).

7. Squaring the circle: High Medieval architecture

We would like to begin the final stage of our excursus by highlighting the apparent gap in the archaeological record regarding domestic space during the transition period towards the fortified settlement world of the Iron Age. This ignorance is not exceptional in our knowledge of the settlement patterns in the northwest, since settlement archaeology is a complex topic about which not enough is known throughout recent prehistory, the period of Romanization and more recent historical periods. We will conclude with a discussionof another major gap in the archaeological record of the northwest: while we do have some evidence for the Swabian Kingdom in Galicia and northern Portugal (for example the *Parrochiale Suevum*) in the form of personal ornament from burial contexts, we lack information about the settlements during this period from the fifth to seventh centuries AD, also known as the Dark Ages.

The arrival of Swabian people in Iberia during this period resulted in the emergence of new building traditions, of new ways of using domestic space at the same time that a proto-feudal model emerged in the rural world. In our opinion it is during this period that traditional domestic architecture underwent a truly massive transformation, including the decline of the

circular house in the northwest. The Germanic-speaking peoples who arrived in this region during the fifth century were not sedentary communities. They had crossed a whole continent, traveling from Asia and across eastern Europe, following a migration pattern influenced by demographic factors, socio-political contexts, movements of other communities, etc. The domestic architecture of these socio-cultural groups in central Europe is characterized by the systematic use of square and/or rectangular houses that used as building materials the sediments from the loess soils of that area (Müller 2003; Tóth 2003) following the architectural tradition of the central European Iron Age settlements (Jérem 2003: 190-1, Fig. 27; Kemenczei 2003: 180-1, Fig. 7; Poroszlai 2000: 30, Figs. 3-4).

The Swabian people originally settled north of the Danube, crossing the Great Hungarian Plain during the last decades of the fourth century. The temporary settlements of these groups, located in valley bottoms near rivers, were small and consisted mainly of above-ground houses some four to eighteen square meters in size, with attached buildings for cattle, some craft workshops and many storage ditches, used as garbage dumps (Tóth 2003: 297-8). The use of wattle-and-daub and wood architecture came to the Iberian Peninsula with these groups[31] during the fifth century AD. On the Castilian plateau, where the Visigoths settled extensively, there is a significant amount of evidence for this type of settlement; excavations carried out at sites like La Indiana (Pinto, Madrid) or Gózquez de Arriba (S. Martín de la Vega, Madrid) have uncovered open settlements from the middle of the fifth century with silos, wells, burial grounds and rectangular huts with stone and clay foundations with curved tiles and linear structures corresponding to plots of land demarcations (Vigil-Escalera 2000). These types of structures were unknown in Spanish archaeology as little as a decade ago; in the northwest such Germanic settlements remain practically unknown (Almeida 1993: 198-9), mainly due to two factors: their location in the valley bottoms, in areas silted up by age-old infillings and significantly modified, and their domestic architecture of perishable materials or material scavenged from previous settlements in the region (Moraime, Penadominga, Cidadela).

This archaeological gap has tended to minimize our recognition of the extent of the Germanization process, a limited process in the sense of its impact on Galician-Roman economic and social structures (Díaz 1993: 219). Similarly, traditional historiography has tended to deny the impact caused by the Swabians in the northwest[32] as well, where in fact recent research has demonstrated a major transformation of the landscape during the fifth to seventh centuries.

Deforestation was extensive and can be documented together with intensive mining activity; both are reflected in paleo-environmental analyses (personal comment by A. Martínez Cortizas[33]). In this sense, the influence of Swabian communities in the transformation of the landscape, material culture and architecture was probably more significant than has been thought up to now.

In this regard, some of the recent excavations carried out under the auspices of cultural resource management projects assessing the archaeological impact of linear infrastructural elements like highways or gas pipelines have allowed the documentation of more complete evidence of these types of valley settlements, for example at As Pereiras (Chaos de Amoeiro, Ourense) (Aboal and Cobas 1999: 26-31) and the extremely well preserved site of A Pousada (San Cristovo do Eixo, Santiago de Compostela, A Coruña). The chronological data for the occupation of the latter site were obtained from radiocarbon dating carried out on material from two structures belonging to the first stage of the site at the threshold of the late Roman-early High Middle Ages (Ballesteros et al. 2006) (Figure 56). The five ditches or silos filled with a deposit of organic earth that were found at A Pousada date from the sixth to seventh centuries, the first stage of occupation. Except for a ditch found below the wall, which was filled[34] with slag, lithic material and some pieces of tile, the others contained large quantities of pottery sherds as well as tile pieces. During the second stage, the seventh to eighth centuries, internal space at the site underwent a transformation that included its architecturalization in the form of a small terrace on which a rectangular stone structure was erected. This structure consisted of a room facing NNE-SSW, about 15.48 meters at its widest extent and about 3.71 meters at its narrowest part. The foundation consisted of large masonry elements associated with a posthole[35]. Four amphibolite bases still survive that are aligned with each other and are at the same height as the walls that enclose the structure, which appears to have been a hybrid type, with a stone base and perishable roofing material. Inside the house the floor was made of stamped clay with a central hearth. The slabs thrust into the ground around the hearth still survive, as does a burned layer. This hearth was later destroyed when a new stamped clay and tile floor was laid down in the western part of the room.

A Pousada represents a previously unknown house construction type related to the exploitation of arable land in a valley bottom dating to the sixth and seventh centuries. This is a masonry domestic architecture that definitely departs from pre-Roman patterns and provides us with a preview of later traditional rural architecture. In this world of continuities and

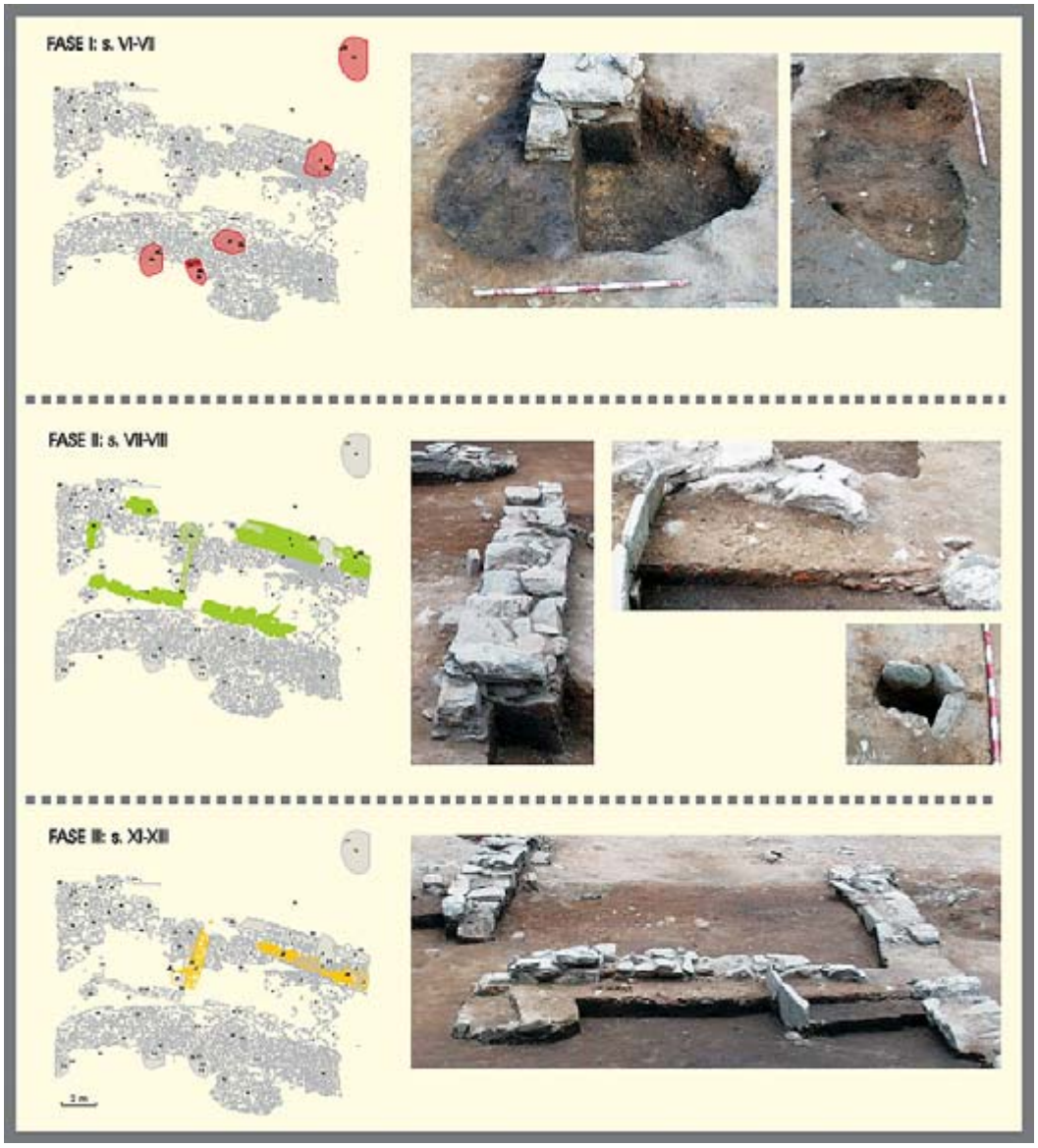


Figure 56. Late medieval settlement of A Pousada (Ballesteros et al. 2006).

discontinuities, it is important to highlight the pottery found in the oldest occupational levels at A Pousada; it clearly demonstrates continuity between the pre-Roman and Roman indigenous traditions, supporting the hypothesis of F. Arias Vilas (1997) that the Germanic communities left very few material culture remains, especially pottery. Architecture, on the other hand, seems to have been a different matter.

It is during these later centuries that the traditional rural landscape of the northwest was born, not only in terms of settlement related to land exploitation, including field terraces (Criado and Ballesteros 2002), but also in terms of domestic architecture. The prestigious architecture of the late Imperial *villae* in this rural context, the colonization of valley bottoms, the gradual

abandonment of fortified settlements and the emergence of a new architectural model brought by the Swabians are all in evidence here. All of this combined to accelerate the disappearance of the circular house, which by that time would have been considered an old-fashioned architectural form that had lost its original meaning.

> *What a waste of houses, a waste of hours.*

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Endnotes

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[2] For those interested in knowing more about the hillforts in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, we suggest the institutional web page www.castrenor.com, a page designed by the members of the European project CASTRENOR (Agência de Desenvolvimento Regional do Vale do Ave S.A. Universidade do Minho, Câmara Municipal de Monção y Xunta de Galicia). It can be downloaded in PDF format in English, and provides an extensive and updated guide to the main hillfort archaeological sites in Galicia and northwestern Portugal (Various Authors 2006).

[3] Florentino López Cuevillas (1886-1958) developed the first scientific research on the Galician Iron Age. He carried out numerous archaeological excavations in hillforts in the decades between 1920 and 1950. From a historical point of view he published a global synthesis in 1953 under the title *La Civilización Céltica en Galicia*.

[4] Another site has been recently excavated. It can be assigned to the Late Neolithic period, like Montenegro near Vilalba (Lugo) within the projected construction route of the Transcantábrica two-lane highway. This settlement was a large oval town delimited by two lines of perimeter trenches with a south-east facing entrance. Inside the enclosure a number of small circular and/or oval depressions two to four meters in diameter were documented. Outside the settlement there is another circular enclosure that follows the same formal model as the one documented at Montenegro (Rafael M. Rodríguez Martínez, personal communication).

[5] GaK-11188: LAVAPÉS 3930±120 BP 1980 BC (Peña Santos 1985: 77).

[6] GIF-6993: 2840±80 BP (890±80 AC) (Martins 1985: 216, 1986: 159).

[7] GIF-7013: 2750±0 BP (800±60 AC) (Martins 1985: 216-7; 1986: 159).

[8] ICEN-21: 2650±40 BP (1010-625 cal AC); CSIC-735: 2750±60; CSIC-735R: 2740±50 (Martins 1989: 66).

[9] Although this work does not specifically deal with the southern Duero River, this area includes the significant archaeological site of Canedotes (XI-IX cal B.C.) in Beira Alta (Vilanova de Paiva, Viseu). Here two circular stone houses five meters in diameter were documented (Canha 1998-1999: 104-5, 112, Fig. 4). This building tradition survived in this area during the Iron Age. The three circular houses in the Cabeço do Couço Fort are a good example (Campia, Vouzela) (Pedro 2000: Figure V-VII).

[10] CSIC-1539 2605±34 Cal BC 833-594 / CSIC-1541 2548±31 Cal BC 801-543 (Villa 2002b: n.p. 162).

[11] Radiocarbon dating of the house deposit and the other structure resulted in the following dates: 2985±40 BP (Ua-20006: cal 2 sigma BC 1373-1052) and 2935 ±40 BP (Ua-20007: cal 2 sigma BC 1286-1005).

[12] The dominance of the circular house type in the northern Plateau, the Duero River basin (Ramírez 1999) and the northwestern Iberian Peninsula during the early Iron Age was due to a local tradition and an associated organizational model of domestic space that reflected the worldview of these communities.

This perspective, even so, does not settle the question of the origin of this architectural form and it does not explain the use of this architecture in the British Isles or along the continental Atlantic coast, either. We would not like to generate unwarranted speculations regarding migrations/invasions or the historical-cultural discourse of those who see the circular house as a living thing (following the traditional view, for example, of the Bell Beaker phenomenon) that moved from south to north following the natural communication pathways (Silva 1986: 41-3). We would prefer instead to highlight the hypothesis recently developed by F.J. González García (2007: 114-6). This author considers a new explanation for the celticization of the northwestern Iberian Peninsula that departs from the classic perspective of uniformity, which equates Celtic culture with the La Tène style, by deconstructing the polymorphism of these societies as it is reflected in their material culture. In this sense, in addition to the Mediterranean and trans-Pyrenean influences, an Atlantic celticization is proposed as a consequence of the contacts established during the Bronze Age, which is thought to be when Celtic-speaking elements first entered the northwest. All this seems to indicate that at some time in the Bronze Age, as a consequence of these Atlantic contacts, *some Celtic speaking groups settled in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula and these groups were responsible for the celticization of this region, that is, for the spread of the Celtic language and customs and ways of life that can be labeled as Celtic* (Alberro 2001, 2002, 2003; González García 2007: 116-7)(author's emphasis). The hillfort communities represent the first stage in a process of ethnogenesis combined with Atlantic Celtic influences that would explain the differences between this area and central European material culture during the La Tène period. Within this hypothetical framework, it is possible to contextualize the circular house as a domestic area typical of the Late Bronze and Iron Age communities in the British Isles and in the Atlantic coastal regions.

[13] Our knowledge of domestic architecture during the early Iron Age in Galicia will increase significantly with the imminent publication of the excavations carried out at the fort of Cociñadoiro, in Punta Langosteira (A Coruña) in the course of the construction of the outer port of the city. These archaeological excavations, supervised by J.A. Cano Pan in 2005, resulted in the exhumation of about thirty domestic structures, both oval and rectangular with rounded corners, and have demonstrated both the intensive occupation of the site and its important metallurgical activity (Miguel Vidal Lojo, personal communication).

[14] The hillfort sites of Penalba, Torroso, O Castro Pequeno de Neixón and Punta Langosteira share some characteristics, including the presence of stone domestic architecture, significant metallurgical activity and, in the last three cases, large domestic structures whose dimensions represent a departure from the relatively uniform size of settlement housing.

[15] Radiocarbon dates for the occupational levels of the oldest dwellings at Pena Redonda have corroborated the relative chronology assigned by the excavator, who had dated the site to the sixth to fifth centuries BC (González Ruibal in press).

[16] Based on radiocarbon dating 2920±110 BP (UGRA 220) carried out on some seeds found inside the house (Silva 1986: 34).

[17] From a structuralist perspective we suggest that this pattern of formal regularity is seen in all aspects of hillfort sociocultural formation, including funerary areas and agricultural field systems. Despite the existing archaeological gap (no necropolis from the Iron Age has been found in the northwest) (Bettencourt 2000c; Vilaseco 1999) the evidence available to us seems to corroborate this idea. For example, at the site of Devesa do Rei (Vedra, A Coruña) a stone circle with a perimeter trench and a central stele was documented on top of a Late Bronze Age deposit (1380-1051 cal BC, Ua-20012); its penultimate occupational level dates to the Iron Age (757-212 cal BC, Ua 21684) (Aboal et al. 2005: 175-

77, Fig. 2). This architectonic structure is seven meters in diameter and shares some formal characteristics with other European Iron Age funerary structures, including its size, circular shape, relative poverty of the grave goods, and external marking with a central stele. The funerary structure at the Castro de Palheiros also has a circular cobblestone pavement, although this is of late Iron Age date (Nunes and Ribeiro 2000: Figs. 3 and 7). This shape is already documented in the funerary record of the Late Neolithic Period, as at the site of Guidoiro Areoso located on a small island in the Arousa River (Rey 1995: 17) (Figure 24).

[18] The fact that some small residential units were found has led some authors to interpret this as the domestic area of a nuclear family. We think that, following R. Brañas (2005: 157-8), this hypothesis supposes that during the Iron Age the family was similar to today, which does not take into account the existence of extended families in tribal societies, leadership societies and even in rural communities of the preindustrial period. In these communities, the relationship structure was the social and legal basis defining the composition of the extended family. On the other hand, there is not necessarily a direct correlation between the size and shape of the domestic area and the family structure/social organization of a society, according to the Anglo-American New Archaeology.

[19] During this phase, there was a systematic introduction of the stone circular house in the area between the Minho and Douro Rivers, as can be seen at Coto da Pena, Cividade de Terroso, Romariz and Santo Estevâo da Facha. They all shared the same building characteristics with thinly paved floors and relatively narrow walls with faces plastered with saprolite mortar without the use of iron tools (Silva 1986: 41).

[20]This type of structure seems to provide archaeological corroboration of Strabo's references to hillfort society (III, 3, 7): *They also drink beer, but they do not have much wine, and the little wine they have is drunk very quickly in feasts with their relatives. They use oil instead of butter. They sit while celebrating feasts, they have benches that are right up against the house walls and they sit according to their age and rank* (Bermejo Barrera 1994: 45). These types of communal structures first appear at this time and develop fully during the late Iron Age in towns in northwestern Portugal (Silva 1986: 49, 53).

[21] A stone rectangular structure was found in the same context with three memorial stones inside it still in their original position. This building has been interpreted as an altar used by the Punic merchants who stayed temporarily in this area, or who may have stopped at these littoral hillforts while traveling along the Galician coast (González Ruibal 2006b: 131; Suárez Otero 2004: 40).

[22] The traditional historiographic paradigm maintains that hillfort society was both peaceful and egalitarian, an idea based on the apparent uniformity of the settlement interiors: the same size houses, the same construction techniques, a homogeneous domestic assemblage, and an absence of weapons. This relative paucity of archaeological evidence for a hierarchical and warlike society has not led Irish archaeologists, for example, to assume the island's populations were either egalitarian or peaceful, nor have they rejected the Classical sources on the basis of the archaeological record (González García, in press).

[23] Another interesting example is the housing area of the hillfort of Saceda (Cualedro, Ourense) where there are no courtyard-houses in the strict sense of the world, but where the family units are demarcated by terraces on which several circular structures were built between 3.5 to four meters in diameter in addition to some square structures. This pattern repeats itself in the Portuguese hillforts of Lanhoso and São Julião (González Ruibal 2005b: 270-1, Fig. 3).

[24] The main reference for this topic is a short text by Strabo (III, 4, 18) about marriage in the northern settlements. He pictures these settlements (Bermejo Barrera 1978: 13-22; Vázquez Varela and García

Quintela 1998: 53-64, 118-9) as a reflecting social organization characterized by a marked parity between men and women, including in terms of marriage practices. Women in each family unit were responsible for immovable items or assets (farm lands) inherited from their mothers, whereas men owned the goods and chattel (such as cattle or personal ornament) inherited from their maternal uncles. Men gave their sisters a dowry and their sisters were responsible for finding them a bride.

[25] We agree with A. González Ruibal (2005b: 282), who has suggested that from the middle of the 1970s on archaeological research in the northwest has constructed a colonial narrative about the past of the Iron Age communities, which is interpreted as a byproduct of Roman influence.

[26] This superposition of structures related to occupational levels from Phase II and from the Late Imperial period is also documented at other important sites, for example at Elviña (Mañana et al. 2002: 68-79), A Lanzada (Fariña 1975), Castromao (Lorenzo 1973), San Chuís (Jordá et al. 2002), Chao Sanmartín (Villa 2002b), A Graña (Meijide 1990) and Vilela (Álvarez et al. 2006).

[27] Examples of this are the sites of A Graña (Toques, A Coruña) (Meijide Cameselle 1990), the hillforts of Zoñán (Mondoñedo Lugo) (Vigo 2005), Barán (Paradela, Lugo) (Álvarez Núñez 1992) and the hillfort of Vilela (Taboada, Lugo) (Álvarez et al. 2006).

[28] For instance, the sites of A Lanzada (Fariña Busto 1975), the Castro Grande do Neixón in Boiro, A Coruña (Ayán et al. 2005) and Torres do Oeste, Catoira (Naveiro 2004).

[29] The suggestion is that during this transition period there was a return to pre-Roman forms, which does not necessarily require the emergence or revival of indigenous social substrata. In fact, the pre-feudal *rural hillforts do not represent a Hillfort Culture like the pre-Roman indigenous one because they did not generate a homogeneous spatial form and their material culture was fully developed during the Iron Age. In addition, they do not constitute the only form of settlement occupation and exploitation, as in the case of the previous Hillfort Culture* (Gutiérrez González 2002: 311)(translation and emphasis by the author).

[30] In this littoral hillfort, occupied from the first to the fourth centuries AD, nine domestic buildings were excavated. Constructed of schist masonry, most had a square plan and rounded corners and were organized around three paved open areas that represented possible different domestic units. Some had hearths and internal continuous benches as well as traces of access to a second story (Barbi 2006; Carrera 1991).

[31] The Swabians were able to consolidate their power in the northwest during the years 411 and 420 thanks to the intervention of the Visigoths who defeated the Alani and the Vandals and expelled both groups from Galicia (Díaz 1993: 210-1).

[32] "On a material culture level, it is almost imperceptible, probably because they did not contribute anything that lasted, but absorbed the cultural aspects of the society that received them [...] L. Musset states that if the Spanish Swabians had not existed, history would not have been very different. Such an assertion, if we do not consider the political historical context, is shared by us" (Díaz 1993: 219-20).

[33] Heritage, Paleo-environmental and Landscape Laboratory, University of Santiago de Compostela.

[34] A sample of this fill was tested and dated, with the following results: Rocasolano radiocarbon date: 1430 $\pm$ 34 (years BP); 560 – 663 cal AD (95.4%).

[35] Dating of this posthole: Rocasolano radiocarbon date; 1349 ± 26 (years BP); 642 – 716 cal AD (89.8%); 749 – 764 cal AD (5.6%).

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