

Portuguese Castros: The Evolution of the Habitat and the Proto-Urbanization Process

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THE CASTRO CULTURE OF THE NORTH-WEST is an important component of the protohistory of the Iberian Peninsula (Figure 1). The nature of the culture was revealed more than a hundred years ago through the work of F. Martins Sarmiento, one of the greatest pioneers of Portuguese archaeology, as the result of his work at Citânia de Briteiros, near Guimaraes, in the province of Entre-Douro-e-Minho, in the north of Portugal. News of this discovery was first published outside Portugal about a year after the beginning of the excavations, in an article 'The Lost City of Citânia, written by Sir John Latouche for the *New Quarterly Magazine* published in 1876. In spite of being written by a layman gentleman tourist, it contains a comprehensive account of the principal characteristics of this regional culture.

Later researchers have offered progressively better definition. Of these we mention in particular F. López Cuevillas of the 'Instituto Padre Sarmiento' from Santiago de Compostela and other Galician archaeologists of the 'Nós' association from Coruña and, in Portugal, R. Serpa Pinto, Mário Cardozo, Eugénio Jalhay and Afonso do Paço, among many others. As the result of more recent archaeological investigation (especially: Silva 1986; Martins 1990; Peña Santos 1992; Queiroga 1992; and Alarcão 1993) its geographical boundaries, chronological parameters and ethnic, social, cultural and technico-economic components have become more clearly defined, while being shown to be more complex.

To date about a thousand fortified settlements have been identified in the north of Portugal. An inventory is now being prepared building upon the preliminary list of 1986. In the meantime we can look to regional studies, in particular those undertaken in the lower basin of the river Lima

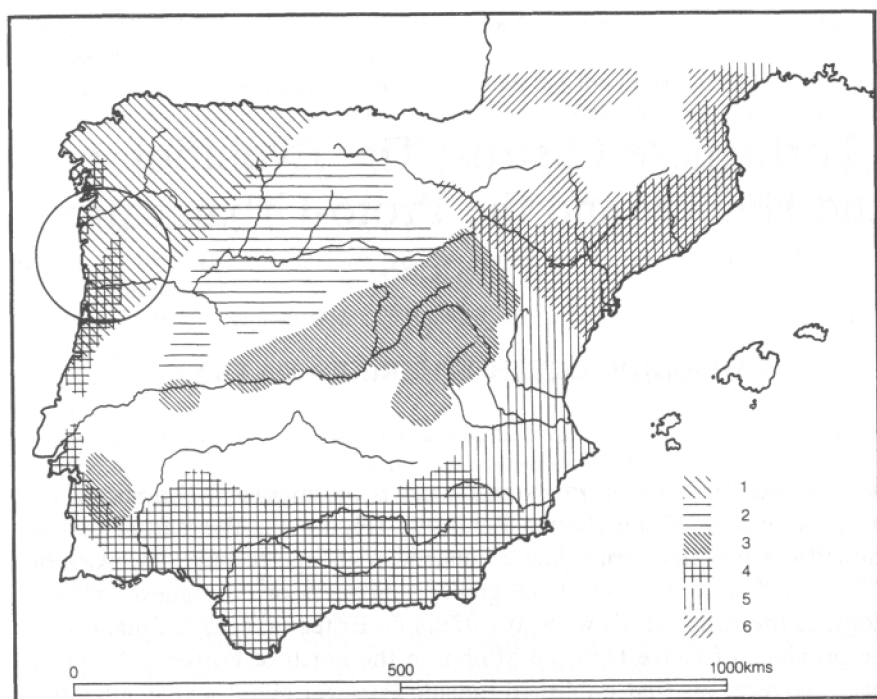


Figure 1. The Iron Age cultures of Iberia (after Schüle 1969, Karte 19)

1. Castro Culture of the North-west
2. Douro Culture
3. Tagus Culture
4. Tartessian/Turdetanian Culture: predominantly Phoenician and Punic influence
5. Iberian Culture: predominantly Greek influence
6. Urnfields.

(Almeida 1990), the middle course of the river Cávado (Martins 1990), the basin of the river Ave (Dinis 1993), the region between the rivers Douro and Vouga (Silva 1994) (Figures 2 and 3) and the eastern region of Trás-os-Montes (Lemos 1993).

Although high altitude was a critical factor in the location of castros, other strategic conditions were even more important. Frequently prominent positions were selected, usually associated with running water, which combined to provide good natural defences and a means of subsistence for the community as well as natural lines of communication. Other factors, however, were also taken into account such as economic, politico-military and perhaps even religious considerations.

Among the data provided by more recent research into the Castro Culture is copious evidence of exogenous influences, reflecting long-term networks of interrelationships. This is contrary to the image, dating back

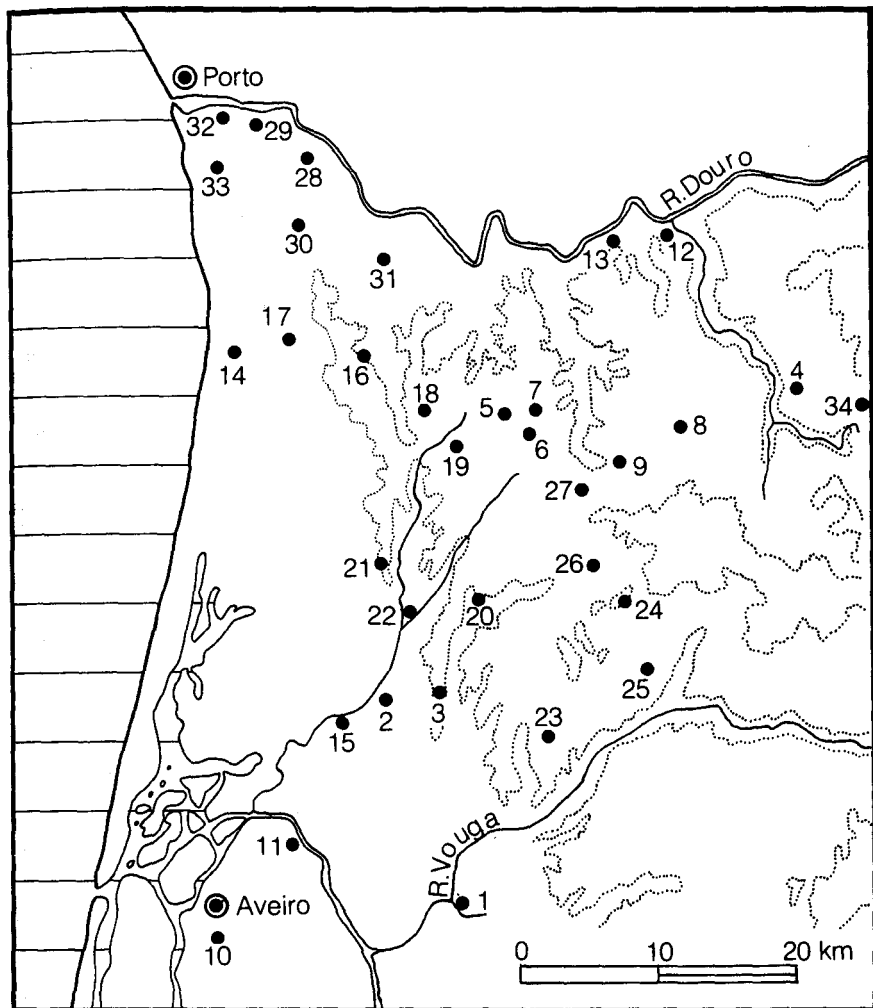
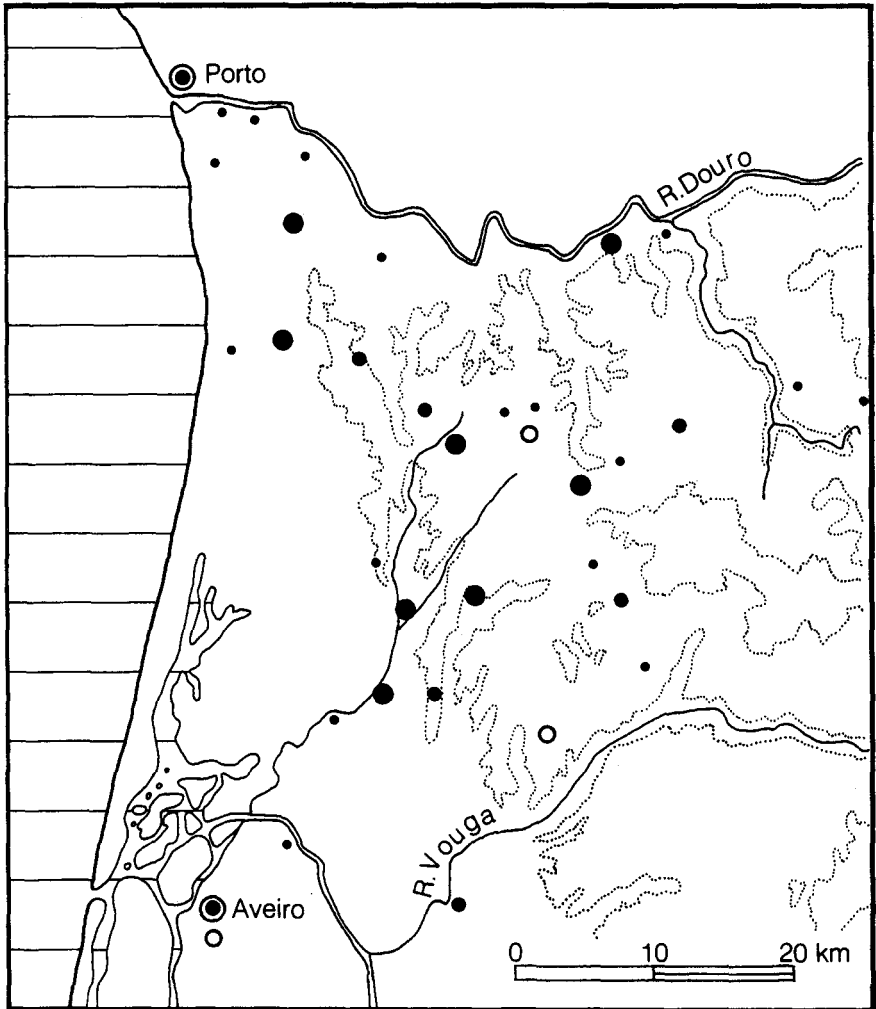


Figure 2. Castro sites between the rivers Douro and Vouga (Silva 1994).

to classical times, of this area as isolated and marginal. The complex nature of the evidence demonstrates that, rather than being a *finisterra*, the region was a centre of communication and a focus of interest and attraction.

In our previous studies on this subject (Silva 1981–82, 1983–84, 1986, 1990a, 1990b; Silva and Gomes 1992; Silva, Raposo and Silva 1993), based on archaeological evidence and supported by stratigraphic sequences and radiocarbon dates, we have proposed dividing the development of the Castro Culture into three phases, each with internal divisions, covering the first millennium BC (Table 1):



● 5+ Ha ● 2-5 Ha ● -2 Ha ○ Uncertain

Figure 3. Castros between the Douro and Vouga analysed by size (Silva 1994).

The **first phase**, corresponding to the first half of the first millennium BC, covers its Atlantic origins and formation, and continental and Mediterranean connections. The initial stages relate to the end of the Late Bronze Age (1000/900–750/700 BC), the later (750/700 to the middle of the millennium) reflect increasing influences from the interior and the south.

The **second phase** covers the expansive period of the culture. In the first stage continental influences (post-Hallstatt and Iron Age *Urnfilds*),

Table 1. Development Phases of the Castro Culture

PERIODISATION					HISTORIC REFERENCES
CENTURY	PHASE	CENTRAL EUROPE	NORTHERN EUROPE	ATLANTIC AREA	
1000			MIV	LBA II	
900		Ha B1 R UF I			
800	IA	Ha B2 R UF II Ha B3 R UF III	MV	LBA III	
700					Phoenician colonisation
600	IB	Ha C			
500		Ha D	MVI	Hallstatt	535 Battle of Alalia 509 1st Rom.- Cart. Treaty
400	IIA	A I La Tène	Iron Age I		
300		B		La Tène	348 2nd Rom.- Cart. Treaty 306 3rd Rom.- Cart. Treaty 279 4th Rom.- Cart. Treaty
200		C II			201 End 2nd Punic War
100	IIB		Iron Age II		194-138 Lusitanian Wars
0	IIIA	D III			138-136 D. Junius Brutus' expedition
0				Rome	96-94 P. Licinius Crassus campaign 82-72 Sertorius' campaigns 61-45 Caesars' campaigns 29-19 Cantabrian Wars
100	IIIB				69-96 Flavian dynasty

internal peninsular migrations (such as those of the *Turduli Veteres*) and Punic trade were assimilated. In the second stage the first Italian imports were introduced, forerunners of direct contact between the Romans and the indigenous population.

The **third phase** developed during the spread of the romanization,

which presumably began with the expeditions of Decimus Junius Brutus (138–136 BC), and lasted until the second half of the first century AD, to the time of the Flavian reform. It is apparent from the pattern of proto-urban organization, which clearly changed in the middle of the phase (IIIA/IIIB), that models proposed or suggested by the Roman Empire were progressively assimilated.

It is intended to take the opportunity provided by this Symposium to offer some account of the emergence of the first urban settlements in Portugal, focusing on evidence for the nature of the occupation and organization of space in the castros. We will relate this to the long process of assimilation of the external influences which acted as catalysts to the evolution of the indigenous culture. This was especially true in the development of technology and decoration, such as the perfection of bronzeworking in phase IA, the introduction of iron and of stone carvings in phase IB, soldering in phase IB, filigree and granulation in phase IIA, and the potter's wheel in phase IIB. Particular consideration will be given to the orthogonal urban planning, which developed in phase III, in the context of romanization.

Castro settlements developed over a long period of time, beginning towards the end of the Later Bronze Age. This is well demonstrated by recent work at the castros of Coto da Pena (Vilarelho, Caminha), S. Julião and Barbudo (Vila Verde), Castelo de Matos (Baião), S. Juzenda (Mirandela), Baiões (S. Pedro do Sul), Santa Luzia (Viseu), S. Romão (Seia) and others (Jorge 1990; Silva and Gomes 1992; Silva, Raposo and Silva 1993). As a result of these new studies we are able to characterize the settlements as they were during their formative stage at the time of the rapid development of metallurgical activity, now firmly dated by radiocarbon assessments (Queiroga 1992; Silva, Raposo and Silva 1993) (Table 2).

The studies show, in general, the *ex novo* establishment of settlements in strategic positions chosen to take full advantage of topography. They are generally located on the tops of medium-altitude spurs, commanding river basins and agricultural land, providing opportunities for the exploitation of such natural resources as tin and gold, as well as access to trade and transport routes indicating the existence of wide-ranging economic links.

Some of the settlements studied were very small in area, covering on average less than two hectares, which is about the area of Castro de Baiões (S. Pedro do Sul). From the data available, it can be assumed that, during this phase, the settlements were distributed over the region (Figure 4) and functioned as autonomous units without any feudal-type dominance arrangement (Alarcão 1993).

Table 2. Radiocarbon dates

Site	B.P.	B.C.	Lab.	Ref.
Tapado da Caldeira (Baião)	3290 ± 55	1340	KN	2769
Tapado da Caldeira (Baião)	3210 ± 55	1260	KN	2770
Pastoria (Chaves)	3040 ± 140	1090	LY	3375
Castro de S. Julião (V. Verde)	3010 ± 35	1060	ICEN	25
Tapado da Caldeira (Baião)	2290 ± 50	1040	CSIC	597
Castro de São Romão (Seia)	2970 ± 35	1020	ICEN	198
Castro de Santa Luzia (Viseu)	2860 ± 50	1010	ICEN	489
Castro de Santa Luzia (Viseu)	2860 ± 60	1010	ICEN	486
Castro do Coto da Pena (Caminha)	2930 ± 100	1000	UGRA	200
Castro do Coto da Pena (Caminha)	2920 ± 110	990	UGRA	220
Castro de Santa Luzia (Viseu)	2920 ± 80	990	ICEN	485
Castro de São Romão (Seia)	2910 ± 35	960	ICEN	797
Castro de São Julião (V. Verde)	2890 ± 45	940	ICEN	27
Monte da Penha (Guimarães)	2880 ± 65	930	GrN	5568
Castro de São Julião (V. Verde)	2840 ± 80	890	GIF	6693
Castro de São Julião (V. Verde)	2820 ± 40	870	ICEN	28
Castro de Santa Luzia (Viseu)	2810 ± 100	860	ICEN	487
Castro de São Julião (V. Verde)	2750 ± 60	800	GIF	7013
Castro de Barbudo (V. Verde)	2750 ± 60	800	CSIC	735
Castro de Barbudo (V. Verde)	2740 ± 50	790	CSIC	735R
Bouça do Frade (Baião)	2720 ± 50	770	CSIC	630
Bouça do Frade (Baião)	2720 ± 50	770	CSIC	631
Bouça do Frade (Baião)	2710 ± 50	760	CSIC	632
Castro de São Julião (V. Verde)	2700 ± 40	750	ICEN	23
Castro de Baiões (S. P. Sul)	2650 ± 130	700	GrN	7484
Castro de Barbudo (V. Verde)	2650 ± 40	700	ICEN	21
Castro das Ermidas (V. N. Famalicão)	2650 ± 120	700	GAK	11461

Laboratories: BM, London, United Kingdom; CSIC, Madrid, Spain; GAC, Gakushuin, Tokio, Japan; GIF, Gif-sur-Yvette, France; GrN, Gröningen, Holland; KN, Köln, Germany; ICEN, Lisbon, Portugal; UGRA, Granada, Spain.

Although there is relatively little information available about the day-to-day life within the fortified settlements, there is ample evidence of such activities as milling, weaving and smelting, together with other remains which demonstrate the existence of such varied economic activities as food gathering, hunting, fishing, farming and mining.

Especially noteworthy during this phase is the appearance of defensive systems, albeit rudimentary, consisting of stone walls (Coto da Pena, Baiões), or ramparts and ditches (S. Julião). These were the forerunners of the fortified settlements which superseded the open settlements existing in phase IA — sites such as Bouça do Frade (Baião) and Teso del Cuerno (Salamanca) with their alignments of post-holes and storage structures



Figure 4. Spatial analysis of a castro region: the basin of the river Ave, phase I (Dinis 1993).

including silos. The evidence of stone constructions in Coto da Pena in phase IA and in Castro de Torroso in phase IB must also be mentioned, since it contradicts the prevailing view that the earliest buildings in the castro settlements were made exclusively of perishable material, even though this was normally the case.

There is insufficient evidence to resolve the problem of the origin of the round house. However, we can point to curvilinear structures in Coto da Pena and indications of circular plans in Castro de Baiões and in Castro de S. Julião. We consider the circular plan to be indigenous. This seems closer to the diffusionist arguments which see this style as originating in the southern settlements of the Bronze Age and spreading through the Extremadura towards Soto de Medinilla. From there, the style is thought by some researchers to have extended as far as the Ebro valley and to the north-west. In any event, circular plans cannot be attributed to Celtic influence, since the Celts in Iberia built orthogonal settlements.

In the first stage of this phase (IA) cultural relationships existed between the north-west of the Peninsula and other regions of Europe. Of particular importance were the maritime links with the Mediterranean in the pre-colonial period beginning in the last phase of the Late Bronze Age and lasting until the establishment of permanent settlements by the

Phoenicians, in the eighth century BC. As evidence of those relationships we may cite the founder's hoard from Castro da Senhora da Guia (Baiões, S. Pedro do Sul), discovered in a context associated with the characteristic elements of the Atlantic system (metal artefacts such as typical bronze axes), as well as with continental (distinctive decorated pottery), and particularly oriental traits ('prestige goods' and objects of a ritual nature). A distinctive regional ceramic fine-ware style (Lopes 1994), differing notably from the typically indigenous products, suggests even greater typological and technical affinities with south-west Iberia.

During the seventh and sixth centuries BC, which correspond to phase IB, the evidence from stratigraphic excavations and from study of artefacts, mainly jewellery, substantiates the range of the influences already apparent at the end of the Bronze Age.

Exchange, which was largely coastal, resulted from the stimulus provided by Phoenician trading systems focused in the southern region of Huelva. Evidence for this is sparsely recorded along the Atlantic coast (Figure 5): from Castro Marim (Vila Real de Santo António), Monte Molião (Lagos), Alvor, Bensafrim and Rocha Branca (Silves), in the Algarve; Sines, in Alentejo; Setúbal, Alcácer do Sal and the Phoenician

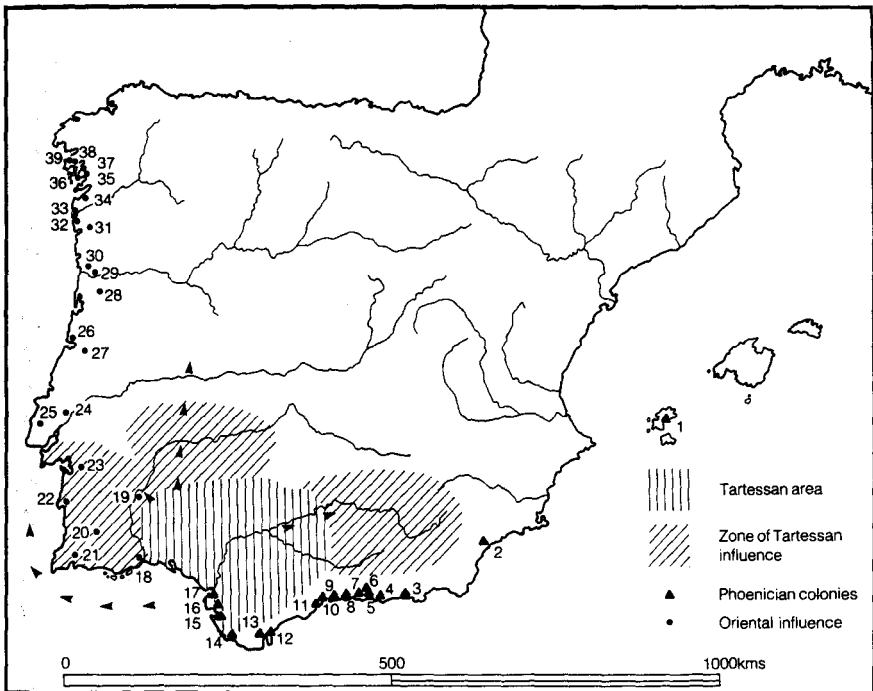


Figure 5. Phoenician influence in Iberia.

trading settlement of Abul, at the mouth of the river Sado; Almaraz (Almada), Lisbon and Alcáçova de Santarém, in the mouth and hinterland of the river Tagus; the Phoenician trading settlements of Santa Olaia, at the mouth of the river Mondego, and Conimbriga, in the interior; Baiões, in the vicinity of the river Vouga; Baião, in the Douro valley, and Paços de Ferreira, in the surroundings of Oporto; Santo Estêvão da Facha, in the lower course of the river Lima; Coto da Pena, in the mouth of the river Minho, and at other coastal sites in Galicia, such as Santa Tecla, Torroso, Penalba, La Lanzada, Alobre and Neixón.

About the middle of the first millennium BC, regional differentiation becomes apparent among the settlements. As a result of the upheavals in the south of the peninsula, following the Battle of Alalia in 535 BC, the north-west would have provided the theatre for many of the expeditions of the Turduli and Celti referred to by Strabo (3, 3, 5) and confirmed by archaeological excavations in the region of the *Turduli Veteres*, at sites such as Romariz (Santa Maria da Feira). There is also epigraphic evidence of these expeditions on the left bank of the Douro, in the *tesserae hospitalis* of the Castro da Senhora da Saúde in Vila Nova de Gaia (Figure 6). This accords with the texts of Pomponius Mela (3, 8) and Pliny (4, 112–13).

Settlements dating from this period display distinctive structural characteristics. Of particular importance is the circular plan used for domestic buildings in the castros and well documented at Coto da Pena (Caminha), Cidade de Terroso (Póvoa de Varzim), Santo Estêvão da Facha (Ponte de Lima) and Morro da Sé (Porto). At each site we find the same structural techniques employing thin double walls with rubble infill, and with thinly paved floors. There is no evidence of ironworking.

Whatever the regional characteristics and external influences conditioning indigenous castro buildings, stone was always the prime construction material and came to be used even more commonly, for both defensive and residential structures, during this phase.

Some settlements, such as Coto da Pena and S. Julião, extended their earlier defensive boundaries to accommodate increasing populations. Others, such as Castro de Romariz, were founded on slopes near the plain and valley — locations which could support demographic expansion. Still others developed at sites favourable for long-distance communication and commerce, such as the Cidade de Terroso, which started out as a small nucleus at the end of the Later Bronze Age, but later covered about 4 ha, acquiring power in the regional hierarchy by virtue of its location.

This phase of Castro Culture demonstrates its originality, though at the same time it assimilates cultural elements of 'Celtic' inspiration from the interior, apparent in the adoption of decorative stamping on pottery, certain objects of bronze and gold, especially of prestige goods and orna-



Figure 6. *Tesserae hospitales* of the Turduli Veteres (Castro do Monte Murado, V.N. Gaia).

ments, and of linguistic expressions. The coastal location of some castros (e.g. Morro da Sé do Porto, Cidade de Terroso and Coto da Pena) favoured an increasing relationship with the Mediterranean world through Punic commerce during the fifth to third centuries BC.

Particularly noticeable is the assimilation of morphological patterns and technological processes by the castro communities, to enhance certain items of prestige for example jewellery such as earrings and necklaces which are now ornamented with filigree and granulation derived from Mediterranean prototypes. Jewellery was worn by the female elite, while the male elite, essentially warrior in nature, acquired its prestige items through the continental Celtic network.

The demise of Tartessian culture, the colonial Phoenician crisis of the sixth century BC and the problems of the Phocaeen Greek world at the end of the same century, apparently coincided with the expansion

of the Celtic people of Meseta who spread into the metallurgical and salt-rich zones of the south-west and Andalucía. As a result economic and social change accelerated, resulting in the disappearance of the original eastern culture. This marked the end of the first Iron Age in the south-west initiating a process of reordering within the territory and causing changes to the extent and nature of the colonial influences. These upheavals may be connected with certain regional dislocations and internal migrations among the *Turduli* and *Turdetani*, heirs to the Tartessian kingdom, which are mainly documented by the appearance of characteristic toponyms in the south of Portugal. It is very likely that the movement of the *Turduli* and *Celti* towards the north-west, referred by Strabo, belongs in this context.

Although it is still too early to estimate the effect of this movement, we cannot ignore the scale of the territorial reordering which followed. It may well have resulted in actual colonialization of some regions depending on the wills and aptitudes of those involved and their desires to explore and control the mineral resources, especially gold and tin in the province of Beira Alta, and salt in the province of Beira Litoral on the coast.

As the bearers of a superior culture — a point emphasized in classical sources (e.g. Strabo 3, 16) — these people must have initiated changes among the indigenous communities. This allows us to relate the development of Mediterranean influence to the evolving castro process especially in the coastal area, and to associate these developments with Punic commerce. In this way we can assess the relative significance of Carthaginian and Greek influences in the western Mediterranean and outer sea.

Mediterranean products, including Greek items, must have arrived in the north as the result of Punic trade via a network of interchange, served by cabotage commerce focusing on distribution centres like those which can be identified at various castros, such as Castelo de Gaia, Morro da Sé do Porto, Cividade de Terroso (Póvoa de Varzim), Coto da Pena (Caminha), in the north of Portugal and in other sites along the Galician coast. These supplied mainly the luxury objects fundamental to the articulation of indigenous society.

The campaign of Decimus Junius Brutus (138–136 BC), which first brought the Romans into direct contact with the indigenous population, marks the end of this phase and the beginning of the next. According to the classical sources, this contact brought new stimuli, and these would have led to the adoption of new styles which were to become established during the following process of romanization.

This period of the Castro Culture is exemplified by the sites of Briteiros (Guimarães), Sanfins (Paços de Ferreira), Terroso (Póvoa de Varzim),

S. Julião (Vila Verde), Santa Luzia (Viana de Castelo), Ancora (Caminha/Viana do Castelo), Santa Tecla (La Guardia, Spain) among others.

As the Roman armies pushed their way across the Iberian Peninsula, the indigenous population was forced to change significantly the way in which it organized social space. New urban settlements appeared, designed specifically to accommodate defensive, administrative, economic and religious needs, and these were centrally located in well-defined territories. Recent studies by Silva (1986), Martins (1990) and Alarcão (1993) have attempted to establish the boundaries of these areas.

Analysis of the castro of Sanfins, Paços de Ferreira, to the surrounding area (Figure 7) shows that Briteiros (Guimarães), Eiras (V. N. Famalicão), Bagunte (V. do Conde), Alvarelos (Santo Tirso), Vandoma (Paredes) and Mozinho (Penafiel) were each located 25 km from their neighbour. This distance, which corresponds to one day's journey, seems to have been the factor determining which of the large settlements became the metropolitan centres of distinctive territories during the proto-urban phase. Each territory was associated with a particular ethnic group, such as the *Madequisenses* (Alvarelos), the *Calaici* (Vandoma) and the *Anaeci* (Mozinho) of the *Bracari* zone located between the rivers Lima and Douro (Figure 8).

This phenomenon, similar to the *oppida* culture for which evidence can be found all over Europe, can be seen either as the result of the combining of small castro settlements into larger strategic units, or as the result of internal migration prompted by the progress of the Roman occupation of the Peninsula following the campaigns of Sertorius, Caesar, and later of Augustus. It is well documented by numismatic finds (Centeno 1987). The larger settlement groups were led by warriors to whom commemorative statues were erected.

The settlements of this phase, marked by the establishment of large agglomerations, continued to occupy the privileged strategic locations of those of earlier periods. Their homogeneous arrangement and lack of structural alterations attest to the establishment, within a short time, of a system of urban planning, such as that of the *Citânia de Sanfins*.

Although some new fortified settlements appeared during this period, most typically the 'agricultural *castros*' (Almeida 1990) established to take advantage of the valleys, or those located to exploit mineral resources, many of the smaller settlements were absorbed by those larger and better-organized. The resulting higher population density led to organizational changes manifest archaeologically in the different utilization of space. This is what can be assumed on evidence from the *citânias* of Sanfins and Briteiros, where the almost orthogonal street arrangement encloses several autonomous modular units.

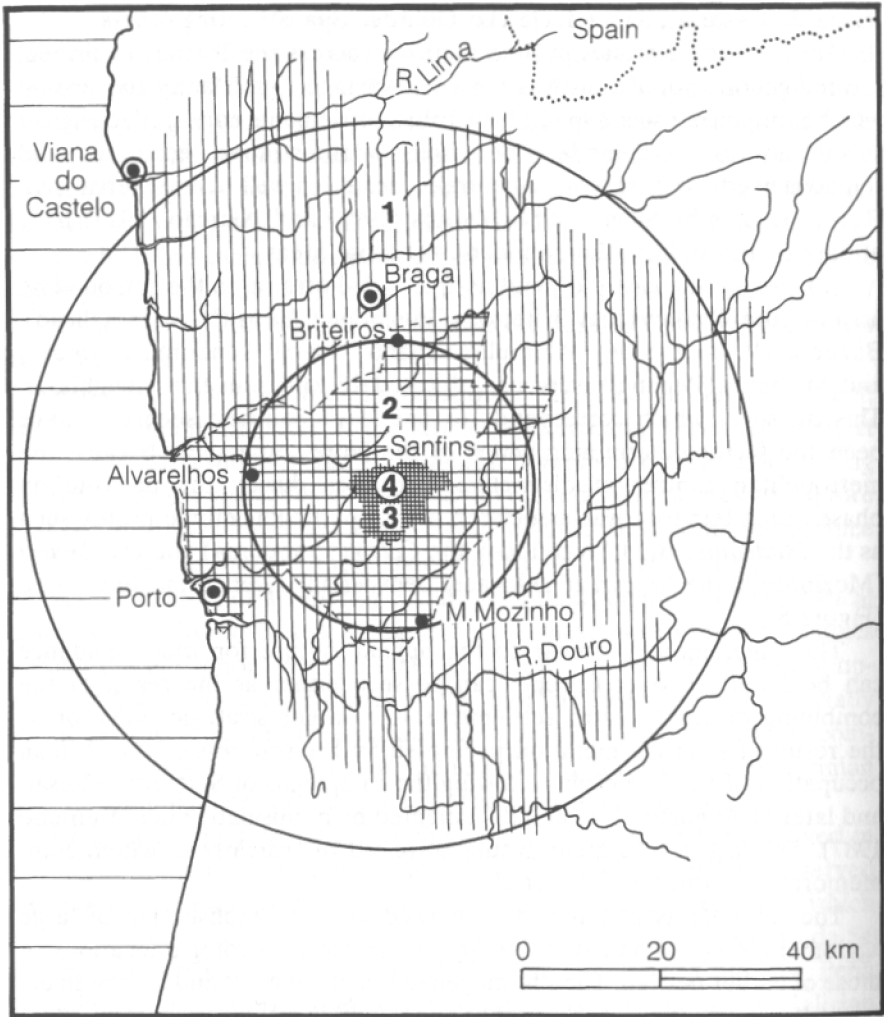


Figure 7. Areas of influence of Citânia de Sanfins.

1. Province of Entre-Douro-e-Minho.
Homogeneous area visually dominated (± 50 km radius)
2. Basins of the rivers Ave/Vizela, Sousa/Ferreira and Leça.
Area corresponding to a circle with a radius of 20/25 km (one journey)
3. Basins of the rivers Ferreira and Leça.
Borough of Paços de Ferreira, Monte Córdova, Negrelos, Lustosa, that we can hypothetically consider as territory (*territorium*) of the Citânia
4. Citânia and immediate area.
Access, water storage, fencing, place of cult (inscription to *Cosunea*).

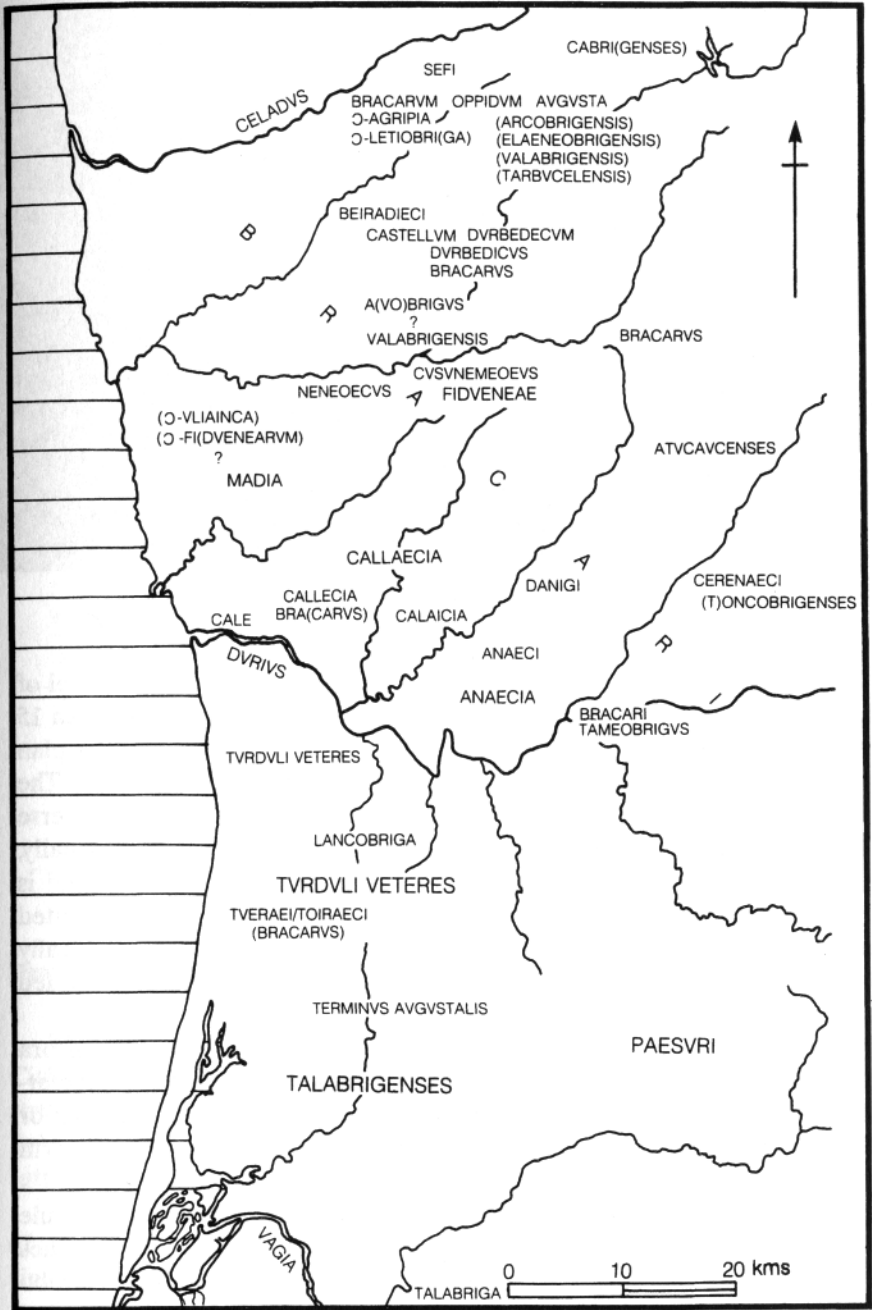


Figure 8. The tribes of northern Portugal.

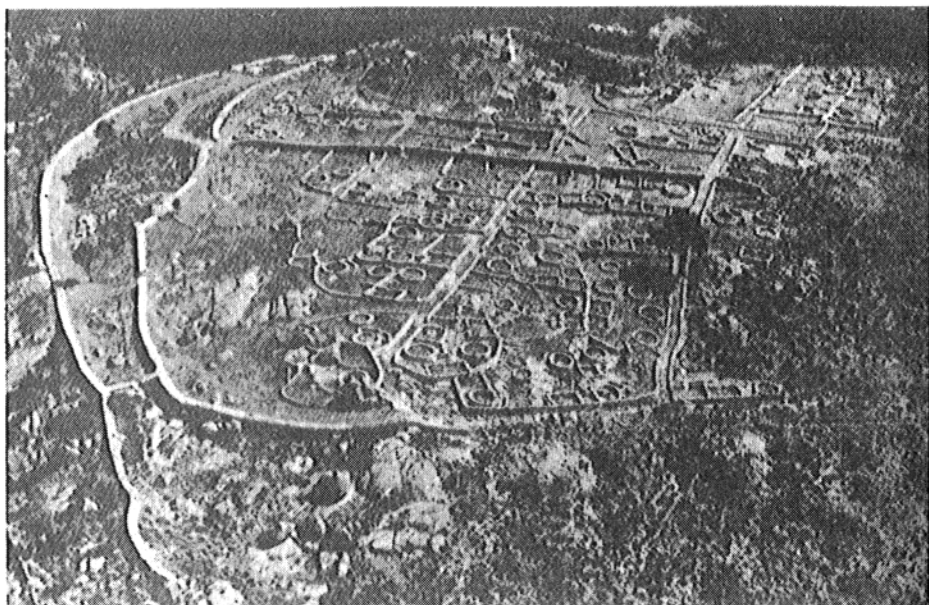


Figure 9. Aerial view of Citânia de Sanfins (Paços de Ferreira).

The Citânia of Sanfins (Figures 9 and 10) provides us with a model of this kind of urban organization. The area within the walls is more than 15 ha in extent, which is larger than most Roman cities in Portugal. Its plan is regular, with the space organized to serve private and public needs. The main street runs north-south, with more or less equidistant transverse branches forming blocks (Figures 11–14). These are subdivided, usually, into four nuclei. Each nucleus occupies an area of 200–300 sq m and is walled, containing four or five circular and/or angular units oriented towards a common patio, usually paved. These, referred to epigraphically as *domus* in the Citânia of Briteiros, appear to have belonged to extended family units.

The spatial analysis of some of these nuclei in the Cidade de Ancora (Caminha/Viana do Castelo) revealed well-defined domestic characteristics (Figures 15 and 16). One included a paved patio with a fountain or water tank. Located around the patio were a circular house with a hearth on one side, designed for living; a rectangular house with an oven and a hearth, for various purposes; and another circular structure with a vestibule (which was later enlarged to the shape of a basilica) with stone benches along the walls and a hearth in the middle, for family gatherings (Strabo 3, 3, 7). This nucleus may also have included a burial area such as that found in a similar nucleus nearby.



Figure 10. Plan of the Citânia de Sanfins.

The experimental archaeological programme currently under way in Citânia de Sanfins (in collaboration with R. Centeno) includes a reconstruction of one such unit (Figure 17), which may help to shed more light on the organization, disposition and integration of space in these settlements.

Roman influence is evident in the adoption of the *patio-house* module, of Mediterranean type, with the circular and rectangular units facing a single, central, paved open space.

The studies which we carried out on a settlement nucleus at Castro de Romariz (Silva and Centeno 1993) provide evidence of Roman accultur-

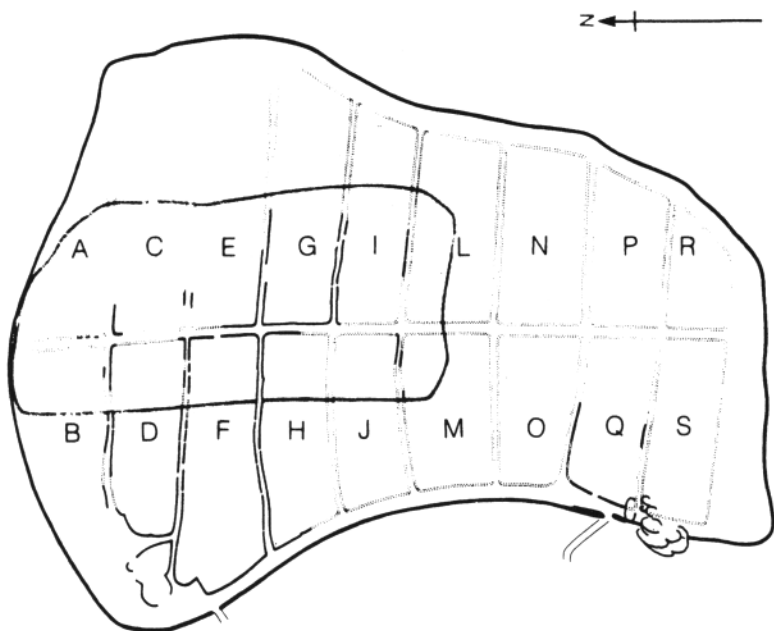


Figure 11. General ordering of Citânia de Sanfins in supra family units or neighbourhoods, later walled.

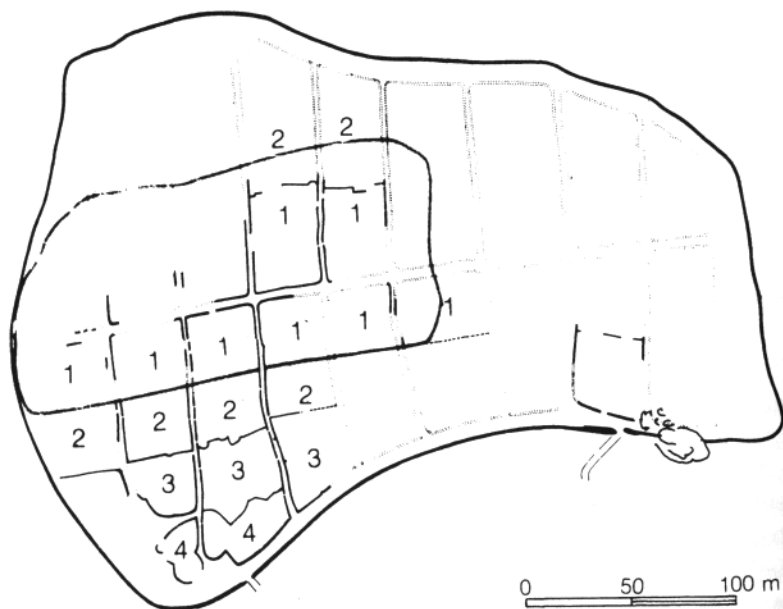


Figure 12. Subdivisions of the neighbourhoods into intermediate units of probable family size.

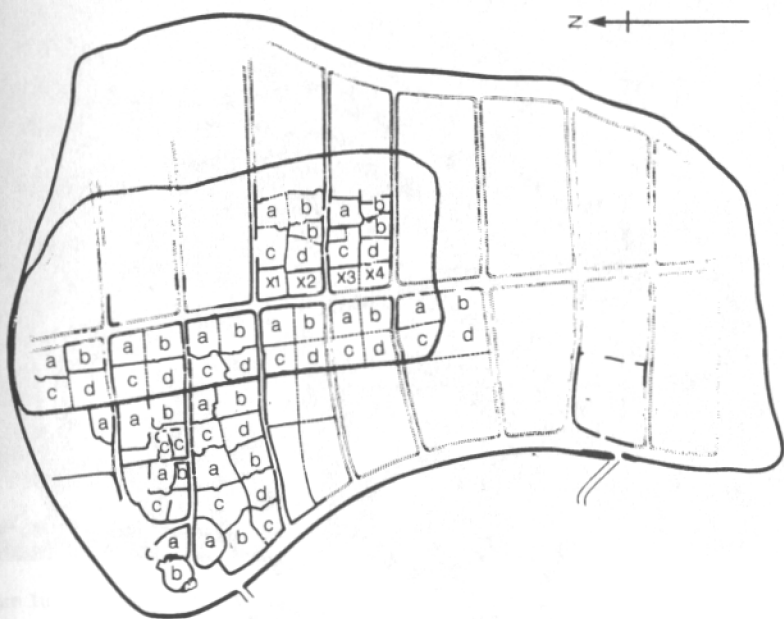


Figure 13. Partitioning of the intermediate units into family nuclei (a, b, c, d) and public spaces (x).

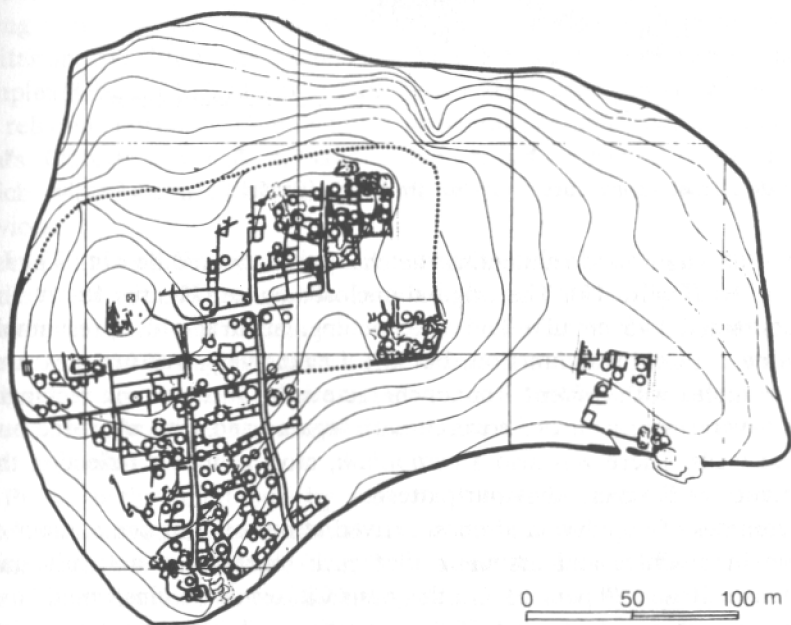


Figure 14. Plan of the excavation of the analysed area (interior of M2).

CIVIDADE DE ANCORA
1978-1982

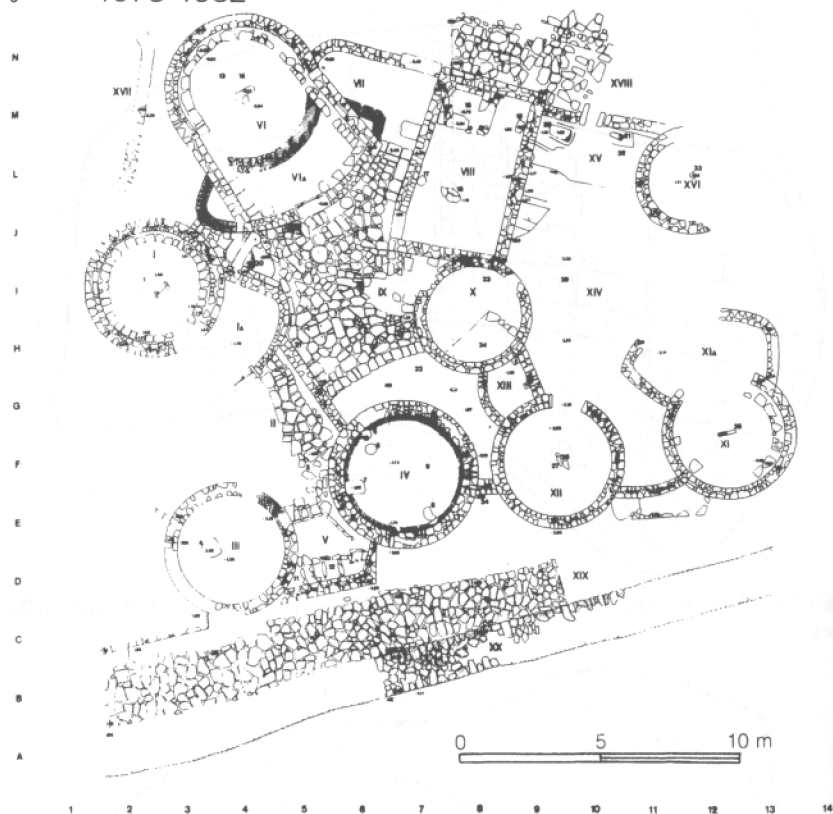


Figure 15. Plan of a family unit in Cidade de Ancora (Caminha/Viana do Castelo).

ation after Augustus, documenting the changes of the middle of this phase (IIIA/IIIB) (Figure 17). The original enclosed space (Figures 18, 19 and 20) contained two circular and one rectangular structures, presumably retaining a traditional function, but the rectangular structure was now more complex with evident Roman characteristics such as rigid rectangularity, several rooms, a roof covered with tegulae and with plastered and painted walls. There was also a *cartibulum*, most probably reflecting the acceptance of Roman behaviour patterns.

Estimates of population are best arrived at by counting the number of settlement modules and assuming that each represented a family unit of between 10 and 20 persons. On this basis Citânia de Sanfins would have had a population of at least 3000, indicating a fairly high population density, in accordance with its status as a central location.



Figure 16. Excavations in Cividade de Ancora.

Some of the buildings stand out by reason of their size or location, indicating that they were intended for public, religious, political or simply utilitarian use. Citânia de Sanfins and Monte Mozinho both contain large complexes of centrally-located rectangular structures probably designed for religious purposes. One of those, in Sanfins, contains two unincised altars. Outside the walls of Sanfins there is also a carved stone shrine, which may have marked the limit of the broader community and its services.

In Citânia de Briteiros, there is a large circular building, about 11 m in diameter with stone benches around the interior walls. It is located away from the family units, and is substantially larger than the domestic structures, which suggests that it might have served a political function, perhaps as the meeting place for a council of elders. The acropolis of Monte Mozinho, where no dwelling units are known, may have served the same purpose.

Public baths stand out, by reason of their grandeur and technical excellence, amongst monumental castro architecture. There are several examples in the north-west, from Galicia and Asturias in the north to the left bank of the river Douro, including Santa Maria de Galegos (Barcelos), Briteiros (Guimaraes), Eiras (Famalicão), Sanfins (Paços de Ferreira) and Freixo (Marco de Canaveses).

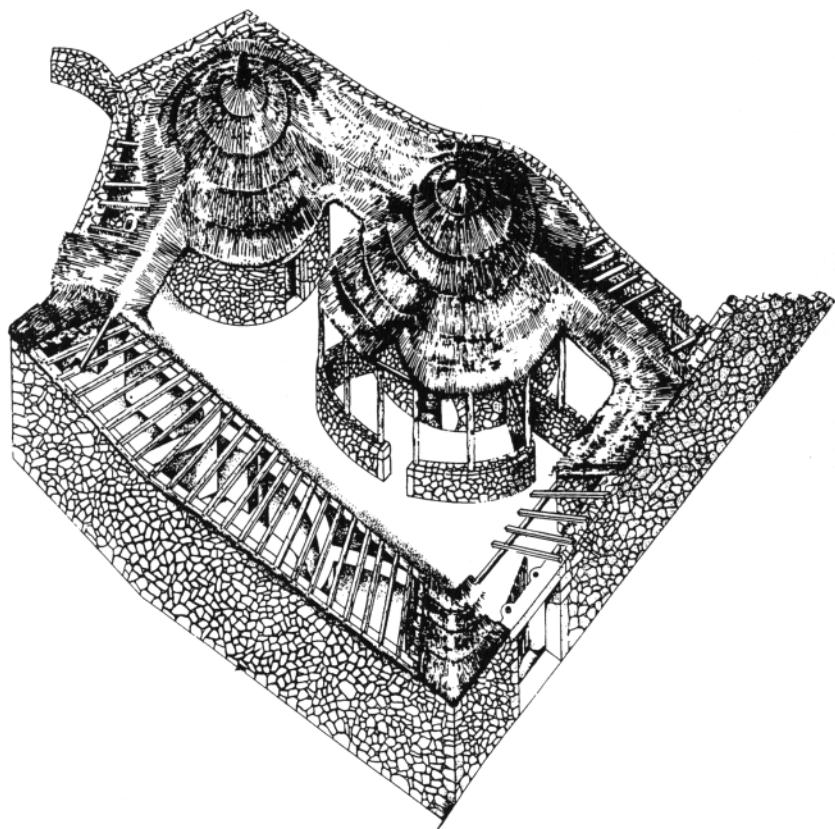


Figure 17. Axonometric reconstruction of a family nucleus in the Citânia de Sanfins (Paços de Ferreira).

These baths were usually situated close to water sources or ducts in the lower parts of the settlements. Because of their tomb-like construction, with chambers containing carved monoliths and 'Pedra Formosa' decoration (as in Briteiros), they were commonly thought to have been 'crematoria', but have also been suggested to have been shrines, bread ovens, pottery or smelting kilns, or abattoirs. All these hypotheses should be rejected. The excavation of the monument of Santa Maria de Galegos (Barcelos) (Figure 21) has provided ample evidence for their being spas or baths, though vested with religious symbolism. It provides the most comprehensive plan of such a structure, as well as a range of other valuable data, surpassing even Citânia de Briteiros and Citânia de Sanfins in importance.

These structures conform well to the characteristics of the baths described by Strabo in *Geographia* (3, 3, 6): subterranean locations for

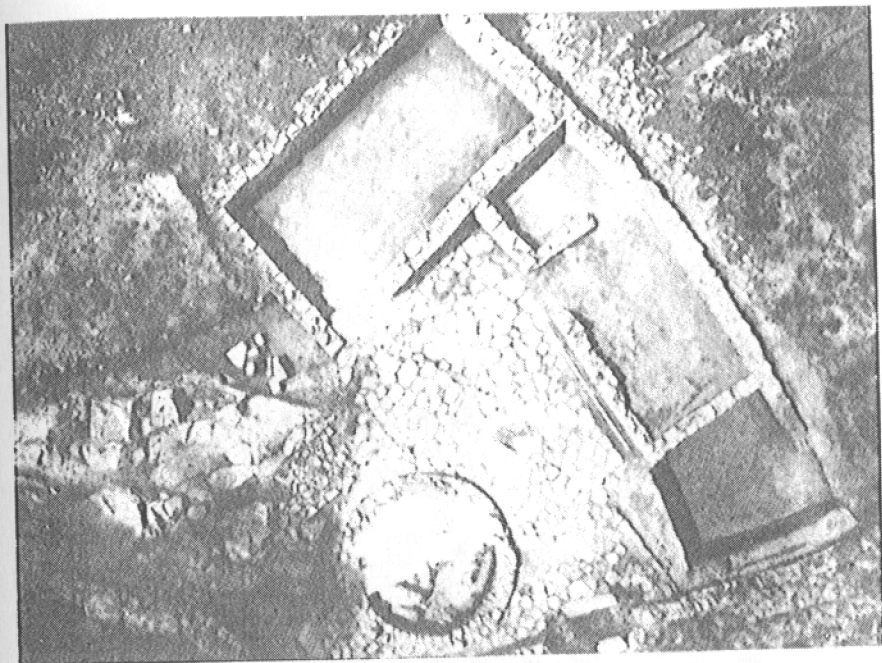


Figure 18. A family nucleus in the Castro de Romariz (S.M. Feira).

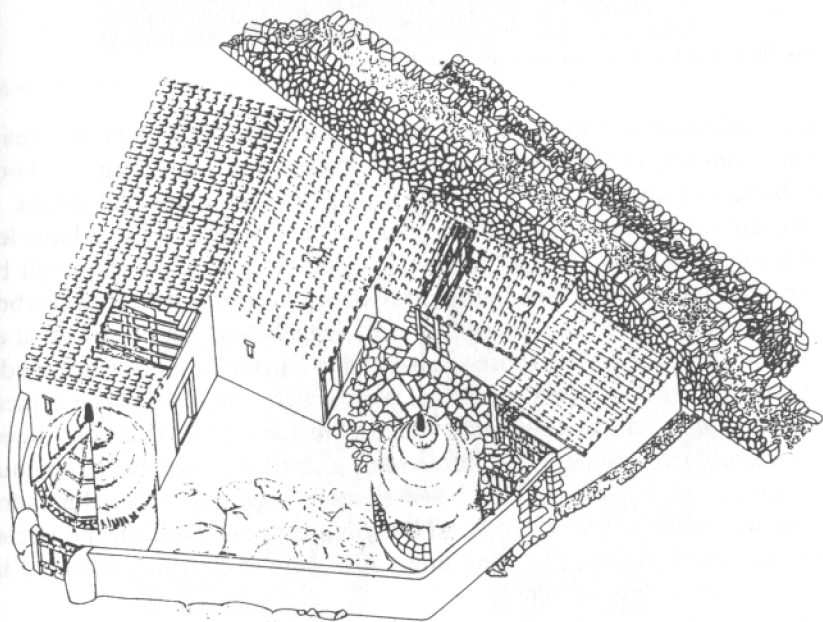


Figure 19. Axonometric reconstruction of a domus in the Castro de Romariz.

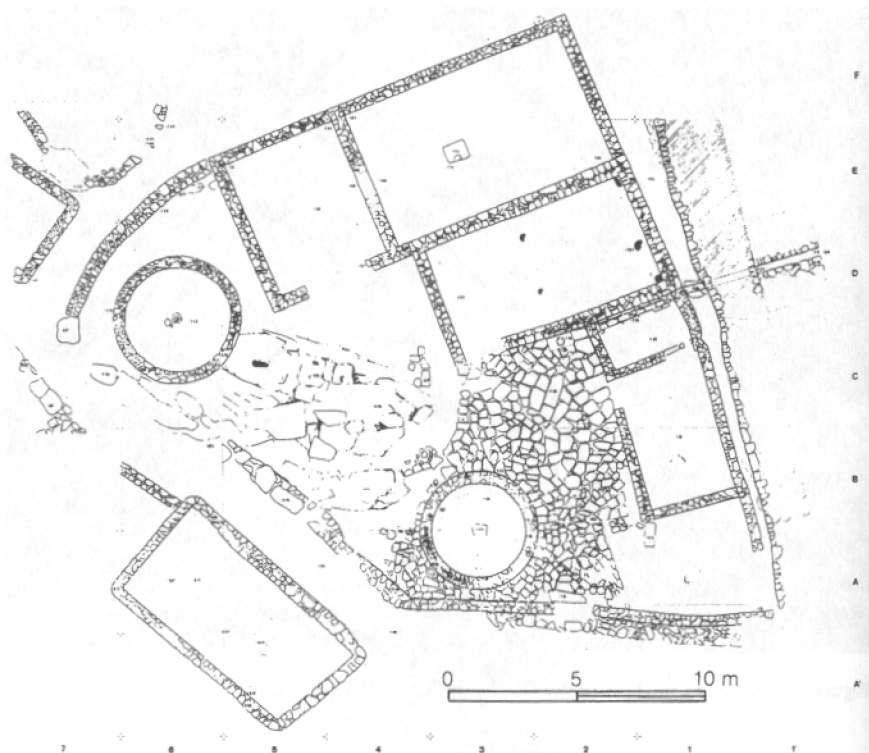


Figure 20. Plan of a domus in the Castro de Romariz.

water catchment and heat conservation; equipment for generating steam (oven, chimney, calcined rocks, heat chamber, and ante-chamber lined with benches); and cold-water tubs in an atrium with pipes and drains.

Recent finds from Solosancho, Avila, in the northern Meseta, have led to the suggestion that proto-Celtic and Celtic bathing practices might be interpreted in the context of initiation rites for warriors (Almagro Gorbea and Moltó 1992). Another possibility is to suggest that they functioned as medicinal ritual baths, like those mentioned in Sanskrit ayur-vedica medical texts, in which oils and medicinal plants were employed. The typical and consistent decorative elements, which have sometimes been considered to be merely ornamental, are better seen as being of symbolic religious significance reflecting the three basic elements referred to in the Indo-European tradition: *fire*, symbolized by compositions based on the circle; *water*, represented by undulating lines; and *vapour* or *wind*, reflected in double S motifs (Figure 22).

Whatever the case, despite any similarities that these castro baths may bear to Roman baths, Greek *topoi*, or Celtic or pre-Celtic Indo-European

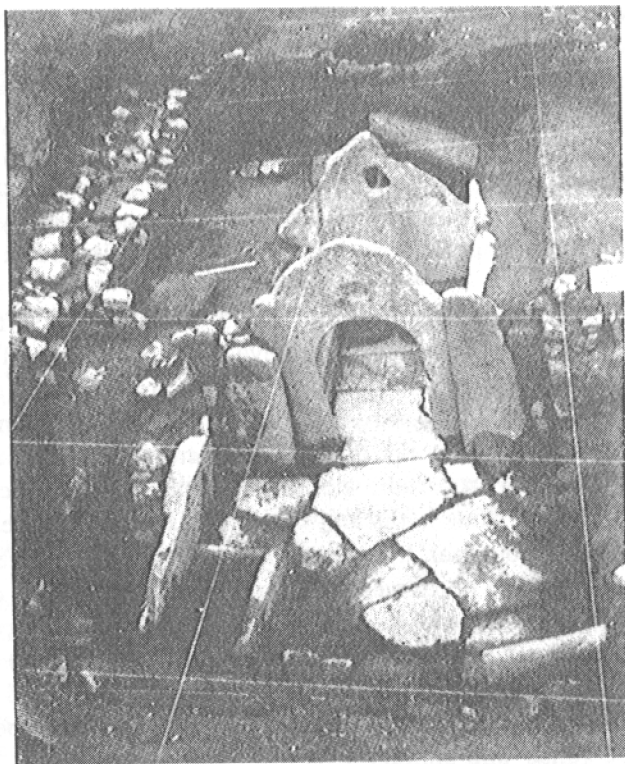


Figure 21. Baths in the Castro of Santa Maria de Galegos (Barcelos).

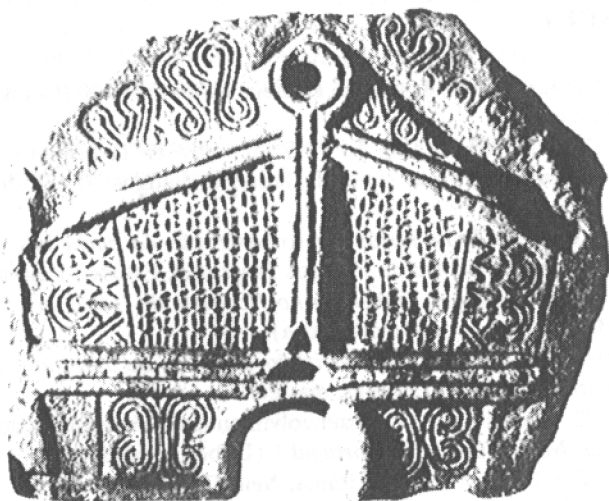


Figure 22. 'Pedra Formosa' from the baths in the Castro of Citânia de Briteiros (Guimarães).

facilities, there is no reason to doubt that they were part of the indigenous culture, and had previously been built of perishable materials.

The defensive and public structures of the large proto-urban settlements indicate that they were subject to strong central control. They also incorporate important technological innovations such as the widespread use of the windmill and the potter's wheel, indicating a highly organized system of production. At the same time, iron was increasingly used in the manufacture of weapons, farm implements and tools, and in building materials.

The evidence from excavations at Citânia de Sanfins is sufficient to suggest that, judged by the advances achieved in metallurgy and pottery-making, the castros can be considered to be the precursors of medieval cities. The same communities also gave rise to the first documented professional associations, made up of groups of craftsmen such as those working in statuary, or in certain specialized public projects such as the elaborately decorated stone baths and the complex defence systems.

From the anthropological, historical and sociological perspectives, the castro settlements of the north-western Iberian Peninsula should certainly be classified as 'urban'. Most of them meet the archaeological prerequisites for 'urbanism' set forth by V. Gordon Childe in 1950 (Wells 1988) in terms of area, population density, magnitude of public structures, and uniqueness of artistic style. In addition, they could boast full-time specialized artisans, 'trade guilds' and military-style local governments.

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Portuguese castros: the evolution of the habitat and the proto-urbanization process

The evolution of Castro communities of the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula represents a long process of development which may be divided into three phases: *origins* – Late Bronze Age to the fifth century BC; *expansion* – fifth century BC to the expedition of Brutus; *proto-urbanization* – Brutus' expedition to the Flavian dynasty. The different stages of settlement organization reflect a progressive development to the urban form. The archaeological contexts of each phase are considered as well as the criteria which characterize them. The excavations of the author, covering the three phases, serve as a basis for detailed discussion. Of these special consideration is given to: Coto da Pena and Cividade de Âncora (Caminha, Viana do Castelo), Cividade de Terroso (Póvoa de Varzim), Castro de Romariz (Santa Maria da Feira), Citânia de Sanfins (Paços de Ferreira), Galegos (Barcelos).

Los castros portugueses: la evolución del habitat y el proceso de protourbanización

El análisis de la evolución de las comunidades castreñas del Noroeste de la Península Ibérica evidencia un largo proceso desarrollado en tres fases (orígenes: finales de la Edad del Bronce hasta el siglo V a.C.; expansión: siglo V a.C. hasta la expedición de Brutus; proto-urbanización: expedición de Brutus hasta la dinastía Flavia) con marcadas diferencias en las etapas de la organización del habitat que manifiestan un desarrollo progresivo de la forma urbana.

Los contextos arqueológicos de cada fase son considerados aquí, así como los criterios que presidieron su caracterización.

Las excavaciones del autor que cubrían estas tres fases sirven como base para este estudio, especialmente: Coto do Pena y Cividade de Âncora (Caminha, Viana do Castelo), Cividade do Terroso (Póvoa de Varzim), Castro de Romariz (Santa Maria da Feira), Citânia de Sanfins (Paços de Ferreira), Galegos (Barcelos).