



MUSEO
DO CASTRO
DE VILADONGA



ROOM 1



DISPLAY CASE 1 THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1

THE SURROUNDINGS

The **geological environment** of Castro de Viladonga has a great variety with a predominance of slate, schist and quartz, and at a greater distance, granite. Clay deposits and limestone formations can also be found.

The historical occupation of the castro coincides with the so-called sub-Atlantic period, with a temperate **climate**, warmer and more humid than the present-day one.

Regarding the **vegetation**, there was a predominance of bush and herbaceous formations (gorse, heather, fern, etc.), arable and orchard lands. Following the course of the rivers, there were small areas of oak groves and forests of birch and alder.

The **wild fauna** would also be very similar to the current one, with the presence of different species of birds, cervids (deer, roe deer ...), suids (wild boars), lagomorphs (hares and rabbits), along with some carnivores: canids such as the wolf or the fox, mustelids such as the weasel or the badger, etc.

2

THE HUMANISED LANDSCAPE

The geological variety of the region of Viladonga can be seen in the **stone materials** used in the constructions as well as in the manufacturing of household goods and working tools.

The main **water** supply must have come both from the cistern located in the NE of the croa, discovered in 2019, and from the many nearby springs, rivers and creeks.

The study of the **vegetable remains** found in the site suggests the existence of an agriculture devoted to wheat, oats, barley, etc. complemented with the cultivation of broad beans, collard greens, turnips... and with the harvesting of wild fruits, pears, acorns, blackberries, etc.

The remains of **animals** found in the castro indicate the existence of bovine breeding (cows and oxen) and ovine/caprine breeding (sheep and goats), with the presence of domestic suids (pigs) and equines (horses). These species have been documented through bones, harnesses and hitches, while other animals such as dogs and cats, have been documented through footprints on tiles or ceramic.

DISPLAY CASE 2 THE PRE-ROMAN OCCUPATION

1

The time when the occupation of this castro originated is unknown, but evidence that refers to the Iron Age can be found in several areas. Throughout the different research campaigns, numerous objects have been recovered which, together with the C14 dating, allow the first occupations to be placed around the 5th century BC. It would even be possible to consider an earlier occupation, during the Bronze Age, supported by the discovery of objects which refer to the Late Bronze Age, such as stelae carved with cavities or the axe with four rings.

2

Several objects bear witness to this phase of the Iron Age, some of them as significant as the gold torcs and earrings or the bronze votive axe, found in the cistern, in which the sacrifice of various animals is represented.

This phase is characterized by the presence of poorly refined ceramics with little decoration and mostly incised. As for the metal objects, bronze takes prominence through fibulae and needles, among which a bronze and wool wick stands out. The dating of these objects being close to the change of era.

On this ancient level there have been found numerous fireplaces, hut bottoms and remains of pajabarro (a building material made from straw and clay) which, together with the monumental cistern, speak of the importance of these first occupations prior to the reform of the castro carried out in the Galician-Roman era.

DISPLAY CASE 3 THE CASTRO: THE ORGANI- ZATION OF THE SPACES.

1

THE DEFENCES

The main wall is formed by an enormous pile of slate and earth. On the inner side there is a stepped wall with access stairs regularly inserted. On the second wall, lower in height, there is a building, or watchtower, with an internal staircase. The **third and fourth walls** are made of stone and loose earth, serving as a large parapet.

The V-shaped **moats**, which are more than 12 metres deep, are dug into the natural slate rock, forming, together with the walls, a well-articulated defence system that is repeated up to three times in the north-eastern area.

2

THE ANTECASTROS

The antecastros, large artificial terraces that allow to overcome the unevenness of the land through the construction of walls and parapets, are arranged around the croa.

There is speculation about the utility of these antecastros, which was probably very diverse. Storage structures such as a silo or a barn (**horreum**) were located in the area of the western gate, next to the access road. Future excavations will confirm the level of construction and use of both antecastros.

3

ACCESS POINTS TO THE CROA OF THE CASTRO

Two entrances to the croa or acropolis, protected by thick stone walls, have been documented in the castro. The access from the eastern side is partially paved and vertical notches have appeared on the walls, indicating the possible existence of two successive doors.

4

THE CROA OR ACROPOLIS

A certain degree of urban planning can be observed in the **croa** of the castro: the constructions are grouped together, leaving spaces to circulate among them in the manner of streets, some of them paved and with water channeling. There is a path from north to south, another that runs from east to west (from door to door), and yet another, an inner ring that gives access to the houses on the north and east sides, and possibly surrounds the entire interior of the croa.

Some dwellings appear isolated, others are extended by means of attached walls to create new rooms, forming sets of buildings, which could be identified with family groups, in which houses, corrals, warehouses and even workshops are integrated.

DISPLAY CASE 4 THE CONSTRUCTIONS

1

STAGES OF OCCUPATION

Several phases of occupation, which can be distinguished by the type of constructions found, have been documented through the excavations. Initially, the huts were made of perishable materials on a base of stones driven into the ground. Later a process of petrification took place, the walls being built with slate, maintaining the circular shape. Towards the change of era, square or rectangular floor plans were gradually introduced.

2

CONSTRUCTION ELEMENTS

The faces or walls of the buildings of the castro are all made of slate and schist, with large blocks of quartz used to settle and strengthen them at their base.

Inside, in most of the constructions, the floor is made of earth or rammed mud, although some of them have slate paving, which suggests that they were used as threshing floors or barns.

Different types of hearths or **lareiras** are found on the pavements: made of stone, baked or trodden clay; some of them are closed on the sides with stones or slabs driven into the ground to enclose and protect the fire.

There are holes of different shapes, sizes and uses scattered throughout the castro: they were used to drive in posts or as tanks or silos for grain or water (by means of pots, baskets and wineskins).

On the outside, some of the houses have a kind of plinth or small cobbled atrium at the front. Sometimes, they place stairs at the entrances, on others there are sill stones, always at a higher level than the path in order to avoid the entry of water. The crevices or small channels made in the rock are drains or water collectors for groups of buildings.

In some constructions, cases of walled up doors or windows have been found, suggesting possible abandonment or a change of use.

3

THATCH ROOF COVERINGS

Colmo is a roof covering made of straw and other plant elements woven together on wooden frames.

To hold the **colmo** in place they used ropes, which were kept taut by the weight of stones or **colmo** weights. This type of roof coverings survived during the Galician-Roman period, coexisting with clay roofs.

4

TILE ROOF COVERINGS

Tiles were introduced in Galicia with the Romanization. They were made with clay in wooden moulds to give them the desired shape. They were then air-dried and, in a final phase, baked in an oven. They sometimes bear digital marks or even potter's stamps made in the fresh clay by the manufacturer.

The tiles are of two types: tegula tiles are flat and imbrex tiles, curved. They were placed in combination on wooden structures called roof trusses.

Tile roofs were used in the castro for some quadrangular and straight-walled houses, without ruling out the possibility of maintaining thatch roof coverings in certain cases. Circular or curved-walled houses had thatched or colmo roof coverings.

The fact that slates with nails have been found points to the hypothesis of possible roofs covered with this material.