



FUNERARY SITES DURING THE BELL BEAKER PERIOD IN GALICIA (SPAIN)

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ABSTRACT

The Galician archaeological record presents certain problems for the preservation of most types of organic remains, so we must explain the past based on inorganic materials. In particular, the Bell Beaker communities have been explained almost exclusively by the presence of Bell Beaker ceramics, excluding all sites that do not contain this cultural element. This paper will present a summary of the sites classified as funerary in nature in Galicia. The depositional characteristics, the degree of fragmentation of the vessels, their position in the sites and the grave goods will be considered in terms of biographical reconstruction. The conclusion is that while only a few of the Bell Beakers had a truly funerary role, their more significant function was to facilitate the ritualised appropriation of Neolithic space as material symbols of a communal 'Bell Beaker' identity, as opposed to metal grave goods which designated individual status.

Key words: NW Iberian Peninsula megalithism, individual rites, contact period, appropriation of space, 3rd-2nd millennia cal BC, cist, pit, metallurgy

RESUMEN

El registro arqueológico gallego presenta ciertos problemas para la conservación de la mayoría de tipos de restos orgánicos, por lo que debemos explicar el pasado a partir de materiales inorgánicos. En particular, las comunidades campaniformes se han explicado casi exclusivamente por la presencia de cerámica campaniforme en los yacimientos arqueológicos, excluyendo todos los sitios que no contienen este elemento cultural. En este trabajo se presenta un resumen de los yacimientos clasificados como de carácter funerario en Galicia. Las características deposicionales, el grado de fragmentación de las vasijas, su posición en los sitios y los ajuares serán considerados en términos de reconstrucción biográfica. La conclusión es que, si bien solo unos pocos de los campaniformes tuvieron un papel verdaderamente funerario, su función más significativa fue la de facilitar la apropiación ritualizada del espacio neolítico como símbolos materiales de una identidad comunal de 'campaniformes', en contraposición a los ajuares funerarios de metal que designaban un estatus individual.

Palabras clave: Megalitismo del NO Península Ibérica, ritos individuales, período de contacto, apropiación del espacio, III-II milenio cal BC, cista, fosa, metalurgia.



INTRODUCTION

To refer to funerary contexts of the communities that used the Bell Beaker in Galicia implies referring to pre-Bell Beaker megalithism. The Bell Beaker and megaliths are connected by a research tradition (Prieto 1999a, 199b, 2011a, 2013), and because the only Galician funerary contexts in which Bell Beakers appear were Neolithic megalithic tombs. Despite the fact that there is now a significant number of megalithic tombs with Bell Beaker pottery depositions (Prieto 2019), this practice is not understood in any detail. On the one hand, it goes unnoticed, because apparently Bell Beaker communities intervened superficially on these monuments, so until excavations occur it is impossible to know whether a tomb was reused in Bell Beaker times. On the other hand, contextual studies have never been carried out, because the few excavated tombs prioritised the centre and entrance of the structures, with the presence of Bell Beaker pottery being scarce and of little interest. Finally, the recording system was imprecise on many occasions, and the Harris stratigraphic method only began to be used at the end of the last century in the region, meaning we have only been able to know the true context of these finds recently.

Megalithism is not the exclusive prehistoric funerary tradition of Galicia (Vázquez *et al.* 2015). From the 5th millennium BC onwards, other funerary practices were used on occasions, with funerary diversity becoming more widespread from the middle of the 3rd and especially during the 2nd millennium BC. In addition, cists and pits were used as type of grave and rock shelters and caves as burial places. Both cists and pits usually form parts of cemeteries that are located outside settlements, but there is seldom well-contextualized documentation of this pattern. Unfortunately, as they are ‘invisible’ elements of the landscape, these are mostly casual discoveries, so in most cases specific contextual information about the grave goods, which are often poorly preserved, is lacking.

It should be noted that the Bell Beaker pottery found in rock shelters clearly does not have a funerary function because isolated fragments are hidden in cracks. If we look at the material evidence from the cists, we can conclude that Bell Beaker pottery was not used to accompany the dead, while at the same time, other elements of the ‘Bell Beaker package’¹ were preferentially selected to be deposited in these funerary contexts. In the graves, there is only evidence of Bell Beaker pottery at Fraga do Zorro (Prieto and Gil 2011), although we do not have

specific contextual information. There is no evidence of Bell Beaker pottery from Galician funerary caves at present, although there is in Northern Portugal (Sanches and Barbosa 2018).

The Galician funerary record is also limited by the virtual absence of human bones because of acidity of soil, which are only preserved if they underwent cremation or were deposited in caves. Despite these limitations, we have a really spectacular increase in the number of documented sites, rising from the 13 Galician examples catalogued by Harrison (1977), to more than two hundred sites between Galicia and North Portugal, with almost half of these being funerary, so this small region can no longer be considered marginal (Prieto 2019).

SOME INITIAL IDEAS

The aim of this study is to offer a summary of Bell Beaker activity in mortuary contexts, adding recent material evidence to previously known information. This will allow us to establish in a preliminary way if the use of megalithic spaces were in fact funerary as traditionally assumed, or if they had another purpose, one which interacted on multiple levels with the social life of these communities. We will also characterize the authentic tombs of the Bell Beaker communities through the available data.

However, referring to Bell Beaker activity in mortuary contexts entails addressing a number of interconnected problems:

- the funerary function of the Bell Beaker in megalithic graves;
- the chronology of the Bell Beaker and its ceramic styles²;
- the problems presented by the megaliths in which these ceramics are deposited;
- the rupture implied by the Bell Beaker from a social point of view when opposed to the Neolithic indigenous materiality;
- the problems that these societies had to deal with during the contact phase;

These are questions that require many pages of discussion³, but we will try to focus on the most significant aspects in order to provide a preliminary answer to this issue.

Although we currently know that the Bell Beaker typology does not work reliably as a chronological indicator in Galicia (Prieto 1999a), differences can nevertheless be established according to their ‘styles’. Vessels in interna-

tional styles still predominate, but are not as exclusive in tombs as previously thought (Prieto 1999a, 1999b) and other Bell Beaker ceramic categories are incorporated alongside them (Bello *et al.* 2011). A detailed study of ceramic production together with a link to the typology of the megalith in which it was inserted may help to change the perspective we have of the use of these monuments by the Bell Beaker-using communities of Galicia.

It is not known how and why the people of the 3rd millennium BC in Galicia began using Bell Beakers. The prolonged circulation of Bell Beaker ceramics in the region is becoming ever more evident and Bell Beaker-using communities existed between approximately 2600 BC and 1600 BC (Prieto and Salanova 2011). The extremes of the chronology cannot be determined with certainty, as there is a lack of information that would facilitate the identification of direct stratigraphic links between the earliest and latest dated samples and Bell Beaker remains. However, the standard styles recorded in the megaliths could be associated with dates within the range of 2800-2500 BC, as in Northern Portugal, where the few existing dates seem to indicate the earliest appearance of the Bell Beaker (S.O. Jorge 2002; Sanches *et al.* 2017).

Rather than raising questions about the origin of these communities, the early chronology in this region may indicate the rapid spread or circulation of the new 'ethos' and materiality as we have proposed previously for northern Europe (Prieto 2008). We should not forget that there was a prolonged period of contact, and possibly conflict, between indigenous Neolithic and Bell Beaker-using communities, lasting until at least 2400 BC. Although there is no direct evidence of conflict, the information available from excavated sites of the 3rd millennium BC reveals an absence of material exchange between the respective communities (Prieto 2013). This fact, if it really lasted 400 years, may be evidence of alienation between these communities, which probably came into contact but decided not to establish relations of material exchange, at least in an evident way. Therefore, we hypothesize that contact between them was somehow avoided, perhaps because the Bell Beaker communities developed an overwhelming strategy of appropriating the space of Neolithic communities. Neolithic communities would not wish to be assimilated and would reject contact accordingly.

After implanting a new society, the development of the Bell Beaker communities can be observed mainly through the study of settlements (Prieto 2011a). Towards the end of the 3rd millennium BC, the Bell Beaker-using communities also came into contact with other social

groups with original economic, ideological and socio-political structures, during what we refer to as the Early Bronze Age. This contact also lasted for a prolonged period, but different contact strategies were involved. In many cases the only evidence that allows us to assert that a site is from the Early Bronze Age is the absence of Bell Beaker pottery, as the undecorated ceramic repertoire is the same as that found on sites with Bell Beaker pottery during the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. So in this case, it is possible that the population that used Bell Beaker ceramics may have assimilated elements of other cultures, or perhaps changed gradually and ultimately transformed into an essentially different social group or society.

The later dates, estimated between 1600-1500 BC, are in some cases linked to cists without Bell Beaker pottery (Prieto *et al.* 2009), to pit-type graves in which there is little Bell Beaker pottery (Prieto and Gil 2011), or domestic huts with large posts, in which a style that could be called 'epi-Bell Beaker pottery,' coexisted alongside more standard ceramics (Vidal 2011c, Prieto 2011d, 2011e). The later sites are rare, but allow us to suggest that the Bell Beaker could have been so strong in this region that it endured longer than elsewhere. Alternatively, these later Bell Beaker sites were connected with a social, political and economic system that was unrelated to the beginnings of the Bell Beaker phenomenon, but attached with a material culture that was not radically different from, and compatible with, that associated with the Early-Middle Bronze Age, which was already established in neighbouring regions. For instance, the Early Bronze Age was established by 2300/2200 BC in Northern Portugal, where there are no confirmed late Bell Beaker-associated dates (Bettencourt 2011).

The early presence of Bell Beaker communities in Galicia and the implied prolonged phase of possible conflict suggests that it was necessary for these communities to develop strategies of domination over occupied space. The most evident and significant material space of the Neolithic communities in which to exercise a strategy of appropriation were the megalithic burials that represented them. Therefore, this space was the one that would have allowed Bell Beaker communities to develop and impose their discourse of power, where through their conspicuous rites they would have taken over an unrelated space, leaving their mark hidden in the form of ceramic fragments and perhaps other objects or organic remains that are no longer preserved, or which have not yet been identified.

Apparently, the Neolithic communities did not survive beyond 2400 BC, just as the Bell Beaker becomes more evident in settlements, with Bell Beakers of international and regional styles occurring alongside other types of undecorated and decorated ceramics (Prieto 2019). Towards 1700 BC, Bell Beaker ceramics begin to disappear from the archaeological record, with the appearance of what we call grooved Bell Beakers or epi-Bell Beakers, until their disappearance possibly around 1600 or 1500 BC (Prieto 2011a, 2013). This whole process appears to have been gradual, perhaps because the Bell Beaker and Bronze Age communities shared elements that may have been crucial for understanding each other, such as the materiality of individual rites, undecorated ceramics that cannot be differentiated, or the use of metal as a status symbol.

This period of time is too long to believe that these communities remained unchanged, and we hope to be able to depict part of them through analysis of their funerary contexts.

POTTERY STYLES IN BURIALS

The pottery from Bell Beaker contexts in Galicia has been characterized on several occasions (*e.g.* Prieto 1999, 2011, 2019, the fig. 1 shows the types of pottery mentioned in the text). As regards the Bell Beaker category, at least 4 major versions have been defined: the international version (with all its varieties, Linear, Herringbone Varieties, All Over Corded (AOC), Corded Zoned Maritime (C/ZM), and we could even include the Geometric Variety), two regional versions, and a later grooved or epi-Bell Beaker version. The international versions were mainly selected for deposition in megalithic tombs, and until recently were almost the only styles known from these tombs, with the proportions of the Bell Beaker varieties being highly significant. Only 16% corresponds to Linear Variety designs, while the Herringbone Variety reaches 57%, with the Geometric Variety accounting for the remaining 27% (Prieto 2012, 39-40). Furthermore, the number of megalithic tombs with regional Bell Beaker pottery has increased, as in addition to Parxubeira and Tecedeiras, we can add Dombate, Roza das Aveas, Romea, Rebullón M4 and Perravella 1. Even epi-Bell Beaker pottery is incorporated in A Devesa de Abaixo, an exceptional site, as outlined below. Finally, in Guidoiro the regional variant is also abundant, with this group including several fragments of a bowl decorated with fish backbone, a decorative technique found in Normandy in

the Bell Beaker period (Prieto and Gil 2011); these ceramics appeared in the middens that seal the M2 and M4 tumuli in Guidoiro.

Among the undecorated pottery, the medium-fine clay version is the type selected for burials, as well as specific shapes, such as the Taraio-type vessels (vases) or the straight-wall vessels (with straight open walls). Even though they predominate in the cists, they can occasionally be found in tumuli, for example the Taraio of Parxubeira or the straight-walled beaker of Rebullón 4. The so-called undecorated Bell Beaker pottery set stands out in this group, with its beaker, *cazuela* (carinated bowl), and bowl being mainly documented in tumuli (Dombate, Santa Catalina, Romea).

Finally, a third category of decorated non-Bell Beaker pottery includes a varied list of ceramic versions, including pieces with applied clay decorations and varied forms in cists and pits, with a clearly Portuguese and Breton-Normandy inspiration; in exceptional cases, we even have a vessel with fingerprints found in Dombate, clearly inspired by ceramics decorated with finger-marks from other regions of the European Atlantic area. Dombate is the richest megalith in Galicia in terms of Bell Beaker pottery, not only containing all the Bell Beaker style variants, both international and regional, as well as abundant and decorated non-Bell Beaker pottery, but also some vessels of possibly foreign origin or inspiration from the Spanish central plateau (Bello *et al.* 2011). Its material complexity is probably the result of continued activity at the site over a long period of time, as indicated by the 37 vessels recorded in the Bell Beaker phase, 18 of which come from the burial mound and are probably associated with two separate phases of use, while 19 vessels recovered in the vicinity of the monument are associated with an area of outdoor activity at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC.

The systematic study of pottery from the point of view of the *chaîne opératoire* has confirmed that long distance relationships are expressed in a special way by Bell Beaker pottery recovered from funerary contexts using grog as temper (Salanova *et al.* 2016). Based on formal criteria, but above all the technological criteria of the clays and decorations, the existence of close ties along the European Atlantic façade is demonstrated, highlighting the fact that there was at least one communication route connecting not only Galicia and Northern Portugal, but also Galicia and Brittany, as demonstrated by the shell impressions technique used to decorate Beakers (Prieto and Salanova 2011), people and ideas are moving in a different ways (Salanova *et al.* 2016).

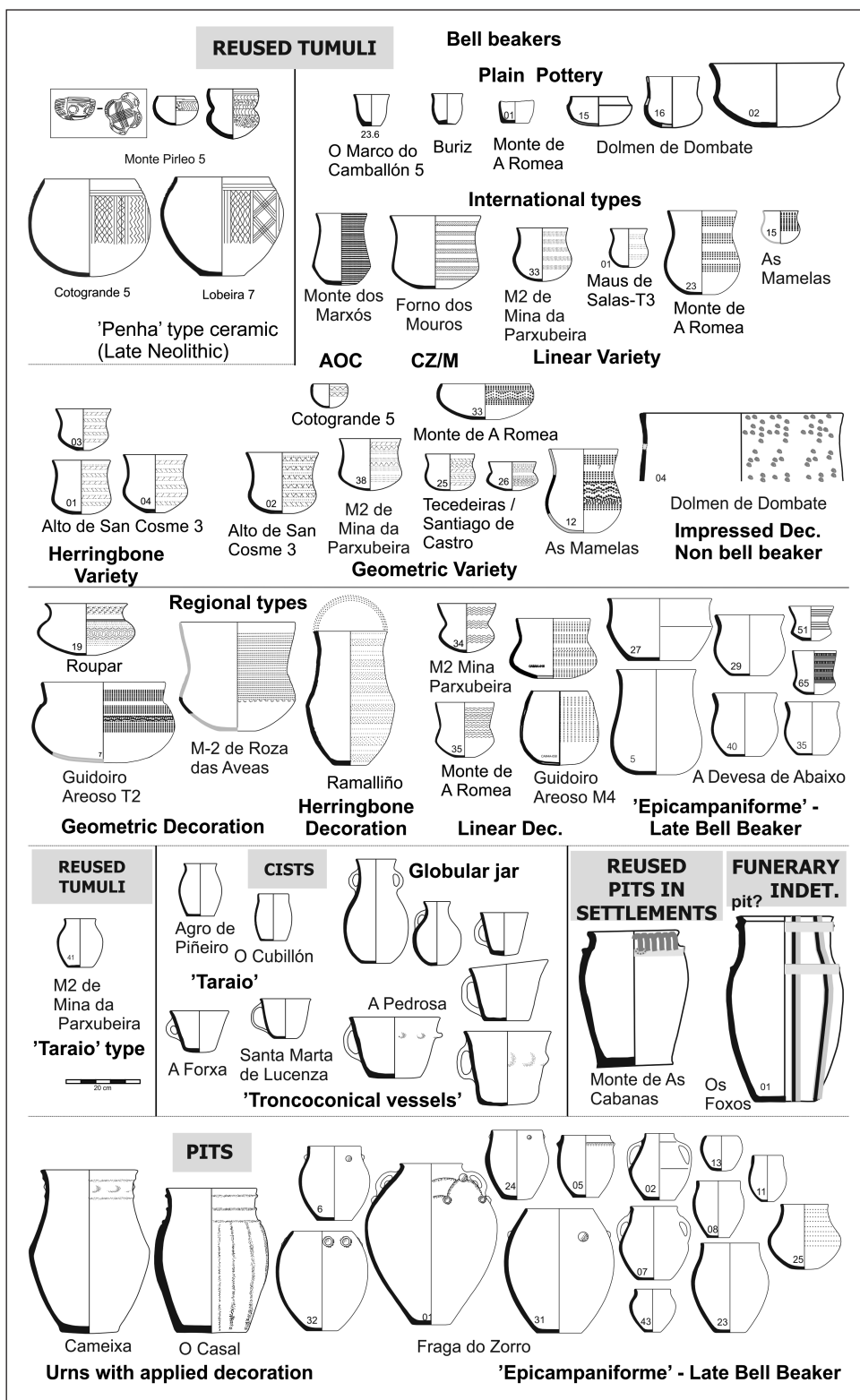


Fig. 1: Selection of representative pottery from 3000 BC to 1500 BC from funerary sites from the Late Neolithic to the late Bell Beaker period ('epi-Bell Beaker')

THE LONG-TERM USE OF MEGALITH SITES

Georg Leisner (1938: 18-34) first established a tripartite evolutionary scheme for chambers in Galicia and Northern Portugal, which simple tombs with chambers of different types, dolmens of different corridor in elevation and plan or with a stepped profile and semicircular chambers. Based on new radiocarbon dates, Leisner's model was refined. The new model recognizes the polymorphism of the phenomenon and proposes a simple evolutionary scheme from small tumuli⁴ with simple chambers or pits at the end of the 5th millennium BC, towards larger tumuli with larger chambers in the 4th millennium BC, followed by their closure in the early 3rd millennium BC, and the construction of smaller tumuli with central pits during the 3rd millennium BC (Alonso and Bello 1997, Fábregas and Vilaseco 2003, 2006). Today, architectural polymorphism has been observed in the megaliths, with associated dates indicating that construction and primary use of these large chambers was c. 4000-3000 BC, with direct dates from paints implying their orthostats were decorated from the outset (Carrera and Fábregas 2006). Only the large monuments and large passage tombs seem to be more limited in time, having flourished towards the end of the phenomenon at the end of the 3rd millennium BC (Carrera and Fábregas 2006).

Evidence confirms that many megalithic monuments were in use over extended periods of time, often undergoing a series of chronologically distinct phases of renovation and remodelling that altered the original forms. This is recorded both in large monuments that can be assumed to have been reused (*i.e.* Dolmen de Dombate, Campiños 6, Cotogrande 5) and in smaller and apparently simpler monuments, in particular sites with renovations that significantly altered the initial structure, such as Monte dos Escuros (Parga and Prieto 2010) and Ponte da Pedra-0 (Vaquero 1999), and sites where the monument is the result of a construction process involving building phases that are 500 or 1000 years apart (*i.e.* Monte da Romea, Mañana 2003). A recurrent pattern – phases of construction followed by periods of inactivity – has been recognized through the analysis of dates from various sites (Cruz 1995, Alonso and Bello 1997). Other subsequent activities are also observed (due to the alterations associated with Bell Beaker material, mound enlargements⁵, etc.), or shaft-type intrusions, events that have sometimes been dated (*i.e.* the shaft in Forno dos Mouros 5, Mañana 2005), and which we will deal with in more detail below. These renovations can also be seen in the dating

of paintings inside the chambers of some megaliths from the middle of the 5th to the end of the 3rd millennium BC (Fábregas and Vilaseco 2004, 71, Bueno *et al.* 2016).

Activities associated with the megaliths continued over time. For instance, objects continued to be deposited in the Late Bronze Age, as revealed by the grave goods of LBH-type⁶ vessels placed on the surface and on the peripheries of these deposits (Nonat *et al.* 2015), or small architectural alterations detected by radiocarbon analyses of some tumuli (such as Forno dos Mouros 5 or Ponte da Pedra-0). Different activities have been detected from Roman times, as is the case of the Medorra de Fanegas (Caamaño and Criado 1991-2), over which a Roman watchtower was built. In the Middle Ages, burial mounds were important for peasant communities, and there is increasing material evidence for their use as territorial boundary markers (*i.e.* A Devesa de Abaixo, Vázquez and Prieto 2016) confirming references to this practice in the literary sources (Martín 2001). Medieval ceramic deposits of clearly ritual significance have also been found (Roza das Aveas, Prieto *et al.* 2010). Finally, in the early 17th century, a treasure hunt took place across the region (Martín 2001) and the central areas of most of the burial mounds, all of which were visible, were systematically ransacked. Occasionally, sunken floors associated with ceramics from the modern era have begun to be documented (O Cotiño, Castro 2018) (fig. 2). This long-lasting phenomenon of megaliths has recently been observed in Europe as well (Díaz *et al.* 2015).

There is an urgent need for a summary that analyses the construction system of the megaliths, taking into account the structural elements that comprise them (the burial mound or the superimposition of additional earthen layers that increase the size and height of the monuments, the outer cairn, the stone kerb, and the morphology of the passage and entrance) as well as the subsequent alterations. It is also necessary to ask new questions through an analysis of the radiocarbon information, in order to define the original structures and contexts in detail (Prieto *et al.* 2012).

MEGALITHIC BELL BEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

The presence of Bell Beakers in megalithic graves has been considered to indicate continuity with the pre-existing Neolithic indigenous culture, as simply secondary interments reusing graves (*i.e.* Fábregas and Vilaseco 2003)⁷. References have been made to reuse without

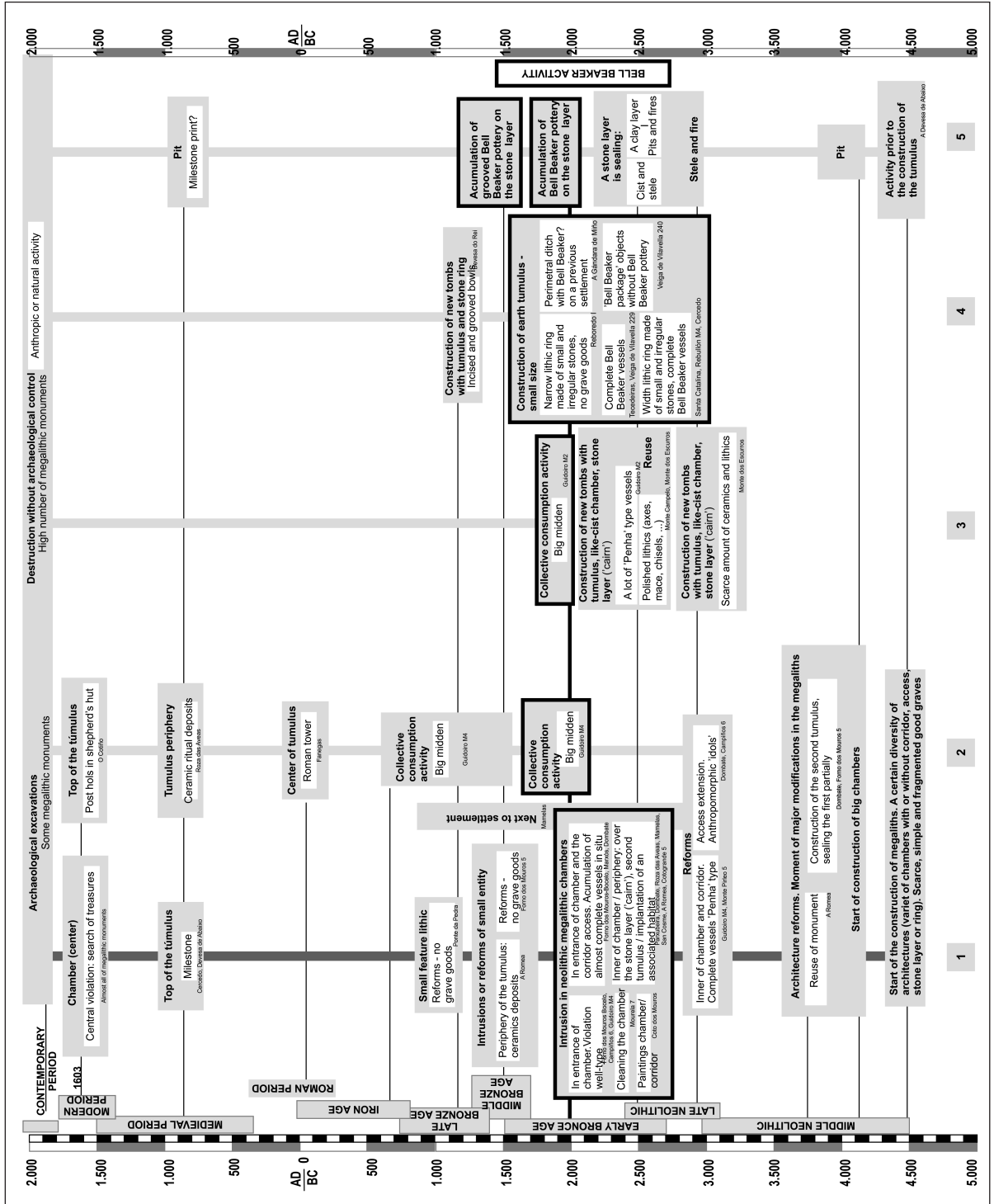


Fig. 2: Summary diagram of the formation processes megaliths of Galicia. In this illustration the chronological phases and archaeological periods from the Middle Neolithic to the present day are shown.

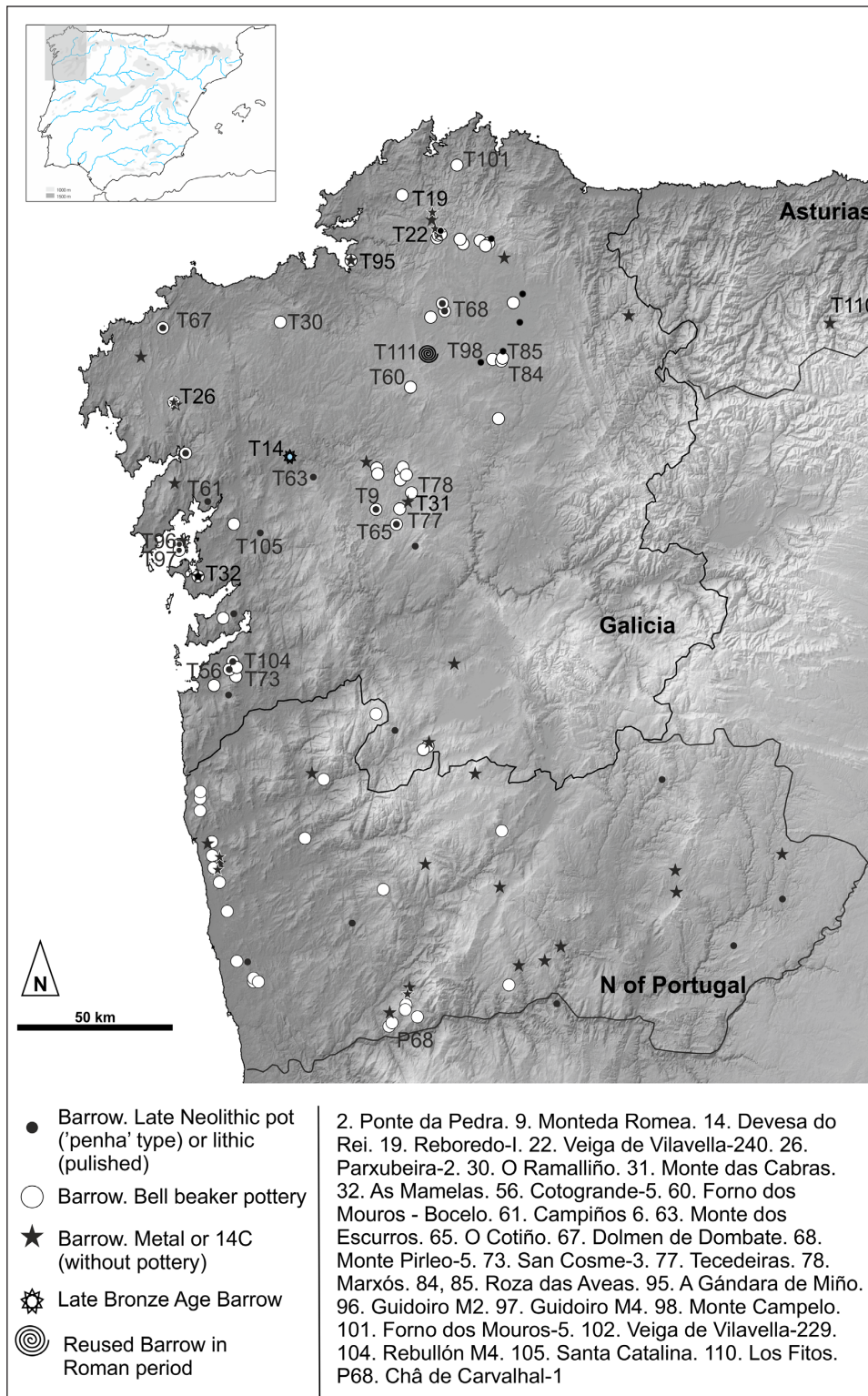


Fig. 3: Distribution of tumuli in the NW Iberian Peninsula with grave goods from the Late Neolithic (stone or ceramic) and from the Bell Beaker communities (ceramic or metallic) (after Jorge 1986, Nonat 2017, Prieto 2019). The sites mentioned in the text are indicated.

questioning the vast variety of architectural models that could have been devised. However, this variety does not imply that there is no underlying pattern, which as we shall see does not seem to have been unintentional. If we explore burial practices in greater detail, as we will see below, a change in funerary rituals occurred during the first third of the 3rd millennium BC. It appears that the Bell Beaker communities had their own social strategies, which may not have been rejected by the entire indigenous population. However, it does not imply continuity between their pre-existing funerary practices and those of the Bell Beaker communities. Instead, this suggests a social environment prone to favour change, which in this case was led by a group of communities that responded positively to a novel social model which differed significantly from that present during the Late Neolithic in Galicia and northern Portugal (fig. 3).

USING OLD TOMBS: SOCIAL CHANGE BEGINS IN THE MEGALITHS

At the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC, new ways of using funerary space began to emerge, as indicated by the renovation or reuse of pre-existing monuments (figs. 4 and 5). These alterations are also indicated by the significantly changing ceramic grave goods, from pottery with quite unremarkable characteristics in the Middle Neolithic to profusely decorated ceramics during the Late Neolithic, deposited intact and carefully set in place. We have two examples: Monte Pirleo 5 (14 m in diameter) (Anonymous 1972) (fig. 6.1) and Guidoiro M4 (15 m in diameter) (Mañana 2017); in both cases, the pottery is complete, and was carefully placed inside the passage next to the entrance to the chamber.

At this time, conspicuous extensions were also made to the entrances of large monuments, including the extension of their length, and the addition of ‘idols’ that were driven into the ground, as seen in the dolmens of Dombate (Bello 1995) (fig. 4.3) and Campiños 6 (Fábregas and Fuente 1991-2), these being associated with the blocking of monument entrances between 3000 and 2600 BC. Not long after, complete undecorated vessels (a dish and a beaker) may have been deposited at Dombate, as they were placed close to these idols, which were not affected when these vessels were deposited, as they may have been in full or partial view and were avoided. Dates have been obtained from the monument that may be consistent with this initial event between 2800 and 2600 BC (Bello *et al* 2011). During this period,

Bell Beaker communities may have intervened in other parts of the megaliths; as evidenced once again at Dombate or Parxubeira 2 (Rodríguez 1989) (fig. 5.2) where large fragments of Bell Beakers and other types of pottery were scattered inside their chambers and passages.

Occasionally, isolated sherds of Bell Beaker pottery are recovered on the surface of the stone kerb of reused tumuli, as is the case in Roza das Aveas (Prieto *et al.* 2010) (fig. 5.1) or Mamelas (Cano *et al.* 2017) (fig. 5.3). These sites are also important because they contain various types of structures (fires, pits, post-holes) which indicate that there was domestic or ritual activity in the surrounding areas before, during, and after the construction of the megaliths. Activity surrounding Mamelas included a Late Neolithic settlement, although there is evidence of intermittent use from the Early Neolithic and over a period of five thousand years.

In this process of renovating pre-existing megaliths, it seems that it was common to appropriate the existing tomb through enlargement of the tumulus. In such cases we can see differences in how Bell Beaker vessels were deployed. We find organized deposition, as in the case of San Cosme 3 (stone kerb: 12 m in diameter, mound enlargement: 24 m in diameter) (Prieto 2011b) (fig. 4.1), where almost complete vessels were placed in the south-east of the entrance area, or delimiting the outer ends of the entrance, as in the case of the undecorated vessels from Dombate. We also find small numbers of sherds from one or several vessels scattered over enlarged cairns towards the periphery of the tumulus and seemingly without context, as at A Romea (Prieto 2007) and Cotogrande 5 (Abad 2000). In both cases charcoal collected from the soil at base of the tumulus enlargements dates these events to c. 2700-2400 BC. In the case of A Romea, the dates came from the lower part of the secondary mound enlargement and the Bell Beaker pottery from the upper part. In the case of Cotogrande 5, the dated sample was taken from charcoal collected in the soil of the tumulus enlargement. There is no Penha-type pottery in A Romea, and instead various polished tools were found (a fragment of halberd and an axe, both of indeterminate typology) and flaked objects (21 flint arrowheads) (Mañana and Prieto 2010), whereas there are several Penha-type vessels in Cotogrande 5, with the same chronology. This points towards the selection of specific burial items, which may be archaeological proof of a first step towards the ‘individualisation’ of megalith burials. In the case of A Romea, the enlargement and Bell Beaker activity could be successive, but at Co-

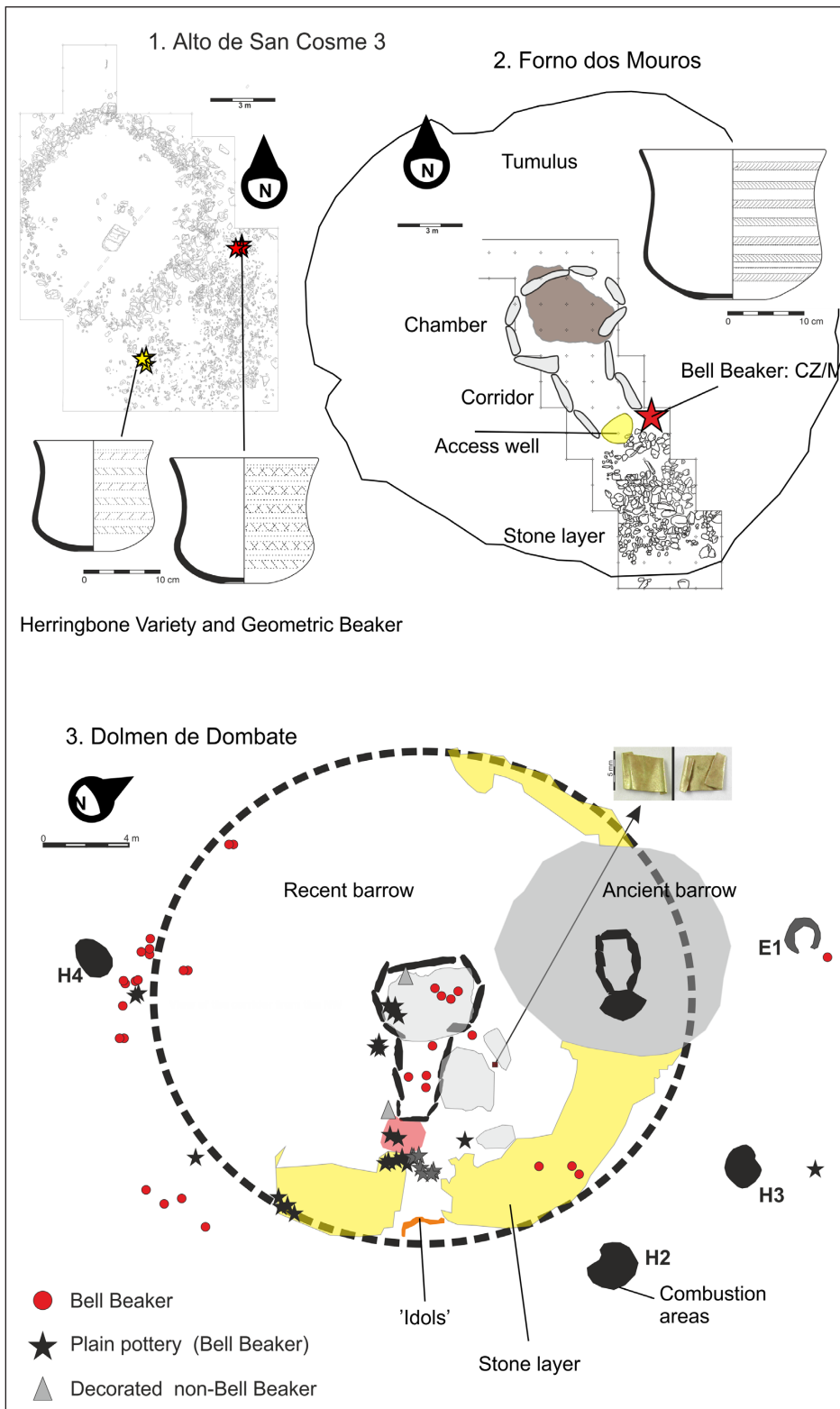


Fig. 4: Selection of plans of tumuli from the Middle Neolithic containing elements that were re-used by the Bell Beaker communities (1, 2 after Prieto 2011b, 3 after Bello *et al.* 2017)

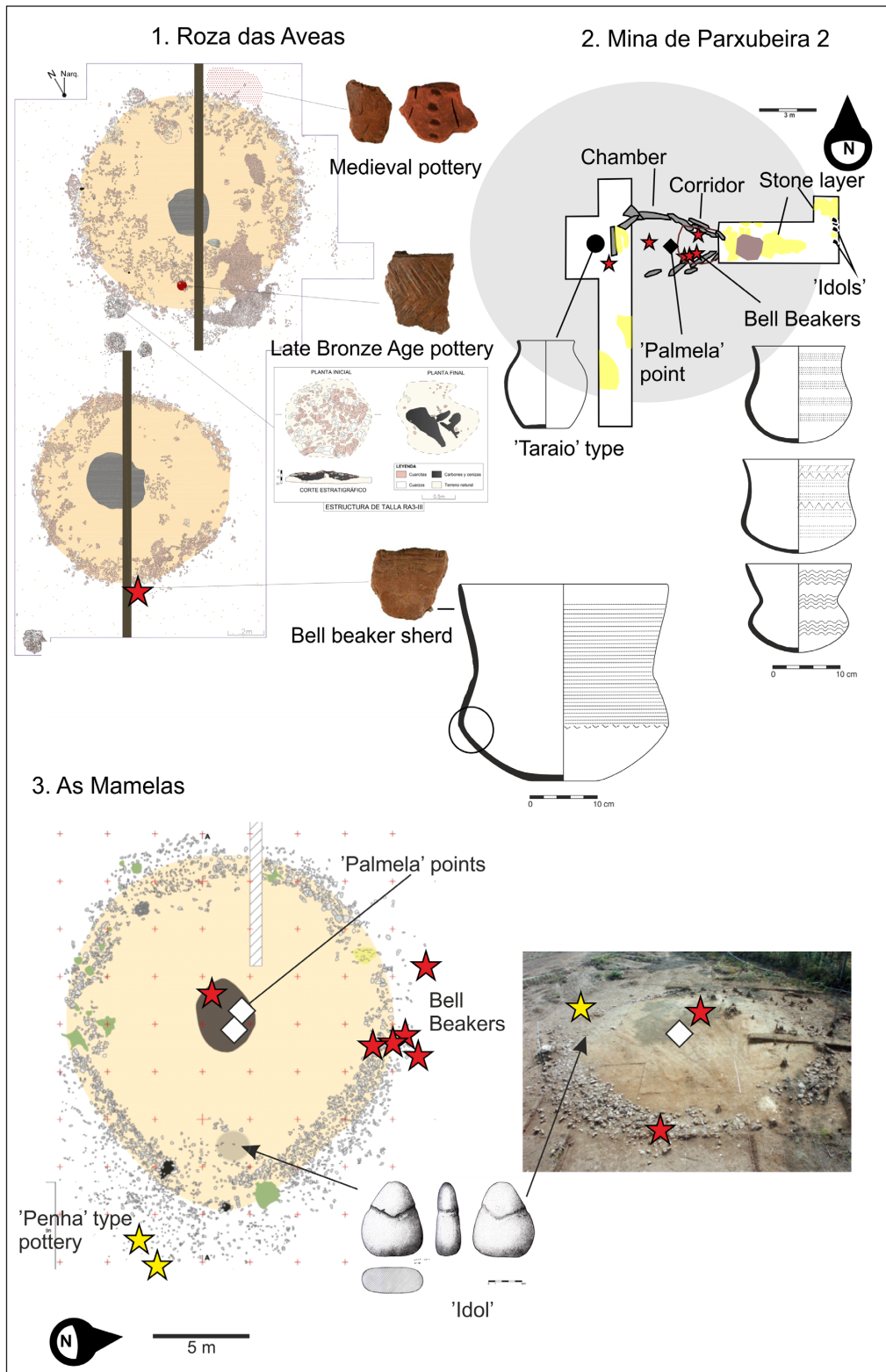


Fig. 5: Selection of plans of tumuli from the Middle Neolithic containing elements that were re-used by the Bell Beaker communities (1 after Prieto *et al.* 2010, 2 after Rodríguez 1989, 3 after Cano *et al.* 2017)

togrande 5 it is unclear, and the excavator (Abad 2000) considered the Penha-type and Bell Beaker pottery to have derived from the same event. It is also worth highlighting that the highly fragmentary nature of the pottery found in Galician tombs is also seen in the North of Portugal (Bettencourt 2011), indicating a wider regional pattern. Perhaps, the bell beaker communities did not want to deposit complete vessels, but instead selected fragments, especially from the belly of the vessel. This type of deposit reveals more of an intention to control a space rather than a funerary ritual per se.

Another type of reuse stands out in the megalithic tumuli of the Middle Neolithic, this being ‘intrusions’ into the architecture. We have documented at least three strategies for accessing the graves.

1) The first consists of digging a shaft from the entrance to the stone chamber, a clear violation of the architecture. This has been confirmed in Campiños 6, Forno dos Mouros-Bocelo and Forno de Mouros 5 (Mañana 2005), although only in the latter case is there a date that situates this event at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC.

2) In the second, there is no clear violation of the architecture, but relatively complete vessels were placed inside the tomb, apparently indicating places that seem to be liminal. In the case of Marxós, an almost complete AOC Bell Beaker was broken in-situ on stones located precisely at the entrance to the chamber (Lestón and Suárez 2011). The stones and Bell Beaker seem to be part of the same event, the final closure of the monument (Lestón and Suárez 2011). The Bell Beaker pottery of Parxubeira could be a similar case, as the fragments are located close to the first section of stones in the chamber, although it was noted during excavation that the filling material had been disturbed (Rodríguez 1989), and so its position cannot be confirmed. It should also be noted that a complete, undecorated ‘Taraio’ vessel was placed in the exterior, next to the head slab of the chamber and possibly forming part of an individual burial.

A nearly complete C/ZM Bell Beaker in Forno dos Mouros-Bocelo was broken and recovered in-situ outside, between the passage and the blocking stones, next to a shaft cut through the entrance of the chamber. If the shaft and the Bell Beaker were part of the same event, we could perhaps propose a date prior to the mid-3rd millennium BC (Prieto 2011b) (fig. 4.2).

In Dombate, a large number of relatively complete Bell Beaker vessels were found, together with other undecorated pottery and vessels that may even be of foreign origin (Bello *et al.* 2011). It should also be noted that

following the use and reuse of the Dombate monument, domestic Bell Beaker activity dated to the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC occurred nearby, and a later ditch possibly delimits a Middle Bronze Age settlement.

Another unpublished example worthy of note is Guidoiro Areoso M4 (Mañana, 2017). Here, once the chamber was sealed in the Late Neolithic, a feast was held on the tumulus (taking the form of a huge midden). The lowest level of this midden contains Bell Beaker pottery, and the chamber was partially invaded when a transverse shaft associated with activity from the Bell Beaker phase, was cut into it. The site continued to be used as a midden until the Late Bronze or Iron Age.

3) Finally, the tumulus of Monte dos Escuros (Parga and Prieto 2010), constructed at the end of the 4th millennium BC, is an example of a new type of megalithic burial consisting of a tumulus, cist-like chamber, and wide stone kerb built with well-assembled stones. There were few stone or ceramic grave goods, which were of little significance at the time of construction. Towards the mid-3rd millennium BC the kerb was modified, and its diameter enlarged, an alteration which is clearly visible in two opposite sections of the kerb-line. There were also alterations at its kerb entrance, slightly modifying its shape. Two types of objects were placed in the kerb, just where its enlargement can be seen: polished items (2 granite balls)⁸ and several quartz prisms, while a polished axe and mace were placed at the entrance. The pottery deposited during the reorganization of this burial is similar to the Penha-type ceramics mentioned at the beginning of this section; however, the type of megalith reused is not a large polygonal chamber, the predominant type of architecture in the examples otherwise described.

NEW TOMBS: LESS COMMUNAL, AND MORE INDIVIDUAL

New burial practices, which are still scarce and apparently varied in architectural elements, were developed between the beginning of the 3rd and end of the 2nd millennium BC (Fábregas and Vilaseco 2004) (figs. 7 and 8). Unfortunately, there are no dates available for these sites. As already detected in the typological studies of the region (*e.g.* Fábregas and Vilaseco 2004, 2006) there seems to have been a trend towards the construction of smaller barrows, but this is not to say that they were less conspicuous at the time of construction and use. Five clear groups can be established based upon documented assemblages of grave goods (fig. 2).

Map-code (fig. 3)	Site name	References	Pottery	Stone	Metal
T67	Dombate (dolmen)	Bello et al. 2011	Bell beakers and Penha type		Gold plaque (1)
T96	Guidoiro Areoso 2-midden	López-Romero et al. 2015	Bell beakers and mid-Bronze Age LBH		Bronze awl
T97	Guidoiro Areoso 4-midden	Mañana 2017	Bell beakers and mid-Bronze Age LBH		Copper dagger (1)
T26	Parxubeira 2 (Mazaricos)	Prieto 2011a, 2013a			Palmela point (1)
T27	Parxubeira 4	Nonat 2017	Bell beakers	Flint blade	Palmela point (1)
T22	Veiga de Vilavella 240	Nonat 2017			Copper dagger (1), copper Palmela point (4), golden diadem (1)
T29	Marco de Camballón M1	Nonat 2017	Bell beakers		Gold cylinder
T104	Rebullón M4	Vidal 2011b	Bell beakers sherds	15 lithic elements (4 grinding fragments)	Metalic fragment, possibly bronze
T31	Monte das Cabras (Mamao do Castro 1)	Nonat 2017			Copper dagger (1), copper Palmela point (3)
T32	As Mamelas	Nonat 2017	Bell beakers and Penha type		Copper Palmela point (3)
T33	Monte Penamá	Nonat 2017			Bronze harlber
T23	Lobán	Nonat 2017			Flat copper axe
T24	Chao da Cótara	Nonat 2017			Flat copper axe
T25	Arquiña de Vilaseco	Nonat 2017			Flat copper axe

Fig 6: Table 1. List of Galician tumuli with metallic grave goods (67: Bello *et al.* 2011; 96: López-Romero *et al.* 2015; 97: Mañana 2017; 104: Vidal 2011b; the rest of the sites: Nonat 2017)

1) The first group is the oldest and may date to the first quarter of the 3rd millennium BC. These are new tumuli, only built of earth, containing abundant polished stone objects (axes, chisels, balls, maces), as in the case of the excavated Monte Campelos 1 (20.5 m in diameter) (Rodríguez 1983), Veiga de Vilavella 229 (19 m in diameter) (Vázquez *et al.* 2015) (fig. 7.2) or Vedro Vello 1 (22 m in diameter) (Fábregas 1994) (fig. (.3). Another type of burial found in this group is represented by Guidoiro Areoso M2 (6 m in diameter) (fig. 7.3), a stone cairn with cist-like central chamber, where 35 rather well preserved decorated ‘Penha’-type vases, many of which were complete, were deposited (López *et al.* 2015). Both deposits are anomalous due to the enormous number of pieces present in such small burials, compared to the small numbers of objects that characterize megaliths. Perhaps these two burials point towards the importance of the interred individual(s) and designate status in a way that is not normally seen so clearly in Neolithic tombs. Guidoiro Areoso M2 was sealed by a midden used over a prolonged period,

from the Bell Beaker period through to Late Bronze Age, like the M4 site on the same islet (Mañana 2017).

2) Sometimes, small barrows have a rubble kerb made of irregular stone that is also small in size as at Santa Catalina (18 m in diameter, 1.35 m in height) (Vidal 2011a) (fig. 7.5). Fifteen vessels (plain and decorated Bell Beakers) were found in different states of preservation together with several grinding stones in the eastern half of the tumulus, including the careful placement of three complete undecorated Bell Beakers just to the south of the stone kerb. In addition, several hearths were excavated in the vicinity, one of which located 15 m from the burial mound, provided a date from the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC. This date, together with the presence of several additional graves within the mound, led the excavator interpret this as a Late Neolithic construction that was subsequently re-used by later Bell Beaker communities (Vidal 2011a). However, the dating of Santa Catalina could be contemporary with the deposition of the complete undecorated vessels in Dombate if an early



Fig. 7: Selection of ground plans and photographs of tumuli built by Late Neolithic and Bell Beaker communities, showing a number of representative pieces (1 after Anonymous 1972, 2-3 after Vázquez et al 2015, 4 after Vidal 2011b, 5 after Vidal 2011a)

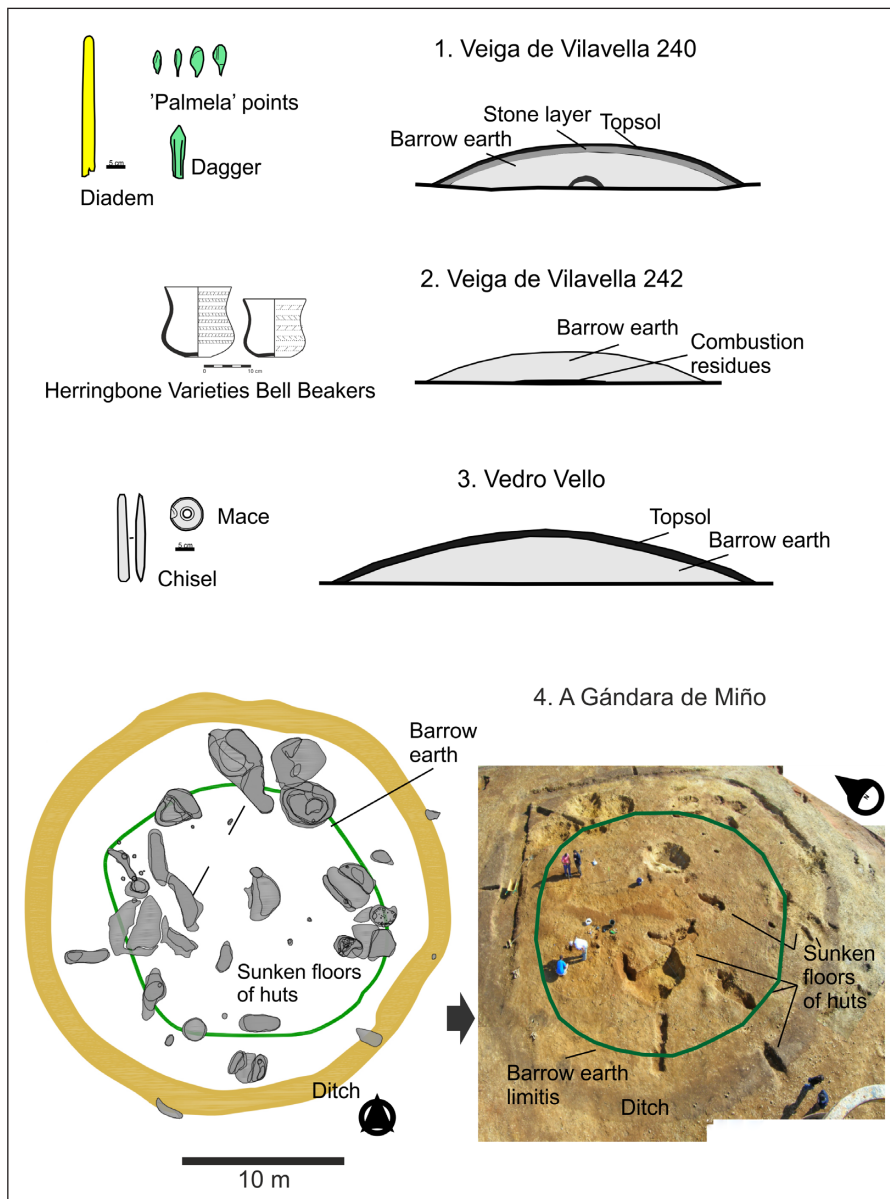


Fig. 8: Selection of ground plans and photographs of tumuli built by Late Neolithic and Bell Beaker communities, showing a number of representative pieces (1, 2, 3 after Vázquez et al 2015, 4 after Méndez 2007)

chronology is accepted. Given the differences in terms of location between the three undecorated vases and the rest of the ceramic collection from Santa Catalina, perhaps several phases of activity could be inferred. Another burial mound that may represent the same construction pattern as Santa Catalina is Perravella 1 in Cerceda (30 m in diameter) (Alonso 2018), although in this case an almost complete but purposely broken Bell Beaker was deposited on the top of the mound, although it had been partially disturbed by a series of medieval and modern intrusions (Prieto et al. 2022).

3) The third group, small earth mounds, contain several complete Bell Beaker vessels as grave goods. The Bell Beaker styles found are varied, as they range from the international varieties (Herringbone variety) found in various burial mounds of the necropolis of Veiga de Vilavella, especially number 242 (18 m diameter) (Vázquez *et al.* 2015) (fig. 8.2), through to regional varieties (Geometric decoration), such as those from the burial mound of Tecedeiras further south.

4) A fourth group, for which no dates are available either, is limited to the burial of A Gándara de Miño, a

Map-Code (fig. 7)	Site name (cist)	Pottery	Stone	Metal	No grave goods	Decoration
1	Taraio	Taraio (1)		Copper dagger (1)		
2	A Insua				X	Incisions, 4 slabs
3	Fariñas				X	
4	Pedramarrada-Carnota		Sandstone archer's wrist-guard (1)	Copper dagger (1)		Incisions, 1 slab
5	Bicos de Lago 1				X	
5	Bicos de Lago 2	Vessel (2)	Schist disc (1)			
5	Bicos de Lago 3				X	
6	Agro de Nogueira 1	Taraio (1)	Grinding (1)			
6	Agro de Nogueira 2				X	
7	O Cubillón	Taraio (1)				
9	Monte dos Cregos				X	
10	Coitemil/ Cinco Mámoas					Incisions, 1 slab
11	As Antas-Rodeiro	Taraio (1)		Small copper dagger (1), lost		Incisions, 1 slab
12	Gandón 1	Vessel (6 fragments)	Sandstone archer's wrist-guard (1)	Copper fragment (1)		Cupmarks, 1 slab
12	Gandón 2		Grinding fragments (2)		X	
13	A Devesa de Abaixo				X	
15	Monte Forte de Gabriel				X	
16	Atios		Quartz polished stone (NW)	Copper dagger (2), gold cylinder (2), silver spiral (1)		
19	Praia da Rola	Globular jar (1)				
21	A Pedrosa/ Chedeiro (4 cists)	Globular jar (2), Straight-walled beaker (2), Straight-walled beaker with artistic decoration (2) Silver spiral (1)				
23	A Forxa	Straight-walled beaker (4)				
24	Biobra	Sherd				
41	Vilamerelle/ A Pataqueira				X	
46	Cista de O Galiñeiro		Quartzite axe		X	
48	Santa Marta de Lucenza	Straight-walled beaker with artistic decoration (1)				
49	A Roza/ Os Prados	Polipod LBH (lost)				Incisions, 1 slab
50	Coto Brigueiro		Slate archer's wrist-guard (1)			

Fig. 9: Table 2. List of cists and grave goods from the NW Iberian Peninsula from between the 3rd millennium BC and middle of the 2nd millennium BC (Nonat 2017)

burial mound surrounded by ditch and no recognisable central structures (barrow: 17 m in diameter, ditch: 27 m in diameter, enlargement: 30 m in diameter) (Méndez 2007) (fig. 7.4). It has a central breach (typical of the seventeenth century) which seriously affected the burial mound, and a Bell Beaker fragment of unknown context was found amongst the resulting up-cast rubble. This tumulus covered more than a dozen earlier house floors, probably from the Late Neolithic, and the settlement consisting of at least another hundred more sunken hut floors spreading across the surrounding area (Méndez 2007). Both the design of the mound with a ditch and this pattern of domestic space being ‘sealed’ by a Bronze Age mound are well known in Europe (e.g. Czebreszuk and Smyt 2011, Grinsell 1941, Turek 2006).

5) To conclude this section, it is appropriate to comment on the non-ceramic grave goods deposited within megaliths reused by Bell Beaker communities. Objects usually associated with the ‘Bell Beaker package’ have been found within at least 14 megaliths, encompassing the architectural variety described above (fig. 6). These include items made of copper (daggers, *Palmela* points and flat axes), gold (plates, cylindrical wire spirals, diadems) and bronze (an awl, a halberd, a bronze spiral), as well as the following exceptional cases. These are Veiga de Vilavella 240 (an earth barrow, 19 m in diameter), with an undecorated gold diadem, four *Palmela* points, and a grooved copper dagger (Vázquez *et al.* 2015) (fig. 8.1), making it the tumulus burial with the most metallic objects in Galicia. Similarly, the uncategorized tumulus at Monte das Cabras, stands out for its 3 *Palmela* points and copper dagger (López Cuevillas 1956). Finally, Mamelas (a barrow with a rubble kerb, 18 m in diameter), contained 3 *Palmela* points in the central area (Cano *et al.* 2016) (fig. 5.3). In general, there are no well-defined contexts, and no direct associations between these objects and Bell Beaker pottery as found in Mamelas or Parxubeira 2 (Rodríguez 1989) (fig. 5.2). However, these grave goods seem to obey the same ritual rules as those found in the cists, as we will see in the following section.

This pattern of tumuli with grave goods from the ‘Bell Beaker package’, but without accompanying Bell Beaker pottery, seems to be repeated in the Asturias region to the northeast of Galicia. While Bell Beakers have yet to be documented in Asturian graves, the archery equipment (specially wrist-guards) and a golden ring documented in the Los Fitos burial mound, could possibly be related to the Bell Beaker pottery from the nearby copper mines in El Aramo (Blas and Rodríguez 2015, 174). Further-

more, in Northern Portugal Bell Beaker pottery has only been found with characteristic objects of the ‘Bell Beaker package’ in exceptional circumstances, such as at Mamoá de Châ do Carvalhal 1 (Cruz 1992), a unique case in which Bell Beaker pottery was associated with 2 copper daggers and 5 copper *Palmela*-type points.

THE REAL TOMBS OF THE BELL BEAKER COMMUNITIES, WITHOUT BELL BEAKERS

It has been assumed that cists are a funerary tradition of the 2nd millennium BC, as they contain grave goods that characterize burials of individual character, and occasionally of persons with high social status (fig. 10). This status is materialized through metal grave goods (weapons and ornaments), which are in many cases related to the so-called ‘Bell Beaker package’, but there is an explicit absence of Bell Beaker pottery. However, the few recent dates extend the chronology of cists from the beginning of the 3rd (without grave goods) to the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. Architectural characteristics do not facilitate the process of establishing a relative chronology (Nonat 2017), although the presence of grave goods in some of these burials may contribute towards this process.

Some cists were built during the phase when the Bell Beaker communities were active. For instance, the Agro de Nogueira cist (Meijide 2011) indicates that they were in use between 2500 and 2200 BC. In Northern Portugal, near the Spanish border, we have another date from Quinta da Auga Branca (Bettencourt 2010) that indicates they were still in use at the turn of the 3rd to 2nd millennium BC. If we accept that the straight-walled beakers are the latest chronological limit of the Bell Beaker period, then A Forxa in Galicia and O Corvilho in the North of Portugal could provide variants from between 1700 and 1500 BC.

In both Galicia and Northern Portugal, the absence of Bell Beaker (and Penha-type) pottery stands out within the collections of grave goods found in these cists. The grave goods from the cists correspond to a pattern similar to that of some of the tumuli we have already discussed, including metallic objects or undecorated pottery, associated with individual-type burials. This is a standard rule seen in European Bell Beaker communities, with the orderly placement of both the grave goods and the body of the deceased. In the Galician cases where information is available, the objects are arranged in a SE or SW direction. The differences between cist burials, which are probably indications of status-related differentiation, are

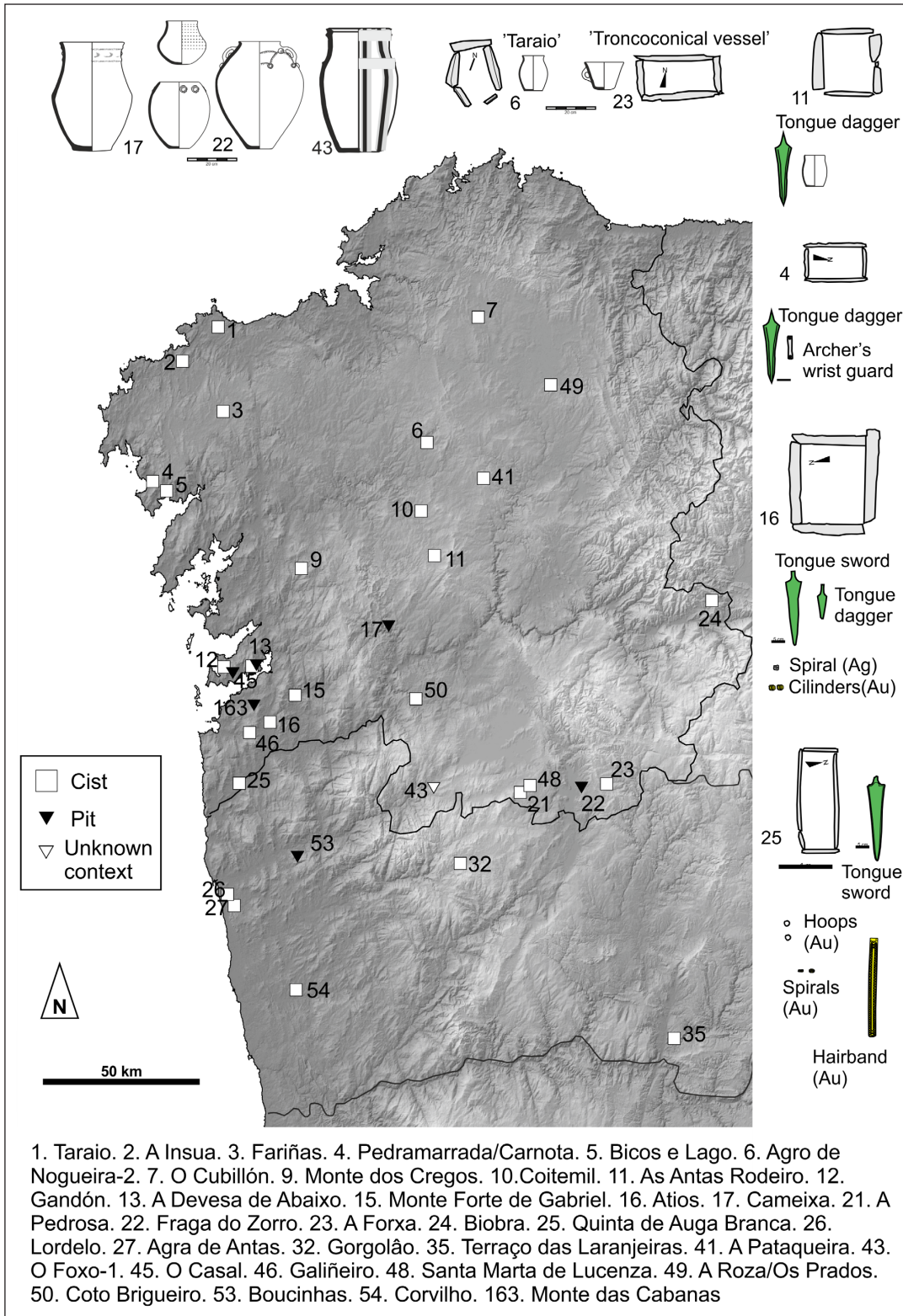


Fig. 10: Distribution of cists and pits in the NW Iberian Peninsula from 3000 BC to 1500 BC, including examples of funerary structures and representative pieces (after Nonat 2017, Prieto 2019)

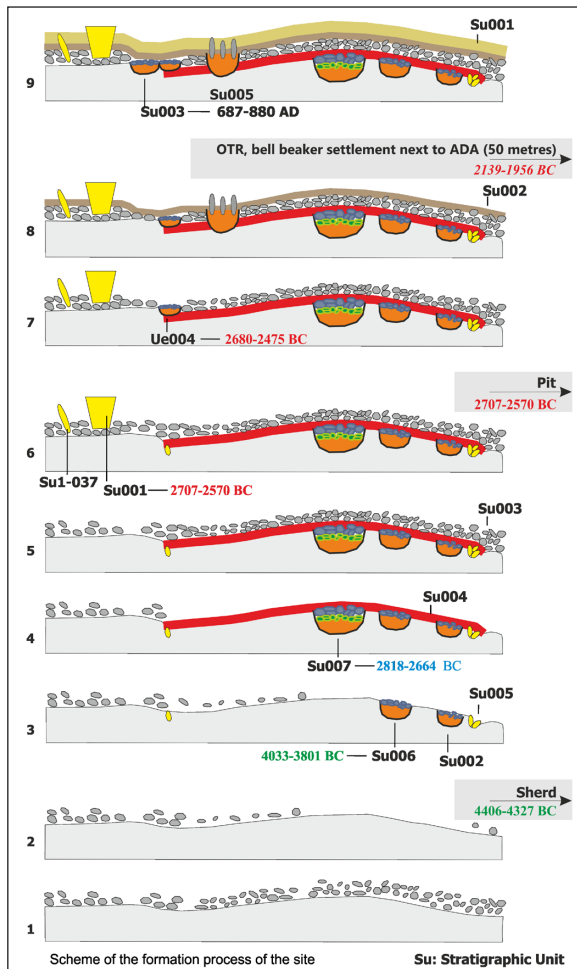


Fig. 11: Scheme of the constructive evolution of the ADA (A Devesa de Abaixo site) (after Vázquez and Prieto 2016)

marked by varying combinations of objects (fig. 9). Notwithstanding, some elements of the regional ‘Bell Beaker package’ stand out within this milieu, such as copper daggers, gold cylindrical wire spirals, silver spirals and archer’s wrist-guards, and other pieces such as schist discs, grinding stones, quartzite axes and undecorated pottery, which are well defined in typological terms in the region (‘Taraio’-type vessels straight-walled beakers and globular jars). Moreover, it seems that the *Palmela* points are particularly associated with megalithic tombs (Parxubeira, Monte das Cabras, Mamelas and Sotorraño), and while archer’s wrist-guards were preferentially deposited in cists (Penamarrada/Carnota, Gandón 1 and Coto Brigueiro cists), only four cists contain individual or pairs of copper daggers (Taraio, Penamarrada/Carnota, As Antas de Rodeiro and Atios).

There is a sub-group of cists featuring carved geometric motifs, but unfortunately there are no associated radiocarbon dates, as they were all chance discoveries. The cist of A Insua has 4 slabs carved with zigzag designs (without grave goods) (Vázquez 1980a), while in the rest of the cases only one decorated slab is preserved, with cupmarks featuring in the case of Gandón 1 (Peña 1985), where an archer’s wrist-guard and a copper fragment was found, and reticulated incisions or lines without a clearly organized pattern occurring in the remaining four cists. In Penamarrada/Carnota an archer’s wrist-guard and a copper dagger were also recovered (Vázquez 1980b); in Coitemil/Cinco Mámoas which contained no grave goods (Vázquez 1980a); in As Antas de Rodeiro a Taraio vase and a (now lost) dagger were found (Vázquez 1980b), and in A Roza/Os Prados where a (now lost) pottery vessel, potentially an LBH, was found (Nonat 2017), suggesting it dates to the Middle Bronze Age. With the exception of this latter cist, which seems to date from a later period, where grave goods are preserved, copper elements are present.

It should also be noted that there may be a degree of cist regionalisation as defined by the pottery types present, as the ‘Taraio’ vessel is documented to the north of the River Miño, while the straight-walled beakers and globular vessels occur to the south (Prieto 1999a, 1999b). Moreover, apart from exceptional cases, metal grave goods predominate in the northern area coinciding with the ‘Taraio’-type vessel distribution, although not necessarily occurring together within individual burials.

In the case of pit burials, archaeological record becomes more difficult to interpret in social terms because the grave goods are poorer (ceramics is the only type of recorded object) and radiocarbon information is more tenuous than in cists. Their morphology can vary from simple shallow or globular profiled pits, to deep shafts, and they are usually associated with ceramic grave goods (Vázquez *et al.* 2015). Recent studies (Vázquez and Prieto 2016) show that there are pit burials from the end of the 4th to the end of the 2nd millennium BC. These include examples from Cameixa (c. 2300- 2000 BC), and Fraga do Zorro (c. 1800 and 1600 BC), which coincide with the cists containing straight-walled beakers. Currently, neither Bell Beaker nor Penha-Type pottery have been found in pit burial contexts, although sherds of Bell Beaker pottery were recovered from an uncertain context⁹ at Fraga do Zorro (Prieto and Gil 2011), a site that included what was probably domestic area and an adjacent pit burial cemetery. In Cameixa, a ceramic urn decorated with applied cordon and lugs, containing a grinding stone and charred earth was deposited

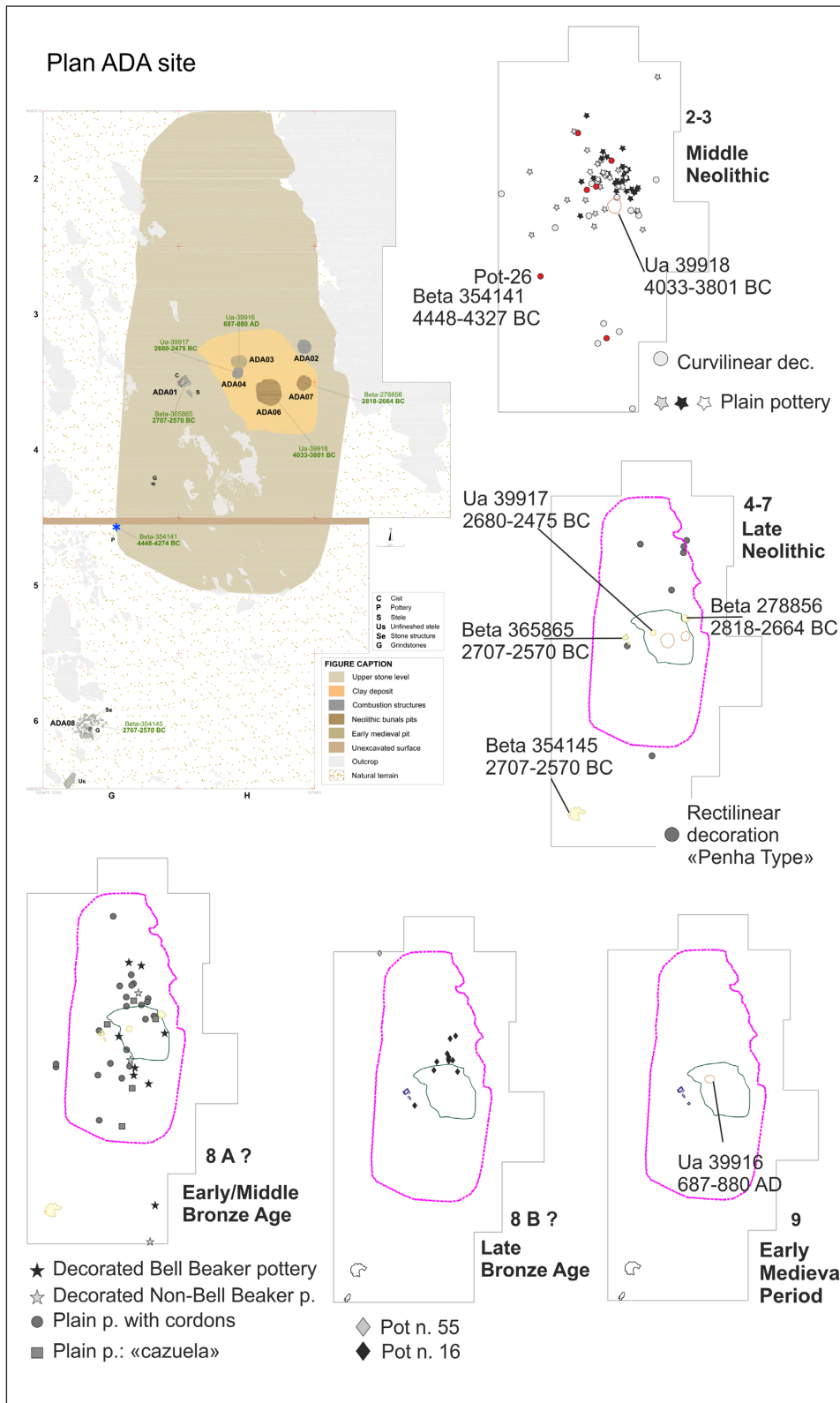


Fig. 12: Distribution of sherds by chronological phases of the ADA (after Vázquez and Prieto 2016)

horizontally within a burial pit (Prieto 2011c). Both sites are located in the area of straight-walled beakers associated with cists from north of the River Miño.

Both cists and pits usually form parts of cemeteries, but there is seldom well-contextualized documentation of this pattern, as they are mostly casual discoveries. Finally, one further site must be mentioned, A Devesa de Abaixo (Vázquez and Prieto 2016) (figs. 11 and 12), a unique case in the NW Iberian Peninsula, without parallels in other regions. It is a cemetery containing a cist, two pit burials, two hearths and two stone stelae, all of which were covered by a layer of clay (7.5 m in diameter) and stones (N-S: 35 m, E-W: 13 m), which in combination acted like a tumulus, and formed part of the same mortuary project. It seems that the intention was to imitate a megalithic monument (with internal architecture under a tumulus), although this possible ‘pseudo-megalith’ is not monumental. Towards the end of the biography of this site, although unfortunately without associated dates, 51 vessels with epi-Bell Beaker grooved decoration, currently a unique late style, were placed and fragmented on the top of the stone layer.

FINAL COMMENTS

We cannot come to a definitive conclusion based upon the existing information, as we are limited by the endemic ignorance of the sex, age or possible social class of the people who were buried in Galicia. Even so, we can take a step further in our understanding of funerary contexts.

First, we must recognize that some Bell Beaker-associated deposits documented in megalithic tombs are possibly funerary in nature and relate to an individual burial rite¹⁰. The careful deposition of one or more complete vessels, as if placed next to a body, corresponds to a strategy that is clearly different from the trend seen in Neolithic burials in megaliths. The norm seen in Bell Beaker burials is clearly opposed to the apparent carelessness and fragmentation¹¹ that characterizes depositions within Neolithic tombs (Chapman 2010), not only in Galicia but throughout Europe. In Galicia, architectural and funerary changes took place just before the introduction of the Bell Beaker. This appears to reflect developments seen within other cultures at the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC in Europe (*i.e.* Conguel, Kerougue Cultures in Brittany), and whose best-known example is the Corded Ware or Single Grave Culture (Prieto 2012).

In Galicia, the individual burial rite accompanied by standardized grave goods designating status according

to a truly Bell Beaker standard does not include the Bell Beaker vessel¹². Tumuli with metallic grave goods and (mainly) cists containing a variety of grave goods, including objects from the ‘Bell Beaker package’, otherwise follow the Continental funerary norm. If we consider that the presence or absence of metal expresses varying levels of greater or lesser status, we should highlight the copper dagger as an element that perhaps embodies the highest status among individuals in this society (Salanova 2007). A simple quantitative study of the presence of the dagger in European graves can substantiate this idea. Copper daggers have only been found in 6% of graves within the Bell Beaker territory, and we cannot fail to note that the Iberian Peninsula is exceptional with 27% of the tombs containing at least one dagger (Prieto 2012, 38-39), and Galicia has 7 tombs with daggers (out of the 96 in the Iberian Peninsula). These quantitative differences in grave goods may reveal different degrees of status (Sarauw 2007), which as previously mentioned, the combinations of objects in Galician grave goods may suggest.

Secondly, the highly fragmentary nature of the Bell Beaker pottery deposited within the megaliths could be accounted for by long-term post-depositional processes (mainly the pieces deposited in chambers or passages), but this is not the only possible answer. If we focus on the discovery contexts of isolated fragments in the megaliths, their external positions are evident, on the periphery of the tumuli and in places that could be significant in the architecture, such as stone kerbs or outer cairns. As such, why not consider that they are the embodiment of a non-funerary rite? Suggesting this option implies rethinking the role of Bell Beaker pottery found in these tombs¹³. The Bell Beaker could have had a different, but no less important role in the new discourse of power, because it materializes both supra-local and supra-regional discourses of these societies. If we consider the presence of the international Bell Beaker vessel (it is above all the Herringbone Variety which predominates over the other styles) in the megalithic tombs, then it may represent how Bell Beaker communities reinforced the ritual appropriation of pre-existing Neolithic communities’ space of the dead and ancestors. It seems that the Bell Beaker pottery was not a socially relevant choice in individual graves, but instead functioned as the designator of a community that represented a new social order¹⁴. Perhaps the least important thing to know in this case is whether the ceramic deposits incorporated in the megaliths represent burials or not, since the same effect was possibly sought in both cases. Although there are authors who think that the Bell Beaker

phenomenon ended up being assimilated by native Neolithic cultures (Shennan 1976, Strahm 2008) because ‘the Bell Beaker phenomenon also then became an ideological component of the native regional End Neolithic cultures; they assimilated it or were acculturated by the Bell Beaker phenomenon’ (Strahm 2008: 210). It does not seem like a process voluntarily adopted by native communities. Rather the Bell Beaker seems to be used everywhere as an element of inter-community appropriation and a symbol used to suppress other ideological or socio-cultural perspectives. As such, perhaps we should consider that rather than being an expression of status within a community, what the Bell Beaker was really expressing was the identity of a community that had ideas and a way of life that were essentially different from those of the Neolithic period. The ceramic medium thereby made it possible to express in a generalized way throughout Europe the essence of a new identity that filtered through the entire social fabric of these communities, until it altered completely after 300 or 400 years, and persisted for more than a millennium.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to Thor McVeigh, whose suggestions and comments have helped to improve the text substantially. Thanks to Guadalupe Castro who contributed the drawing of two Bell Beakers from Guidoiro M4. She is currently studying the ceramics of this site. This study was carried out as a part of the project PRX18/00408 ‘Salvador Madariaga’, as an invited researcher at the Department of Anthropology of the University of Montreal.

NOTAS

1. The objects that are part of the ‘Bell Beaker package’ in Galicia are those defined by Harrison (1977) for the Iberian Peninsula, for example, copper tongue daggers and Palmela points, some gold ornaments, archer’s tools, stone arrowheads or wrist-guards (see figs. 6 and 9 in present work). The discussion on the most correct way to classify the material elements of the so-called Bell Beaker Set that Besse and Strahm present is especially interesting (Besse and Strahm 2001).
2. This paper will not mention the date known for this period in detail, as they have been published in a number of updated compilation articles, especially Prieto (2011a) and Sanches and Barbosa (2018) for the 3rd and 2nd millennia in Galicia and Portugal, and Prieto *et al.* (2012) for the sites from the 5th to 3rd millennia in Galicia. All dates are cal BC.
3. This question has never been discussed in the Galician case, although it has been extensively investigated in other regions of Europe (i.e. Fokkens and Nicolis 2012, Rojo *et al.* 2008 and 2014).
4. Fábregas and Vilaseco (2004) define the sizes of tumuli based on their diameter and height as follows: small tumuli are those with a diameter of less than 12 metres, and a height of 0.5 metres; medium-sized tumuli have a diameter of between 15 and 25 metres, and a height of between 1 and 2 metres, while large tumuli have a diameter of more than 30 metres, with some reaching a diameter of 70 metres and a height of 4 metres, in exceptional cases. A study of megaliths in Lalin, a small district in the interior of Galicia, provided the following proportions: 22% small-sized tumuli, 54% medium-sized, and 23% large (only 7% of these tumuli have a diameter of more than 30 m) (Fábregas and Vilaseco 2004, 68, diagram 2).
5. ‘Mound enlargement’ is a concept that is regularly used to describe an activity that involves adding earth to a previously constructed tumulus, achieving a more monumental appearance for the burial with minimum effort. We also refer to it as a ‘second tumulus’.
6. LBH vessel: *Largo Bordo Horizontal* (Wide Horizontal Rim vessel) (Nonat *et al.* 2015).
7. Even in Europe, publications suggesting the existence of a rupture in the use of megaliths by the Beaker communities are exceptional (Jeneusse 2020).
8. The polished stone artefacts, mainly consisting of axes, adzes and maces were called the *Rechaba horizon* (Vázquez 1979), based on the typology of the stone and its documentation in tumuli, probably of an individual nature. There are still no dates for this type of site.
9. The spatial study of ceramics in this site is pending. Although most of the pottery was documented in the pits, some fragments were recovered in other areas of the site, such as Bell-Beaker pottery. The only dating of the site comes from inside one of the graves. More samples would need to be dated to confirm whether the site was operational in more than one phase.
10. This phenomenon differs from the findings of other regions of Iberia, in which the bell beaker grave goods are interpreted as collective burials that persist in the bell beaker communities (Bueno *et al.* 2005, 78).
11. In many cases this fragmentation is caused by the repeated use of the same spaces over time in the grave (Schmitt *et al.* 2018).
12. This pattern is present in other European regions (Fokkens and Nicolis 2012).
13. The role of the feast as a key activity in the development of bell-shaped societies has gained importance in recent years. The archaeological record shows material evidence of the development of activities that consume a lot of food and drink alcohol (Rojo *et al.* 2008). For example, several mounds have been documented in Iberia Central that have been interpreted as possible places of celebrations that commemorate the death of a significant person or as cenotaphs (Rojo *et al.* 2014).
14. Other authors have thought about this extensively. Strahm thinks “the Bell Beaker-specific artefacts represent a specific distinctive sign of a community within the End Neolithic soci-

ety. They are the representation of an ideology” (Strahm 2008: 210). Fokkens argues for “This ‘standardised’ selection of artifacts in Beaker burials, does not represent elites in my view, but they represent consciously constructed identities of ‘exemplary’ ancestors” (Fokkens 2012: 30).

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