

Proença-a-Nova International Archaeological Field Camp

Campo Arqueológico de Proença-a-Nova

2020

Iron Age hillfort of CASTELO DO CHÃO DO TRIGO: fourth season of excavations

Period June 15 to 27, 2020

Objectives following the results and objectives of the previous campaigns, we will keep our purpose of gathering further scientific data regarding the structural and functional aspects of the organization of this Iron Age settlement and relevant information about its chronology of occupation. To do so, we will maintain our focus on the areas already under excavation: the ramparts and the housing structures located in the eastern area of the site.

Location near Peral, municipality of Proença-a-Nova, Intermunicipal Community of Beira Baixa Portugal.

Programme archaeological excavation (12 days / two weeks); other field practices (site recording, findings labelling, archaeological surveying); lectures; leisure trips.

Archaeological excavation team Paulo Félix (site director); other participants and volunteers.

Brief description of the archaeological site Castelo do Chão do Trigo or, as local inhabitants know it, *Cerca do Castelo*, was described for the first time at the beginning of the second half of the 18th century in the inquiries that the state ordered to be done, following the devastating earthquake that destroyed Lisbon: it was then defined as a very ancient village surrounded by a wall with two visible entrances.

This settlement is located at a prominent hill bounded by a stream that draws a deep meander, which stresses even more the defensive traits of the emplacement. The most accessible path is the southwestern slope, where we anticipate the existence of the main entrance to the hillfort, a common feature in contemporary settlements all-over the Southwest of the Iberian Peninsula. The defensive walls are made of blocks and slabs

collected from the local bedrock (schists and greywackes) or the near stream, placed in a very well-structured way and cemented with a sort of clay mortar.



1. Location of Proença-a-Nova Municipality in mainland Portugal.

The findings are clearly dominated by pottery, hand-made or manufactured with the help of lightweight turntables and, possibly, some kind of kick wheel. Shapes are the customary for this epoch and regional context: round-shaped pots and jars with narrow necks, very everted rims, flat bases and no decoration. The only example with some sort of decoration collected to the date is a sherd of a well-polished black surface vessel that shows a pattern of stamped impressions, usually associated to very late moments of the Iron Age, even from the Roman conquest (II-I centuries b.c.e.).

Other findings include some lithic tools, fragments of several millstones, collar beads, and evidences of metallurgical practices.

We think this settlement was occupied in the period corresponding to the Late (or, Second) Iron Age, between the 5th/4th and the 1st century b.c.e., being the last date a *terminus ad quem* inferred from the lack of any material indication related to the control of

the region by the Romans. It's worth remembering that this process took more than one century to be accomplished, from the first skirmishes with the Lusitanians (around 195 b.c.e.) to the pacification campaign lead by Caius Julius Caesar in 61/60 b.c.e.



2. A view of the inner defensive wall, very destructed and superimposed by a modern agricultural terrace wall (2019).



3. The outer defensive wall during its excavation (2018)

Useful references

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