
Current researches on Bell Beakers

Proceedings of the 15th International Bell Beaker Conference:
From Atlantic to Ural.

5th - 9th May 2011

Poio (Pontevedra, Galicia, Spain)

M. Pilar Prieto Martínez & Laure Salanova (coords.)



2013. Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

© Galician ArchaeoPots: wikipot.com

ISBN: 978-84-941537-0-9

Depósito Legal: C 1281-2013

Printed in Santiago de Compostela (Spain). June 2013

Editorial: Copynino-Centro de Impresión Digital



Contents

List of contributors	13
Chapter 1. A corded-mixed Bell Beaker vase at the monumental enclosure of Forca, Maia, North of Portugal (Bettencourt, A. M. S.; Luz, S.)	15
Chapter 2. The Dolmen of Dombate in its bell beaker phase. Ceramic styles and occupation of space (Bello Diéguez, J.M.; Lestón Gómez, M.; Prieto Martínez, M.P)	21
Chapter 3. Bell beaker findings in rock art contexts (Seoane-Veiga, Y.; Prieto Martínez, M. P.; Dal Zovo, C.)	31
Chapter 4. Achievements and blunders in the application archaeometric techniques for the study of a chalcolithic site with Bell Beakers (Blasco, C.; Liesau, C.; Ríos, P)	41
Chapter 5. The Bell Beaker funeral group from Sierentz “Les Villas d’Aurèle” (Haut-Rhin, France) (Vergnaud,L.)	51
Chapter 6. Two new burial sites of Bell Beaker Culture with an exceptional find from Eastern Moravia/Czech Republic (Peška, J.)	61
Chapter 7. Funerary Rituals, Social Relations and Diffusion of Bell Beaker Csepel-Group (Endrődi, A.)	73
Chapter 8. New archaeobotanical Data of the Bell Beaker Csepel-Group (Gyulai, F.)	89
Chapter 9. New dating of the Bell Beaker Horizon in the region of Madrid (Ríos, P)	97
Chapter 10. Bell Beaker influence in the Early Bronze Age on the basis of latest discoveries in Rozbórz, in south-eastern Poland (Jarosz, P.; Mazurek, M.; Okoński, J.; Szczepanek, A.) ...	111
Chapter 11. Where does the East meet the West? A find of a wrist guard in the Republic of Moldova (Demchenko, T.)	117
Chapter 12. Two beaker vessels from Maxey Quarry, Cambridgeshire (Gibson, A.; Snape, N.)	129
Chapter 13. Hut structures from the bell beaker horizon: housing, communal or funerary use in the Camino de las Yéseras site (Madrid) (Liesau, C.; Rios, P.; Aliaga, R.; Daza, A.; Blasco, C.)	139
Chapter 14. The Beginning of Terminal Lithic Industries in Moravia (Kopacz, J.)	153
Chapter 15. The Bell beaker culture in Eastern Central Europe and silicite (flint) Axes (Přichystal, A.; Šebela, L.)	163

Chapter 16. Bell Beaker metal and metallurgy in Western Europe (Labaune, M.)	177
Chapter 17. Technology of Bell Beaker pottery in Bohemia (Neumannova, K.)	189
Chapter 18. Bell Beaker ware from Estremadura, Portugal, and its likely influence on the appearance of Maritime Bell Beaker ware (Carvalho-Amaro, G.)	197
Chapter 19. Unity and Circulation : what underlies the homogeneity of Galician bell beaker ceramic style ? (Prieto Martínez, M. P)	209
Chapter 20. Beaker occupation at Cavenham Quarry, Suffolk (Gibson, A.; Gill, D.)	251

1

A corded-mixed Bell Beaker vase at the monumental enclosure of Forca, Maia, North of Portugal

Bettencourt, A. M. S.; Luz, S.

Abstract:

The aim of this work is to present a fragment of a corded bell beaker vase (CZ/M) identified at the archaeological site of Forca/Lavra, in North-west of Portugal.

Forca is a place that contains monumental structures, similar to other enclosures of the Iberian Peninsula. In Forca, ditches and palisades were built containing internal fences, pits structures and fireplaces in use, at least, between the Chalcolithic and Bronze Ages.

The fragment of the bell beaker vessel appeared inside a ditch, in a Chalcolithic context associated with a radiocarbon date from 2.625 to 2.337 BC.

Corded bell beaker vases are rare in the Iberian Peninsula and known only in three other Portuguese prehistoric sites: the enclosure of Porto Torrão, Ferreira do Alentejo, in the Southwest, and the walled enclosures of Castelo Velho de Freixo de Numão and Castanheiro do Vento, both places are located in Vila Nova de Foz Côa, in the Northwest. The first one appeared inside a Chalcolithic level, the second one was in from the beginning of the third quarter of the third millennia BC, and the third one, still unpublished, is also surely of the third millennium BC. Based on its rarity and on these contexts of findings the authors consider the hypothesis that this kind of bell beaker may have been used in a very special way of action and have circulated mainly in places of great importance, collectively serving a significant population group.

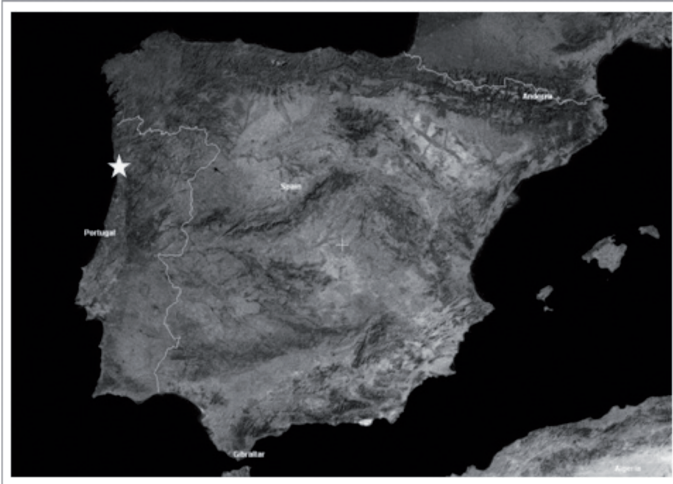
Key words

North-west Portugal; corded bell beaker vase (CZ/M); third millennia; monumental and collective contexts.

Introduction

This work aims to present a fragment of a corded bell beaker vase, in the European variety CZ/M, according to the classification of R.J. Harrison (1977), identified in the context of a preventive excavation, between 2006 and 2008, at the archaeological site of Forca, Lavra, municipality of Maia, district of Porto, in North-west of Portugal (Fig. 1) and also tries to integrate it into chronological and cultural terms.

Forca is a place that contains monumental structures, similar to other enclosures of the Iberian Peninsula within a plateau of 97 m to 103 m height of the middle of Leça basin, already frequented since Neolithic times, as attested by some megalithic tombs.



At Forca, ditches and palisades were built in an area with several acres, containing internal fences, pits structures, fireplaces, etc. (Fig. 2). This place was in use, at least between the Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age (3rd and early 2nd millennium BC) having been subjected to various long term architectural renovations (Valera & Rebuge 2008, Muralha-Cardoso 2008; Bettencourt 2009, 2010, 2011). It is a ceremonial place where deposits were made, along with handling numerous ceramic containers and lithic artifacts, as well as molluscs, crustaceans and meat consumed in rites performed by the population that lived in the Leça valley during the third millennium BC (Bettencourt 2010).

The fragment of the corded bell beaker vessel was found within the stratigraphic unit 662 under conditions that we believe were not associated with intentional depositions, if we take into account the criteria established for ceramic deposits by Matt Brudenell (in press).

The stratigraphic unit 662 is a sedimentary deposit that corresponds to a pocket of dark brown soil, of

Figure 1. Location of Forca in North-west of Iberian Peninsula

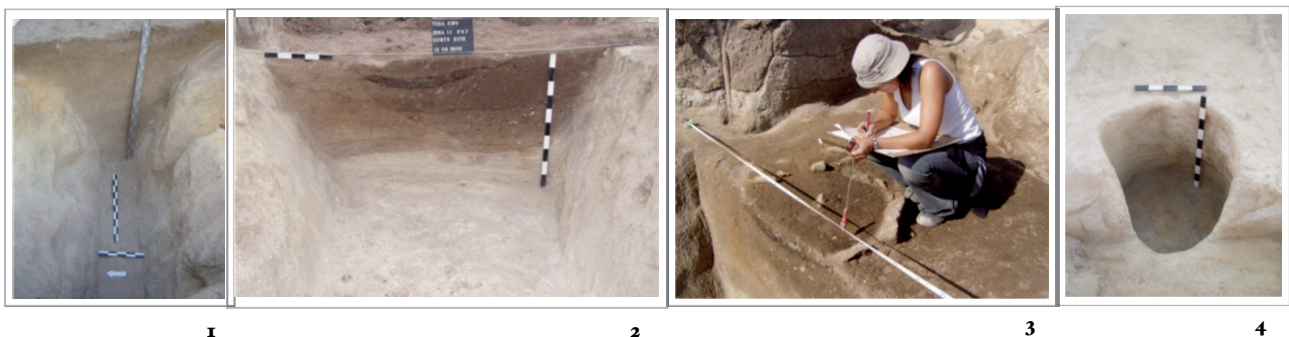


Figure 2. Some excavated structures in the enclosure of Forca. 2.1 and 2.2: Ditches; 2.3 Fireplace inside a ditch; 2.4. Pit structure (by Arqueologia & Património and City Hall of Maia)

medium compacity with charcoal nodules that filled the top of the ditch 46, a structure more than 2 m. wide and about 1.5 m. deep (Fig. 3).

In association with the bell beaker fragment, several charcoals and 113 pottery sherds were found. These sherds were of small and medium dimensions (between c. 2.2 mm and 6.4 mm), with fractures that were often rolled and different decorative organizations and techniques such as ceramics with “filled triangle motifs” and “Espinhada”, “Pentada” and “Penha” ceramics. We also found a small number of lithic elements in this context, such as flaking debris, stone hammers, a flake and a polisher.

The bell beaker sherd

The sherd in analysis probably belongs to the body or the base part of a bell beaker vase, created by hand, with a paste composed of fine and medium grains of quartz and mica. The sherd is partially eroded although, had originally inner and outer surfaces polished. The fractures are rough (Fig. 4).

The paste is very brittle, reddish in colour and the core is dark grey, possibly resulting from inadequate firing.

The sherd is decorated with several horizontal lines carried through the corded decoration, defining bands

filled by oblique lines made by shell printing, similar to what L. Salanova (1992) calls “coquille fine”. Among the various bands with printed decoration there are undecorated areas of irregular height. These features allow us to include this container in the “Herringbone variety” (Fig. 5).

Dimensions:

Height: 6 cm; Width: 5,1 cm; Thickness: 0,6 cm.
Height of undecorated bands: between 0,4 cm to 0,5 cm; Height of decorated bands: between 0,8 cm to 1,1 cm (Fig. 6).

Radiocarbon date

Some of the charcoals of the stratigraphy unit 662 were dated. Even though is in a secondary deposit context, that is, of materials that were taken out of their original context served to obstruct the ditch, there is a similar look between the different sherds, which,

Lab. Ref.	Data BP	Cal. 1 sigma	Cal. 2 sigma	Material
Beta - 258088	3.980 ± 50	2.576-2.460	2.828-2.824 (0.3%) 2.625-2.337 (94.2%) 2.322- 2.308 (1.0%)	Charcoal

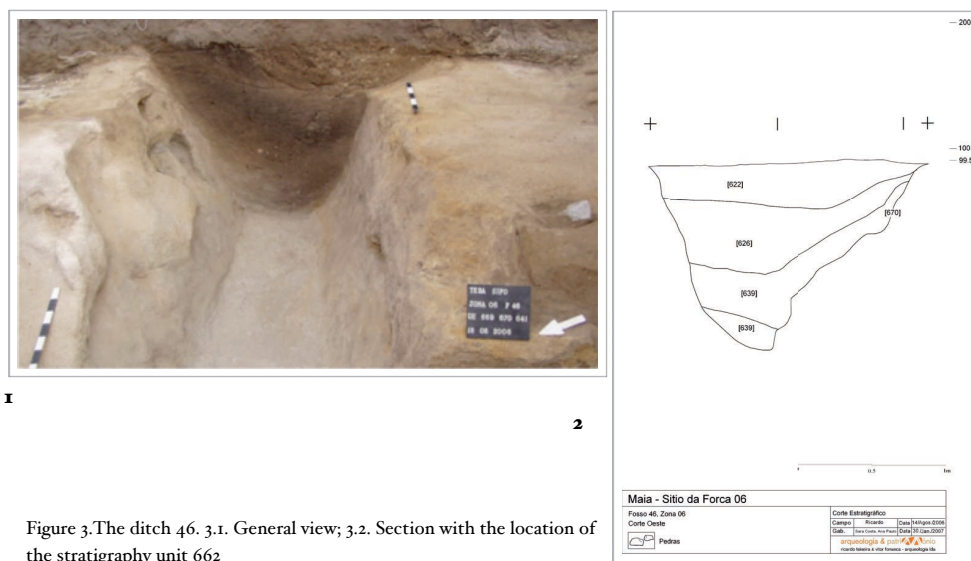


Figure 3. The ditch 46. 3.1. General view; 3.2. Section with the location of the stratigraphy unit 662



Figure 4. The bell beaker sherd of Forca (by Manuel Santos/D. Diogo de Sousa Museum, Braga)



Figure 5. Detail of decorations from the bell beaker sherd

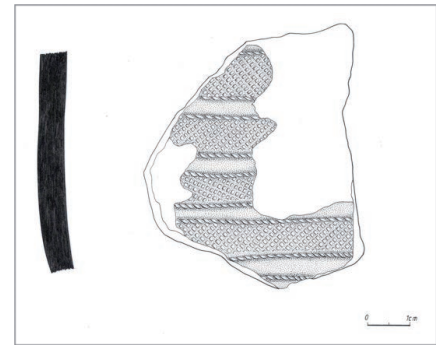


Figure 6. Drawing of the bell beaker sherd (by Amélia Marques)

makes us believe that they are from the same time period.

The data obtained allowed us to consider the entire unit 622 in the Chalcolithic, especially between 2.625 and 2.337 BC (2 sigma) (Bettencourt 2010). This is consistent with all the excavated artifacts.

Final Considerations

The analysis of the context of finding and the characteristics of this ceramic fragment allowed us to consider a series of factors.

First, we can assume that the presence of this single bell beaker vessel in all the thousands of ceramic fragments manipulated in the location of Forca indicates its symbolic importance in what it would have been its primary deposition.

Secondly, its poor quality firing and subsequent low resistance also suggests that it was made for restricted use or to be kept in a closed context.

Its presence in filling of ditch 46, in association with numerous ceramic fragments of rolled edges, suggests that when this structure was filled, these materials would have been at the surface and abandoned. This requires an intense and prolonged occupation of the

place but in a cyclical time, which fits well to the ceremonial interpretation we have given to this enclosure (Bettencourt 2009).

Corded bell beaker vases are very rare in the Iberian Peninsula and only known in three Portuguese sites besides this one. We refer to the “settlement” or enclosure of Porto Torrão, Ferreira do Alentejo, in the Southwest, inside a Chalcolithic level dated to the 1st quarter of the 3rd millennium BC (Cardoso & Soares 1990/1992; Cardoso 2000); to the walled enclosure of the Castelo Velho de Freixo de Numão, Vila Nova de Foz Côa, in a range of use from the beginning to the third quarter of the 3rd millennium BC (S. Jorge 2002; S. Jorge & Rubin 2002) and the walled enclosure of Castanheiro do Vento, Vila Nova de Foz Côa, probably from the Chalcolithic context. And finally, the fragment found is very similar to the one discussed here, therefore, it can be included in the “Herringbone variety”.

Based on these contexts of findings, the authors consider the hypothesis that the corded bell beaker may have been used in actions that mainly took occurred in places of great collective and symbolic importance during the 3rd millennium BC.

Due to the scarcity of this type of container, as well as other bell beaker varieties compared to thousands of ceramic sherds found in all enclosures, it is assumed that these would be used in a restricted way, handled by a small number of people, who knew the meaning of the signs engraved on the vases, and who had the power to conduct rites associated with them. In this sense, the bell beaker vase is not a main fossil nor corresponds to a precise chronology, anterior or posterior to the Penha type ceramic, or with the “filled triangle motifs” typical of Portuguese northwest, or penteada and espinhada decoration, which are more typically found in Portuguese northeast. It is another element in a group of elements with great symbolic power that circulated in various contexts over an extremely long period of time.

If we compare the Portuguese data with Galicia we can see that in this region the number of corded bell beaker fragment finds are, although scarce, superior to the number found in Portugal. This makes it possible to support the hypothesis envisaged by J. Suarez Otero (1997, 2011), that the corded bell beaker would have Atlantic origin, a theory which is shared by one of the authors of this work (Bettencourt 2011).

In relation to the Galician contexts, we observe that corded bell beakers were either deposited in megalithic funerary monuments, illustrating reuse and insertion of these Neolithic constructions in new cognitive universes of the III millennia BC, or in presumed “settlements”. In the first case we refer to Forno dos Mouros, Toques, Corunha, to Alto de San Cosme, Mos, Pontevedra (Prieto Martínez 2011) and to Monte dos Marxos, Rodeiro, Pontevedra (Suárez Otero & Lestón 2005). In the second we refer to A Fontenla, Moaña, Pontevedra and As Gándaras de Budiño, O Porriño, Pontevedra (Suárez 1995; Prieto 1999). Although these two last sites are normally classified as settlements, we think that, given the complex network of sites connected to each other in the Recent Prehistory of the Northwest Peninsula (Jorge 2006; Bettencourt 2009), this statement requires a better empiric basis². As a result, the Galician data are not yet contradictory

to the envisaged hypothesis, taking into account that the bell beaker deposits found in megalithic monuments indicate the presence of important social ceremonies, which may point towards a symbolic reinstatement of ancestors in new ideological aspects of the third millennium BC.

Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful to Ana Castanheira Santos for the English translation of this text.

This work was developed under the SFRH/BSAB/986/10 supported by the Portuguese “Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia” – FCT (Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology)

Footnotes:

1-We are grateful for this information to Susana Oliveira Jorge.

2-It is known another place in Galicia where it was found a corded bell beaker sherd. This is the rock shelter of Arca dos Penedos, Ourense (Eguileta *et al.* 1993/1994), although we do not know the precise context of the finding.

References

- Bettencourt, A.M.S. 2009. A Pré-História do Minho: do Neolítico à Idade do Bronze, In P. Pereira (ed.). *Minho. Traços de Identidade*. Braga: Conselho Cultural da Universidade do Minho: 70-113.
- Bettencourt, A.M.S. 2010. *Comunidades pré-históricas da bacia do Leça. O Rio da Memória: Arqueologia no Território do Leça*. Matosinhos: Câmara Municipal: 30-81.
- Bettencourt, A.M.S. 2011. El vaso campaniforme en el Norte de Portugal. Contextos, cronologías y significados. In M. Pilar Prieto-Martínez & Laure Salanova (eds.) *Las comunidades campaniformes en Galicia. Cambios sociales en el III y II milenios BC en el NW de la Península Ibérica*. Pontevedra: Diputación de Pontevedra: 363-374.

- Brudenell, M. 2011. Sherd biographies and the dynamics of ceramic deposition on Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age settlement sites in Eastern England. A Joint Consideration of the Study of Prehistory in Britain and Portugal: Towards a Critical Understanding of Time, Space, Practice and Object in the Prehistoric Past. Porto: Flup, Ceaucp (in press)
- Cardoso, J.L. & Soares, A.M.M. 1990/1992. Cronologia absoluta para o campaniforme da Estremadura e do Sudoeste de Portugal. *O Arqueólogo Português* 8/10. Série IV: 203-228.
- Eguileta Franco, J. M., Fernández Ibáñez, C. & Seara Carballo, A. 1993/1994. Un campaniforme cordado procedente de A Limia (Ourense). *Brigantium* 8: 57-67.
- Harrison, R.J. 1977. *The bell beaker cultures of Spain and Portugal*. Cambridge, MA: American School of Prehistoric Research. Peabody Museum, Harvard University (Bulletin of the American School of Prehistoric Research; 35).
- Jorge, S.O. 2002. An all-over corded bell beaker in Northern Portugal: Castelo Velho de Freixo de Numão (Vila Nova de Foz Côa). Some remarks. *Journal of Iberian Archaeology* 4: 107-129.
- Jorge, S.O. 2006. *O Passado é redondo. Dialogando com os sentidos dos primeiros recintos monumentais*. Porto: Afrontamento.
- Jorge, S.O. & Rubinos, A. 2002. Cronologia absoluta de Castelo Velho de Freixo de Numão: os dados e os problemas. *Côavisão* 4: 95-111.
- Muralha Cardoso, J. 2008. Escavação Arqueológica no sítio pré-histórico do Lugar da Forca (Maia). *Actas das I^ª Jornadas Arqueológicas da Bacia do Rio Leça*. Matesinus 6. Matosinhos: Câmara Municipal.
- Prieto-Martinez, M.P. 1999. Caracterización del estilo cerámico de la Edad del Bronce en Galicia : cerámica campaniforme y cerámica no decorada. *Complutum* 10 : 17-90.
- Prieto-Martinez, M.P. 2011. Poder y estrategias de apropiación del espacio en las comunidades campaniformes. Dos casos de estudio : el dolmen de Forno dos Mouros y el túmulo 3 del Alto de San Cosme. In M. Pilar Prieto-Martínez & Laure Salanova (eds.) *Las comunidades campaniformes en Galicia. Cambios sociales en el III y II milenios BC en el NW de la Península Ibérica*. Pontevedra: Diputación de Pontevedra: 85-94.
- Suárez Otero, J. 1997. Cerámica campaniforme com decoración cordada en la Península Ibérica. Acotaciones en torno a una problemática. *Boletín Avriense* n° 26: 27 - 46.
- Suárez Otero, J. 2011. Del campaniforme cordado (AOC) en el Noroeste Hispánico. Un extraño e inesperado invitado. In M. Pilar Prieto-Martínez & Laure Salanova (eds.) *Las comunidades campaniformes en Galicia. Cambios sociales en el III y II milenios BC en el NW de la Península Ibérica*. Pontevedra: Diputación de Pontevedra: 259-265.
- Suárez Otero, J. & Lestón Gómez, M. 2005. Un vaso com decoración cordada en Galicia y el problema de los orígenes de la cerámica campaniforme en el occidente ibérico. *Madridier Mitteilungen* 46: 1-21.
- Valera, A.C. & Rebuge, J. 2008. Datação de B-OSL para o fosso 1 do sítio Calcolítico do Lugar da Forca (Maia). *Apontamentos de Arqueologia e Património* 1 : 11- 12. Available online at <http://www.nia-era.org/>