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# Brief Guide of the Archaeological «Neixón» complex.



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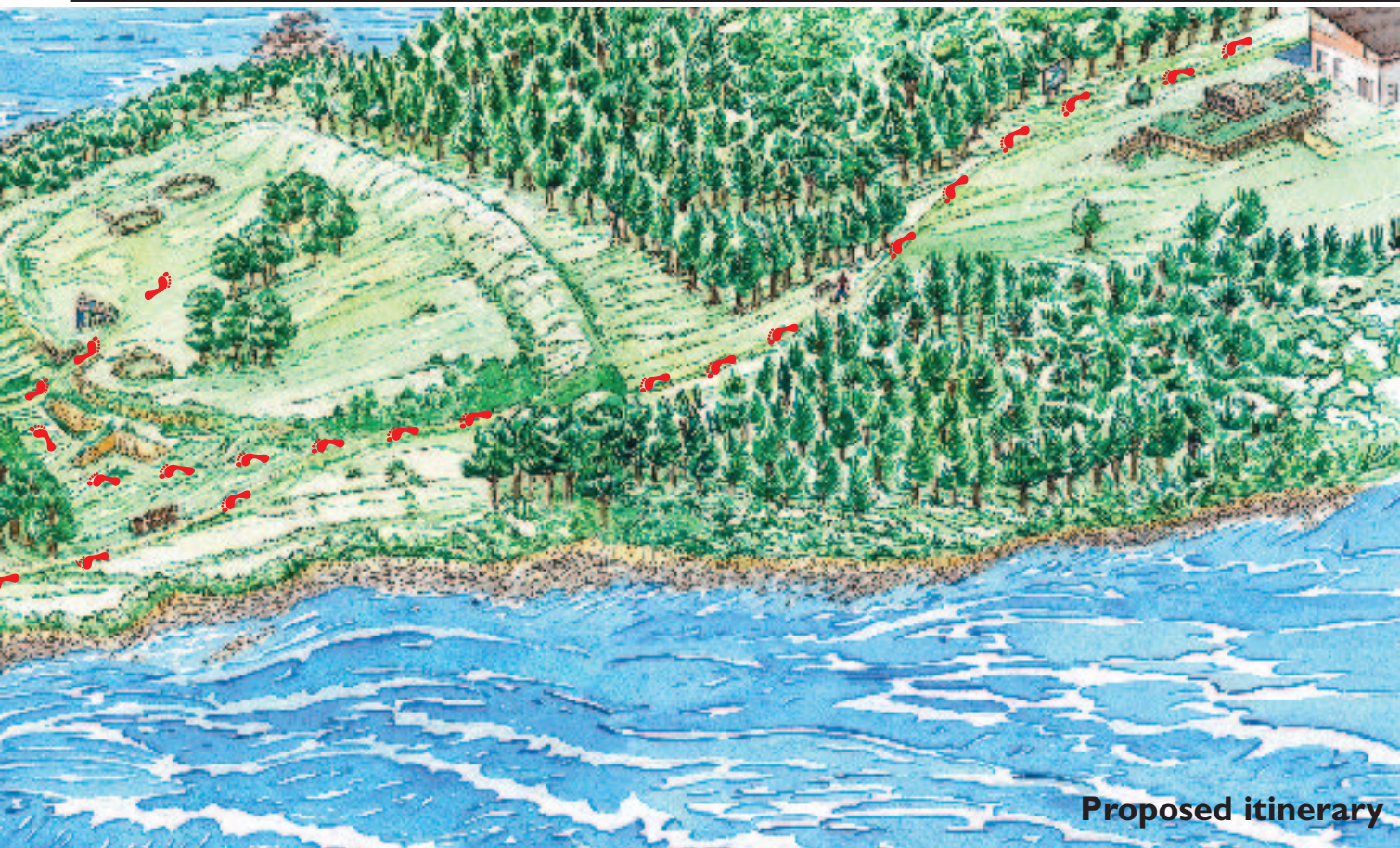
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## **Brief Guide of the Archaeological «Neixón» complex.**









**Proposed itinerary**









## Location

The hillforts of Neixón are located in a small peninsula located inside the Arousa Stuary, specifically in one of the zones more to the interior of the same, situated to the NNW. This place got an important local development of the metallurgy of bronze and iron for much of the first millennium BC, which comes to be known as the Iron's Age, while the culture Castrexa was developing.

Its situation is strategic in relation with the commercial circuit maritime; likewise the mining wealth of the zone, what in some measure determined an important local development of the bronze and iron metallurgy during the first millennium BC.

## The first studies.

At first of last century, investigators of different academic and scientific institutions carried out different studies since the first decades because of the amazing finds that amateurs and erudites from this area were achieved. The unusual interest of these intellectuals is because of in Neixón was detected a human settlement during the transitional period between the Bronze's and Iron's Age, becoming Neixón Pequeno like one of the hillforts with a later settlement in the Northwest peninsular. Initially it was understo-



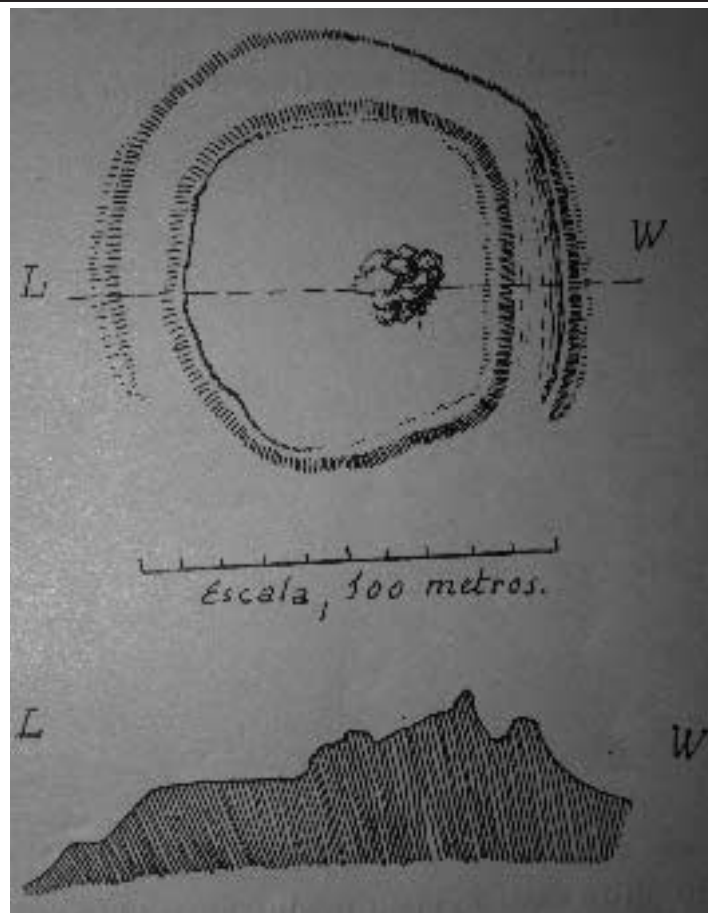


od like a fusion between the native tradition, the *Oestrinnios*, and central European cultural contribution product of a hipotetical celtic invasion from the Northwest at the end c. IV BC, personified in *Saefes*.

Likewise, in these first studies is emphasized the existente of an important metallurgical activity fundamentally of bronze, though with presence of smelting of iron. Later, in the decade of 70 appeared “arybalos” (a container of aromatic oils made with polichromium glass and Punic origin, circa c.V BC) is confirmed that Neixón was supporting commercial contacts to long distance, concretly with the Mediterranean world.

In the decade of 80, the archaeological complex of Neixón turns into a degraded and marginal place: tracks are opened, forest plantations are done and numerous dust-bins appear.

In 1996 a new stage begins for Neixón, because of autonomic and municipal administrations appreciate the opportunity to upgrade the archaeological complex. Later, about the year 2000, when the Galician Network of Archaeological Heritage is created (2001), a part of archaeological structures found since the first c. XX are consolidated and returned.







Since 2003 until today, they've realized archaeological excavations consistently to characterize the archaeological deposit and continue the process of revaluation of archaeological complex.

### **The Big Hillfort**

According to the most recent studies, there were three differential moments of occupation in the Big Hillfort of Neixón: a pre-Roman occupation (phase I), Roman occupation (phase II) and finally late-Roman occupation (phase III).

**Phase I (c.V-II BC)** At this first moment of Big Hillfort occupation, their inhabitants began to have contact with Punic commercial circuits and other producing zones of hillfort's world, with short, medium and long distance trade. In this first phase, it could be that the hillfort was used like a big site dedicated to storage of surplus, like it can be because of a lot of storage moats that were located inside the studied areas during the last years.

**Phase II** It matches with the change of age c. I BC -II AD; at this moment a lot of products proceeds of Roman commercial circuit appears; the same happen in another hillforts as Santa Tecla, el Castro de Vigo, Facho de Donón, Castro de la Lanzada, etc.



Phase III It coincides chronologically with the Roman empire's crisis of the end of the c. III, to finish left around c. IV-V AD.

### **Constructive sequence and formal characteristics**

From a physiognomic point of view, the compound presents a plant lightly oval, with 95 meters in the sense North-South and 105 meters in the axis East-West.

The higher compound of the Big Hillfort was built during the c. V-IV BC. A perimeter moat of monumental nature encircled the top, possibly with a wooden fence as well in the SE access.

The parapet was possibly built around the c. III BC, and near the end of the c. II BC. it could lost its defensive function, coinciding with the rapid process of closing of the moat, that would come determined by the remodeling of the defensive system in which the parapet extends North and the lateral appendices that close the top of Neixón. The moat was excavated on the rock and it has a section in V, having 3 meters of depth. A Dust-bin with a great quantity of organic remains that give a lot of information about their nourishing diet (cattle species, practices of shellfishing, palaeoenvironment, etc) was found forming a part of their landfill.















By the change of Age an urban restructuring is produced; the level of occupation most ancient is clearly dismantled using the material to refill the southeast entry.

Terraces that could be inhabitable areas or elements of the defensive system are preserved out of the acropolis, both in the oriental sector and in the western one, and the space that is between hillforts, like happens in la Gabia I could justify its existence on the part of the defensive system or as configuration of the attached terraces like conditioning bench-cover, or enclosed, as delimiting of the space or a possible mining exploitation.

The structures of masonry returned in the Big Hillfort belongs to the last occupation phase of archaeological deposit, so they were built from c. III AD in forward (sector 1 and 2) and they concern to the low imperial occupation phase or maybe after Roman, as a result of the located materials, while that the reforms made along the occupation of the Big Hillfort caused the archaeological structures of previous epochs were dismantled.

### **Material Remains**

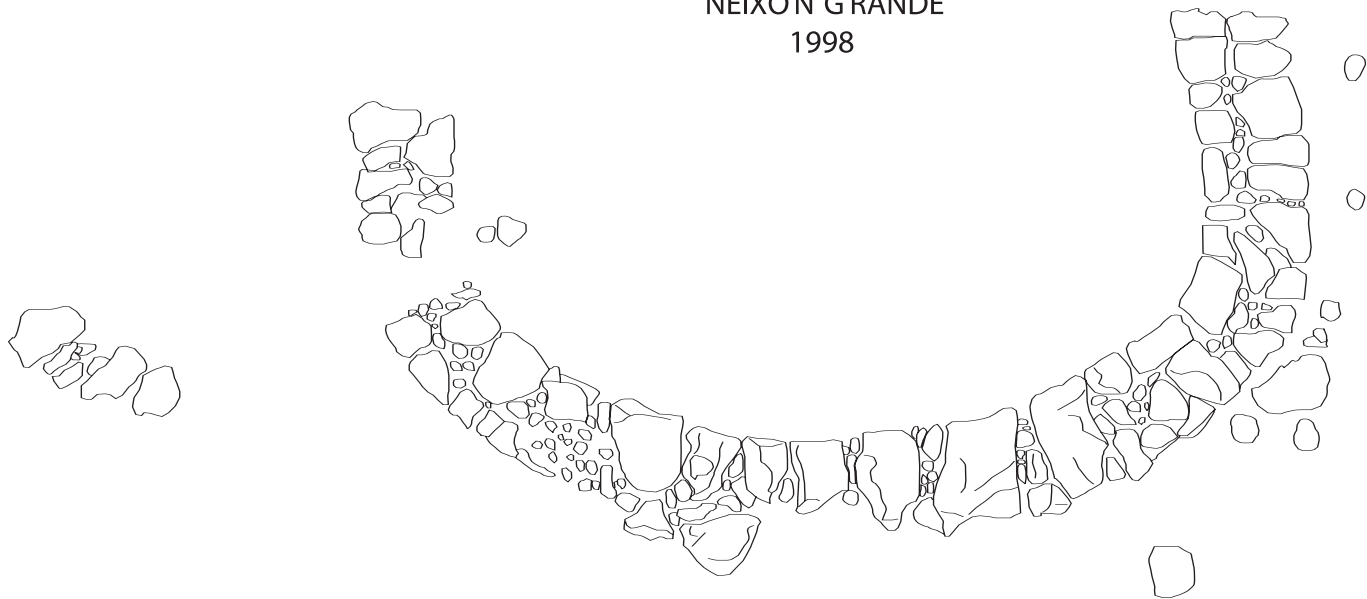
The biggest percentage of found materials are of ceramic nature and for the most part they correspond with elements that the inhabitants of Neixón used in their daily





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NEIXÓN GRANDE  
1998





life, as pots for cooking or storing different products. Attending to their origin we can classify the remains as aborigens or of import.

Regarding indigenous materials, all ceramic kinds that define the tradition of the pottery in the Rías Baixas (RRBB) were found. The most abundant kind found is the pot with the increased edge, type *Cíes*. Also the presence stands out of pitchers and pots type *Toralla* with a great formal and decorative variety. Likewise, other foreign types to the RRBB as type *Corredoiras*, *Cameixa* and *Recarea* are had recovered ceramics of Punic imitation as the container for salves recovered into the moat and even someone of Iberian tradition.

In relation with materials of import, the presence stands out of objects proceeding from the Mediterranean orbit as the remains of Iberian - Punic origin, with the presence of amphorae before roman as the type *Mañá-Pascual A4* (c. IV-II BC) and several *askós ebusitanos* (c. III BC) among others objects.

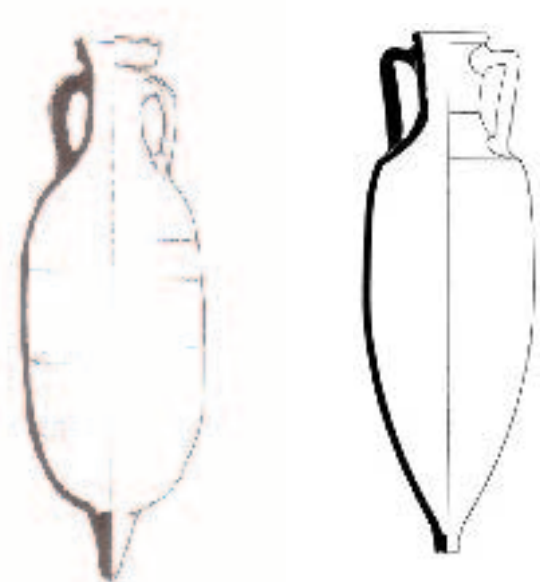
By the change of Age, with the entrance of Neixón into the roman commercial circuit, objects as ceramics of great quality represented for terra sigillata of Hispanic production and chronology high empire (c. I-II AD) proceeding of



*Tricio* (Riojan Pottery) and *Clunia* (Burgos); *sigillata focense* (Mediterranean oriental, c. IV-VI AD) and common ceramics from *Lucus Augusti* (nowadays Lugo) and principally amphorae of type *Lomba do Canho* and *Haltern 70* proceeding from the *Baetica* with near chronologies at the change of Age; amphorae *Dressel 2-4* made in the orbit of the Guadalquivir about the 1st century B.C. and that would be used to transport wine from the *Baetica*; amphorae *Beltrán IIb* that transport salting between c. I and III AD and finally it's confirmed the presence of Palestine origin amphorae (c. IV-VII AD) as well as the recovery of a small sample of Roman glass.

Besides the ceramic remains, also abundant tools made in rock were recovered, as: polishers, axes, weights, mills, etc.; made in local raw materials as quartz, schist and cuarcita, nevertheless, material foreign to the zone was used in the manufacture of flat mills to obtain a major quality.

Besides of ceramic and lithic remains, also a very important set of elements made in metal, basically in bronze (fibulae, needles, hangers, etc.) were found, although elements of iron were found as well. Equally it was checked the existence of the whole sequence or technical - operative process for the transformation of the minerals in metals, with the





recovery of numerous utensils and adornments, dross, crucibles, pots-oven, etc.

## THE SUBSISTENCE

### Livestock and hunting resources

The inhabitants took the cattle as one of the fundamental resources for their subsistence. Sheeps, goats, pigs and bovine formed a part of their cattle-breeding. Sheeps and goats were the most abundant group, the bovine supplied a major volume of meat, and the pig occupied the third place in importance. The exploitation of sheeps and goats seems that it took the supply of meat as an exclusive purpose. The sacrifice of different species present in their cattle-breeding happened when the replacement was insured, but younger animals were eaten as well, maybe males of whom an exclusive pertaining to meat contribution is not looked.

It's interesting to stand out the find of tame dogs' remains, although it seems they didn't eat them.

Since it comes being a habitual practice in other archaeological deposits in the Northwest, it was detected the absence of horses and wild species that suggest a hunting activity; nevertheless some pieces of deer horn were found but that's not enough to think about a hunting practice development, just the use of shafts of renewal of horns.



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## The shellfishing

The closeness of both hillforts to the sea assures them an efficient exploitation of sea resources, as shellfish is. The studies realized stand out a balance between sandy and rocky substratum species, mainly mussels, razor clams and clams with a lower presence of oyster and winkle, while the presence of limpet can be considered to be anecdotal. The exploitation of the mollusks seems to have a selfprovision character, with a radius of harvest shortly, basically limited to the most immediate zone to the hillfort. To anecdotal level it is necessary to emphasize the presence of a mollusk as is the purpura (*Thais haemastoma*), which nowadays is extinguish in the Northwest peninsular, because of the cooling of the sea's water.

## The environment

The landscape and the resources don't stay fixed along the time; we know, for example, that around the change of age, the sea level would be lower than nowadays, between 1 and 2 meters, what evidently has to be born in mind, in relation with the physiognomical and environmental change in the place.

The ancient inhabitants of Neixón needed woods to obtain combustible to ignite the fire and built frameworks and appliances using for that trees and bushes. It brings out the





oak wood (probably *Quercus sp. Caducifolio*), a very plentiful specie in their environment, and the leguminous and maloideas (how brooms and cork oaks or holm oaks, and others).

Paradoxically there aren't evidences of coast's wood exploitation, as is usual in another archaeological complex it's from the same chronology and location.

The analysis show us the existence of a deciduous forest where the oak would be the main specie, it would probably be degraded because of the anthropic action (fires and cattle practice) as the presence of maloideas and leguminous show us, and the punctual presence of *castanea sativa* (chestnut tree).

### The small hillfort

According to known information, it's confirmed a constant occupation between the Bronze's and the Iron's Age. Probably at first, the small hillfort of Neixón, was an small opened village, just delimited for a small moat towards the peninsular place, taking advantage of the natural conditions of the terrain. In this archaeological complex is confirmed the architecture built at first with perishable materials and later another one composed for houses of circular ground with stone socles, adobe and straw walls, and covered of



vegetable fibres. Those buildings are characteristic in the first moments of the Iron's Age.

In the recently excavated area was found a group of three houses, one of them with a socke made of stone, and the other ones were built of perishable materials, just conserving wedgess post's holes and a hearth.

In this place, is significant the big group of bronze remains and chunks of ceramic molds for smelting bronze, being documented all the process or technical - operative chain of the metallurgical process. A total of 26 pieces of melting pot and 6 moulds were got back. On top of several devices made of metal: fibulae, chunks of metal pot, sticks, knife or jackknife, etc.



















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