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Montefortino-type and related helmets in the Iberian Peninsula: a study in archaeological context

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Over the past few years our knowledge of the 'jockey-cap' helmets of Montefortino and related types in the Iberian Peninsula has been greatly enhanced by the publication of many catalogues and the discovery of new pieces. An attempt has also been made in some of the more detailed works to produce classifications that try to deal with the problems posed by some types and variants that seem specific to Iberia and are not therefore adequately covered by existing typologies.

Although much promising work remains to be done in this 'typological' field, we believe that a parallel analysis of archaeological and cultural contexts in which the helmets have been discovered can throw much light, first, on those very problems of classification, and then, on the much more important matters of cultural interpretation. For example, the most recent and up-to-date attempt at typology (García Maurino 1993) has failed to appreciate correctly the differences between knob-helmets of Etrusco-Italic origin and the so-called Buggenum type. This in turn has led to helmets that are probably of very different date being classified as the same type (although admittedly different variants). This has been so partly because the artisanal, non-industrial nature of helmet production and the relatively small number of complete available examples in Iberia, have obscured the typological finesse. However, the distinction has in this case an important implication, as the Buggenum type is much later and thus corresponds to a very different cultural and historical setting (from the Hannibalic Wars and early conquest of Hispania to the Civil Wars).

In the case of Iberia, also, the correct classification of helmets, taking into account not only the details of manufacture, but also their archaeological context, is relevant to the discussion of 'Celtic' or 'La Tène' influences in Iron Age Spain, and also to the evaluation of the role of Punic armies and Iberian mercenaries serving under the Carthaginians in introducing many early examples of helmets in southern Spain.

Thus we shall provide a very schematic layout of the main existing classifications (Table I) - we remit for details to the works cited there, and also a very schematic catalogue and distribution map (Table II and Figure I), in which helmets from the Balearic Islands or Southern France are not included. Then we shall go on to discuss helmets and their archaeological contexts in three different scenarios: the 'Celtic' problem in Spain; the finds of Etrusco-Italic- and even Latin inscribed helmets - in clearly indigenous contexts; and the geographical distribution of helmets dated to the period of the Roman conquest (roughly the second century BC from c. 195 to 133 BC) and the Civil Wars of the Later Republic. We should however warn the reader that many pieces were found in 'uncontrolled' digs many decades ago, and that unfortunately only vague details about their general context are known.

MONTEFORTINO HELMETS, RELATED TYPES AND 'CELTS' IN IBERIA

There is no doubt at all that during the Iron Age there were many Indo-European-speaking peoples dwelling in the Iberian Peninsula, mainly in the Ebro Valley, the Meseta (the inland central plateau) and the Southwest, and we are not trying to deny what is evident. It has also been long accepted that these Spanish Celts did not share the 'La Tène' cultural complex with Gauls and other European Celts, but that some elements of La Tène type were imported into Spain, mainly swords and fibulae; and that these elements were duly copied, transformed and converted into 'local' types. It is clear that some of these elements, such as some types of La Tène fibulae, were adopted by the Iberian Culture. Quite exceptionally, some burials in purely Iberian contexts also contain Celtic weapons, such as the La Tène sword and early iron helmet from grave 478 at El Cigarralejo (Murcia), dated to c. 375-350 BC.

We maintain, however (see Quesada 1997a, b forth) that...
'true' La Tène weapons are rare in the Peninsula, even in the Meseta, and truly exceptional in the Southeast and Andalusia, the Iberian non-indoeuropean lands.

As it is widely known, research in France, Germany and Italy has reached the conclusion that the Montefortino-type helmets with angled neck-guard and knob at the top are not really 'Gaulish', but in fact 'Celtic-Italic' or 'Italo-Celtic', and the later versions even 'Etrusco-Italic' (Robinson 1975; Adam 1986:22 ff.; Schaaff in Antike Helme, 1988; Feugère 1994a passim). However, for a long time nearly all the jockey-cap helmets found in Spain and Portugal, except those which are obviously Roman, have been considered proof of Celtic penetration, even in purely 'Iberian' areas, and this idea still pervades certain circles today, including German as well as Spanish scholars.

This position was already explicit in the very title of one of the first catalogues by J.M. Blázquez (1959-60): «Unpublished Celtic helmets». Nearly all of the pieces studied in that text are Montefortinos of Etrusco-Italic type, but they are nevertheless considered proof of a 'Celtism' that it was thought-permeated all of Spain, including the Iberian areas, during the Iron Age (Blázquez 1959-60:382-383). This idea in turn comes from earlier scholars such as the influential A. Schulten, the excavator of Numantia (Schulten 1914, II:224), and H. Sandals (1913:73).

Thus, when Abasolo and Pérez first published the helmet from Gorrita in Valladolid (1980), found in a 'Celtic' region but without precise archaeological context, they classified it as 'Celtic' and postulated that it had been imported by 'continental European trade' (Abásolo, Pérez 1980:114). However, in 1982 these scholars changed their minds, and in a new paper the helmet was labelled 'Celtic-Italic' (Abásolo, Pérez 1985), and the provenance changed to the Mediterranean world (ibidem, 48), perhaps connected with Carthagin...
nian expeditions into the Meseta known from literary sources. The history of this particular helmet does not end here, however, because years later a new fragment of the neck-guard was discovered, and it contained a faded Latin inscription N.PAQVI (Martín Valls, Esparza 1989:273). This discovery proves that the helmet was in fact Roman, and should probably be dated to the latter decades of the 2nd century BC or later, instead of the end of the 3rd.

The find from Alarcos poses a similar problem. P. Mena and A. Ruiz (1985) still classified as 'Celtic' an Etrusco-Italic helmet of type Maurifio la (see Table I for correspondences), found at Alarcos (Ciudad Real, Southern Meseta) during agricultural work in an area that could be part of the cemetery of the important settlement nearby (ibid., 635). The lack of direct archaeological context, and the fact that the digs at Alarcos have proved that this is a culturally 'Iberian' area (pottery, bronze figures, etc.) did not prevent the authors publishing the helmet as ‘elemento celta' and considering it proof of strong Celtic influence in Iberian areas (1985:638). They however tried to reach a -in our opinion- difficult compromise, by stating that «parece que nos encontramos con una pieza que llega a través de los círculos comerciales mediterráneos» (p. 639), but also that «la aparición de este casco hay que ponerla en relación con la presencia de soldados romanos durante la época republicana... hacia la mitad del s. II a.C.».

The recent investigations mentioned above, and Gorrita's cautionary tale, might have led other researchers to be less inclined to rashly ascribe any new Montefortino helmet to Celtic influence, but this has not been so, notably among certain German scholars. P. Stary (1982 passim and still in 1994:94-97 and 303 ff.) considers the Knopfhelme proof of strong La Tène influence not only in Catalonia (where we would readily agree that the panoply is more La Tène than Iberian, see Quesada 1997a forth.) but also in the South-East and other regions. Stary does not make any distinctions among the different types of helmets with crest-knob (see Stary 1994, II:4 and Karte 3), and seems to consider all of them to be Celtic except those at Alcaracejos, Lanhosos and Quintana Redonda (1982:118 and 1994:95). As he believes that Etruscans and Romans also adopted this type of helmet from northern Celts (which may well be true), he envisages a similar process of diffusion from North to South for both Peninsulae, Italy and Spain, during the fourth century BC (which is probably wrong). In fact, when we have some sort of archaeological context for helmets found in Iberian areas, it is always mid-3rd to mid-1st BC and not earlier.

As recent research by ourselves (Quesada 1989: II, 16-20; 1992, 1996) and others (García Mauriño 1993) has shown, most Montefortino helmets in the Iberian Peninsula arrived in Spain from the Mediterranean during the Punic Wars and during the Roman Conquest. Most of them have been found in Southeastern Spain, and the concentration of finds in the Northeast (Stary 1982:118) no longer holds true.11

It is here that individual analysis pays. In our opinion,
only three to six helmets can be considered 'Celtic' with any certainty: those from Vallfogona de Balaguer in Lérida, Can Miralles in Barcelona and Cigarralejo in Murcia (fig. 2). Also, the three helmets from the cemetery of Les Corts at Ampurias (Gerona, near the French border) might also be considered 'Celtic' as they were found together with real La Tène swords and scuta, but these burials have been dated to the 2nd century BC or early 1st., and they might therefore also be called 'Roman' (see Table II for references) and not relevant to the discussion of the supposed 'Celtization' of Iberia.

The helmets from Vallfogona and Can Miralles (see Table II for details and fig. 7 for illustration) were found associated with other objects of La Tène type, such as swords with iron scabbards and suspension loops; Catalonia is quite close to southern France -the Pyrenees not being a real obstacle along the Mediterranean coast, and there was certainly a close relationship with Southern Gaul in many fields of material culture from the 6th century BC onwards. Both helmets are forged in iron -which is very rare in Spain, and show certain manufacturing and decorative details (such as the independent and riveted neck-guard of Vallfogona's piece and the decorated cheek-guard of the one from Can Miralles) that are completely absent in the rest of the Peninsula. The Vallfogona helmet, as well as the long La Tène I sword found with it, is probably earlier, dating to the 4th or early 3rd century BC. The helmet from Can Miralles, found in grave pit 24, can be confidently dated to c. 225-175 BC, that is, during the Second Punic War or the great rebellion against Roman rule of 195 BC.

The iron helmet found in grave 478 at El Cigarralejo is another rare piece (Plate I). It has an hemispherical bowl, incipient neck-guard, no cheek-pieces and no knob. Badly preserved and heavily restored, it could be taken as an example of a 'heavy' Coolus type of Caesarian date... (Feugère 1994:41 ff. for details) had it not been found in a burial dated by other elements to the first half of the fourth century BC. These materials among the grave goods include Attic black glaze pottery decorated with linked palmettes, a 'ritual brazier' (bronze plate used for libations), bronze situla, horse-bit, falcata, soliferreum, Iberian pottery, etc., all consistent with a 375-350 BC date. The burial was excavated in well controlled conditions. With a maximum diameter of 22.5 cm. front to back, and 20.5 from side to side, and a height of 15.5 cm., it is of normal size, but exceptionally heavy. As it has been very restored, it is possible that it had a hole in the upper part of the bowl for an additional piece, and that it can be classified with hemispherical helmets with incipient neck-guards of the early La Tène type (Schaaff, 1988b:295 ss.; (see Tables I-II), and is probably the only 'Celtic' helmet of such an early date in Iberia. Some doubt still persists, however.

HELMETS IN IBERIAN 'INDIGENOUS' CONTEXTS (fig. 2)

The pieces of head-armour described above have all been found in 'Iberian' indigenous contexts. This is also the case of about 30 helmets (or nearly 50% of the total) of Etrusco-Italic type, that is, 'real Montefortino' helmets. Many of
them do not have a precise archaeological context, coming as they do from old archaeological excavations or casual finds in Iberian sites, but there are enough that do to prove that nearly all of them should be dated to the final decades of the 3rd and the whole of the 2nd century BC. Only helmets from Galera in Granada could perhaps be earlier, but the complete looting of the site by robbers during the early years of this century left only meagre remains for the later archaeologists. Thus the broad cultural setting is that of the Hannibalic War and the early phases of the Roman conquest.

It is significant that -except for the three helmets from Les Corts in Ampurias- nearly all of these helmets come from cemeteries in Alicante, Murcia, Albacete and Eastern Andalusia, this is to say, the nuclei of the Iberian culture, Contestania and Bastetania. No helmets in this category are known from the Meseta, except for the dubious piece from la Osera 201, a site that in any case has strong connections with the Iberian South-East, as the finds from burial 350 have proved (Quesada 1989,II:22).

These above-mentioned regions, ruled from the 4th to 2nd centuries BC by monarchs and chiefs of different kinds and strengths, supported by strong warrior clientelae, have yielded big cemeteries with up to 600 cremation graves containing rich grave goods. About 30% of them -on average- contain weapons, a very high proportion. It should be noted that the presence of helmets proves to be, in this context, a very rare, almost exceptional occurrence. Some sites, such as El Cigarralejo, have produced only two metallic helmets out of 600 graves, and the important site at Cabezo Lucero, with 100 burials, has not produced a single piece. Admittedly, these are early, 5th-4th century sites, but cemeteries with a stronger representation of the later periods, such as Cabecico del Tesoro (fig. 7, Plates 6-7), present the same pattern of about one metallic helmet for every 50 or so graves with weapons. This scarcity of head armour means in turn two things: that other types of helmet made of organic materials such as sinew and leather were far commoner (and this is confirmed by literary as well as iconographic sources); and that Montefortino-helmets were imported and not locally produced.

It has been held (García Mauricio 1993:139) that, given their scarcity, Montefortino helmets must have been a status and/or wealth symbol among Iberian warriors. This is however not completely supported by the available evidence. True, some helmets have been found in very important chamber tombs at Toya, Galera o Castellones de Ceal in Andalucia; but they have also been discovered in modest burials than cannot be counted among the richest in their respective cemeteries; this is the case of the two pieces at Cabecico del Tesoro (Quesada 1989), or of helmets from Castellones de Ceal (Jaén) or Les Corts (Emporion, Girona). At the same time, there are very rich graves with weapons that do not contain any bronze head-armour.

It seems that the occurrence of Montefortino helmets in certain tombs has much to do with individual experiences. Some of them might have been purchased in coastal sites such as Los Nietos in Murcia, but it is quite probable that most belonged to mercenaries or allies -officers as well as common soldiers- fighting under Carthaginian standards. It
of a La Tène bivalve umbo, and some other minor metal objects. All these grave goods could be consistent with a 4th century date, except for the helmet and probably the la Tène sword. The absence of the scabbard deprives us of the best chronological indicator; the sword itself is 72.5 cm. long; the blade is 62.5 cm. long with plain, rounded shoulders and parallel edges and a short point, apparently rounded (it is badly corroded); it has no midrib. The iron shield boss, also fragmented and incomplete, forms part of a long bivalve piece, usually dated to the 4th century BC (Rapin 1983-84) but also found in much later, 2nd century contexts. In all, this grave would appear to be the mid-4th century burial of an Iberian warrior with a set of 'captured/traded Celtic weapons'. However, the helmet poses a particular problem (García Maurino 1993:116; de Hoz 1994); in our opinion, it is much later, and should be dated to the later stages of the Second Punic War at the earliest.

The helmet belongs to García Maurino’s type Ia, a version of Russell Robinson’s B quite common in Spain, with a lot of punched and incised decoration on the rim and neck-guard. It has holes for cheek-guards, an iron ring at the back for chin-straps and decorated knob. But it also has a punched Latin inscription which reads ‘MVLUS’ on the inner part of the neck-guard, probably the property-mark of the original owner of the helmet, an Italian. The inscription has been recently studied by J. de Hoz, who accepts the 4th century date given by the Greek import and maintained by the excavator, and strives hard to find 4th century parallels for the -VS termination instead of the more common -OS, dominant until the first years of the 2nd century BC (Hoz 1994:226): De Hoz finally concludes that the owner could have been an Iberian mercenary fighting in Sicily during the fourth century BC who obtained the helmet there (see Quesada, 1994 for a detailed list of sources on Iberian mercenaries).

However, apart from the general late typology of the helmet, there is also another sign that this piece should probably be dated to the early decades of the second century BC. On the neck-guard there is a punched decoration with waves which fits neatly in the ‘Wellenranke’ decoration category in U. Schaaff’s scheme (Schaaff 1988:318 ff.), typical of the 2nd-1st centuries BC. The absence of cheek-guards leaves us without an interesting additional diagnostic element. It must be noticed that no cheek-guards have been discovered in helmets found in Iberian burials, just as if Iberian users discarded them as inconvenient or useless.

In all, the epigraphical difficulty described above, the decoration and shape of the helmet, and the even more surprising appearance of a supposedly 4th century Italic helmet in an Iberian burial even before the spread of this particular type of helmet in Italy, demands an alternative explanation, although a mid-fourth century date could be just barely possible. This could be that the grave is in fact an early
2nd century one in which an Iberian was buried with a set of captured enemy weapons (helmet, shield and sword of perhaps a Roman auxilia) and his own (falcata, spearhead, Iberian round shield). The presence of a much earlier Greek vessel is not at all a rare occurrence in Iberian burials; there are some documented cases of 4th century Attic black-glaze pottery found with 2nd century BC Campanian A ware in closed contexts (Quesada, in prep.).

It may seem surprising that very few helmets in this ‘indigenous’ group have been found in sanctuaries (only the terminal knob from Collado de los Jardines belongs to this category), but in fact very few Iberian weapons of any type have been documented in temples or sanctuaries. It seems that it was simply not an Iberian custom to deposit weapons in these contexts, while about 30% of burials in cemeteries do contain weapons.16

Iconography also plays a part in this study. Iberian helmets are carved in Iberian sculptures from the beginning of the 5th century BC onwards; these are helmets of Greek inspiration but local manufacture and tradition. During the 4th-3th centuries BC helmets are as rare in art as they are in burials, and most of them seem to have been leather helmets sometimes reinforced and decorated with metal elements and crests, such as the piece found in Grave 277 at Cigarralejo (Cuadrado 1989). It is only during the late 3rd and 2nd centuries BC that helmets were more frequently depicted on decorated vases of the Liria style (fig. 5), and many of these are clearly Montefortino helmets, the same types that the artisans could see in the Roman, Carthaginian and Iberian armies that during these very years were marching up and down the Iberian coast, from Tarraco to Carthago Nova. These helmets are also sometimes worn by the horsemen represented in Iberian coins, usually dated to the second century BC and later.17

HELMETS AND THE ROMAN ARMY (fig. 3)

The third group of helmets according to context and type comprises those pieces whose context is not indigenous, as in the previous two groups, but rather ‘Roman’. In fact, they can be divided into two sub-groups according to type (figs. 3 and 8). The first is that of ‘Montefortino’ helmets very

**Fig. 6: Helmets from Pozo Moro (left) and Quintana Redonda (right).**
MONTEFORTINO-TYPE AND RELATED HELMETS IN IRON AGE IBERIA. A SAMPLE OF TYPES AND CONTEXTS.

A. CELTIC TYPE HELMETS, IRON, CATALONIA
B. MONTEFORTINOS IN IBERIAN BURIALS.
C. ROMAN, LATE 1st-EARLY 2nd, centuries BC
D. BUGGENUM. Mid-1st century BC.
E. GALICIAN LOCAL TYPE. Augustan period.

Fig. 7: Some examples of helmets in the Iberian Peninsula.
similar to the pieces found in Iberian burials and settlements; the second consists of helmets of the Buggenum type, an evolution of the former but of much later, Caesarian date (Waurick 1990). It is here that a detailed use of typology becomes a great ally of context, because many of the later helmets have often been incorrectly grouped with those of the early group, thus blurring distribution patterns.

Montefortino helmets: Roman conquest and Sertorian Wars

There are around nine helmets in this group. None of them, of course, have been found in burials, and none of them comes from Eastern Andalusía or the Southeast, where most helmets of the previous group have been found. Most come from the Meseta, in the battlegrounds of the Celtiberian Wars of the 2nd century BC; or from the Ebro valley, where Sertorians fought and died during the first decades of the 1st century BC. The already cited helmet from Pago de Gorrita in Valladolid could be, with its Latin inscription NPAQVI, a good example of the problems posed by these helmets. In type, it is similar to many dated to late 3rd/early 2nd centuries BC, although there are some minor differences. It is not possible, however, to determine precisely if it is of that date or much earlier. Perhaps the helmet from Alarcos in Ciudad Real has the same origin, but as it was found near an Iberian site, it is probably better to classify it as ‘dubious’.

A couple of Montefortino helmets have been found in good contexts. The first is the well-preserved helmet from Quintanas de Gormaz in Soria (fig. 6); it was found around 1868 in a hoard together with two silver cups and over 1300 silver coins from the mint at Osca in the Pyrenees. From its type and decoration (waves on the neck-guard; scaled knob) it could perfectly be an early 2nd century helmet. However, the coins provide a close date in the first half of the 1st century BC, during the Sertorian Wars. In fact, the helmet may well be a much earlier piece. It seems clear that Roman soldiers used old helmets until they became unserviceable (see details and references in Quesada, 1992:68), so we can expect to find a mixture of brand-new and quite battered pieces of armour of different styles in military units. The second well-dated helmet comes from a recent excavation at Camínreal (Teruel), in the Ebro valley. A plain, rounded knob of a late type was found with many other weapons and even a catapult, in the Hellenistic-style house of an Iberian Romanized notable called Likine. The house and its contents have been closely dated to c. 80-70 BC, during the Sertorian wars (Vicente et al. 1991:passim and p. 116).

Another interesting group of three helmets was found underwater at the ancient anchorage at Piedras Barbadas (Benicarló, Castellón). Only one of the three helmets has been published in detail (Oliver 1987-88), but it seems to be a Mauriño’s Type 1a helmet (fig. 8), in association with a probably later Ib and another iron helmet. The place has also yielded other Roman materials, such as anchors, amphorae and a stone mill. Although it has been suggested that these helmets might have been deposited as part of a ritual action (Oliver 1987-88:211), it seems to us more likely that this was probably a disembarkation point for Roman reinforcements during the last years of the Second Punic Wars and later campaigns.

Buggenum-type helmets

As we mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this paper, the Buggenum-type helmets have been often confused with Montefortino types. In fact, as Feugère has remarked (1993, 1994), they are of Caesarian, mid-1st century BC date, derived from the earlier Etrusco-Celtic-Italic types, but simplified in manufacture and decoration, which is scarce or nonexistent.

This type can be matched with type C -and some D’s -in Robinson’s classification. All of Type II and some Ib’s and Ic’s in García Mauriño’s typology belong to this group (see Table I).18

All helmets of this type in the Iberian Peninsula have been found in the Southwestern areas (Spanish Extremadura and Southern Portugal) or in the Ebro Valley. In the first area we can count the helmets from Castelo de Aljezur in Algarve, Cabeço de Vaiamonde in Alemtejo,19 Lacimurga in Badajoz, and perhaps also Mesas do Castelinho in Beja (see fig. 8 for some examples, and Table II for details). In the Ebro Valley the helmet from Piquete de la Atalaya (near Botorrinita in Zaragoza) also belongs to this type.20 The helmet from Alcaracejos, although apparently found in an odd context (a mine shaft in Cordoba) during the last few years of the 19th century, also belongs to this group on the basis of its type.

Local productions of the (pre-)Augustan era in Galicia and northern Portugal (fig. 4)

A total of five helmets (Type García Mauriño III) form this group. They are undoubtedly indigenous, Gallic or Lusitanian productions based on Montefortino and/or Buggenum models in the Roman army, and have long been recognized as imitations (García Mauriño 1993 for references; also Feugère 1994:41). All of them were found in a small area of northern Portugal and Galicia; four of them in castros and one while dredging river Miño.21 When there is some associated material, it points to the second half of the 1st century BC. Typologically they are very distinctive, with a long pointed and very decorated knob, conical bowl and heavy cabled and incised decoration on the rim and neck-guard (see fig. 7).

CONCLUSION (fig. 8)

Although there are many individual cases, the overall pattern seems reasonably clear: there are four big groups of
Montefortino-type and related helmets to be considered, and a fifth 'we don’t know' group:

1. A very small number (about 5%) of *real* Celtic helmets, found mainly in Catalonia (Vallfogona, Can Miralles, possibly Ampurias) but also in Murcia (Cigarrallejo, grave 478); these are early, and date to the fourth and third centuries BC. All these helmets belong to different types. All of them come from indigenous, Iberian graves. No comparable specimens have been found in Celtiberian contexts, where helmets of any type are very rare.

2. Helmets dated to the second half of the 3rd century BC or to the first decades of the 2nd, and found in *indigenous contexts*. This is by far the biggest group, with 30 pieces (49%). Most helmets are of types Ia and Ib in the classification by García Mauriño (mostly B and some A in Robinson’s). Many of them come from the Southeast and Eastern Andalucia, and have been found in cemeteries (Galera, Cabecico del Tesoro, Hoya de Santa Ana, Pozo...
Moro, Villaricos, etc.), usually in warrior's graves. We believe them to be helmets of Italic origin, used during the Punic Wars by Roman and Carthaginian soldiers, and by Romans and their allies during the early phases of the occupation of Iberia. This armour ended up in Iberian burials for a number of reasons: booty (the helmet with Latin inscription from Pozo Moro in Albacete perhaps falls into this category), equipment distributed to Iberian soldiers under Carthaginian flags or purchased by them... even perhaps trade.

These elements of armour have been found in very important tombs (such as the ashlar-built chamber tombs at Toya and Castellones, or the rich grave 4F-2 at Pozo Moro), but also in more modest graves (such as Cabecico del Tesoro 428).

3. The third group is that of helmets found in Roman contexts. They can be dated from the early 2nd to mid-1st

Pl. 3: Almaciles (Granada). Detail of decoration on neck-guard. Perhaps this is original decoration.

Pl. 4: Almaciles. Detail of incised linear decoration. Note the low quality of workmanship.

Pl. 5: Helmet from Castellones de Ceal, Jaén (1955 digs). As most helmets in Iberian burials, it was deliberately damaged during the burial rites.


Pl. 7: Detail of neck-guard decoration. Cabecico del Tesoro sep. 428.
century BC, and can be further sub-divided into two groups according to place of find (land or underwater) or according to type and date. The second option is much to be preferred. These helmets are usually later that those from group 2, but there is a noticeable overlap in the 2nd century BC. From the point of view of typology, it is not possible to differentiate them, as they have exactly the same origin.

3a. Montefortino types (Garcia Mauriño's Ia and some Ib and Ic; Robinson's A and B). Dated from c. 220 to c. 70 BC. No clear-cut line of evolution is evident, as some heavily decorated types also appear in late contexts, such as the helmet from Quintana Redonda (Sertorian Civil Wars, c. 80 BC), or the two knobs from Fosos de Bayona, dated to the 2nd century BC by the excavators but perhaps from Sertorian times. They are mostly found in settlements (Gorrita) or directly in houses (La Caridad, type Ic, very late, dated to c. 70 BC). A single piece (lost) was found in a deposit, together with gladii spaniensis and scuta, perhaps with ritual significance (La Azucarera). A sub-group within this category consists of the helmets from the anchorage at Piedras Barbadas in Benicarlos (Castellón), a probable disembarkation point for Roman reinforcements during the last years of the Second Punic War and later campaigns.

3b. Buggenum or Robinson's C and D (Garcia Mauriño's II and probably some Ia and Ic). Dated to Caesarian times (mid-1st century BC). Usually without precise archaeological contexts. Most in castros in Western Spain and Portugal (Castelo de Aljueiz in Algarve, Southern Portugal; Vaiamonde, Alentejo; probably also Lacimurga, Badajoz and Mesas do Castelinho, Beja) or in the Ebro valley, scenario of many Caesarian actions (Piquete de la Atalaya, Zaragoza). None of them were found in graves or in the Southeast.

4. The fourth group is very compact in the appearance, date and geographical distribution of its components. It consists of five helmets found in Galicia and northern Portugal (Briteiros, C. de Tuy, Castelo de Neiva (x2) and Lanhoso). These pieces of armour belong to Garcia Mauriño's type III, and probably date to the second half of the 1st century BC. Four of them were found in castros, and one in the river Miño, but there is only a good archaeological context for the Castelo de Neiva helmets, which can be dated with some confidence to the early Augustan period.

5. As we have seen, some helmets of types Mauriño Ia and Ib have been found either in 'iberian' or 'Roman' contexts, with different cultural and sometimes also chronological implications. This is to say that any helmet of these types without a context cannot be confidently placed in either group 2 or 3, and must be placed in an 'Indeterminate' category. This is the case of the pieces from Alarcos (Ciudad Real), Cola de Zama ( Albacete), Osca, and even perhaps those from the sanctuary at Collado de los Jardines (Jaén).

Table I: Correspondence of main typologies.
NOTES

1. This paper has been prepared within the framework of Research Project PB94/0189 financed by DGICYT.


3. Five new entries must be made to the most recent catalogue (García Muñoz, 1993): A new Montefortino A-B helmet found in the Iberian cemetery at Almaciles (Granada) by clandestine diggers and now in the Museum of Murcia (Quesada, 1992); a Montefortino A-B helmet dredged from the Guadalquivir river (Caballós Rufino, 1994); and a fragment -including the solid knob- of another bronze Montefortino from the surface layers of the Iberian cemetery at La Serreta de Alcoy (Alicante): the cemetery is located near the
enceinte wall and can be dated to the 4th-early 2nd centuries BC (unpublished, we are grateful to M. Olcina for showing it to us). Also a knob from Mesas do Castelinhno in Portugal, dated to c. 70-50 BC. Last, another helmet was found in Alfaro (La Rioja, ancient Graccurris) in 1969 during a controlled excavation, in a deposit together with scutum bosses and straight swords of the gladius hispaniensis type (see Quesada, 1997b forth.). It is lost, and has been published only recently.

4. The recent catalogues by Lenerz de Wilde (1991), Stary (1994) and Feugère (1994a) are only lists, and contain only a few hints in typological matters on a non-systematic basis. The most useful evidence is Garcia Maurino's, but his system is not free of problems (see Table I, type Ib).

5. No two helmets are exactly alike. So, any classification implies some degree of simplification and personal choice of significant variables in each piece.

6. As M. Feugère has correctly pointed out (Feugère, 1994a:79-80).

7. Such as the manufacturing technique of crest-knobs. The detached ones, riveted to the bowl, are often of Celtic origin, while those forged in one piece with it are of Italic origin (see Schaaff, 1981: passim; 1988:319; also Feugère, 1994:37).

8. The use of these helmets in Carthaginian armies has been accepted since Robinson (1975:13).


10. It was found during surface surveying at Pago de Gorrita, together with Celtiberian wheel-made sherds that can be dated from the third century BC down to the Augustan Era.

11. M. Lenerz de Wilde has also criticized Stary's approach (notably in Lenerz, 1986:273). Stating that 'seul un petit nombre [of these helmets] peut être qualifié avec certitude comme étant d'origine celtique'. She has however included a list of his type 'b' helmets (mixing Montefortino, Buggenum and local productions together) in her Iberia Celtica (1991:180-181), which might lead to confusion.

12. Notably, Castellones de Ceal, chamber tomb; Cabecico del Tesoro grave 146; Hoya de Santa Ana, grave '0': Les Corts, graves 7, 31, 110. See Table II for bibliographical references.

13. Polibyus twice specifies (3.87 and 114) that it was the Africans who were re-equipped in this way, but this should not be taken as absolute. Any enterprising individual could easily have equipped himself not only after the big Roman disasters in Italy and in Spain, but on many other different occasions.

14. A very similar piece was found, together with a La Tène sword and spearhead, at El Hinojal (Arcos de la Frontera, Cádiz), in a Late Period cemetery dated to the second century BC (Corzo, 1983:13; also Stary, 1994:II, 57).

15. Perhaps we should remember that the origin of this type of helmet with crest-knob has been dated to c. 350 BC (Adam, 1986:22; Connolly, 1981:120) or perhaps a bit earlier (Feugère, 1994:37).

16. The case of helmets from the Balearic Islands is different. Most finds there come from sanctuaries (Garcia Maurino, 1993 has collected the available evidence).


18. For example, the helmet from Lacimurga and probably that of Cola de Zama.

19. Identified personally as such by M. Feugère (pers. comm.).

20. It was labelled as ‘Montefortino’ in its only publication, a plate without study in Los Bronces Romanos: 201.

21. There is a long tradition dating back to the Bronze Age, of underwater votive deposits containing weapons in rivers throughout Western Spain, so perhaps this is a votive object. Garcia Maurino is of the same opinion (1993:139).

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