

The Braganza Brooch warrior and his weapons: the Peninsular context

Fernando Quesada ¹

THE 'Braganza' (*aka* 'Flannery') brooch has been known to the scholarly world for a long time. The first publications around 1960 (Klindt-Jensen 1960, 1961) proposed a northern Italian provenance, and maintained that the brooch itself and the statuette of the warrior were in fact different pieces that had been combined fairly recently. The warrior was also labelled 'Celtic' basically on the evidence provided by the weapons he carried. The first publication in Spain (de la Bandera 1986) did not arouse much interest, although it put forward for the first time the theory that the brooch might be of Iberian origin after all. The available evidence on the history of the brooch has recently been collected and evaluated (in English by I. Stead and N. Meeks, 1996; in Spanish see Vv.Aa., 2007: 13-17) and need not be repeated here.

Although initially some scholars cast some doubts on the authenticity of the fibula, later research, including metallographic analysis (Rowlett, 1993; Stead, Meeks 1996: 6) showed it to be original and ancient, and to have been conceived as a single piece, including the warrior fighting the monster.

Recent discussion has focused on the probable origin of the 'Braganza Brooch' and its iconography (Vv. Aa. 2007). In this paper, in response to the kind invitation of Dr. A. Perea, I shall discuss the possible date, provenance and 'ethnicity' of the brooch using the evidence provided by the warrior and his weapons, in the context of the shape and decoration of the object as a whole, as analyzed elsewhere in this volume ².

¹ This paper has been written within the framework of I+D Research project HUM 2006-08015-HIST. We are grateful to Verity Peterson for the revision of the English text.

² The lively discussions during the Conference held in Madrid (May 2007) that was the starting point for this volume were very useful, but they also revealed the degree of uncertainty that still clouds many aspects of the study of this masterful piece of workmanship.

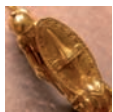


Fig. 77: Detail of the Braganza Fibula shield
(© British Museum. Foto: Archivo Au, A. Perea)

My starting point will be that the brooch could indeed have been manufactured in Iberia, as its typology, decoration and parallels seem to show clearly (and has been recognized by modern scholarship, see in particular de la Bandera 1986; Stead, Meeks, 1996). One of the main arguments against this probability, however, would be the apparently ‘Celtic’ character of the gear carried by the warrior figure. A close examination of every weapon type represented in the brooch, and its combination as a warrior’s panoply, is therefore essential.

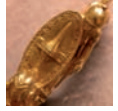
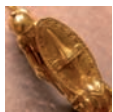


Fig. 78: 'Braganza Brooch'. Detail of the fight between monster and man.
The differences and similarities between the two animals are obvious
(© British Museum. Foto: Archivo Au, A. Perea)



The shield

The shield carried by the warrior in the ‘Braganza Brooch’ has very clearly defined characteristics (Figs. 77, 78). It is oval and completely flat. It is held by a single, horizontal handgrip. The body of the shield (its ‘core’) is reinforced by a vertical midrib (*spina*, wooden in real shields), and this element is in turn protected by a central boss or *umbo* (iron or bronze in the original, full size object). The rim of the shield shows a thin cable-like ‘decoration’ all round its perimeter, and a decorative frieze. All these elements closely correspond with the structural parts of real oval shields.

The first impression to be gained from a close examination of the shield is that its shape, proportions and typological details show that the artisan who made it had seen actual shields of this particular type, and understood the structural and constructional details of the original object (Fig. 79). This is particularly evident in the way the *umbo* or central boss is placed over the central *spina* (the wooden vertical midrib that strengthens the shield), and (in the original) nailed by two strong rivets to the wooden core of the shield. This shows that the goldsmith understood that the shield itself consisted of a wooden core (sometimes made of solid planks, sometimes of laminated wood), a glued midrib and finally a metal *umbo* or boss-plate riveted to the core, together with a metal reinforcement of the rim (see also Polybius 6,23,4)³.

A great deal of care was obviously taken in shaping the boss; but due to the very small size of this object, the type cannot be precisely identified in archaeological terms. But at least we can discard three types that are dated at either end of the Iron Age timeline. It is surely not an early 5th to early 4th century BC bivalve boss⁴. Nor is it a late period butterfly-shaped, or an even later round boss (Brunaux, Rapin 1988: 62 ff)⁵. It is clear that the object in the ‘Braganza’ shield was meant to represent a winged or

³ On the structure of the oval shield, see Brunaux, Rapin (1988). Real examples in wood, Randsborg (1995), Kimmig (1938). On Republican Roman, convex tile-shaped shields, see the Fayum shield in Kimmig (1940) and its re-interpretation as a Roman and not ‘Celtic’ shield in Eichberg (1987) among others. On the oval shields from Iberia, see Quesada (1997a). The Roman auxiliary shield from Doncaster is much later (Buckland, 1978). Rectangular and curved Imperial Roman shields such as the Dura Europos shield are a specialized evolution not to be taken into account here (James 2004). Bronze-faced shields from Britain, such as the Battersea (ceremonial?) shield, are also a distinct type, and their shape is quite different from this piece (Stead 1984).

⁴ See Rapin 2001 for the bivalve type and Quesada 2002-2003: 77 for the very few examples of this model in Iberia.

⁵ Bivalve *umbones* are of European Celtic origin, and clearly the earliest to be found in Iberia. In the Peninsula they date to the second quarter of the 4th century BC, and there is no way they can be dated to the 5th century BC as proposed by Rapin (2001: 281, fig. 5). This type was not widely accepted in the Peninsula, either in the Celtic areas or in the Iberian coastal lands.

The second type of *scutum* boss-plate is provided with ‘wings’ (band-plates in I. Stead’s terminology), rectangular in shape in the early variants from the end of the 3rd century BC, and opening into the trapezoidal wing of the so-called ‘butterfly’ shape later on. In Iberia, these iron boss-plates are only found north of the Ebro river, mainly in Catalonia, and are usually found in association with other elements of the La Tène I-II panoply, such as swords with metal scabbards and La Tène spearheads. They must therefore belong to *scuta* of Gaulish type, dated to the second half of the 3rd century BC (Cabrera del Mar, Turo dels dos Pins, etc.). A sub-group within this type of winged or band-plates is comprised by similar bosses also found in the Northeast or the Levant, but dated to the first half of the 1st century BC, and associated with Roman Sertorian contexts (La Azucarera, La Almoina de Valencia, La Caridad).

The third type consists of big round bosses dating to the 1st century, contemporary with or slightly later than the late group of the second type.

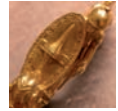
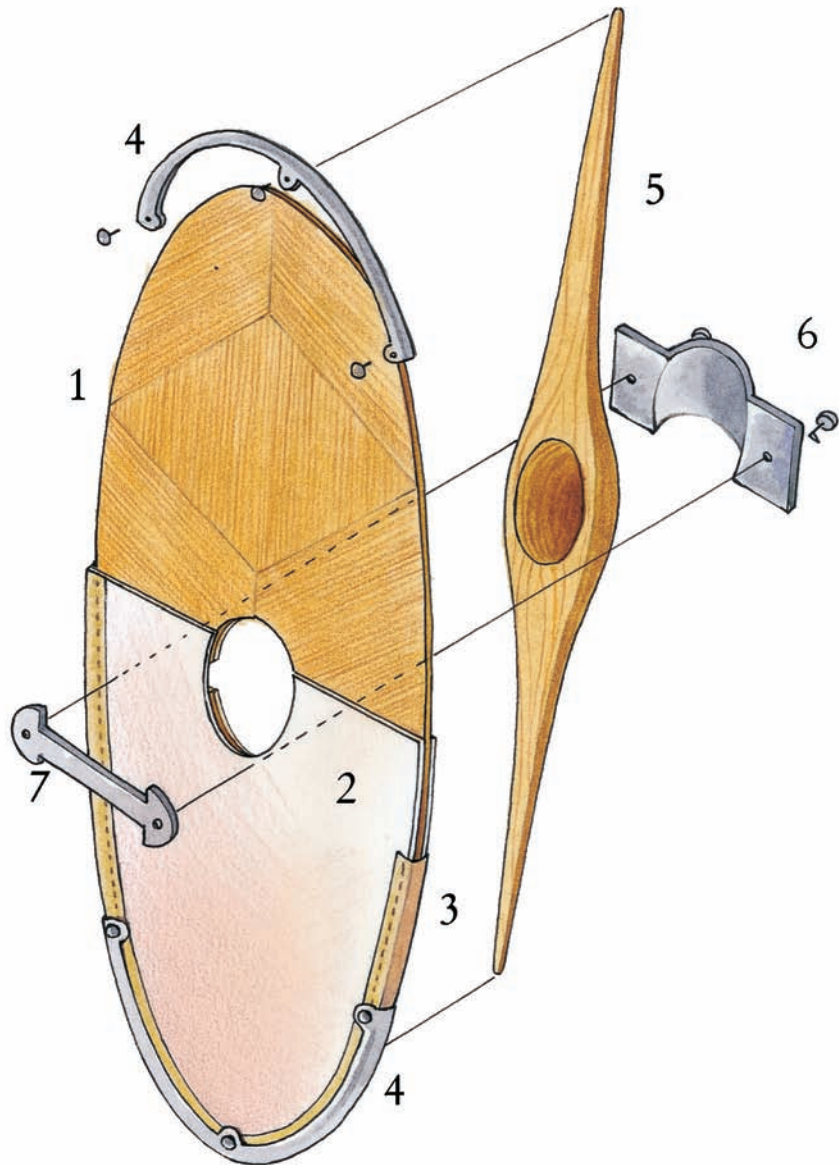


Fig. 79:

Constructional details
of a flat, oval, Celtic shield.
Other scuta or thureoi types
not necessarily 'celtic' shared
similar characteristics
(Design C. Fernández
after A. Rapin)



'band-plate' boss, the commonest type between c. 300 and c. 125 BC, both in Gaul and Italy (Brunaux, Rapin 1988) and in Iberia (Quesada 1997a, 2002-2003). Given the length of the side 'wings' or 'bands', it looks as if a late date within this timeframe was more probable. But given the size and detail in the fibula, a more precise date is just not possible.

The shield is fitted with a short horizontal handle (Fig. 78), which is a faithful depiction of actual handgrips. To many people, laymen as well as scholars, a vertical grip intuitively 'feels' better, and this is how they would imagine an oval shield being held. In fact, the opposite holds true, and almost all known *scuta* (actual or painted; oval or rectangular; Roman, Celtic or Hellenistic) show short horizontal

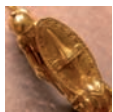


Fig. 80:

Relief from an Iberian monument at Osuna (Seville), probably 2nd century BC (Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Photo author)

Fig. 81:

Detail of the above. The flat surface, oval shape, reinforced rim, spina and winged boss plate are all visible (Photo author)



handgrips (full discussion in Quesada 1997a: 535-536). A vertical grip would certainly provide better manoeuvrability at first, but then wrist and elbow would sustain most of the weight and receive the force of blows, and these shields are heavy (5 to 10 kg, average 6 kg). Modern experiments show that the horizontal grip actually provides better control and is more comfortable. Therefore this detail shows once again that the goldsmith knew exactly what he was doing.

The idea that a purely oval shape for a shield is typically Celtic is disproved by the Hjortspring find in Denmark (recently, Randsborg 1995: 30-31), where a number of actual shields were discovered, dating to the mid-4th century BC. Most of them are rectangular with rounded edges, just like the British shields (Stead 1986) and also the Iberian shields represented on Liria-style vases (Valencia) dated c. 200 BC (Quesada 1997a). This means that the overall shape is very varied in all cultural regions, and that it is not a particularly good indicator of provenance (see also Stary 1981). Only the markedly convex, 'tile' section of the Roman shield shows a really marked difference (as specifically explained by ancient literary sources, see Livy 38,21,4; Polybius 2,30). In particular, representations of *scuta* in Iberia cover all shapes in the spectrum, from the almost rectangular shields with rounded ends depicted

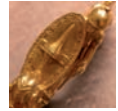


Fig. 82:

Scutum in a relief from Osuna (Sevilla).

From the same monument as the relief in Figs. 80-81.

(Musée des Antiquités Nationaux, St. Germain-en-Laye, Paris.

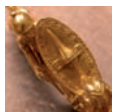
Photo author)



on the Liria vases (Ballester *et al.* 1954; Quesada 2002-2003: fig. 8), to the very different oval shields in the Late Iberian monument at Osuna (Sevilla), probably dated to the 2nd century BC (Figs. 80-81). These last are very close in shape and details to the Braganza shield.

Regarding the supposedly ‘Celtic ethnicity’ of the oval shield (Kimmig 1940; Cabré 1939-1940; Stary 1981), more recent research tends to discount this notion as simplistic (Eichberg 1987; Gunby 2000; Quesada 2002-2003). Even if the origin of this type lies in northern Italy very early in the Iron Age (particularly Eichberg 1987: 171 ff.), by the 3rd c BC its use had spread all over the Mediterranean. Gauls, Britons, other Celts, Germans, Romans, Carthaginians, Iberians and Celtiberians, Greeks... all employed different variations of the *thureos* or *scutum*. We can therefore be certain that oval shields in Spain can no longer be uniformly labelled either ‘Celtic’ or ‘Gaulish’ (as was once common, see Cabré 1939-1940; Stary 1981). The provenance of this type of weapon in the Peninsula is quite complex: archaeological data in Catalonia (mainly iron boss plates) show that the *scuta* there indeed have a Gaulish origin, although by the 3rd century BC they were produced locally. But further south, in Valencia and Andalusia, the situation was different, and Carthaginian and Roman influence is more marked than any Celtic influx, and between c. 225-200 BC the Iberians even developed their own distinctive type (see Quesada 2002-2003 for details of this argument).

Even if the presence of any type of oval shield should not automatically be considered *proof* of the Celtic character of the fibula, the different elements in the Braganza fibula shield do indeed point towards a ‘Celtic’ typology, rather than ‘Roman’, ‘Hellenistic’ or ‘south Iberian’. But its shape is characteristic not only of Gaul or Northern Italy, but also of northeastern Spain and even of Andalusia (Osuna reliefs) during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.



Helmet

The Braganza fibula warrior wears what has long been identified (Stead, Meeks 1996) as a helmet of the Montefortino type (Fig. 83), which belongs to the family of Italo-Celtic helmets *a botone* (Tagliamonte 2003), *a bouton sommital* (Feugère 1994), *knopfhelme* (Stary 1994), or *jockey-cap* (Robinson 1975). The characteristically decorated lower rim has led some scholars to believe, rightly in our opinion, that the original it was meant to represent was the bronze variant rather than the iron one (Stead, Meeks 1996: 12).

The main features of the Braganza helmet are: a rounded, globular profile of the bowl, a knob (a crest holder) on the top, lower rim decorated with a cable or 'rope' pattern, very short and almost horizontal neck guard, and the remains of two soldered plumeholders on both sides of the helmet. We'll also comment on the significant absence of cheekpieces.

The shape of the bowl points towards a relatively late type (3rd century BC onwards), while the decorated rim seems to rule out a very late variant such as the Buggennum type of Caesarian times (Waurick 1990) Also, the neckguard –and the probable bronze manufacture– lead us away from the typically alpine, Celtic iron helmets with independent, riveted neckguard (Schaaf 1974).

Overall, all the features mentioned above point towards a fairly late helmet of Italic type (3rd to 2nd century BC), used by Roman legionaries, other Italic peoples –including Cisalpine Celts–, but also by Carthaginian soldiers and, from the final decades of the 3rd century BC, also by the Iberians.

The Italo-Celtic family of helmets (including the Montefortino-type) is in fact fairly common in the Peninsula, with an inventory of well over sixty actual examples (García Mauriño 1993, Quesada 1997a: 553 ff.; Quesada 1997b) (Fig. 84). Apart from the odd iron helmet with independent neckguard and trilobate cheekpieces of Celtic typology found in Iberian contexts in Catalonia (northeastern Spain), most helmets belong to the Montefortino/Buggennum group. Leaving aside late, 1st century examples found in contexts associated with the Roman conquest and later Civil Wars (Celtiberian, Sertorian and Caesarian wars) we are still left with a substantial group –about thirty items– of bronze 'Montefortino' helmets dated to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. Most of them come from Iberian burials in the Southeast. Iconography also proves that the type was actually employed by Iberians from the latter part of the 3rd c. BC (pottery from Liria and other sites in the Levant, see Ballester *et al.* 1954 and Quesada 2002-2003: fig. 2). It is now clear that these helmets in Iberia cannot, except for the iron examples from Catalonia mentioned above, be considered 'Celtic' at all ⁶.

⁶ On this see Quesada (2002-2003; 2005) and *infra*. P. Stary (1994: 94-97 and 303 ff.) considers the *Knopfhelme* proof of strong La Tène influence not only in Catalonia (we do readily agree with this, see Quesada, 1997a: 556 ff.; 1997b) but also in the Southeast. Stary does not make any distinctions between 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, Lanhoso and Quintana Redonda (1994: 95). As he believes that Etruscans and Romans originally 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 Italy and Spain during the fourth century BC (which is almost certainly wrong).

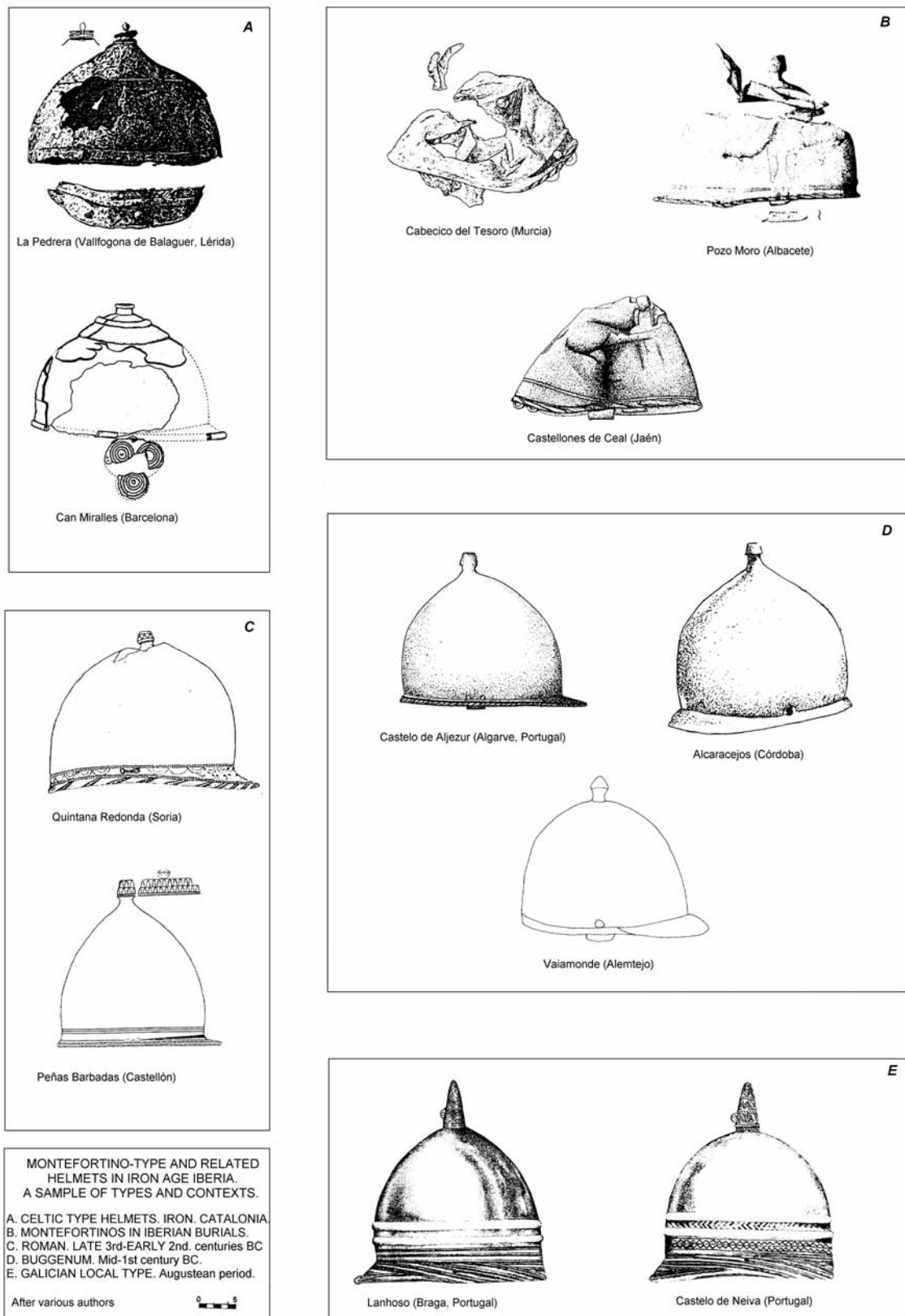


Fig. 84: Different variants of the Italo-celtic family of helmets 'a botone' found in the Iberian Peninsula (c. 250-15 BC) (after Quesada 1997a)

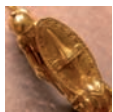


Fig. 85: Bronze helmet with Roman inscription 'Mulus' on the neckguard and intentionally damaged with sword cuts, found in an Iberial burial in Albacete. Late 3d-2nd century BC (Photo author)

Some of the earlier examples were probably captured from the Romans during Hannibal's war (218-201 BC), as in the case of the bronze helmet with the punched Latin inscription 'Mvlys' (de Hoz 1994)⁷ found in burial F4/2 in the cemetery at Pozo Moro (Albacete) (Quesada 1997b: 156) (Fig. 85). This helmet in particular shares an important characteristic with the 'Braganza Brooch' helmet: the two holders soldered to the sides of the bowl to hold vertical plumes, which are characteristic of Roman legionary helmets, although extant surviving examples are rare (see Robinson 1975: 17, nr. 4, from Italy). However, iconographic and literary sources tell us that Iberian peoples also used crests and plumes on helmets to make their owners look more impressive, almost feral; the comment by Strabo (3,3,6) that Lusitanians used helmets with three crests applies to a helmet type such as the one we are studying (with one central and two side holders).

⁷ However, the mid-4th century BC date apparently given by an Attic black glaze pottery kantharos is mistaken. A much later date is now accepted (*e.g.* Alcalá Zamora 2004: 91 ff.) given the typology of the *wellenranke* decoration on the helmet's neckguard (Schaaf 1918: 318 ff.).

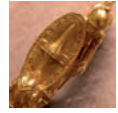


Fig. 86:

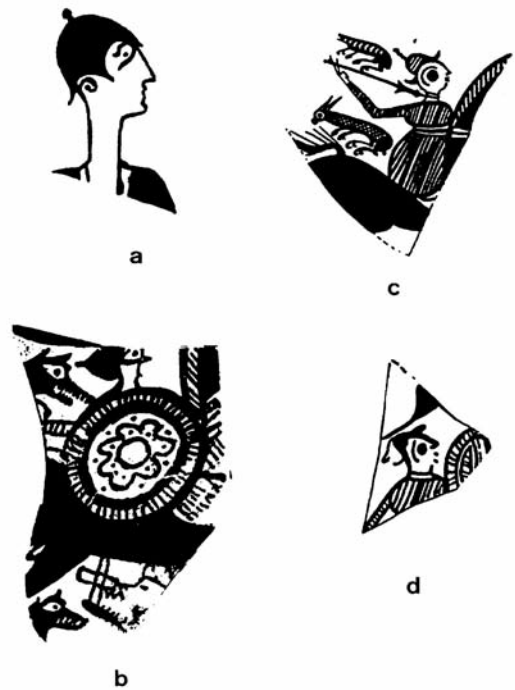
Montefortino-type helmets painted on Iberian vases
(late 3rd-2nd centuries BC)

- a) S. Miguel de Liria;
- b) Castillo del Río;
- c-d) Elche.

The absence of cheekpieces is noticeable.

Note also, the chinstrap in 'b'

(after Quesada 1997b)



A most important detail is that the Braganza helmet does not carry cheekpieces (and it never did: they did not break off and get lost, as the plumes and the sword blade did). Many well-preserved actual helmets in Italy and Gaul still have their cheekpieces (Robinson 1975; Schaaf 1988; Tagliamonte 2002-2003; 2004), and it indeed seems clear from the iconography that Romans, Etruscans, Samnites, Italian Celts and Gauls all used these helmets with their face protection. However, no example found in Iberian burials or sanctuaries has cheekpieces (see Quesada 1997b for details). Images also show these helmets without them (Fig. 86). So it seems that the Iberians dispensed with cheekpieces, perhaps because they limited peripheral vision and this did not suit their mode of fighting, or perhaps because they hid facial features, something that perhaps was not considered appropriate by these proud warriors whose traditional leather helmets left the face visible. Whatever the reason, the absence of cheekpieces in the Braganza fibula helmet is another indication of a possible peninsular provenance.

Sword, scabbard and suspension system

Although the sword blade is missing in the 'Braganza Brooch' (a scar remains on the warrior's arm where the blade originally rested), enough elements (Fig. 83) are still extant to allow an attempt at classification: hilt, scabbard and belt (Fig. 87).

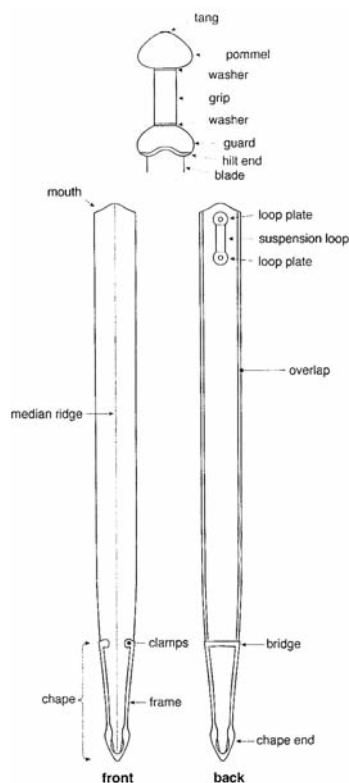
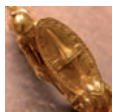


Fig. 87:

Elements of a La Tène-type sword and scabbard (after Stead 2006)

The sword surely had a straight-blade matching the scabbard, and it belonged to a generic ‘La Tène’ type (Stead, Meeks 1996: 11) ⁸.

The scabbard is one of the best guides for chronological classification of La Tène type swords ⁹, chape-ends (fr. *bouterolles*) in iron being one of their most distinctive elements. We agree with I. Stead (1996: 11) that the goldsmith purposely modelled a La Tène I scabbard with a lobate chape end, which is quite different from the straight-sided chape ends of later periods. As we have seen in the case of the other weapons represented on the brooch, the smith was clearly aware of details, and this is also surely the case.

If the fibula were Gaulish, a Navarro type Ið dated to c. 250 BC could certainly be the intended type (De Navarro 1972: fig. 115 and pp. 61 ff.; cf. Stead, Meeks 1996: 11; also Lejars 1994: 26). But if the sword is a Spanish version of the La Tène sword, then the chape end could well be a García Jiménez’s Type 3 or 4 (García Jiménez 2006: 131, fig. 43) dated to the end of the 3rd or mostly to the 2nd century BC, as in actual examples from Burriac, Mas Castellar de Pontós, Turo dels dos Pins, etc. (García Jiménez 2006).

There are also two elements in the scabbard that Ian Stead considers ‘decorative’: ‘*The borders down the front may be decorative, but they could represent the overlapping edges of the back-plate; four grooves across the middle, and two in the lower part, are presumably decorative*’ (Stead, Meeks 1996: 10). In fact, swords north of the Pyrenees rarely have the back plate folding over the front plate to secure the scabbard (e.g. Lejars 1996: 27 ¹⁰); most of them are the other way round, front over back, thus hiding the joints. However, the Iberian version actually folds ‘back over front’ more often, thus showing an edge all along its sides, just as in the Braganza fibula (García Jiménez 2006: fig. 40 and pp. 126-128). Also, metal horizontal reinforcements along the scabbards are alien to La Tène I-II tradition (this is why they were rightly considered ‘decorative’ by I. Stead); but again in Iberia this reinforcing element is actually present in swords from Catalonia (García Jiménez 2006: 133-135) (Fig. 88).

The Braganza sword-hilt has one puzzling characteristic, as already noted by Stead (1996: 11): the guard or hilt-end is markedly convex (Fig. 83), a feature that is undocumented either in France, Italy or

⁸ Bibliography on La Tène swords is huge. For general syntheses, see Navarro (1972); Brunaux; Lambot (1987); Pleiner (1993); Rapin (1998); Stead (2006). For the Iberian Peninsula, see Quesada (1997b); García Jiménez (2006).

⁹ De Navarro (1972); Brunaux, Lambot (1988: 122-125); Lejars (1994). In Catalonia, see García Jiménez (2006).

¹⁰ Gournay, where this quite rare ‘back folded over front technique’ appears twice, in la Tène BI and LT C1 (c. 300-250 BC). As in other aspects, Iberian types lagged behind in typological evolution.

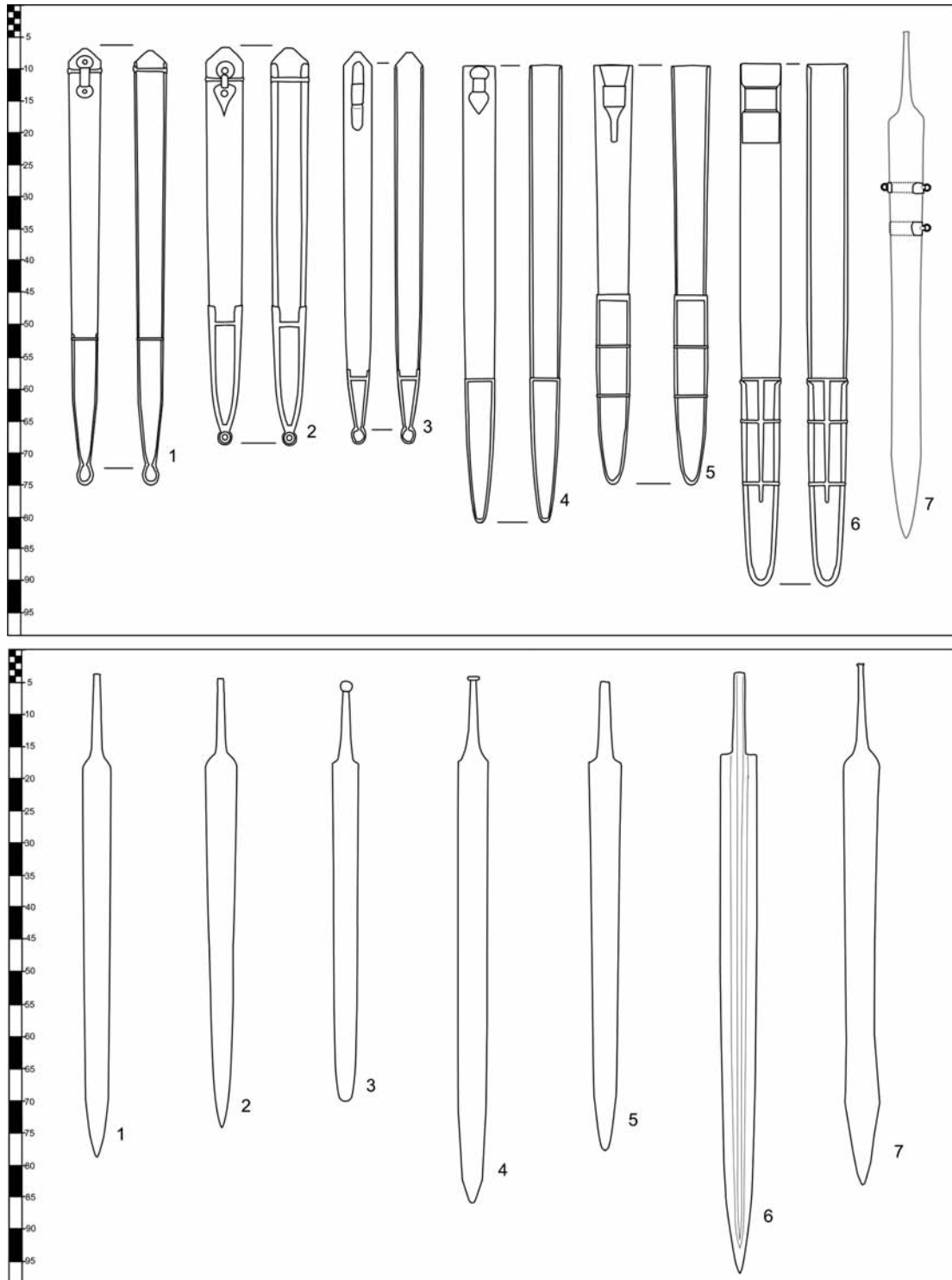
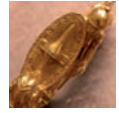
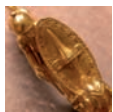


Fig. 88: Locally manufactured La Tène-type sword and scabbards from Catalonia
(after García Jiménez 2006, figs. 71-72)



Spain. This shape would fit badly with any of the known scabbard-mouth types (these are straight, or also convex, see de Navarro, 1972: fig. 3; García Jiménez 2006: fig. 54), thus making a good fit impossible.

The pommel of the hilt is clearly trilobate, a feature that is not easily identified in original swords as most pommels, manufactured in wood or bone, have long been lost to natural decay. Trilobate pommels have, however, a long story: they occasionally appear in actual swords from Britain and elsewhere (e.g. St. Maur les Fosses, Seine, de Navarro 1972: Plate 11653a-3b; Pleiner 1993: fig. 6), and were still used during the Roman Empire. Recent digs in El Fayum (Egypt) have unearthed a complete 1st century AD sword with wooden trilobate pommel, very much like the swords carried by the gods sculpted in an even later relief from Palmyra ¹¹. Only in this case the lobes are globular and not discoidal, and the central one is much bigger than the side elements.

But earlier trilobate pommels seem to be particularly present in Iberia. The above-mentioned monument from Osuna (2nd century BC) shows in relief an Iberian *scutatus* who carries a straight sword with a trilobate pommel very similar to the Braganza example. Incidentally, the warrior carries his sword blade resting over his shoulder just as he does in our golden fibula (Fig. 89). The Osuna relief is not the only example in Andalusia: a relief from Estepa (Seville), now in the Seville Archaeological Museum, shows two Roman legionaries armed with *lorica hamata* and convex *scutum*. Although the hilt of the sword carried by one of them is almost invisible, close personal examination proves it to be an unmistakable trilobate pommel. In this case the relief probably dates to the first century BC (Noguera 2003: fig. 24 and pp. 175-176).

The scabbard of the Braganza fibula is suspended vertically along the right leg of the warrior ¹² by a belt, made of a separate band of gold around the warrior's waist. Vertical suspension from a belt is a typically Celtic system, sometimes quite complex because it involves not only a belt but also pieces of metal chain, hooks and buckles (see Rapin 1987, 1991; Mathieu 2005). None of these elements is represented in the fibula, probably due to their very small size. Belt suspension was not only uncommon in most of Iberia, but also almost certainly unpopular. Both Iberians and Celtiberians used a completely different system of Mediterranean origin, shared with the Greeks, Etruscans and Romans.

Swords in Iron Age Iberia were suspended from a leather baldric hung across the chest. The baldric joined the scabbard via some mobile rings that allowed the sheath to be hung at an angle, so that drawing the sword was easier. This system, which is identical to the Greek way of carrying the *xiphos*, was used from the fifth century BC (Porcuna monument, see Negueruela 1989) down to the 1st century BC. In fact, some actual examples of late 4th century BC La Tène swords were eventually modified in Iberia, their iron plate scabbards (fitted with the Celtic belt suspension loops, fr. *pontet*) changed to add mobile rings for the baldric (see Quesada 1997c for a detailed discussion). In due course, while the swords themselves were modified only very slightly, the Celtiberians discarded the metal scabbards altogether, using leather sheaths with metal frames and baldric-rings instead. These swords became in turn the prototypes for the Roman *Republican gladius hispaniensis* (Quesada 1997c).

Therefore the Braganza fibula retains a original Celtic sword suspension system that would be quite unusual in Iberia. But we must remember that there is a region in the Peninsula that actually produced La Tène type swords while retaining metal scabbards with suspension loops: Catalonia and Spain in general north of the Ebro (see Quesada 1997a: 623 ff.; García Jiménez 2006: *passim* and 146 ff.).

¹¹ <http://www.romanarmy.com/rat/viewtopic.php?t=12907>

¹² It is quite feasible to draw a 66 cm. long blade suspended from the right hand side.

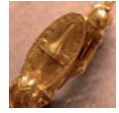


Fig. 89:

Sword hilt from the sword in the Osuna monument, probably a prototype of the *gladius hispaniensis* (Paris, St. Germain-en-Laye. Photo author)

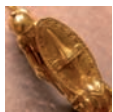


Overall, the sword from the ‘Braganza Brooch’ looks like a straight-blade sword of a type common enough in northeastern Iberia by the late 3rd and 2nd centuries BC – but also occasionally documented in Andalusia (Fig. 88). This model is clearly inspired by a late La Tène I Celtic prototype, but some of its features –some scabbard details and pommel– seem to suggest a Peninsular rather than any other provenance.

A warrior and his weapons

To sum up, our warrior’s panoply thus consists of a relatively Late Montefortino-type helmet without its cheekpieces, a flat oval shield with *spina* and metal boss, and a straight sword with trilobate pommel, iron sheet scabbard with elaborate chape-end suspended from a belt, that fits well with an Iberian version of the la Tène I-II model from Gaul, in itself the model for the Roman *gladius hispaniensis*.

While the figure of the warrior is carefully modelled (and this has been studied elsewhere), nudity is his most noticeable feature. There are two ways of interpreting this: as a faithful depiction of a real custom, or as a symbolic gesture. Most studies, focusing on the supposedly Celtic nature of the fibula, have cited ancient sources describing naked Celtic warriors in battle (*e.g.* Telamon 225 BC, see Polybius



2,28-29; also Diodorus 5,29,2) and this view has spread to more general literature (see Celtic 2001: 6). Thus, the naked warrior would be a reflection of actual martial practices among the Gauls and other Celts from the Alpine region, and in the case of the fibula, nudity would also assume a heroic nature.

However, we have already seen that the warrior and his weapons can perfectly well be considered in a Celtiberian or Iberian context, but we do not have literary sources informing us that they marched naked into battle. But what we do have is hundreds of bronze figures, *ex-voti* from sanctuaries in Andalusia and Murcia, that show armed but naked warriors (Iberos 1998 cat. nrs. 27, 262, 264; Alvarez Ossorio 1941; Nicolini 1969; Prados 1992). These figurines show that nudity with weapons was an accepted iconographic feature, filled with symbolic meanings, including both heroic nudity and nakedness before the divinity in the context of the sanctuary.

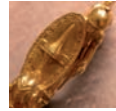
On so-called 'Celtic' weapons in the Iberian Peninsula

There is no doubt that during the Iron Age there were many Celtic-speaking peoples dwelling in the Iberian Peninsula, mainly in the Ebro Valley, the Meseta (the inland central plateau) and the Southwest.

It has also long been accepted that these Spanish Celts did not share the 'La Tène' cultural complex with Gauls and other European Celts, but that some elements of the La Tène cultural complex (mainly weapons and fibulae) were imported into Spain; and that some of these were copied, transformed and converted, thus becoming >local= types (e.g. García Jiménez 2006).

But 'true' La Tène weapons are rare in the Peninsula, even in the Meseta, and truly exceptional in the Southeast and Andalusia, the Iberian lands (Quesada 1997a: 556 ff.; 618-632). La Tène I weapons are very rare, and only very few can be dated to the end of the 4th century, such as the sword from La Pedrera (Lérida, Catalonia), accompanied by an iron helmet of probably local manufacture along Gallic lines (Schule, 1969: Taf. 180.1; Quesada 2002a, 2002b). Most finds are dated to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, being part of the La Tène II horizon (Arcobriga in Saragossa, la Revilla in Soria, and many from Catalonia (Turo dels dos Pins, Cabrera de Mar, Puig Castellar, Ullastret, etc). Some swords are even later and are connected with the Roman conquest (Cato's campaign in 195 BC, Celtiberian Wars and later Sertorian and even Caesarian campaigns in the mid 1st century BC). This is the case of finds at Caminreal (Teruel), or Ampurias. True assemblages consisting of more than one sword and iron boss in association are in fact only found in Catalonia and Saragossa, and not south of the Ebro river.

One of the recurring features of Iberian and Celtiberian cultures is their ability to absorb foreign influences through a process of adaptation to local tastes and conditions. Perhaps the best example (see above) that of the transformation of La Tène-type iron-plate scabbards with *pontet* for vertical suspension from a belt, into sheaths suspended from a baldric hung across the chest by means of mobile rings, as in the swords from Gormaz, Arcobriga or Cigarralejo (Quesada 1997c: 262-266). The other two elements that used to be considered 'late Celtic' in Iberia, namely knob, jockey-cap helmets and oval shields are now considered proof of Mediterranean influence in regions south of the Ebro (*i.e.* most of the Peninsula) during and after Hannibal's war (see above).



Provenance and date of the 'Braganza Brooch' according to the warrior's panoply

All the weapons in the Braganza gold fibula, put together, are therefore consistent with the panoply of a late period Iberian or Celtiberian warrior. More precisely, the area of Catalonia, and the lower half of the valley of the river Ebro (the north-eastern quadrant of the Peninsula) have with some frequency yielded real examples of all these weapons, and not only as scattered objects, but as a set or panoply. But isolated examples can also be found in eastern Andalusia and the Southeast (*e.g.*, Jaén, Granada, Murcia, Alicante), and even the Osuna reliefs in Seville show that warriors armed this way were present in western Andalusia. So, we have evidence of *realia* and iconography that provide parallels for this panoply in many parts of the Peninsula.

Thus, the provenance of the 'Braganza Brooch' remains uncertain. It is in fact no more than an educated guess, but from the –admittedly limited– point of view of the study of the warrior and his weapons¹³, the lower Ebro valley would probably be our best choice. Not only is this area close to the greatest concentration of 'La Tène type' weapons in Iberia, and the only region where a belt instead of a baldric would be acceptable as a sword suspension system, but it also shows other archaeological elements that fit well with a masterpiece of art such as the 'Braganza Brooch' with its Greek or Hellenistic undertones (Stead, Meeks, 1996: 15). There is a local tradition of warrior sculptures (the 'lower Ebro valley stelae' that depict heroised warriors, probably local rulers, riding horses and carrying oval shields (*e.g.* the interesting stela from Calaceite, see Beltran 1996: 176). Some of these rulers were fond enough of Greek architecture to order the building of fortifications that resemble Greek prototypes, such as the twin polygonal gate towers at Castellet de Banyoles (Tivissa Tarragona), dated to the end of the 3rd BC¹⁴. Also, decorated silverware of the highest quality has been found in this area, works of Greek influence but of local manufacture. Most notably, the famous Tivissa *phiale*¹⁵ (also from Castellet de Banyoles), dated to c. 225-200 BC., but also some other vases¹⁶.

If the 'Braganza Brooch' was indeed manufactured in Iberia, our second best choice for a provenance would be Andalusia, and more precisely central Andalusia, where very powerful *reguli* ruled over many *oppida* over vast regions (see Livy 28, 13; 33, 21), where urban life had been established for many centuries (Cunliffe, Keay 1995), and where many hoards of silver and goldware have been found, dating to the end of the 3rd to the first half of the 1st century BC. Also, the best parallels by far for the shape of the 'Braganza Brooch', namely silver fibulae with images of mounted warriors¹⁷, also come

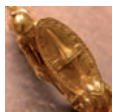
¹³ As dictated by this book's 'rules of engagement' that divide fields of study.

¹⁴ Pallarés (1983-1984) but Asensio *et al.* (1996 for the date). But the similarities with Greek fortifications are superficial. The Iberian builder did not really understand the complexities of overlapping fields of fire and the towers themselves had no artillery platforms, notwithstanding their external appearance (Moret 1996: 217; 1998: 89).

¹⁵ Forming part of the decoration of this exceptional silver dish we again find a horse warrior with spear and oval *thureos* of Hellenistic type, shown along with many other figures. See Olmos (1997).

¹⁶ Olmos 1997; Jaeggi 2004: 49 ff. with all the relevant earlier bibliographical references.

¹⁷ For silver fibulae, see Almagro Gorbea, Torres 1999: 149 ff, and elsewhere in this volume. Also de la Bandera (1986) and Stead, Meeks (1996).



Fernando Quesada

mainly from this area, although some of them have also been found in Valencia and Guadalajara, closer geographically to our first choice ¹⁸.

Without any context it is difficult to put forward a good date for the Braganza fibula, but the weapons carried by the warrior, and the shape of the brooch itself, point towards a fairly late timeframe, between c. 300 BC and c. 100 BC. Or, more precisely, between c. 250-150 BC

The ‘monster’

Without trying to cast any doubts on the general authenticity of the ‘Braganza Brooch’, I am however still concerned about a point of detail. In my opinion, the animal actually fighting the warrior –be it feline, wolf or imagined monster– does not really ‘fit’ with the rest (Fig. 78). Although it undoubtedly shares a general look with the other animal figures, the quite natural curve of its neck, front legs and claws, and the comparative naturalism and flexibility of its features, are in sharp contrast with the rigid stance and hieratism of the three other animal figures, and even look a bit ‘Art Nouveau’ in style.

Even if samples for metallographic analysis have been taken from this specific part of the brooch for comparison with other parts of the piece –I have not been able to secure precise information on this point– a consistency between the composition of the gold used to model the monster and the rest of the brooch could in fact only prove that this part of the brooch was damaged when found, and that a very gifted artisan linked to the house of Braganza could have used this same gold to recreate a monster, imitating the style of the rest, but with a distinct ‘modernist’ flavour.

There are parallels for this. Long ago Horace Sandars published a short paper on forged antiquities from Spain (Sandars 1913). He rightly concluded that a ‘falcata’ sword from Almedinilla (Córdoba) ¹⁹ (Fig. 90) was a forged object, although it had been published as a genuine ‘falcata’ by P. Paris in 1904 (Paris, 1904: 280 ff., and fig. 426 and plate XI) ²⁰ and many other scholars ²¹, and has continued to be exhibited as such even in modern times (Iberos 1983: 131). In fact, the blade and part of the hilt are genuine, but a griffin’s head was added as a ‘restored’ pommel, together with some plates meant to act as scales for the hilt itself. The style of the griffin is reminiscent of Viollet le-Duc’s (1814-1879) gargoyles at Notre Dame in Paris, and the ‘scale’ covers look very much like ‘Art Nouveau’ work of

¹⁸ For the distribution of silver hoards see Jaeggi (2004: fig. 14) and references there.

¹⁹ Now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, Inv. 10.473. See Maraver (1867) and Sandars (1913b).

²⁰ But even P. Paris found something odd about the hilt: “*A première vue, il semble que l’on soit transporté fort loin de l’Iberia. Le dragon ou la panthère a un faux air de monstre arab ou persan; le rinceau fait penser à quelque ingénieux travail de la Renaissance. Cependant l’oeuvre est bien authentique et espagnole, et il faut ajouter, antique*” (Paris 1904: 284).

²¹ Including Cartailhac (1886: fig. 367) and the *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines* de Daremberg y Saglio, s.v. *machaera*.

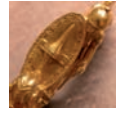


Fig. 90:

Falcata from Almedinilla (discovered c. 1867)
restored and modified with a modern hilt in modernist style before 1904
(Museo Arqueológico Nacional)

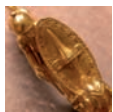


the late 19th to early 20th centuries²². We do not know when this forgery (probably considered as an nice and true restoration by whoever crafted it) was made, but it must have been between 1867 –when the sword was discovered– and 1899 when Cartailhac published it. Let us remember in this context that the ‘Braganza Brooch’ only reached the United States in 1919, and that before that had probably belonged to the Royal House of Portugal, the Braganza family, perhaps acquired by Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg (1816-1885), although this is only an informed guess (Stead, Meeks, 1996; Vv. Aa. 2007: 13). I fully realize, however, that the idea that the monster in the brooch might be a later addition –perhaps using damaged metal from parts of the original– is an impression based on points of style, which obviously contains an significant element of subjectivity and should be considered as such.

Concluding remarks

To sum up, the warrior in the ‘Braganza Brooch’ can be considered a depiction of a Late Iberian or perhaps a Celtiberian warrior, but not necessarily ‘Celtic’ in the usual sense of the term. In our opinion, the other features in the fibula -including its general shape- point towards an Iberian rather than a Celtiberian context. So perhaps ‘Iberian’ rather than ‘Celtic’ is the best label for the brooch in the present state of our knowledge.

²² Another mistake lies in the fact that the hilt became too big in the ‘restoration’ process, leaving a handgrip which, at 12 cm in length, is unique among true Iberian falcatas, whose average handgrip measures only about 8 cm (Quesada 1997a: 103-104).



Fernando Quesada

The best date for the weapons –as they are represented– could be early 3rd to late 2nd century BC, and, to be a bit more precise, perhaps a chronological timeframe of c. 225 to c. 125 BC is applicable. This warrior depicts a new kind of fighter that used an updated panoply (Quesada 1997a: 615 ff.), better adapted to the new battlefield conditions after Iberian peoples became, *velis nolis*, a warring faction in the conflicts between Carthage and Rome, and later, during the Roman conquest. This panoply included the adoption of bronze, mass-produced Montefortino helmets of Italian origin, used both by Romans and many Carthaginians; oval shields that protected the body better than the round *caetra*, and new types of sword. Although these weapons did not replace the earlier panoply – the *falcata* remained in use into Augustean times, they actually indicate profound changes in warfare that do not really reflect Celtic influence, but a much more complex situation, the involvement in the ‘World Wars’ between the superpowers of the time.