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Artistic Expression and Material Culture in Celtic Gallaecia

Alfredo González-Ruibal

Abstract

The Iron Age art of northwestern Iberia (the ancient Gallaecia) is scarcely known by scholars outside Spain and Portugal, due to the local character of most publications dealing with this topic. This has deprived archaeologists of the knowledge of an original culture, whose artistic expressions owe as much to the Mediterranean world as to the Atlantic one. An overview of the main characteristics of this distinctive material culture tradition, within the social context of its production and use, is offered along with a catalogue of the most outstanding pieces of Gallaecian art (sculpture, jewellery, bronzework, pottery).

Key Words

Sculpture, jewellery, bronzework, oppida, hillforts, Late Iron Age, northwest Iberia.

Two caveats have to be made on the topics addressed in this article. One refers to the term "Celtic" and the second to the concept of "art". As we will see in the next paragraphs, there are very few elements that characterise "early Celtic" art *par excellence*, i.e. the La Tène style of the Late Iron Age. Although this style cannot simply be equated with "Celts", it can be found over most of temperate Europe, from the north of Italy to Ireland and from Brittany to eastern Europe and it was obviously used as a form of elite expression among aristocrats in the Late Iron Age in Europe (Megaw and Megaw 1989; Wells 1998). However, no clear traces of Celtic art have been discovered in northwestern Iberia to date. Even if some elements do show links with central Europe, such as the Montefortino helmets or the *têtes coupées*, how they arrived in this area is not easy to guess. The Montefortino helmets, for example, or at least the concept of this helmet style, may have come from southern Iberia since the artifacts themselves were

apparently produced in the northwest. Personal ornament was clearly inspired by continental or Atlantic Europe, especially in the case of torcs, but technology and style (filigree, granulation), as well as decoration are, in many ways, akin to the Mediterranean culture. Many of these mixed or hybrid features are due to the doubly marginal character of the region, with regard to the Mediterranean and to other Atlantic or Continental regions (González-Ruibal 2004). If we use the label "Celtic art" to mean the "artistic" expressions of certain "Celtic" groups - those supposedly inhabiting the northwestern Iberian Peninsula in the Late Iron Age - then its use might be admissible, although I remain suspicious about the historical reality of such a construct. Finally, I will not deal with elements from the Later Bronze Age or the Early Iron Age. Only the art of the Middle and, especially, the Late Iron Age - roughly equivalent to the La Tène period (450-50 BC) in temperate Europe - will be taken into account. Otherwise, an anachronistic and confusing image of the local cultures and their evolution would be presented, a shortcoming of many histories of "Celtic art".

Secondly, the term "art" is not something that can be extrapolated from contemporary to pre-modern cultures without exploring the meaning and the role of aesthetics in those cultures. Archaeologists and art historians tend to forget the deep social roots behind what they label "art". Lévi-Strauss (1995), for example, has stressed the "semi-religious" character of many non-Western artistic expressions. I agree with Shanks (1996: 148) when he says that there can be no purely decorative surfaces, devoid of meaning, since a design always implies, at least, the conditions of its production. Besides, the clear division between art and other forms of material culture in modern Western societies is rarely shared by traditional groups. Should we include fibulae, torcs and pottery or not? Are we not adopting a male-centered view when refusing to consider pottery an art, or giving it a secondary place in aesthetics? Is architectural decoration always perceived as something imbued with aesthetic meanings or are these secondary as opposed to, say, magical principles? On the other hand, "art" cannot be reduced to its sociological background: a sense and even a theory of aesthetics is present in every society - see, for example, Glassie (1999). Although these questions are beyond the scope of this paper, it is necessary to keep them in mind when looking at the works that will be discussed below.

If we adopt a classic approach to the art of Iron Age Gallaecia, we find the following expressions:

1. **Stone sculpture.** Two traditions can be proposed: the "art of the oppida", in the

southwest of the region (*Conventus Bracarum*), and representations of human heads, which are mainly found in Galicia (the largest part of the ancient and largest Roman administrative region known as Gallaecia).

2. **Jewellery.** This, and the following manifestations, would be labelled as "minor arts" by traditional art historians. All material expressions in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, however, were tightly linked: the same motifs and a similar grammar can be found in stone, gold and pottery, thus allowing a "pervasive style" (de Boer 1991) to be defined. Three main types of artifacts can be identified here: torcs, belts, and earrings. A marked regional diversity, with important socio-political implications, can be seen.
3. **Decorated bronzes.** Only a handful of pieces have been recovered. Four types of artifacts will be taken into account, three of them related to ritual and one associated with war: cauldrons; sacrificial axes; ceremonial cart models and helmets. Unlike other "Celtic" areas in Europe, scabbards, hilts, swords and daggers lack almost any decoration in Gallaecia. Except for the ceremonial cart model, the rest of the decorated bronzes probably belong to the Late Iron Age.
4. **Pottery.** In the Middle Iron Age (400-100 BC) an outstanding decorated pottery tradition appeared in southwestern Gallaecia. Some baroquely decorated containers were still produced in the Late Iron Age. Local pottery has little in common with the La Tène style or other continental traditions, either in shape, technology or decoration. Parallels with other Atlantic regions are not seen until well into the Late Iron Age and only in the northernmost area.

A brief description of each artifact category will be given, followed by a catalogue of some representative pieces. The references for each work do not represent a comprehensive bibliography, but only the most important or recent titles. Older sources are mentioned only if they contain relevant context-related data. Calo Louridos' Ph.D. thesis, published as a book (Calo 1994) represents the most comprehensive and updated account of the Iron Age sculpture in northwestern Iberia, and includes a complete bibliography up to 1991 as well as a good summary of each site. A recent number of the journal *Madridier Mitteilungen* (Vol. 44, 2003) is devoted to warrior statues in Gallaecia. For jewellery, two catalogues were consulted: Balseiro (1994) and Álvarez Núñez (1996). Bronzes and pottery lack good monographs. Silva's (1986) Ph.D. thesis contains a significant amount of information, drawings and photographs of sculptures, jewellery, bronzes and pottery in northwestern Portugal. The place where each piece is now located is indicated following the relevant sources in the catalogue below.

The area referred to in this article is the territory called *Gallaecia* by the Romans,

basically northern Portugal and Galicia and adjacent territories of Spain (Fig. 1A). Their inhabitants were called *Callaeci*. The region was divided into a northern territory (*Conventus Lucensis*) and a southern one (*Conventus Bracarum*) (Fig. 1B). The division was made on ethnic grounds: Roman boundaries seemingly reflect Iron Age traditions. The neighbouring area, called *Asturia* by the Romans, is less well known and its material culture is not as rich as that of Gallaecia. It stretches through the modern provinces of León and Oviedo (Asturias). The southern part of Asturia (*Asturia Cismontana* or *Augustana*) was strongly influenced by the eastern Celtiberian traditions and it will not be taken into account here.

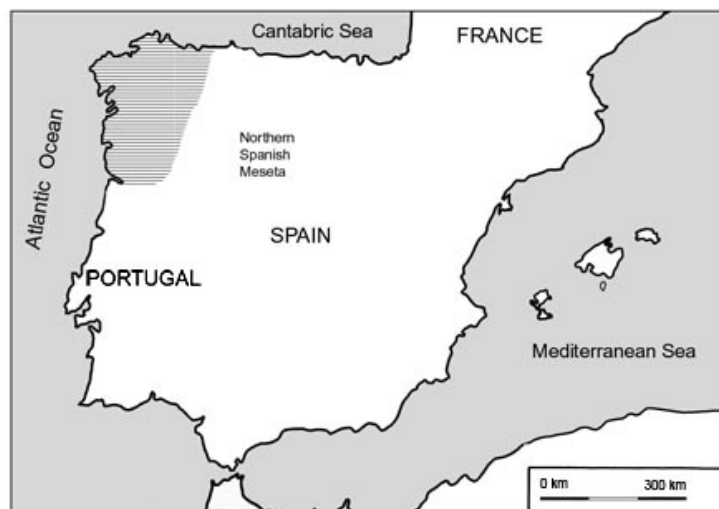


Figure 1A. The northwestern Iberian Peninsula: the land of the Callaeci.



Figure 1B. The northwestern Iberian Peninsula. Roman territories (*conventus*) and modern capitals.

The following chronology will be used:

- Late Bronze Age 1200-800 BC
- Early Iron Age 800-400 BC
- Middle Iron Age 400-100 BC
- Late Iron Age 100 BC - 50 AD
- Roman Iron Age 30 BC - 50 AD

Sculpture

The Art of the Oppida

The oppida built in southwestern Gallaecia from the second half of the second century BC on reflect a deep transformation in the structure of the society and material culture of the area (Fig. 2). The elites increased their power: centralization, inequality and hierarchization characterize the Late Iron Age in northwestern Iberia, as seems to be occurring at that time in most parts of temperate Europe. Also, as in the rest of Europe (Kruta 1993: 438-443), the creation of these centralized polities lead to a particular style. Complex chiefdoms, as Earle (2002: 162) reminds us, are usually associated with "great styles". Significantly, one of the most astonishing novelties in our region is the emergence of a tradition of rich stone statuary that has no equal in other regions of "Celtic" Europe, although Mediterranean influence may be responsible for the development of stone sculpture in Gallaecia. Southern Iberia enjoyed a superb sculptural tradition from the sixth century BC on, following Greek and Oriental models (Chapa Brunet 1990), and the coastal areas of Gallaecia were in touch with Semitic merchants from Andalusia (González-Ruibal 2004). Nonetheless, most of the motifs and elements are native or have wider European connections. Four main groups of sculptures can be established:

1. Warriors.
2. Anthropomorphic statues, probably representing gods.
 - a. Female goddesses.
 - b. Seated gods.
3. Architectural decoration.
4. *Pedras formosas* (lit. "beautiful stones"), i.e. decorated stones from ritual saunas.
5. Sacred pillars. *Omphaloi*?

Chronology

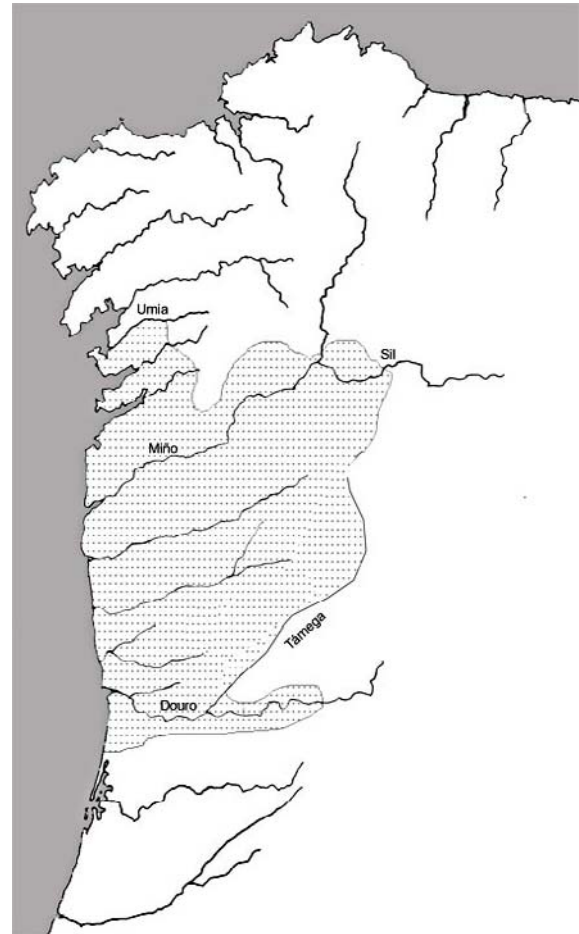


Figure 2. The area of the southern Gallaecian art style, which corresponds almost exactly with that of the oppida.

Before describing the characteristics of these sculptures, a note on chronology is required. The origins of Gallaecian sculpture are much debated. Most of the archaeologists working in the area postulate a late chronology, starting from the time of Augustus and ending in the late first century AD (see Calo Lourido 1993-94, 1994), a theory, however, that is flawed for a number of reasons.

Some decorated stones have been recovered in hillforts abandoned before the time of Augustus. The best examples are Sabroso (Braga, Portugal) and A Forca (Pontevedra, Galicia). Despite Calo Lourido's (1994: 250-256; 421-422) objections to both sites, the evidence is overwhelming: no LIA pottery has been recovered in A Forca, but MIA indigenous pottery was found along with Punic and Greek sherds - the scant Roman sherds appeared in disturbed contexts and most are likely Republican in date (Carballo Arceo 1987, 1996). In Sabroso, although later in date, only a fragment of a Roman amphora has been reported (Soeiro et al. 1982: 345), while the typical materials of "romanized" hillforts are absent - Samian ware, glass, Roman coins, *tegulae* - at least from stratified contexts. A Forca represents the origin of sculptural decoration during the second century BC and Sabroso its height during the first century BC, before Augustan times.

Most of the statues and friezes were not recovered during archaeological excavations and, even when they were, they were rarely discovered in their original context of use. The fact that the oppida and hillforts where sculptures have been discovered show strong traces of Roman occupation (basically from the time of Augustus to the mid-first century AD), does not imply that the sculptures were created and displayed in this period. As a matter of fact, they often appear re-used in streets and houses that were then being built or rebuilt (e.g. Mergelina 1944-45: láms. XXVIII-XXX; Viana 1963: 175; Silva 1986: est. XXVII, nº I-IA, 2; est. CXXXV, 3). That implies that they had been produced earlier. In one of the very few cases in which a carved stone was discovered *in situ*, inside a domestic compound, the stone was hidden by a wall some time in the first half of the first century AD (Silva 1986: 49; est. XXVII, nº I-IA).

It is difficult to understand why a clearly indigenous manifestation began after the Roman conquest only to come to an end 75 to 100 years afterwards. The huge number of sculptures known (around 600 pieces) makes this hard to believe.

No clear Roman influences can be distinguished in most of these sculptural works. A local Roman art style developed from the beginning of the first century AD on that is quite

similar to other local artistic expressions in the Empire, such as those from Britain or Gaul.

In the specific case of warrior statues, the weapons and dress depicted are clearly pre-Roman and the Latin inscriptions that appear on some statues are obviously of later date, one of them from the 17th century AD (Koch 2003). Some authors have argued that warrior representations are the indigenous *interpretatio* of the Roman *thoracatae* statues in the *fora* (Almeida 1983). This can hardly be the case, if only for chronological reasons: the first monumentalization of the Roman towns in northwestern Iberia did not take place before the Flavian era, while the hillforts start to fade away by the mid-first century AD. On the other hand, no formal or structural similarities can be found between Gallaecian warriors and Roman statues.

Thus, I propose a chronology of the second and first century BC, parallel to the emergence and development of oppida, for the art of southern Gallaecia (González-Ruibal 2003a: 326-328). The art came to an end in the aftermath of the Roman conquest of the region, as part of a wider re-negotiation of identities (González-Ruibal 2003b).

Warriors

Warrior statues are among the most outstanding artistic achievements of pre-Roman Gallaecia. They represent outsized males with a short sword or dagger, a small round shield (*caetra*), torc, bracelets (*viriae*), decorated belt and decorated dress. In some cases, they have a beard (Lezenho) and in one example, the head is covered with a helmet (Sanfins). The weapons, specially the famous *caetra*, have been also described in Greek and Roman texts (Strabo 3, 3, 5). The decorated belts are especially interesting: the existence of magic belts has been noted amongst Phoenicians and Punics (Blázquez 1991: 90-97), and they could have reached Gallaecia through the Semitic merchants that regularly visited the northwest coasts in search of tin and gold. The best warrior statues come from Lezenho, an unexplored hillfort near the Támega River, in the northwest of Portugal. All the examples were made of granite, as were virtually all other sculptural works in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. Unfortunately, as is the case with most of the statuary, only a couple of pieces have been found in an archaeological context. These are the remains from the Sanfins' acropole and the feet - wedged in an outcrop - found at the same oppidum (Silva 1999:16). The problem with the former is that they were found in a secondary position and purposefully demolished in what seems to have been a sacred area, used in the first half of the first century AD. The feet have no archaeological materials associated with them; however, it is interesting to note their location. The statue was situated in a prominent

place among huge rocks beside the main gate of the second enclosure of the oppidum. The figures probably represent idealized warrior aristocrats (heroes) that symbolically protected the entrance to the settlements, while at the same time making explicit the power of the ruling elite. Parallels have been proposed with the late Hallstatt statues from Germany, such as those from the Glauberg and Hirschlanden (Höck 1999). However, the Gallaecian warrior statues were probably produced in the late second and first centuries BC and always appear linked to oppida or hillforts, while the Hallstatt examples are from the sixth to fifth centuries BC and are found in funerary contexts. In addition, there is too wide a spatial gap between southern Germany and northwestern Iberia. Warrior statues have appeared in several locations in northwestern Portugal and in the province of Ourense (Galicia) in the oppida of Rubiás and Armeá.

There are also smaller representations of warriors, most of them from southern Galicia, whose date may be earlier, although we lack any contextual data. The most famous image is the warrior from Capeludos, from northeastern Portugal, who wears a cap extraordinarily similar to that of the Hirschlanden warrior. Finally, some stone heads, probably depicting warriors, have been discovered in Galicia. There are only three good examples: Castro do Río, Anllo (both in Ourense) and Ralle (Lugo). They are oversized heads wearing torcs and

probably helmets, although the less realistic detail and the rougher treatment of the surfaces prevent an easy identification (Fig. 3). The emphasis on warrior representations fits well with the situation of instability and endemic warfare that characterized the Iberian Peninsula in the second and first centuries BC. Internecine conflict and wars against Rome probably encouraged inequalities within hillfort communities, especially in southern Gallaecia, the region that was in closer contact with Lusitanians and other warlike peoples, continuously menaced by the Roman

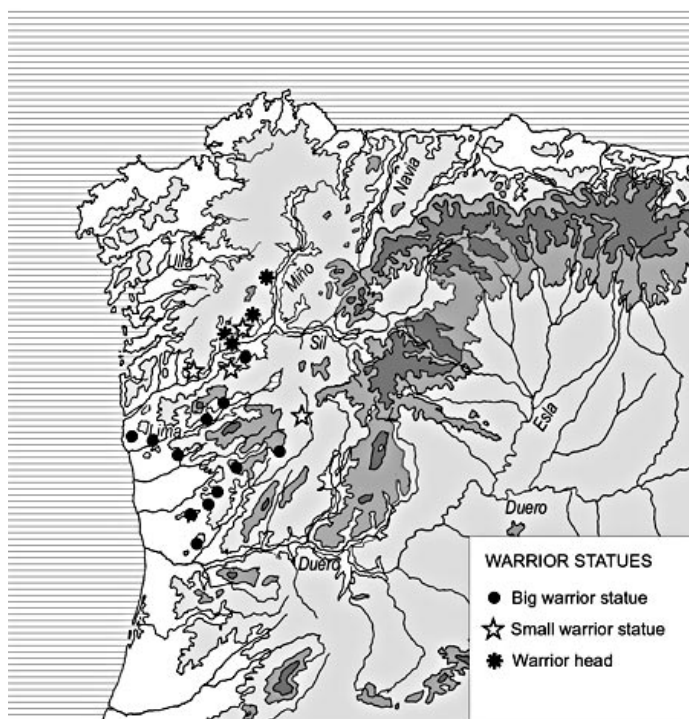


Figure 3. Distribution of different kinds of warrior statues. After González-Ruibal (2003a).

expansion. Mercenaries and warlords probably made the most, in social and political terms, of this turbulent situation.

Catalogue

Two warrior statues, Lezenho hillfort (Vila Real, Portugal) (Fig. 4).

The statues from Lezenho are the finest found in Gallaecia up to now. They show an astonishing degree of realism and detail. Both statues presented here have torcs, belts, round shields and daggers. One of them (B) has a dress decorated with interlaced S-patterns, the same pattern to be found in architectural decoration. Four statues in total are known from Lezenho hillfort.

Bibliography: Silva (1986: 305-307; Est. CXX, 1-2); Calo Lourido (1994: 292-302; 2003: 10-4, Pls. 10-21); Schattner (2003). Museu Nacional de Arqueologia e Etnologia (Lisboa).

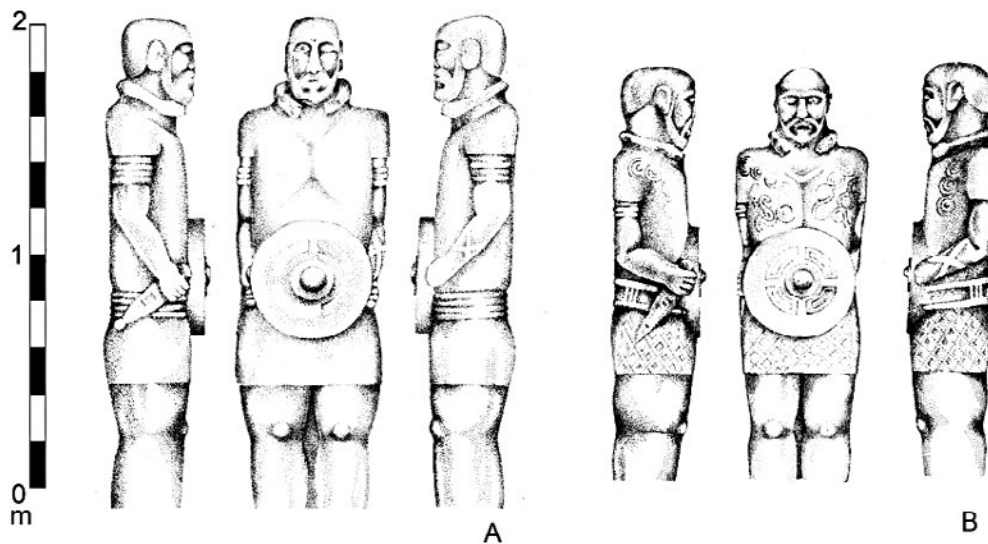


Figure 4. Two warrior statues from Lezenho. After Silva (1986).

Warrior statue, Citânia de São Julião (Braga, Portugal) (Fig. 5).

This statue shows the most elaborate dress of any warrior representation known from Gallaecia. The skirt has the same diamond-shaped pattern found in other statues (Lezenho, Monte Mozinho). The shirt, however, has abstract vegetal motifs of eastern Mediterranean origin that somewhat recall La Tène-style pieces. The motif on the right shoulder is a stylized palm-tree, very common in Iron Age orientalizing and post-orientalizing art (see Blanco Freijeiro 1957: 174-196). Some examples in architectural decoration can be identified in northwestern Iberia from Lansbrica and Coeliobriga, in Ourense, Galicia, (Calo Lourido 1994: 443, 1-2) and Briteiros, northern



Figure 5. Warrior statue from São Julião. After Silva (1986).

Portugal (Calo Lourido 1994: 180), among other sites. The following inscription can be read on the warrior's shield: *Malceino / Divilonis / F*, i.e. "Malceinus, Divilo's son". The front part of the belt has a multi-armed swastika, perhaps with an apotropaic meaning. The fact that those elements decorating houses and ritual saunas also appear in warriors' dress, reveals an appropriation by the ruling elite of powerful cosmological symbols. This was one of the latest warrior statues to be discovered, in the early 1980s. Bibliography: Martins and Silva (1984); Silva (1986: 305-306; Est. CXX, 4); Calo Lourido (1994: 450-455; 2003: 19-20, Pls. 30-32); Koch (2003); Schattner (2003). Unidade de Arqueologia da Universidade do Minho.

Warrior statue, Sanfins (Porto, Portugal) (Fig. 6).

As has already pointed out already, the feet were found wedged among big boulders near the oppidum's entrance gate while the other fragments were dug up in a wide rectangular building along with anepigraphic altars in the central part of the settlement. The dismemberment of the statue in early Roman times might have been part of a ritual performance. If so, it would suggest a shift in the foundation and representation of power. The style looks coarse, compared with other statues. The helmet, although perhaps not a Montefortino (Quesada 2003: 98), seemingly predates the Roman conquest. Quesada attributes it to Caesarian times (Buggenum type, see also Quesada 1997: 555-558). This is the only full warrior statue wearing a helmet.

Bibliography: Paço (1968); Calo Lourido (1994: 484-487, 493; 2003: 21-22, Pls. 37-39); Silva (1999: 16, 31); Schattner (2003). Museu Arqueológico da Citânia de Sanfins (Paços de Ferreira).

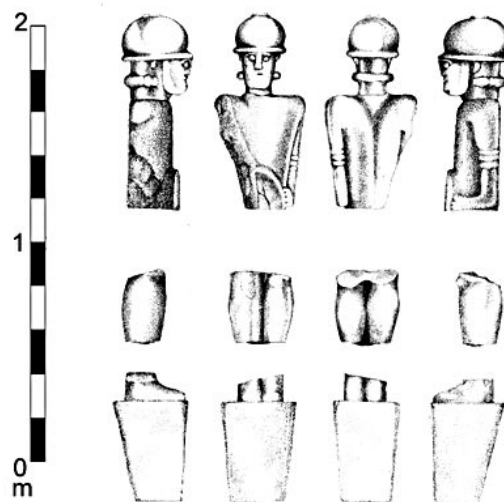


Figure 6. Warrior statue from Sanfins. After Silva (1986).

Warrior statue, Santa Comba hillfort (?). Refojos de Basto (Vila Real, Portugal) (Fig. 7).

This huge statue (206 cm) wears the characteristic belt, round shield, dagger and *viriae* on both arms. The belt has a small triskel as a decoration in the back, the same used in architectural decoration. As has been said, this was probably considered a magical protective device. One of the most interesting features of this work is the presence of feet, seldom preserved in warrior statues, seemingly encased in a pair of closed (leather?) boots and shin pads (*knemides*). In addition, this is one of the few warrior statues with a sword, which is unsheathed over the right part of the torso. It bears a Latin inscription on the lower part of the shield: "*Artifices / Calubrigens / es. et. Abianis / F(aciendum). C(uraverunt)*", whose interpretation remains obscure. Apparently, the "*faciendum curaverunt*" refers to the inscription itself and the statue could have been reused as a landmark between both *populi*. Bibliography: Silva (1986: 307;

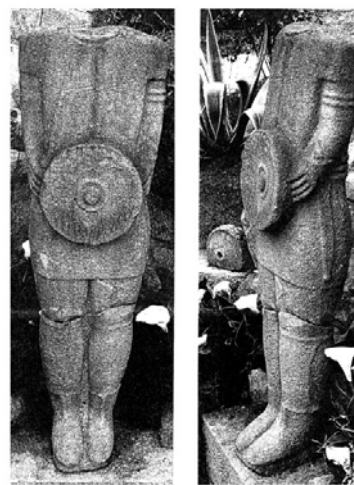


Figure 7. Warrior statue from Santa Comba. After Calo (2003).

est. CXXII, 1); Calo Lourido (1994: 509-515; 2003: 23-24, Pls. 40-43); Koch (2003); Schattner (2003). Private collection.

Warrior head, Anllo (Ourense) (Fig. 8).

The lesser quality of the work, as compared to the full warrior statues (e.g. Lezenho), is evident. The face has been roughly shaped and there is no attempt to provide a naturalistic image. Besides, the surface is badly eroded, making it difficult to ascertain whether the head was wearing a helmet or not. Slight traces of the *paragnatide* can be glimpsed on the left cheek.

The torc, on the contrary, although not realistic, is quite obvious. The sculpture is 44 cm high. It was discovered not far from an Iron Age defended settlement, although this date is far from certain in the hillfort-crowded landscape of Galicia.

Bibliography: Orero Grandal (1986: 95-98); Calo Lourido (1994: 81-83; 2003: 6, Pl. 1); Schattner (2003). Museo Arqueolóxico Provincial de Ourense.



Figure 8. Warrior bust from Anllo. Author's photograph.

Anthropomorphic statues

Female goddesses

The number of female representations in the pre-Roman art of Gallaecia is scant and their chronology is very dubious. We will take into account only two statues here: one from Briteiros and another one from Sendim, both found in hillforts in northwestern Portugal. These are less than life-sized representations of women, with their sexual attributes conspicuously marked. The sculptural work appears less skillful when compared to the warrior statues. The piece from Sendim was discovered in a hillfort inhabited throughout the Middle and Late Iron Age, until the beginning of the first century AD. The piece from Briteiros comes from the oppidum's acropolis, in an area that was probably devoted to ritual activities, as shown by other sculptures, inscriptions and human remains found there (González-Ruibal 2003a: 469-470). Some divinities known through the Roman epigraphic evidence in northwestern Iberia are probably female (such as *Navia*). Nonetheless, due to the scant information given in inscriptions, it is difficult to link statues to particular divinities. Female gods wearing torcs are known in temperate Europe, such as one of the figures depicted on the Gundestrup cauldron. Apart from the two images from southern Gallaecia, three other female representations are known in the northwest (Calo Lourido 1994: 196-197; 302-304). Two of them come from the Logrosa hillfort and the third from Carabeles (A Coruña, Galicia). They probably depict women, although only one of them

(Carabeles) has any sexual attribute (breasts). All female statues are shown clasping both hands together in what has been called an attitude of respect, submissiveness or devotion, sharply opposed to the hieratic and powerful bodies of male warriors. The presence of sexual attributes suggests fertility and reproduction. The mother goddess cult (*Matres*) is known in Gallaecia. The most explicit inscription, however, was found outside the region: it is the altar devoted to the *Matribus Gallaecis* ("Gallaecian Mothers") in the Roman town of Clunia in the Spanish Meseta (CIL II 2776).

Catalogue

Female statue, Oppidum of Briteiros (Braga, N. Portugal) (Fig. 9).

The most interesting element in this work is the presence of a torc, an item of personal ornament usually associated with men in Celtic Europe, at least in the second half of the first millennium BC. Women wearing torcs are commonly associated with deities. The work is rather crude, with rough surfaces, and disproportionate. The only sexual attributes visible are the breasts. The position of the arms is very characteristic. This is the only seated female statue in northwestern Iberia. It is 48 cm high. Bibliography: Cardozo (1968); Calo Lourido (1994: 170-171, 188). Museu da Sociedade Martins Sarmento (Guimarães).

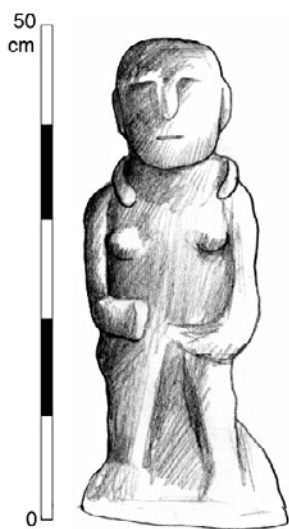


Figure 9. Female statue from the oppidum of Briteiros. After González-Ruibal (2003a).



Figure 10. Female statue from Sendim. Author's photograph.

Female statue, Sendim hillfort (Porto, N. Portugal) (Fig. 10).

In this case, the breasts are not so obviously marked as in the Briteiros piece. Nevertheless, the vagina is clearly depicted. The general gesture is quite similar to the previous image. Calo Lourido considers it a Roman votive offering, without any grounds in my view. It is 57 cm high. Bibliography: the first mention of the hillfort is found in Pinto (1933), without reference to the statue; Calo Lourido (1994: 600-602). Museu da Sociedade Martins Sarmento (Guimarães).

Seated gods

Only four sculptures representing seated gods have been discovered in Gallaecia to date. However, they are extremely interesting. The motif is undoubtedly Mediterranean; the original model comes from the Near East in the Bronze Age. Several examples of seated divinities have been recorded in southern Spain, such as those from Galera (Jaén), Verdolay (Murcia) or Baza (Granada). Interestingly, the Mediterranean tradition portrays women, sometimes linked with Tanit, often with sex attributes (breasts) well marked, as a sign of fertility and wealth. By contrast, the statues from northwestern Iberia show males, in some cases with marked genitalia, such as the piece from Braga (Bettencourt and Carvalho 1993-94). Thus, a similar meaning might be transmitted, of wealth and power (both related to sex) but the sex itself has changed from female to male, which fits well with the southern Gallaecians' androcentric ethos, as shown by the aforementioned warrior statues. The divinities are sitting on thrones, an unambiguous symbol of power, which at least in one case (Pedrafita) is quite elaborate. The style clearly resembles that of the warrior statues: an element present in most of them, bracelets (*viriae*), can also be found in the seated gods. The context is unknown. Only one of them was excavated in a hillfort: Lanhoso (Teixeira 1940). Another piece comes from the vicinity of the Roman town of Braga (ancient Bracara Augusta, the capital of the Conventus Bracarum), although it could have been moved there (Bettencourt and Carvalho 1993-94). The two pieces discovered in Xinzo de Limia (Ourense, Galicia) had no definite context (Ferro Couselo 1972), but were reported as coming from the vicinity of a Roman villa and road. The link with a traditional road may be more eloquent than the settlement in this case. The statue from Pedrafita (Ourense, Galicia) was discovered not far from a hillfort (Luis 1997), but, as with the other examples, the proximity to an archaeological site means little. They could well have been located outside defended settlements, in pre-Roman open shrines or sanctuaries, as is seen at Vix in France (Chaume and Reinhard 2003). The origin of these statues must be sought in the Iron Age, based on their Mediterranean counterparts, even if they were later relocated in the proximity of Roman settlements.

Catalogue

Seated god, Xinzo de Limia (Ourense, Galicia) (Fig. 11).

This is one of a couple of sculptures found in the same place near the Roman *vicus* of Xinzo de Limia. Some hillforts are known in the vicinity of Roman settlements. The statues were located not far from the Lima on a wooden structure. No associated archaeological materials could be

found. A Roman building and a road are nearby, but no direct relation with the statues can be recognized. One of the gods holds a vessel in his hands, the other might be holding a tray. This might be showing the god's lavishness. Mother goddesses in the Mediterranean are usually portrayed with pots as symbols of fertility and generosity. Although sex is not marked, we could perhaps consider one statue to be male and the other female, as at Vix (Chaume and Reinhard 2003). The statue is 69 cm high. Bibliography: Ferro Couselo (1972); Calo Lourido (1994: 290-91). Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Ourense.



Figure 11. Seated god from Xinzo de Limia. Author's photograph.



Figure 12. Seated god from Pedrafita. After Luis (1997).

Seated god, Pedrafita (Ourense, Galicia) (Fig. 12).

This was the last sculpture of this kind to be discovered and it is the most elaborate of all. The throne is decorated with a triskel, one of the most frequent motifs in architectural decoration, triangles and a double moulding in the back, similar to that found in Xinzo de Limia. In this case, the figure lacks *viriae*, but has wristlets. The way the torso is depicted clearly resembles those of the warrior statues. The god holds a vessel with both hands, in the same manner as one of the seated gods from Xinzo de Limia. Bibliography: Luis (1997). Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Ourense.

Architectural decoration

The majority of the sculptures known from the Iron Age in northwestern Iberia are elements of architectural decoration. The origin of this art is intrinsically linked to the conditions that fostered the development of oppida and a particular type of composite homestead. Compound-building and expansion served as an arena for social competition in which different households exhibited their power and wealth. The sometimes complex decorative programs can be explained as a statement of social position and economic achievement, a tradition well attested among the Toraja, in Indonesia, or the Zafimaniry, in Madagascar, amongst other "house societies"

(Waterson 1995). However, the decoration of households is not only a reflection of social competition among elites or elites and commoners, but also reflects symbolic concerns: The huge populations concentrated inside oppida not only made socio-political differentiation necessary but also lead to the avoidance of dangers due to symbolic and real pollution: large agglomerations of people are usually accompanied by the appearance of protective devices in the form of amulets, paintings or inscriptions among neighbours frightened of disease or symbolic contamination. The most common decorative elements are the following:

- Stone discs with swastikas or triskels carved on them. These were embedded in house walls.
- Friezes with string-work or herring-bone-shaped decoration, usually a band that went around the house walls.
- Door decorations, usually abstract motifs (SS), mouldings and string-work covering jambs and lintels.
- *Amarradoiros*: Pieces of unknown use - once thought to be used to hitch up domestic animals (from *amarrar*: "to tie"). These are elbow-shaped and have a very simple decoration, usually some incised lines.
- *Couzóns* (hinges): These are round pieces with a sort of shaft whose use is also unknown. The decoration is more elaborate, usually herring-bone or string-work bands.

Catalogue

Triskels and swastikas (A), "hinges" (B), amarradoiro (C), wheels (D) and rosettes (E), Oppidum of Santa Trega (Pontevedra, Galicia) (Fig. 13).

As for all other decorated stones found by Cayetano de Mergelina in the 1920s and 1930s, no topographical or stratigraphical reference has been recorded for these pieces. The variety of swastikas has no equal in northwestern Iberia and their quality is extraordinary. The stone wheel - probably related to the swastika - is especially interesting because of the religious significance of this item in Celtic Europe (Green 1984). Wheels are also found carved in



Figure 13. Different types of architectural decoration from the oppidum of Santa Trega. After Mergelina (1944-45).

open sanctuaries (Parcero Oubiña et al. 1998). Santa Trega is the oppidum with the largest collection of Iron Age sculptures in northwestern Iberia, followed by Monte Mozinho and Briteiros (northern Portugal). It is also one of the largest oppida (20 ha), located in a dramatic environment: a prominent peak facing the Atlantic Ocean and the river mouth of Galicia's longest river, the Miño. It was an important and wealthy entrepôt from the late second century BC to the early first century AD. Bibliography: Mergelina (1944-45); Calo Lourido (1994: 530-593); Carballo (1994); Peña Santos (2001). Museo da Citania de Santa Trega (A Guarda).

Swastika/triskel, Oppidum of Lansbrica, modern San Cibrán de Las (Ourense, Galicia) (Fig. 14). This stone was reused as a slab in the pavement of a courtyard, during the early first century AD. The archaeological excavations, carried out in 1947, were never published. The maximum length of the stone is 42.5 cm. Since 2003, Lansbrica, an oppidum of nine hectares, has been the object of large scale excavations that may shed light on the pre-Roman sculpture of Gallaecia. Bibliography: Calo Lourido (1994: 438, 443). Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Ourense.

Swastika/triskel, Oppidum of Coeliobriga, modern Castromao (Ourense, Galicia) (Fig. 15). This piece was discovered during archaeological excavations. It probably belonged to a small rectangular house of the late MIA or LIA. The maximum length of the stone is 46 cm. Coeliobriga, the capital of the Coelerni, was an important oppidum (about 20 ha), inhabited beginning in the Early Iron Age, and later an important Roman town. Recent excavations have recovered swastikas from pre-Roman layers dating from the second to the first centuries BC (Orero Grandal, pers. comm.). Bibliography: García Rollán (1971: 196, Fig. 47); Calo Lourido (1994: 208, 217). Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Ourense.



Figure 14. Swastika from the oppidum of Lansbrica. After Peña Santos (2003).



Figure 15. Swastika from the oppidum of Coeliobriga. After Peña Santos (2003).

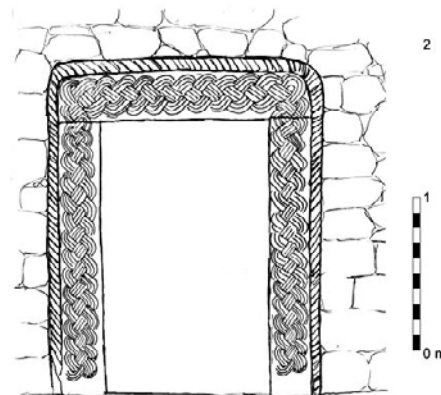


Figure 16. Door frame from the oppidum of Âncora. After González-Ruibal (2003a).

Door frame, Cividade de Âncora (Viana do Castelo, northern Portugal) (Fig. 16).

This monumental door (its maximum height is 209 cm) undoubtedly belonged to an aristocratic house in the oppidum. It was discovered in the 1870s and its specific context is unknown. The right jamb was reconstructed in concrete. The site has also produced other interesting decorated stones, most of them reused in later structures (Viana 1963). The coastal situation of this oppidum and the quantities of amphorae found in it illustrate its important development in the LIA, parallel to that of Santa Trega. Bibliography: Calo Lourido (1994: 70-80). Archaeological

excavations in the hillfort are described in Viana (1963) and Silva (1986: 48-51; Est. XXVII-XXX; CXVIII-CXXIX). Museu da Sociedade Martins Sarmiento (Guimarães).

Door frame and friezes, Sabroso (Braga, northern Portugal) (Fig. 17).

Bibliography: Calo Lourido (1994: 421-432). Museu da Sociedade Martins Sarmiento (Guimarães).

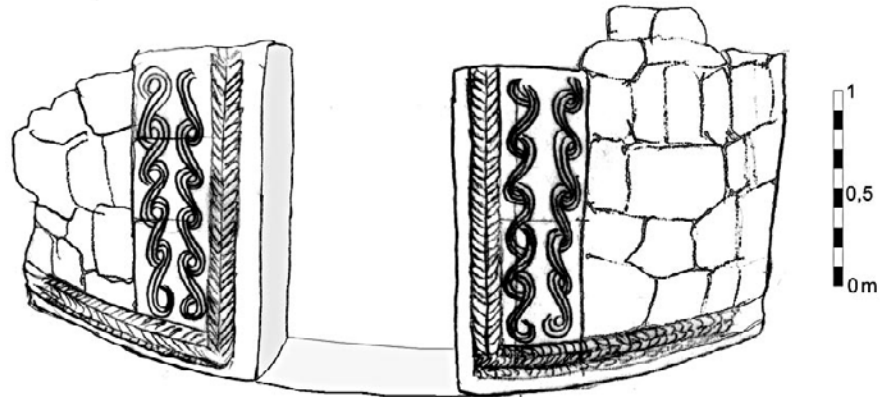


Figure 17. Door frame and friezes from Sabroso hillfort. After González-Ruibal (2003a).

Friezes, Oppidum of Briteiros (Braga, N. Portugal) (Fig. 18).

These are highly schematized representations of a palm-tree, similar to those found in the dress of some warrior statues (see above), recalling the reworking of Mediterranean vegetal motifs by La Tène artists of Central Europe (Kruta 2000: 770-771). However, unlike La Tène-style elements, these are more geometric and abstract. These friezes, along with other similar works, might have belonged to a monumental rectangular building, perhaps an aristocratic residence or a sacred place. They were discovered by Martins Sarmiento in the late nineteenth century.

Bibliography: a short introduction to the oppidum: Cardozo (1976); Calo Lourido (1994: 141-148; 180).



Figure 18. Stylized palm-tree decorations from the oppidum of Briteiros. After Calo Lourido (1994).



Figure 19. String-work-shaped friezes from the oppidum of Briteiros. After Calo Lourido (1994).

Friezes, Oppidum of Briteiros (Braga, northern Portugal) (Fig. 19).

These are characteristic examples of string-work decoration, as used on jambs and wall trimmings. Cardozo (1976); Calo Lourido (1994: 149-52, 181).

Lintels, Oppidum of Briteiros (Braga, northern Portugal) (Fig. 20).

These are two late and atypical examples of architectural decoration, dated shortly after the Roman conquest. The decoration is rather crude. The most important element, conveying the idea of power and knowledge, is the writing. In early Roman times, literacy was probably used as a means of showing social distance from commoners and acquaintance with the new rulers' culture. These lintels are also important because they show the relevance of houses, both material and socially speaking, in the social organization of the LIA communities of Gallaecia. The inscriptions say CAMAL (probably *Camali*) and CORONERI / CAMALI / DOMUS: "The house of Camalus, the son of Coronerus". The signs over CAMAL are probably imitating letters. The name Camalus is very widespread in Gallaecia and Lusitania (Untermann 1965, Map 26). The same name appears in other lintels and rock inscriptions from Briteiros. Bibliography: Cardozo (1976); Calo Lourido (1994: 135-138; 178).



Figure 20. Lintels with Latin inscriptions from the oppidum of Briteiros. Author's photograph.

Pedras formosas

If architectural decoration is the most popular of all the sculptural expressions in the northwest, the art reached its peak with the so-called *pedras formosas* (beautiful stones). The first example discovered, in the oppidum of Briteiros, in the eighteenth century, is one of the nicest works of pre-Roman Gallaecian art. The use of these stones, and of the semi-subterranean structures to which they are related, was much debated until the 1970s. There is now a virtual consensus that the buildings were baths (saunas) and that the *pedras formosas* were monumental façades for those baths (Fig. 21). However, two irreconcilable interpretations have arisen: one defending a Roman date and a profane use (e.g. Calo Lourido 1994; Ríos González 2000) and one arguing for a pre-Roman date and a ritual use (e.g. Almagro-Gorbea and Álvarez-Sanchís

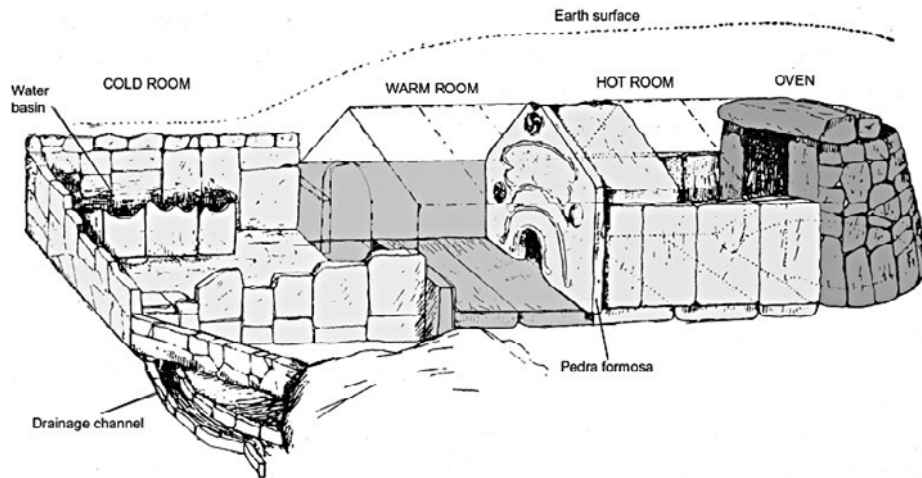


Figure 21. Late Iron Age ritual sauna (Briteiros 2). After Cardozo (1931).

1993). Bearing in mind that the Greek geographer Strabo (3, 3, 6), quoting sources from the second century BC, mentions the habit of taking baths among the Gallaecians; that monumental Roman baths in the area are not known prior to the mid-first century AD; that a profane use cannot explain the transport and carving of such enormous slabs nor their location in the central room instead of in the most external one, nor the difficult access to the different rooms (it is necessary to crawl through a small entrance), and, finally, that the *pedras formosas* have complex cosmological symbols carved on them, I consider a pre-Roman date and a ritual use the most likely option. It is also probable, as Almagro-Gorbea and Álvarez-Sanchís have pointed out, that these premises were used in rites of passage, seemingly linked to warrior groups. Meaningfully, the small entrance is almost always enhanced. Only the stone from Sardoura lacks decoration, both on the entrance and the rest of the stone, therefore underlining the idea of transition.

Three types of saunas have been described (Queiroga 1992; Ríos 2000). Types 1a and 1b are those found in southern Gallaecia, in the region of the oppida. They both have three rooms and are built of large slabs and blocks. Type 1a has a very simple and coarse *pedra formosa*, and it is probably the oldest monumentalized sauna. Type 1b is the most widespread model of sauna and it probably dates to the first century BC. Saunas belonging to this group have well-shaped *pedras formosas*, sometimes with profuse decoration. Type 2 is only found in the northern area. The buildings have only two rooms instead of three, they lack *pedra formosa* (which were

probably made of wood) and they were built of small stones (schist or slate). All decorated *pedras formosas* known to date come from the north of Portugal. The only Type 1B sauna from Galicia (Santa Mariña de Augas Santas, Ourense) does not have a decorated stone.

Catalogue

Pedra Formosa, Type 1A, Sardoura (Viseu) (Fig. 22A).

This is the only sauna stone known south of the Douro River. It was discovered during construction work more than half a century ago and it was not properly recorded. No Roman materials were found nearby. This, along with the crude shaping of the stone, leads us to suggest an earlier date, perhaps third or second century BC, when compared with Type 1B.

Bibliography: Cardozo (1949).

Pedra Formosa, Type 1A, Eiras (Arcos de Valdevez, Braga) (Fig. 22B).

This is one of the latest sauna stones to be discovered and the only one belonging to Type 1A with decoration. The decoration is atypical and simple, only the two swastikas on the top recall the decoration in Type 1B saunas, such as Briteiros 2. Bibliography: Queiroga (1992: 25).

Pedra Formosa, Type 1B, Eiras (Vila Nova de Famalicão, Braga) (Fig. 22C).

The sauna of Eiras is linked to one of the biggest oppida in northwestern Iberia, Eiras-Vermoim (ca. 65 ha.), made up of two oppida united by massive ramparts. Bibliography: Queiroga (1992: 25).

Pedra Formosa, Type 1B, Briteiros 1 (Braga) (Fig. 22D).

This was the first stone of its kind to be discovered and is the most baroquely decorated of all. The structure is extraordinarily similar to that of Eiras (Vila Nova de Famalicão). It was already known in the eighteenth century. Bibliography: an extensive and largely useless bibliography is available. See Cardozo (1976) and Calo Lourido (1994: 166-168, 185-186) for the most important references.

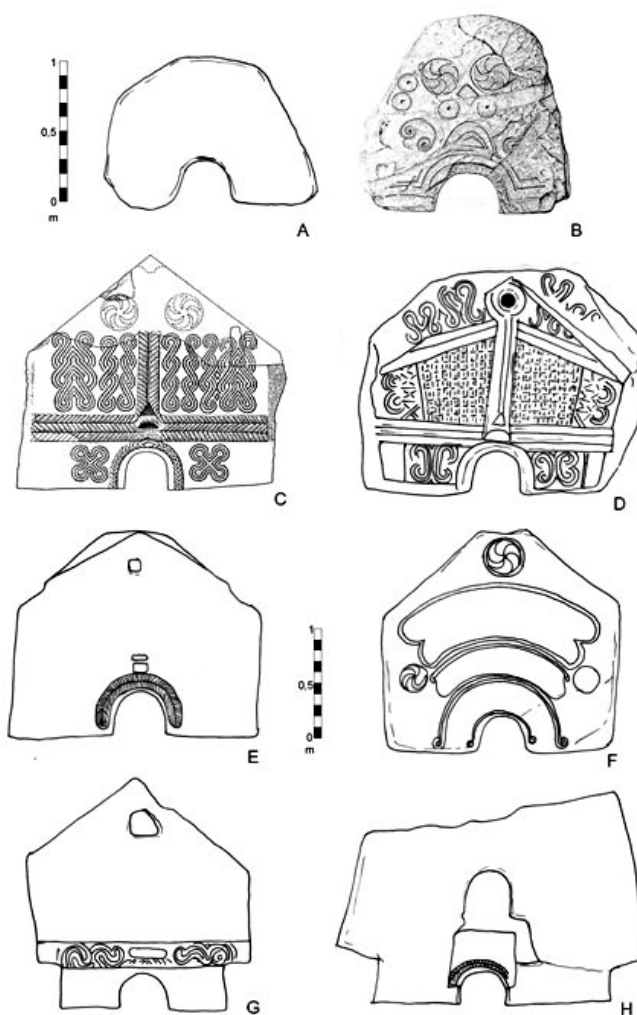


Figure 22. Sauna stones. A. Sardoura; B. Eiras (Arcos de Valdevez); C. Eiras (Vila Nova de Famalicão); D. Briteiros 1; E. Sanfins; F. Briteiros 2; G. Galegos; H. Tongobriga (Freixo). B, C. after Queiroga (1992); the rest after González-Ruibal (2003a).

Pedra Formosa, Type 1B, Sanfins (Porto) (Fig. 22E).

This was the first *pedra formosa* discovered during archaeological excavation. The archaeological items associated were extremely poor: only a few Roman and native sherds from the period when the sauna was already abandoned. The decoration of the stone is similar to that from Freixo: a simple string-work border framing the entrance. Bibliography: Almeida (1974); Calo Lourido (1994: 487, 494).

Pedra Formosa, Type 1B, Briteiros 2 (Braga) (Fig. 22F)

The discovery of this stone in situ, during construction of a new access road to Briteiros, provided insight into how these slabs were actually set, although the debate about the function of the monument was to last 40 more years. Bibliography: Cardozo (1931, 1932, 1976); Calo Lourido (1994: 168-170, 187).

Pedra Formosa, Type 1B, Santa Maria de Galegos (Braga) (Fig. 22G).

Although discovered in the early 1980s and properly excavated, no report has been published. The scant data come from A.C.F. da Silva's thesis, the archaeologist who conducted the excavation. Most of the pottery is indigenous, belonging to the pre-Roman LIA. However, the drainage system and water tank were made with Roman tiles and a small fragment of a Hispanic Drag. 27 vessel was also discovered. The structure was probably refurbished and reused after the Roman conquest. The decorated stone has interesting wavy motifs, perhaps representing hot water or steam, and a small, thinly inscribed wheel, which probably has the same meaning as the swastikas present in other saunas. Bibliography: Silva (1986: 56-60, Est. XXV-XXVI, CXXXVI, 2 and CXXXVII, 5); Calo Lourido (1994: 266-270).

Pedra Formosa, Type 1B, Tongobriga, modern Freixo (Porto) (Fig. 22H).

This sauna and the one at Ulaca (Ávila, central Spain) are the only ones known that were excavated in stone. The decoration is reduced to simple string-work covering the arch. It was discovered in 1984. The Iron Age levels of the oppidum are not well preserved or published, research having focused on the later period. A Roman town of some importance was built over the old settlement and Roman baths were constructed, reusing the indigenous sauna. Bibliography: Calo Lourido (1994: 262-265); Dias (1997).

Pedra Formosa, Type 1B, Detail of Briteiros 1. (Fig. 23).

Museu da Sociedade Martins Sarmiento (Guimarães, Portugal).

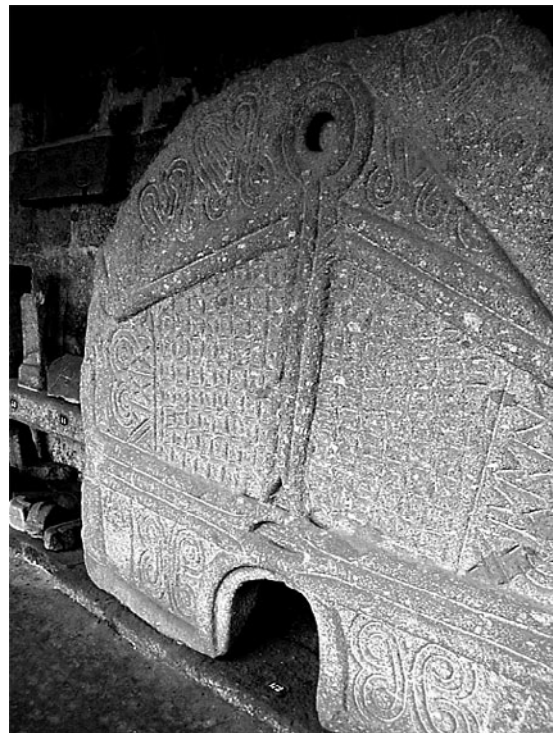


Figure 23. Briteiros 1. Author's photograph.

Omphaloi(?)

There is a small group of carved stones that cannot be clearly associated with any of the groups previously discussed. They are prismatic pillars with their four faces decorated with different motifs. I propose an interpretation based on sacred stones found among other "Celtic" peoples, such as the Irish *omphaloi* (O'Kelly 1989: 284-289), which have stylized vegetal motifs organized in four different parts, not unlike those from Gallaecia. I do not claim that the use and the cosmology behind Irish *omphaloi* can be directly translated to these pillars *tout court*. Rather, I would argue that they have a ritual purpose roughly comparable to other carved stones and natural rocks in the "Celtic" world, traditionally linked with political power (García Quintela and Santos Estévez 2000). In our region, there are some Roman inscriptions that may throw some light on the interpretation of these stones. There is a divinity called *Crougea Toudadigoe*, whose meaning seems to be "The Stone of the People" (Búa 1997: 74-75). Another divinity, *Trebopala*, has traditionally been interpreted as "The Stone of the Village". However, the interpretation of *-pala* as "stone" does not have many followers today. A translation as "flat land" is preferred.

The pillars known from southwestern Gallaecia suffer the same interpretive problems as the majority of the pre-Roman statuary in the area: the absence of a well-recorded context. Their link to Iron Age hillforts, nonetheless, is well proved.

Catalogue

Pillar, Cortinhas (Vila Real, northern Portugal) (Fig. 24A). The interlaced SS decorations are very similar to those from São Miguel-o-Anjo. Unlike the stones from Cendufe and Beiro, roughly the same symbol seems to be reproduced on each face of the pillar. Bibliography: Calo Lourido (1994: 233-237).

Pillar, Castro de Beiro (Ourense, Galicia) (Fig. 24B). Only three faces are clearly visible. The triangular motifs recall those from Cendufe. The size, however, is much smaller. Bibliography: Calo Lourido (1994: 126-127). Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Ourense.

Pillar, Cendufe (Braga, N. Portugal) (Fig. 24C). This pillar has Grecian frets, similar to the Iron Age stelae from Brittany (Cunliffe 2000: Figs. 4-5). A fragment of a warrior statue was also discovered here. All finds were made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Bibliography: Calo Lourido (1994: 219-226).



Figure 24. Decorated Pillars. A. Cortinhas; B. Beiro; C. Cendufe; D. S. Miguel-o-Anjo. After González-Ruibal (2003a).

Pillar, São, Miguel-o-Anjo (Viana do Castelo, northern Portugal) (Fig. 24D).

The stone was reused in the foundations of a Late Iron Age round hut. Bibliography: Pereira (1895); Calo Lourido (1994: 459-462).

Heads

Unlike the art of the oppida, heads can be found from the Douro River to northern Galicia, all over Gallaecia. Two groups can be distinguished: representations of severed human heads, similar to the Gaulish *têtes coupées* (Rapin 2003), and other images, probably representing gods.

It is in the northern area (*Conventus Lucensis*), where the largest number of this kind of sculpture, and specifically severed heads, has been found. A particular style has been recorded in this area, characterized by very simple and crude representations of human heads, often in bas-relief, with "owl faces". They closely resemble the pillars with *têtes coupées* from southern France (Salviat 1987; Green 2001: 100-102), even if the severed heads from southern Galicia are usually more elaborate. Two pieces from Armeá (Ourense), for example, clearly show the features of a dead person: the most naturalistic element is the swollen, half-closed eyes. A couple of severed heads carved on stone pillars, in a realistic style, have been recently discovered in Amoeiro (Trasalba, Ourense) (X. Ayán Vila, pers. comm., 2003).

Only four statues have been found during archaeological excavations - which is not bad, if we take into account the substantial problems for dating and providing a context for this kind of representation in the rest of Europe (Megaw 2003): Barán (Lugo, Galicia) (Álvarez Núñez 1993, 1993-94), A Graña (A Coruña, Galicia) (Barciela and Rey 2000: 135-136), San Cibrán de Las-Lansbrica (Ourense, Galicia) (Pérez Outeiriño 1985: 246, Pl. IV, 2) and Monte Mozinho (Porto, Portugal) (Calo Lourido 1994: 346-347, 357, 703).

The head from Lansbrica was not in its original location, due to major construction work in the area in the first century AD. However, it was found very close to a monumental gate of the oppidum's inner enclosure (where rituals or social activities probably took place). The head from A Graña was dug up in the entrance also. It was undoubtedly located over the gate. Two of the heads from Barán were located on a heap of stones in the central area of the hillfort. The chronology of the stone heads is not clear, but they were most probably in use in the first century BC. Two functions can be proposed: an apotropaic one, in the entrances to hillforts and oppida,

and a ritual one, to which specific areas inside settlements were probably devoted. The ancient writers told us about the Gaulish custom of putting human heads in house doors and the practice of severing the enemy's head in war among barbarians (Strabo, 5, 29, 5; Polybius, *Hist.* 2, 28; Livy, *Hist.* 10, 26 and 23, 24; Diodorus Siculus *Hist.* 5, 29, 4-5). The severed head, or its representation, could simultaneously attract the power of the vanquished enemy, serve as a protection against bad spirits and as an image of the power of the community. Although it has been traditionally linked with Celtic peoples, the magical and social use of heads is very widespread, both in space and time (Rosaldo 1980). I suggest that the spread of head hunting or its representation must be linked to the increasing violence provoked both by the growing hierarchization and territorialization of the Late Iron Age and the stress brought on by the Roman wars. On the other hand, not all heads can be related to severed human heads, some of them probably represent gods, perhaps a local genius (*Genius Castellii*), a protector of the village. Divinities of this kind, such as *Bandua* and perhaps *Coso*, are well attested in Lusitania and Gallaecia (Olivares 2002; Prósper 2002). Whether they are related to gods or humans, heads seem to play a central role in the beliefs of Celtic peoples from all over Europe (Almagro-Gorbea and Lorrio 1990; Megaw 2003).

Another variety of heads or busts are two-faced and most probably represent Janus-like gods. Their context is unknown and their chronology dubious. Five examples, all from Galicia, are known: Amorín and Seixabre (Pontevedra), Francos and Pontedeume (A Coruña) and, perhaps, Óutara (Lugo) (Calo 1994: 67-69; 259-261; 375-376; 384-388). All have two opposite faces, except the statue from Pontedeume, which has four. Unlike severed heads, these are seldom related to hillforts. In fact, only the example from Francos may come from a hillfort and, in this case, the carving is so rough that it is difficult to ascertain if there are in fact two faces. Because of the multiple faces, they might be related with entrances, points of passage or roads. Statues with two or three heads are found in other Celtic areas (Megaw 2003: 277-278), sometimes associated with important travel routes (e.g. Hayen 1987: 134-135; Szábo 1992: 99). Interestingly, the cult of the *Lares Viales* had special significance in northwestern Spain.

Catalogue

Severed head, Barán (Lugo, Galicia) (Fig. 25).

This is one of a group of three sculptures, one of which was found in an archaeological context. They appeared in the acropolis of a small hillfort, in what may be identified as a ritual area, devoid of houses or other ordinary structures. However, the poor standard of the publication

hampers any plausible interpretation of the site. This sculpture is a good example of the Lugo style, as represented by this hillfort and the neighbouring one of Cortes. The representation is rough and extremely simple. Bibliography: Álvarez Núñez (1993; 1993-94); (Calo Lourido 1994: 120-123). Museo Provincial de Lugo.



Figure 25. Severed head from Barán. Author's photograph.

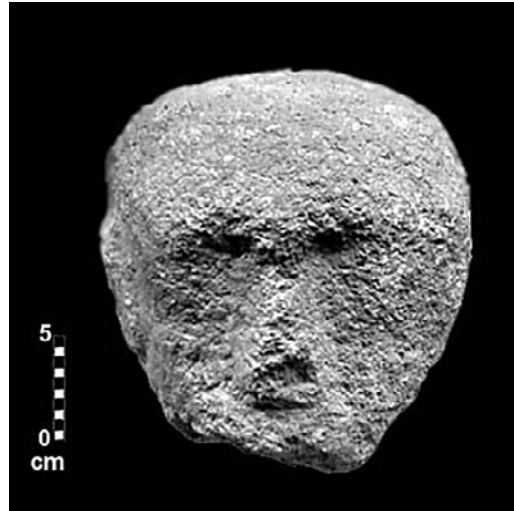


Figure 26. Severed head from Monte Güimil. Author's photograph.

Severed head, Monte Güimil (Pontevedra, Galicia) (Fig. 26).

This is a stray find from a hillfort, whose occupation spans the period from the Early Iron Age to the beginning of the first century AD. Although it is more realistic than the examples from Lugo, it is not as elaborate as those from Armeá (see below). It is a detached sculpture similar to the head found in A Graña (A Coruña). The shape and volume of the head have been reproduced with some skill, including the ears. The marked features (sunken eyes, elongated head) slightly recall a human skull. Bibliography: Calo Lourido (1994: 662); González-Ruibal (2001: 163-164). Museo Provincial de Pontevedra.

Severed head, Armeá (Ourense, Galicia) (Fig. 27).

This piece comes from an oppidum of ca. 10 ha. The context, as for the rest of the sculptures found in this site or its vicinity, is unknown. It was carved in *haut-relief* and it shows considerable skill, as opposed to other *têtes coupées* known from Galicia. It was probably embedded in the wall of the oppidum, perhaps near a gate. Three *têtes coupées* are known from this settlement. Bibliography: Conde-Valvís (1950-51); Calo Lourido (1994: 98-101, 108). Museo Arqueolóxico Provincial de Ourense.

Severed head, Armeá (Ourense, Galicia) (Fig. 28).

The context of discovery is the same as for the previous piece. It bears a strong resemblance to the former, particularly the dead eyes and the technique of *haut-relief* on a block of stone. Their function and location was certainly the same. Bibliography: see previous piece. Museo Arqueolóxico Provincial de Ourense.



Figure 27. Severed head from Armeá. Author's photograph.



Figure 28. Severed head from Armeá. After Peña Santos (2003).

Some of the most important representations of heads from Galicia and northern Portugal (Fig. 29).

1. Chaves; 2-4, Armeá (Ourense); 5. Cortes (Lugo); 6-8. Barán (Lugo); 9. San Cibrán de Las (Lansbrica, Ourense); 10. Gaxate (Pontevedra); 11. Remesar (Pontevedra); 12. A Graña (A Coruña); 13. Moreira Nova (Pontevedra); 14. Ocastro (Pontevedra); 15. Narla (Lugo); 16. Monte Mozinho (Porto). After González-Ruibal (2003a: fig. 4.117).

Two busts, Seixabre (Pontevedra, Galicia) (Fig. 30).

The one above represents a female. The one below is two-faced and male. They were discovered seemingly unassociated with any other archaeological remains during construction work near one of the most important natural travel routes in northwestern Iberia. Bibliography: González-Ruibal (2001: 164). Museo Provincial de Pontevedra.

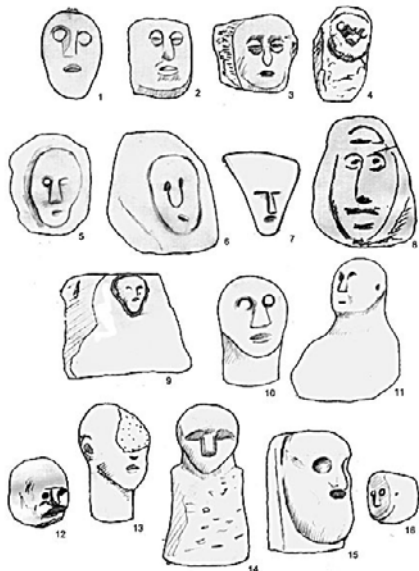


Figure 29. Severed heads from northwestern Iberia. After González-Ruibal (2003a).



Figure 30. Female bust (A) and *herma* (B) from Seixabre. After J.J. Perles Fontao (unpublished report).

Jewellery

The history of jewellery in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula in the first millennium BC is quite similar to that of the British Isles and other Atlantic regions (Northover 1994). A period of expansion in the Late Bronze Age is followed by a period of restriction (Early Iron Age), with a gradual new expansion from the Middle Iron Age that ends with an outstanding quantity of gold jewellery in the second and first centuries BC, most from hoards. The majority of the jewellery described here probably dates to the Late Iron Age. Coincidences are not restricted to the evolution and involution of jewellery, but also affect the raw material used: as opposed to the Mediterranean use of silver, gold is the prevailing metal of Gallaecian jewellery, as in the rest of "Celtic" Europe.

Torcs

Undoubtedly, torcs are the most outstanding artifacts that the indigenous communities of northwestern Iberia ever produced. Their number (around 150) is striking, especially if we consider that most of them cluster in the north of Galicia (see catalogues in Pingel [1992] and Prieto Molina [1996]). As has been said, most of them are made of gold, as in the rest of the Atlantic regions, in stark contrast with the silver jewellery typical of the Mediterranean, including the rest of the Iberian Peninsula. Silver torcs, such as the group from Bagunte (Ladra Fernandes 2001), are the product of exchanges with foreign elites or raids conducted in distant lands. Some of them weigh more than one kilogram. Although the Mediterranean influence is quite obvious (Armbruster and Perea 2000: 104; García Vuelta 2002), there are marked differences with southern traditions, one of them being the raw material (gold) employed. However, even if the Gallaecian torcs are not completely similar to those known in the British Isles or France, the very idea of the torc most probably came through the Atlantic routes. These items of personal ornament, as is also true in the rest of Europe, were worn mainly by men like the aristocratic individuals represented by the warrior statues. The links between torcs and the divine realm are demonstrated by the aforementioned statues of goddesses and seated gods. Although they were primarily used as an adornment aimed at enhancing the bodies of the ruling elite, other uses can be pointed out. On the one hand, the fact that some of them have tiny stones inside their hollow ends, producing a sound when shaken (Xanceda, Vilas Boas, etc.), proves their use as rattles. The same use, placed in the context of a religious activity, is probably attested

in the Cernunnos of the Gundestrup cauldron. On the other hand, it has been demonstrated that Gallaecian torcs follow a Punic weight system, based on the shekel (Ladra Fernandes 1999b). Thus, they were probably also used as ingots, or rather, as a way of accumulating wealth in a measurable form.

With regard to the context of deposition, they seldom appear in clear domestic contexts in the northern area. By comparison, they are usually located inside the inhabited area of the oppida, in the south: fragments of torcs have been dug up in Sanfins, in the courtyard of a domestic compound (Jalhay 1950); in Troña, underneath the pavement of a first century BC round house (Ladra Fernandes 1999a); and in unknown domestic compounds in Santa Trega (Mergelina 1944-45: 37-38) and Bagunte (Ladra Fernandes 2001). Unfortunately, these are the only torcs recovered during archaeological excavations that have been properly published, although exact information on the context and stratigraphical position are only given in the Troña example. Some northern torcs are reported to have been found inside hillforts, but their context is unknown (e.g. two examples in Viladonga: Chamoso Lamas 1977). They more often appear in the surroundings of hillforts and frequently as part of hoards, along with other torcs, ingots and other jewellery or fragments of jewellery. The hoards from Foxados (A Coruña) and A Madorra (Lugo) are good examples (Carro García 1943; Ladra Fernandes 1997-98). At least one torc was recovered from a watery context (Bouza Brey 1965). The torcs from Chaves very frequently appear in hoards far from hillforts. A votive activity may be behind most of these deposits.

The torcs of the Late Iron Age show a considerable diversity. A number of stylistic categories that were identified in the 1950s can, despite some problems, still be used (López Cuevillas 1951; Monteagudo 1952). I have proposed three main groups based on the old typologies (González-Ruibal 2003a: 346-347, Fig. 4.95) (Fig. 31):

Torcs of the oppida. These can be found in northwestern Portugal and southwestern Galicia. They appear in the area occupied by oppida, are always discovered inside these large settlements, and their main features are their bell- or urn-shaped terminals. The terminal profiles sometimes recall a certain type of vessel from the Late Iron Age, which was used for storing jewellery. These torcs often have a very baroque decoration of undoubtedly Mediterranean inspiration. The bar has a round cross-section. The best examples come from the oppidum of Lanhoso (see below). Other examples were located in the oppida of Sanfins (Jalhay 1950) and Santa Trega (Carballo 1994).

Torcs of Chaves. These appear in northeastern Portugal, and the best examples come from the upper Tamega basin (Chaves). They also exhibit profuse decoration. The terminals have double mouldings, called *scotiae*. The bar often has a square cross-section. The best example is a piece fortuitously discovered near Vilas Boas, not far from Chaves.

Northern torcs. They cluster round the northern part of Lugo and eastern A Coruña (Galicia). Within this wide group several types are known. The most characteristic types are:

- *Artabrian type.* Named after a pre-Roman people that occupied part of the province of A Coruña (Greek *Artabroi*, Latin *Artabri*, also called *Arrotrebae*) (Monteagudo 1952). The main characteristics are the wire that covers two thirds of the bar and the spirals (two or four). The ends can be pear-shaped or have double mouldings (*scotiae*). They mainly appear in A Coruña, but some examples are also known from Lugo. Good examples are those from Orbellido and Viladonga. The bar has a round cross-section.

- *Asturian-northern Gallaecian (Astur norgalaico).* In this type two thirds of the bar is covered with wire but instead of spirals the central part of the torc is decorated with filigree or simply left devoid of decoration. The ends have double mouldings (*scotiae*). The best examples come from northern Lugo: Burela, Marzán and Recarea. The bar has a round cross-section.
- *Torcs with stamped decoration.* The ends can be pear-shaped or have double mouldings (*scotiae*). The bar has a square cross-section. They are probably older than the rest, perhaps from the Middle Iron Age (fourth to third centuries BC), given the parallels with MIA pottery decoration.

There are also a large number of undecorated torcs, with square or round bar and pear-shaped or moulded ends, whose distribution coincides with the other types already mentioned.

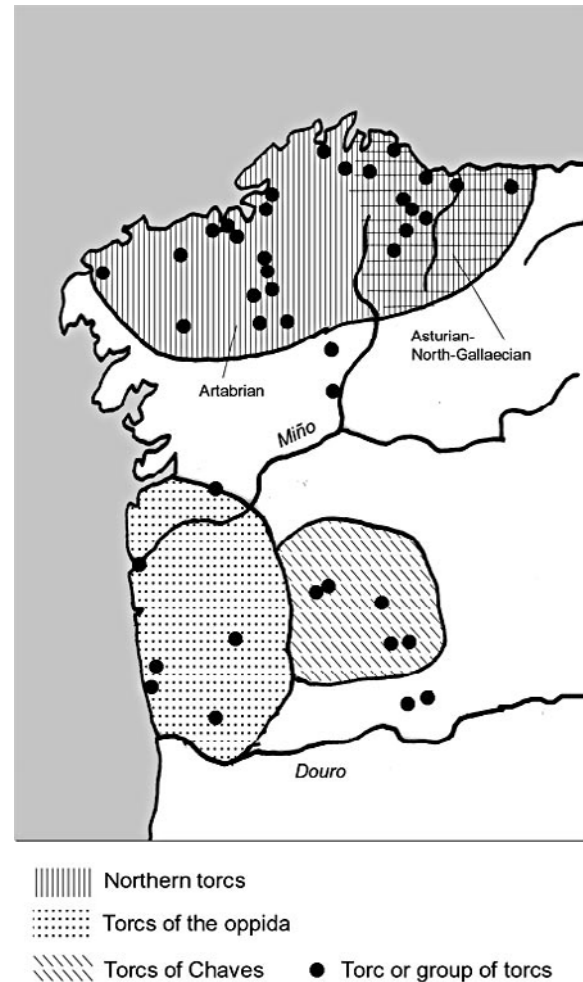


Figure 31. Distribution of the main groups of torcs of the Late Iron Age. After González-Ruibal (2003a).

This can be due to different reasons: they may be older or they may belong to different social groups (age or class groups). It would be necessary to find this type of jewellery in a datable context if we want to interpret the variety of types and their geographical distribution. Despite these regional groups, torcs from a certain area are sometimes found far away from it. One of the best examples is the fragment of an Artabrian torc found in Troña (Pontevedra), around 100 km away from the production area in eastern A Coruña (Ladra Fernandes 1999a). This may be explained by the documented practice of gift exchange and plundering carried out by war leaders. Torc-giving is well attested in the early Irish literature (Castro Pérez 1984-85).

Catalogue

Gold torc, Northern group, Undecorate, Melide (A Coruña, Galicia) (Fig. 32).

The region of Melide, in central Galicia, has yielded a striking number of torcs and torc fragments, most of them undecorated. This contrasts sharply with the local hillforts, which are usually of very modest size (less than one hectare) and with very few huts in perishable material. This might be because the communities despised immovable properties, while using gold and cattle as a means of accumulating wealth. This torc weighs 678 grams. Bibliography: López Cuevillas (1951: 24); Balseiro García (1994: 104-107). Museo Provincial de Lugo.



Figure 32. Torc from Melide. After Balseiro García (1994).



Figure 33. Torc from Burela. After Balseiro García (1994).

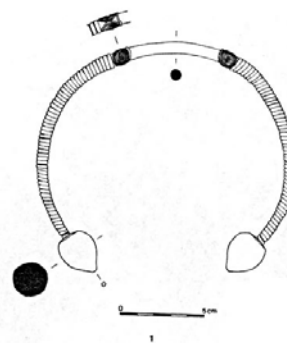


Figure 34. Torc of unknown provenance. After Queiroga (1987).

Gold torc, Northern group (Asturian-northern Gallaecian) Burela (Lugo, Galicia) (Fig. 33).

This is the heaviest piece of Iron Age jewellery found in northwestern Iberia. It weighs 1,812 kgs. The quality of the gold is also very high. It was found near a coastal hillfort on the Cantabric seacoast. A gold earring was found years later. Bibliography: Trapero Pardo (1956); Balseiro García (1994: 138-147). Museo Provincial de Lugo.

Gold torc, Northern group (Artabrian) (Fig. 34).

Unknown provenance; weight 275.68 grams. Artabrian torcs have usually low weight and have a high silver content. Bibliography: Queiroga (1987). Ashmolean Museum (Oxford).

Gold torc, Northern group (Artabrian), A Coruña (Galicia) (Fig. 35).

Museo de San Antón (A Coruña).



Figure 35. Torc from A Coruña. Author's photograph.



Figure 36. Torcs from A Madorra. After Ladra Fernandes (1997-98).

Gold torcs, from a hoard in A Madorra (Lugo, Galicia) (Fig. 36).

Three different types are present: three of them (2-4) belong to the Asturian-northern Gallaecian group; one (5) to the group of torcs with stamped decoration (which may date to the Middle Iron Age), and another one (1) to the Meseta style group. The last one is especially interesting, because it is probably a copy of an alien model, originally made in silver. The heterogeneity of the torcs gathered in a single hoard points to the existence of inherited wealth and status symbols, gift exchange or raids. Bibliography: Ladra Fernandes (1997-98: 46-58); García Vuelta (2000: 88-91). Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Madrid).

Detail of a gold torc, Northern group, Xanceda hillfort (A Coruña, Galicia) (Fig. 37).

This is the central part of a torc that vaguely follows the structure of the Artabrian style. However, this part, instead of being devoid of decoration, is packed with a baroque combination of diverse motifs: minute triangles composed of granulated decoration, an intricate filigree knot, buttons and thick wire imitating string work. The thick wire vaguely resembles that of British torcs. This kind of jewellery shows that, under the general constrictions of a certain structure, gold smiths, or those ordering the jewellery, were endowed with a considerable agency. Bibliography: López Gómez (1996: 126). Museo de San Antón (A Coruña).



Figure 37. Detail of a gold torc from Xanceda. Author's photograph.

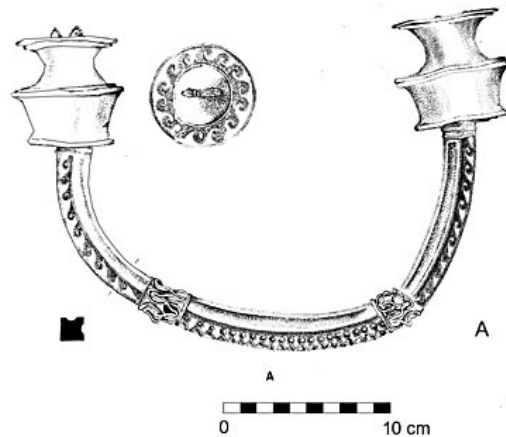


Figure 38. Torc from Vilas Boas. After Silva (1986).

Gold torc, Chaves group, Vilas Boas (Chaves, northern Portugal) (Fig. 38).

This piece was found in the foothills of a defended Iron Age settlement called Cabeço da Senhora da Assunção (Tamancas). It was possibly a votive deposit. This is an example of a torc with rattle ends. The presence of duck symbolism is also very interesting: ducks are often found in the jewellery of northwestern Iberia (Pérez Outeiriño 1980) and they play an important role in Celtic mythology (Green 1992: 214). The Mediterranean influence is evident, both in the techniques used (filigree and granulation) and in the decorative motifs (wavy borders or Grecian fretwork). It weighs 387.3 grams. Bibliography: Santos Júnior (1965); Silva (1986: 249-50; Est. CXI). Museu Nacional de Arqueologia e Etnologia (Lisboa).

Gold torcs, Oppida group, Cividade de Lanhoso (Braga, northern Portugal) (Fig. 39).

The torcs have wire covering two thirds of the bar, as seen in many northern torcs. In fact, the overall structure of the torcs resembles that of the Artabrian group. However, the decoration is more plentiful and detailed here. The interlaced SS motif in the trim around the torc terminals is a widespread indigenous element, very common in pottery. The central bar's trimming has close parallels in architectural stone decoration, as do the spirals or stylized swastikas that frame the central part of the bar. These stylized motifs are somewhat akin to La Tène elements. These torcs are rather small to be neck adornments. They weigh around 55 g each. The hoard containing these three torcs was discovered while during road construction. The presence of ashes was noticed. A Montefortino helmet and a statue representing a seated god - both mentioned in this article - were discovered in the nearby hillfort, which would have been an important elite dwelling in the Later Iron Age. Bibliography: Teixeira (1940); Silva (1986: 250-251, Est. CXII, 1-3). Museu D. Diogo de Sousa (Braga).

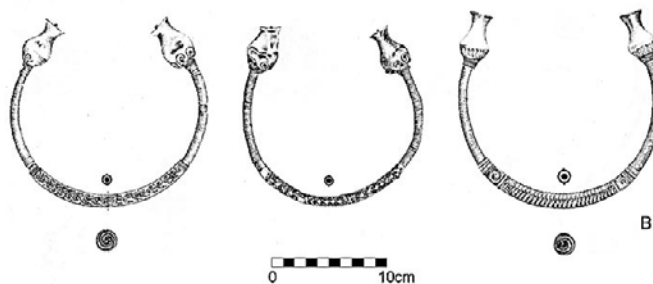


Figure 39. Torcs from Lanhoso. After Silva (1986).



Figure 40. Torc terminal from Santa Trega. Author's photograph.

Terminal of a gold torc, Oppida group, (Monte de Santa Trega) (Fig. 40).

This piece was found during the excavations carried out in the 1920s. We lack any specific data on the place of provenance inside this enormous hillfort, although a domestic context is likely. The Mediterranean influence is clear in the wavy trimmings and in the use of granulation and micro-granulation. The terminals' flat sides are decorated with swastikas. The torc fragment weighs 30 grams. Bibliography: Mergelina (1944-45: 37-38; Pl. XLVII); Carballo (1994); Peña (2001). Museo do Monte de Santa Trega (A Guarda, Pontevedra).

Belts

A few decorated gold bands have been recorded in the northernmost area of northwestern Iberia (García Vuelta and Perea 2001). They are quite thin and bear different motifs, mainly abstract, but also figurative: the best examples of the latter are the friezes showing warriors and horsemen in the belt from Moñes. These pieces have been traditionally called diadems, although such use is far from credible. They were most certainly belt elements: the gold bands were probably sewn to a leather strip. Only four examples are known, and only one of them (Elviña) was discovered during archaeological excavations, under the pavement of a first century AD house (Luengo Martínez 1979). A pre-Roman chronology around the second and first centuries BC, if not older, can be suggested. The decoration on some buttons clearly resembles that found on the pottery from the Later Iron Age in the Cantabric region. Despite the indigenous decoration and the "Celtic" mythology reflected in one of the pieces, the origin of these objects should perhaps be sought in the "magic belts" of the Semitic settlers of southern Iberia (Blázquez 1991: 91-97). In addition, the mere idea of narration is more akin to the Mediterranean than to Celtic art.

Catalogue

Gold belt, Mones (Asturias) (Fig. 41).

The provenance of this piece is not clear but it was most probably discovered in present-day Asturias. This object is outstanding not only because of its remarkable craftsmanship, but also because it depicts a local myth, probably related to funerary beliefs. García Quintela (1997) has proposed an interpretation of the Gallaecian "river of oblivion", the Lethes River, paralleling other mythical rivers in the "Celtic" or Indoeuropean world. Mounted warriors, men on foot carrying cauldrons, warriors armed with two spears and a small round shield (*caetra*) and wearing a helmet with three crests (such as those described by Strabo, 3, 3, 6) take part in an esoteric procession; fish and water birds can also be observed. The fish can perhaps be linked with the "primordial salmon" of some Celtic myths, while the water flow has parallels in a variety of cosmic fountains (Sterckx 1996: 10, 24). Bibliography: García Vuelta and Perea (2001). Museo Valencia de Don Juan (Madrid), Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Madrid) and Musée des Antiquités Nationales (Paris).

Belt, Elviña hillfort (A Coruña, Galicia) (Fig. 42).

This belt appeared with a gold necklace, glass beads and other jewellery underneath the pavement of a stone hut in the second enclosure of Elviña. Although it was found during archaeological excavations, the standards were not satisfactory and questions about the chronology remain. The swastikas can be related to stylistic and mythological traditions from Central and Atlantic Europe. The wavy decorations are Mediterranean in origin, but they were also used in temperate Europe, such as in the stelae from Brittany (Cunliffe 2000: Figs. 4-5). The duck is also to be placed in the context of Western and Central European traditions. The

technique employed for decoration is *repoussé* (embossing), which, unlike filigree and granulation, was known in the northwest from the Bronze Age on. This technique, along with the association of the belt with an orientaling necklace and the absence of decorative buttons, allows us to think in terms of an early date (perhaps around the fourth century BC). The necklace, nevertheless, could be of an earlier date. Bibliography: Luengo Martínez (1979); Reboredo Canosa (1996). Museo de San Antón (A Coruña).

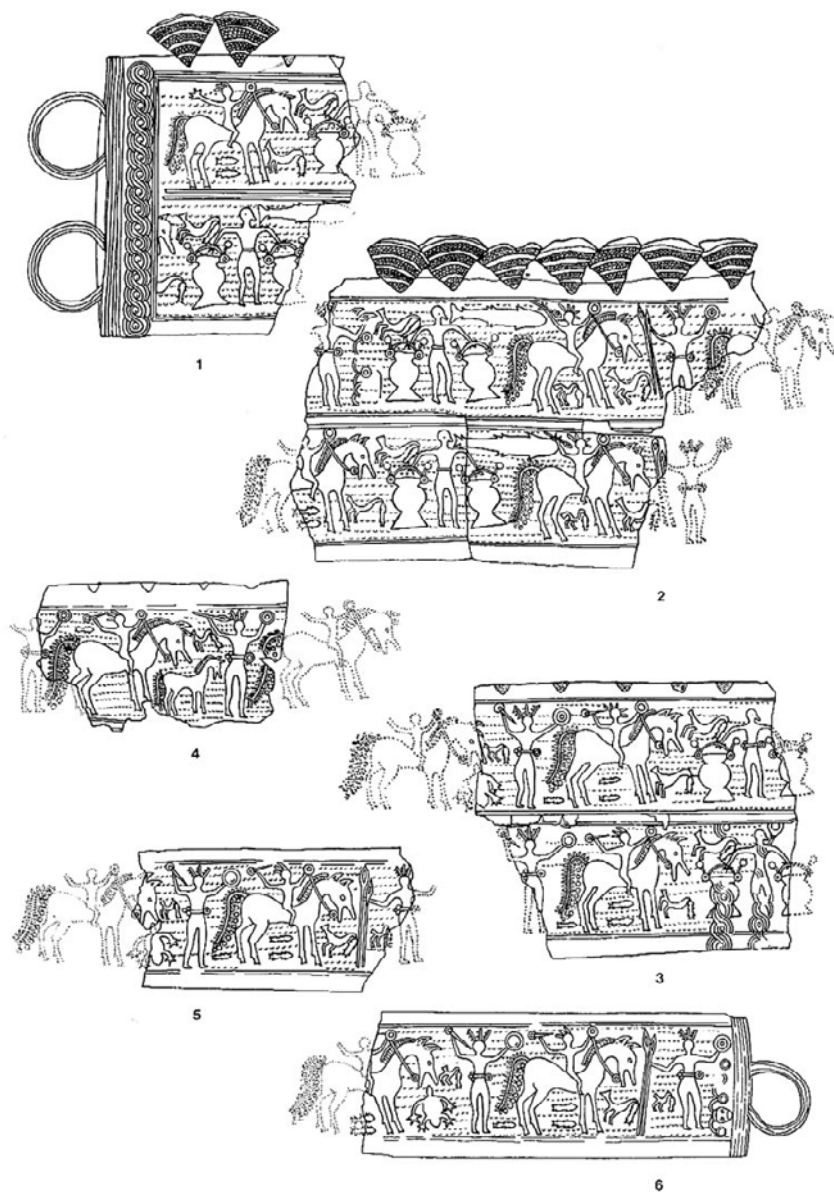


Figure 41. Gold belt from Mones. After Pingel (1992).



Figure 42. Gold belt from Elviña. Author's photograph.

Earrings

Although it is a little outdated, there is a good reference book on earrings in northwestern Iberia (Pérez Outeriño 1982). Unlike torcs, some earrings (*arracadas*) have been found during modern archaeological excavations (Meijide Cameselle 1996; Villa Valdés 1999; Calo Lourido and Soeiro 1986). We even have a radiocarbon date for the find context of one of them (Meijide Cameselle 1996), discovered in a round hut in A Graña (A Coruña), and dated between the fourth and second centuries (cal.) B.C. (Gd 5859, 2210 ± 50 BP). The context for such objects is frequently domestic, as compared to torcs. However, some earrings come from watery locations (López Cuevillas 1939-40) and other clear votive contexts. Two main traditions can be proposed: 1) a Southern style; and 2) a Northern style.

The Southern style

The southern style is clearly influenced by the orientalizing art of southern Iberia. These earrings have been mostly found in southern Gallaecia, although some pieces made their way northwards as far as the Punta dos Prados hillfort, located on the northernmost edge of Galicia (C. Parceró Oubiña, pers. comm.). I have proposed that finds from as far away as southern Gallaecia may be due to exchanges among elites, perhaps involving marriages and the displacement of women (González-Ruibal 2003a: 348). Significantly, northern earrings do not appear in the south: that could be explained by the practice, among northern elites, of establishing kinship ties and political alliances with their prestigious and powerful southern neighbours, while the reverse was not so much needed. Southerners, however, could have been interested in engaging warriors from the north in their raids against the Romans. In the south of Gallaecia other earrings have been discovered that bear a striking resemblance to Iberian jewellery from Andalusia (cf. M^a.J. Almagro Gorbea [1986]). They might be direct imports, perhaps obtained through raids into that area, or items influenced by the knowledge of Iberian earrings.

The Northern style

This style is characterized by kidney-shaped earrings without the triangular hanging piece found in the southern style earrings. The decoration can be very simple, reduced to simple incisions, or quite complex, such as in the examples from the Bedoya Treasure. Two main sub-styles can be noted: labyrinth-shaped earrings and boat-shaped earrings. Both sub-styles are present in the Bedoya Treasure (Ferrol, A Coruña). Unlike the southern pieces, these sometimes

appear in large hoards. For example, that of the Recouso hillfort (A Coruña, Galicia) was composed of around 15 earrings (Pérez Outeiriño 1982: Pl. XXV). This style is not attested south of the river Ulla (the boundary between the provinces of A Coruña and Pontevedra).

Catalogue

Gold earring, Northern style, from a treasure (Tesoro Bedoya) found in the vicinity of Ferrol (A Coruña, Galicia) (Fig. 43).

Two pairs of earrings were deposited inside a bronze vessel with a pre-Roman gold belt (see above), two Roman rings and several silver and gold coins, the last of these dating from the time of Domitian (91 AD). All pieces were gathered together in the hoard because of their economic value, while the original meaning of the pre-Roman jewellery was probably lost by then. The earring showed has the characteristic kidney-shape of the northern style and it belongs to the boat-shaped subgroup. The granulation and filigree hint at a deep Mediterranean influence. The tiny "flies" made with gold grains can also be traced to the Mediterranean. The piece weighs 6.4 grams. Bibliography: Pérez Outeiriño (1982: 89-93); Balseiro García (1997). Museo Provincial de Pontevedra.

Gold earring, Southern style, Afife or Carreço (Viana do Castelo, northern Portugal) (Fig. 44).

Afife has a Late Iron Age oppidum. The shape of this piece recalls orientaling jewellery, although the Mediterranean style was altered by local goldsmiths. It weighs 9.9 grams.

Bibliography: Pérez Outeiriño (1982: 43-45); Silva (1986: 262, Est. CXVIII, 8; CXLVIII, 2A-B). Museu Nacional de Arqueologia e Etnologia (Lisboa).

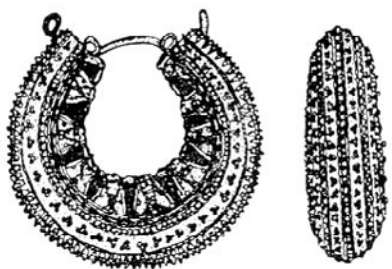


Figure 43. Earring from northern Galicia. After Pérez Outeiriño (1982).



Figure 44. Earring from Afife. After Pérez Outeiriño (1982).

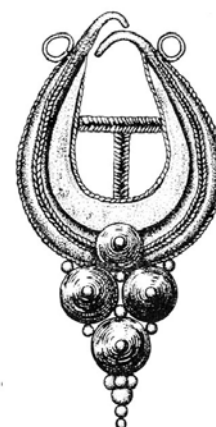


Figure 45. Earring from San Martinho de Antas. After Pérez Outeiriño (1982).

Gold earring, Mediterranean type, San Martinho de Anta (Vila Real, northern Portugal) (Fig. 45).

This earring follows Iberian models like those recorded in the necropolis of Tutugi (Jaén, Andalusia) (M^a. J. Almagro Gorbea [1986]). Bibliography: Blanco Freijeiro (1957: 81-83); Pérez Outeiriño (1982: 77-80); Silva (1986: 242-43; Est. CXVIII, 11). Private Collection.

Decorated Bronzes

Unlike other areas of temperate Europe, metalwork (apart from gold) seldom produced items that deserve the name of art (at least according to the criteria of classic art historians). The weapons employed by Gallaecians were spears and *falcatae* (curved short swords) in the south, and spears and antennae daggers in the north. The latter were surprisingly long lived (from the eighth to the first centuries BC at least). Neither the blades nor the hilts bear any decoration. The most common type of all the "artistic" bronzes are the cauldrons (*situlae*). The other artefacts (votive axes and carts) are extremely rare.

Cauldrons

Bronze cauldrons were known in the area from the Later Bronze Age on. In the second century BC a particular type of cauldron appears, bearing a complex decoration on the rim and handles. The decoration, especially interlaced SS and string-work-shaped strips, recalls that used in jewellery, some pottery vessels and stone carvings. Cauldrons were certainly used in those feasts mentioned by Classical writers (Strabo 3, 3, 7), and the use of cauldrons in banquets is also well recorded in the Irish sagas and other Iron Age contexts of temperate Europe (Arnold 1991: 225-226; Arnold 1999: 73). The context of growing hierarchization, the appearance of oppida and the intensification of war probably encouraged the increasing importance of feasting in the later Iron Age. As several authors have noted, although feasting can exist without war, conflict always favours banqueting (Ferguson 1992: 92), which is strongly correlated with alliances and the reinforcing of warrior solidarities. War and feasting are brought together in the hoard of Castelo de Neiva (Almeida 1980): two Montefortino helmets, three bronze cups, various sherds of wine amphorae (Dressel 1), a bronze sieve for wine or beer and fragments of a cauldron were discovered on the margins of a large oppidum. Cauldrons were extremely popular all over Gallaecia in the second and first centuries BC, which was a period of great external pressure on the local communities by Rome. Their appearance in later contexts, probably during the time of Augustus, might imply that banquets were resorted to during the troubled times of early Romanization, when identities and power had to be deeply renegotiated (González-Ruibal 2003b).

Catalogue

Clay moulds for bronze cauldrons. These were found in a pit in Bracara Augusta (modern Braga, Portugal), the Roman capital for the Conventus Bracarum (southern Gallaecia) (Fig.

46.A).

The presence of a few pre-Augustan elements at Braga (statues, Campanian ware, etc.) does not rule out its use by an indigenous population, perhaps as a ritual place, before the Roman foundation. Bibliography: Martins (1988). Museu D. Diogo de Sousa.

Decorated rim and handle, Coto de Altamira (Pontevedra, Galicia) (Fig. 46.B).

In this tiny hillfort (less than half a hectare in surface area), a huge number of decorated bronzes were recovered. A workshop, probably supplying a religious demand, was established in this place. Perhaps the hillfort was a sanctuary itself. Some of the bronzes are Roman (Mercury, a votive altar) but others, such as these two, come from a pre-Roman background. Finds from unsystematic excavations show an occupation span from the Early Iron Age to the mid to late first century AD. The absence of good archaeological excavations makes it impossible to identify the context of the finds. Bibliography: Carballo (1983). Museo Provincial de Pontevedra.

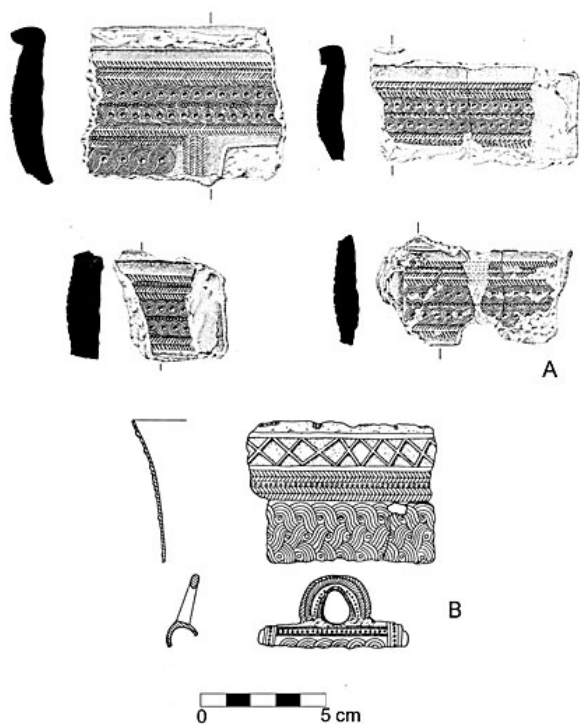


Figure 46. A. Clay moulds for cauldrons from Braga. After Martins (1988); B. Parts of bronze cauldrons from Coto de Altamira. After Carballo (1983).



Figure 47. Decorated handle of a cauldron. Author's photograph.

Decorated handle from a hillfort in León (Fig. 47).

Situlae were used far from the core area, in Asturian hillforts. Museo Provincial de León.

Ritual axes

Only four or five pieces are known and only one of them has a reliable provenance. Their small size, terminals in the shape of animal heads and decorative torcs are elements shared by all

of these pieces. One of the axes, now stored in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Madrid), is specially interesting because it seemingly depicts a *suovetaurilia* (Barril Vicente 2002: 308), a rite including the sacrifice of a ram or sheep, a pig and an ox or cow, whose existence among the inhabitants of northwestern Iberia, specifically the Lusitanians, is known through the Romano-indigenous inscription of Cabeço das Fraguas. The presence of torcs as decorative elements reveals the religious significance of these axes among Gallaecians. They undoubtedly belong to the Late Iron Age, but the exact chronology is unclear, as is their specific function.

Catalogue

Votive axe, unknown provenance (Fig. 48.1).

Due to the similarities with the previously described axe and the kind of torc represented, this piece probably comes from somewhere in northern Galicia. The terminal is in this case a ram's head. A cow or bull, however, is also depicted, near a bronze cauldron, thus showing the religious significance of cauldrons and feasting in Iron Age Gallaecia. Almost all the piece is covered with thin string-shaped bands, similar to those found on cauldrons. Bibliography: González-Ruibal (2003a: 468, Fig. 4.191). Museo Provincial de Pontevedra.

Votive axe, Cariño (A Coruña, Galicia) (Fig. 48.2).

This piece was reported to have been found on the beach of this fishing village, on the northernmost edge of Galicia, facing the Atlantic. On the same coastline, an antennae dagger from the Early Iron Age was discovered decades later (Meijide Cameselle 1988). The particular geographical location, with its character of both a natural and probably also a symbolic boundary, and the natural landscape explain this item as a part of a votive ritual in a sacred place. It has two suspension rings in the upper part and two other smaller rings, probably representing torcs, along with an image of a torc, over the axe blade. The head represents a bull or a cow. Bibliography: Luengo Martínez (1964). Museo de San Antón (A Coruña).

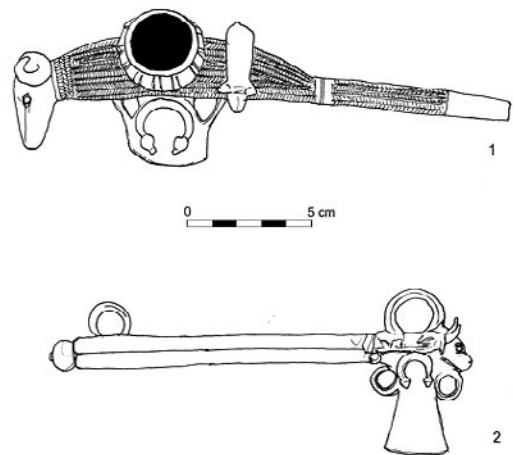


Figure 48. Votive axes. 1. Unknown provenance. 2. Cariño. After González-Ruibal (2003a).

Votive cart

The only votive cart known from the northwestern Iberian Peninsula is that of Costa Figueira (northern Portugal). Apparently, it was discovered along with a roasting spit that seems older than the votive cart (Late Bronze Age). It represents a ritual procession in which both men and women take part. Some of the men are represented bearing arms. The sacrifice of a sheep or goat, in the last row of the procession, seems to be the objective of the religious event depicted.

Interestingly, an ovid is represented in the votive axe of unknown provenance, as we have seen, and Strabo refers to the sacrifice of he-goats to the God of War, who is equated with Ares (Str. 3, 3, 7). The chronology of the cart is unclear. Votive carts are known in Celtic Europe from the Later Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age.

Catalogue

Votive cart, Monte de Costa Figueira (Vilela, Paredes, Porto, northern Portugal) (Fig. 49).
 Bibliography: Silva (1986: 208, Est. XCVII, 2^a-D, CXLV; 1999: 30-31). Museu do Seminário Maior de Viseu.

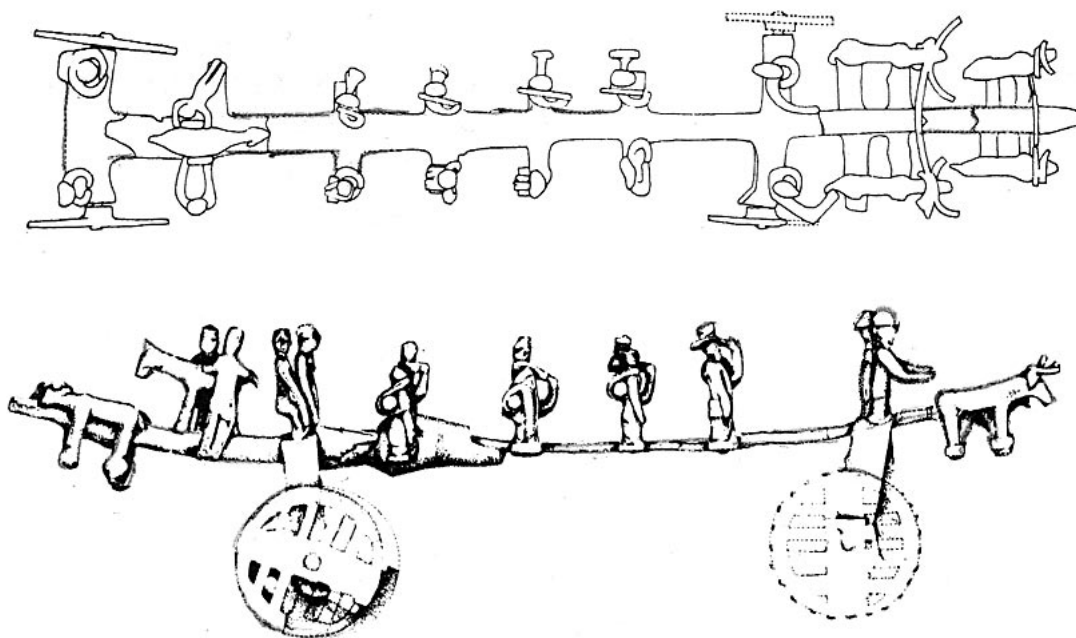


Figure 49. Votive cart in bronze from Monte da Costa Figueira. After Silva (1986).

Helmets

Unlike their neighbours (Quesada 1997), the people inhabiting the northwestern Iberian Peninsula never developed a spectacular panoply of weapons. The only exceptions are four bronze helmets, dating to the Later Iron Age, found in the *Conventus Bracarum*. Small fragments are known from other locations, such as the oppidum of Briteiros. The origin of this artefact can be traced back to the fourth century BC in Central Europe. The Montefortino helmet was in use, in its many variants, until the time of Augustus, when it is replaced by the simplified Buggenum type. Despite the Celtic origins of this helmet type, it spread rapidly across the Mediterranean. The southern regions of Iberia have yielded a large number of Montefortino helmets, even more than Celtic Iberia (García-Mauriño 1993; Quesada 1997: 558) and in fact they might have been

popularized by the Italian and Carthaginian armies (ibid). They have a wide distribution, from Scythian lands in the east to southern Iberia in the west (ibid: 556). The helmets from our area were produced locally: the decoration along the rim and peak (circles, triangles filled with dots, zigzags, strings and mouldings) can also be found in the pottery of the second and first centuries BC. The context of deposition is clearly ritual in two cases, Castelo de Neiva and Caldelas de Tui. The good preservation of the helmet from Lanhoso also suggests a votive context. The Gallaecian examples have been attributed to a later date, possibly as late as the Augustan period (Quesada 1997: 563-564), but those found in context (Castelo de Neiva), were recovered with sherds of Dressel 1c amphorae. It is thus more likely that the chronology has to be put back between the late second and mid-first centuries BC. Bearing in mind the participation of Gallaecian warriors in the Civil Wars of the mid-first century BC, we may date the Montefortino-Buggenum helmets of Gallaecia around this period.

Catalogue

Montefortino helmet, Lanhoso (Braga, northern Portugal) (Fig. 50A).

This piece was discovered during the construction of a road in the oppidum of Lanhoso. In the same settlement and probably not far from the place were the helmet was dug up, a statue of a seated god was also discovered. Bibliography: Teixeira (1940); Silva (1986: 206; XCII, A-F; CXLIV, 3). Museu D. Diogo de Sousa (Braga).

Two Montefortino helmets, Castelo de Neiva (Viana do Castelo, northern Portugal) (Fig. 50B-C). The helmets were found together with elements associated with feasting, as we have seen. They certainly were part of a votive hoard. Bibliography: Almeida (1980); Silva (1986: 206; Est. XCIV, A-F; CXLIV, 2, XCV, A-E). Private collection.

Montefortino helmet, Caldelas de Tui (Pontevedra, Galicia) (Fig. 50D).

This piece was dredged from the river Miño, the longest and largest river of Galicia, which is today the frontier between Spain and Portugal. In the same stretch of the river, two votive deposits from the Later Bronze Age were discovered, one of them composed of nine bronze axes

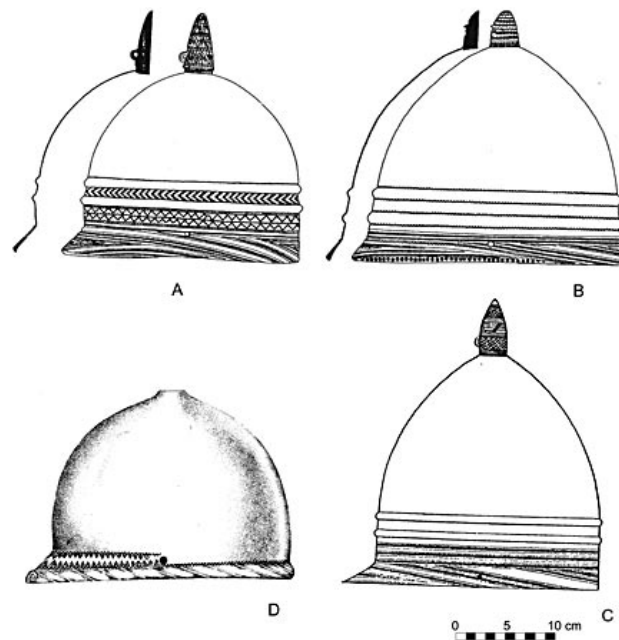


Figure 50. Montefortino helmets. A. Lanhoso. After Teixeira (1940); B-C. Castelo de Neiva. After Almeida (1980); D. Caldelas de Tui. After Silva (1986).

and the other by two swords (Mejjide Cameselle and Acuña Castroviejo 1988). The area was probably imbued with sacred meanings since the Bronze Age, because it was a boundary and a crossing point simultaneously (as suggested in general by Bradley 1998). Bibliography: Santiso, Gómez Sobrino and Tamuxe (1977); Silva (1986: 205, Est. XCII, 1A-D; CXLIV, 1). Museo Histórico Diocesano de Tui (Pontevedra).

Other decorated bronzes

Some small decorated bronzes are also known in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. Pieces decorated with stamped triangles and other simple motifs, probably used in belts and hilts, have been recorded in the northern region. Another kind of bronze item, which is especially widespread in the LIA, is the spheroid bead. These usually bear simple motifs, although some of them have quite intricate elements, such as swastikas or sigmas, usually inlaid with silver (Bouza Brey 1963).

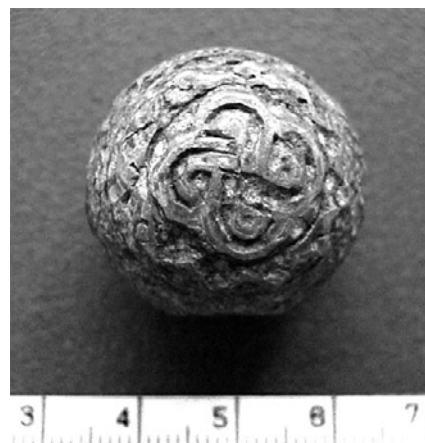


Fig. 51. Bronze bead with a swastika.
Author's photograph.

Catalogue

Bronze bead, unknown provenance (Fig. 51).

The omnipresent swastika indicates the probable use of this bead as an apotropaic item.

Bibliography: unpublished. Museo Provincial de Pontevedra.

Pottery

Due to its immense variability, both temporal and geographical, it would be impossible to summarize here the typologies of Gallaecian pottery in the Late Iron Age. Suffice it to say that the most decorated vessels appear in the Rías Baixas area (Pontevedra, Galicia) and the middle and lower Miño river basin (Ourense and Pontevedra, Galicia) in the Middle Iron Age. The most widespread technique for decorating pots is stamping. Some areas, especially the north, developed decorated containers, seemingly used in rituals or social activities, in the Late Iron Age. A few of them have been discovered in the Roman town of *Lucus Augusti* (Alcorta Irastorza 2001: Figs. 30 and 36), showing, as the cauldrons did, the importance of communal banquets in the aftermath of the Roman conquest. These exceptions apart, the pottery of the Late Iron Age shows a trend towards standardization and the impoverishment of decorative features. Some elements, such as the concentric circles and the interlaced or simple SS (probably stylized ducks or water birds) have parallels all over temperate Europe. There is no complete overview of

the pre-Roman pottery of northwestern Iberia. However, a few interesting publications on Galicia include Rey (1990-91) and Cobas and Prieto (1999).

Catalogue

Pot with stamped and incised decoration, Middle Iron Age, A Forca hillfort (Pontevedra, Galicia) (Fig. 52).

Bibliography: Carballo (1987). Museo Provincial de Pontevedra.

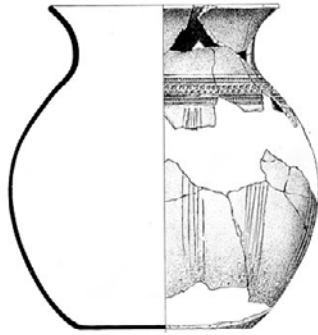


Figure 52. Decorated pot from A Forca. After Carballo (1987).



Figure 53. Decorated pot from San Cibrán (Pontevedra). Author's photograph.

Pot with plastic decoration, Late Iron Age, San Cibrán hillfort (Pontevedra, Galicia) (Fig. 53).

Bibliography: González-Ruibal (2003a: 408-409, Fig. 4.150). Museo Provincial de Pontevedra.

Concluding remarks

The Late Iron Age (second to first centuries BC) in northwestern Iberia witnessed the development of a remarkable artistic style, clearly linked - as was also the case with the LaTène style - to high status individuals. The development of this art, in fact, cannot be detached from the increasing hierarchization and growing complexity of the native populations of Gallaecia throughout the Middle and Late Iron Ages. The social and symbolic relevance of this style is reflected in its extraordinary expansion in different types of media (bronzework, gold jewellery, stone sculpture, dress). The main motifs depicted were loaded with religious meaning: swastikas, triskels, wheels, and probably also interlaced SS and string-work designs. As in other areas, these motifs were probably linked to basic cosmological principles and were deemed fundamental to the production and reproduction of the natural and social order, hence their appropriation by aristocrats, who displayed such symbols on their houses, dress, weapons and jewellery.

Perhaps one of the most distinctive characteristics of Gallaecian art is the pervasive

influence of the Mediterranean: the outstanding importance of stone sculpture can be attributed to this influence, as in other "Celtic" cultures in close touch with Mediterranean peoples (such as the southern Gauls). However, the marginal character of Gallaecia, from a geographical point of view, allowed the indigenous people to engage in a deep reconceptualization of foreign techniques and ideas. On the other hand, "Celtic" Europe is obviously present in the use of torcs, the representations of severed heads, the preeminence of geometric or stylized motifs rather than figurative ones, etc. Again, the remote location of Gallaecia with respect to the core "Celtic" area provided the local populations with freedom to renegotiate exotic concepts.

The context of appearance of Gallaecian art is diverse: in the southern area, where a more complex and inegalitarian society developed, oppida are the places where jewellery, sculptures and bronzework were used or deposited, sometimes in ritual contexts (votive deposits, sacred places), sometimes in domestic ones (aristocratic compounds) or public areas (entrance gates, ramparts, temples/sanctuaries). In the northern area, which is characterized by small hillforts rather than oppida, the surroundings of the settlements were chosen to deposit most of the aristocratic artefacts mentioned in this text: ritual hoards (in watery or dry-land locations) seem to be the rule. Some pieces (such as earrings) come from domestic contexts, while severed heads - almost the only kind of stone sculpture known from northern Gallaecia - appear to be associated with hillfort entrances and sanctuaries inside the settlement. Unfortunately, the majority of artistic representations known from Gallaecia are stray finds, rarely discovered during archaeological excavations and even then very seldom recovered in what would today be considered a scientifically conducted fashion. On the other hand, the absence of formal necropolises in the area further inhibits our knowledge of the social functions and precise chronology of most of the Gallaecian artistic pieces. Funerary rituals appear to parallel those of other Atlantic areas (Ireland, Britain) and probably involved excarnation by exposure, the cremation and throwing of the deceased's ashes into rivers and lakes, or similar practices attributed by Greek and Roman authors to other "Celtic" peoples. Some antennae daggers, torcs and bronze objects recovered from watery locations might be related to these types of funerals. While much work remains to be done to augment the record of isolated finds with systematically excavated evidence, the existing material culture record from this part of the "Celtic" world speaks eloquently of the energy and artistic brilliance of the Gallaecian craftworkers and their elite patrons.

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