

# Conflict Archaeology

Materialities of Collective Violence  
from Prehistory to Late Antiquity



**Editors:**  
Manuel Fernández-  
Götz and  
Nico Roymans

*Themes in  
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**ROUTLEDGE**  


# Conflict Archaeology

In the past two decades, conflict archaeology has become firmly established as a promising field of research, as reflected in publications, symposia, conference sessions and fieldwork projects. It has its origins in the study of battlefields and other conflict-related phenomena in the modern Era, but numerous studies show that this theme, and at least some of its methods, techniques and theories, are also relevant for older historic and even prehistoric periods.

This book presents a series of case studies on conflict archaeology in ancient Europe, based on the results of both recent fieldwork and a reassessment of older excavations. The chronological framework spans from the Neolithic to Late Antiquity, and the geographical scope from Iberia to Scandinavia.

Along with key battlefields such as the Tollense Valley, *Baecula*, *Alesia*, Kalkriese and Harzhorn, the volume also incorporates many other sources of evidence that can be directly related to past conflict scenarios, including defensive works, military camps, battle-related ritual deposits and symbolic representations of violence in iconography and grave goods. The aim is to explore the material evidence for the study of warfare, and to provide new theoretical and methodological insights into the archaeology of mass violence in ancient Europe and beyond.

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Materialities of Collective Violence from  
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# Preface

The idea of producing this edited volume proceeds from a common interest in the study of mass violence and the archaeology of Rome's imperial expansion in Gaul and Iberia. It is our explicit aim to place this research into the broader and expanding field of conflict archaeology. In 2015 we organised two symposia at respectively Amsterdam (*The Materiality of Conflict. Aims, methods and theory of conflict archaeology from Prehistory to modern times*) and the EAA Conference at Glasgow (*Battlefield archaeology: Exploring the materialities of conflict*), after which the decision was taken to collect a number of papers and edit a peer-reviewed volume out of them. Since most overview volumes on conflict archaeology are focused on rather recent historical periods, the choice was taken to focus on contributions dealing with Late Prehistory and the Roman period. For this purpose, we invited speakers from the sessions in Amsterdam and Glasgow, and in addition to that some other scholars were asked to contribute in order to further strengthen the profile and cohesion of the volume.

The nineteen chapters in this volume provide a combination of site-specific analysis and larger overviews,

as well as a mixture of information coming from the reassessment of well-known sites (e.g. *Alesia*, *Numantia*, Thorsberger Moor) and new excavation and survey projects such as those at the Tollense Valley, *Baecula*, *Arausio* and Monte Bernorio. Beyond the discussion of particular case studies, we aim to contribute to the development of methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of past conflict. Although the volume is focused on ancient Europe, many of the contributions can be of interest for scholars working on other parts of the world and later periods. We hope that the book will play a role in the broader international discussion on conflict archaeology and be a stimulus for further research.

Finally, we would like to thank the EAA and in particular the series editors Prof. Kristian Kristiansen and Prof. Eszter Bánffy for including this volume into its new monograph series, as well as the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments.

Manuel Fernández-Götz/Nico Roymans  
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# Rediscovering the Roman conquest of the north-western Iberian Peninsula

JOSÉ MANUEL COSTA-GARCÍA

In ancient times, different ethnic groups inhabited the north-western area of the Iberian Peninsula, symbolically delimited in the south by the river Douro and in the east by the course of the Esla and/or Cea. The arrival of Roman power implied their integration and generic grouping into three *conuentus*, those called after the *Callaeci Lucenses* (northwest), the *Callaeci Bracaraenses* (southwest), and the *Astures* (east). The absorption of these territories into the Roman world has been commonly linked with certain conquest episodes, which have largely monopolised the historiographical discourse. However, these traditional approaches were very dependent on Greco-Roman written sources due to the scarcity of archaeological data. The awakening of Roman military archaeology as an autonomous discipline in Spain has forced a transformation of this scenario. Still, to what extent have the existence of new archaeological data changed the way in which we approach to the Roman conquest of these territories?

## INTRODUCTION

The traditional historiographical discourse on the conquest of the north-western region of the Iberian Peninsula was excessively based on literary sources and very little on archaeological data (Magie, 1920; Rodríguez Colmenero, 1977; Santos Yanguas, 1982; Schulten, 1962; Syme, 1970). This situation fed the articulation of a simplistic and circular debate around certain recurrent issues for decades. The attention paid to certain details (e.g. the definition of the exact chronology and location of specific war episodes) usually contrasted with the carelessness adopted when dealing with the background of the conflict, which was conceived and described as a unidirectional process. Moreover, the landscape heterogeneity and the political fragmentation of the space formerly occupied by *Callaeci* and *Astures* ballasted the development of joint visions.<sup>1</sup> This situation frequently led to the emergence of nationalist, regionalist, or local

approaches. But nowadays, the absence of archaeological data is no more a factor limiting the development of modern perspectives when studying the conquest of these territories. This chapter tries to synthesise those archaeological novelties and to suggest new lines of research based on their differential potential.

## LOCATING THE CONQUEST PROCESS

The first literary mention of Roman presence north of the river Douro is the expedition of *Decimus Iunius Brutus* (Appian *Hisp.* 71–74; Strabo *Geogr.* III.3.1 y 4; Florus 1.33.12; Livy *Per.* 55–56; Orosius 5.5.12; Valerius Maximus 6.4; Velleius Paterculus 2.5.1). Apparently, the governor of the province *Hispania Ulterior* defeated in 138–137 BC a people called the *Callaeci*. After that, this name began to be used to designate the natives inhabiting the whole region north of the river. The destruction of some native settlements in northern Portugal – namely the hillfort of Terroso (Póvoa de Varzim) – has been linked to this historical episode (Coelho, 2007).

From this moment on, archaeology attests that the contacts with the Roman world started to increase. Through the Punic *emporium* of *Gadir* (Cádiz) the inhabitants of the Galician and Portuguese hillforts maintained a fluid exchange of goods with the Mediterranean world at least from the 5th century BC (González Ruibal et al., 2010). The advance of the Roman presence in *Hispania* accelerated this process: from the 2nd century BC onwards Italic goods began to flood the archaeological record (González Ruibal, 2007; Naveiro, 1991).

Also the literary sources prove the existence of Roman expeditions during those years. Some of them were clearly explorative and commercial,<sup>2</sup> but others sought a quick enrichment by attacking and plundering the native population.<sup>3</sup> Although recent archaeological

<sup>1</sup>Nowadays this region is divided between the Portuguese districts of Viana do Castelo, Braga, Porto, Vila Real and Bragança, and the Spanish Autonomous Communities of Galicia, Asturias, and Castilla y León.

<sup>2</sup>The searching of the mythical *Cassiterides Insulae* by *Publius Crassus* (98–97 BC) (Strabo *Geogr.* 3.5.11).

<sup>3</sup>The campaign of *Julius Caesar* (61 BC) implied the sacking of *Brigantium* (nearby modern-day city of A Coruña) (Cassius Dio 37.52–53).

excavations could attest the violent destruction of some hillforts in the Galician coastline area (Rodríguez Martínez, 2015), the evidences are still very scarce. Indeed, we do not know when Rome effectively absorbed the western Galician territories due to the lack of reliable archaeological data.

Still, it looks like there was not a clear will to conquer or permanently annex the whole area during the last years of the Republic. This situation could have changed when Caesar Octavian took control of the Spanish provinces in 42 BC. The *Fasti Triumphales* record a number of triumphs *ex Hispania* celebrated by some of his legates in the period 36–27 BC (Amela Valverde, 2006). However, the literary sources do not expressly mention the *Callaeci* in a military context after the incursion of Julius Caesar in 61 BC.

The war theatre seems to have been relocated eastward. In 29 BC the general *Statilius Taurus* fought the *Vaccei*, the *Astures*, and the *Cantabri* (Cassius Dio 51.20). Three years after, Emperor Augustus himself travelled to Spain in an – political and symbolic – attempt of quickly conclude the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula (Velleius Paterculus 2.90; Strabo *Geog.* 6.4.2; Florus 1.33.5). By then, only the *Cantabri* and the *Astures* remained out of the Roman power sphere. Although they were not among the largest people in Iberia, the war proved to be bloodier and longer than it was initially planned (see Fernández-Götz et al., this volume). After an initial campaign (26–25 BC) the revolts extended the conflict until 19 BC (Florus 2.33; Cassius Dio 53.25, 53.29, 54.5, 54.2–5; Orosius 6.21.1–11). At least two of them (24 and 22 BC) brought activity to the Asturian front. The destruction of some hillforts, such as Peña de la Ercina (León) (González Gómez de Agüero et al., 2015) or Llagú (Asturias) (Berrocal-Rangel et al., 2002), has been associated with some of these events.

### TRACING THE ROMAN MILITARY PRESENCE

Until the 1990s the archaeological research on the Roman army in north-western Iberia focused on the study of permanent settlements founded after the Cantabrian-Asturian Wars: León, Rosinos de Vidriales (Zamora), and Astorga (León) (Morillo, 2002) in the Asturian area, and A Cidadela (A Coruña) and Bande (Ourense) in the Galician zone (Caamaño Gesto and Fernández Rodríguez, 2002; Rodríguez Colmenero and Ferrer Sierra, 2006). Although some temporary sites were known in this area, none of them were excavated (Del Olmo Martín, 1995; Loewinsohn, 1965; Sánchez-Palencia, 1986). Fortunately, the intensive surveying along the Cantabrian Mountains – following methodologies of protohistoric archaeology – started to

reveal the traces of numerous marching camps related to the Augustan campaigns (Peralta, 1999, 2002). Shortly after, the discovery of a similar site at Monte Curriellos (Asturias) (Camino Mayor et al., 2002) confirmed that this phenomenon was not exclusive of the eastern mountainous areas.

In recent times, the increasingly open access to several geospatial techniques and resources such as historical aerial photography, modern aerial and satellite imagery, airborne LiDAR technology, GIS, or photogrammetry has shaken up the discipline again. These tools provided a new and differential approach to archaeology, and they also allowed the study of the sites from a diachronic perspective. The development of new cost-effective methodologies (Menéndez Blanco et al., 2013) has begun a democratisation of the archaeological research, causing a torrent of new discoveries (Camino Mayor et al., 2015). The following lines are an attempt to synthesise all the evidences of early Roman military presence documented in the Asturian and Galician territories (Figures 13.1–13.3).

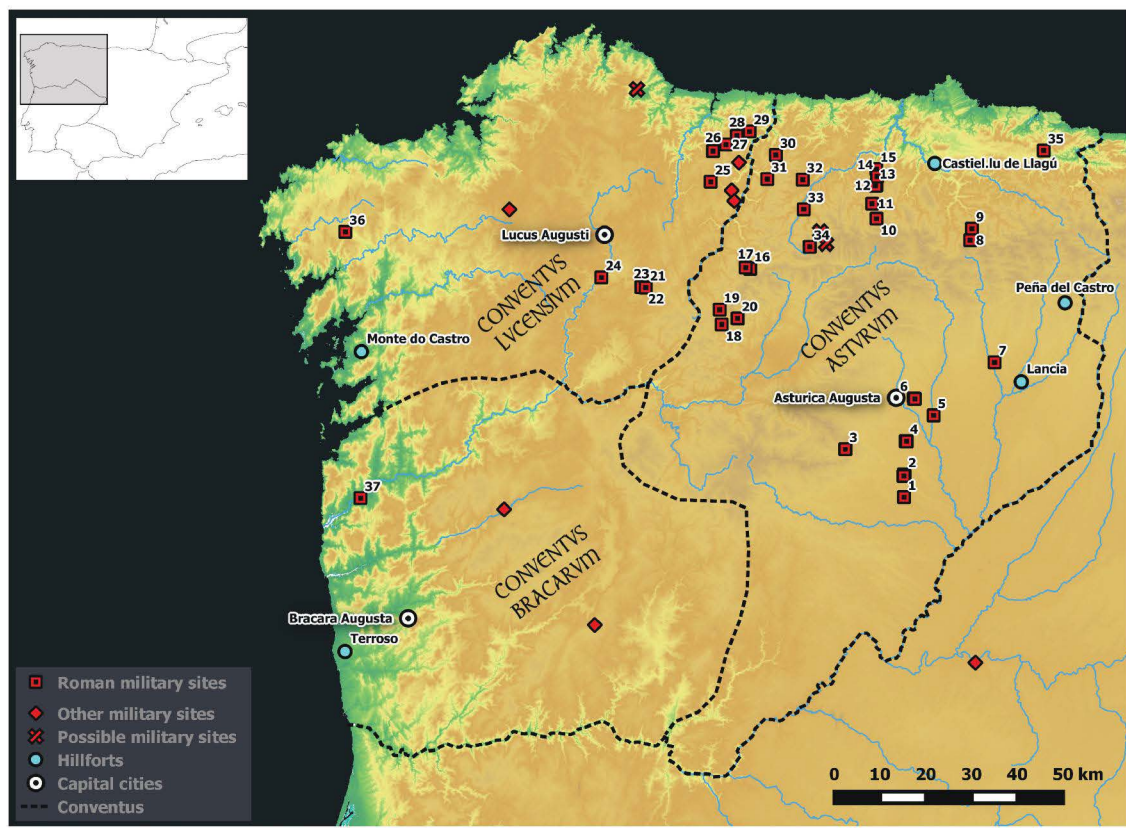
### Asturia cismontana

During the Early Empire, much of the Roman military deployment in *Hispania* was concentrated in the Spanish plateau area north of the river Douro. Soon after the end of the Cantabrian-Asturian Wars (at the end of the 1st century BC) the important military bases of León (Morillo and García Marcos, 2009), Rosinos de Vidriales (Carretero Vaquero, 2000), and Astorga (González Fernández, 1997) were founded by soldiers of the legions *VI Victrix* and *X Gemina*.

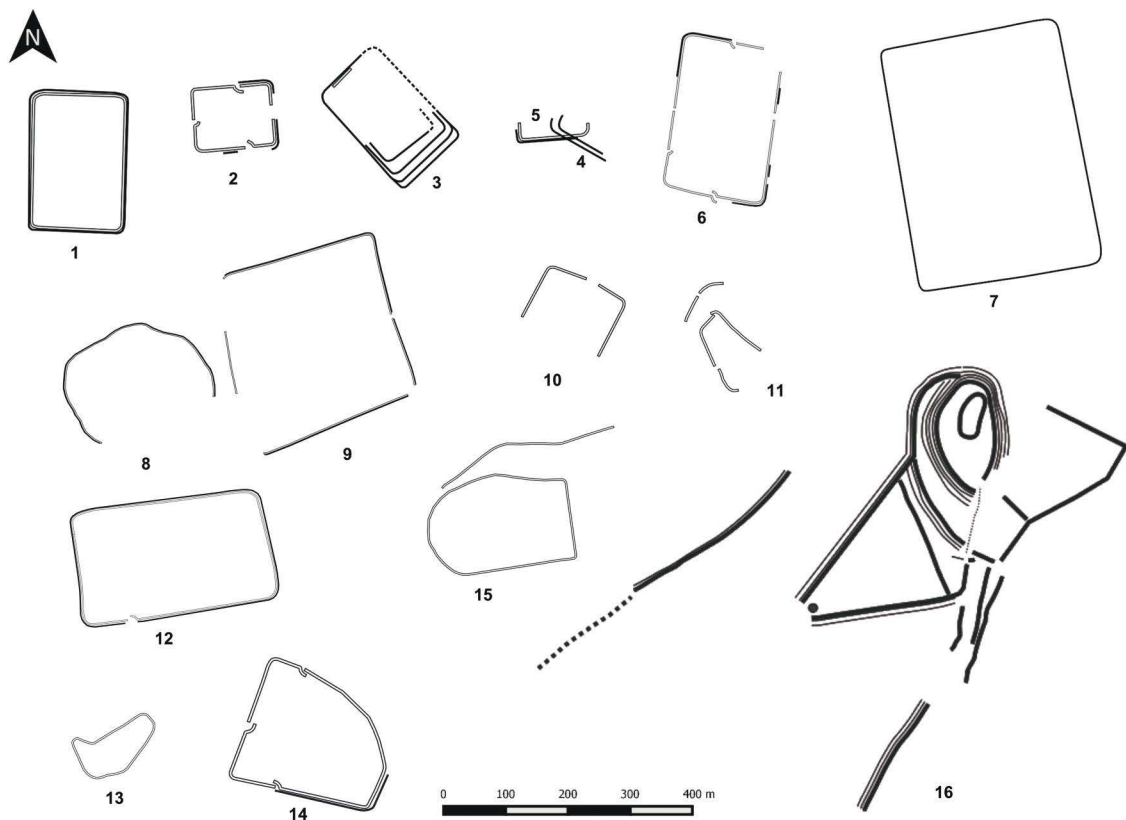
Some temporary installations have been also identified in this region (Figure 13.2). The site of Valmedema (Truchas, León) was discovered decades ago in the upper basin of the river Eria (Sánchez-Palencia, 1986). This medium-sized marching camp (c. 4.5 hectares) follows the classic playing-card pattern and displays entrances reinforced by *clauiculae*. It was detected with the use of historical aerial photography (USAF AST6 54-AM-78, 1956–7) and the LiDAR technology reveals it still exists under a dense forest canopy (Costa-García and Casal García, 2015; Sánchez-Palencia and Currás, 2015) (Figure 13.3). It has been stated that the camp was built either during the Augustan campaigns or during the immediate post-war period.

Following the course of the river Eria, there is an interesting accumulation of enclosures in the vicinity of Castroalbón (León) (Del Olmo Martín, 1995; Loewinsohn, 1965). Up to six military camps of small size (1.4 to 3.3 hectares) were located on both sides of a Roman road built in Augustan times, the *iter XVII (It. Ant. Wess. 422,2–423,5)*. They have not been excavated,

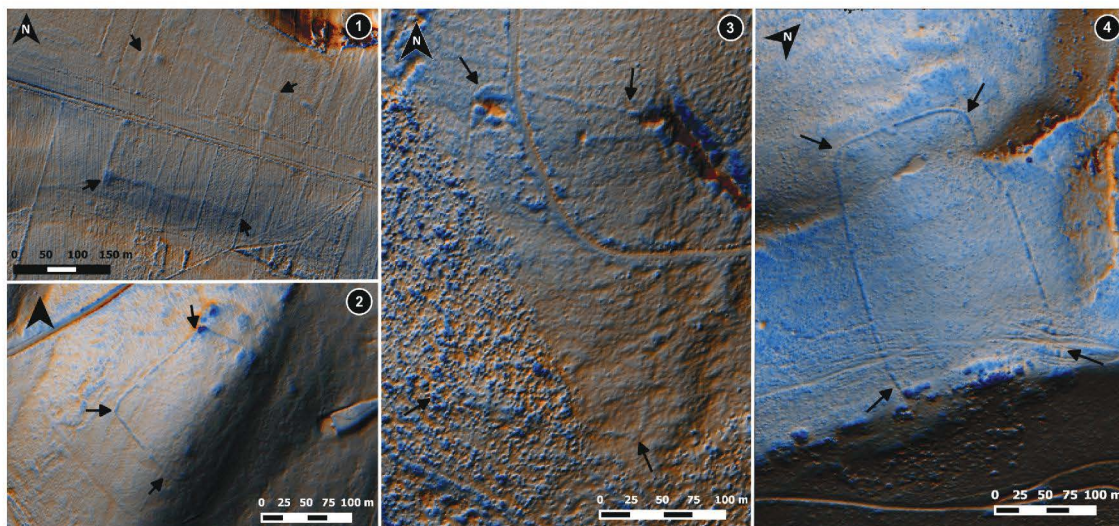




**Figure 13.1** Roman military sites in north-western Iberia. Rosinos de Vidriales (1), La Chana-Castroalbón (2), Villalazán (3), Villamontán (4), Huerga de Frailes (5), Astorga (6), León (7), Llagüezos (8), Monte Curriellos (9), El Xuegu La Bola (10), Cueiru (11), El Mouru (12), El Colláu Valbona (13), El Llaurienzu (14), Las Cruces (15), A Granda das Xarras (16), A Recacha (17), A Cortiña dos Mouros (18), Serra da Casiña (19), As Penas de Parturexe (20), Monte da Chá (21), Cabianca (22), Monte da Modorra (23), Monte dos Trollos (24), A Penaparda (25), El Picu El Outeiro (26), A Pena Dereta (27), A Pena Dereta (28), El Chao de Carrubeiro (29), Moyapán (30), El Chao (31), Resiellea (32), Peña de Cáscaro (33), Reconco (34), Picu Viyao (35), O Cornado (36), Campos (37) (author).



**Figure 13.2** Roman military enclosures (1/2). Castroalbón I (1), Castroalbón II (2), Castroalbón III (3), Castroalbón IV (4), Castroalbón V (5), Valdemeda (6), Huerga de Frailes (7), El Colláu Valbona (8), El Mouru (9), Las Cruces (10), El Llaurienzu (11), A Granda das Xarras (12), A Recacha (13), A Cortiña dos Mouros (14), Llagüezos (15), Monte Curriellos (16) (author).



**Figure 13.3** The enclosures of Cabianca (Lugo, Spain). (1), Moyapán (Asturias, Spain) (2), Valdemeda (León, Spain) (3), and El Chao de Carrubeiro (Asturias, Spain) (4). LiDAR-DEM visualisations using SAGA GIS Resampling Filter. Open Access PNOA-LIDAR granted by © Instituto Geográfico Nacional (author).

so there are many hypotheses about their dating and functionality. All the same, no undisputed evidence supports their connection with the process of conquest (Costa-García, 2016). The detection of new temporary camps, close to the same road 14 km to the north, in Villamontán de Valduerna (León) has been recently announced (Celis Sánchez et al., 2015). The publishing of this interesting discovery is forthcoming.

Finally, a large camp (c. 12.1 hectares) was found near the river Órbigo in Huerga de Frailes (Villazala, León) (Menéndez Blanco, González Álvarez, Álvarez Martínez et al., 2015). Unfortunately, the defensive structures of this enclosure have been completely destroyed by ploughing. Only the differential accumulation of moisture allows the detection of the ancient trenches through the aerial photography. There is no other material evidence associated with this site.

### Asturian-leonese mountains

The site of Monte Currieños (Aller-Lena, Asturias) has been one of the greatest discoveries of Spanish archaeology in recent times (Camino Mayor et al., 2005). It can be also considered the most complex Roman military camp of those documented in the Iberian Peninsula. Around the Boya peak (1,728 m high) a series of sometimes massive defensive lines takes advantage of the local topography in order to delimit different camping areas (about 8–10 hectares of total extension). The archaeological excavations confirm that the site was repeatedly occupied and enlarged during the Cantabrian-Asturian Wars. This main logistic hub controls *La Carisa*, an important route that follows

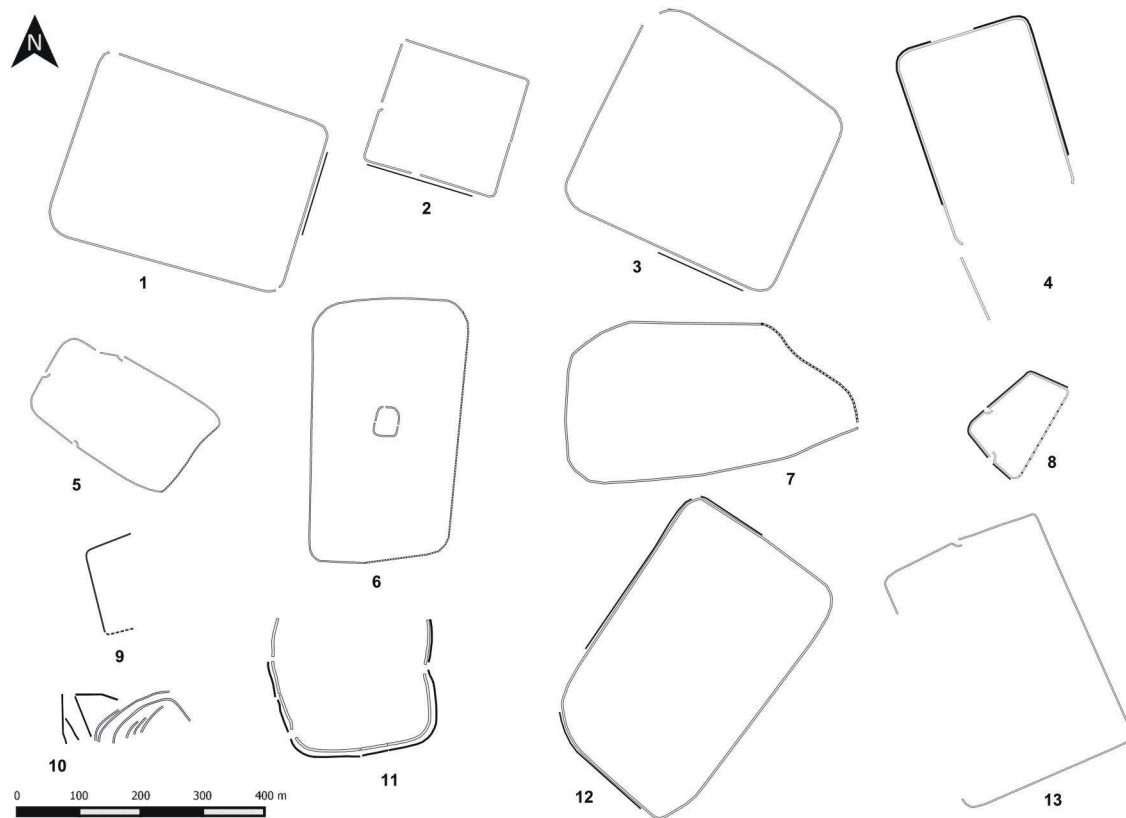
the mountain ridge of Carrucedo and was named after *Publius Carisius*, the legate commander of Augustus for the Asturian front (Camino Mayor and Viniegra Pacheco, 2010; González Álvarez, 2011).

About 5 km south of Monte Currieños, following the same mountain ridge, another camp has been documented at the Llagüezos peak (Lena-Villamanín, Asturias, Castilla y León) (Camino Mayor and Martín Hernández, 2015; Martín Hernández and Camino Mayor, 2014). This irregular rectangular site encloses an area of about 3.1 hectares, although the presence of a *bracchium* could expand the fortified space significantly. The detection of new Roman military sites in the surroundings has been announced.<sup>4</sup>

The mountain route known as *Camín Real de la Mesa* was also important in ancient times (González Álvarez, 2011). The finding of the enclosures of El Mouru and El Colláu Valbona (Grado-Belmonte, Asturias) confirmed the use of this road by the Roman army during the conquest operations (Didierjean et al., 2014: 159–162; González Álvarez, Menéndez Blanco et al., 2011, 2012). Both camps control an important mountain pass and they show similar defensive structures, but they differ considerably in morphology and dimensions. While El Mouru is a large playing-card enclosure (9.6 hectares), El Colláu Valbona could be described as some *castra rotunda* – rounded camp – of a more modest size (min. 4 hectares).

These are not the only camps close to this mountain route (Martín Hernández, 2015). Some kilometres

<sup>4</sup>C. M. Basteiro, “Los arqueólogos piden 15.000 euros para investigar en la Carisa”, *La Nueva España* (26/01/2016). Available at: <[www.lne.es/caudal/2016/01/26/arqueologos-piden-15000-euros-investigar/1873430.html](http://www.lne.es/caudal/2016/01/26/arqueologos-piden-15000-euros-investigar/1873430.html)> [accessed 6 February 2016].



**Figure 13.4** Roman military enclosures (2/2). Monte da Chá (1), Cabianca (2), Monte da Modorra (3), Monte dos Trollos (4), El Chao de Carrubeiro (5), El Pico El Outeiro (6), A Pedra Dereta (7), Moyapán (8), Peña del Cáscaro (9), Picu Viyao (10), Campos (11), O Cornado (12), Serra da Casiña (13) (author).

north of Valbona two small enclosures (1–1.5 hectares) were found in El Llaurienzu and Las Cruces (Grado-Belmonte, Asturias). The former was trapezoidal in shape and it shows a double defensive line in some sectors of the perimeter, while the latter adopts a rectangular layout with rounded corners. Two more sites could be added to this repertory south of the Valbona pass: a complex enclosure at El Cueiru (Teberga, Asturias) and a trapezoidal camp at El Xuegu la Bola (Teberga-Somiedo, Asturias).<sup>5</sup>

## O Bierzo

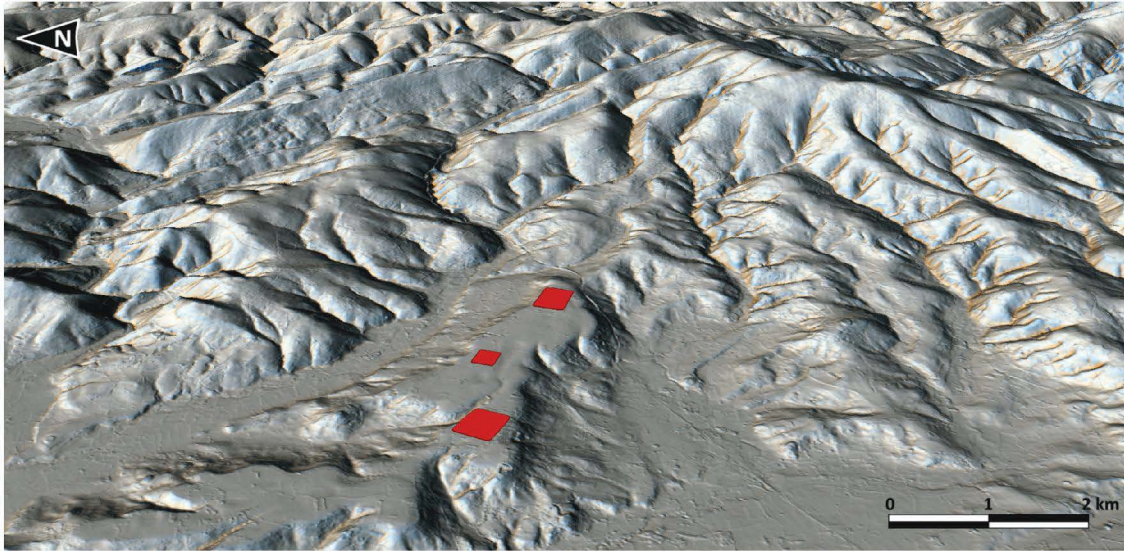
In recent years this region between León, Asturias, and Galicia has been particularly fruitful in findings. The enclosures of A Granda das Xarras (Ibias-Candín, Asturias-León) and A Recacha (Navia de Suarna, Lugo) control the mountain routes which communicate the valleys of the rivers Ibias and Balouta (Menéndez

Blanco et al., 2011). Paradoxically, it looks like there was no strict locational relationship between them even though they are located within 2 km. Regarding their morphology, the first enclosure was a medium-size camp (5.6 hectares) with a playing-card layout, and the second one could be classified as a *castellum* due to its ovoid layout and small extension (0.7 hectares). The archaeological team that currently excavates both sites has confirmed their military nature (Orejas and Sánchez-Palencia et al., 2015).

The camp of Serra da Casiña (Balboa, León) was built in the southern spurs of the Ancares mountain range (Menéndez Blanco, González Álvarez et al., 2015). From this location it controls the mountains of O Arengo and the valley of Balboa, leading to the pass of O Portelo, a traditional transit zone between O Bierzo and Galicia. Although the creation of pastures for cattle grazing has notably damaged the defences, the old rampart and two *clauicalae* can be recognised. This large camp (11.5 hectares) shows a rectangular perimeter with rounded corners (Figure 13.4).

The enclosure of A Cortiña dos Mouros-Alto do Circo (Cervantes-Valboa, Lugo-León) (Vidal Encinas, 2015: 31–32) is located 6 km to the north, close to O Portelo. It was almost completely razed in recent

<sup>5</sup>A. Menéndez, D. González Álvarez, and V. Álvarez reported these discoveries to the Consejería d'Educación y Cultura (Asturias) on 23 December 2015 and they were first surveyed in October 2016. I want to thank A. Menéndez for allowing me to mention these sites before their forthcoming publication.



**Figure 13.5** The three marching camps of *A Chá de Santa Marta* (Lugo, Spain) (foreground), close to the Ancares mountain range (bottom). Open Access PNOA-LIDAR granted by © Instituto Geográfico Nacional (author).

times due to the reforestation, but the historical aerial photography reveals the existence of a small trapezoidal camp (3.8 hectares) with *clauiculae* guarding the entrances. Not far from here, in As Penas de Parturexe (Villafranca del Bierzo, León), another small, severely damaged enclosure was detected.<sup>6</sup>

### Eastern Galician area

A Chá de Santa Marta (Láncara-Sarria) is a vast plateau located in Galician territory close to the Ancares mountain range. The analysis of historical aerial photographs has revealed the presence here of three camps, practically destroyed by farming and reforestation (Figure 13.5).<sup>7</sup> Monte da Modorra (an irregular quadrangular enclosure of c. 13 hectares) blocks the western end of the plateau, while Monte da Chá (a classical playing-card camp of c. 12 hectares) does the very same at the eastern part. Finally, the *castra quadrata* of Cabianca are the smallest site of the set (4.6 hectares). By occupying a central position, they can control the traffic through the plateau.

The camp of Monte dos Trollos (O Páramo, Lugo) was placed only 16 km to the west of this complex, controlling an elevation over the river Miño (Costa-García

et al., 2015b). Although affected by reforestation and land parcelling, the defences (a rampart and a single trench) are still visible. The historical aerial photography and LiDAR-based visualisations show a rectangular enclosure of about 7 hectares in size as well as an annex that could add 2.5 hectares more to the camping area.

### Western Asturian area

The existence of a route of penetration in the Asturian area from the Galician eastern regions through the mountains of Ouroso and Penouta has been postulated (Menéndez Blanco et al., 2012; Menéndez Blanco et al., 2014). Four camps and a defensive line have been identified in this region occupying some mountain summits. The western enclosure of this set is called A Penaparda (A Fonsagrada-Villanueva de Oscos) and it lies over the Galician-Asturian border. It was recently discovered and therefore it remains unpublished.<sup>8</sup>

Two more enclosures were established at El Pico El Outeiro (Taramundi-Villanueva de Oscos, Asturias), 12 km to the north: a large marching camp (c. 10 hectares) and a small *castellum* (0.19 hectares). Both were severely deteriorated by the reforestation and the installation of a TV-Radio repeater.

Almost 6 km to the northeast lays the defensive line of Cildadeya (Villanueva de Oscos, Asturias). After it,

<sup>6</sup>I want to thank Julio Vidal Encinas for allowing me to mention this site. It was reported by him on 24 November 2015 to the Territorial Commission for Cultural Heritage of León (Proceeding num. 12/2015, page 302).

<sup>7</sup>The two eastern enclosures were reported by the archaeologists Luis F. López and A. Orejas to the Galician authorities on 2 October 2014. Shortly after (12/02/2014) J.M. Costa-García and M. Gago presented a report mentioning the three camps among other archaeological features. After nearly a year of impasse, the set was presented during the XXIII Limes Congress (Ingolstadt, Germany) (Costa-García et al., 2015b). Before the end of year 2015 another archaeological team published it as well (Orejas et al., 2015).

<sup>8</sup>A. Menéndez, D. González, V. Álvarez, and J. Costa reported this discovery to the Conseyería d'Educación y Cultura (Asturias) and to the Consellería de Cultura, Educación e Ordenación Universitaria (Galicia) on 9 December 2015. They kindly allowed me to mention A Penaparda in this chapter.

another enclosure of notable dimensions (c. 10–10.5 hectares) was located on the peak of A Pedra Dereta (Castropol-Boal, Asturias). This site presents a rectangular perimeter in the western area but, as we move towards the east, the walls begin to get closer and they finally draw a triangular shape. Finally, the camp of El Chao de Carrubeiro (Boal, Asturias) (4.5 hectares) was placed only 5 km east of the former. The entrances protected by *claviculae* and the irregular playing-card layout are excellent examples of how Romans adapted their camp building models to the local topography (Figure 13.3).

Although none of these sites has been excavated and a strict dating cannot be therefore suggested, their creation during the Cantabrian-Asturian Wars seems plausible due to their settlement pattern. Besides, the two enclosures of El Pico El Outeiro confirm the diachronic nature of this set, a fact which reveals the recurrent use of this mountain route by the Roman army.

Beyond this zone, there are more evidences of Roman military presence. The camp of Moyapán (Ayande, Asturias) (González Álvarez et al., 2008) was located in the mountain range of Carondio, close to a natural route which connects the watersheds of the Navia and Narcea rivers. This small site (1.6 hectares) takes advantage of the local topography, showing a trapezoidal layout with rounded corners and entries defended by *claviculae* (Figure 13.3). The use of LiDAR visualisations and field survey has recently revealed the existence of two new enclosures in this area, El Chao and Resiella (Ayande, Asturias).<sup>9</sup>

Traces of a possible small camp (min. 2 hectares) have been also documented in Peña de Cáscaro (Cangas del Narcea, Asturias) (Didierjean, 2015). Along with an alleged defensive line located at the mountain pass of Reconco, this enclosure could block the transit throughout a mountain route close to the valley of the river Narcea.

### Eastern Asturian area

Picu Viyao (Piloña, Asturias) is an Iron Age hillfort. Some rampart and trench defences were here detected conforming a triangular annex which comprises a water spring in its lower vertex. Considering the different morphology and defensive concept of these structures when compared to the indigenous walls, the refortification and reuse of the hillfort as a Roman *castellum* has been proposed (González Álvarez et al., 2011).

<sup>9</sup>I want to thank A. Menéndez for allowing me to mention these sites. They were reported to the Consejería d'Educación y Cultura (Asturias) on 29 March 2016 and are included in a forthcoming paper.

### Western Galician-Portuguese area

The last two sites collected in this review are situated far away from the others, within an area that gradually begins to produce studies focused on this issue. They could be somehow linked with the Meridian Depression, a natural passage that crosses western Galicia from south to north and was recurrently used in ancient times as transit zone (González Ruibal, 2001). Up to date they are the westernmost evidences of Roman military presence in Iberia.

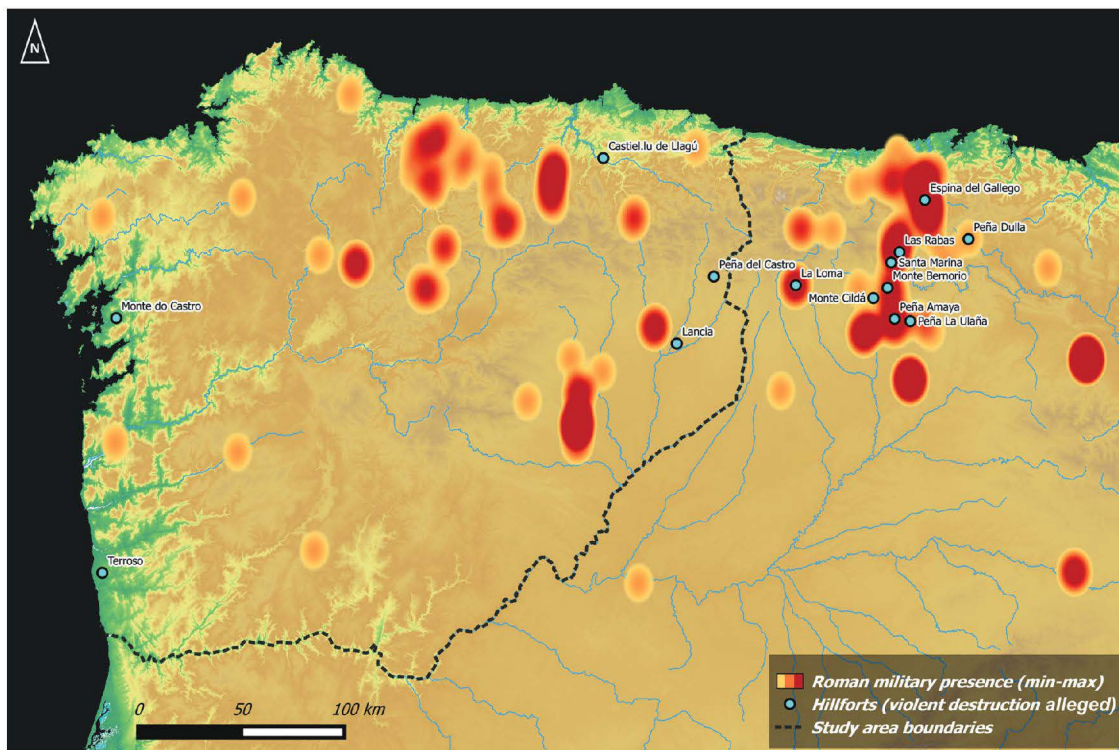
O Cornado (Negreira, A Coruña) is a large camp with a slightly irregular rectangular layout (13.6 hectares) (Costa-García et al., 2015a; Gago Mariño and Fernández Malde, 2015). It perfectly suits the hill in which it is located, acquiring a selective visual control of the surrounding area and the close natural passes. Although reforestation and farming have damaged the site, the earth rampart and the outer ditch are still visible.

The archaeological site of Campos (Vila Nova de Cerveira, Portugal) was located in the southern bank of the river Minho, close to a major Roman road – *iter XLX* (*It. Ant.* Wess. 429.5–431.3). It was completely destroyed decades ago during the construction of an industrial park, but several archaeological features could be detected after analysing the historical aerial photography (Costa-García et al., 2015a; Blanco-Rotea et al., 2016). Two alignments were identified as the remains of a rampart and a ditch belonging to a medium-size Roman camp (min. 5.5 hectares).

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The development of Roman military archaeology as a discipline and the implementation of new remote sensing methodologies has revolutionised the archaeological scene in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. Consequently, the discovery of sites related to the Roman army has grown exponentially in the last decades. But this dynamic context has resulted in another important transformation beyond the mere accumulation of knowledge. Naturally, the ways in which the Roman military presence shows up in the archaeological record change as the research advances, and this implies a deep transformation in the way in which we think and reflect on this topic altogether.

However, despite the progress made, Roman military archaeology in Iberia has barely left behind its first steps as a discipline. The scarcity of financial support for archaeological research or certain administrative difficulties could provide explanation for the fact that very few of the sites related here have been properly excavated (and that means the paucity of proper dating).



**Figure 13.6** Roman military presence heat-map based on the distribution and number of Roman military sites and their relationship with Iron Age hillforts with alleged archaeological evidence of violence/destruction (author).

We could also discuss about the aspects that the discipline has emphasised (e.g. the study of defensive systems, morphology, material remains) at the expense of many others (e.g. locational analyses, proper contextualisation of the archaeological landscape).

But I want to stress here a different issue. For a long time, the study of the Roman military presence in Hispania has lacked archaeological studies with a holistic and reflexive viewpoint (Costa-García, 2013). Remarkably, the important role played by the native population during the conquest and post-war processes (Marín Suárez and González Álvarez, 2011) has been usually underestimated, if not omitted, in our works. Although the archaeological study of the Late Iron Age societies in the north-western Iberia has bloomed in the last decades (González Álvarez, 2016; González Ruibal, 2007; Marín Suárez, 2012; Parcero-Oubiña, 2002), we have usually focused solely on -alleged- episodes of violent destruction documented in some hillforts, or on the finding of certain military-related materials and structures (Camino Mayor et al., 2015; Morillo, 2014). Being optimistic, Figure 13.6 is possibly showing the traditional lack of understanding between the researchers of the Iron Age and Roman periods in the study area when dealing with this historical moment (versus the Cantabrian region, which is more co-ordinated, see Fernández-Götz et al., this volume). We undoubtedly deal with more archaeological data today than ever, but maybe that information is not being properly managed.

This situation cannot be considered a minor neglect. Although the development of Roman military archaeology has contributed to overcome many old assumptions about the Roman conquest, this effort cannot support by itself the articulation of a modern and cross-disciplinary debate about the very nature of the conflict, or to deepen on the understanding of the traumatic changes lived by the northern territories and their inhabitants. Even adopting the most basic and canonical principles of landscape archaeology (not to study isolated items, to apply diachronic perspectives, etc.), surprisingly there is still too much work to be done to acquire a reliable knowledge about the pre- and post-war archaeological scenarios. In this way, for north-west Iberia, we still lack to a great extent the groundwork that should support proper conflict archaeology perspectives such as those developed for other areas (cf. Roymans and Fernández-Götz, 2015).

We could debate if this situation is the cause or the consequence of another striking phenomenon. While we start to contemplate a different outlook in the Cantabrian region, with attested episodes of mass violence (Peralta, 2002, 2006; Torres-Martínez et al., 2011; see also Fernández-Götz et al., this volume), we can frequently find more or less surreptitious attempts to link Roman military presence with the exploitation of local natural resources or other 'civil' tasks in the north-western area of the Iberian Peninsula (Orejas et al., 2015; Sánchez-Palencia and Currás, 2015). Of course,

some of the sites collected here could be somehow associated with those activities, but the density, specific locational pattern, or diachronic nature of some settlements clearly indicate that we are facing a very different reality. They are the blurred traces of a forgotten story of violence.

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