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TWO LEAD COINS WITH THE LEGEND N·CALECI FROM SERTORIAN FORTS OF THE ROMAN CIVIL WARS IN *HISPANIA* ^[1]

Carolina DOMÉNECH-BELDA* & Feliciano SALA-SELLÉS*

Abstract – We here consider two lead coins with the inscription, N·CALECI, which were found in archaeological contexts in two Roman forts located on the southeast coast of *Hispania*, in association with materials typical of military contexts. They were built the forces of Q. Sertorius towards the end of his war with the forces of the Roman Senate, between

72 and 70 BCE. The archaeological context provides information useful for understanding the chronology and circulation of these coins. The whole series of lead coins with the legend N·CALECI was possibly made in south-east *Hispania*. Lead may have been used to make these coins because bronze and silver coins had become scarce.

Keywords: *Lead coins - Hispania - Q. Sertorius - Roman civil wars - Roman forts - Hercules - Vulcan - N·CALECI*

Résumé – Nous présentons ici deux monnaies en plomb portant l'inscription N·CALECI provenant de contextes archéologiques de deux forts romains construits sur la côte sud-est de l'*Hispania*, et découvertes en association avec des artefacts typiques de contextes militaires. Ces fortifications furent construites par les troupes de Q. Sertorius vers la fin de la guerre l'opposant aux troupes du

Sénat romain, entre 72 et 70 av. J.-C. Le contexte archéologique fournit des informations utiles quant à la compréhension de la chronologie et de la circulation de ces monnaies. Toute la série des monnaies en plomb à la légende N·CALECI a probablement été produite dans le sud-est de l'*Hispania*. Le plomb pourrait avoir été utilisé comme métal monétaire au moment de la raréfaction des monnaies de bronze et d'argent.

Mots clés : *Monnaies en plomb - Hispania - Q. Sertorius - guerres civiles romaines - forts romains - Hercule - Vulcain - N·CALECI*

^[1] This work was carried out in the framework of the HAR-2015-67111-P 67111-P, and PROMETEO/2019/035 LIMOS project, financed by the Generalitat Valenciana.

* Institute of Research in Archeology and Historical Heritage, University of Alicante. We are grateful to Clive Stannard (Brussels), member of the scientific committee of the JAN, and to Christine Hoët-van Cauwenberghe (Université de Lille) for the epigraphic commentaries.

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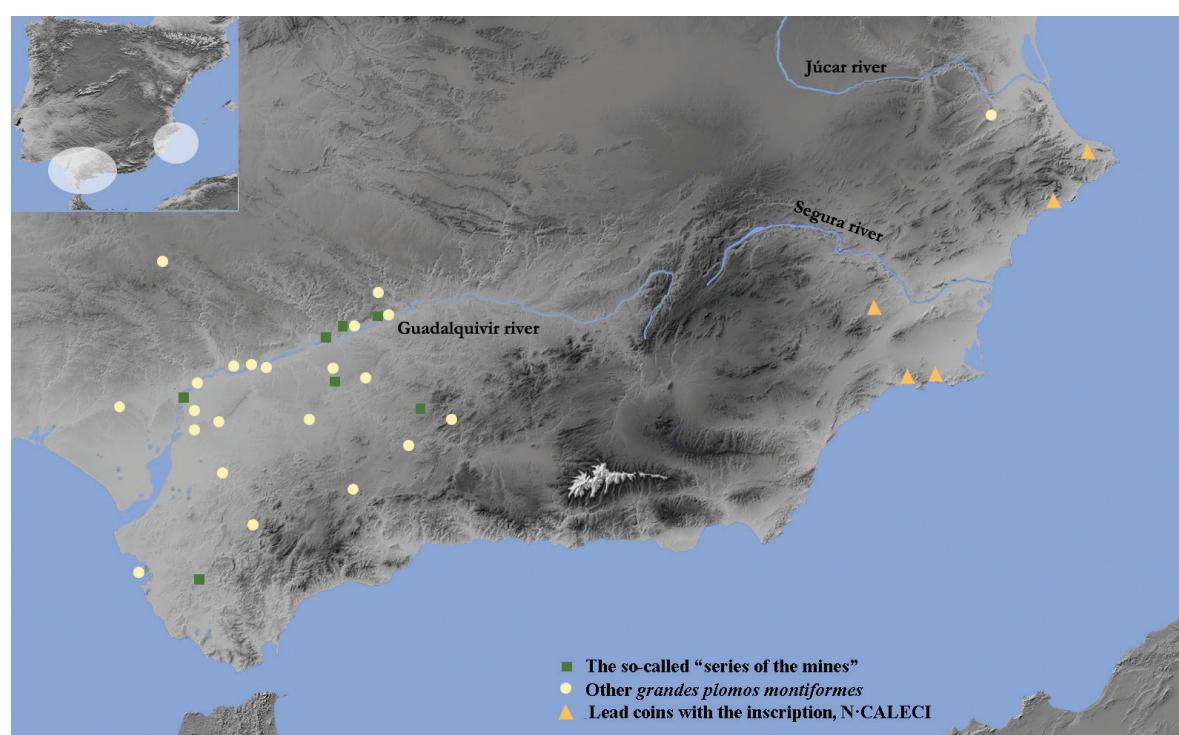


Fig. 1 - Finds of *Grandes plomos monetiformes*
(drawing by S. Bayo)

1. LEAD COINS AND TESSERAE IN THE SPANISH CONTEXT

Coin-like lead objects (that is, disk-shaped, with images or lettering or one on both sides) are a well-known feature of Roman material culture. They occur in many different places, and their function needs to be investigated on a case by case basis. A minority are believed to have been coins with a monetary function, and some of these may have been issued by formal authorities, though most were informal. We here publish two lead coins with the legend, N·CALECI, used in military forts towards the end of the Sertorian war in *Hispania*. For clarity, will use the following terms: “*plomos*”, the congeries of lead *grandes plomos monetiformes* found in *Ulterior Baetica*,^[1] some of which appear to have had a monetary function, others not; “*tesserae*”, similar objects that had a variety of non-monetary functions;^[2] and “coins”, or “pieces”, then their use is uncertain.

A few mints in southern *Hispania* made lead coins with the types of their bronze coins. The reasons of their issue are uncertain: perhaps economic emergency or a lack of bronze. In other instances, the legends on these pieces do not relate to coins in any other metal^[3]. Such lead coins do not concern us here, but they show that the coins of N·CALECI are not a unique phenomenon in the Spanish context.

The *grandes plomos monetiformes* are a phenomenon specific to *Ulterior Baetica*. Unlike the *tesserae* from Rome and Ostia, which were cast in moulds, the *plomos* were struck between dies. The largest group, as proposed Casariego *et al.* 1987, have in the past often been described as “*plomos de las minas*”, and associated with the mines of the Sierra Morena. They are found in the valley of the River *Baetis*, mostly around Corduba, in an area where the Romans mined silver/lead ores (fig. 1, and see, in particular, Stannard *et al.* 2021, p. 55, fig. 1). The main reason for this proposed attribution, however, was iconographic: the frequent use of Vulcan as a type, and particularly the image of an often-ithyphallic man walking with a shovel on his shoulder and ringing a bell, which was interpreted as a miner off to work. Stannard has shown, however, that this image is certainly not of a miner, but a *furnacator*, or stoker of hypocausts, and that Vulcan, the *furnacator* and an associated image of two strigils and an *aryballos*, are found both on the Spanish *plomos* and on a large group of bronze and lead pieces from Latium, where they obviously have nothing to do with mining.^[4] Because this iconography is found only in these two places, he has called these the Italo-Baetican series, and dated them from c.140/130 to 70/50. Fig. 2, taken from Casariego *et al.* 1987, shows a number of the Spanish issues: for Vulcan, nos. 6, 7 and 9; and for the *furnacator*, nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, of which 3 and 4 are ithyphallic. Note the inscription, P·S, on nos. 1 and 2, to which we will return.

[1] The first systematic study of this phenomenon is Casariego *et al.* 1987. See also Stannard *et al.* 2017, catalogue.

[2] Rostowtzew 1903 published a *corpus* of lead *tesserae* of the imperial period, mainly from Rome and Ostia. He distinguished four groups: 1) the “official *tesserae*”, vouchers granting a right to receive products from public storehouses; 2) similar “municipal *tesserae*”; 3) “show *tesserae*” or entrance tickets to games; and 4) “private *tesserae*” of various types: gaming pieces, *calculi* to cast accounts, or entrance tickets to baths and other places. It was sometimes suggested that the lead “erotic *tesserae*” and the bronze *spintriae* may have been used in brothels, but this seems unlikely. For a *status quaestionis*: de Callatay 2021, and for critics of this idea: van Berchem (1936) and Virlovet (1988).

[3] García Bellido 2001 *et al.*, p. 77–78.

[4] For an analysis of the Italo-Baetican imagery and of the inscription, P·S: Stannard 2019. For role of the Italo-Baetican series in trade between the Roman port of Minturnae, at the mouth of the River Garigliano, on the border between Latium and Campania, and the nature and role of the *plomos* in Baetica: Stannard *et al.* 2019 and Stannard *et al.* 2021.



Fig. 2 - Grandes plomos monetiformes of the Italo-Baetican issues, mistakenly called “series of mines”

On the basis of this iconography, García Bellido had proposed that a number of bronze coins were used on the mines. Fig 2, no. 9, with the *furnacator*, is one of these. She described such *plomos* as “*plomos mineros*”, saying that “in significant mining and agricultural companies they needed and depended on a monetary economy, and when there were not enough coins or specific ones, they issued something that replaced it in its function”^[5]. Casariego *et al.* 1987

[5] García Bellido 1986, p. 26.

then isolated what it considered to be “series of the mines”. However, Stannard has since catalogued all these as Italo-Baetican issues, including the pieces that are the focus of this paper,^[6] but, as we now assign them to a Sertorian military context, they are best regarded as a separate, military phenomenon. Some of these issues have monetary value^[7]; others are almost certainly *tesserae*.

The idea that coins were associated with the mines has also been independently questioned by others. For example, in his study on the Rio Tinto mining area, de la Hoz concludes that while some Iberian coins, specifically those of Castulo^[8], are frequently found in Roman mining areas^[9], this does not necessarily mean that they were issued as “mining coins”. He points to the fact that many are found far from the mines.^[10]

If not issued for the mines, what was the function of the *plomos*? García Bellido also proposed reading the P·S legend on the *plomos* as *societas publica*, which seems likely. She associated this *societas* not with mining but with agriculture.^[11] Stannard has recently discussed the P·S legend in detail, and suggests that the *societas* was based in Cordoba, probable between 80 and 49 BCE, and dealt with the management of common agricultural lands. García Bellido also identified a group of lead pieces as “*plomos agrícolas*”, because they showed amphorae, *modii*, or other symbols relating to agriculture, or carried initials also found on Dressel 20 amphorae used to transport oil from *Baetica*.^[12] She supposed that these amphorae are also those that appear on the lead *pircrd*. She suggested their use in agrarian communities that, in her opinion, functioned and were organized in the same way as the mining communities^[13].

There are also a group of lead *tesserae* with agricultural types that are not part of the Italo-Baetican *plomos*: Mora proposes as the context of their issue the production and transport of Baetican oil in the second and first centuries CE^[14].

Archaeological contexts for the various groups of Baetican lead pieces are few, but such information is slowly building up. Mora (2003) has published a large group of lead *tesserae* from the excavations of the baths at Alameda (Malaga). Stannard *et al.* (2017) have published an Italo-Baetican plomo with an Iberian legend found in the context of the mid-first century BCE in the Iberian oppidum of Enguera at Castell Menor, above modern Xàtiva, near Valencia. To these must now be added the specimens of the series with the legend, N·CALEDI, which we discuss here^[15], which come from well-understood contexts: Roman forts of the first civil wars on the Southeast coast of *Hispania Citerior*, c. 80-70 BCE (fig. 3). This new data helps clarify the use of these specific series.

[6] Stannard *et al.* 2017, catalogue nos. 69–71.

[7] Self-evidently *ibid.*, no. 10, which has four dots for a *triens*, and no. 20 with three dots for a *quadrans*.

[8] Castulo is for the moment the only mint which has been known to have issued coins specifically for the mining industry. (Arboledas 2010, p. 49).

[9] A known case is that of the mine of La Loba (Fuente Obejuna, Córdoba). See F. Chavez and P. Otero (2002).

[10] De la Hoz 2011, p. 158-159. In a non-Spanish context, Woytek 2004 has re-interpreted the Balkan issues of Antoninus Pius in the name of the Imperial *metalla* as military issues.

[11] García Bellido 1986, p. 26.

[12] *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

[13] *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

[14] Mora 2004, p. 533-34; 2005, p. 519.

[15] This series is also discussed in detail in Rodríguez 2017.

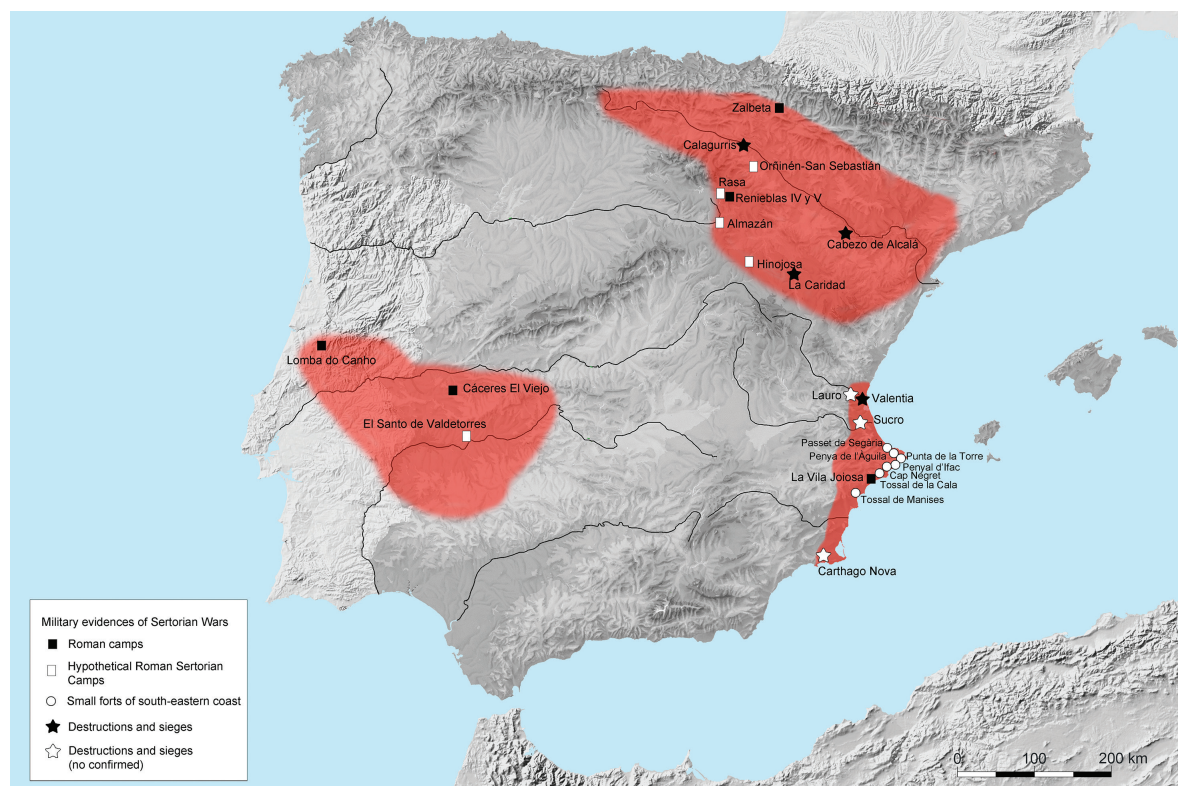


Fig. 3 - Location of the castella of the southeast coast of Hispania Citerior during the Sertorian wars (made by A. Morillo and F. Sala 2019; drawing by S. Bayo)

2. THE LEAD COIN FROM THE TOSSAL DE LA CALA

The coin illustrated in fig. 4^[16] was discovered in the fort of Tossal de la Cala (Benidorm, Alicante) (fig. 5), in room 10B, during the excavations of 2015. The room is part of a great building aligned with other buildings against the northern wall of the fort. In the tradition of Roman military architecture, it could be a building used for administration of the garrison. The buildings are accessed from a street that ran in an east-west direction.

This lead coin has a diameter of 30 mm and a weighs 48.6 grammes. The anepigraphic obverse depicts a male head right wearing an animal skin. There is a quadrantal value-mark (three dots) behind the head. This head can most plausibly be identified as the Hercules wearing the lion's skin, and what is most likely a club ornamented with ribbons on the reverse would appear to confirm this interpretation.^[17] Hercules was also the standard Roman quadrantal type.

The reverse image that is described in Casariego *et al.* as a club with blades crossed behind it. García Bellido sees a small bag of coins tied with a string^[18]; and Rodríguez^[19] an ointment

[16] A specimen of Stannard *et al.* 2017, catalogue no. 70; Casariego *et al.* 1987, p. 34, 5 & pl. 37, 4; Rodríguez 2017, p. 78, type M.

[17] García Bellido 1993, p. 165, suggested instead Sucellus, a divinity of Gaelic origin whose cult is frequently documented in Gaul, especially in the Rhône and Saône Valleys, in Upper-Germania, and in York and Dacia. He carries a hammer or mallet and wears a wolf's skin. His attributes include small bag of money, a cask and a dog. As a chthonic god, she proposed associating him with mining.

[18] García Bellido 1986, p. 26; 1993.

[19] Rodríguez 2017, p. 81.



Fig. 4 - Lead coin from Tossal de la Cala (Benidorm, Alicante). Photo: MARQ



Fig. 5 - Castellum of Tossal de la Cala at the top of the coastal hill (Benidorm, Alicante); to the right, the construction that would have served as a jetty for Roman ships

jar closed with a stopper with two “antennas” from which two ribbons hang. The legend N·CALECI encircles the image.

The club motif is common throughout the Ancient World. It is also found on an issue of lead pieces from Majorca of the first century BCE, published by Trilla and Calero 2008, which they consider may have had a monetary function (fig. 6). Specimens of this series have also been found in the sea off Amoladeras, Cabo de Palos, Cartagena.^[20] One piece from Majorca shows the club with a rope or ribbons coming from behind and the Latin legend NV-DTAG o NV-DTAC^[21], which, by its type and the lay-out of the legend, looks somewhat similar to the N·CALECI coin.

Fig. 6 - Lead coin from Mallorca, with a reverse type of Hercules' club; Trilla & Calero 2008, p. 74, no. 4



^[20] Sinner *et al.* 2020.

^[21] Trilla & Calero 2008, p. 78, n° 14.



Fig. 7 - View of the ancient Dianium harbor (Denia, Alicante) from the second wall of the hill-fort of Peña de l'Àguila and aerial view of the three walls and the settlement



Fig. 8 - Lead piece from the Peña de l'Àguila (Denia, Alicante)

Fig. 9 - Lead coin with the legend, N-CALECI, from Peña de l'Àguila (Denia, Alicante)
Photo: "Soler Blasco" Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum in Jávea (Alicante)

Fig. 10 - As of Valentia found with the lead coin in fig. 9, from Peña de l'Àguila (Denia, Alicante)

3. THE LEAD COIN FROM PENYA DE L'ÀGUILA

The fort of *Penya de l'Àguila* (Denia, Alicante) is located at an altitude of 470 meters on a rise that dominates the port of *Dianium* and the Gulf of Valencia (fig. 7). Two lead coins, now kept at the Museo Arqueológico y Etnográfico “Soler Blasco” in Jávea (Alicante), were found in this fort.

One piece, with a diameter of 26 mm and a weight of 12.2 grammes, is virtually unreadable; there is perhaps a bearded head right on the obverse (fig. 8). The second was studied and published in Falcó & Casabó 1989. It is a coin, a specimen of Rodríguez 2017, p. 79, type P (fig. 9), found with an *as* of the mint of Valencia struck by C·LVCIEN Q·MVNI, which Ripollès dates to c. 138/125 BCE^[22] (fig. 10). It is a sporadic find from the western end of the archaeological site, the inhabited sector of the fort, about half a hectare with square shaped rooms visible on the surface, inserted in an extension of 2.5 ha fortified by three thick parallel walls. It is 21.9 mm in diameter and weighs 9.02 grammes. The obverse shows a bearded and diademed head of Jupiter right, with the ribbon tying the diadem visible to the left;^[23] there is a quadrantal value-mark, three dots, below the bust. The reverse is a cornucopia with hanging bunches of grapes; the legend, N·CALE, is visible down left, but any continuation is off the flan to the right. The reverse cornucopia is similar that on the *as* of Valentia, but lacks the lightning-bolt on which it is charged. A cornucopia is a very usual Roman image, but the fact that the lead coin and the *as* were found together is interesting.

4. THE COINS WITH THE LEGEND N·CALECI

Fig. 11 lists the 11 known lead coins with the legend, N·CALECI^[24]; fig. 12 illustrates a number of these. Two are from Andalusia; two are sporadic surface finds from near Cartagena; one is probably from the province of Murcia; and there are two pieces studied here from the Tossal de la Cala and the *Penya de l'Àguila*. There is no useful information regarding the remaining three pieces. Fig. 1 shows the known find-spots on a map; they are mainly in southeast *Hispania*.

We can differentiate two groups on the basis on their iconography and metrology. Group I uses the club on the reverse^[25]. All carry the quadrantal three dots behind the head. Weights range between 40 and 48.6 grams and diameters between 30 and 32 mm. The lead coin from the Tossal de la Cala is in this group. Group II uses a cornucopia reverse. Group II.1, with a Vulcan-head obverse, has a diameter of 38 mm and a weight of 97.5 grammes. Group II.2, with a Jupiter-head obverse, ranges in weight from 8.4 to 12.23 grammes and in diameter from 20 to 24 mm.

Group II, like Group I, appear to be quadrantes, with the probable exception of Group II.1 (no. 6), which is so much heavier and lacks a value-mark. Its value was probably higher.

The legend, N·CALECI, cannot be attributed to a person with any certainty. The *praenomen* N is the abbreviation for Numerius (Lassère 2007, 1, p. 84). Common under the Republic, it became rare in the imperial era and seems used in some patrician families, especially in the *gens* Fabia, although it is also attested among the Valerii and Furii. Rodríguez following

[22] Weight: 15.2 g; diameter: 27.2 mm. Die axis: 10. Type: Ripollès 1988 n°19a.

[23] Falcó & Casabó (1989, 68) described as the bearded head of Vulcan, laureated or with a diadem with tongs in front and below three dots.

[24] Rodríguez 2017, p. 77, fig. 2.

[25] Which García Bellido interpreted as a tied bag of coins, the attribute of Sucellus.

Group	Nº	Origin	W. (g)	Diam. (mm)	Thick. (mm)	Value-mark	Reference
I Obverse: Hercules. Reverse: club/bag	1	Tosal de La Cala (Benidorm, Alicante)	48.60	30	7.5	Three dots	García Bellido 1986, 24. Casariego 6. Ríguez 2017, M5
	2	Palas (Fuente Álamo, Murcia)	40.62	30	7.38	Three dots	García Bellido 1986, 24. Casariego 6. Rodríguez 2017, M2
	3	Cayón collection	40	32		Three dots	García Bellido 1986, 24. Casariego 6. Rodríguez 2017, M1
	4	www.identificacion_numismatica.com	43.30	30		Three dots	García Bellido 1986, 24. Casariego 6. Rodríguez 2017, M3
	5	www.identificacion_numismatica.com					García Bellido 1986, 24. Casariego 6. Rodríguez 2017, M4
II.1 Obverse: Vulcan Reverse: <i>cornucopia</i>	6	Villaronga collection	97.50	38		None	García Bellido 1986, 23. Casariego 6 bis. Rodríguez 2017, G1.
II.2 Obverse: Jupiter Reverse: <i>cornucopia</i>	7	Penya de L'Àguila (Denia, Alicante)	9.02	22	3.6	Three dots	Falcó & Casabó 1989. Rodríguez 2017, P2
	8	Caldera Pérez (Cartagena, Murcia)	12.23	21	5.25		Falcó & Casabó 1989. Rodríguez 2017, P1
	9	Province of Murcia	9.06	24			Falcó & Casabó 1989. Rodríguez 2017, P3
	10	www.identificacion_numismatica.com	8.4	20			Falcó & Casabó 1989. Rodríguez 2017, P4
	11	Cores collection					Falcó & Casabó 1989 Stannard et al., 2017, 71 (Cores coll.)

Fig. 11 - Known specimens of lead coins with the N-CALECI legend

Vera, notes that the legend may refer to a CALECIVS or CALECIANVS, both names known epigraphically; the latter variant is known from a *fundvs caleciano* owned by a rich Italian family (Rodríguez 2017, p, 79 ; Vera 1999, p. 1012). This gentilice Calicius/Calecius, rare, is present in Africa and is found under the form CALICI (or CILICI?) in an inscription painted on an amphora for Baetican fish sauce, dated to the first quarter of the first century CE, which was found in Narbonne. This names the owner of the workshop where the preparation of fish transported in the amphora was made (Liou 1993, n° PN18, p. 140-143). There is one record of this gentilice in imperial times, *Ex of(f)ic[inis] / Caleci[anis?]*, in the Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss / Slaby, from Leon /Legio / Legio VIII Gemina^[26]. Note in passing that Plutarch^[27], evoking the inhabitants of Galicia, speaks of Calecians.

^[26] Publication: AE 1928, 00172; EDCS-ID: EDCS-16200668.

^[27] Life of Caesar, XII.



Fig. 12 - Lead coins with legend, N·CALECI. 1. Tossal de La Cala (Marq). Pallas, Fuente Álamo (Rodríguez 2017); 3 and 6. Andalucía (García Bellido 1993); 4. <http://www.identificacion-numismatica.com/t16461-plomo-monetiforme-n-cal-eci>. Peña de l'Àguila (Jávea Museum); 11. Stannard et al. 2017, 71

García Bellido, because of her proposed identification of the obverse head of Group I, as the Gallo-Roman god, Sucellus, associated the coin with mining, and proposed that it was made by a Gaul living in Hispania who owned a mine^[28]. However, as we have seen, none of the *plomos* refer to mining, and the discovery of the pieces at Tossal de la Cala and Peña de l'Àguila in reliable stratigraphic contexts within military settlements related to the Sertorian wars, far from the mining centres, shows that they come from a military rather than from a mining context.

^[28] García Bellido 1993, p. 166-67.



Fig. 13 - Weapons, personal objects, tools and bronze vessels found in the coastal forts of *Penya de l'Àguila* (n° 1, 4, 6, 8-9, 11-12, 17-18 & 20-26), *Passet de Segària* (7) and *Tossal de la Cala* (n° 2-3, 5, 10, 13-14, 19 & 27): 1-2, pila; 3, gladius; 4-6, spear tips and bottoms; 7, lead sling bullets; 8, scorpio or manuballista tips; 9, bronze plate for cavalry or belt; 10-11, bone and iron rings; 12, lighter; 13, bulla; 14, spatulate probe; 15-16 & 19, jug handles and footstool; 17, Montefortino helmet paragnatide; 18, handle, edge and base of strainer; 20, crowbar; 21, hoe; 22, knife; 23, axe; 24, pincer; 25, dolabra; 26, basin base; 27, saw.

5. LEAD COINS, COASTAL FORTS AND THE SERTORIAN CONFLICT

In 83 BCE, Sertorius arrived as *praetor of Hispania Citerior*. Following Sulla's seizure of power in Rome, his appointment was revoked and Sertorius became a rebel who fought against the dictator. Pressed by an army sent by Sulla, he fled to Mauritania, only to return in 80 BCE, after a series of successful campaigns. He was initially victorious, despite the arrival in 79 BCE of Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius with two legions and many auxiliary troops. The Roman senate then sent Gneaus Pompeius (Pompey the Great) with the rank of proconsul and powers that matched those of Metellus; he crossed the Pyrenees in 77 BCE.

With the port of Carthago Nova (modern Cartagena, Spain) in the hands of the senatorial *optimates* and with Pompeius advancing with his army down the Mediterranean coast, Sertorius needed an escape route by sea. He chose the port of Dianium to use as his naval base, opposite Ebusus, and in friendly territory, thanks to the alliance with the *Contestani*^[29]. It is believed that a number of forts were then constructed on promontories along the coast of Alicante, south of Cap de la Nau, all in sight of each other (fig. 3): these include the archaeological sites of Punta de la Torre, Penyal d'Ifac, Cap Negret and Tossal de la Cala. The research project that we have been undertaken since 2010 has highlighted the importance of the Cap de la Nau for Sertorius' creation of these coastal fortifications (Sala-Sellés & Moratalla 2014).

With the usual trade-routes closed to Sertorius, and the ports of Ebusus and Carthago Nova lost, surveillance and possible military action against senatorial ships became a necessity. As Strabo recounts, it is likely that Sertorius made an agreement with the Cilician pirates whose fleet was based in the port of Dianium.^[30] Ancient writers place three important battles along this coast, especially the Battle of Sucro in 75 BCE, which shifted the momentum of the conflict to the senatorial forces. Knowledge of the military conflict has advanced in recent decades, thanks to archaeology. The documentation by Ribera^[31] of the destruction of Valentia by the Pompeians showed the reality of events that until then had been known from only historical writing.

Taking the archaeological context of the destruction of Valentia as the *terminus ante quem*, we can address the coastal forts - *castella* - that housed small garrisons of the Sertorian army. The forts at Tossal de la Cala and Penya de l'Àguila, where the lead coins were found, are characterized by the presence of weaponry, Roman items of war, construction and maintenance tools, and Roman kitchenware (fig. 13)^[32]. Iberian ceramics, initially ascribed to the presence of local villagers, consist mainly of storage cups and amphorae that probably contained local Iberian supplies for provisioning the Roman troops. Many coins have been found, mainly Roman Republican *asses*, as well as some Iberian issues^[33]. The circulation pattern appears similar to that in military environments. Everything suggests that the lead coins discussed here were current in the forts, particularly when bronze and silver coins became scarce during the conflict. It is possible that they were made in the area of the forts, or the area under Sertorius' control. There is as yet no evidence linking the name, N·CALECI, to the Sertorian faction.

[29] *Periocha*, CXV.

[30] *Strab.*, 3.4.6; Sala *et al.* 2013, p. 202-5)

[31] Ribera 1995.

[32] Bayo 2014; Bayo *et al.* in press.

[33] Doménech-Belda 2014.

Our excavations have shown that the forts have one occupation level only: they were constructed *ex novo* on a rocky substratum and abandoned at the end of the conflict, following the murder of Sertorius in 72 BCE. The sites were violently destroyed and never re-occupied. The finds of the N·CALECI coins in the Peña de l'Àguila fort, with the as from Valencia, suggests that the two were lost or abandoned at the same time, and that the fort were among the last strongholds of the Sertorian troops, in a location of difficult access, while they were awaiting the arrival of a ship with which to flee from the port of Denia^[34], c. 72 to 70 BCE^[35]; this provides a *terminus ante quem* for dating the lead coins. The same is true for Tossal de la Cala where we have clear evidence of a violent end.

Where the precisely the lead coins were made, who made them, and whether they were specifically made for the army, is as yet unclear. We may learn more about these the lead coins as new specimens come to light, especially if found in archaeological contexts. New finds could advance our understanding of the function of these pieces, their distribution pattern and, finally, the role they played in the history of ancient *Hispania*.

^[34] Abad *et al.* 2017.

^[35] In c. 70 B.C. Cicero accuses Verres of looting the boats of Sicilian fishermen, with the excuse that they were Sertorian soldiers who had fled from the port of Dianium (Cic. *Ver.* 5, 146, 151 and 154).

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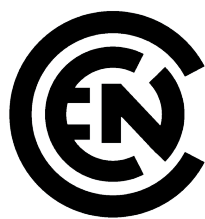
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