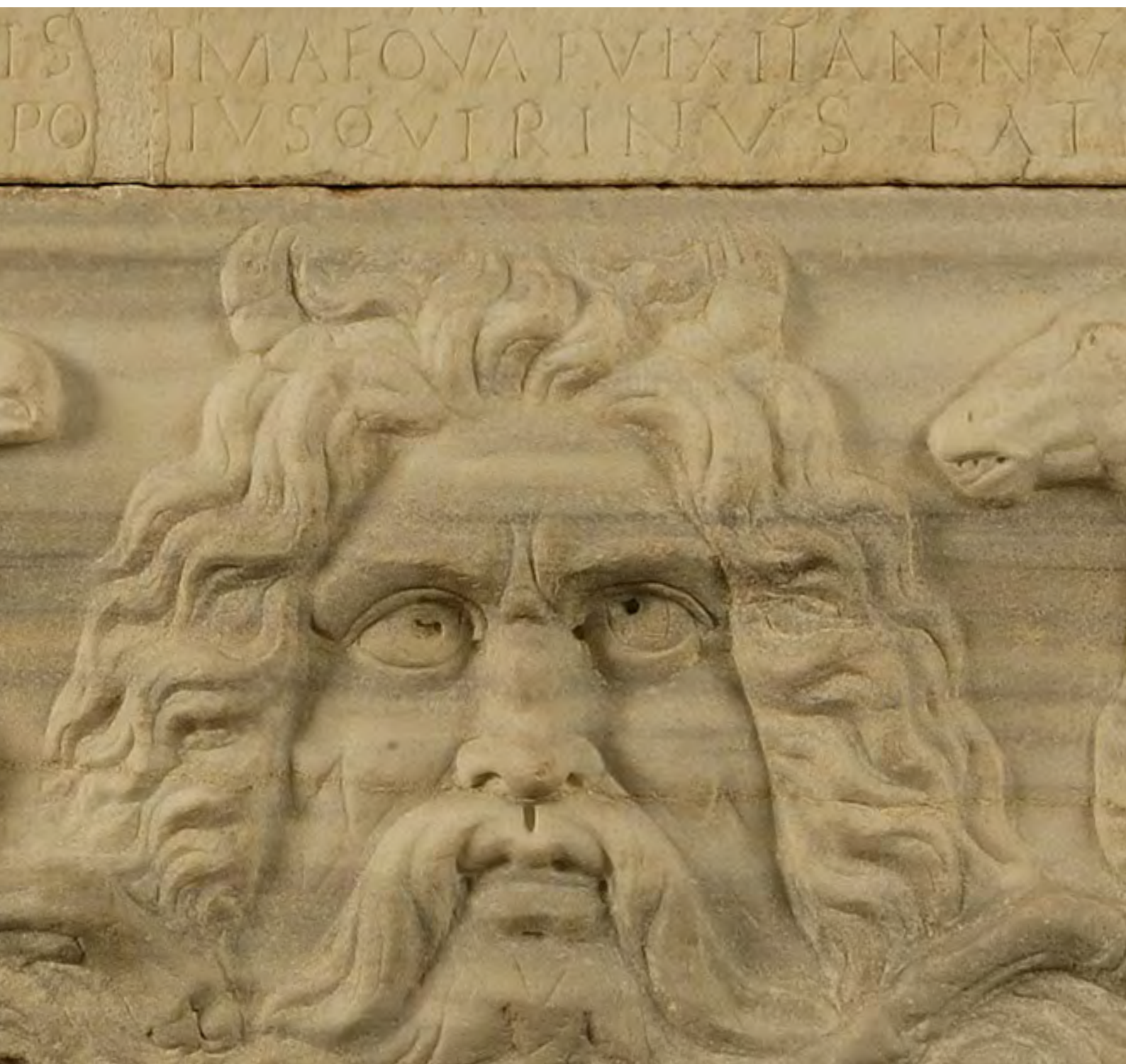


# BOLETÍN DEL **MUSEO ARQUEOLÓGICO NACIONAL**

**40** / 2021





# Boletín del Museo Arqueológico Nacional

**40** / 2021



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# Countermarks from the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid (I).

## Part A. *The LVI/clava inversa* (upright club): Imperial proclamation of Galba

Contramarcas del Museo Arqueológico Nacional (I).  
Parte A. *LVI/clava inversa*: proclamación imperial de Galba

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**Resumen:** Este trabajo, articulado en tres partes: A, B, y C, se publicará en dos entregas en números sucesivos del Boletín y tiene el objetivo de precisar algunos aspectos relativos a contramarcas del área hispánica apuntados en dos artículos precedentes. Parte A: análisis del contexto y la correcta descripción de la tipología *LVI/clava inversa*; parte B: verificación de las consideraciones funcionales relativas a la técnica del punzonado; parte C: encuadre cronológico de las cuatro principales contramarcas empleadas en la época de las Guerras Civiles (68-69 d. C.) en el área hispánica, sean de naturaleza oficial, sobre emisiones imperiales, *L X GE/águila* (cabeza) y *LVI/clava inversa*, o de ámbito ciudadano, sobre acuñaciones provinciales, águila (cabeza) y *jabalí* (tumbado)/*jabalí* (cráneo).

Se confirma la atribución de *LVI/clava inversa* al pronunciamiento imperial de Galba (abril de 68 d. C.) en Clunia, con el apoyo de la *Legio VI Victrix*, contramarca producida en estrecha relación con las dos tipologías punzonadas *jabalí* (tumbado)/*jabalí* (cráneo), siempre asociados en las emisiones de la ceca cívica; además la investigación del objeto representado sobre la sigla trilítera *LVI* ha llevado a la conclusión de que no se trata de una «punta de lanza», sino de una clava invertida.

La relación entre la contramarca «imperial» *LVI/clava inversa*, sobre sestercios de Claudio, y las tipologías «provinciales» punzonadas *jabalí* (tumbado)/*jabalí* (cráneo), sobre monedas de Clunia, presentan un horizonte productivo completamente análogo a lo ya indicado para *L X GE/águila* (cabeza) y *águila* (cabeza): con ocasión de acontecimientos de especial interés político y social, como el pronunciamiento imperial de Galba y el traslado a la Germania Inferior de toda la *Legio X Gemina*, la administración romana utilizó emisiones «imperiales» para las contramarcas del ámbito oficial, producidas con cuños, destinadas en principio al ejército, junto a emisiones de bronce provinciales de cecas hispánicas para las tipologías «locales», producidas con punzones, dirigidas a hacer partícipe del acontecimiento a toda la ciudadanía y no solo al ambiente legionario.

El mayor número de contramarcas producidas para el tipo *LVI/clava inversa* respecto al *L X GE/águila*, analizado en un artículo precedente, se justifica por la diferente importancia de las dos tipologías: el pronunciamiento imperial de Galba, de mayor relevancia social y trascendencia política, frente al traslado de la *Legio X Gemina* desde Hispania a la Germania Inferior y su posterior regreso a Hispania.



La forma de la *clava inversa*, que en un cuño en particular aparece *fissa*, «partida», sugiere la idea de que tan original representación pueda aludir a las dificultades de Nerón, «el nuevo Hércules», para combatir el pronunciamiento de Galba.

Finalmente, la reconstrucción de la secuencia de los cuños de la contramarca *LVI/clava inversa*, así como la relación entre la silueta del punzón, la forma de la clava y el sistema utilizado por los técnicos antiguos para componer las letras, ha permitido identificar algunas falsificaciones modernas recientemente aparecidas en el mercado internacional de antigüedades, bien como simples «réplicas» de la tipología antigua, bien en forma de «variantes» de la leyenda.

**Palabras clave:** Vitelio. *Legio X Gemina*. Clunia. Técnicas de acuñación. Falsificaciones. Cuños. Punzones.

**Abstract:** This work will be published in two successive issues of *Boletín del Museo Arqueológico Nacional*. This three-part (A-C) article details findings briefly noted in two earlier papers.

Part A, discusses the *LVI/clava inversa* type; part B, reports interesting results for experiments «replicating» three countermarks; part C, frames out the chronology of the four main countermarks applied around Hispania during the Civil War (68-69 ce), *LX GE/eagle* (head), *LVI/clava inversa*, and *eagle* (head) and *boar* (lying)/*boar* (skull).

Part A: looks at the *LVI/clava inversa* type for Galba's proclamation (April 68 ce) at Clunia, supported by the *Legio VI Victrix*, a type coined in close association with the two punch-struck countermarks *boar* (lying)/*boar* (skull), nearly always paired on the local issue; furthermore, investigation of the figure on the countermark above letters LVI leads to the conclusion that it is not a «punta de lanza», or spearpoint, but rather a *clava inversa* (upright club).

**Keywords:** Vitellius. *Legio X Gemina*. Clunia. Mint technology. Coin forgeries. Mint-dies. Mint-punches.

## Foreword

Over the last two years, three countermarks struck and circulated in Hispania, reflecting two different legal contexts for production and distribution, were analyzed. The «state» countermarks employed imperial issue, from both the Rome and Tarraco mints (Martini, 2019: 205, n.<sup>os</sup> 1-8), as types to countermark with a die, whereas «provincial» countermarking took place on a municipal level and showed a decided preference for series from the mints in Clunia and Turiaso. Rather than being restamped with a die, the latter, «provincial» specie, tended to be struck with a punch (Martini, 2019: 213-220 y 2020: *passim*). These countermarking operations have been dated to the era of the Civil Wars in 68-69° ce, under Galba and Vitellius, respectively, to commemorate three distinct historical events. Two types relate to Galba's proclamation as emperor at Clunia in 68° ce: (a) the die-struck *LVI/clava inversa* type and (b) the punch-struck countermarks *boar* (lying)/*boar* (head), which are always found together. The second historical event was the return of the *Legio X Gemina* to Hispania after being temporarily stationed at Carnutum (in early 69 ce), noted by type (c), a punched *eagle* (head) countermark. The third occasion, the permanent transfer of the legionary unit from Hispania Tarraconensis to Germania Inferior (end of 69 ce), corresponds to (d) a die-struck *LX GE/eagle* (head).

These four countermarks were produced within Roman military administration for manifest celebratory purposes, both official, as with types **(a-b)**, and more narrowly related to the legionary milieu, types **(c-d)**. But they were designed for different social contexts. Types **(a)** and **(d)** were minted with a die for the two army groups in their function as representatives of the Empire, in the midst of carrying out their official duties in close cooperation with imperial authority. This stands in contrast to the role of types **(b)** and **(c)**, struck with a punch on the occasion of events that were either of a more general nature, **(b)**, or involved a smaller milieu, **(c)**, and directly affected civil society as a whole, not merely the legionary environment.

Furthermore, the different purposes correspond to two distinct modes of communication. Types **(a)** and **(d)** use imperial issue and the epigraphy standard to a given figure, *L(egio) X GE(mina)-eagle* (head) and *L(egio) VI/clava inversa*, not only so as to leave no doubt over interpretation but also to make explicit the direct relationship of the event and of the countermark to official military and imperial spheres. On the other hand, the exclusive use of figurative features, i.e. *boar* (lying) on **(b)** and on **(c)** the *eagle* (head) again, but without explicit epigraphic indication, seems limited to commemorative purposes. These included civil celebration, honoring either the specific political event, the proclamation of Galba emperor at Clunia, or the social occasion, the return of the *Legio X Gemina* to the land where it had been stationed for nearly a century, contributing to the economic and structural development of the region (cf. Morillo, y García, 1998: 593-594 y 598).

The two previous articles mentioned certain questions that were admittedly marginal in the scope of those writings but nevertheless afford significant critical interest, as follows. Part **A** takes up the possible attribution of the *LVI/clava inversa* type to moment of Galba's proclamation as emperor at Clunia (April 68 ce). Part **B** looks at the implications inherent in the technique used to manufacture the *eagle* (head), which was struck with a punch, a technique shared by the types from Clunia and, in this case, distinguishes the three «municipal» types, *boar* (lying)/*boar* (skull) and *eagle* (head), from the «imperial» *L(egio) X GE(mina)/eagle* (head) and *L(egio) VI/clava inversa* types. Part **C** is devoted to the succession of the two Clunia types, *boar* (lying)/*boar* (skull).

Countermarks show coherent behavior in relation to the three events, Galba's proclamation, the return of the *Legio X Gemina*, and its subsequent departure with Vitellius:

- official context: imperial issue, lexical-figurative types, die-struck;
- municipal context: provincial issue, lexical types, punch-struck.

Part **A**. *Galba's Proclamation as Emperor*: Just a nutshell mention was made of the key role played by the *Legio VI Victrix* in Galba's proclamation as emperor at Clunia, citing in the overall conclusions its related countermark, *LVI/clava inversa*. In that article the figure (also referred to as the «upright club», i.e. planted with its head on the ground and its haft in the air) was defined simply as a «club», which hints at an ideological outlook wholly comparable to what has been found for the *L X GE/eagle* (head) and the punch-struck *eagle* (head) type (Martini, 2019: 219-220). On the other hand, two other punch-struck types, correlating to the *LVI/club*, found on bronze issue from Hispanic mints, the *LVI* type and the *spearpoint* type, were dated to an earlier chronology, though in all likelihood not so far back as Augustus, to fit with the hypothesis advanced by García-Bellido (2006: 575), perhaps Tiberius or later?, on the basis of testimony from a Hispania as with a punched *eagle* (head) countermark overstruck on an *LVI* (García-Bellido, 2006: 576, n.º 154, a).

Part **B**. *Notes on Countermarking Techniques*: In analyzing the *eagle* (head) type, it was claimed that the technique of striking with a punch, a method shared with the two types from Clunia with the image of the *boar*, was quicker and easier than minting countermarks with a die. However, the operation required a greater number of punches due to their lack of durability compared to die types,

which lasted vastly longer (Martini, 2019: 214-215).

Part **C. Considerations on Relative Chronology**: Doubts were expressed about the hypothesis of a clear chronological succession of the *boar* (lying) type (Martini, 2020: 269-270) by the boar (skull) type. While the former was deemed the first countermark used on provincial issue from Clunia, directly governed by the legionary administration, the latter could have been implemented by the city's civil society to regain suzerainty over the coinage in response to the earlier legionary operation that had «militarized» coin circulating in the urban area (García-Bellido, 2004: 242 y 2006: 581-587, 592).

## Part A. *LVI/clava inversa*: Imperial proclamation of Galba

### A. Type *LVI / clava inversa*

#### A.1. Catalog

Specimens	Authority	Diameter	Die
A01. [Tesorillo], 2019, Caligula,	Caligula, RIC 32(?)	Ø35.5mm	D5 (fig. 9)
A02. Paris, BN, C142 <sup>1</sup>	Nero Drusus, RIC 93	Ø36.5mm	D1 (fig. 3)
A03. Guadán coll. <sup>2</sup>	Claudius, RIC 96	Ø36mm	D2 (fig. 5)
A04. SaM coll., 2044 <sup>3</sup>	Claudius, RIC 96	Ø36mm	D1 (fig. 1)
A05. León, MP, No. 5269, <i>Legio</i> <sup>4</sup>	Claudius, RIC 98	Ø35.5mm	D3 (fig. 7)
A06. Madrid, MAN, 2004/90/1205 <sup>5</sup>	Claudius, RIC 99	Ø35.5mm	D4 (fig. 8)
A07. Madrid, MAN, 2004/90/575 <sup>6</sup>	Claudius, RIC 99	Ø35mm	D1 (fig. 4)
A08. <i>Cayón Numismática</i> 61, 5406 <sup>7</sup>	Claudius, RIC 99	Ø36mm	D3 (fig. 6)
A09. Rabat, MLC, <i>Volubilis</i> <sup>8</sup>	Claudius, RIC 99(?)	Ø35mm	D1 (fig. 2)
A10 SiA coll, 01 <sup>9</sup>	Claudius, RIC ---	Ø35mm	D1?

Currently documented countermarks recur on Claudius sesterces coined in imperial mints in Gallia and Hispania (Besombes, 2003-04, *passim*), with the sole exception of one Caligula specimen, most likely a product of the Rome mint. Nearly all the specimens feature a now barely legible countermark. This is due both to their wear during prolonged circulation and, in some cases, to the poor quality of the photographic reproductions available. The phenomenon hinders proper understanding of the meaning of the countermark, which depends in large part precisely on the unequivocal recognition of certain descriptive details in the type.

<sup>1</sup> GIARD, 1986: 95, n.º 142; WERZ, 2009, III: 551, n.º 123.1/1, S1.2.

<sup>2</sup> GUADÁN, 1958: 15, fig. 1; GARCÍA-FIGUEROLA, y GARCÍA-BELLIDO, 1999: 114, n.º 8 y 2002: 458, n.º 8, fig. 2.8; GARCÍA-FIGUEROLA, y GONZÁLES-ALONSO, 1998: 128, n.º 2; HERRERAS, 2013: 105, fig. 6.

<sup>3</sup> BAKER, 1984: 56, n.º 13 (coll. Baker); HERRERAS, 2013: 105, fig. 7; WERZ, 2009, III: 551, n.º 123.1/1, S1.1 (through error described in Madrid, MAN); *Classical Numismatic Group*, E439, n.º 215.

<sup>4</sup> GARCÍA-BELLIDO, 1997: 66; 2006: 576, fig. 154, d y 2009: 904, fig. 1(a); GARCÍA-FIGUEROLA, y GARCÍA-BELLIDO, 1999: 114, n.º 7 y 2002: 458, n.º 7, fig. 2.7; GARCÍA-FIGUEROLA, y GONZÁLES-ALONSO, 1998 y 1999: *passim*; GRAU, y HOYAS, 1996: *passim*; HERRERAS, 2013: 105, fig. 8; MORILLO, 1997: 78; MORILLO, y GÓMEZ, 2006: 303, n.º 50; VIDAL, y GARCÍA, 1999: *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> GARCÍA-FIGUEROLA, y GARCÍA-BELLIDO, 1999: 114, n.º 9 y 2002: 458, n.º 9, fig. 3.9; GARCÍA-FIGUEROLA, y GONZÁLES-ALONSO, 1998: 128, n.º 3; GUADÁN, 1958: 13, note 4; HERRERAS, 2013: 103, fig. 4.

<sup>6</sup> GARCÍA-FIGUEROLA, y GARCÍA-BELLIDO, 1999: 114, n.º 10 y 2002: 458, n.º 10, fig. 3.10; GARCÍA-FIGUEROLA, y GONZÁLES-ALONSO, 1998: 129, n.º 4; GUADÁN, 1958: 13, note 4; HERRERAS, 2013: 103, fig. 5.

<sup>7</sup> [tesorillo], 2019, Claudio, 4.

<sup>8</sup> MARION, 1968: 627, n.º 6.

<sup>9</sup> Bought *Bolsa Numismática*, stock vii.1982: countermark partially legible, poorly struck, and damaged by mechanical cleaning.





Fig. 1. A04 (coll. SaM, 2044) [D1].

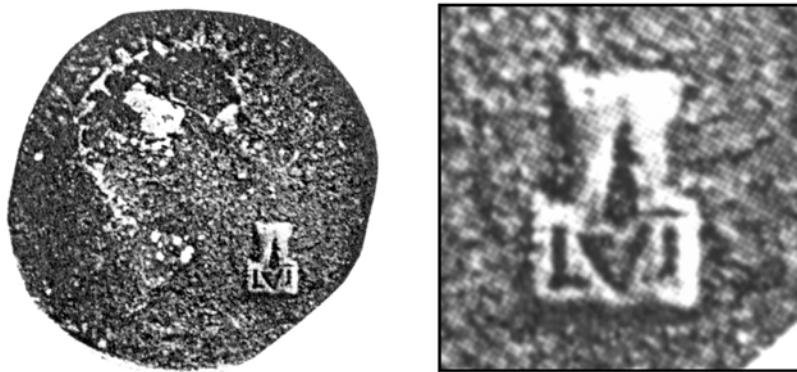


Fig. 2. A09 (Rabat, MCL, *Volubilis*) [D1].



Fig. 3. A02 (París, BN, C142) [D1].



Fig. 4. A07 (MAN, Mrid, 2004/90/575) [D1].



Fig. 5. A03 (coll. Guadan) [D2].



Fig. 6. A08 (Cayón Numismática 61, 5406) [D3].



Fig. 7. A05 (León, MP, 5269) [D3].



Fig. 8. A06 (Madrid, MAN, 2004/90/205) [D4].





Fig. 9. A01 ([tesorillo], 2019, no, No.) [D5].

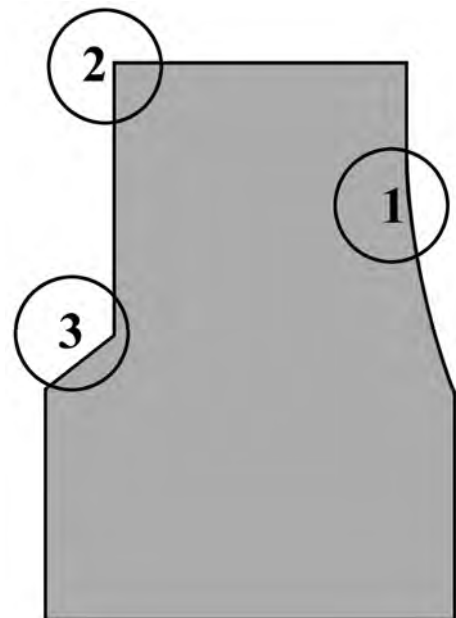
The *LVI/clava inversa* countermark shows up for an historical event during Galba's reign, his proclamation as emperor in Clunia, and corresponds closely to the paired *boar* (lying)/*boar* (skull) types (Martini, 2020, *passim*). This is analogous to what was to take place the following year on the occasion of the *Legio X Gemina's* return from Carnuntum, commemorated by the *eagle* (head) type, and to its subsequent transfer to Germania Inferior, recalled by the *L GE X/eagle* (head) type (Martini, 2019, *passim*). On all these occasions, the Roman administration chose two different coins of bronze specie for countermarking (cf. *infra*): Hispania mintings and imperial issue, and two different striking methods, dies and punches, respectively.

These countermarks thus bear witness to three farreaching consensus operations, clearly quite similar to one another in terms of aims and means. The initiatives are wholly relevant to the complex, multifaceted relationships at play between the military administration, the *Legio VI Victrix* in this case or the *Legio X Gemina* in the case of Vitellius, and the civilian context in which the two legionary groupings were by now long since deeply ensconced.

#### A.1.1. Punch morphology

The contour of the countermark, dies D1 and D2, described by García-Bellido (2006: 575) as an L-shaped square («recuadro en forma de L»), has an irregularly shaped outline with a rectangular foot, broader in the beam, onto which a second rectangular section is grafted, tapered in its stem. This section adapts to the rectangular base with a straight, sloping step on the left (= 3) and a curve stretching the length of the right side (= 1). A distinctive feature of the matrix, the only partially removed inner metal, is found on the upper right side (= 1).

This contour is slightly altered on die D3, whose right vertical is nearly straight, without the curvature but with a triangular unremoved wedge of metal along the upper right edge (= 1), a feature not clearly discernible in specimen A05 (León). Furthermore, the outline of die D4 seems to match the former perfectly, save for a 'wing' jutting out blatantly at the upper left corner (= 2), which is in all likelihood ascribable to the poor state of conservation of specimen



Diseño 1. Punch shape of D1-D5.

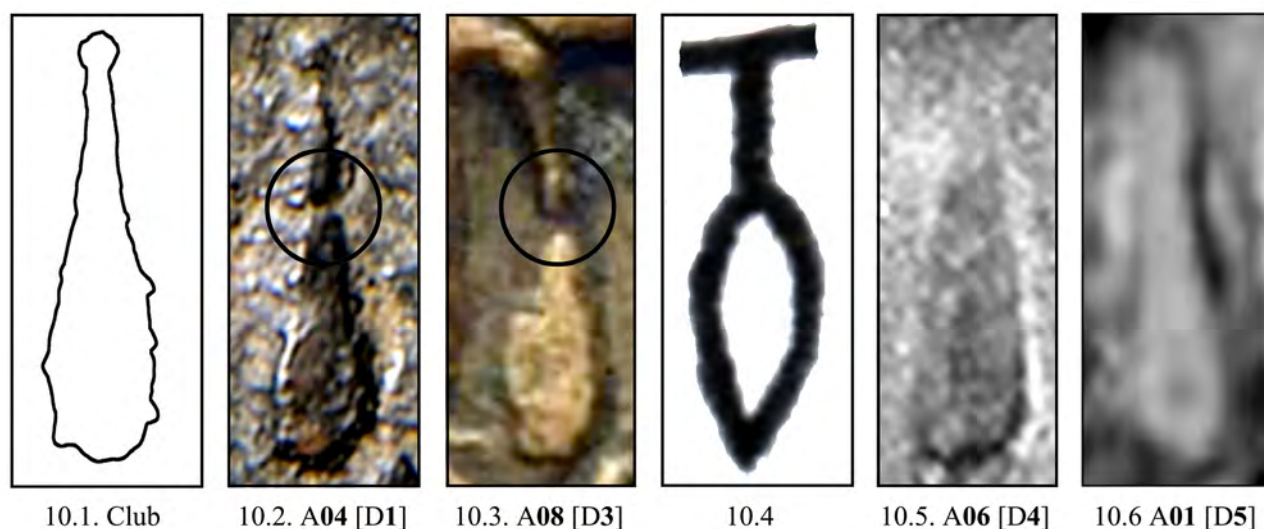


Fig. 10. 1-6 Renderings and enlargements.

**A06** (Madrid, MAN, 2004.90.1205).

Finally, die **D5** shows an altered facet of the upper part of the right side (= 1), whose gentle curvature has been replaced by a tapering to the same height as the slant on the left (= 3), with a right angle stepping back in line with the outer edge. Its upper left corner (= 2) seems to match **D4** perfectly.

## A.2. Analysis of Dies

### A.2.1. Figurative element: *clava inversa* (upright club) (fig. 10.1-6)

This type shows blended composition of lexical and figurative features, in a manner wholly comparable to the *LXGE/eagle* (head) discussed earlier, with which it shares the same juridical context (cf. *infra*). Guadán (1958: *passim*), who first published the countermark, described the figure as a «clava o maza invertida» (i.e. upended club or mace). This interpretation gained acceptance for a while (Morillo, 1997, 78), until investigations following the find of specimen **A05** in León. Identification of the object was subject to debate, ultimately tending toward adoption of the theory that it was a «spearpoint» (García-Bellido, 1997: 66; García-Figuerola, y González-Alonso, 1998: *passim*), whose outcomes then found their way into the literature (García-Figuerola, y García-Bellido, 2002: *passim*). Interpreting it as a spearpoint enabled a connection with two other types found only on Hispania issue, the (die-struck) *LVI* type and the (punch-struck) *spearpoint*, which belonged to a separate chronological and historical context (Martini, 2019: 219-220). Werz (2009, II, 472, n.º 123.1) takes no position, terming the object above the lettering as a «Dreieck», a triangle. Recently, noting this discussion, Herreras Belled, who had initially subscribed to the interpretation claimed by García-Figuerola and García-Bellido (Herreras, 2012: 113-114), returned to the subject to propose the existence of two different countermarks. The first of them is to be found on four specimens (Herreras, 2013: 104, figs. 4-7), here **A03-04** and **A06-07**, representing the «club». The second countermark would be seen on two specimens (2013: 104, figs. 8-9), here **A05** (León, MP), with the image of a «punta de lanza» or spearpoint. Herreras Belled states: «Estas dos contramarcas [...] dieron pie a poder asociar la punta de lanza [...] que aparece colocada sobre ases hispanorromanos con la titulación de la *LVI*», i.e. these two countermarks gave rise to possible association with the spearpoint found on Roman asses from Hispania with the *LVI* entitlement. Prefacing any analysis by acknowledging that the two images cited and commented on by Herreras Belled (2013: 104, figs. 8-9) indeed belong to the same coin from León, **A05** herein, the former (fig. 8 therein) correctly shown and the second (fig. 9 therein) printed flipped, preliminary consideration of the type in detail and an attempt to order the dies used to produce the countermark are in order.

The indispensable premise would appear to be absolute certainty that all currently documented countermarks indeed represent an *upright club* in the sense of *clava inversa* (figs. 10.1-2) and that the «differing» outcomes, as with the letterforms, are to be attributed to the subsequent phases of die manufacturing or even to poor preservation or imperfect striking of the individual specimens.

Certain features appear to be significant: (i) the «break» in the upper part of the *clava inversa*, especially evident in specimens **A04** (fig. 10.2) and **A08** (fig. 10.3); (ii) the engraving of a new die on which the endpoint of the object has been repositioned separate from the lower body of the object (fig. 10.3); (iii) the broader shape of the *club* presumably due to prolonged use of the die or poor preservation of the coin, particularly evident in **A06** (fig. 10.5), less so in **A01** (fig. 10.6).

(i) Specimen **A04** shows the «break» in the upper part of the *clava inversa* (fig. 10.2) with an outright «interruption» in the body of the object that cannot be ascribed to the preservation of the specimen, nor to wear on the matrix, but must be willful division of the figure into two distinct parts (cf. *infra*). The likelihood that the «break» was intentional is confirmed in a later die, **D3**, that used the same movable punch as **D1** to make the lower part of the *clava inversa*, adding above it, clearly separate, the second section, a final «peduncle» to complete the upper part of the object (fig. 10.3). It is somewhat ineptly worked into the figure, compared to the earlier image, broadly separated from the lower body, leaning to the left but clearly showing the same descriptive features, i.e. the elongated triangular shape, the knotty wood, and the handle at the end. Furthermore, a second operation in negative on the die before it was struck, after engraving the lower part of the *clava inversa*, can be seen: the movable punch for the lower part must have been damaged, thickening its midsection on the left, which has extruded outwards, whereas the concave end is fully identical to the matrix of **D1**.

(ii) The countermark on specimen **A08** (fig. 10.3), **D3**, thus represents the *clava inversa* in its variant from dies **D1-D2** due to later workmanship, with the upper part in the shape of a «peduncle» that ends at the edge of the die, leading to the continuity of the type with the planchet surface area (fig. 10.3). Although discernment is a challenge given the poor preservation of specimen **A08**, there seem to be grounds for theorizing that the upper «peduncle» of the *clava inversa* may have been engraved with the same movable piece used for dies **D1-2**, an idea that remains hypothetical in the absence of more telling material documentation. The graphic aspect of countermark **A05** (León), which belongs to the same **D3** die as specimen **A08** (*Cayón*), led García-Bellido to interpret the figure as a «spearpoint», building on the basis of the testimony of the latter coin a graphic reconstruction of the feature (fig. 10.4) that fell perfectly into line with the shape of *spearpoint* countermarks often punched on Augustus issue from Hispania mints (García-Figuerola, y García-Bellido, 2002: 456-458, *Tipo II: punta de lanza*). The two specimens, **A05** (León) and **A08** (*Cayón*), belong to the same **D3** die (cf. *infra*, A.2.2. *Lexical feature: LVI*) but analysis enabled by the latter's higher quality belies the hypothesis that the object represents a «spearpoint» (García-Figuerola, y García-Bellido, 2002: 458-459, *Tipo III: punta de lanza y LVI*), i.e. that there are two different types, one with the «clava o maza invertida» (upside-down club or mace) and another, based on the evidence of the León specimen, showing a «punta de lanza» or spearpoint (Herrerías, 2013: 104).

(iii) The shape of the *clava inversa* in **A06**, **D4** (fig. 10.5) and **A01**, **D5** (fig. 10.6) might seem fanciful compared to the two representations on dies **D1-D2** and on die **D3**, although the moneyers used the same movable punches employed on the former to engrave the letters on the die for the legend *LVI* (cf. *infra*, A.2.2. *Lexical Feature: LVI*) and the two specimens are poorly preserved, allowing for only partial analysis. The different outline on **A06**, **D4**, (fig. 10.5), might be ascribed to the specimen's prolonged wear or poor preservation. The figure is massive in its taper and barrel, broader than the outline of **D1-D3**, with no sign of knots on the wood, lacks the narrowing of the haft, and has no knob, though the feature may be illegible due to poor striking or preservation.





Fig. 11. 1-5 Letters LVI rendering.

Here, again, only newly available documentation will allow us to determine whether specimen **A06** actually belongs to a die that differs from **D1-D3**. In **A01**, **D5** (fig. 10.6), the outline of the *clava inversa* differs from the former, with a shape much more like **A04** and **A08**, for whose lower portion the same movable punch was quite likely employed, probably without the retouching done to dies **D1** and **D3** once they had been engraved (cf. *supra*). However, its upper section differs, being heavier and wider, although in this specimen, too, it seems possible to identify the «break» revealed by the incongruent alignment of the two parts. The bottom leans to the left, whereas the top is in axis with the die, and this discontinuity skews the image into a nearly sinusoidal *clava inversa*.

#### A.2.2. Lexical feature: LVI (fig. 11.1-5)

The letterforms for the lexical part of the countermark, the alphabetical triad *LVI*, were made with the same movable punches, slightly altered to offset damage due to wear, partly misshapen by the mechanical stresses they had suffered during coin striking. In any case, the letterforms were composed by stamping their individual features on the dies, not by direct engraving (cf. *infra*, B.2. *Punchmarking Technique*). The individual letters were in turn built by assembling several segments (fig. 11.1-4) (cf. *infra*, B.3. *Segmented Lettering*), the letter **L** out of two bars at right angles, the letter **V** out of two slanted stems converging at the bottom,  $\nabla$ , but misaligned at the point. The letter **I** was a vertical stroke but crossed at its ends by two small horizontal slabs. Compared to die **D1**, the following two differ in the rightward slant of the letters, the **L** and the **E** in **D2** (fig. 11.2) and the leftward slant of the **L** in **D4** (fig. 11.4). In addition to the thickened ductus of **D5** lettering, due to prolonged use of the die, the point of the **V** is lower than that of the other two letters, although the terminal of the **I** can scarcely be discerned. The abovementioned slant of the *clava inversa* brings the end of the object into contact with the second apex of the **V**. It would thus seem possible to confirm the hypothesis that the five *LVI* triads on the countermarks were made with the same movable die punches, but etched onto the dies in varying states of alignment. Provenance from the same moneymen's workshop could attribute the images of the *clava inversa* on **A06** (**D3**) and on **A01** (**D5**) to the same movable punch used for **D1-D2** (cf. *supra*).

Analysis of the well-preserved coin **A08** (*Cayón*), from die **D3**, is telling for its critical facets as these relate to specimen **A05** (León).

Heretofore it had been theorized that the figure of the *clava inversa* had been etched with the same movable tool used on dies **D1-D3**, only slightly altered to make up for damage to the lower part of the image (cf. *supra*), whereas the slant of the lettering for the triad enables further precision.



Fig. 12. AF01 (Tauler & Fau 9, n.º 117).

The layout of the letters shows that die D4 is not simply die D1 (fig. 12.1) with detail that is not as clean because of wear on the tool having made the ductus broader. The *clava inversa* figure has been touched up by adding the upper peduncle at greater offset and by widening the left side of the body of the object. On die D4 the three letters have been engraved anew, as is especially evident on the letter I, which is slightly slanted to the right and lowered to align with the point of the V. Among various effects of mechanical wear, die D3 shows glaring broadening in the base of the letter L (fig. 11.3), identical distortion to what is perfectly discernible on specimen A05 (León) (fig. 7), as is the thickening of the left side of the barrel of the *clava inversa* (cf. *supra*). The consistence of these features thus allows for attribution of the two coins, A08 (Cayón) and A05 (León), to the same die D3, with implications for identifying the object portrayed in the figure (cf. *supra*).

#### A.2.3. Modern forgeries: LVI (fig. 12), LV, LVII (fig. 13.1-4)

Modern forgeries of countermarks referencing legionary units related to Hispania have been recorded. They draw inspiration from the LVI/*clava inversa*, and have been documented on original Claudius sesterces, in all likelihood to be traced to various workshops in Spain.

#### AF01. «LVI/club», Claudius, RIC 96 (Tauler & Fau 9, n.º 117)<sup>10</sup>

This type (fig. 12) shows itself to be wholly fanciful compared to the aforementioned types, on at least three levels: punch contour, figure outline, and letterform (cf. *infra*); making it possible to deem it a modern forgery. The countermark is engraved in a rectangular punch, which is just slightly ansate along the left edge, a shape only distantly inspired by the outline of the original specimens (cf. *supra*, A.1.1. *Punch morphology*). The club is shorter, broader in its barrel, and missing its terminal peduncle. It is also points the opposite way, so that rather than resting upright on its barycenter it is shown as it would be wielded. The image's features, combined with what can be seen in the lettering (cf. *infra*) cast doubt on the authenticity of the specimen, while there can be no doubt that it has nothing to do with the manufacture of dies D1-D5. The letterforms are also completely unprecedented, even considering their poor preservation. The letters are large, with broad, upright ductus, while

<sup>10</sup> [tesorillo], 2019, Claudio, 3.

13.1. AF02, LV / *clava* ?13.2. AF03, LV / *clava* ?13.3. AF04, LVII / *clava* ?

13.4. AF05, (VESPA)

Fig. 13. C. Modenr forgeries.

the horizontal stroke on the letter L stretches to end up under the point of the V. This countermark lies completely outside the morphological features of dies D1-D5, allowing certain identification as a modern forgery. Compared to other coins bearing false countermarks that nevertheless remain undoubtedly original coins, this specimen (fig. 12) may also be a modern «reproduction», a replica of a sesterce from the Rome mint that was cast and then plated. Without actual, physical examination, the investigation cannot achieve certainty, but the impression remains that this is a modern counterfeit.

**AF02.** «LV / club?», Nero Drusus, RIC 93 (*iliberrí*, vi.2018, eBay auction)<sup>11</sup> (fig. 13.1)

**AF03.** «LV/club?», Claudius, RIC 99 (fig. 14.2)<sup>12</sup> (fig. 13.2)

The two countermarks belong to different workshops, both inspired by the outlined shape of the original type. The first, AF02 (fig. 13.1), narrows both sides of the punch toward the top. The second, AF03 (fig. 13.2), associated with type AF04 «LVII / club?», below, reduces the width of the lower body of the object at a right angle and has a circular extrusion on the base at right. On the first coin the letters bear no reference to the original and the club(?) is designed with a simple linear stroke, vertically, wedged into the open corner of the V. The lexical composition of the second specimen adheres more nearly to the original, and the contour of the club(?) is thicker and more curved.

**AF04.** «LVII/club?», Claudius, RIC 99 (fig. 13.3)<sup>13</sup>

This type, associated with the preceding type AF03 «LV/club?», must refer to the *Legio VII Galbiana*, a unit established by the emperor after his proclamation at Clunia and clearly inspired by the *IVI/clava inversa* countermark, whose shape it even tried to imitate while introducing some new features. Compared to the original, the outline of the mark is overturned to appear as a «hammerhead» (fig. 13.3), with its breadth at the top, nestled inside the «LVII» epigraphy, and its narrow end at the bottom, stretched significantly long so as to fit poorly with the overall outline. Inside it is the overturned «club?», which is barely legible and so elongated as to be out of proportion with the field of the countermark.

For the sake of completeness, other modern counterfeits should be noted, since the have

<sup>11</sup> [tesorillo], 2019, Claudius 1.

<sup>12</sup> HERRERAS, 2013: 102, fig. 1 [a] = [tesorillo], 2019, Claudius 2.

<sup>13</sup> HERRERAS, 2013: 102, fig. 1 [a] = [tesorillo], 2019, Claudius 2.



recently been spotted for sale. Three «(VESPA)» countermarks from the same matrix have been found, associated with an ancient NCAPR and struck on a Tiberius sesterce<sup>14</sup> (fig. 13.4) and on two Claudius sesterces<sup>15</sup>.

### A.3. Historical Context: Galba's Proclamation as Emperor

The *LVI/clava inversa* countermark, after initially being attributed with certainty to the «period of the Civil Wars» (García-Figuerola, y García-Bellido, 2002: 466), was called back into question by García-Bellido with a more nuanced chronological context: «posterior a Claudio, muy probablemente de tiempo de Nerón o incluso de Galba» (García-Bellido, 2006: 577), i.e. subsequent to Claudius, quite likely from the time of Nero or even Galba. Nevertheless, the countermark's inclusion in the period of the Civil Wars remains most realistic (García-Bellido, 2006: 577-578). Werz tends toward a generic dating of «Regierungszeit des Claudius-69 n. Chr», or 69 ce during the reign of Claudius (Werz 2009: 472, Typ 123).

In an earlier comment (Martini, 2020: *passim*) the associated *boar* (lying) and *boar* (skull) figurative countermarks, struck on bronze provincial issue from the Clunia mint, were dated to April 68 ce, when the legionnaires of the *Legio VI Victrix* stationed in the city supported the proclamation as emperor of Servius Sulpicius Galba, who had been *legatus Augustis pro praetor* for the Province of Hispania Tarraconensis since 60 ce. In this context the *LVI/clava inversa* type represents the «official» facet of the same event, using imperial-issue sesterces exclusively. In Clunia the *boar* (lying) and *boar* (skull) types, struck on provincial bronze, and the *LVI/clava inversa*, struck on imperial coinage, Claudius sesterces, were used in precisely the opposite way from what was to take place the following year. The movements of the *Legio X Gemina*, first when it returned to Hispania Tarraconensis from Pannonia in early 69 ce and then when it was transferred to Germania Inferior at the end of 69 ce, led to the striking, first, of the «municipal» *eagle* (head) type on Hispania provincial bronze and then to the «imperial» countermarking of the *LX GE/eagle* (head), on Claudius sesterces (Martini, 2019: *passim*).

On the occasion of Galba's proclamation, too, the initiative called for involving both the military milieu in general and its surrounding social arena, with the sole difference, compared to what was to happen with later countermarks, that the two types referred to the very same event, rather than distinct moments as in the case of the *Legio X Gemina*. If the «municipal» hypothesis for the two punch-struck Clunia countermarks, *boar* (lying) and *boar* (skull), holds, i.e. that they belong to the commemoration of the social and religious ceremonies related to Galba's appointment to emperor (Martini, 2020, *passim*), the die-struck *LVI clava inversa* countermark plays the role of 'imperial' celebration of the event. The latter involved official issue rather than coinage from provincial mints, clearly showing the legionary unit as the leader of the political event.

There is a factor that distinguishes the two «imperial» types, the *LX GE/eagle* (head) and the *LVI/clava inversa*: the number of dies that were used. No rigorous die sequence has been proposed for the former type, but it has been supposed that documented specimens were all made with the same die (Martini, 2019: 211-212). At least five dies have been identified for the latter type (cf. *supra*), despite the fact that the number of specimens found is nearly the same, eight and ten coins respectively. Manufacture of the first countermark, the *LX GE/eagle* (head), can in all likelihood be traced to the complex propitiatory ceremonies marking the transfer of the of a legionary contingent, designed more to take care of needs related to conducting religious rituals than to large-scale distribution

<sup>14</sup> Soler y Llach 1102, n.º 92: Tiberius, RIC 62.

<sup>15</sup> [rupert], 2013: Claudius, RIC 96; *Pliego Numismática* E30, n.º 41: Claudius, RIC 99.

aiming to recall the event. The second type, the *LVI/clava inversa*, on the other hand, meant to celebrate an important political moment that had involved the whole Legio VI Victrix, thus had a more far-reaching ideological destiny, a countermark designed to fill its role as «witness» to the event.

The limited survival of specimens with the *Legio VI Victrix* countermark can be ascribed to the likely immediate withdrawal of the coins from circulation. A few months after the proclamation of Galba (in April 68 ce) the legions in Germania were acclaiming Vitellius emperor (January 69 ce), making the specimens with the Galba type politically obsolete and embarrassing. The new emperor was also solidly rooted in Hispania, and shifting from Galba's faction to that of Vitellius must not have been without its challenges for the *Legio VI Victrix*, perhaps leaving the new emperor skeptical of the legionary unit's actual loyalties. There would appear to be testimony to this factor in the lesser prestige of the legion compared to that of the *Legio X Gemina* (Morillo, y García, 1998: 591-592), including its basic mission to defend Hispania Baetica from the designs of the governor of Mauretania Tingitana, Lucceius Albinus, who was loyal to Otho (Mascialino, 1970: Tacitus, *Historiae*, II, 58).

#### A.3.1. An issue of iconography: *clava inversa* (upright club) or *clava fissa* (cleft club)?

The graphic representation of the *clava inversa* as it appears on die D1 (fig 10.2), more blatantly on die D3 (fig 10.3), and discernibly even on D5 (fig. 10.6), seems to hint that the image was intentionally made with a glaring break in the upper part of the object, so as to «divide» the lower section of its body from the upper part that represents the haft and the terminal knob, meaning to convey the idea of «breaking» the club. This unusual engraving, featuring an interruption in the object being portrayed, might find explanation within the political context that gave rise to manufacture of the *LVI/clava inversa* countermark, i.e. the onset of conflict, including military conflict, between Galba, who had been proclaimed emperor, and Nero, who would be metaphorically identified precisely by the image of the *club*.

Ancient sources iteratively recall the successive forms of *imitatio* that Nero engaged in, first of *Apollo* (ca. 59 ce), then of *Sol* (ca. 64 ce), and finally of *Heracles* (starting 66 ce). This last assimilation was brought to fruition and adhered to during Nero's stay in Greece (Champlin, 2008: 293-295). Suetonius recalls that the emperor, secure at this point in his conviction that he had equaled the first two deities, decided to emulate Heracles, as well<sup>16</sup>. Cassius Dio cites the lyrics of the chorus that had accompanied Nero's «triumphal» parade (early 67 ce) to celebrate his victory in artistic competitions in Greece, which explicitly recalled the emperor's assimilation to *Apollo* and to *Heracles*<sup>17</sup>.

Toward the end of his reign, Nero had completed his *imitatio* of Hercules, allowing reference to his person through accouterments that connoted the deity, specifically the *club*, the hero's attribute par excellence. The object's unprecedented representation in the *LVI/clava inversa* countermark as «broken» would, in this sense, amount to a *cleft club*. This might have alluded, in light of the imminent military clash between the emperor and Galba's troops, to two different interpretations: (a) the legionnaire's wish that the «new Hercules» would have to rely on useless weapons, unable to withstand the onslaught of the mutineers, or (b) the conviction that Nero was actually already a «broken» Heracles, therefore harmless, no longer able to defend his authority.

<sup>16</sup> VIGEVANI, 1973: Suetonius VI, liii, «Destinaverat etiam, quia Apollinem cantu, Solem aurigando aequiparare existimaretur, imitari et Herculis facta».

<sup>17</sup> STROPPIA, 1998: Cassius Dio 63, 20, 5, «Io victor Olympice ! [...] io Neroni Herculi ! io Neroni Apollini !».



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