

ANTHROPOLOGICAL REFERENCE & RESEARCH SERVICE

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND MUSEUM AFFILIATED ARCHIVAL RESEARCH SPECIALISTS

Mr. Michael Spinelli Medici
Medici Alliance U.S.A.
1010 University Avenue
San Diego, CA 92103

February 4, 1998

Dear Mr. Spinelli Medici,

We appreciate your referral from Yale University's research department. I apologize for the delay in responding to your request. It has taken some time to assimilate information from resource materials provided by our various international affiliates, and to focus on your central and specific issue. Thank you for telephoning me in January with a further clarification of the precise parameters of your research inquiry.

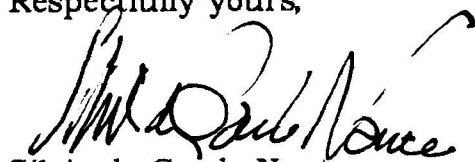
We have now completed the attached synopsis which references a wide range of relevant, albeit arcane, materials from various international libraries, universities, and museums, as well as from some private reference sources. We believe that the point of view expressed in this overview of the evolution of "Torques" is sufficiently supported with historical data, and conforms with the nature and purpose of your inquiry. However, we must be clear in informing you that we have not found any specific evidence to support the premise that Torques was ever a formal, organized sport, in the sense that ancient cultures (Roman Circus Maximus) or modern civilization (Football, Tennis) have structured events that represent relationships between team "player/ athletes" and spectators, as an organized competitive activity for public gratification. Some evidence exists (2nd c. B.C.) that would suggest the employment of Torques among member of the same Celtic and Gaulic "tribes" for (contest or amusement) purposes; activities certainly other than combat or hunting.

Although you did not specifically request visual support images (standard color copy prints normally billed at \$18.00 each), we have included a set of reproductions of the black & white visual materials referenced within the text portion of your report. A small fee has been added to cover the cost of re-printing these images which were used in the course of our research.

An invoice is enclosed; your initial deposit has been credited to the account, and the final balance charged to your American Express account, as requested and approved by your assistant, Lisa, on January 12th.

It has been a pleasure for me and my colleagues to work on your assignment, and we hope you are pleased with the results.

Respectfully yours,



Silvie de Garde-Nantes
Executive Research Coordinator

"TORQUES" HISTORIC REFERENCE & OVERVIEW

When exploring the history of *"the torque"*, there are only a few unassailable facts¹, that together with excavated artifacts, anthropological research, and a great deal of vague referential data, all contribute to the currently held view of its unique evolution.

—As with archery, fencing, wrestling, darts, and so many other modern diversions - once the revered survival skills of warriors and hunters - Torques' earliest history is also immersed in the arts of warfare, the testing of masculine prowess, and tributes paid for success in a man's ability to establish supremacy over his opponents.

By the beginning of the second century B.C., we see the emergence, among Celtic and Gaulic warriors, of a loosely organized competitive activity [sport], based in the unique coalescence of inherently socio-culturally bellicose tendencies and the Torques' more ancient form - one no longer relevant in the practice of warfare. We can trace this evolutionary path from its origins in Marnian [Marne] Culture of the late mid-6th c. to early 5th c. B.C. (Champagne region of France, Epernay Musée Municipal); then, (end of the 4th c. B.C.) through the celebratory gestures of the Celts who hurled their [metal] Torques into the air upon victorious resolution of a battle; and, later (last quarter of the 3rd c. B.C.) to the Gauls and Britons who presented elaborately decorated Torques - gold or gilt-bronze, highly-symbolic Torques - as tokens of alliance or obedience to their military and political leaders. One of the best examples of these golden Torques² [Rheinisches Landesmuseum] was found in the tomb at Waldalgesheim, among a cache of ornate ceremonial objects, for personal adornment, of uncertain religious, political and military significance.

—There is now considerable evidence to support the mid-19th c. theory that in their earliest form (circa 688 B.C.), Torques were crafted from strips of moistened animal skins and bark fibers, twisted tightly around a stone bead and allowed to dry in the form of dangerous projectiles with a characteristic spiral pattern. Torques were deployed sometimes by hand, often by sling, and evidence suggests that early fifth century B.C. Gauls and Britons used wood-handled rods³ to project them with great speed, accuracy, and strike force. Within the subsequent 280 years, stylized versions of these original, simple, crudely aerodynamic weapons were crafted in bronze, and worn around the waist and as necklaces by the ancients, as much for adornment and as symbols of prestige, as for their practical service as an ever-ready defense.⁴

Much of what is known comes to us not from actual torque artifacts, but from bronze and iron figurative plaques and other objects showing Torques prominently depicted in scenes of spiritual rituals and warfare. Diverse examples include an late 4th century B.C. gold repoussé commemorative relief⁵ from Copenhagen, and a (circa 140 B.C.) gilt-silver shield⁶ unearthed at Manerbio sul Mella, Brescia. It is from this later period, that we see clear references to Torques as an intentionally non-lethal, but intensely competitive [sport] activity. Recent excavations of the sanctuaries in Picardy have further endorsed these observations.

By the middle of the first century B.C., the Torques metamorphosis was complete. Solid gold and jeweled Torques had evolved into entirely decorative and symbolic, ritual objects⁷; awarded as valuable and official recognition for valiant military service or political accomplishments among the Provincial elite, by Governors of the far-reaching Roman Empire, which had absorbed most of Briton, ancient Gaul⁸, and all the territories to the south-eastern perimeter of the Mediterranean.

¹ "Torques": twisted bands, often of tooled leather, [precious] metals, or cloth, worn especially by ancient Gauls and Britons; "Torse"[torsade] L. tors(us): an ornamental symbolic wreath of twisted vines or cords, placed or worn upon a crest, coronet or battle helmet as reference to valor associated with ancient battle Torques of the [6th c. B.C.] pre-Roman Celtic and [5th c. B.C.] Gaulic-Roman warriors.

² Objects of the early phase of La Tène culture occur in regional groups according to the workshops (foundries) which produced them. Typologically early examples of the Celtic "classic" style are represented by the art of the 3rd c. B.C., in the Tommerup Ball Torques, with their raised spiral motifs and stroke patterns. See Plate # I

³ Elaborately-chased, curved silver handle, with evidence of joining pins to wooden rod as Torque projectile implement. See Plate # II

⁴ Brescia, Museo Civico Romano; See Plate # III

⁵ See Plate # IV

⁶ Celtic-Gaulic "Triskelia" Torque symbol representing its characteristic rotating action, carved into silver ceremonial rondelle. See Plate # V

⁷ Solid Gold Buffer-Torque from tomb of Santa Paolina di Filottrano-Ancona; Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche. See Plate # VI

⁸ Plate # VII Map

Plate # VIII Slovenské Národné Múzeum; Esoteric, highly-stylized relief image of serpent and ram's head entwined in a culturally relevant spiral motif, strongly associated with the ritualistic Torques of the first half of the 1st c. B.C.

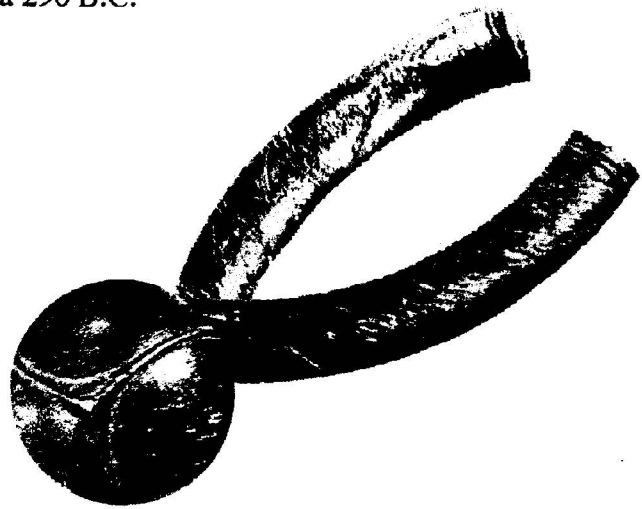
Plate # IX "Dying Gaul" detail of sculpture: thick Celtic Torque around the warrior's neck, large symbolic stone as reference to its ancient historic origins.

Plate # X "Dying Gaul" (part of a monument erected at Pergamum by Attalus I after 228 B.C.) displays the warrior's final agony; sword and shield replacing earlier more primitive weapons.

Reference Resources:

Yale University; Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, New Haven Connecticut, USA
Metropolitan Museum of Art; Early Roman, Etruscan & Gaulic Gold, New York City, New York
Royal Artillery Museum; Arms of the Ancient Britons, Woolwich, England
London University, Historical Research Center, London, England
Museo Nazionale Villa Giulia; Gaulic and pre-Etruscan Civilization, Rome, Italy
Vatican Library Archives; Archivio di Stato, Vatican City, Italy
Museum Suisse-Roman; Celtic and Early Roman Artifacts, Avenches, Switzerland
Musée des Antiquités nationales, Pre-Christian Archaeological Collection, St. Germain-en-Laye

Figure A
circa 290 B.C.



“Ball Torques”

Tommerup, classic period

These two images present a clear view of the evolutionary stages, during the 3rd c. B.C., in the transition of Torques from a stylized metal version (A) of the earlier leather and stone weapons, to a form (B) which could be worn as ritual or symbolic adornment.

By approximately 190 B.C., Torques, modified from the type seen in figure A, had been introduced as a sociocultural activity (game/sport) in informal tournaments among the ancient Gauls and Britons.

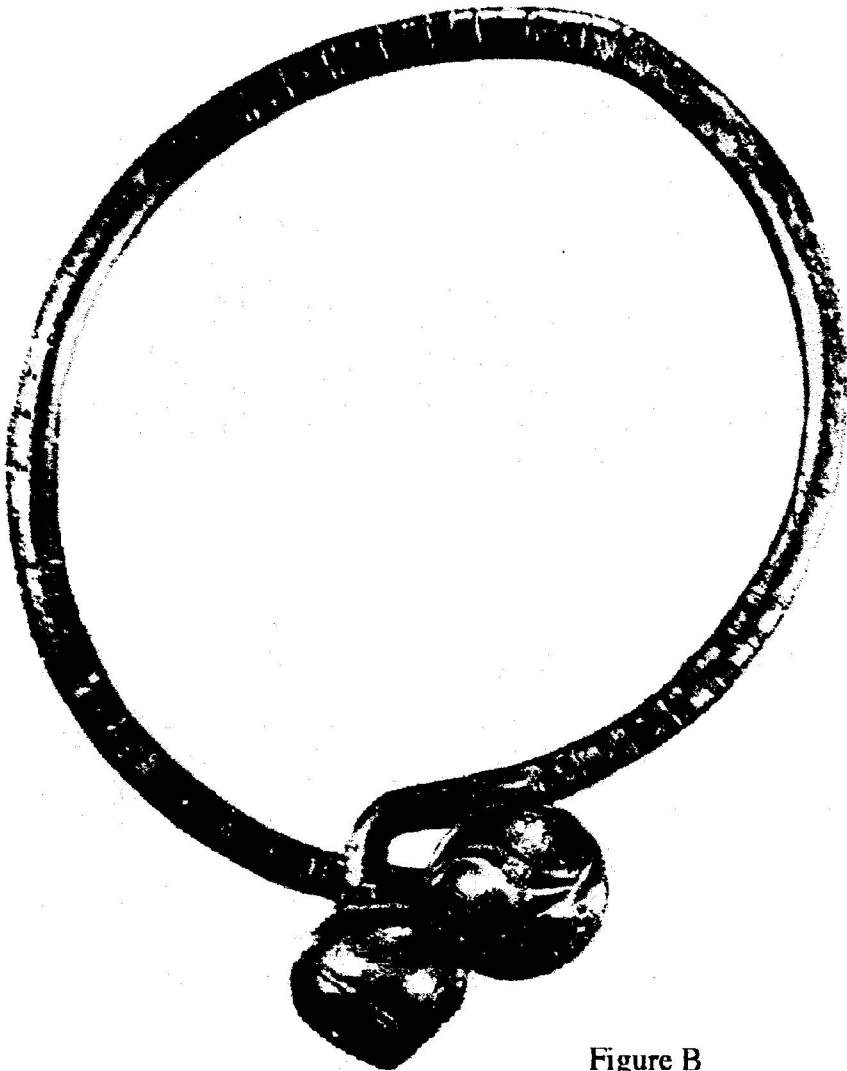


Figure B
circa 240 B.C.

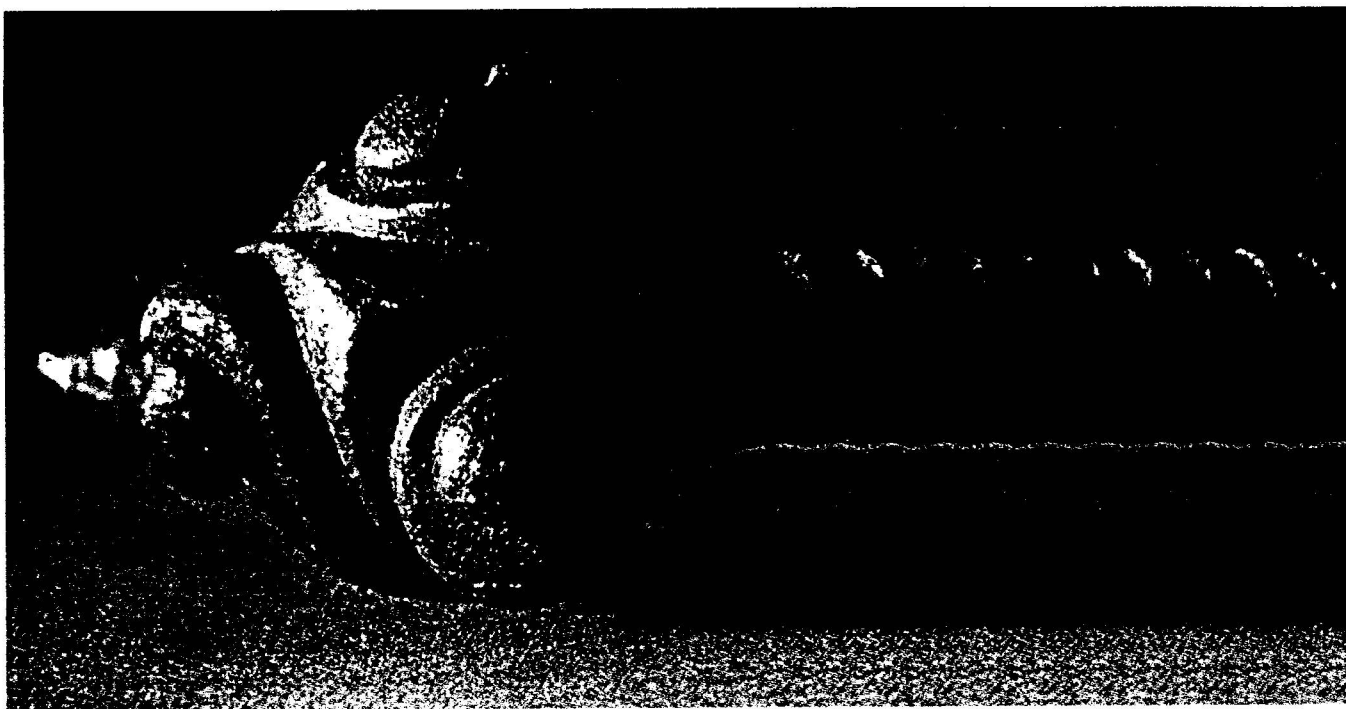


Chased-silver curved tubular handle, pinned to hardwood rod fragment
(implement for projecting early combat Torques)

Archeological evidence from early 5th c. B.C. (Hochscheid Rhineland and Marne-Epernay) suggests that hunting and battle Torques were launched using wooden rods (later with elaborately tooled metal handles) to achieve extreme advantages in speed and the force of impact, over earlier methods of projection (hand-throwing techniques).

Artifacts from the early 2nd c. B.C. (Parisii-stater) would suggest that this method of projecting Torques continued, in some form, even after Torques were no longer viewed as weapons, but rather vehicles for demonstrating masculine prowess, agility, and athletic skill (much as the discus or javelin were in ancient civilizations of Greece, when these objects had become transformed from hunting and warfare weapons to forms for the expression of symbolic sport).

Plate # III



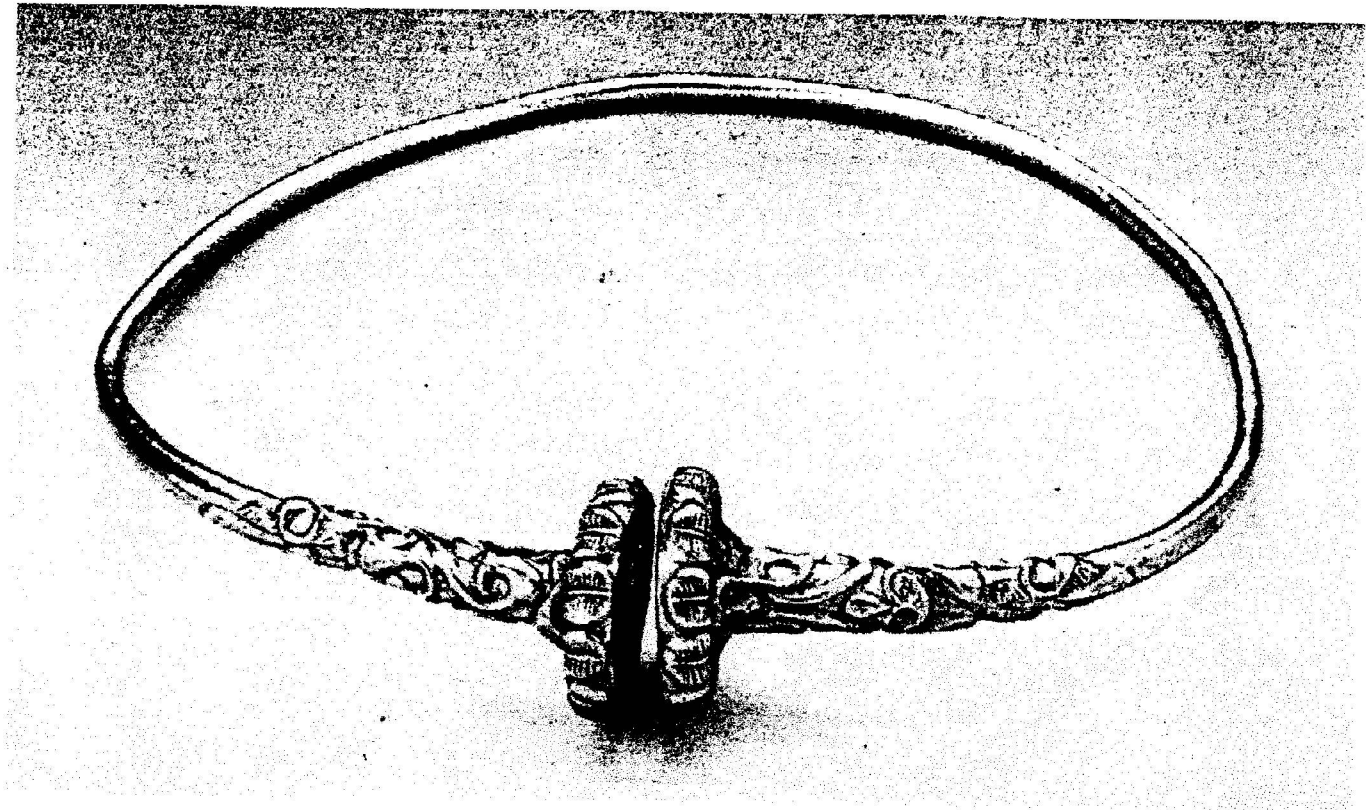
Cast bronze stylized Torques (ceremonial) Weapon
Circa 225 B.C. Prague, Národní Muzeum (Horní K'sely)

Plate # V



Celtic-Gaulic "Triskelia" Torques symbol

Gilt-silver shield; Manerbio sul Mella, Brescia, Italia



Gold "Buffer-Torques"

Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche

Final stage of Torques evolution; worn as personal adornment around the neck as ritualistic symbols or
valor and achievement.



Britannia, Gaul, and the North-Western provinces of the Roman Empire.

Primary regions where Torques have been unearthed in burial sites and excavations of pre-Christian settlements.



Fragment of Gold & Bronze composite Relief; 55 B.C.

Cast and hand-chased medallion depicting serpent and ram within a culturally-relevant spiral motif - one of the most powerful concepts (Torques: twisting/turning/spinning) associated with the Celts, Gauls and Britons during several centuries predating the arrival of Christianity in Western regions of Britannia, Gaul and, the later accessions of the Roman Empire.



Commemorative Relief; repoussé sheet gold

A Celtic / Gaulic Warrior represented symbolically meditating in a state between this world and the next; in the midst of nature, wild beasts, and human adversaries; holding in his right hand a golden Torque - the life symbol of survival (victory in battle, and success in hunting), and in his left hand, the serpent - the symbol of the mysteries of the world to come.

Plates # IX & X

"Dying Gaul", detail
Fragment of a monument erected
at Pergamum by Attalus I
(Marble copy of earlier bronze)
circa 225 B.C.

Classical Celtic Warrior
(Gaulic Wars) depicted wearing his
symbolic "Torque" on the
battlefield.

