Clunia: Excavating a Roman Provincial Amphitheatre

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My time in Spain has thus far been spent at the Roman colony of Clunia, conducting an archaeological excavation of the site's large theater. It is believed, due to apparent architectural alterations, that the theater underwent a renovation into a gladiatorial arena almost immediately after its construction. Excavation has also been conducted on the colony's urban center, which includes a forum, basilica, public baths, several temples, and at least one large villa. While these are standard portions of most Roman colonies, Clunia is outstanding in that the Romans did not raze and build over a native Celtiberian site, as was the common practice throughout the Empire.

The product of my research at Clunia will result in an examination of Clunia's architecture and city planning in relation to Rome. Undoubtedly, the paper will contain a thorough analysis of metropolitan and provincial theaters, drawing upon my firsthand knowledge of Clunia's archaeological record. Furthermore, I wish to discuss the relationship between Clunia's architecture and that of another Spanish provincial site, Tiermes. Tiermes, unlike Clunia, follows the typical policy of building directly over a native settlement. This raises an interesting point of comparison within not only architectural bounds but also the very nature of imperialism itself. By completely abandoning the Celtiberian settlement at Clunia, were the Romans in fact more imperialistic? Was this an attempt to wholly discredit the native way of life, elevating Roman culture as the ideal? While I have not yet visited the site of Tiermes, answers to these questions (or most likely more questions concerning these questions) will come to light when I do in the weeks to come.