

= Crosby Garrett Helmet =

The Crosby Garrett Helmet is a copper alloy Roman cavalry helmet dating from the late 2nd or early 3rd century AD . It was found by an unnamed metal detectorist near Crosby Garrett in Cumbria , England , in May 2010 . Later investigations found that a Romano @-@ British farming settlement had occupied the site where the helmet was discovered , which was located a few miles away from a Roman road and a Roman army fort . It is possible that the owner of the helmet was a local inhabitant who had served with the Roman cavalry .

The helmet appears to have been deliberately folded up and deposited in an artificial stone structure . It is thought to have been used for ceremonial occasions rather than for combat , and may already have been an antique by the time it was buried . It is of the same type as the Newstead Helmet (found in 1905) and its design also has similarities with the Ribchester Helmet (found in 1796) and the Hallaton Helmet (found in 2000) , though its facial features are more akin to those of helmets found in southern Europe . Its design may allude to the Trojans , whose exploits the Romans re @-@ enacted in cavalry tournaments .

Dr Ralph Jackson , Senior Curator of Romano @-@ British Collections at the British Museum , has described the helmet as " ... an immensely interesting and outstandingly important find ... Its face mask is both extremely finely wrought and chillingly striking , but it is as an ensemble that the helmet is so exceptional and , in its specifics , unparalleled . It is a find of the greatest national (and , indeed , international) significance . "

On 7 October 2010 , the helmet was sold at Christie 's for £ 2 @. @ 3 million (US \$ 3 @. @ 6 million) to an undisclosed private buyer . Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery in Carlisle sought to purchase the helmet , with the support of the British Museum but was outbid . The helmet has so far been publicly displayed twice , once in a 2012 exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts , and again at Tullie House in 2013 @-@ 14 .

= = Description = =

The Crosby Garrett helmet is an almost complete example of a two @-@ piece Roman cavalry helmet . The visor portrays the face of a youthful , clean @-@ shaven male with curly hair . The headpiece is in the shape of a Phrygian cap , on the crest of which is a winged griffin that stands with one raised foot resting on an amphora . The visor was originally attached to the headpiece by means of a hinge ; the iron hinge pin has not survived , but its existence has been inferred from the presence of powdery deposits of iron oxide residue . The helmet would have been held in place using a leather strap attached from the wearer 's neck to a decorated rivet on either side of the helmet , below the ear . Wear marks caused by opening and closing the visor are still visible , and at some point the helmet was repaired using a bronze sheet which was riveted across two splits . Only two other Roman helmets complete with visors have been found in Britain ? the Newstead Helmet and Ribchester Helmet .

The helmet and visor were cast from an alloy consisting of an average of 82 % copper , 10 % zinc and 8 % tin . This alloy was probably derived from melted @-@ down scrap brass with a low zinc content , with which some tin had been added to improve the quality of the casting . Some of the fragments show traces of a white metal coating , indicating that the visor would originally have been tinned to give the appearance of silver . The griffin was cast separately from a different alloy consisting of 68 % copper , 4 % zinc , 18 % tin and 10 % lead . The visor would originally have been a silver hue and the helmet would have had a coppery yellow appearance . The helmet 's creation can be dated to the late 2nd or early 3rd century from the use of a particular type of decorated rivet as well as some of its design features , such as its pierced eyes .

There has been much debate about the symbolic meaning of the helmet 's design . The griffin was the companion of Nemesis , the goddess of vengeance and fate . They were both seen as agents of death and were often linked with gladiatorial combat . The meaning of the face and headpiece are less clearly identifiable . Suggestions have ranged from the Greek god Attis and the hero Perseus , to the Roman gods Mithras and Jupiter Dolichenus , to a more general Eastern Mediterranean

appearance that could possibly have been meant to suggest a Trojan identity . The Phrygian cap was often used by the Romans as a visual motif representing the Trojans .

= = Discovery and restoration = =

The helmet and visor were found in May 2010 in pastureland on a farm owned by Eric Robinson at Crosby Garrett in Cumbria . The finder , an unnamed metal detectorist in his 20s from Peterlee , County Durham , had been detecting with his father in two adjacent fields for some years but had previously only discovered some Roman coins and other small artefacts . The findspot is situated not far from a Roman road . A number of earthworks are located nearby , indicating the presence of a previously unrecorded ancient settlement . The area was strategically placed on the route to the northern frontier of Roman Britain within the territory of the Carvetii tribe . The Roman army would have been present in the area and would certainly have used the nearby road . A Roman auxiliary fort stood only 9 kilometres (5 @. @ 6 mi) to the north @- @ east at Verterae (Brough Castle) .

Following the helmet 's discovery , the area around the findspot was investigated in a project sponsored by the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery and the Portable Antiquities Scheme . The earthworks noted earlier were found to be part of a substantial enclosure surrounded by ditches , within which buildings had once stood . The enclosure , which measures as much as 500 metres (1 @, @ 600 ft) long on its southern side , combines both native British and Roman methods of fortification . A sunken area within the enclosure may possibly have served as a paddock for horses , while the evidence for the buildings is concentrated in the enclosure 's northern portion . The remnants of Romano @- @ British field systems in the surrounding area show that the area was under cultivation and animal remains found on the site indicate that the inhabitants also raised livestock , including sheep , goats and pigs . The presence of Roman pottery suggests that the inhabitants had adopted some elements of the Roman lifestyle , but their community may well have been there long before the Romans arrived . Archaeological evidence from the enclosure indicates that the site may have been first settled as far back as the Bronze Age , at least 1 @, @ 000 years before the helmet was deposited .

The finder discovered the helmet and visor buried together some 25 cm (10 in) below the surface , at a site located on a ledge at the lower end of the settlement . It had been placed onto two stone slabs at the bottom of a hole which had been back @- @ filled with soil . A stone cap had been laid on top . The helmet was found in 33 large fragments and 34 small fragments and had apparently been folded before burial . The visor was mostly intact and had been placed face down . The griffin had become detached and was found with the helmet . No other artefacts were found at the time , but the subsequent Tullie House / PAS excavations at the findspot discovered a number of copper and iron objects , a bead and two Roman coins dating to between 330 @- @ 337 . The coins were found within the artificial stone feature in which the helmet had been deposited and may have been buried at the same time .

The finder did not initially realise that he had found a Roman artefact and thought at first that it was a Victorian ornament . He eventually identified it as Roman by consulting auction catalogues , searching the Internet and getting advice from dealers . Find Liaison Officers from the Portable Antiquities Scheme were notified of the discovery and visited the findspot along with the finder . Christie 's commissioned Darren Bradbury , an independent conservator and restorer , to restore the helmet and visor for sale . Although Christie 's was asked to delay the restoration so that a full scientific examination could be carried out , this request was not granted and information about the helmet 's burial may have been lost as a result . However , the British Museum was able to inspect the find during restoration and X @- @ ray fluorescence spectrometry was carried out to determine the composition of the headpiece , visor and griffin . Bradbury 's restoration work took some 240 hours and involved the repair of cracks and holes using resin and cyanoacrylate , retouched to match the appearance of the surrounding material .

= = Similarities and usage = =

The helmet and visor have marked similarities to a number of other Roman cavalry helmets . The visor is a cavalry sports type C (H. Russell Robinson classification) or type V (Maria Kohlert classification) . Similar examples have been found across the Roman Empire from Britain to Syria . It is of the same type as the Newstead Helmet , found in Scotland in 1905 , and its facial features most closely parallel a helmet that was found at Nola in Italy and is now in the British Museum . The rendering of the hair is similar to that of a type C helmet found at Belgrade in Serbia and dated to the 2nd century AD . The griffin ornament is unique , though it may parallel a lost " sphinx of bronze " that may originally have been attached to the crest of the Ribchester Helmet , discovered in Lancashire in 1796 . The headpiece is nearly unique ; only one other example in the form of a Phrygian cap has been found , in a fragmentary state , at Ostrov in Romania , dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD . Rings on the back of the helmet and on the griffin may have been used to attach colourful streamers or ribbons .

Such helmets were used for hippika gymnasia , cavalry tournaments that were performed in front of emperors and senior commanders . Horses and riders wore lavishly decorated clothes , armour and plumes while performing feats of horsemanship and re-enacting historical and legendary battles , such as the wars of the Greeks and Trojans . According to the Roman writer Arrian :

[T] hose of high rank or superior in horsemanship wear gilded helmets of iron or bronze to draw the attention of the spectators . Unlike the helmets made for active service , these do not cover the head and cheeks only but are made to fit all round the faces of the riders with apertures for the eyes . . . From the helmets hang yellow plumes , a matter of décor as much as utility . As the horses move forward , the slightest breeze adds to the beauty of these plumes . ? Arrian , *Ars Tactics* 34

Combat gear was issued by and belonged to the Roman army , and had to be returned at the end of a wearer 's service . Cavalry sports equipment appears to have been treated differently , as soldiers apparently privately commissioned and purchased it for their own use . They evidently retained it after they completed their service . Both helmets and visors have been found in graves and other contexts away from obvious military sites , as well as being deposited in forts and their vicinity . In some cases they were carefully folded up and buried , as in the case of the Guisborough Helmet . The Dutch historian Johan Nicolay has identified a " lifecycle " for Roman military equipment in which ex-soldiers took certain items home with them as a reminder of their service and occasionally disposed of them away from garrison sites as grave goods or votive offerings .

The circumstances in which the Crosby Garrett helmet was buried are still unclear , but the discoveries made by the post-excavation Tullie House / PAS excavations have provided much more detail about its context . It was clearly deposited within an artificial feature that had been specially constructed ; Stuart Noon of the Museum of Lancashire suggests that the feature may have been intended as a memorial of some sort . It was not buried in an isolated spot but within a long-occupied Romano-British farming settlement that had clearly adopted aspects of Roman culture . Given the settlement 's proximity to Roman military locations , it is very possible that some of its inhabitants served with the Roman army , which often recruited mounted auxiliaries from among native peoples . The helmet may well already have been a valuable antique at the time of its burial ; if the coins found nearby reflect when it was buried , it could have been over a century old by the time it was deposited . It was deliberately broken before being buried in what may have been intended as a ritual sacrifice . The identity of its owner will never be known , but it could have been that a local inhabitant who had formerly served with the Roman cavalry was responsible for the helmet 's deposition .

= = Auction and controversy = =

Although the find was reported under the Portable Antiquities Scheme , it was not declared treasure under the 1996 Treasure Act because single items of non-precious metal are not covered by the act . The finder and landowner were thus free to dispose of the helmet as they saw fit . The discovery was publicly announced by Christie 's in mid-September 2010 ; the helmet was the centrepiece of its 7 October auction catalogue , featuring on the cover and six more pages . Its

value was put at £ 200 @, @ 000 ? £ 300 @, @ 000 (\$ 309 @, @ 200 ? \$ 463 @, @ 800) . The Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery launched an appeal with the aim of purchasing the helmet and making it the focus of a new Roman frontier gallery due to open in 2011 . The campaign immediately attracted numerous donations , including £ 50 @, @ 000 from an anonymous overseas benefactor who offered the sum if a matching sum could be raised by the public (it was) ; a £ 1 million offer from the National Heritage Memorial Fund ; a £ 300 @, @ 000 pledge from the Headley Trust and the Monument Trust ; £ 200 @, @ 000 from the Art Fund ; and £ 75 @, @ 000 from the J Paul Getty Jr Charitable Trust . By the time of the auction three and a half weeks after the campaign had been launched , the museum had raised enough money to support a bid of up to £ 1 @. @ 7 million . Behind the scenes , efforts were made to persuade the finder and landowner to agree a private sale with the museum , but these approaches failed .

The initial estimate was passed within seconds of the auction opening . Six bidders pushed the price towards a million pounds and Tullie House was forced to drop out at £ 1 @. @ 7 million . Two remaining bidders took the bid past £ 2 million ; the winning bidder , an anonymous UK resident and fine art collector bidding by phone , paid a total of £ 2 @, @ 330 @, @ 468 @. @ 75 including the buyer 's premium and VAT . The outcome aroused controversy and prompted calls for the Treasure Act to be revised , though British Archaeology noted that the circumstances of the helmet 's discovery may have resulted in it being outside the scope of even a revised act . It is still possible that the helmet could come into public ownership ; if the winning bidder wishes to export it , an export licence would have to be applied for and if a temporary export bar was placed on it an opportunity could arise for funds to be raised by a public institution to purchase the helmet .

= = Display = =

Since its sale in 2010 , the helmet been on public display three times . It was lent by its owner to the Royal Academy of Arts in London , and was put on display from 15 September to 9 December 2012 as part of an exhibition of bronzes . From 1 November 2013 until 26 January 2014 the helmet was on display at the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery in Carlisle , and a printed guide was produced for the occasion . It was subsequently displayed at the British Museum from 28 January to 27 April 2014 .