

Monte Castrelo de Pelóu

(Grandas de Salime)

The site was catalogued by José Manuel González in 1973, calling the spot then *La Pica el Castro*, although it is also known in the neighbourhood as *Monte Castrelo* or *Prida del Castro*. Nevertheless, the later scarce bibliographical references have always called the place with the generic name of *El Castro de Pelóu*.

The excavations began in the autumn of 2003 with a first campaign of archaeological soundings which have continued up to now.

The proximity of several mines, the size of the defences and mainly the application of mining techniques in the excavation of the ditches, favoured its inclusion in the group of the called *castros mineros* (mining hillforts): settlements believed to be of Roman origin created to accommodate specialised labour force.

Nevertheless, nowadays a long sequence of occupation has been proved going back to the second Iron Age, when powerful fortresses protected a group of huts and a hillfort sauna. It had episodes of re-fortification during the 1st century A.D. and the first half of the 4th century, in both cases with a strong military character.

There is an inscription which belongs to the Early Imperial Roman time with the name of up to 50 individuals; it has been interpreted as a *tabula censualis*, a kind of census of those who, assigned to the territory of the *civitas Ocela* (probably with capital at the Chao Samartin) had to tribute in the area of influence of the *castelum* of Pelóu.