



## ***Celtic Elements in Northwestern Spain in Pre-Roman times***

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this article is to present a synthetic overview of the state of knowledge regarding the Celtic cultures in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula. It reviews the difficulties linked to the fact that linguists and archaeologists do not agree on this subject, and that the hegemonic view rejects the possibility that these populations can be considered Celtic. On the other hand, the examination of a range of direct sources of evidence, including literary and epigraphic texts, and the application of the method of historical anthropology to the available data, demonstrate the validity of the consideration of Celtic culture in this region, which can be described as a protohistorical society of the Late Iron Age, exhibiting a hierarchical organization based on ritually chosen chiefs whose power was based in part on economic redistribution of resources, together with a priestly elite more or less of the druidic type. However, the method applied cannot on its own answer the questions of when and how this Celtic cultural dimension of the proto-history of the northwestern Iberian Peninsula developed.

### **Keywords**

Celts, Northwestern Spain, historical anthropology, proto-history, Indo-Europeans

### **1. The difficult question of Celticity**

The presentation, explanation and study of Celtic cultural elements in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula presents the observer with a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, as outlined in the work of most international investigators, and even in well founded (although in the minority) Spanish studies, the cultural and linguistic situation of pre-Roman populations in this part of the peninsula as part of the Celtic word is considered so obvious that any discussion

appears superfluous. Maps showing the distribution of the Celts in ancient times, or of pre-Roman languages, represent all the central and northwestern parts of the Iberian Peninsula as part of the Celtic language area (Figs. 1a, b, c). However, this situation is openly contested by a number of specialists, particularly Spanish archaeologists, but also linguists from other countries.

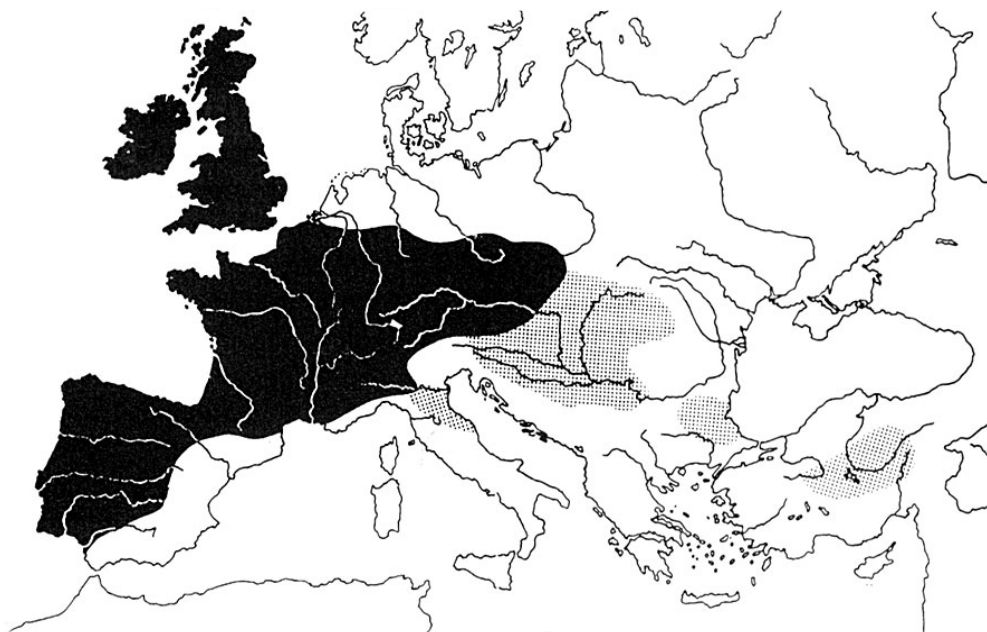


Figure 1a. Area of distribution of the Celts (after Kruta 2000:3).

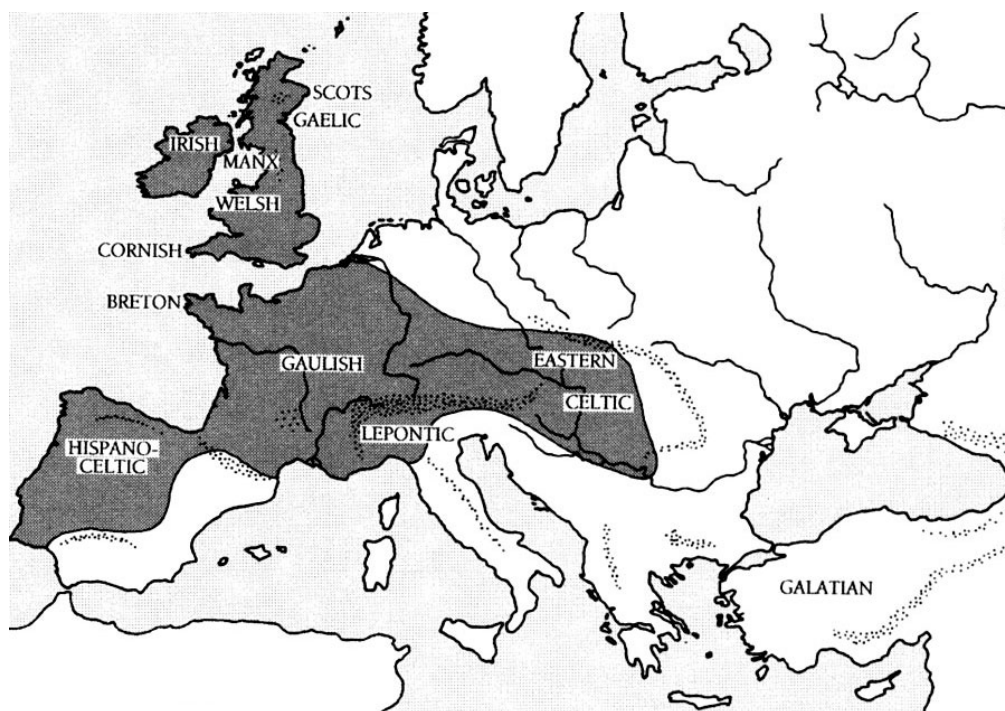


Figure 1b. Area of distribution of Celtic languages (after Mallory and Adams 1997:97).

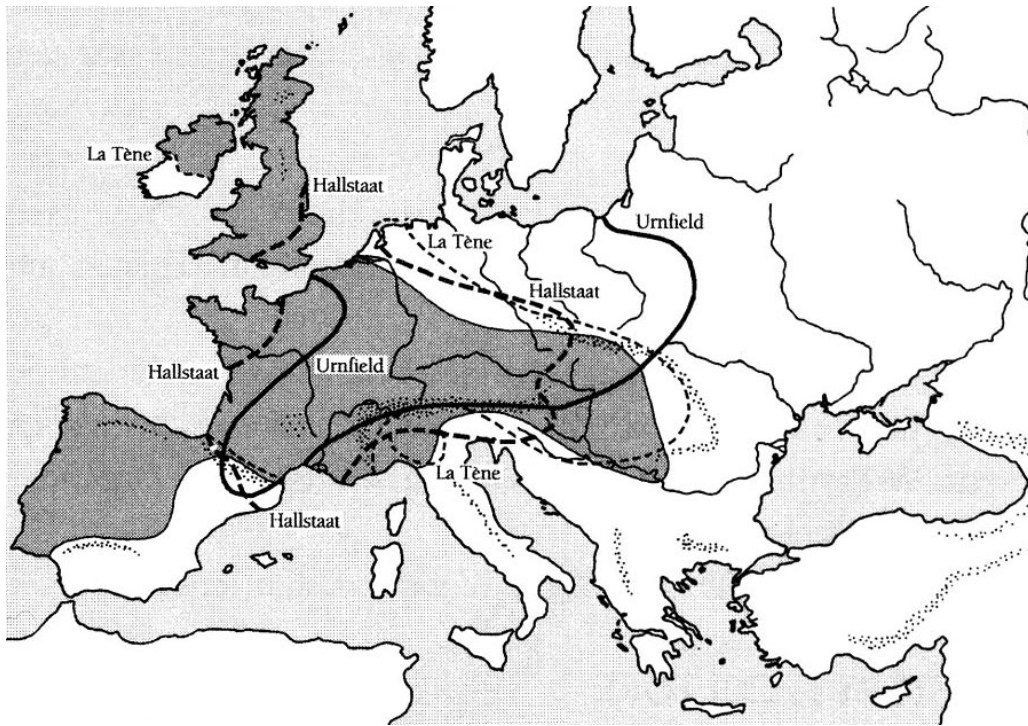


Figure 1c. Celtic languages in relation to archaeological evidence (after Mallory and Adams 1997: 101).

The archaeologists maintain that nothing referring to the Celts is found in the archaeological records they examine, and that the artifacts discovered during explorations of pre-Roman settlements in the northwest of the peninsula are not related to the ones usually attributed to Celtic populations in other parts of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Linguists have suggested differentiating the linguistic family to which the four inscriptions in the Lusitanian language known to date belong from other Celtic languages. From the work of A. Tovar onwards, their position, with occasional but important nuances, has mainly been that these testimonies are isolated, either due to the vagaries of preservation, or because they are the last remnants of a very ancient Indo-European language that spread from the Bronze Age, or even earlier, throughout much of Europe: the so-called 'language of hydronyms'. Opposed to this is the minority position of those who defend the idea that these inscriptions belong to the family of Celtic languages, despite their distinctive features, but that they represents a variant of a Celtic language corresponding to a very ancient linguistic stratum.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, if we follow the dominant positions of the archaeologists and linguists, it makes no sense to argue for the Celtic nature of the northwestern Iberian Peninsula in pre-Roman times. Here the best solution may be a historiographic study, currently nearing completion, which explains how at a given time in the pre-Roman period a Celtic enclave appeared in this part of

the world, and how the various modern investigative fields then gradually chipped away at the foundations of this model using more advanced scientific approaches.<sup>3</sup>

This is not the option we advocate here. On the contrary, we defend the classic idea of a Celtic origin for the elements of the culture, considered in an anthropological sense, of the pre-Roman inhabitants of the region. However, it is important to clarify here which hermeneutic context supports this approach, in order to prevent confusions or misunderstandings.

Firstly, this point of view is in no way connected to the Celticism of the founding fathers of Galician political nationalism that characterised the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (*supra* n. 3). These local academics, fueled by historical curiosity (none of them were professional historians) saw in the 'Celtic' label for the pre-Roman inhabitants of the northwestern peninsula the unequivocal symbol of an identity that differentiated Galicia from other regions, with its roots in the prehistoric past. Those of us who today see the opportunity of using Celtic parallels to comprehend different aspects of the pre-Roman situation in the region simply are not part of this political and cultural tradition, and consider that our modern political options, however defined, have nothing whatsoever to do with the pre-Roman past of Galicia.

Secondly, our point of view is based on what would appear to be a scientific heresy, as it questions the results obtained by archaeologists and linguists, the most rigorous of the social sciences due to their being based firstly on material cultural and secondly on phonological data. Instead we defend a different proposal in historical terms, or rather, using a historical anthropology that considers a holistic approach towards cultures, whether past or present.

Thirdly, these archaeologists or linguists reach their conclusions by applying the comparative method. In this way, the artifacts studied by the first coincide or not with other artifacts commonly attributed to Celtic populations in other locations. In turn, the data explored by linguists may or may not coincide with phonetic evolutions detected among speakers or writers of Celtic tongues in other locations. That said, the comparative method is part of historical anthropology because the cultural features may be described as Celtic based on their identification among populations described as such in other places. This means that if a different conclusion is reached through this discipline from that obtained by other disciplines, it is not because some are more correct than others. The fact is that we are faced with heterogeneous data, in terms of cultural attribution, which must be historically interpreted as a reflection of a complex situation. In this context, it is relevant to question the primacy of the archaeological or

linguistic perspectives, and to vindicate the autonomy of the perspective offered by historical anthropology.

In fact, the objects found by archaeologists never represent all of those that once existed. For example, one of the features that defines Iron Age archaeology in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula is the complete absence of necropoli, which have been so essential in defining Celtic archaeology throughout Europe. At the same time, the language or languages represented by the linguistic data are very poorly documented in this case. This means that the positions based on these features must acknowledge the weaknesses of their data sources, and the fact that their results, even when extremely important, will never provide a definitive formulation or explanation of a culture that can be fully understood only in anthropological terms.

Objects and languages do not in themselves explain religions, in their complexity of gestures and beliefs, political systems, historical processes, parental relations, or inter- and intra-tribal relations. Neither, unfortunately, can historical anthropology explain all of these behavioural variables using available sources, although it may offer more than the explanations offered by archaeology or linguistics. In this sense, archaeologists and linguists, driven by the material basis of their disciplines, occasionally make the mistake of developing a holistic view of the cultures they study, losing sight of the fact that they are merely part of a whole. Such conclusions must at least be questioned when the presence of Celtic cultures in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula is denied using methods that are actually both partial and limited.

What follows therefore must be understood as one possible historical discourse, making use of the available data, about the situation in this part of the Peninsula in pre-Roman times. It is also important to note that this contribution forms part of a specific editorial project complemented by the article by César Parcero and Isabel Cobas<sup>4</sup> (this volume), which reviews the historical evolution of the Iron Age in the northwestern Iberian peninsula using archaeological evidence, providing a perspective consistent with the approach presented here.

## **2. Evidence of the Celtic presence in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula**

Neither the predecessors of Galician political nationalism, nor academics with scientific backgrounds who constructed the types of knowledge accepted throughout Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, nor, more recently, those who have upheld historical anthropology, have made use of the Celts as an interpretative horizon purely as a result of fancy.

We have done so on the basis of ancient texts that mention the presence of Celts in the Hispanic northwest.

## 2.1. Literary sources

Some ancient authors give details about the presence of Celts in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula.<sup>5</sup> These are mainly Strabo, Pomponius Mela and Pliny the Elder. Later on, Ptolemy continued the association of geographical locations with astronomic references begun in the Hellenic period; his work consists of lists of place names with their geographical coordinates, and is therefore of limited interest to us here. We will also leave aside the problematic testimony of the late-appearing *Ora Marítima* by Rufus Festus Avienus.

Strabo was a Greek geographer from Asia Minor and a contemporary of the Emperor Augustus, who supported what we today call human geography, as opposed to the geography based on mathematical and astronomical foundations imposed by Hellenistic Alexandria. He dedicated Book III of his geographical work to the Iberian Peninsula (which he never visited), meaning that his information was derived from previous authors, mainly Poseidonius of Apamea (who died around 80 BC), supplemented by more recent information gathered by Strabo himself who, as an admirer of the work of Augustus, was able to follow the campaigns of pacification that culminated in 19 BC with the conquest of the northwestern Iberian Peninsula. Strabo describes the rivers of the peninsula, refers specifically to the Duero River, and then states:

The river of Lethe, which by some persons is called Limaeas, but by others Belion; and this river, too, rises in the country of the Celtiberians and the Vaccaeans, as also does the river that comes after it, namely the Baenis (others say 'Minus'), which is by far the greatest of the rivers in Lusitania - itself also being navigable inland for eight hundred stadia. Poseidonius, however, says that the Baenis rises in Cantabria...this river was the limit of Brutus' campaign, though farther on there are several other rivers, parallel to those mentioned (*Geografia*, III, 3, 4; H.L. Jones translation).

Later on, Strabo stresses the importance of the Lethes River (a name meaning 'oblivion' in Greek), in order to explain why the region was inhabited by Celts. He indicates that in the northwestern part of the Iberian Peninsula there are

the Artabrians, who live in the neighbourhood of the cape called Nerium, which is the end of both the western and the northern side of Iberia. But the country round about the cape itself is inhabited by Celtic people, kinsmen of those on the Anas [= Guadiana]; for these people and the Turdulians made an expedition thither and then had a quarrel, it is said, after they crossed the Limaeas River; and when, in addition to the quarrel, the Celtic peoples also suffered the loss of their chieftain, they scattered and stayed there; and it was from this circumstance that the Limaeas was also called the River of Lethe...Now about

thirty different tribes occupy the country between the Tagus and the Artabrians (*Geografía* III, 3, 5; H.L. Jones translation).

Pomponius Mela is a writer of lesser intellectual importance. Born in Tingentera, close to Cádiz in modern-day Spain, he lived in the first century AD and wrote, towards the middle of the century, a Latin compilation of the geographical knowledge of his time, which he gave the Greek title of *Chorographia*. This is of special interest to us, as in its description of the northwest it makes use of detailed testimonies of which Strabo was unaware. The following passages from this work are especially relevant:

9. The following side [the coast that continues from the Duero River] has for some distance a coast to the right; it then enters a little; it then advances gradually, then penetrating again, extending from there in a straight line towards the promontory we call 'Celtic'.

10. The Celts occupy all of the coast; but from the Duero to the first entrance are found the Grovii, through whose territory flow the Avo, the Celadus, the Nebis, the Minius [Miño] and the Limia [= present-day name], known as 'Oblivion' [= Strabo's 'Lethes']. This entrance contains the city of Lambriaca, and receives the waters of the Laeros [Lérez] and the Ulla [=].

11. The external part is inhabited by the Praestamaricii, between which flows the Tamaris [Tambre] and the Sars [Sar], rivers whose courses do not run far from their respective origins. The Tamaris flows down to the port of Ebora, and the Sars close to a tower known as the tower of Augustus. Further on, at the end of this section of coast, live the Supertamaricii and the Nerii. All of this we have referred to belongs to the coasts that face west;

12. The coast then turns to the north from the Celtic promontory to the Scitic promontory. Until the land of the Cantabrii, the coast is nearly straight, with the exception of some small capes and small inlets;

13. in it are found, firstly, the Artabrii, who still belong to the Celtic nation, and then, on the point, the Astures. Among the Artabrii, a narrow gulf, but with an extensive contour, offers along its perimeter the city of Adrobica, and receives four river mouths, of which two are of little renown, even among the indigenous peoples; from the others flow the Mearus [Ducanaris] and the Ivia [Libuca] (*Chorografía*, III, 9-13)

The great Latin writer Pliny, who died in the year 79 AD on observing the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, also dealt with different landscapes in his work on Hispania. He knew the Iberian Peninsula, as he had worked there as an administrator during the reign of Vespasian. The results of a census he passes on to us informs about the following:

The jurisdiction of Lucus contains 15 peoples both unimportant and bearing outlandish names, excepting the Celtici and the Lemavi, but with a free population amounting to about 166,000. In a similar way the 24 states [*civitates*] of Braga contain 285,000 persons, of whom besides the Bracari themselves may be mentioned, without wearying the reader, the Biballi, Coelerni, Callaeci, Equaesii, Limici and Querquerni (*Naturalis Historia*, III, 3, 28; translation H. Rackham).

In Book IV, Pliny offers more details about the inhabitants of northwestern Hispania:

111. and then, belonging to the jurisdiction of Lugo, starting from the river Navia, the Albioni, Cibarci, Egi, Varri, surnamed Namarini; Iadovi, Arroni, Arrotrebae; the Celtic Promontory, the rivers of Florius and Nelo, the Celts surnamed Neri and the Supertamarci, on whose peninsula are the three Altars of Sestius dedicated to Augustus, the Copori, the *oppidum* of Noega, the Celts surnamed Praestamarci, the Cileni. Of the islands must be specified Corticata and Aunios. After the Cileni, in jurisdiction of the Bracae are the Heleni, the Grovi and the Castellum Tyde, all people of Greek stock; the Siccae islands, the *oppidum* of Adobrica, the river Miño four miles wide at its mouth, the Leuni, the Seurbi, Augusta, an *oppidum* belonging to the Bracae, above whom Gallaecia...

113. From the Douro begins Lusitania; it contains the old Turduli [...]

114. [from the Celtic Promontory] on one side is the north and the Gallic Ocean, and on the other the west and the Atlantic. The distance which this promontory projects has been given as 60 miles, and by others as 90 miles; the distance from here to the Pyrenees many give as 1,250 miles, and place here a race of Artabres, which never existed, the error being obvious; they have put here, with an alteration in the spelling of the name, the Arrotrebae, whom we spoke of before we came to the Celtic Promontory (*Naturalis Historia*, IV, 20-21, 111-114; translation H. Rackham altered).

We must thank F.J. González García for a detailed treatment of the physical and human geography reflected in these testimonies as well as the problems presented by its correct interpretation (2003), and A. Tranoy, who some years ago established the most likely location of these toponyms and ethnonyms (1981)(Fig. 2). However, on the whole, these testimonies clearly indicate the presence of Celtic inhabitants in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula.<sup>6</sup>

It is true that they also indicate the presence of Greeks (as represented by Pliny's writings), a piece of news that responds to the curious confluence of two situations. On the one hand, a degree of homophony between indigenous terms and Greek or Latin terms, that may have led speakers of these languages to interpret some names in accordance with their phonetic similarity to their own languages, giving rise to errors - the *Heleni* are not necessarily "Hellenic", the name of the indigenous population may be related to Celtic words for deer (*elanos*) - or correct identifications, albeit by chance, such as the name of the river *Lethes* ("oblivion", in



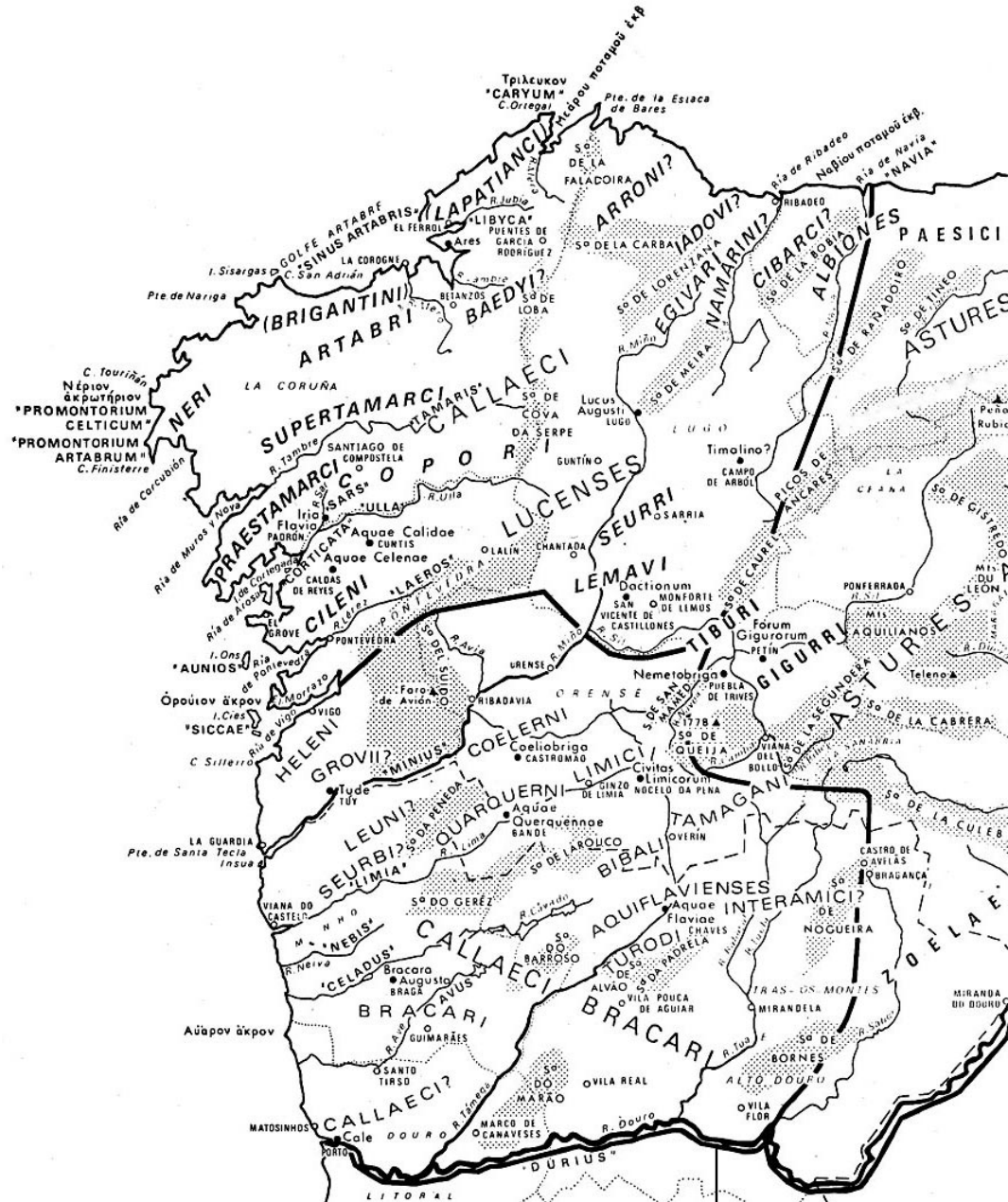


Figure 2. Map showing the geography of the pre-Roman and Roman peninsular northwest (after Tranoy 1981).

Greek), which are phonetically reminiscent of the common name for the Afterworld in Celtic languages (*Letavia*). In this case, the phonetic coincidence is supported by semantic coincidence, as in the case of the mythical geography of the Greeks, which situated the river *Lethes* in Hades, the "Great Beyond".

Furthermore, other settlements that were not expressly described as Celtic could have been so, in the same way as those mentioned as such may not have been so, considering all of the elements that serve to define them.

It is also important when considering ethnic descriptions of ancient peoples to bear in mind that when the Greeks use the term *ethnos* and its derivations, it is best to understand this as equivalent to the modern concept of culture in an anthropological sense. The basic testimony is that of Herodotus (VIII, 144) where race (*ethnos*) is considered a conglomerate of language, religion and other traditions and customs. The same idea is expressed in another way by Isocrates (*Panegiricus of Athens*, 50), for whom being Greek was not only a question of birth, but also of education and culture. Centuries later, the Roman author Pliny described the Celtic nature of some of the peoples who inhabited Hispania (*NH*, III, 13). However, Strabo also applied this idea in determining the ethnic identity of the inhabitants of Gallia, considering their physical appearance, language, political systems and ways of life (IV, 1, 1) in a sense then not far from the use of the modern anthropological term culture.

This means that if the authors quoted considered at least some of the inhabitants of northwestern Hispania to be Celts, this was because they defined themselves as such, or because they found among them some features that were similar to those of other Celts they knew of, and about whom there was precise knowledge in ancient times. The Greek writer Pausanias (I, 4, 1) mentions the ethnonym *Galatas*, normal usage in his time, although he recognises that this is a later term, and that previously the commonly accepted name was *Celtas*.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the most reliable source of all, that of Julius Caesar (*BG* I, 1), coincides with that of Pausanias when he states that the name *Celtae* was adopted by these people to refer to themselves, whereas *Galli* was the name for this same people (or peoples) in Latin.

We should also bear in mind that the Greeks knew the Celts who had sacked Delphi (in 279 BC) and installed themselves in the strongly Hellenicized Asia Minor. The Romans, in turn, had contact with the Celts from a very early stage on, after they occupied Rome in 387 BC. The expansion of Rome throughout western Europe took over Celtic populations, which were later administered by the Romans, who worked in different provinces and could distinguish between their inhabitants, including the common features they shared. Also, from the time when the Greek Polybius lived among the Romans in the first half of the second century BC, there was a fusion between Greek ethnography as a discipline, and the empirical knowledge of the Romans about foreign populations, some of which were Celtic, which laid the foundations for ancient knowledge about this culture that has reached us today.

There can be no doubt that this ancient ethnographic knowledge may not be compared to

present-day knowledge, and presents significant interpretive problems. However, neither are there any reasons, despite this, to reject ancient ethnographic testimonies that refer to the presence of Celts in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.2. Epigraphic sources

Some areas of investigation tend to lend greater credibility to epigraphic sources than to other types of information.<sup>9</sup> They argue that Classical literary sources are too stained with the ethnocentric prejudices of Greek and Roman culture to be trusted. By contrast, epigraphic documents are a direct emanation of local populations in different parts of the Roman Empire, and are therefore more authentic and closer to reality.

None of these arguments are wholly acceptable. On the one hand, the fact that literary sources have problems does not mean that they should be rejected, nor that it is impossible to develop investigative strategies to derive trustworthy information from them. On the other hand, epigraphic testimonies always reflect a degree of Latin-Roman enculturation by virtue of being documents produced by a people with an indigenous oral tradition writing in Latin. Therefore it is more difficult to be sure about other information contained in these documents. This means that these testimonies must be understood as evidence of a process of transformation, something of extraordinary interest in itself, but not as a directly faithful testimony of the indigenous situation in pre-Roman times.

In any case, some of the epigraphic testimonies confirm the contents of literary sources. We may divide these into direct testimonies, which expressly mention the Celtic nature or character of a given individual, and indirect testimonies, which present features unequivocally identifiable as Celtic.

The first consists of a group of funerary stelae that identify where the deceased came from, indicating that they are Celtic. These documents are characterised by referring to individuals who had not adopted the Roman way of life, presented in private contexts. This means that mention of their Celtic origin coincides with the testimonies of Caesar or Pausanias about the fact that the Celts referred to themselves as such. For example, the epitaphs of Supertamaric Celts (who lived to the north of the Tambre River in Galicia) mention their place of origin when they died far away from their homeland. This was the case of Fusca, daughter of Coedi, a Supertamarican woman who died in Asturica Augusta (Astorga), capital of the Conventus Asturum, where her sister erected a tombstone in her memory, giving details of her distant birthplace:

Fvsca Coedi f. Celtica Svperta(marica) ⊃ [B]laniobrensi Secoilia Coedi f. soror sva posvit.

Another example is the tombstone of Eburia, whose stela appeared in Andíñuela, in the province of León, halfway between the gold mining area of Las Médulas and Astorga:

Ebvria Calveni f. Celtica Svp(ertamarca) ⊃ Lvbri an. XXVI h.s.e.

Another Supertamarican woman opted, probably together with her family, for Crecente, in the province of Lugo, as the place of her destiny and death:

Apana Ambolli f. Celtica Svpertam(arica) [⊃] Miobri an. XXV h.s.e. Apanvs fr(ater) f.c.<sup>10</sup> (Fig. 3a, b).



Figures 3a, b. Galaico-Roman funerary stelae of women belonging to the *celtici Supertamarici*.  
a) García Martínez (1999: 417). b) Rodríguez Colmenero (1999: 616).

Pliny also mentions that the Supertamarici were Celtic. However, it does not appear likely that Secoilia, the sister of Fusca in Astorga, or Apanus, the brother of Apana in Crecente, would have had to read Pliny to request the inscriptions in honour of their deceased sisters. This situation definitively reflects the existence in ancient times of differentiated areas of knowledge, one which was cultured and for the Roman elite, reflected in the ethnographic literature, and

another that was still close to indigenous traditions, seen in the local epigraphy. This means that these testimonies can be said to mutually support each other. Indirect epigraphic testimonies are more problematic, and actually overlap with possible interpretations of onomastic sources.

### 2.3. Onomastic sources

Onomastics is a discipline that lies between linguistic, geographical and topographic studies, and historical studies as such. It is subdivided into the study of different types of names, of gods or theonyms, of people or anthroponyms, of places or toponyms, and within the latter category the names of rivers, or hydronyms, etc. In turn, these names are detailed in ancient sources, such as the literary or epigraphic sources we already know, or are found in the names of the present-day landscape. In this last case it is necessary to establish the age of the name in question, which is evident in some cases but not in others, requiring specific investigation of the oldest references to the name. All of this is added to information about the standard forms of phonetic evolution in different languages.

Starting with the most simple aspect, it is easy to recognise that in ancient literary and epigraphic sources reference is made to the presence of pre-Roman populations referred to as Celtic in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, and we have examples of toponyms to aid us that call for special examination due to their importance. Another feature traditionally used to identify the area of expansion of Celtic populations in the Iberian Peninsula is that of toponyms ending in *-briga*, meaning 'high point' or 'fortress' in the Celtic language (Fig. 4). This is basically a synonym of *-dunum*, although whereas *-briga* is predominant in the Peninsula, *-dunum* is more frequent in other Celtic parts of Europe.

In the literary sources mentioned above, reference is made to some of these toponyms ending in *-briga* that may serve as examples.<sup>11</sup> Others lack this ancient pedigree, and appear in current toponymy modified according to a standard phonetic evolution. Here it is accepted that most Galician toponyms ending in *-bre* or *-bri* derive from an ancient name ending in *-briga*.

This does not have to be true in all cases. However, a clear example is offered by the toponym *Alobre*, corresponding to a hillfort in the Arousa estuary. The name fully coincides with that of the *Alobrigaecini*, referred to in ancient epigraphy in the northwestern corner of the peninsula, but also to the great tribe of the *Alobrogi* in Gaul. This means that it is an ancient Celtic term, seen in areas as distant as Galicia, León and eastern Gaul, and one that has been maintained as a toponym to the present day. Its meaning is clear, something like 'those of the



Figure 4. Area of toponyms ending in *-briga* contrasted with those containing the element *ilu-*, meaning 'city', belonging to the Iberian languages of the Mediterranean region of the Peninsula.

other fortress', which fits well with the highly mobile nature of the Celts. Another example of toponymic continuity is provided by the name of the hillfort of San Cibrán de Las, where "Las" appears to be derived from the ancient name for the hillfort, *Lansbricae*, testified by an inscription found *in situ*. Also, the term *lans* is frequently found in other Celtic areas as a toponym, clearly in the second part of the composite Medio-lanum (= Milan), meaning "plain" or flat area, although not in the sense of a topographic description, but instead as a religious term, as the specific place where there was communication between men and gods.<sup>12</sup>

Another significant toponym is *Céltigos*, corresponding to a small village in the council of Ortigueira, which features a large hillfort with twin defensive ramparts, occupied in the centuries directly before the Roman conquest. The name is clear, although it may be argued that the name of this area, "of the Celts", distinguished it from others that were not so associated. This means that the toponym could indicate partial Celtic occupation, and much could be said about other toponyms that may be interpreted using Celtic languages. This is also true of any

process of invasion or imposition of culture, where a reduced human group settles in specific areas and imposes its culture on the inhabitants of large-scale territories. This was the case with the Romans in the western Empire, the Moors in the Iberian Peninsula and the Spanish in the Americas. However, the opposite also occurs, as in the case of the Germanic invaders of the Peninsula who adopted the Latin and Christian culture of the people they were invading. This does not appear to have been the case with the Celts, whose culture was hegemonic for some time in many of the areas they occupied.

Personal onomastics, or anthroponymy, presents other problems as well, particularly in relation to epigraphic documentation. Here there are also arguments pro and con. Some say that the imposition of a name is random, and that its meaning is not normally taken into consideration. Others affirm that the imposition of a name, particularly among individuals belonging to the social elite, implies the assumption of a certain type of agenda. The first situation is present in current western cultures. Yet even there this assumption does not always hold true. When taking office, for example, Catholic Popes adopt a name that alludes to the agenda they intend to follow. Another instance is the current king of Spain, Juan Carlos I, who preferred to name himself as the first of a lineage, instead of as Juan II, following on from a temporally distant mediaeval king of Castille.

In the case of Celtic populations, we have highly relevant examples of name changes. For instance, in the world of Irish legend, Setanta adopts the heroic name of Cuchulainn, "the dog of Culann", after killing the fierce dog of the blacksmith Culann. Along the same lines, it does not appear to be by chance that Titus Livius (XXXIV, 46, 4) refers to an individual who declared himself to be ruler of the Boyos, a Celtic tribe from the north of Italy, as calling himself Boiorix, meaning 'king of the Boyos', or that among the Gallic chieftains Vercingetorix called himself "king of the great warriors" or "supreme ruler of the warriors", whereas Diviciacus, the Druid ally of Caesar, bore a name that meant 'divine', while his brother and enemy Dumnorix called himself "king of the fortress". It is not likely that these were their original names. It rather seems that, as in the case of Cuchulainn, they adopted such names when required to do so by their social function or political agenda. We should not forget that in Rome, Caius Octavius, adopted by Caesar, assumed the name of his adoptive father, Julius Caesar, to continue the latter's political program.

Similarly, the anthroponyms seen in northwestern Iberian epigraphs that are related to the

social elite of that area may be seen to have parallels with the ogamic funerary inscriptions seen in Ireland, which can also be associated with the social elite, by bearing names related to divinities, animals (sacred or wild), plants and warfare that may be clearly interpreted in Celtic language terms. This was the case for C. Caraecius Fuscus, a priest from the Roman city of Aqua Flavia (Chaves, Portugal), who was Romanized, as may be seen in his three names: his *nomen*, Caraecius, is indigenous, while his *cognomen*, Fuscus, is Latin. Semantically, however, both names express the same idea, as the indigenous name is equivalent to that of Caraegius, a local magistrate recorded in the Spanish city of Palencia, or the Vetón name Caraeciquum, all three of which are related to the ogamic Irish Ceranus meaning "dark", the translation of the Latin *fuscus*. The idea of darkness or blackness in an anthroponym reappears in the northwest in the name of the prince of the Albioni, called Nicer (= *Níger* in Latin), which may adopt the form *Dov-* seen in some epigraphs from the northwest and in Irish names, both in ogamic epitaphs and in mythological characters related to the afterlife. Names presented as *Medugenus*, *Medigenius*, *Medicena*, etc., as in the famous Mount *Medulius* whose location is uncertain, is related to the Indo-European name for mead, *\*medhu*, to indicate "born in mead". *Latronus* and *Viriatius* have warlike connotations, as does *Camalus*, constructed from the root *\*kem-* that is present in Irish as *cam*, meaning "battle" or "combat", and present in the epithet of Mars found in Britannia, *Camulos*. *Caturo* adopts the root *\*kat-* which means "fight". Finally, *Eburius* or *Eburancus* together with the toponym *Ebora*, quoted by Pomponius Mela, are derived from the Celtic name for the yew tree, *eburo*, which was thought to have powerful magical qualities, and is found in an important number of anthroponyms, theonyms and toponyms. This is also the case with some modern French words derived from Gallic, as for example the word for yew in French, which can be traced to the Gallic-derived *if*.<sup>13</sup>

Theonyms offer another essential testimony. Here the aim is not to identify equivalences between names of gods in a specific region, in this case the northwestern peninsula, with gods from other Celtic regions. The aim is also to use this method to verify to what extent there was a common religion shared by Celtic populations in ancient times. As would be expected, in this case the testimonies available are also subject to controversy.

On the one hand, there are the names of gods found in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula and in other parts of the Celtic world. One name of particular interest is *Lucoubu* (Fig. 5), the



dative plural form of inscriptions found close to the city of Lugo, present in the ethnonymy of the Asturian *Luggei* or *Lugones* and in toponyms such as the numerous references to Lugdunum found in Gaul, all of which are related to the name of the great Celtic god Lug. Two additional inscriptions mention *Bormanico* (Fig. 6), clearly related to the epithet of the Celtic Apollo *Bormanus* or *Borbanus*, the Gallic version of the god of medicine, referred to in Irish mythology as *Dian Cécht*.<sup>14</sup> The denomination of the pan-Celtic god *Lugus* using the plural is seen throughout the ancient Celtic regions (Sterckx 1998: 98-101). *Cosus* is also well represented in the northwestern peninsula, and there is one instance of this name in the area close to Bourges in France, which is the ancient *Avaricum*, capital of the Biturigi.

However, there are other names of gods without any parallels. *Bandua* is one of the most frequently attested theonyms in the northwestern peninsula, but without parallels in any other regions. *Reve*, *Crouga* and many others are in the same situation, leading to diverse interpretations and, at the same time, supporting those who defend the absence of a Celtic presence or its marginal nature in populations in the northwestern peninsula. This problem is also directly related to the definition of the language spoken by pre-Roman inhabitants of the region, and requires a more specific examination.

### 3. The language: The distribution of Galaico-Lusitanian toponyms

The linguist and philologist J. Untermann is one of the leading academic authorities on the different pre-Roman languages spoken in the Iberian Peninsula as a whole, whether from the Indo-European family or not, and is also one of the foremost defenders of attributing the Celtic family of languages to the pre-Roman period in the north-western region (1985-1986; *supra* n. 2).



Figure 5. Inscription dedicated to *Lucoubu Arqui(en)o* (Otero de Rey, Lugo).



Figure 6. Inscription dedicated to *Bormanicus* from Caldas de Vizella (northern Portugal); dedications to this god are frequently found in Galia.

However, apart from this position, an interpretation derived from a complex linguistic study, we are interested in a previous piece of data established by J. Untermann that is as elemental as it is significant. This data is the existence of a so-called "area of Galaico-Lusitanian toponyms". In a well-defined area limited to the west and to the north by the ocean, to the south by the Tagus River and to the east by what would later become the 'silver route' stretching from Oviedo to Cáceres, theonyms that include those indicated above, as well as several others, are more or less uniformly found. In this same area may also be found the four examples of the Lusitanian language, two of which are unequivocally religious in content (Fig. 7).

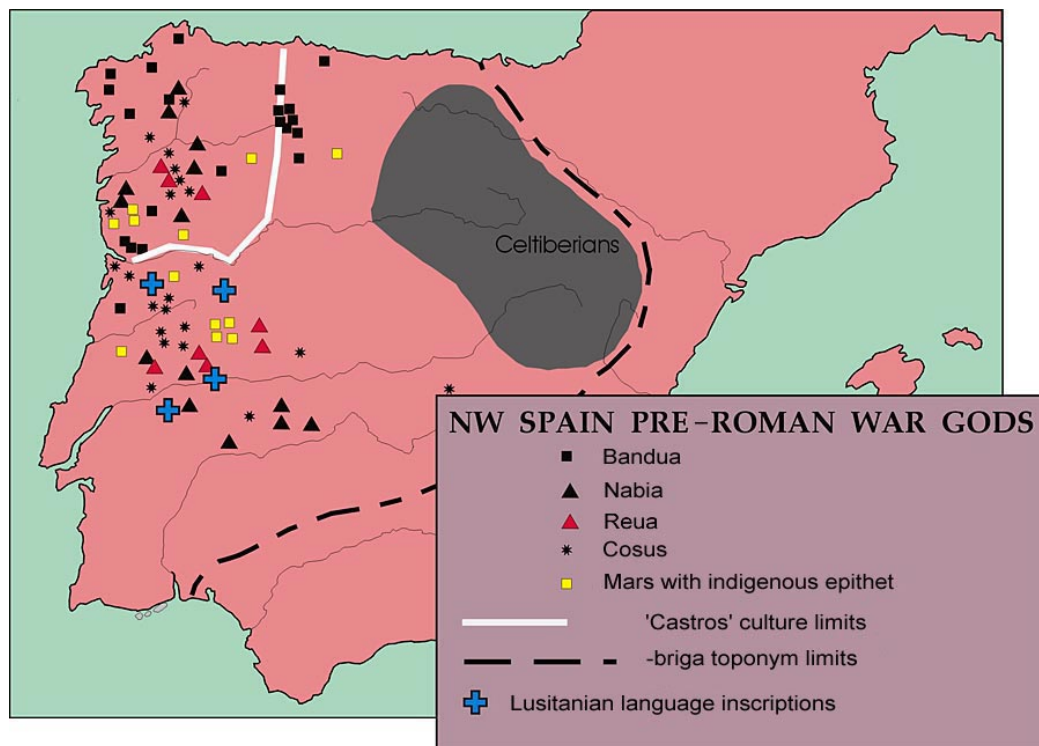


Figure 7. Area of Galaico-Lusitanian theonyms and distribution of Lusitanian inscriptions.

The Indo-European nature of the language reflected in these theonyms is beyond question, as is the trio mentioned in the Lusitanian inscription in Cabeço das Fraguas, related to the Roman *suovetaurilia*, the Greek *tryttis* and the Indian *sautramani*. This is a significant point because, independent of the precise linguistic family to which these testimonies may be related, they clearly reveal the Indo-European nature not only of the language, but also of the religious forms and culture in general that governed these populations.

It is important to note this, because those who suppress the Celtic issue in the historical interpretation of the pre-Roman northwestern Iberian Peninsula also tend to suppress the Indo-

European question at the same time. However, the situation of both issues is radically different: the first one is controversial, while the second is unassailable. This means that the Indo-European cultural factor must be a fundamental part of any interpretation, and ignoring it or avoiding it means leaving a relevant part of the information available without a plausible explanation.

Along the same lines, if we consider the Indo-European factor, we have to relate it to other contemporary Indo-European events that belonged to a similar social, economic and political horizon in western Europe. We must relate this fact to Celtic Europe as a whole, as it offers the closest possible comparative horizon. This means that even though we may hypothetically put ourselves in the position of archaeologists and linguists who reject the presence of Celts in this part of the Iberian Peninsula, the cultural features of these populations, being Indo-European, would have to be explained, at least partly, with the help of testimonies from the Celtic area.

Having said this, we will return to the theonyms not found in other parts of the Celtic world. Here there are also theonyms without parallels. Alongside a small nucleus of shared theonyms, there is also a vast quantity of unique theonyms, at a local level and not widespread. However, this does not mean that the Celts did not have a structured pantheon. On the contrary, written sources from Ireland, such as accounts of the *Second Battle of Mag Tuired*,<sup>15</sup> Caesar's description of the Gallic gods (*BG* VI, 17-18), and a number of epigraphs, including some from Hispania, such as the Lusitanian inscription in Cabeço das Fraguas (*infra*), reveal the existence of a pantheon structured by a handful of principal gods.

Yet the Celtic religion had an extremely well developed taste for epiclesis. This practice derives from a frequently observed fact in polytheist religions, which exhibit a tendency to avoid mentioning particular deities by their correct names, and often represent them in the iconography with the attributes that best correspond to their mythical definitions. This results in a constant search for newer and better names by which to refer to the same deities, and in many cases epigraphic theonyms, for example. This results in one of the possible epicleses of one god or another being listed, without the possibility of determining which god is being referred to.<sup>16</sup> An example of this would be a religious practice similar to references to the Virgin Mary in the Catholic rosary, or the knowledge that common women's names in Spain, such as Soledad, Amparo, Pura, Concha and many more are all ways of remembering and referring to the mother of Christ. Knowledge of Christian rites and reflections involving the Virgin Mary and Spanish

onomastic habits are what make it possible to make a correct identification. However, in the Celtic world we are unaware in many cases of the correspondences between names, the mythology involving one god or another, as well as the usages established and accepted in the construction and definition of the epithets offered to them.

For this reason, the correct approach involves making full use of the available information, particularly that which converts the extensive list of the unknown into the basis for a hermeneutic nihilism tinged with well-meaning critical spirit. In order to put an end to these linguistic issues, it is essential to define the position adopted in this study.

We have explained the historical perspective, which is neither linguistic nor archaeological, of our starting point. This means that we should not declare void any linguistic discussion beyond our area of competence, although it is necessary to know the terms of the debate and highlight the relevant historical consequences. Up to now we have done so by synthesizing evidence for the presence of the Celts in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, apart from linguistic issues, or by indicating the significant role of the Indo-European factor in establishing a cogent interpretation of the situation in the region in pre-Roman times.

It is therefore necessary to indicate the somewhat nominal nature, in our opinion, of the discussion offered by linguists. Their work involves identifying the pertinent features of a language and establishing its degree of similarity with other better-known languages. In this sense the basic facts are recognised by all linguists and are not disputed; for example, the fact that in Lusitanian the letter 'p' appears at the start of words, something not observed in the Celtic world as a whole, or that the conjunction *indi*, similar to the Germanic 'and' or 'und', also does not appear to be Celtic, to provide two simple examples. Elsewhere, an important feature of the Salamanca school of linguists, currently headed by Francisco Villar, is identifying the features that relate Lusitanian and other pre-Roman linguistic testimonies from the northwestern peninsula with Italic languages, including archaic forms of Latin.<sup>17</sup>

The really significant difference is in the interpretation of these facts. For some they suggest that Lusitanian has its roots firmly sunk in prehistory. For others, Lusitanian does not belong to any of the large families of established Indo-European languages. For the third group, there would be no problems with considering it part of the Celtic family of languages, as long as it were considered to be a less evolved or more primitive version of Celtic, due to its peripheral situation.

Given the perspective presented here, the simplest thing would be to shelter under the protective mantle of the erudition of J. Untermann and leave the linguists to argue among themselves. However, this comfortable position requires us to forget that all of the current linguistic interpretations are actually transformations into a historical discourse, more or less conscious, of a highly technical linguistic analysis developed from a series of limited and ambiguous sources. In this sense, the problem offered by all of these analyses is that they rely on a single category of information, primarily considered in linguistic terms, to reach a conclusion that operates within a different conceptual register. References to primitivism would have to be contrasted, for example, with archaeological information, at the same time that archaeological interpretations would have to abandon the anti-invasionist premises that have reigned in recent decades. It is true that these premises would have to be reconstructed on new foundations, in the same way that the conclusion of not belonging to the Celtic world would have to be contrasted with the sources already referred to, as well as others we will refer to shortly in this article.

Finally, linguists must use the existing documentary corpus as the foundation for their analyses, as no other method is possible. Yet they do not always draw attention to the extremely small number of samples available. There are only four inscriptions known in Lusitanian, one of which has been lost. The remaining testimonies are onomastic, in the context of ancient Latin epigraphy, or toponymic and seen in documents of varying antiquity. The wide range of interpretations that exist are based on this highly succinct corpus; in other words, the less that is known, the greater the number of theories possible.

However, we will follow a different path. We will attempt to present new testimonies susceptible to the discovery of a possible interpretation, drawing parallels with the Celtic world as a whole, not so much because it is Celtic, but rather because it is the closest and best known Indo-European horizon to which the pre-Roman populations in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula belonged. If we find that it is relevant to use the Celtic world as a resource for this purpose, then we will have supported the argument of those linguists who defend the Celtic option, but not because we take this as an *a priori* argument.

#### **4. Aspects of Celtic ideology in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula**

Apart from the direct evidence of the presence of Celts in the pre-Roman northwestern Iberian Peninsula, there are other indirect sources that corroborate this. That said, the fact that

they are indirect sources, and recognised as such, does not detract from their worth, and may even be said to add to it. If literary testimony in the form of Classical ethnography reveals the distance, the doubts or the lack of knowledge of the author with regard to what he is describing, but which at the same time appears in independent sources as a motif found in Celtic culture in other locations, then we may believe that we are faced with trustworthy testimony, even if those who transmitted it were not aware of all of its cultural implications.<sup>18</sup>

The same may be said of some archaeological data. One of the results of more recent investigations has been the discovery of sites whose interpretation in terms of Celtic religious ideology appears to be overwhelming. Sites in themselves are mute, obviously, although in this case turning to Celtic parallels may offer potential explanations for some of their characteristics.

In this sense, the information contributed by historical anthropology to the knowledge of the Celtic presence in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula consists of a series of partial studies, referring to a small text or a range of texts, or to a type of archaeological remnant, whose global meaning is made clear with parallels drawn from throughout the Celtic world. None of these studies are conclusive, due to their own limits. However, the passage of time has made it possible to create complex and articulate sequences of historical knowledge about religious, ideological and institutional aspects of this region, explained in reference to the Celtic world.

#### 4.1. Celtic royalty in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula: myth and ritual

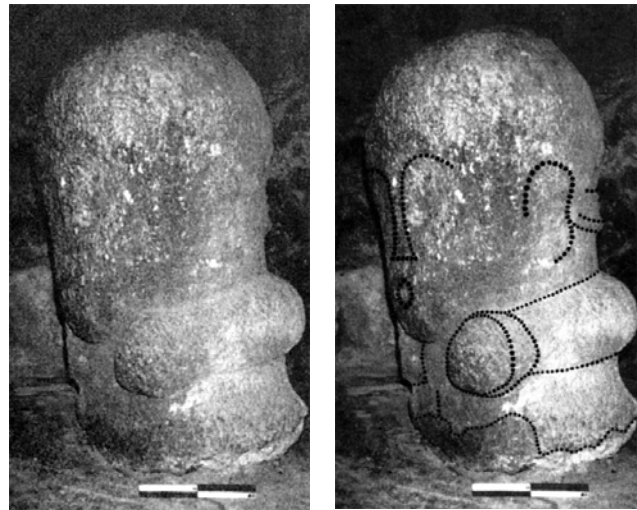
A series of heterogeneous testimonies (literary, archaeological and folkloric) may be interpreted by considering different aspects of Celtic royalty. It is important to mention that when, in this context, we refer to kings in the Celtic world, these had little to do with the social, institutional and political image of European monarchs from the mediaeval period to the present day, or even with the models offered by Hellenistic royalty or the Roman emperors. The Celtic kings are a particular manifestation of the figure of the Indo-European king. They were characterised by the contrast they presented between their limited effective power and the strength of the ideology at their disposal. Their capacity for command was derived from their efficiency as redistributors of resources that were often obtained by force, as above all they were warrior chiefs crowned for their successes. Thus, it is not surprising to see the presence of numerous kings, each of them ruling over a very small territory, although there can be no doubt that they were kings, as sources referring to them used terms derived from the root *\*reg*, although in these cases they are duly hierarchized.

In the northwestern peninsula, there are references to individuals described as chiefs, whose functions are not clearly defined and who may or may not have had the indicated attributes of kings. There are also a series of outstanding references regarding the Lusitanian chieftain Viriatus, which attribute to him the precise features of a Celtic king. Other archaeological evidence reinforces this conclusion, by identifying part of the ritual sequence of investiture of these kings. Let us begin therefore with Viriatus, whom we will examine more closely below.

#### 4.1.1. Viriatus, the model Celtic king

Viriatus was the head of the Lusitanian resistance that fought against the Roman legions until the middle of the second century BC. He is known thanks to a series of relatively important texts. Many of these refer to his military feats, whereas others present a moral portrait of his personality, and relate episodes of his life that are suffused with legend. These are the texts that interest us.<sup>19</sup>

It is true that references to Viriatus lead us away from the northwestern part of the peninsula, as his military feats mainly took place in the south. However, the name Viriatus has two different yet concordant etymologies: it may derive from the Indo-European root *\*uiros*, "man", and evoke notions of strength and virility, or from *\*uei-*, present in the *viriae* or Celtiberian "twisted armbands" worn by warriors (Pliny XXIII, 39). *Viriatus* is therefore equivalent



Figures 8a, b. The Warrior of Ralle (Taboada, Lugo), wearing a large torque (Fernández Carballo, 2001).

to the Latin *Torquatus*, he who wears the torques, a symbol of courage. Torques, or neckrings, apart from being one of the most outstanding metal objects found in the hillfort culture, are represented in statues of Galaic warriors (Figs. 8a, b), and the name *Virius* is seen in other parts of the northwest as well. The episode concerning Viriatus' wedding also has a precise structural equivalent in Galician folklore.<sup>20</sup> We will therefore consider the ideology surrounding Viriatus as representative of Celtic Iberia as a whole.

This ideology is derived from the Indo-European theme of royalty as the synthesis of the

three ideological functions identified by G. Dumézil (1898-1986). The trifunctional ideology is present in numerous manifestations of social life, including the organisation of the pantheon and its hierarchy, matrimony, or the position of individuals in society. It is organised around three general principles or hierarchized functions. The first function, which we will call (F1), groups together themes concerning the magical and cosmological aspects of the world order and the manifestations of this order among humans (agreements, pledges, etc); in social terms, it is formed by the priests and the king, who is chosen from among the warrior caste. The second function, referred to here as (F2), is organised around strength and protection and is represented socially by warriors. The third function, here designated as (F3), is connected with the reproduction of society in all of its facets, from sexual unions to the preservation and production of harvests and herds of animals, and in general to abundance and important quantities; socially, this is the activity of the producers.

We may start by exploring the texts that present Viriatus passing through three different phases throughout his life. Diodorus of Sicily, our oldest testimony, refers to Viriatus in some of the fragments preserved from Book XXXIII of his *Bibliotheca Historica*. The first offers a portrait of Viriatus and a summary of his life's works. The text is extremely long-winded, but the functional purpose of each stage may be seen without difficulty. Viriatus was a shepherd in his youth, and the austerity of his life made him physically strong (a denigrated version of motif F3). He fought against animals and wild beasts until a great crowd chose him as their chieftain, and he immediately surrounded himself with a band of thieves (F2), showing himself to be an honourable and competent military commander. Finally, he proclaimed himself the legitimate chieftain, renouncing his position as the head of the group of thieves, and set out to wage war against the Romans (F1, the transition from warrior to king).

A similar trifunctional order appears in the description of Viriatus offered by Cassius Dio. The opening formula sums up the text of Diodorus mentioned above (and the same in Florus, I, 33, 15), with the sequence of a trifunctional life. An explanation is then offered of Viriatus's qualities as a warrior (F2), his austerity (F3 denigrated) and his intelligence (F1). The text ends with an evocation of the 'three sins of the warrior' that Viriatus avoided. It is also interesting to note that the structure of this tale coincides with that of an Irish text. This is the so-called 'pillow dispute' that starts the Irish epic *Táin Bó Cuailnge*. There Queen Medb lists her own qualities and those of her husband and king of Ireland: "I was the most noble and distinguished of all [her



sisters] (F1). I was the best in terms of grace and generosity (F3). I was the best in combat, battle and fighting (F2)... It was I who asked for a buying price that no other woman would have asked of an Irish man, that is to say, a man without avarice (F3), without jealousy (F1) and without fear (F2)". She then clearly defines each quality, and ends up by repeating the three qualities she finds in Aillil, whom she takes as her husband.

Furthermore, in Diodorus, Cassius Dio and Florus, we find a biography that is really a moral portrait of Viriatus according to these three functions. This structure coincides with the biographies of other great founders of Indo-European tribes and royal houses, such as the Persian Cyrus or the Roman Romulus. The text of Cassius Dio is equivalent, in the way it structures the trifunctional series, to the portrait of the "good king" of Ireland. And so, although we may seek out a common literary source for the texts about Viriatus - for example, the Greek philosopher and scholar Poseidonius - the parallels found in ancient Roman, Persian and Irish texts suggest that Poseidonius knew about a portrayal of Viriatus from an indigenous local source, not only of Indo-European origin, but closely tied to the Celtic world, as the Irish parallel is the nearest to the Viriatus legend.

There are also writings about our hero on the subject of the three sins of the warrior. Cassius Dio ends the previously quoted passage with a description of Viriatus the warrior as "without any desire for wealth, dynastic ambition and without rage... instead with a love of fighting and combat" (XXII, fr. 73, 4). In this way he refers to the three possible failings of the Indo-European warrior, consisting of sins against each function - the desire for wealth, to usurp reigning sovereigns and an excess of rage (a sin opposed to that of the 'good war') - as being erased in Viriatus' personality. This is reiterated by Diodorus (XXXIII 7, 3) when he affirms that Viriatus was outstanding for his sobriety (*autarkeia*), which made him independent of the servitude of F3; his preference for liberty (*eleuthéria*), which was a radical affirmation of sovereignty (F1) and his bravery (*andreía*) (F2). These texts situate Viriatus in a category of royalty defined according to Indo-European principles. This is explained if the Classical texts that have come down to us were derived from Lusitanian sources.

To this series also belongs an episode referring to Viriatus's wedding, as told by Diodorus. It is an episode narrated by Lusitanians - the rite is not Greek - which is transmitted via Hellenic language and expressions. In general terms, Indo-European ideology considers three types of marriage. Some are of special religious importance, and require the acceptance of the

guardian parents of the bride (F1); others derive from the capture of the bride, or from the mutual consent of the couple to be married (F2); finally, there are marriages with a circulation of goods, or with a representation of the bride being purchased (F3).

Firstly, Viriatus complains that Astoplas, his brother-in-law, had not offered him any kind of gift (F3). Tensions arise at the banquet, and the wedding continues when Viriatus orders his companions to bring him his wife, as if she were being captured (F2). Finally, Viriatus carries out religious ceremonies and takes his wife to share his residence (F1). And so the marriage is consummated when he takes the final step in a series of three, each defined by a precise and distinctly different ideological focus. G. Dumézil had previously found a similar structure in the union between young Romans and Sabine women, although he considered this to be an exceptional case, as other myths that invoked the trifunctional ideology of marriage presented a hero who married three different women according to the correct manners for each function.

However, in a series of Irish texts, the hero consummates his marriage when he takes the final step in a series of three, as is the case with Viriatus. Two examples are isolated episodes from the *Courtship of Etain*, in which the sovereignty of Ireland is at stake. In both, the Dagda, supreme king of Ireland, attempts to find a wife for his son who will guarantee the royal lineage. The episode told in the metric *Dindshenchas* focuses on the Dagda handing over the sovereignty of one region, called Mag Fliuchrois, to Aedh.<sup>21</sup> In the *Dream of Oengus* the subject is more veiled, subsumed under the apparent consummation of a passionate love affair.<sup>22</sup>

However, in line with Irish ideology, sovereignty was always represented as a woman who transmitted it to the man who was with her at all times (as in the episode of the 'pillow dispute' referred to previously). In the *Dindshenchas*, Aedh, in order to assume power, must marry the wife of the warrior Codhal, chieftain of Mag Fliuchrois. In the *Dream of Oengus*, the woman, only daughter of a king, appears before Oengus in a dream, arousing his passion. The subject of the tale is how this passion is consummated, although in the background is the problem of sovereignty in a region without a male heir. In both cases a situation arises in which judicial aspects are key, and introduce the trifunctional theme.

Aedh and Oengus seek stable unions, although complications arise as a result of an initial rejection. In both cases the aim is to seek the agreement of the woman (metric *Dindshenchas*) or of her father (*Dream of Oengus*), characteristic of F1 marriages. The failure of this initiative leads to war (F2). This ends with an agreement with the forms of F3. The first episode presents

an economic compensation that has a meaning as the price of the bride, typical of Irish marriages, but which is absent in the *Dream of Oengus*, which ends with the couple sleeping together after taking on the appearance of swans. In both cases, the marriage is only established after a third and final stage within the order of the three functions.

The "Melodies of the House of Buchet" (*Esnada Tige Buchet*) provides the third Irish case,<sup>23</sup> recounting how Buchet of Leinster had Eithne, daughter of Cahaer Mór, king of Ireland. However, the twelve sons of the king and their courtiers frequently came to stay at their home, and Buchet protested before the king about how they were impoverishing him. As he was not offered any form of compensation, he fled with his wife and Eithne to Kells. One day Cormac, who was not yet king, saw the young Eithne and was captivated by her. He then sent a message to Buchet, asking for her hand in marriage (F1), without success. The following night she was taken by force to Cormac, and spent the night alone with him (F2). Finally, Eithne did not accept Cormac until he paid the price for his bride to Buchet (F3).

We will end this section with review of comparable tales in Galicia. The folklore of a small Galician region explains the origin of its name, Xurenzás (in the local county of Boborás, in the province of Ourense), as a result of the marriage between Zas, a magician who lived in a place with esoteric carvings and letters (an allusion to petroglyphs), and the daughter of an anonymous warrior who lived in a strongly defended hillfort. This marriage also culminates in a triple sequence: firstly Zas attempted to buy her (F3) without success; he then enchanted the young woman, whereupon her father challenged him to a duel (F2), but the warrior was defeated by Zas, and forced to swear on his victor's name, in the Galician language 'Xuro en Zas' (I swear by Zas) (F1), leading to the popular etymology of the place.

We therefore have four parallels to the structure of Viratus's marriage. The example of this type of marriage identified by Dumézil originates in Rome. The rape of the Sabine women (F2) is associated with the compromise to sacralize the unions (F1). Open war continues between the Romans and the Sabines, but the women choose to remain together with their captors (Titus Livius, I, 13, 1-3). A peace agreement is then reached, integrating the Sabines in Rome and the Romans as a pacific group, adopting the name of *Quirites* (F3).

There is an essential similarity in the Lusitanian, Galician, Roman and Irish texts. Only in Lusitania is any express mention of sovereignty absent, a concept that is present in Rome through the constitution of a political community, and in Ireland through the union of the

pretender to royalty with women who personify sovereignty. We therefore suggest that these ideas are contained in Diodorus' text about the marriage of Viriatus. His wedding in three stages is as necessary for Viriatus as for the sons of Dagda who aspire to become royalty, or for the young bachelors of early Rome. Without this marriage, the social order cannot be maintained.

The difference between the Lusitanian episode and the others occurs in F3. In Rome, Ireland and Galicia, there is a final agreement that is lacking in Lusitania. Yet this divergence is consistent with the ethnographic and historical context: the wealth of Astoplas calls for a peace which, for Viriatus, is equivalent to submission to Rome. However, as the social depository of F3, Astoplas ultimately obtains the woman (like the Sabines, the enemies of Dagda's sons, Buchet or the anonymous warrior of Xurenzás), the reproductive force of the community that guarantees its survival. Viriatus does without the wealth in F3, but needs the fecundity.

In sum, the parallels brought together to explain the most significant episodes of the life of Viriatus transmitted by Classical, particularly Greek, sources reflect an ideology associated with royalty that has Indo-European roots. Yet it would mean twisting the facts if we limited ourselves to this conclusion, without recognising that the clearest, most significant and articulate parallels come from Irish mythology. This said, as it does not appear possible that there was a relationship between Greek ethnographers and medieval compilers of Irish mythology, the only plausible explanation is a common origin of the structures that articulate the tales we read, and that these structures are the Celtic adaptations of a more general Indo-European theme, the conception of royalty as a synthesis of the three functions described above.

#### **4.1.2. Archaeological vestiges of the rites of royal investiture**

There are other sources in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula that may be interpreted as a reflection of Celtic types of royalty. They differ in some ways from the previous examples, as on the one hand we have a peculiar form of Galician petroglyph, and on the other a folklore tradition whose significance for the interpretation of ancient motifs is only gradually being recognised.<sup>24</sup>

The carvings referred to above are quite clear. They are footprints, bare or shod, left or right feet, isolated or grouped together in different ways (Figs. 9, 27). Apart from the carvings themselves, we are interested in the fact that these footprints may be clearly identified and correspond to a normal adult, in contrast to those related to traditions based on other footprints,

widespread and often attributed to saints or Christ, but which when examined only bear a vague resemblance to human footprints. These are also situated in points in the landscape where visibility is an important feature, and are carved in such a way that in some cases it is possible to turn around towards the horizon, or least towards areas of greater visibility, if the observer successively places their feet in the different carved footprints.

The footprint in the county of Cabanas (in the province of A Coruña) is possibly the result of natural erosion but is similar in shape to carved footprints and appears on a so-called 'Election Stone' (Fig. 10). This is a large rock overlooking the Eume estuary that is mentioned in a small folkloric *aition*, collected at the end of the 1990s. According to these accounts, in ancient times mayors were inducted upon the stone and a bagpiper could be heard playing upon it on midsummer's eve. This information orients the interpretation of other carved footprints as places where local Celtic sovereigns were invested, while at the same time they offer a 'text' that may be compared to others that also refer to the investiture of sovereigns throughout Europe, which differ from the official methods sanctioned by the Church.

In effect, traditions from Ireland and Scotland, as in Galicia sometimes associated with the presence of carved footprints on rocks, indicate that these were places where local kings or chieftains were invested. Other forms of this rite have been observed in Brest and Auvergne in modern times. The person being invested must place their foot upon the carved footprint (attributed to the founder of the royal lineage), in order to indicate that the tradition is to be



Figure 9. Petroglyphs with podomorphs in Monteferro (Vigo, Pontevedra).



Figure 10. View of the 'Election Stone' (Cabanas, A Coruña), with foot-shaped carvings.

continued. In other cases the person elected must take a series of steps that involve taking in the landscape as a whole, as is the case in Auvergne, and in a parallel ritual further afield, in part of an investiture ritual documented in India known as the *digvyasthapanam* or "ascension to the rooms of space", whereby the person being invested must take four steps towards the four cardinal points, representing the totality of the world and the social order.

A latent sense of all of these rituals is even present in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, consisting of an imitation of sexual union between the sovereign and the land he is to rule over, explicit in the Celtic tradition in the *Mabinogi of Math*, when it presents the figure of the virgin charged with holding the king's feet on her lap as the person in whom the fecundity of the kingdom is deposited.<sup>25</sup> In effect, in a carving in the Peña de Santa María (Iruelos del Mesón Nuevo, province of Salamanca), the bare footprints have a penis and testicles carved between them, making explicit the relationship that in other places is latent (Fig. 11).



Figure 11. Petroglyph of Peña de Santa María (Iruelos del Mesón Nuevo, Salamanca)(Benito del Rey and Grande del Brío 2000: 122-127).

Therefore, two dissimilar types of sources, Greek ethnographic texts about Viriatus and a series of carvings in the shape of feet, have folkloric parallels in the twentieth century in Galicia. These parallels make it possible to insert them in a comparative series, which uses the resource of the Irish traditions as well as Celtic traditions more generally. Furthermore, in a totally different way, both testimonies refer to the Celtic ideology of royalty and its ritual manifestations, making it possible to suggest that this ideology was widespread in the pre-Roman northwestern Iberian Peninsula.

#### 4.2. Lusitanian sacrifice

If the ideology of royalty presented here was the basis of social order for Indo-European peoples, an examination of Lusitanian sacrifices reveals the figure of the druid. However, this social category does not appear explicitly, and only the process of analysis can reveal his presence. To do this we will first consider three basic texts about sacrifice that have the peculiarity of being written in three different languages (see p. 528 and Figs. 12, 13).<sup>26</sup>





Figure 12. Rock inscription in the Lusitanian language and the Latin script from Cabeço das Fráguas (Sabugal, Guarda).

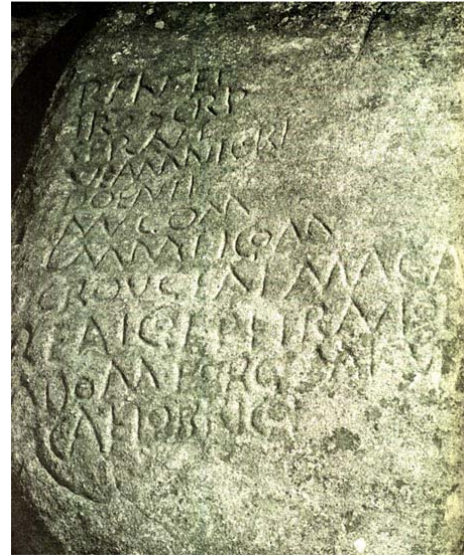


Figure 13. Rock inscription from Lamas de Moledo (Castro Daire, Viseu) (Búa 1999: 321).

The first two texts reflect the presence in Lusitania of an animal species hierarchy common among the Indo-Europeans, which is found in Roman contexts as well. These animals are usually related to deities, making it possible to comprehend, in this case, the relative hierarchy of gods whose myths are otherwise unknown. The inscription shown in Figure 13 is bilingual, in Latin and Lusitanian. According to C. Búa (1999: 321), it reads as follows:

RVFINVS . ET  
TIRO SCRIP  
SERVNT

VAMNICORI  
DOENTI  
ANGOM  
LAMATIGOM  
CROVGAI MAGA  
REAIGOI . PETRANIOI . T  
ADOM . PORGOMIOVEA  
CAIELOBRIGOI

The epigraphs mention the inferior species of the Indo-European hierarchy of sacrificial animals. Strabo describes the two most valuable species of the series, horses and men. Where sacrifices of horses and humans are seen (in India and Rome), these are carried out using similar rituals. Strabo's text only explains the human sacrifice, although a testimony by Polybius (XII 4b, 3), probably describing Celtic populations, refers to the same procedure carried out with horses. This testimony is significant, because when Diodorus describes human sacrifices carried out by

druids in Gaul, he outlines a similar procedure to that described by Strabo among the Lusitanians.

**1. Lusitanian, inscription at Cabeço das Fraguas (Guarda), translation by Ch.-J. Guyonvarc'h**  
OILAM TREBOPALA / INDI PORCOM LAEBO / COMMAIAM ICCONA LOIM / INNA OILAM  
USSEAM / TREBARUNE INDI TAUROM // IFADEN [.../ REUE [...]

A sheep [lamb?] for Trebopala [= "Rock of residence"] and a pig for Laebo, [a sheep] of the same age for Icona Loiminna, a one year old sheep for Trebaruna and a fertile bull... for Reve...

**2. Latin, sacrificial offering in Peñafiel (Oporto), reading and translation by P. Le Roux<sup>27</sup>**  
O(mnia) V(ota ?) C (onsecro ?) ET NIM(bifero) DANIGO / M(acto ?) NABIAE CORONAE VA /  
CCA(m), BOVEM, NABIAE, AGNU(m) / IOVI AGNUM BOVE(m) LA / CT(entem) [...]URGO  
AGNU[l(um)] ? [I]DAE COR(onam) // ANN(o) ET [D]OM(o) ACTUM V ID(us) APR(iles) LA / RGO  
ET MESALLINO CO(n)S(ulibus), CURATOR(ibus) / LUCRETIO VITULLINO LUCRETIO SAB /  
INO POSTUMO PEREGRINO.

All of these offerings I consecrate to you, and by Danigo who brings the rains I sacrifice to Nabia Corona a cow and an ox, to Nabia a lamb, to Jupiter a lamb and a calf, to [...]jurgus a young lamb and to Ida a crown. Made in the year and in the *domus* on the fifth day of the ides of April, under the consulate of Largo and Mes(s)alino, with the commanders Lucrecio Vitulino and Lucrecio Sabino Postumo Peregrino.

### **3. Greek, the sacrifices of the Lusitanians, in Strabo, III 3, 6-7**

θυτικοὶ δ' εἰσὶ Λυσιτανοί, τὰ τε σπλάγχνα ἐπιβλέπουσιν, οὐκ ἐκτέμνοντες·  
προσεπιβλέπουσι δὲ καὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ πλευρᾷ φλέβας, καὶ ψηλαφῶντες δὲ τεκμαίρονται.  
Σπλαγχνεύονται δὲ καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπων αἰχμαλώτων, καλύπτοντες σάγοις· εἴθ' ὅταν πληγῇ ὑπὸ τὰ  
σπλάγχνα ὑπὸ τοῦ ἱεροσκόπου, μαντεύονται πρῶτον ἐκ τοῦ πτώματος. Τῶν  
δ' ἀλόντων τὰς χεῖρας ἀποκόπτοντες τὰς δεξιὰς ἀνατιθέασιν... καὶ τῷ Ἄρει τράγων  
θύουσι καὶ τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους καὶ ἵππους.

The Lusitanians are given to offering sacrifices, and they inspect the vitals, without cutting them out. Besides, they also inspect the veins on the side of the victim; and the divine by the tokens of touch, too. They prophesy through means of the vitals of human beings also, prisoners of war, whom they first cover with coarse cloaks, and then, when the victim has been struck beneath the vitals by the diviner, they draw their first auguries from the fall of the victim. And they cut off the right hands of their captives and set them up as an offering to the gods... And to Ares they sacrifice a he-goat, and also the prisoners and horses.

Thus, in the Celtic nations the druids carried out sacrifices for a number of reasons following procedures that we can see in the sacrifices of the Lusitanians, although there is no specific mention of druids. It is difficult, however, to consider that the main figure was anyone other than a druid. This absence may be explained if we consider that the dominant Classical ethnographies and historiographies avoided the topic of religious issues. This means that what we know about druids in Gaul is more significant, thanks to Poseidonius of Apamea and other



authors, than what we do not know about the religion of many other peoples known to the Romans and Greeks.

There is also archaeological evidence for the importance of sacrifices, including votive axes from Cariño in A Coruña (Figs. 14a, b) and another in the Museum of Pontevedra. Both are related to other *ex votos* displaying scenes of sacrifices in the collections of the Institute of Valencia de Don Juan in Madrid, and in Castedo de Moreira and Guimarães in Portugal (Figs. 15a, b, c).



Figures 14a, b. Small votive axe from Cariño at the Castillo de San Antón Museum (A Coruña): a) general view; b) detail showing torques in the section where the blade joins the handle; on the opposite side is a *caetra*, the typical shield of indigenous warriors.

In all of these cases the importance of sacrifice is clear, although it is difficult to recognise with any precision the species represented, except for the ox in the case of the axe from Cariño. Also, the unequivocal figurative association of sacrificial scenes with the representation of torques evokes, in a way that is difficult to argue against, a Celtic ideological and religious universe.

#### 4.3. Echoes of Celtic mythology

If, in spite of the difficulties referred to, we consider it possible that druids were present among the Lusitanians, this hypothesis is also supported by texts whose Celtic tone would be difficult to explain without the presence of a common caste of priests, responsible for its maintenance and diffusion.

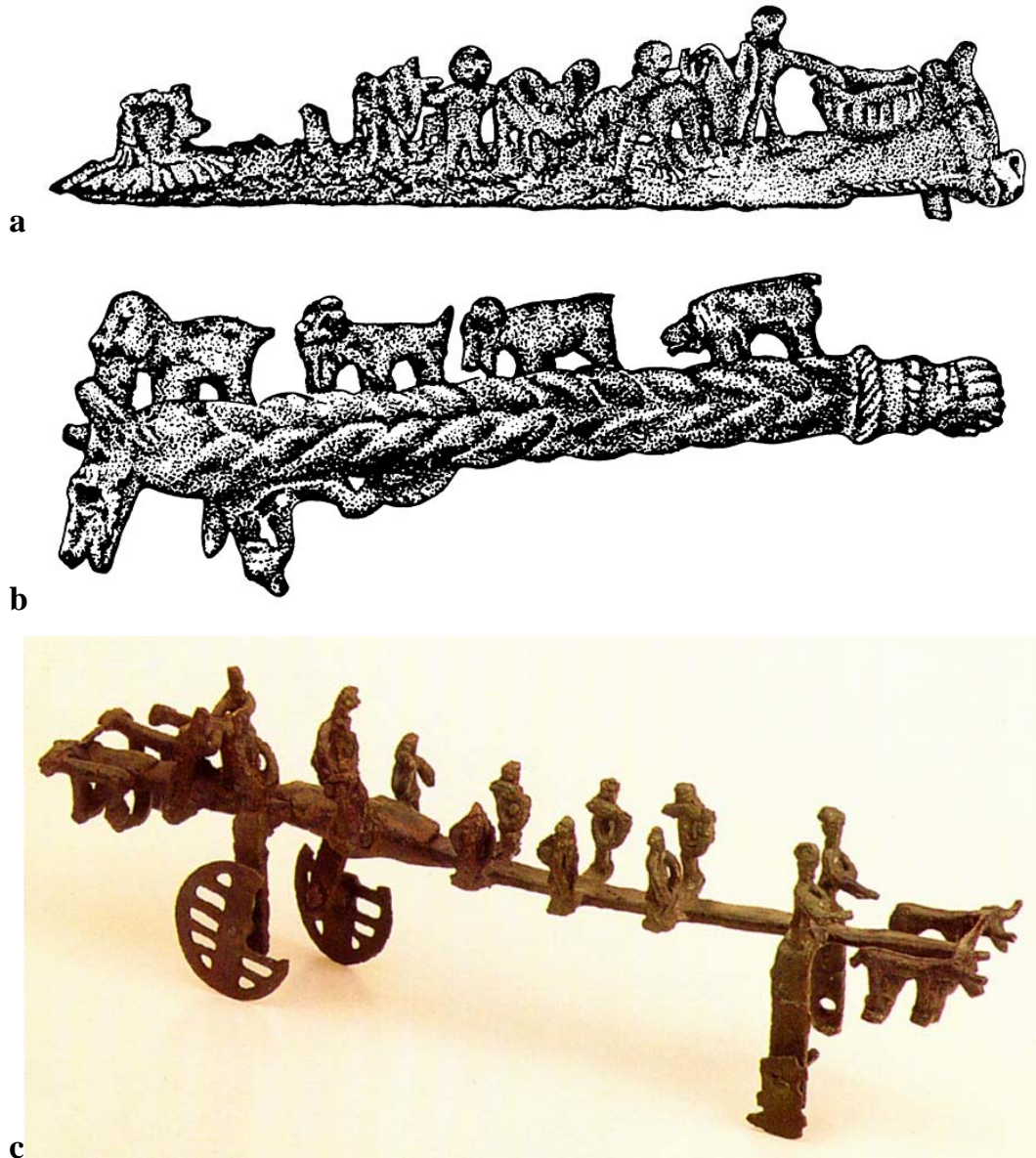


Figure 15a, b, c. *Ex votos* depicting religious scenes: a) Bronze at the Valencia de Don Juan Institute (Madrid); b) Bronze from Castelo de Moreira (Celorico de Basto, Minho); and c) votive carriage from Guimarães (Portugal).

#### 4.3.1. The River of Oblivion and the Gates of Hell

We will start with the passage in which Strabo offers an explanation of the population of Galicia:<sup>28</sup>

The Artabrians, who live in the neighbourhood of the cape called Nerium, which is the end of both the western and the northern side of Iberia. But the country round about the cape itself is inhabited by Κελτικοί, kinsmen of those on the Anas [= Guadiana]; for these people and the Turdulians made an expedition thither and then had a quarrel, it is said, after they crossed the Limaeas river; and when, in addition to the quarrel, the Celtic

peoples also suffered the loss of their chieftain, they scattered and stayed there; and it was from this circumstance that the Limaeas was also called the River of Ἀήθης (*Geografia* III, 3, 5; H.L. Jones translation).

Titus Livius and Florus make a similar point when they describe the attempted revolt of the army of D. Junius Brutus during the campaign of 137 BC as he led the first Roman expedition towards the northwestern Iberian Peninsula. Before commenting on that passage, however, let us examine how the Irish explained the arrival of St. Patrick in their island:

They all left from among the Bretons of Alclud by the sea of Wight towards the south in a voyage towards the land of the Armorican Bretons, that is the Bretons of Letha, as at that time they had brothers there... it was at this time that the seven sons of Sechtmaide, king of Brittany, were exiled (far) from Brittany. They made a great expedition against the Armorican Bretons, where Patrick was with his family, there they killed Calpurn (Patrick's father) and took Patrick and Lupait (his sister) with them to Ireland (MS Life of St Patrick, preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, Ch.-J. Guyonvarc'h translation).

Elsewhere, the Welsh legend entitled *The Dream of Maxen Wledig* tells of the adventures of a Roman emperor, Maxen Wledig, who dreamt of a marvellous princess whom he sought out and found in Britannia.<sup>29</sup> She was called Elen Lluyddawc, the "driver of armies", and he married her. But he had forgotten Rome, and so he continued with his conquest, providing Britannia with legions that never returned. This army populated the *Llydaw*, the land of the dead.

Also, in Gaul a goddess named *Litavis* appears (*CIL* XIII 5599, 5600, 5603, 2887, 5598 etc.) while among the Celts of Italy the Roman consul Postumius perished together with his army in the year 216 BC in an enchanted forest called *Litana* (Titus Livius, XXIII, 24, 7).

Ch.-J. Guyonvarc'h explains that the Irish *Letha*, the Welsh *Llydaw*, and the Gallic forms *Litavis* and *Litana*, all refer to the Celtic afterlife, reconstructed with the form *\*Letavia*.<sup>30</sup> *Lethes* in Strabo's Greek means 'oblivion', although it may also transmit a term in a local language that was incorrectly understood by the Greeks and Romans, who phonetically identified it with a familiar word. If we add to this the fact that the river *Lethes* forms part of Greek representations of the afterlife, it may be understood that the phonetic 'slide' from the local form for *\*Letavia* to the form *Lethes*, was something quite straightforward.

But we do not have to rely on a single word to support this idea. Strabo's tale contains echoes of others. In a place named *\*Letavia* the armies died, did not return and were lost; this is where Patrick lost his family and was taken prisoner, a distant territory visited by fully equipped warriors. It is therefore very likely that the theme taken up by Strabo is a Hispanic version of a

pan-Celtic myth explaining ideas about the afterlife. This interpretation is further supported when considering the Diadem of Mones from Asturias, dated to around 125 BC.

In this image we see warriors armed in the same way as stone statues from this region, consistent with descriptions from literary texts. There are also characters bearing two cooking pots each. The scene is completed with marine animals filling in gaps in a type of *horror vacui* (Fig. 16). F. Marco<sup>31</sup> has argued that each of these elements belongs to the Celtic iconography of the afterlife, situated in islands beyond the sea. In this place social hierarchies disappeared, and those who reached their shores ate wonderful, abundant delicacies and drank heady beverages. In the tales examined, *\*Letavia* is also situated beyond the sea (in the episodes of Patrick and Maxen Wledig), while in the northwestern peninsula it is reached by crossing a river). Warriors who went there would never return, living without any type of hierarchy (there is a particular emphasis on chieftains or parents who had died or disappeared).

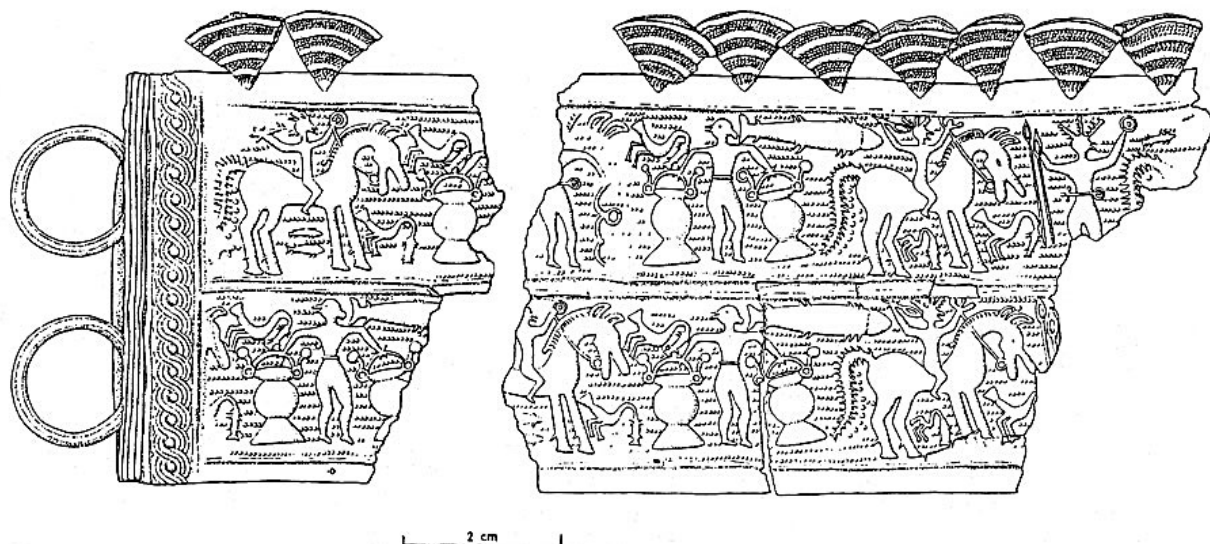


Figure 16. Gold diadem from Mones (Asturias), representing a scene of communication with the afterlife in Celtic style (illustration by Anxo R. Paz).

And so the passage from Strabo about the river of Oblivion and the iconography of the Diadem of Mones may be understood within the framework of Celtic culture. Both bear witness in different ways to the presence of Celtic categories about the afterlife among the inhabitants of the hillforts.

#### 4.3.2. Myths and rituals about the sun born from the sea

Here we will pause and examine an episode in which the army of D. Junius Brutus ended its march northwards. After the attempted rebellion on crossing the Limia River had been put

down, Brutus halted his advance towards the banks of the Miño River while his soldiers watched in horror as the sun set in the sea, setting its waters ablaze and growing in size, causing panic among them and leading them to flee homewards (Florus, I 33, 12).

This piece of information partially coincides with an ethnographic report about the Holy Promontory, the ancient name of Cape St. Vincent at the southwestern tip of the peninsula, and the home of the Celts of the Anas, as described by Strabo:<sup>32</sup>

It is not true that there is a sanctuary of Hercules - a lie told by Ephorus - nor an altar, not even for another god. On the contrary, in several places there were groups of three or four stones that were turned on arriving at them, according to the local custom, and were moved after offering a libation. It is not permitted to make sacrifices nor to go in the night, as then the place is occupied by the gods. Travellers visiting the place have to spend the night in a nearby village, go during the day and take water with them (III 1, 4 and 5).

An astronomical discussion follows, in which Strabo, following on from Poseidonius, rejects the observation of Artemidorus:

There is nothing true in other parts of his description...[of Artemidorus and others], which says that in the regions bordering the Ocean the sun is seen to be bigger when it sets, when it sinks with a whistle similar to that that would be made by the sea as if it were being put out on sinking in its waters...Artemidorus...says that the sun is one hundred times larger at the moment it sets and that night falls immediately...there is no other place on the shores of the Ocean where he could have made such an observation.

It would therefore appear that the more succinct version of Florus and Strabo's more prolific version are two ways of saying the same things in two extreme points of the Atlantic coast of the Peninsula. In both places specific rituals were carried out, and unsettling observations were made about the behaviour of the sun, which 'feeds' or grows larger on coming into contact with the sea.

The next information received about Cape St. Vincent is seen in the Muslim *Geography and Chorography* of Idrisi, who was active in the twelfth century, and called this place *kanisat al gurarab* or "church of the crows".<sup>33</sup> People believed that these birds exhibited a wide range of extraordinary behaviours, such as refusing to eat as long as the pilgrims visiting the site were not fully fed. Later on, the site was the base for the re-Christianization of Lisbon: it was from here that the body of St. Vincent was taken, followed by the crows, to become an essential relic in the newly constructed cathedral in Lisbon.

This series of fantastic stories, both ancient and mediaeval, illustrates the difficulty of passing from one source to another in constructing an argument. That is, while there may be

continuity in the religious use of a given place, it may not be justifiable to draw parallels between the religious methods identified, and in those instances where the mediaeval sources differ from those indicated by the Classical tradition they should be seen as complementary rather than contradictory.

The great divide between the two periods is reduced if we consider that St. Vincent was a Valencian martyr associated with crows, which were charged with protecting his body from other animals. His body was lost at the time of the Moorish invasion of the peninsula, and different places have been attributed to having custody of the remains. Finally, thanks to the initiative of the Infante Afonso Henriques (1109-1185), founder of the kingdom of Portugal, Cape St. Vincent was chosen as the place where the saint was finally rescued from Moorish lands. Moorish sources mention a church of crows, which the Christian Portuguese related to Vincent, whose attributes were crows. Nothing prevents us from believing that the crows were present, and that it was the association with Vincent that made the birds Christian, and by extension the area as a whole.

That said, the supreme god of the Celts, *Lug*, is directly related to the sun in his epiphanies among mankind. He was described as very large and youthful, with blonde hair, a glowing face, and always following the course of the sun.<sup>34</sup> He is also associated with crows, in the myth of the foundation of Lugdunum and, in particular, through the figure of *Bran*, the Crow, the main figure in the Welsh *Mabinogi*, whose head is an object of worship associated with prominent points of the ocean, and provides endless riches and wealth to his followers.

It is true that the considerations about heteroclitic reflections of the myth of *Lug* in the dislocated tales from ancient and mediaeval times, from Moors or Christians, are hypothetical. But this is not the case when considering that from Brittany to the mouth of the Guadalquivir River the coast is full of sites with important religious associations. In Brittany, Strabo mentions a sanctuary where white-winged crows offer divinations - the Welsh *Bran* 'the Blessed'<sup>35</sup> may also be *Bran* "the White", i.e. the White Crow. In Great Britain the head of *Bran* marks the eastern and western extremes of the island. The Galician coast has sites such as the sanctuary of *Deus Larius Breus Brus* in the Facho de Donón, the tip of the Morrazo peninsula (in the province of Pontevedra), where, during excavation work in the summer of 2003, the most important collection of indigenous votive dedications found in the region to date were uncovered (Figs. 17a, b). Further south, on the right bank of the mouth of the Miño River, is the hillfort of Santa

Tecla, founded at the start of the second century BC, although it was a religious centre before that date, as may be seen in the Bronze Age carvings included in its walled area, which were treated with great care by the builders of the hillfort. It should be remembered that this was the limit of Brutus's expedition (Fig. 18). Even further south, in Sintra in Portugal, there is another carving and a series of local elements used by ancient religions, with the layout of what was a sanctuary for worshipping the sun (Fig. 19). Later in the same text a city is mentioned that has the Celtic name *Ebura* (after the name of the yew tree), the sanctuary of *Lux Dubia*, the light of sunset (Strabo, III, 1, 9).



Figure 17a, b. Two of the inscriptions from Donón (Pontevedra): DEVS LARIVS BREVS BRVS SANCTVS. Votive inscriptions of the Facho de Donón (Pontevedra) (Baños and Pereira Menaut, 1998: 21-44): a) *Deo Lario Breo Bro sancto*; b) [*Deo Lari]bero Breo aram pos[uit]*.

In sum, what Florus tells us about the circumstances that necessitated the return of Brutus, and the information given by Artemidorus about the rites of the 'Holy Promontory', evoke local traditions related to some aspects of the sun, and perhaps to crows. These themes appear either associated or separately in specific areas, particularly on the coast, and in the myth of the god *Lug*, whose association with crows and the sun is characteristic, and manifests an ambiguity proper to his definition as a deity, as he is at once young and old, male and female.

So far we have identified two remnants of Celtic myths in Strabo's text about the Iberian Peninsula. Both are situated geographically in a precise way at the extreme tips of the Atlantic coast. The episode of the River of Oblivion helps to explain the Celtic population of Cape Nerio ('of the heroes') at the northern tip, while rites involving the great sun are situated at the Holy Cape, the axis of the territory of the southern Celts. In the middle is the territory in which Strabo situates the barbarians. The significant point here is that as a 'gateway' to his description he has



used remnants of ancient knowledge about these sites, which was probably maintained and adapted by a caste of priests similar to the druids.

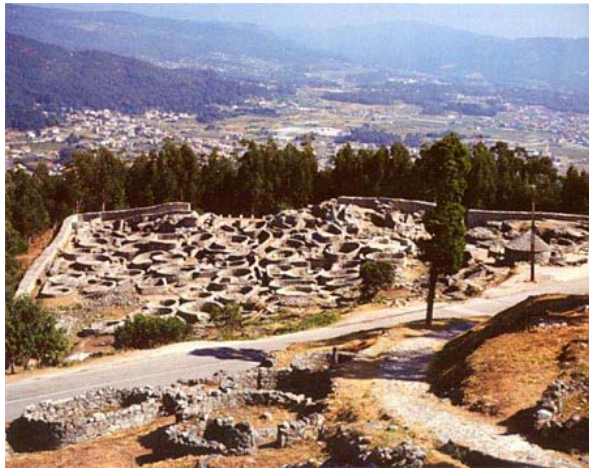


Figure 18. View of the Santa Tecla hillfort (A Guarda, Pontevedra).



Figure 19. Sintra petroglyph (Portugal).

#### 4.4. A solar sanctuary

The most recent investigations that aid us in the identification of Celtic remnants in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula are based on the study of sites that, for lack of a better name, we refer to as 'sanctuaries'.<sup>36</sup> Some have already appeared in this article as places where chieftains were invested, and we have just referred to places of worship situated on promontories overlooking the ocean.

A decisive step in identifying these sites has been taken by M. Santos Estévez, a specialist in Galician petroglyphs, who has identified two styles and two types of motifs that are very different from the carvings dated until now to the Bronze Age, or had until now been relegated to undefined historical periods. Among the latter, M. Santos argues that some should be dated to the Iron Age, the period of the hillfort culture when the northwestern Iberian Peninsula was settled by the Celts.<sup>37</sup>

The petroglyphs from this period appear in a structured manner at specific, significant points on the landscape: a cape overlooking the ocean, as at Corme (Fig. 20), a small plateau, as at Pedrafita in Lugo (Fig. 21) and Ferradura in Amoeiro, in the province of Ourense (Fig. 22), or a mountain crest that served to limit the humanized landscape of the hillforts in the area, as at Fentans in Campolameiro, province of Pontevedra (Fig. 23), among other examples. The most complex of these petroglyphs are the easiest to study thanks to their quality, and offer a significant number of common features.



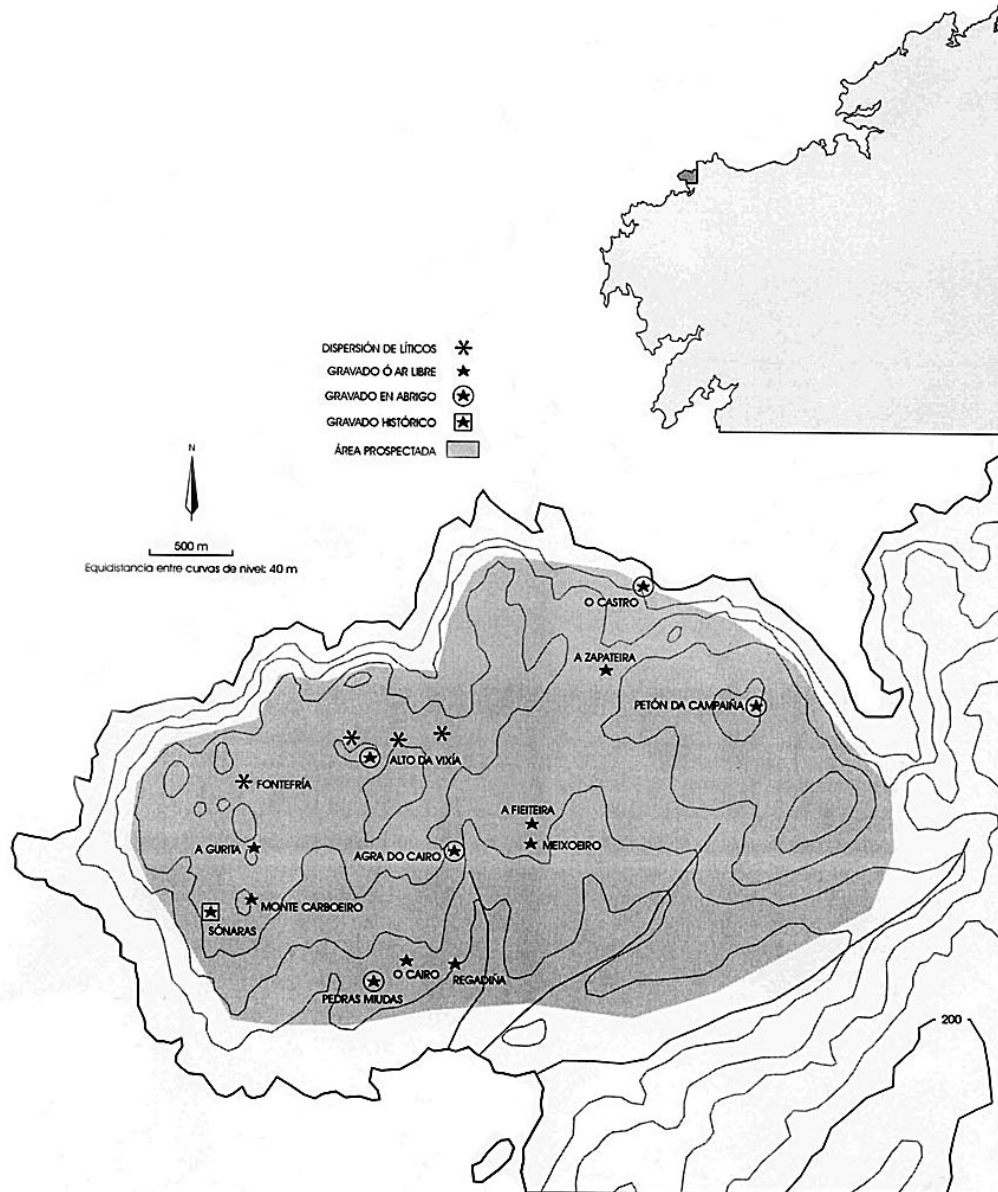


Figure 20. Distribution of petroglyphs in Cape Corme (A Coruña).

Significantly, they are situated in 'non-natural limit' zones that correspond to old ecclesiastical divisions or current administrative boundaries. If a boundary between parishes, archbishoprics or local councils follows the course of a river, when it reaches the level of the 'sanctuary' it crosses through it, incorporating it, to then regain, on passing through the area of the sanctuary, the course of the river. There are three different types of carving styles: the first type is the simplest, consisting of cup marks carved on rocks that approximately define the natural space of the sanctuary (Fig. 24). The second type consists of more complex carvings, with normally abstract figures, except for the carvings of footprints that, as we have seen, occupy

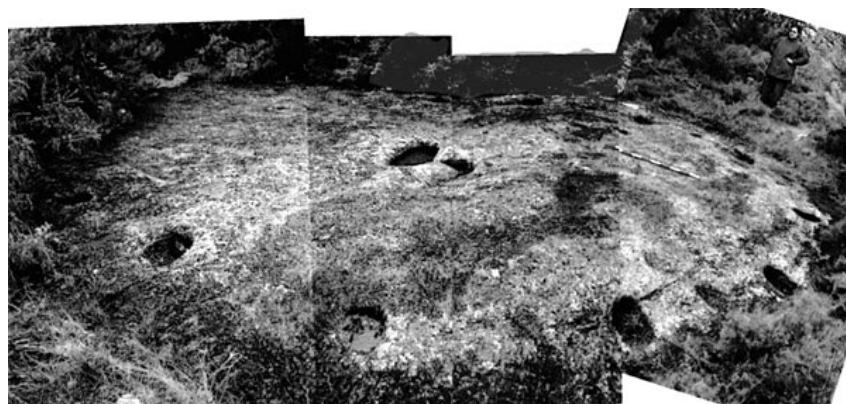


Figure 21. View of the Pedrafitra petroglyph (Lugo).



Figure 22. View from the east of the area with petroglyphs in A Ferradura (Amoeiro, Ourense).

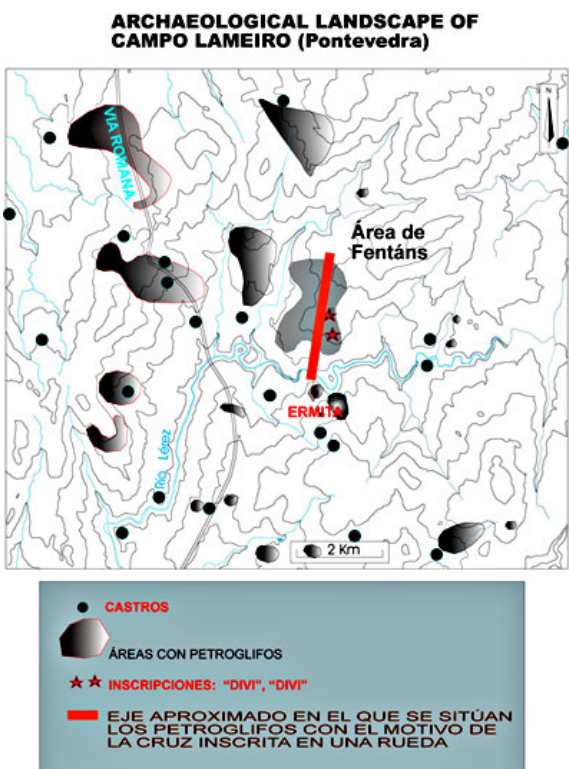


Figure 23. Area of petroglyphs in Fentans (Campo Lameiro, Pontevedra).



Figure 24. Group of cup-marks at the edge of the plateau where the Pedrafitra petroglyph is located (Lugo).

a central position. Finally, the third type represents carved crosses that appear more or less profusely in the access points of sanctuaries, with the peculiarity that they usually mark the path that joins the central area with a river or the sea (Fig. 25). These are the archaeological features that have been observed, together with the fact that in these areas there are no inhabited structures, which instead appear on the perimeter of such sites.

The interpretation of these sites is complex, and calls for the study of parallel examples. Due to its relevance for the subject under discussion here, we will examine the site of A Ferradura in the province of Ourense in greater detail. This area meets nearly all of the requirements of the general scheme, although we have not found crosses carved in circles along the access path at this site.<sup>38</sup> We will focus on two petroglyphs closely related to the landscape as a whole: one is called O Raposo (The Fox) and the other A Ferradura (The Horseshoe).

The stone of A Ferradura is in the center of the plateau, and is 10 metres long, 3.20 metres wide and 1.5 metres high (Fig. 26). Among the carvings there are eleven podomorphs, the foot carvings referred to above, carved into the rock in such a way that a person standing over them makes a complete turn towards the areas of greatest visibility over the valley, in which a series of hillforts are situated (Fig. 27). These carved footprints, of left and right feet, both shod

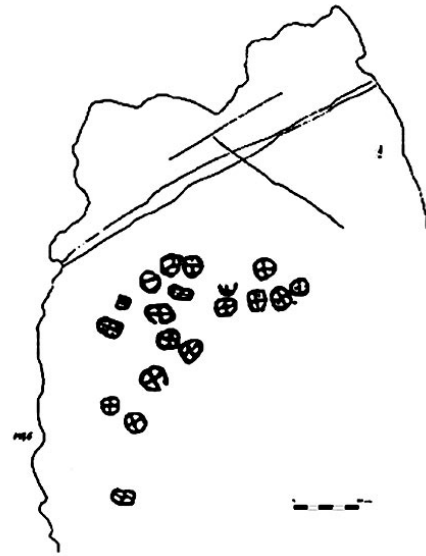


Figure 25. Carved crosses in area with petroglyphs in Corme (A Coruña).



Figure 26. General view of the petroglyph known as A Ferradura, in the area of the same name.



Figure 27. Rubbing of the same.



and barefoot, could have served as a mnemonic device to ensure that the person was correctly situated over the rock during an investiture ceremony.

Excavations carried out by M. Santos Estévez in the autumn of 2002 around the rock did not produce any archaeological materials, although evidence of human activity on other parts of the rock was found, such as the intentional fitting of small quartz rocks in its fissures, or the accumulation of larger, rounded stones at its northern end. More interesting was the excavation of a crack, possibly natural but later carved by human hands, which crosses the rock from east to west, so that by standing to the eastern side of the rock, above the natural land level at the time when the carving was made, the crack directs the viewer's gaze towards the other side of the valley, to the west, where the hillfort of San Cibrán de Las is situated (Figs. 28a, b). Here a wall



Figures 28a, b. a) Close-up of crack that runs across the rock of A Ferradura. In the background is the horizon where the sun sets over the hillfort of S. Cibrán de Las. b) Aerial view of the hillfort of S. Cibrán de Las (San Amaro and Punxín, Orense).

can be seen that encloses the summit, occupying the highest, central part of the settlement. This may have been a sacred area, as revealed by a dedication to Jupiter, which simply reads IOVIA and is situated next to the western entrance to the site. The lower line of walls (to the west) is the perimeter of the actual settlement.

The carving on O Raposo is without parallel in Galicia. It is within a natural hollow in the rock, and lines up with a narrow natural opening, triangular in shape, that opens out towards the southeast. The carved rock was originally joined with another, from which it was separated in order to place the carving in front of the opening (Fig. 29).

But apart from the location of the carvings, other observations are also relevant, which

have made it possible to see how both rocks have significant solar associations that may only be understood within the context of Celtic culture.

The position of the carving on O Raposo in front of the natural opening implies that it is partially lit by the sun on the winter solstice, when it sets over the summit of San Trocado, on the other side of the valley (Figs. 30a, b). Another of the openings in the rock means that the carving is lit up in the mid-afternoon at the equinoxes (Figs. 31a, b). Finally, a third opening, the largest, is oriented towards the sunset at the summer solstice. But for the few minutes when the sun passes in front of it, shortly before sunset, its weak light does not illuminate the carving situated deep within the rock from this angle of vision. It seems evident that the carving was made in this location due to its relation with the winter solstice, as in this moment the rock and its carving are in the center of a line that joins San Trocado with its hillfort, where the sun sets precisely on this day, and Coto do Castro, indicated by the rock's shadow, as if it were a sundial, therefore marking sunrise on the summer solstice (Fig. 32). This function as an annual sundial is repeated, although to a lesser degree, at the equinoxes, as the shadow of the outcrop is projected at sunset towards a characteristic mound that encloses the horizon of the area to the east (Fig. 33).

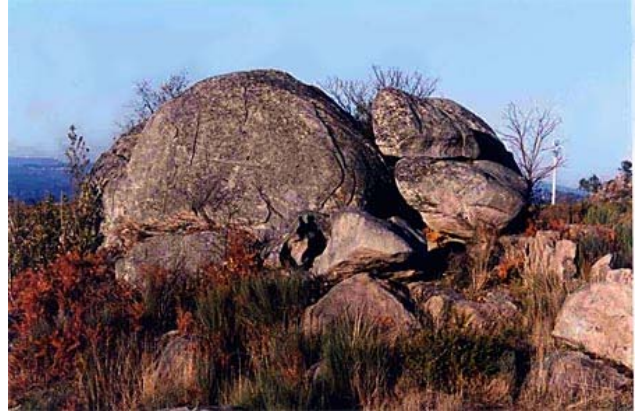


Figure 29. View of the rock called O Raposo in the area of A Ferradura where the petroglyph is located.



Figures 30a, b. a) View of the petroglyph inside O Raposo illuminated through the crack, on the day of the winter solstice; b) Position of the sun at sunset on the winter solstice, over the hills of San Trocado. At this moment it lights up the petroglyph of O Raposo, as in Fig. 30a.

Furthermore, the crack that runs across the A Ferradura petroglyph also has solar associations. We have been able to observe how the sun sets at the summit of the hillfort of San





Figures 31a, b. a) Another crack in O Raposo, from overhead position; b) the sun shines through and illuminates the petroglyph on the days of the equinox.



Figure 32. The shadow of O Raposo at sunset on the day of the winter solstice, pointing towards Coto do Castro.



Figure 33. The shadow of O Raposo at sunset on the day of the equinox, pointing towards an elevated point with an unusual shape on the eastern horizon.

Cibrán de Las around the first of February (Fig. 34) and that the sun rises, once again at the hillfort of Coto do Castro, around the first of May (Fig. 35). These are positions that are then reproduced in its transit across the landscape on 1 November and 1 August respectively, and therefore on the four main festivals of the Irish religious calendar.

That said, these dates from our present calendar, designed by Julius Caesar in 46 BC, are late medieval adaptations of the traditional Celtic festival calendar to the Julian calendar which, as demonstrated by S.C. McKluskey, took place at local levels more or less successfully.<sup>39</sup> In this way, the replacement of Samain for All Saints' Day spread all over Europe, whereas the adaptation of Lughnasad, on the first of August, took more diverse local forms. There is nothing to suggest that this process took place at A Ferradura, although it may be significant that the local festival of the parish of Formigueiro, at the northern limit of A Ferradura, takes place at Candlemas on the second of February, and that an important relief from the hillfort period representing a scene with horses was integrated into the chapel of this village (Fig. 36).



Figure 34. Sunset on 1 February, seen from the petroglyph of A Ferradura. See Fig. 28, corresponding to the same day. The sun sets over the hillfort of San Cibrán de Las and points towards the crack of A Ferradura.



Figure 35. Sunrise on 1 May seen from the A Ferradura petroglyph. The sun rises over the hillfort of Coto do Castro, and points towards the crack of A Ferradura.

We should also consider the phenomenon of the procession of the equinoxes, whereby current solar dates are not exactly the same as they were 2000, 2500 or 3000 years ago, in indicating the possible use of this sanctuary to measure the passage of time. This is something still pending investigation, although on examining other studies that have been carried out, it appears that in the latitudes of southern Europe, this oscillation may be limited to only a few days.<sup>40</sup>

To this are added the difficulties of defining with astronomical precision the dates of the solstices, as for several days the sun appears practically motionless, and it would have been virtually impossible to judge the equinoxes using methods available in ancient times. We should remember that the date for the winter solstice in the Julian calendar was the 25th of



Figure 36. Formigueiro relief.

December, and for summer the 24th of June. This does not mean, on the contrary, that there was not an empirical awareness of the existence of these nodal points in the sun's route and an



approximate estimation, using different resources, in different cultural traditions.

The 'sanctuary' of A Ferradura reveals the practical and empirical manner, without sophisticated knowledge of mathematical astronomy, in which these previous problems were resolved. The solstitial axis formed by Coto do Castro, O Raposo, and San Trocado is an evident and permanent natural feature. Furthermore, as none of these hills or rocks is a precise instrument for observation, a margin of several days around the significant dates can be allowed without causing alterations to the general model. That this was observed and rationalized with reference to an unknown date in ancient times is revealed by the fact that a rock was carved in the sheltered hollow of O Raposo, underlining the relationship between elements of the local landscape related to the solstices.

Celtic festivals were also celebrated for around forty days after the solstices or equinoxes, at now unknown dates that were determined by the individuals who made the carvings of A Ferradura. However, the solar observations carried out at the rock of A Ferradura, which have the peculiarity of not being aligned with significant points of the natural landscape, but instead with the landscape transformed by human action, reveal that an approximate comprehension of this temporal relationship was focused on the

local landscape, in the spatial relationship between the two rocks we are considering, O Raposo and A Ferradura. This means that if we take the hill of Coto do Castro as a vertex that closes to the northwest all visibility of the plateau of A Ferradura where the two carved rocks are situated (Fig. 37), these rocks form a fixed angle in the landscape making it possible, using the alignment at the solstices, to determine when festivals of the Celtic religion were to take place, as this angle

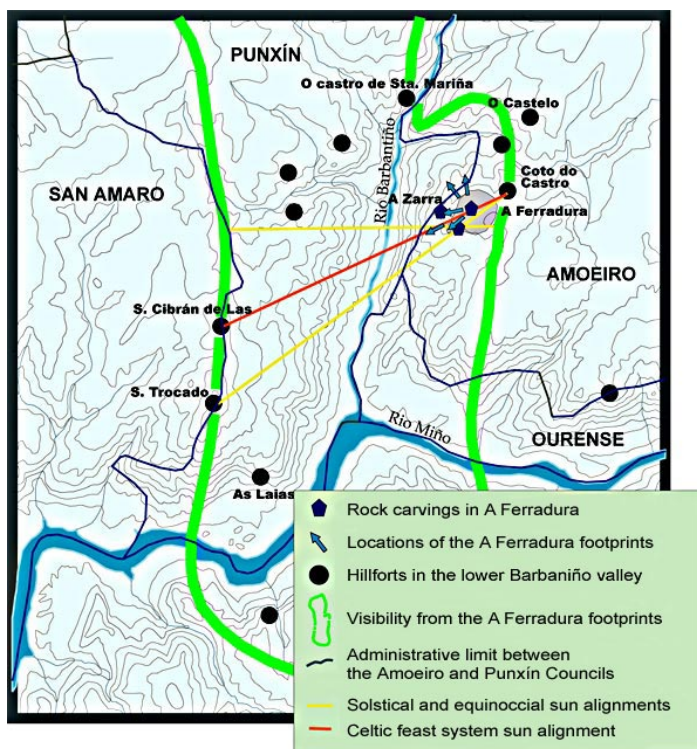


Figure 37. Map of the lower Barbantiño where it joins the Miño River, showing the archaeoastronomic relations detected from A Ferradura.



is stable, regardless of the exact date corresponding to the actual calendar, but in any case, on dates close to those indicated.

Put differently, present-day observations have had to make use of actual dates in order to discover the relationships described here. These temporal relationships, by establishing a stable relationship between the different elements of the landscape, are shown to be relevant, even if our initial observation had a margin of error with regard to the situation in ancient times, as the fixed spatial points are sufficient to correct any error of observation that may have been produced, either in ancient or modern times. We will now explore other intriguing elements of this sanctuary.

Firstly, the site appears to exhibit a dichotomy between an emphasis on the processes of nature marked by the solstitial axis that designates relevant points in the landscape, and an emphasis on certain aspects of religious culture present on the rock in A Ferradura, as both the liturgical dates indicated by solar relationships, as well as the investiture rites carried out over the podomorphs, correspond to human creations; furthermore, in this case the solar axis is not emphasized by relevant landmarks, but instead by areas where more or less important hillforts are situated.

Secondly, the site is suitable for the celebration of assemblies and festivals. These meetings were observed in ancient times by Strabo (III, 3, 7) and are documented in an epithet associated with an indigenous deity, *OENAECUS*, the precise equivalent of the Irish *oenach*, which designates the celebration of assemblies and festivals in Ireland. Furthermore, the relief found in the chapel in Formigueiro with a scene representing horse riding and/or domination makes it possible to evoke the information provided by Strabo, in which he refers to the Lusitanians celebrating horse riding events during their gatherings, something that would have been possible in A Ferradura.

Thirdly, it seems logical to invoke *Lug* as the patron god of this sanctuary. In the Welsh legend, he receives his name after hunting a wren. This ritual of hunting wrens is seen in the period around Christmas, i.e. at the time of the winter solstice, in Ireland, Wales, France, Galicia and the north of Portugal. It also appears to be related to other Celtic festivals, although without doubt its closest relationship is with *Lugnasad*, on the first of August. *Lug* is also the god of meetings in general, at which his epiphany is naturally produced. We should remember that rituals worshipping *Lug* were also observed in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula.

Fourthly, the solar relationships present in A Ferradura may only be understood in the context of the presence of intellectuals able to carry out the necessary observations and designate the precise places where celebrations were to be carried out according to these observations. This means that once again, although druids are not directly mentioned, their knowledge, present in monuments such as the remains of Gallic calendars, or in other European archaeological contexts, have also left their mark in Galicia in places such as the 'sanctuary' of A Ferradura.

## **5. A model of society**

One of the most significant results of recent archaeological investigations into the hillfort culture in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula was the discovery of the existence of groups of hillforts exhibiting a certain degree of community organisation, either in their socio-economic use of the landscape, in religious practices, or, more difficult to observe, in political and institutional terms.<sup>41</sup> For more details, the work of C. Parcero Oubiña should be consulted regarding hillfort archaeology,<sup>42</sup> in particular with reference to the different patterns of settlement that characterised the Early Iron Age (800 to 400 BC) and the Late Iron Age (400 BC until the Roman conquest). This period did not so much represent a break from previous tendencies but instead these were developed further within a new political and administrative framework. The radical transformation due to the process of Romanization occurred after the start of Roman political domination.<sup>43</sup> Historical anthropology, which synthesizes archaeological data and written sources, can most productively be applied to these last two phases.

This was the period dominated by groups of hillforts that, in socio-economic terms, were mainly situated in areas where the land was suitable for agriculture, as well as making use of nearby forests for wood, as areas for pasture, or for hunting. The above-mentioned sanctuaries appear to be related to these groups of hillforts, with at least one sanctuary corresponding to each group. However, this is an issue that calls for further investigation.

Finally, somewhat contradicting the model suggesting that each hillfort was located so as to maximize the possibilities for economic exploitation of its surroundings, there is usually one hillfort with relatively inferior conditions for economic exploitation that is often the largest in the region whose superior natural defences could be reinforced with specific monumental elements. These would have been the political capitals of these groups of hillfort sites. This is a summary, albeit brief, of the archaeological information available.

With regard to literary information, it is necessary to begin with a passage from Strabo in which he mentions how the Romans organised the territories in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula following the conquest, in the period of Augustus, although previously D. Junius Brutus had reached the Miño River (in 137 BC) and Julius Caesar the area of A Coruña (in 60 BC). Here, Strabo states (III, 3, 5) that they dissolved, or dismantled most of their *poleis* (sing. *polis*), and grouped others together in a more suitable fashion.

*Ethnos* (pl. *ethne*) was the Greek term for the local settlements that Latin references consistently describe as *populus* (pl. *populi*) when referring to this part of the peninsula. However, these are also referred to as *ciuitas* when referring to indigenous settlements in Gaul or other barbarian territories, which then appear in Greek sources labelled as *poleis*, although they were by no means the equivalent of Greek cities. Perhaps, if we are not seeking a high level of precision, it would be correct to translate these terms using the ethnographic concept 'tribe', while fully recognising the ambiguity of this term. However, it is interesting to note that Strabo uses a precise Greek political term to refer to a form of Roman administrative action. He says that they divided most of the 'tribes' into 'villages', *komai*, the natural and normal subdivision of Greek cities. Conversely, when he states that they grouped others together, he uses the term *synoikizo*, normally used to designate the grouping of smaller entities that formed a Greek *polis*.

However, considering the political terms used by Strabo, and bearing in mind that they were aimed at contemporary Greek readers of his texts, the term *synoikizo* may actually indicate the gathering in a specific location of a group of inhabitants (as in the case of the great hillfort of San Cibrán de Las, founded when the area was already under Roman control). It may simply indicate a grouping under the same political authority, or in the same institutional grouping, of individuals or human groups situated within other relationship networks that had until then been under a different authority. This does not necessarily imply any modification of habitat, nor should we consider this an example of the founding of cities in the urban sense of the term.

Among the numerous points of interest included in the so-called Bierzo Edict, discovered in the autumn of 1999 (Fig. 38), in which Augustus dictated rules about the organisation of the *castellani Paemeiobrigenses* and of the *gens* (equivalent to *populus* in this context) of the *Susarri*, is confirmation of a specific case that Strabo refers to in general terms.<sup>44</sup> The *Paemeiobrigenses*, loyal to the Romans in an atmosphere of general uprisings and warfare against them, received in exchange for this loyalty immunity from tribute and the recognition of

their territory. In the same way the *Susarri* were 'amputated' from one of their components, *castellum* in Latin (like the *castellum Tyde* described by Pliny), but without doubt a *kome* in the language of Strabo, which also received favorable treatment. However, the *Susarri*, having to pay in full their tribute to Rome, were allowed as compensation to pay this tribute with the *castellani Aliobrigiaecini*, who had previously belonged to the *Gigurri gens*.

Nothing requires us to believe that there was a change of residence or habitat in this case. The change took place in the administrative sphere and involved smaller components of a *populus* type of structure whose number is unknown. The Bierzo Edict presents in Latin a particular case

described by Strabo in Greek as the result of a general policy. What Augustus did in this case was to force a process akin to the *synoikizo* of the Greeks, which involved gathering in a specific location a large group of people, obviously in line with the interests of Rome, to the benefit of some and against the interests of others. The *Paemeiobrigenses* were outright winners, and the *Gigurri* outright losers, as they were separated from one of their components, while the *Susarri* continued without any variations, since the immunity granted to the *Paemeiobrigenses* was compensated for by the ascription of the *Aliobrigiaecini* to their 'tax office', so to speak.

In other documents, particularly funerary stelae such as those of the Supermarican



Figure 38. The Bierzo Edict, found in 1999, in which Augustus regulates the relations of dependence or liberty among several indigenous communities.

women described previously in this article, the *castellum* is indicated using the symbol  $\supset$  (read as 'inverted C'), revealed as the least relevant place of origin to identify where an individual comes from, situated between the direct family referred to in these documents as the person's parents and normally those who dedicated the stela, and the *populus* or *ethnos*, in Greek, of the literary documents.

This means that the *castellum* was a subdivision of the *populus* in Latin terms, in the same way that the *kome* was a subdivision of the Greek *polis*, or *ethnos*. If the *populi* were large enough to satisfy Roman tributes demands, they were sufficient for applying other normal measures after conquest as well, such as recruiting auxiliary forces for the army. We know, for example, of military units settled in different parts of the Empire identified with the names of the *populi* in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, and the creation of censuses depended on the previous measures.

Yet at the same time, the smaller entities, *castella* or *komai* depending on the language, at times demonstrated their autonomy, as in the case of the *Paemeiobrigenses*, who in a state of general warfare sided with Rome. This implies that the political structure at the level of the *populus* was very lax, and that effective decisions could be taken, before and after the conquest, at a lower level.

The next step, which requires new investigations to correctly measure its scope, involves relating the groups of hillforts, recently recognised by archaeologists, with the political and administrative descriptions referred to in the texts. These groups of hillforts, each with its 'capital' and common 'sanctuary', were precisely situated in the landscape implying the definition of a territory and appear to clearly correspond to what we know of the *castella* or *komai* featured in the texts. Also, the places where these groups have been found are outside the present region of Galicia, meaning that in the Late Iron Age these sites commonly continued into the first decades of Roman administration, with the generalized use in funerary inscriptions of the mention of *castella* indicating places of origin.

Here it is important to do away with a possible misconception. The *castellum* mentioned in the texts may indeed be an archaeological 'hillfort', but it does not have to be so. It may also be the name of the 'capital' of the group that was used as a generic term for all of its inhabitants. Another problem is that we do not know whether the political and administrative system was imposed by the Romans or whether the Romans based it on the previously existing situation.

Hegemonic research tendencies, more or less associated with those who deny the relevance of the Celtic question in interpreting the pre-Roman world in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, tend to favor the first option.<sup>45</sup> However, the groups of hillforts discovered through archaeology suggest that the opposite may be true. *Populi* and *castella* appear to be pre-Roman structures, as is clearly indicated by Strabo and Pliny's hesitation to quote names that were cacophonous to them (*NH*, III, 28; Strabo, III, 3, 7), something that would be difficult to explain if these names had been introduced by the Romans.

The comparative study corroborates this conclusion. Wherever there is sufficient documentation, from Galacia in Asia Minor to Ireland, the political structures of peoples who were less influenced by Mediterranean models, or predated the period when this influence was hegemonic, clearly suggest different types of socio-political entities, the largest of which were more lax and unstable, and the smaller of which were more permanent, such as the Gallic *pagi* or the Irish *teutha*. In these situations a political and historical dialectic is significant that is resolved throughout time, in a constant process of weaving complex, 'imperial' political forms that break down into more simple structures to be reborn in new complex forms that may take on the appearance of other specific models.

These 'empires' were created around successful military chieftains, such as Ortiagon or Deyotarus of the *Galati* (who finally won the support of Rome), or the British chieftains Casivelaunus, Cunobelinus, or Cogidumnus, who also had the support of Rome. The *Helvetii* were grouped under the control of Orgetorix, but some time before this one of the *pagi*, or subtribes, of the *Helvetii*, had caused war to break out. The unstable hierarchy of Irish kings may be seen as part of the same process.

I will not enter here into the details of a subject about which I have recently written a book,<sup>46</sup> but it is sufficient to indicate that apart from the difficulties of distinguishing between the greater or lesser component parts of Celtic socio-political groups in different places and at different times, what does appear to be a stable and fundamental feature of their political life is a constant dialectic between centrifugal and centripetal tendencies that are presented in each source as a specific moment in a process of continual change.

This political instability has closely related economic and social foundations. The economic foundations are presented as a concept of value, determined in an ideological manner, which placed greater emphasis on goods rather than buildings. In this way, although Celtic

societies clearly depended mainly on agriculture, precious metals, personal ornament, more or less skilfully crafted objects and livestock constantly reappear as the most widely treasured items. Coherent testimonies from all parts of the ancient Celtic and Mediaeval world uphold this consideration, although it should be recognised that this is a subject barely touched upon by the available sources, due to their specific biases. Yet all this does is add value to the coherence of the affirmations made in this regard.

The social correlate of this notion of value, assigning greater prestige to material goods than properties, is the existence of well differentiated warrior castes, either as companions or followers of specific chieftains, or, like the famous *gaesati*, as specialised warriors who were not always directly linked to a specific chieftain. This therefore creates a socio-economic dialectic that can be associated with the political dialectic described above, in which warrior chieftains have to constantly engage in new campaigns to conquer new booty (goods) to share among their followers, who increase in number depending on the success of each leader. When the military chief achieves the consensus or strength necessary, he may become the head of one of the smaller entities and, if he continues to be successful, may eventually become the head of an 'empire', which is normally ephemeral. This is due to the fact that the logic of the social and economic system leads to the constant appearance of new, ambitious military chieftains, who wish to strip the established chieftain of his wealth in order to demonstrate their bravery before new groups of warriors, or existing groups he intends to command. At the same time, the chieftains who have already triumphed cannot be accommodated, as they have to provide constant demonstrations of their military bravery in new campaigns and expeditions, and continually provide new spoils of war to be shared out, and all of this, both in the case of warriors aspiring to be chieftains, as well as for established chieftains, with the subsequent risk of a premature death. The career of Vercingetorix, described in particular detail by Julius Caesar, may serve as a model, with his short-lived 'empire' falling before the Roman legions. Constant murders and mutilations, marking the limits of kingdoms that are nearly always ephemeral, are a structural feature of late medieval Irish royal houses, and provide an example of the fluid and contentious nature of Celtic political systems.

The Romans fought with all their might against these 'empires' when they felt them to be contrary to their political interests. Ortiagon, who became king of the various Galatian tribes of Asia Minor, was annihilated by C. Manlius Vulsus in 188 BC. Viriatus, who led a Lusitanian

coalition, was killed in an act of treachery by his own people at the instigation of the Romans, and the coalition of the *Helvetii*, as well as the coalitions led by Cassivellaunus in Britain, and by Vercingetorix in Gaul, equally fell before Caesar. Yet the Romans themselves knew how to promote these chieftains when they fell in line with their plans. This was the case with Deyotarus in Galaica and Cogidumnus in Britain, who, in the garb of the Roman institutional figure of the *rex amicus*, had great local and internal power, providing they accepted the policies established by their Roman masters. This appears to have been the model that operated in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, although we do not have information as detailed as that which is found in other parts of the world.

The importance and splendour of the metalwork produced by the hillfort culture, particularly gold torques,<sup>47</sup> contrasts with the monotony of the common living areas found in the hillforts, revealing that these treasures may have formed part of collections of goods indicating prestige and wealth, which kindled the avarice of other individuals. It is also important to consider that few pieces have managed to survive the passage of time, particularly following the plundering that commonly occurred after any conquest in antiquity. Furthermore, numerous documents indicate the importance of livestock in the hillfort culture, and one testimony by Strabo (III, 4, 18) may be interpreted as revealing a distinction between property, such as land, which was held by women, and goods and livestock, which were in the hands of men who did not pay enough attention to farming and were notorious for their predilection for pillage and plunder (Strabo, III, 3, 5).

This dedication to warfare among the men folk appears continually. The warlike nature of the inhabitants of the northwestern Iberian Peninsula features strongly in the written sources, and it is a fundamental fact that not one hillfort is known that was not more or less fortified. Strabo also offers a detailed description of the weapons used and the celebration of festivals with a clearly military flavour. The rough statues that exist of hillfort warriors and the frieze on the diadem of Mones show warriors armed in the same way described by Strabo. Following the conquest, the region became a regular source of soldiers for the Roman army. It was also in this new situation that men who were surely the final representatives of the ancient warrior elite were found bearing the heroic names we have already discussed.

Who were the leaders of these bands of warriors? Strabo distinguishes between the simple arms carried by the foot soldiers, and the splendid weapons carried by a small elite, who



were undoubtedly their chieftains. The statues of warriors that have been found, either realistic or idealized, also represent this group. They were probably the privileged wearers of torques, frequently seen on statues of warriors. Viriatus undoubtedly provided a hypertrophied model - like Vercingetorix in Gaul - but the distinction made in different sources between his phase as a 'thief' and his phase as a 'leader' or 'chieftain' offer a good example of the head of a band of warriors who was crowned for his success and occupied an institutional rank at the head of an important confederacy.<sup>48</sup>

It is interesting to note that after the conquest, we know of four individuals from three epitaphs, two on a stela in Lugo, Vecius and Vecco (both difficult to read), Nicer in Asturias, and Doviderus in León. All of them are referred to as *principes*, a Latin term, although their names and the contexts of their inscriptions are indigenous. This means, we suggest, that *princeps* is the term that they, or the people around them, used to indicate, in the language of the conquerors, their social position within the community. It is true that in Latin the term *princeps* is polysemic, although it is also true that the first years after the conquest of the northwest coincide with the first years of the Roman Empire, and that this means by antonomasia that the *princeps* is the emperor. For this reason we may consider that these individuals were the last indigenous chieftains, now under Roman control, occupying a similar position to the 'client kings' Cogidumnus in Britain or Deyotarus in Galatia.

In closing, it is important to note that the elements described here form an organic whole. The difference between lesser political structures (*castella* or *komai* - the groups of hillforts documented archaeologically) and larger structures (*populi* or *ethne* - without any clear archaeological reference) is in the social and political practice in the hands of warlords, and their successes or defeats in their ambitions to obtain spoils of war with which to satisfy the material aspirations of their followers. This is a model that may be seen from Galatia to Ireland, particularly when it starts to break down as a result of the pressure of a new political model that originated in the Mediterranean and a new scale of values, which placed emphasis on land ownership.

The *castellani Pameiobrigensis* of the Bierzo Edict, who, according to Strabo, saw their territories probably increased through the assigning of new tribute sources and, I suggest, new *principes*, belong to the group of those who were able to recognise in time the significance of these changes, and who benefited by the new situation. However, and this is what I have

attempted to show by indicating the general nature of these practices in different times and places, they did so following a series of guidelines that are simultaneously typical of Celtic populations, and antithetical to the Greek and Roman political methods that finally triumphed in the historical process.

## 6. Conclusion

We have set out here in an academic context a review of the approaches customarily applied to discussions of the relevance of Celtic models to reconstructing the historical situation in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula prior to the Roman conquest. In order to demonstrate that the opposite case is relevant, this article has been structured starting with the simplest aspects, and then passing on to more complex issues.

Firstly, ancient literary, epigraphic and onomastic testimonies that mention the Celtic ethnic features of these inhabitants were explored. These references underscore a fact that critics trained in archaeology frequently do not consider (something which linguists, obviously, cannot do): even if the Celtic question is avoided, the Indo-European model must be taken into account, as there can be no doubt that pre-Roman languages spoken in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula belong to this language family. If we apply the comparative method to the study of Indo-European phenomena, as is usual in the fields of linguistics, archaeology, religion and history, then we must turn to the closest Indo-Europeans to the inhabitants of the region, who just happen to be Celts.

More complex testimonies of an ideological nature were explored next, including passages from literary sources and specific objects and archaeological sites, demonstrating in each case relevant Celtic parallels in order for them to be correctly comprehended.

Finally, a global reconstruction of the economic and social model was proposed within which all of the previous issues were articulated, a model which, once again, has parallels in areas that fell under Roman dominion at a late stage in the northern perimeter of the Mediterranean area in the late Iron Age, once again a roundabout way of invoking the Celts.

The Celts in the northwest at some point simply appear in this area, constructing objects and warranting narrative treatment by Classical authors which, when examined in greater detail, respond to recognisable patterns in other Celtic areas. Finally, it is possible to identify a form of social organisation with an identical cultural horizon in various Celtic-speaking regions,

including the northwestern peninsula.

Seen in this light, it would appear to be up to those who deny the relevance of Celtic models in northwestern Spain to offer a coherent alternative based on a valid articulation of the evidence presented here in terms of ethnic and cultural investigation. Naturally, it is always possible to gather and describe evidence rejecting the construction of an explanatory model, although this type of behaviour is more common to collectors rather than historians. Despite possible errors, the latter method has been applied in this article.

But this is not the end: it would be misleading to close with this kind of triumphant declaration. The historical-anthropological perspective used does not offer answers for some fundamental questions, such as when, how and from where these Celtic elements appeared. It is true that a range of interpretations have been put forward by archaeologists and linguists, although all of them are hypothetical, and there is no point in adding hypotheses to the existing corpus. It would seem more reasonable to simply recognise that along with what we have been able to bring to light here, there are important areas for which evidence is lacking, which call for renewed, more focused investigations.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The book by F. López Cuevillas, *La civilización céltica en Galicia*, Madrid: Istmo, 1988, (ed. original 1953), is the last publication in which the Celtic reference is of significance. F. Calo Lourido, *A Cultura Castrexa*, Vigo: A Nosa Terra, 1993, reveals the anti-Celtic posture currently held by some archaeologists. Both positions must be considered in light of the historiographic and critical comments of M<sup>a</sup>. D. Fernández-Posse, *La investigación protohistórica en la Meseta y Galicia*, Madrid: Síntesis, 1998.

From a technical perspective, it is necessary to make use of G. Pereira, F.J. Sanchez-Palencia (eds), *Tabula Imperii Romani. Hoja K-29: PORTO*, Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Geográficos, 1991, as this work compiles the information available for the Roman period by geographic region, although it is also relevant for the previous period. The most significant archaeological documentation is gathered together, with a commentary and good photographs, in J.M. Vázquez Varela, A. Rodríguez Colmenero, *Galicia. Arte*, vol. 9: *Arte prehistórico y romano*, A Coruña: Hércules, 1993.

Archaeological summaries useful for contrasting data in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula are: A.C. Ferreira da Silva, *A cultura castreja no Noroeste de Portugal*, Paços de Ferreira: Câmara Municipal, 1986; E. Peralta Labrador, *Los Cantabros antes de Roma*, Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2000; A.J. Lorrio, *Los Celtíberos*, Alicante - Madrid: Suplemento a *Complutum*, 1997; F. Burillo Mozota, *Los Celtíberos, etnias y estados*, Barcelona: Crítica, 1998; J.R. Álvarez Sanchís, *Los Vettones*, Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1999; *idem*, *Los Señores del Ganado. Arqueología de los Pueblos Prerromanos en el Occidente de Iberia*, Madrid: Akal, 2003.

I would like to offer my thanks to Manuel Alberro, Xurxo Ayán and Francisco Javier González for their help with different aspects of this study, which forms part of the *ContextAR* project financed by the General Subdirectorate of Investigation Projects of the Investigation Directorate of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Technology, code BHA2002-04231-C02-02.

<sup>2</sup> A. Tovar, *Lenguas y Pueblos de la Antigua Hispania: Lo que Sabemos de Nuestros Antepasados Protohistóricos*, *Veleia* 2-3 (1985-1986): 15-34, is one of the last studies by the patriarch of Indo-European linguistics in Spain, and offers a systematic presentation of his thoughts. This was updated by J. Gorrochategui, *En torno a la clasificación del lusitano*, in *Studia palaeohispanica, Actas del IV coloquio sobre lenguas y culturas paleohispánicas*, Vitoria (1994): 77-91. A summary of theses supporting the 'Celtic' nature of pre-Roman languages in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula in J. Untermann, *Lusitanisch, Keltiberisch, Keltisch*, *Veleia* 2-3 (1985-1986): 57-76, further developed by C. Búa Carballo, *Estudio Lingüístico de la Teonimia Lusitano-galaica*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Salamanca, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Some examples of how 'Celtism' is articulated as a component of the collective imagination in Galicia, without any scientific basis, include: J. Renales Cortés, *Celtismo y literatura gallega: la obra de Benito Vicetto y su entorno literario*, (2 vols.) Santiago: Xunta-Consellería de Presidencia, 1996; J. C. Bermejo Barrera, *Los antepasados imaginarios en la historiografía gallega*, *Cuadernos de estudios gallegos* 38, (1989): 73-91; F. Pereira González, *O mito celta na historia*, *Gallaecia* 19 (2000): 311-334.

<sup>4</sup> C. Parceró and Isabel Cobas 2004 Iron Age archaeology of the northwestern Iberian peninsula, in M. Alberro and B. Arnold (eds), *The Celts of the Iberian Peninsula: e-Keltoi* 6: 1-72.

<sup>5</sup> The Classical sources are compiled in A. M. Romero Masia and X. M. Pose Mesura, *Galicia nos textos clásicos*, A Coruña: Padroado do Museu Arqueolóxico Provincial, 1988, although they must be complemented with the critical editions of the works of the different Greek and Latin authors. For a more analytical perspective, see A. Balboa Salgado, *Gallaecia nas fontes clásicas*, Santiago: Servicio de Publicacións da Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> F.J. González García, *Os Artabros. Estudio xeográfico e etnohistórico*, Ourense: Diputación Provincial de Ourense, 2003. The years go by and the great summary written by A. Tranoy, *La Galice Romaine*.

*Recherches sur le nord-ouest de la péninsule ibérique dans l'Antiquité*, París: Centre P. Paris, 1981, has yet to be bettered.

<sup>7</sup> Something similar may be seen in Dionysius the Periegeta, V, 288. See Diodorus of Sicily V, 24, on the legendary origins of the Celts, presented as descendants of Hercules; cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassos, *Roman Antiquities*, XIV, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Criticism of ancient ethnography and its peculiarities is inspired by publications such as those of F. Hartog, *Le miroir d'Hérodote. Essai sur la représentation de l'autre*, Paris: Gallimard, 1980, or A. Momigliano, *La Sabiduría de los bárbaros: los límites de la helenización*, México, FCE, 1988 (Cambridge 1976) and, closer to home, P. Thollard, *Barbarie et civilisation chez Strabon. Étude critique des livres III et IV de la 'Geographie'*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1987. The perspectives that open up studies of this type to testimonies in the Iberian peninsula can be found in the series *Mitología y Mitos de la Hispania Prerromana I, II, III*, Madrid: Akal, 1986-1999.

<sup>9</sup> Epigraphic evidence, whilst awaiting a new edition of the *CIL* corresponding to the peninsula, is extremely dispersed. Recent useful works, despite being incomplete, include F. Arias Vilas, P. Le Roux, A. Tranoy, *Inscriptions romaines de la province de Lugo*, Paris: Centre P. Paris, 1979; G. Pereira Menaut (ed.), *Corpus de inscripciones romanas de Galicia*, Santiago, vol. I. *Provincia de A Coruña*, 1992, by G. Pereira Menaut; vol. II. *Provincia de Pontevedra*, by G. Baños Rodríguez, 1994; A. Rodríguez Colmenero, *Corpus-catálogo de inscripciones rupestres de época romana del cuadrante Noroeste de la Península Ibérica*, Sada: O Castro, 1993. The almost exclusive use of epigraphic documentation by many historians and linguists frequently lacks the necessary correlative examination and critical reflection regarding this type of documentation. Steps in the right direction are taken by I. Sastre Prats, *Onomástica y relaciones políticas en la epigrafía del conventus Asturum durante el Alto Imperio*, Madrid: Anejos de AEspA XXV, 2002: 15-46.

<sup>10</sup> References to these inscriptions: *CIL* II 2902 = 5667; S.M. García Martínez, Tres nuevos antropónimos de los Célticos Supertamarcos in F. Villar, F. Beltrán (eds), *Pueblos, Lenguas y Escrituras en la Hispania Prerromana*, Zaragoza y Salamanca, (1999): 413-420, p. 414; A. Rodríguez Colmenero, Sobre dos nuevas estelas monumentales de *Lucus Augusti*, in F. Villar, F. Beltrán (eds), *Pueblos, Lenguas y Escrituras en la Hispania Prerromana*, Zaragoza and Salamanca, (1999): 605-617, p. 608. For a previous study see M<sup>a</sup> L. Albertos Firmat, Los Célticos Supertamáricos en la epigrafía, *Cuadernos de Estudios Gallegos* 19 (1974-1975): 313-318.

<sup>11</sup> Pomponius Mela quotes Lambriaca and Adrobica, Pliny writes this name as Adóbrica and also mentions Talábrica and Conimbriga. See the list of 89 toponyms ending in *-briga* drawn up by M<sup>a</sup> L. Albertos Firmat, Los topónimos en *-briga* en Hispania, *Veleia* 7 (1990): 131-146.

<sup>12</sup> An interpretation based on Ch.-J. Guyonvarc'h, *Mediolanum Biturigium*. Deux éléments de vocabulaire religieux et de géographie sacrée, *Ogam* 13 (1961): 137-158.

<sup>13</sup> I have drawn these examples from R. Brañas Abad, *Deuses, heroes e lugares sagrados na cultura Castrexa*, Santiago 2000, an onomastic study that synthesizes much of the previously existing bibliography.

<sup>14</sup> J. MacKillop, *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998: 122.

<sup>15</sup> E. Gray, ed. and tr., *The Second Battle of Mag Tuired*, Dublin: Irish Texts Society 52, 1982.

<sup>16</sup> C. Sterckx, *Essai de dictionnaire des dieux, héros, mythes et légendes celtes*, Brussels: Société Belge d'Études Celtiques, 1998 and 2000, starts out from this principle.

<sup>17</sup> F. Villar constructs his position through a wide range of publications, particularly his book *Indoeuropeos y no Indoeuropeos en la Hispania Prerromana*, Salamanca: Universidad, 2000. On issues

closer to the northwest, it is important to cite B.M. Prósper, *Lenguas y religiones prerromanas del occidente de la Península Ibérica*, Salamanca: Universidad, 2002. The affinities between paleohispanic languages and Italic languages established by these authors are not surprising from the point of view of historical anthropology, although we cannot enter into this subject here in any greater detail. However, the exclusive capacity this school has for detecting hydronyms from any onomastic testimony that passes into their hands strips their studies of any historical credibility: simply, there are no societies of this type.

<sup>18</sup> I have developed a methodological support for these views, suggesting the usefulness of the concept of *isoethos*, in M.V. García Quintela, Le programme d'accès à la royauté dans le monde celtique: pour une anthropologie politique celtique, *Études celtiques* 35 (2002): 261-291.

<sup>19</sup> The following is a summary of M.V. García Quintela, *Mitología y Mitos de la Hispania Prerromana III*, Madrid: Akal, 1999; updated in two different ways in M.V. García Quintela et al., *Souveraineté et sanctuaires dans l'Espagne celtique (études comparées d'histoire et d'archéologie)*. *Mémoires de la société belge d'études celtiques*, Brussel, 2003, and the paper cited in n. 18.

<sup>20</sup> Galician folklore can contain subjects that are very ancient in origin. Any interpretation requires knowledge of its key elements, for example in: M<sup>a</sup>. M. Llinares García, *Mouros, animas, demonios. El imaginario Popular gallego*, Madrid: Akal, 1990; B. Aparicio Casado, *Mouras, serpientes, tesoros y otros encantos. Mitología popular gallega*, Sada: O Castro, 1999; L. Castro Pérez, *Sondeos en la arqueología de la religión en Galicia y norte de Portugal: Trocado de Bande y el culto Jacobeo*, Vigo: Universidade, 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted by Ch.-J. Guyonvarc'h, La nourriture de la maison des deux Gobelets, *Celticum* 18 (1969): 315-343.

<sup>22</sup> Aislinge Óenguso (The Dream of Angus). Modern version: Angus agus Càer. See: Ch.-J. Guyonvarc'h, Le Rêve d'Oengus, *Ogam* 18 (1966): 117-31; F. Le Roux, Le Rêve d'Oengus, *Ogam* 18 (1966): 132-50.

<sup>23</sup> *The Melodies of Buchet's House (Esnada Tige Buchet)*, a story dating from the 10th century found in the Cycle of Kings or Historical Cycle, is included in the Book of Leinster and the Yellow Book of Lecan: R.I. Best, O. Bergin, and A. O'Sullivan (eds), *Book of Leinster*, 6 vols., Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1954-83. R. Atkinson (ed.), *The Yellow Book of Lecan*, Dublin, 1896.

<sup>24</sup> Here I summarise M.V. García Quintela and M. Santos Estévez, Petroglifos podomorfos de Galicia e investiduras reales célticas: estudio comparativo, *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 73 (2000): 5-26; M. Santos Estévez and M.V. García Quintela, Petroglifos podomorfos del Noroeste Peninsular: nuevas comparaciones e interpretaciones, *Revista de Ciências Históricas* 15 (2000): 7-40.

<sup>25</sup> G. Jones and T. Jones (eds), *The Mabinogion*, London: Everyman, 1996: 46-63 (Math Son of Mathonwy).

<sup>26</sup> A summary of M.V. García Quintela, El Sacrificio Lusitano. Estudio Comparativo, *Latomus* 51 (1992): 337-354; M.V. García Quintela, *Mitología y mitos de la Hispania Prerromana III*, cit., p. 225-260. B.M. Prósper, The inscription of Cabeço das Fraguas revisited. Lusitanian and Alteuropäisch populations in the west of the Iberian Peninsula. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 97/2 (1999): 151-183, establishes (p. 156) my "sheer ignorance of linguistic analysis". This is true, as is the fact that I have never attempted to conduct linguistic analyses in my work. But linguistics and the study of the history of religion do not necessarily follow the same theoretical trends, and this author tends to equate linguistic analysis with a form of 'religious truth' without historical parallels. For a review of this approach to (re-)constructing pre- or proto-historical religions exclusively from linguistic evidence, see F.J. González García, M.V. García Quintela, De la Idolatría en el Occidente Peninsular Prerromano, *Ilu. Revista de Ciencias de las Religiones* 10 (2005): 27-62.

This does not replace the systematic presentation of religions in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula. In this case see F. Marco Simón, La religión indígena en la Hispania indoeuropea, in *Historia de las Religiones de la Europa Antigua*, Madrid: Cátedra, 1994a, p. 313-400; *idem*, *Die Religion im Keltischen Hispanien*, Budapest: Archaeolingua, 1998; completed with J.C. Bermejo Barrera, *Mitología y Mitos de la Hispania Prerromana I*, Madrid, 1994 (1st ed. 1982); *idem*, *Mitología y Mitos de la Hispania Prerromana II*, Madrid, 1986; B. García Fernández-Albalat, *Guerra y Religión en la Gallaecia y la Lusitania Antiguas*, Sada, 1991. An important study is that of M. Almagro-Gorbea and J.R. Alvarez-Sanchís, La 'Sauna' de Ulaca: Saunas y Baños Iniciáticos en el Mundo Castreño, *Cuadernos de Arqueología de la Universidad de Navarra* 1 (1993): 177-232.

<sup>27</sup> In Cultes indigènes et religion romaine en Hispanie sous l'Empire, in Y. Le Bohec (ed.) *L'Afrique, la Gaule, la religion à l'époque romaine. Mélanges à la mémoire de Marcel Le Glay*, Brussels: Latomus, 1994: 560-567.

<sup>28</sup> What follows is a summary of M.V. García Quintela, *Mitología y mitos de la Hispania Prerromana III*, cit., p. 158-169.

<sup>29</sup> G. Jones and T. Jones (eds), *The Mabinogion*, London: Everyman, 1996: 67-74 (The Dream of Macsen Wledig).

<sup>30</sup> In Notes d'étymologie et de lexicographie Gauloises et Celtiques XXVIII, 133.- Celtique comun \**Letavia*, gaulois *LETAVIS*, irlandais *Letha*; la porte de l'Autre Monde, *Ogam* 19 (1967): 490-494.

<sup>31</sup> In Heroización y tránsito acuático: sobre las diademas de Mones (Piloña, Asturias) in J. Mangas and J. Alvar (eds), *Homenaje a José M. Blázquez*, Madrid: Clásicas, vol. II (1994b): 319-348.

<sup>32</sup> I offer two analyses of this subject that are more complementary than opposed, in M.V. García Quintela, *Mitología y mitos de la Hispania Prerromana III*, cit., 169-176; and in El reyezuelo, el cuervo y el dios céltico Lug: aspectos del dossier ibérico, forthcoming.

<sup>33</sup> Idrisi. *Geografía de España*, Valencia: Anubar 1974, p. 161.

<sup>34</sup> Daithi Ó hÓgáin, *Myth, Legend & Romance*, New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991: 272-76.

<sup>35</sup> G. Jones and T. Jones (eds), *The Mabinogion*. London: Everyman, 1996: 21-4, 27-31, 33-35.

<sup>36</sup> Studies of 'sanctuaries' in the northwest began with C. Parcero Oubiña, M. Santos Estévez, F. Criado Boado, Rewriting landscape: incorporating sacred landscapes into cultural traditions, *World Archaeology* 30 (1998): 159-176. A systematization of the archaeological facts and an essay offering a historical interpretation of religions is found in M. Santos Estévez and M.V. García Quintela, Arte Rupestre y santuarios, in M.A. Castiñeiras González and F. Díez Platas (eds), *Profano y pagano en el arte gallego, Sémata* 14 (2003): 37-149. On the presentation and interpretation of Pedrafitá in Lugo, M.V. García Quintela et al., *Souveraineté et sanctuaires dans l'Espagne celtique*, cit., chapter 3 entitled Lucus, Lugdunum, Lucaria, *Lugnasad*, Auguste, Lug et Saint Jacques.

<sup>37</sup> M. Santos Estévez, Arte Rupestre y recintos rituales en la Edad del Hierro, in M.A. Castiñeiras, F. Díez Platas, *Profano y pagano en el arte gallego, Sémata* 14 (2003): 37-94.

<sup>38</sup> The following publications may be consulted: M.V. García Quintela, M. Santos Estévez, From Rock Carvings to Celtic *Weltanschauung* in A Ferradura: Sanctuary of the Hillfort Culture in NW Spain, *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 32 (2004): 319-36; M. Santos Estévez, Y. Seoane Veiga, Escavación no contorno dun petroglifo en A Ferradura (Ourense - Galiza), *Arkeos* 15 (2005): 37-54; M.V. García Quintela, M. Santos Estévez, Los "santuarios" de Galicia en la Edad del Hierro: "A Ferradura" (Amoeiro, Ourense) como ejemplo, in S. Ribichini, S. Verger, X. Dupré I Raventós, *Saturnia Tellus*, Rome: École française de Rome, forthcoming ; and Chapter 6 of the forthcoming book by M.V. García Quintela, M. Santos Estévez, *Santuarios de la Galicia Celta*, Madrid: Abada, 2006.

<sup>39</sup> S.C. McCluskey, *Astronomies and Cultures in Early Medieval Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 60-76; S.C. McCluskey, The mid-quarter days and the historical survival of British folk astronomy, *Archaeoastronomy* 13, suppl. to *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 20 (1989): S1-S19.

<sup>41</sup> What follows is a summary of the book by M.V. García Quintela and R. Brañas Abad, *La Organización socio-política de los populi del Noroeste de la Península Ibérica Un estudio de antropología política histórica comparada*, Santiago de Compostela, 2003. This work was inspired in different ways by publications by R. Brañas, *Indíxenas e Romanos na Galicia Céltica*, Santiago: Follas Novas, 1995; *idem*, *A organización socio-política do Mundo Castrexo*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Santiago, 1999, and P. López Barja, El censo provincial, los *populi* y los *Castella* de *Gallaecia*, *Gallaecia* 18 (1999): 347-362.

<sup>42</sup> See C. Parceró Oubiña, Elementos para el Estudio de los Paisajes Castreños del Noroeste Peninsular, *Trabajos de Prehistoria* 52/1 (1995): 127-144; *idem*., Tres para dos. Las formas de poblamiento en la Edad del Hierro del Noroeste Ibérico, *Trabajos de Prehistoria* 57/1 (2000): 75-95; *idem*., *La construcción del Paisaje Social en la Edad del Hierro del Noroeste Ibérico*, (tesis doctoral inédita), Santiago, 2001. Recently extended for the northern part of Galicia, in the graduate thesis of P. Fábrega Álvarez, *Territorio, Sociedad y Romanización de la cultura castreña en la comarca de Ortegal*, Santiago de Compostela, 2003.

<sup>43</sup> For more details on the Roman conquest in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, see A. Schulten, *Los cántabros y astures y su guerra con Roma*, Madrid: Austral, 1962, and the studies published in *Las guerras Cántabras*, Santander, 1999.

<sup>44</sup> The edition used is by F.J. Sánchez Palencia, J. Mangas, (coords.), *El Edicto del Bierzo. Augusto y el Noroeste de Hispania*, Ponferrada: Fundación Las Médulas, 2000.

<sup>45</sup> On the one hand, they base their work on epigraphic documentation, G. Pereira Menaut, La formación histórica de los pueblos del Norte de Hispania. El caso de *Gallaecia* como paradigma, *Veleia* 1 (1982): 271-287; J. Santos Yanguas, *Comunidades indígenas y administración romana en el Noroeste Hispánico*, Vitoria, 1985; M<sup>a</sup> C. González, J. Santos, (eds), *Las Estructuras sociales indígenas del norte de la Península Ibérica*, Vitoria 1993. On the other hand, they are based on a model of archaeological exploration in the province of León, A. Orejas, *Estructura social y Territorio. El impacto romano en la cuenca nordoccidental del Duero*, Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Históricos, 1996; M. D. Fernández-Posse, J. Sánchez-Palencia, Las comunidades campesinas en la Cultura Castreña, *Trabajos de Prehistoria* 55-2 (1998): 127-150; I. Sastre Prats, *Las formaciones sociales rurales de la Asturia Prerromana*, Madrid: Clásicas 2001; A. Orejas Saco del Valle, I. Sastre Prats, Fiscalité et organisation du territoire dans le Nord-Ouest de la Péninsule Ibérique: *civitates*, tribut et *ager mensura comprehensus*, *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 25 (1999): 159-188; F.J. Sánchez Palencia, (coord.), *Las Médulas (León). Un paisaje cultural en la "Asturia Augustana"*, León: Fundación Las Médulas, 2000. However, they virtually all lack any specific examination of the historical process before the conquest. This, by contrast, is the point of view adopted by this publication, emphasising the continuity between the pre-Roman period and the earliest days of Roman domination, in line with the conclusions reached by C. Parceró based on examining different models of hillfort settlements in Galicia as a whole in different periods.

<sup>46</sup> M.V. García Quintela, R. Brañas Abad, *La Organización Socio-Política de los Populi del Noroeste de la Península Ibérica*, Santiago de Compostela: Trabajos de Arqueología e Patrimonio n<sup>o</sup> 28, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2002.

<sup>47</sup> Details about gold and silver work can be found in L. Castro Pérez, *Los Torques de los dioses y de los hombres*, A Coruña 1992, and A. Balseiro García, *El Oro prerromano en la provincia de Lugo*, Lugo



1994, *idem.*, *Diademas áureas prerromanas: análisis iconográfico y simbólico de la diademas de Ribadeo-Moñes*, Lugo 2000.

<sup>48</sup> An anonymous reviewer kindly reminded me that "there are parallels here with the Irish *fiana*, the 'heroes outside the tribe', originally a band of men who lived by hunting and plunder"; see K.R. McCone, Werewolves, Cyclops, Dīberga and Fianna: juvenile delinquency in early Ireland, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 12 (1986): 1-22; *idem.*, The Cyclops in Celtic, Germanic and Indo-European Myth, *Studia Celtica* 30 (1996): 89-111.

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