



The Celts in Iberia: An Overview

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Abstract

A general overview of the study of the Celts in the Iberian Peninsula is offered from a critical perspective. First, we present a brief history of research and the state of research on ancient written sources, linguistics, epigraphy and archaeological data. Second, we present a different hypothesis for the "Celtic" genesis in Iberia by applying a multidisciplinary approach to the topic. Finally, on the one hand an analysis of the main archaeological groups (Celtiberian, Vetton, Vaccean, the Castro Culture of the northwest, Asturian-Cantabrian and Celtic of the southwest) is presented, while on the other hand we propose a new vision of the Celts in Iberia, rethinking the meaning of "Celtic" from a European perspective.

Keywords

Celts, Iberian Peninsula, Iron Age, Celtiberians, Indo-European.

1. Introduction

Textbooks on European prehistory published during the last seventy-five years confirm that ever since the first theories were formulated at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Celts have played a crucial role in studies of European protohistory. The Celts have even been accused of taking over Europe during the Iron Age, through the cultures of Hallstatt and La Tène. Any conclusions drawn by European historiography about the Celts have been based on the image conjured up by Classical sources and the archaeological and cultural evidence collected at La Tène. It was only during the mid 1980s that scholars began to debate this issue and started to break away from the conventional established image of the Celts (Collis 2003; Ruiz Zapatero 1993, 2001). Traditionally, theories surrounding the Celts practically excluded the

Iberian Peninsula from the equation, since archaeological finds from the Hallstatt and La Tène cultures were rare in this area, and did not provide enough evidence for a cultural scenario comparable to that of Central Europe. However, this is not the only reason for such an oversight: north of the Pyrenees Spanish archaeological studies were practically unknown, and Spain was manifestly under-represented in forums and European publications on the subject. This combination of factors explains why European Celtic studies either exclude the Iberian Celts, or barely acknowledge their existence, let alone display any depth of knowledge of these people.

Thus, it is now more important than ever to study and publicize information about the Celts in Iberia. Only in the last decade, and especially during the last few years, have Iberian Celts been included in introductory texts about the Celts, for example in Cunliffe's excellent book *The Ancient Celts* (1997: 133-144), and in his illuminating and highly recommended brief overview entitled *The Celts: A Very Short Introduction* (2003). Other works include Kruta's ambitious textbook *Les Celtes: Histoire et Dictionnaire* (2000: 316-333) or Collis' most recent book *The Celts: Origins, Myths and Inventions* (2003: 122-123, 177-180), a lucid study that goes beyond a simple appraisal of Celtic historiography. Comprehensive works such as *The Historical Atlas of the Celtic World* (Haywood 2001: 44-45) place equal emphasis on the Iberian Celts and their cousins from other areas. This increased scholarly interest in the Celts of Iberia is also observable most recently in Raftery's *Atlas of the Celts* (2001: 48-49, 113).

However, unfortunately the situation continues in general as before: many studies persist in ignoring the Iberian Celts, despite the publication, albeit limited, of Spanish works in English, French and German (Almagro-Gorbea 1991a, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c; Almagro-Gorbea and Lorrio 1991, 1993; Álvarez-Sanchís 2000; Arenas 2001-2002; Burillo 1991; de Hoz 1992a, 1992b; Lorrio 1997b, 1999; Marco 1998; Ruiz Zapatero 1996; Sánchez Moreno 2001; Tovar 1986) and the international conferences that have focused specifically on the subject of the Iberian Celts (Almagro-Gorbea and Ruiz Zapatero 1993; Almagro-Gorbea et al. 2001; Cousquer et al. 1999).

This essay has two key objectives: Firstly, to provide a general overview of the latest research on the Iberian Celts, especially in the last fifteen years, and thus serve as a point of reference for other monograph-length studies. Secondly, to present a frank appraisal of research that reveals the polarization that is taking place in a few cases in Spain between pro- and anti-Celtic positions, which have in some cases a political dimension (Díaz Santana 2002; López

2003; Ruiz Zapatero 1996, 2003). This is comparable to the state of research in other European countries.

First and foremost, we have included a brief historiography of Celtic research carried out in Spain (Ruiz Zapatero 1993, 1995-97, 2003), which we consider absolutely fundamental when approaching contemporary research and seeking answers to a number of questions (Collis 2003: 11). Referring to past history and the development of the ideas we are working with is crucial when undertaking critical research. Secondly, we will examine the image of the Celts between the late third and first centuries BC according to Classical sources, historical linguistics, and archaeology in order to assess what is defined as Celtic and what criteria are applied. We believe that it is extremely important to explore the concept of the Celts from the perspective of ancient history, palaeolinguistics and archaeology, and also to give equal weight to independent theories, which must then be compared with the traditional sources. Such a task is by no means straightforward. We must proceed with extreme caution, always bearing in mind that the objects of comparison are fundamentally different. Thirdly, we will tackle the complex issue of the origins of the Iberian Peninsular Celts by studying the origins of the Celtiberians as a possible key to unlocking the process of Celticization of the rest of the Peninsula. Fourthly, we will define the different Peninsular archaeological groups that can be classified as "Celtic", and briefly analyze historical sequences along with the problems of how to identify their Celticity from an archaeological perspective. Fifthly, we will introduce and examine the model of the Celticization of Iberia, and we will lay particular emphasis on the need to proceed in this field with a greater critical awareness in order to produce interpretative models of the archaeological information. Sixthly, we will explain why there should be joint multidisciplinary research into the Celtic issue, in which disciplines such as ancient history, palaeolinguistics, archaeology, history of art, anthropology, population genetics, history of religion or ethnology, mythology and folklore studies should all be taken into consideration together. We would, however, like to highlight the very real danger of what John Collis has termed the continuous circular argument (2003: 12). In other words, each discipline must assess its own data without entrusting it to the interpretation and use made of it in other subject areas. Finally, we will attempt to demonstrate the importance of the Iberian Celts in the context of Iron Age Europe, and we will even suggest that the unique Iberian vantage point can offer new and interesting approaches to research into the Celts north of the Pyrenees.

As Cunliffe suggests, the Celtic debate reached its zenith at the dawn of the twenty-first century (2003: 6). A recent article by Sims-Williams summarizes the wide range of opinions, which run the gamut from celtomania to celtoscepticism (1998). The debate is heated and at times even inappropriate, but all sides would agree that the complexity of this issue is intriguing. There are many different approaches with different types of data to be analyzed. As Cunliffe has summed it up so well, "it is a rich mix of ingredients, but what we cannot do is to fling them all into one pot and expect a perfectly formed Celt to emerge. Each of the different categories of evidence has to be considered within its own critical parameters to separate fact from wishful thinking and to distil out what it has to offer to the debate. Whether, in this process of deconstruction, Celts and Celticism will vanish altogether remains to be seen" (2003:7). This has been our aim in this article (Fig. 1).

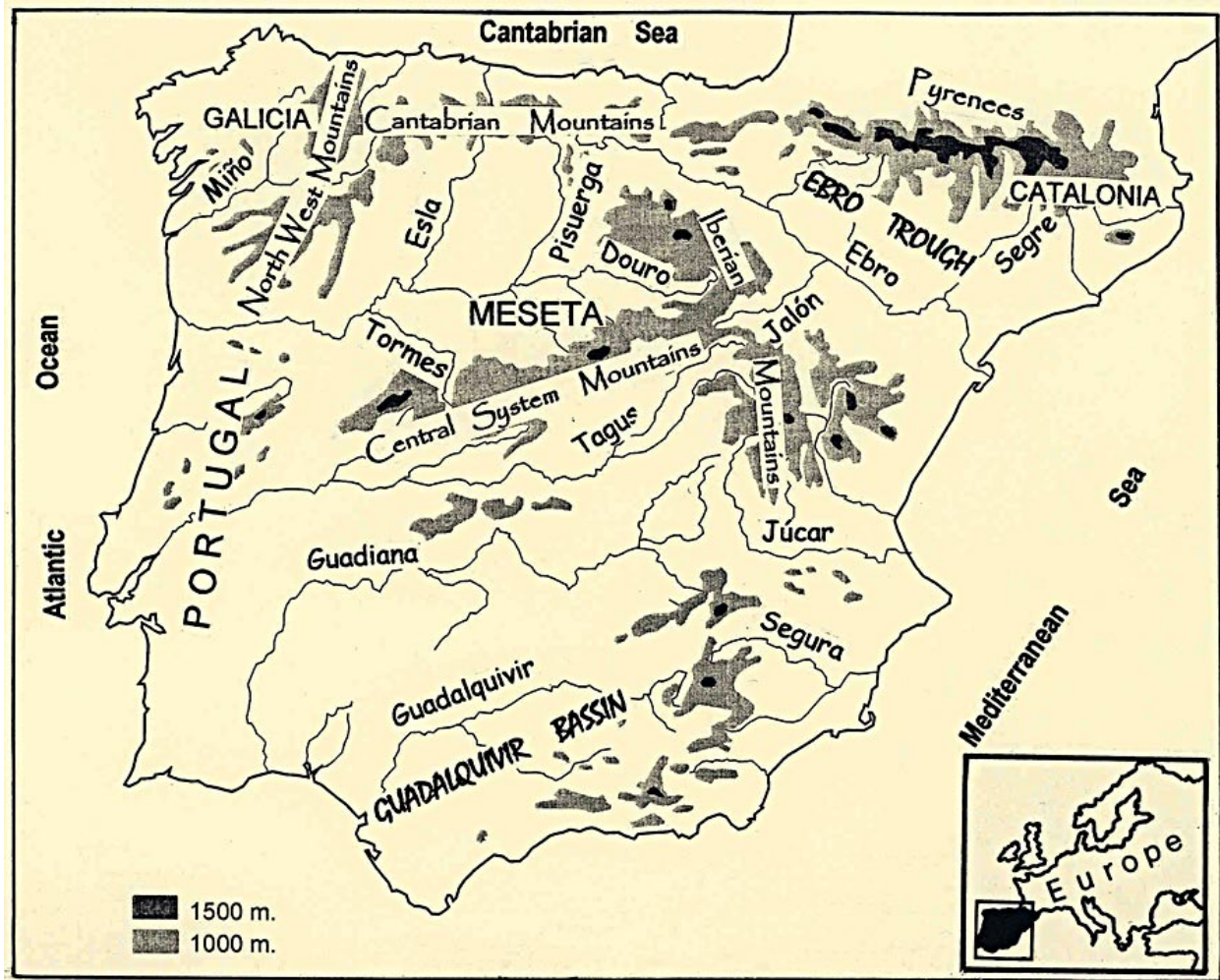


Figure 1. The Iberian Peninsula: main geographical features.

2. The history of research

The first studies on the Iberian Celts date as far back as the scholarly tradition of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, which focused on identifying cities mentioned in Classical sources, including *Numantia*. However, it was not until the first quarter of the nineteenth century that W. von Humbolt (1821) was able to identify a few Celtic toponyms in the Iberian Peninsula that came from literary sources. During the second half of the century, F. Fita (1878) and E. Hübner (1893) greatly added to the collection of documents by focusing on names based on epigraphic evidence. At the same time, the first non-coin finds of Celtiberian epigraphs written in the Iberian alphabet were made. Despite various attempts from the sixteenth century onward to decipher these texts using numismatic documentation, this task was not achieved until 1925, by M. Gómez Moreno. The late nineteenth century saw H. d'Arbois de Jubainville (1893-94) publish several seminal studies on the subject. He was the main exponent of the Ligurian theory, according to which this Indo-European race of people had colonised the West before the Celts arrived. D'Arbois de Jubainville began an assessment of Peninsular Celtic elements primarily based on Classical literary sources and onomastic documentation.

Alongside these studies, important archaeological activity began to take place in Peninsular Celtic areas, in particular during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Excavation was begun in locations such as *Numantia*, particularly the Iron Age burial grounds located in the Upper Tagus, Upper Jalón and Upper Douro Rivers that, according to written sources, were the nucleus of Celtiberia (Lorrio 1997a: 16-18). Archaeological work began in the city of *Numantia* in 1803, and was taken up again at the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century. However, it was the excavation work funded by Kaiser Wilhelm II and carried out by A. Schulten between 1905 and 1912 that revealed the city and the Roman camps that formed Scipio's border to the international community. The results of these excavations were published in four volumes between 1914 and 1931 (Schulten 1914, 1927, 1929, 1931). The first of these volumes contained the first ever analysis of Celtiberia, in which Schulten (1914: 7-11, 281-290) included a collection of literary sources on the Celtiberians. He used literary sources to create a highly personal reconstruction of the process of ethnogenesis of the Celtiberians, which would become the basis for subsequent studies by Bosch Gimpera. According to Schulten (1914: 98-99; 1920: 108-111), the Celts probably gained eventual control of the whole of the Meseta region. His evidence to support this theory was the geographic distribution of the toponyms

ending in *-briga*, which were later absorbed into Iberian cultures. Therefore, the Celtiberians could have been Iberians who settled in the land of the Celts, which would directly contradict the traditional theories suggesting that the Celtiberian people developed as the result of a Celtic invasion of the land of the Iberians. A sign that these two populations intermingled can be seen in the presence of Celtic elements among Celtiberians, such as the names of Celtiberian nobility (Schulten 1914: 246).

From 1915 onwards, P. Bosch Gimpera wrote a series of studies broaching the issue of the Celts in the Iberian Peninsula. He used Schulten's invasion theories - which were largely based on Classical texts and linguistic data - as his basis, and attempted to shore them up using archaeological evidence. He linked the Celts with the recently discovered Urnfield Culture in the northeast of the Peninsula and suggested that various invasions took place. Bosch Gimpera was in some respects the "creator" of the Hispanic Celts, at least from an archaeological point of view (Fernández-Posse 1998: 40). In his work *Two Celtic Waves in Spain* (1943), Bosch Gimpera distinguished two waves of invasions. He placed the first around 900 BC and linked it with the Urnfield Culture from southern Germany, which according to him penetrated the Peninsula via Catalonia, where a process of naturalization of the invaders took place up until the mid seventh century BC. He defined the second wave as being made up of groups of Hallstatt peoples from the Lower and Middle Rhine, who arrived in the Peninsula in several stages between 650 and 570 BC via the western passes of the Pyrenees, which is why their influence was fully felt in the Meseta region. The Belgae were the last Celtic group to arrive in the Peninsula around 570 BC, pre-dating the first La Tène culture objects, which were the result of trade relations. The Belgae settled in the northern Meseta and in the Ebro River Valley, bringing with them elements that would give rise to the so-called "Post-Hallstatt Culture".

From the 1930s onwards, M. Almagro Basch wrote several articles (1935, 1939, 1947-48) in which he defended his conclusions, which were in direct conflict with Bosch Gimpera's theories. He developed his ideas more fully in his publication *La invasión céltica en España* (1952), which was included in R. Menéndez Pidal's *Historia de España*. In this work, Almagro restated his theories on the Indo-Europeanization of the Iberian Peninsula, and suggested a single Celtic invasion that started ca. 800 BC and took place slowly and gradually, against the background of the Celtic Urnfield culture.

From the 1940s onward, archaeological research into the Celtic question lapsed into a state

of relative torpor (Díaz-Andreu 1993), which added to the difficulty in relating Hispanic material to that found in the rest of Europe, and led to a marked decline in new theories and interpretations. Several German archaeologists provided the impetus for a change in direction. The conclusions drawn from their work identified the historical Celts with the La Tène culture, in line with the hypotheses of Central European Celtic research (cf. Ruiz Zapatero 1993: 49). This new research avenue can be clearly seen in the work of E. Sangmeister (1960), in which he tried to clarify the value of the Celtic contribution in the Iberian Peninsula. For Sangmeister, Hallstatt D represented a new cultural phase in southeastern Germany and northeastern France, bringing together surviving elements of the Urnfield Culture and reviving elements of the Tumulus Culture and other typically Hallstatt elements. He could not determine precisely which of these components would have brought with it the Celtic language, which, according to Sangmeister, was the only and definitive argument that could justify referring to Celts in the Iberian Peninsula.

Evidence provided by the field of linguistics supports the idea of several invasions. Following Gómez Moreno's deciphering of the Iberian alphabet (1925), Caro Baroja (1943) identified Celtic elements in certain inscriptions written in Iberian that came from Celtiberia. The geographical zone of Celtiberia was defined according to where coins having certain word-endings were found. However, it was Tovar who in 1946 detected several fundamental traits of the Celtiberian language, which was thus finally classified as belonging to the Celtic languages. This pioneering work was followed by a number of important publications: Lejeune (1955), Schmoll (1959) and Tovar himself (1948, 1949, 1950, 1955-56, 1961, among other works). For Tovar (1971: 18-19) there were two Indo-European linguistic strata: one was 'pre-Celtic', as attested in Lusitanian, a "more archaic [language] in some elements than Celtic, which could represent the remnants, although in an evolved state, of the early Indo-European invasions in the West". He defined the other stratum, Celtiberian, as an "archaic Celtic dialect" (Tovar 1971: 18 ff.). For Untermann (1961), on the other hand, there was only one Indo-European invasion of the Iberian Peninsula of Celtic origin responsible for the dialectal differences found in this region. In the early 1970s, the presence of a Celtic language in the Iberian Peninsula was definitively confirmed with the discovery of the first Botorrita Bronze, considered one of the most important texts in the whole of the Celtic continental world (Beltrán and Tovar 1982; Eska 1989; de Hoz and Michelena 1974; Meid 1993, 1994: 7-28).

From the mid 1980s on, research on the Celts in the Iberian Peninsula was revitalised by

renewed efforts that approached the issue from various disciplines. Prior to this, research had almost entirely been confined to linguistic studies. Greater knowledge and understanding of the Late Bronze and Iron Age material cultural in the central and western regions of the Iberian Peninsula have allowed us to move forward in the interpretation of the origins of some of the main peoples thought to be Celtic by Graeco-Roman authors, against the background of the Celticization of the Iberian Peninsula. Research had practically ground to a halt following the seminal theses by Bosch Gimpera and Almagro Basch, and apart from laudable attempts by Sangmeister (1960) and Schüle (1969) this question had not been revisited. Lenerz-de Wilde (1981) and Stary (1982) took up the reins of interpretation and followed the Central European tradition of Celtic research already present in Sangmeister's work. They tried to demonstrate that Peninsular Celts were La Tène Celts, despite the fact that the distribution of discoveries relating to La Tène culture in the Iberian Peninsula did not coincide with the Indo-European linguistic areas. Subsequently, Lenerz-de Wilde (1991, 1995) proposed her invasionist theories based on her belief that there was evidence from the sixth century BC onward for contact between the Iberian Peninsula and the Hallstatt Culture. Later on, Celtic groups arrived in the Peninsula via routes that had already been established through previous trade contact via the Ebro River and through to the Meseta plateau. This would certainly explain the discoveries dating from the fifth century BC in the Meseta that demonstrate the links between this region and the Hallstatt and La Tène cultures in Central Europe. These finds include certain types of brooches, La Tène swords and their characteristic sheaths, objects that appear during the fourth century BC, and a rare belt hook, which was doubtless made in the La Tène culture area (Lenerz-de Wilde 1995: 538). However, Kalb (1979), in his study on the Celts in Portugal, did not uphold the idea that La Tène style discoveries made in Portugal constituted archaeological proof of a Celtic culture, and stated that this "term is not suitable to describe unequivocally an archaeological context" (Kalb 1993: 155). As Untermann (1995a: 20) pointed out, even the discovery of Latenian objects cannot be linked to the linguistic Celticization of the Iberian Peninsula, since "Linguistics demands a considerably earlier date for the first settlement of speakers of Celtic languages".¹

It was not until M. Almagro-Gorbea began to develop his research from the mid 1980s onward that the issue was given a new dimension (Almagro-Gorbea 1986-87, 1987, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1993; Almagro-Gorbea and Lorrio 1987). In the first place, it is difficult to maintain that the origin of the Peninsular Celts can be linked to the Urnfield culture. Research

since the 1970s has confirmed that the latter culture originated from the other side of the Pyrenees, and also that this people settled throughout the northeast of the Peninsula, a zone that does not coincide with that occupied by the historic Celts nor with Celtic linguistic evidence (Ruiz Zapatero 1985). Furthermore, there was a smooth uninterrupted transition from the Urnfield culture in the northeast into the Iberian culture, whose epigraphic findings correspond to a language - Iberian - which is not Celtic and indeed not even Indo-European (de Hoz 1993b; Untermann 1990; etc.).

Therefore, Almagro-Gorbea (1987, 1992, 1993, 1994) sought a new interpretation that would determine the origin of the Celts documented by written sources, by tracing their material culture, their socio-economic structure and their ideology in the Iberian Peninsula as interrelated parts of the same cultural system (Fig. 2). He sought the roots of the Peninsular Celtic world in its 'proto-Celtic' substratum (Almagro-Gorbea 1992, 1993), which was preserved in western regions of the Peninsula, although in the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age

this zone expanded to cover the area from the Atlantic to the Meseta. This phenomenon is attested by the existence of ideological elements (such as initiation rituals for 'fraternities' of warriors, archaic deities, etc), linguistic evidence ("Lusitanian" and anthroponyms and toponyms *P-*) and common archaeological finds (weapons cast into the water, round houses, the absence of "fortified settlements", etc.), as well as a primitive social organization, which appears to be linked to the Atlantic Late Bronze Age, but whose characteristics are similar to historical Celts, and therefore allow a connection to be made. Thus, even if we do not rule out the movements and migrations of populations, the formation of Peninsular Celts would probably have come about due to the *in situ* evolution of this culture, in which processes of acculturation, particularly of the Tartessian and Iberian world, would have played a defining role, even constituting a key element to understanding

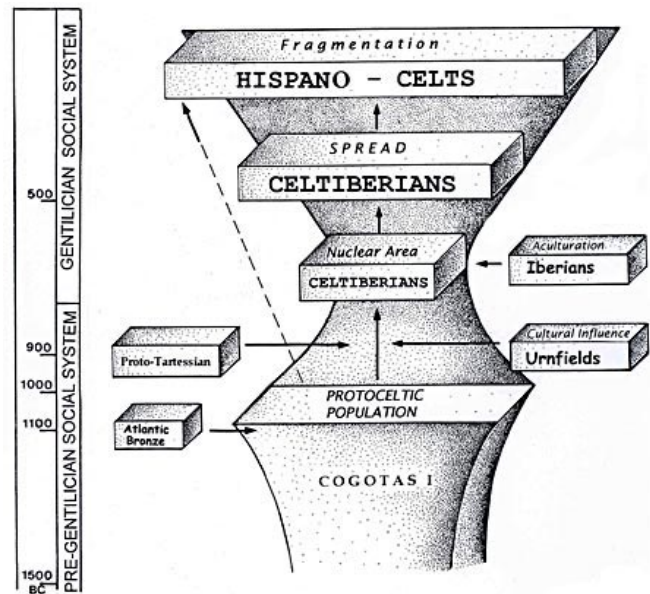


Figure 2. Origin of the Celtiberians and process of *Celticization* in the Iberian Peninsula (After Burillo 1998, following Almagro-Gorbea 1993 data).

the personality of the Peninsular Celts.

According to Almagro-Gorbea (1993: 146-150), the Celtiberian culture emerged out of a 'proto-Celtic' substratum, which would explain the cultural, socio-economic, linguistic and ideological similarities, as well as the progressive assimilation of the 'proto-Celtic' substratum into the Celtiberian culture. This process of Celticization allows us to understand better the heterogeneity and clear personality of Celtic Hispania within the Celtic world.

In a recent study, Almagro-Gorbea (2001: 95) proposed that the origins of the Celts could be traced back to the third millennium BC, and sought to find the initial roots of the formative process that would eventually give rise to the Celtic people in the Bell Beaker culture. This remote origin would certainly explain the wide dispersion of the Celts throughout western Europe, as well as the variability of the different Celtic peoples, and the existence of ancestral traditions. The Celts described in Classical sources and known to us through archaeological remains would, therefore, have been the result of a long process of progressive or "cumulative" Celticization, presumably explaining the cultural variety which, although they may have all spoken similar languages and held similar beliefs about life and its values, made them stand out from other people in the ancient world (Almagro-Gorbea 2001: 98).

However, there is an undeniable presence in the Eastern Meseta of ethnic contributions from the Ebro valley, approximately dated to the eighth and seventh centuries BC. Such contributions have allowed us to assess the importance of the Urnfield culture in the development of the Celtiberian world - possibly in the form of small infiltrations of "settlers" (Arenas 1999: 246) - stemming from its introduction of a new socio-economic model into local populations as well as possibly an Indo-European language, the direct predecessor of the Celtiberian language attested in inscriptions. This proposal (Lorrio 1997a: 260-261, 372; Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1988, 1999: 26, 34) allows for the indigenous cultures - which did not disappear along with Cogotas I, a characteristic culture of the Late Bronze Age in the Meseta (for an opposing view, see Arenas 1999: 246) - to play an active role in the process of interaction with the Urnfield model. It was this interaction that gave rise to the ancient Celtiberian world.²

3. Iberian Celts: literary sources, linguistics and archaeology

The main sources that allow us to build up a picture of the Celts in the Iberian Peninsula are the following: Classical texts, linguistic and epigraphic evidence, and archaeology.

Mythology and folklore should also be included here, since these disciplines provide evidence of the endurance of certain traditions that are allegedly Celtic in origin, although the value of these traditions for the purpose of Celtic studies is yet to be determined.

1. Firstly, we will analyze the information provided by Classical Graeco-Roman authors (Figs. 3-5), who approached the description of the Iberian Peninsula from different perspectives and had diverse motivations and interests. Only a few of these descriptions refer to the presence of Celts, and thus paint a picture of the Celtic World as seen "from the outside" in which mistakes, personal interests and manipulation of the information are all present to a certain degree (Champion 1985: 14-17).

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that specifically Graeco-Roman historians and geographers created some of the terms used to refer to Celtic peoples in Iberia. Moreover, the reasons that led to the usage of these terms are in general unknown, which without doubt makes it difficult to understand the groups defined as Celts. This is certainly the case with the term *Celtiberi*, which must have been used to refer to a people that the authors believed to be a mixed group (Untermann 1983, 1984). This term appears in accounts by Diodorus, Appian and Martial, for whom the Celtiberians would have been Celts mixed with Iberians, although other authors such as Strabo saw the Celts as the more dominant group in this blend. There is an extremely interesting reference by Pliny (3, 13) to the *Celtici* in *Baeturia*, who are classified as Celtiberians because of their rituals, language and the names of their towns. This sheds light on some of the defining factors for a Graeco-Roman author when it came to classifying people into concrete ethnic categories. Although Pliny makes no reference to their material culture, we know that when Classical authors refer to aspects such as weaponry, they are showing the differences or similarities observed between the peoples they describe (Lorrio 1997a: 189-196).

2. Linguistic evidence includes epigraphs written in indigenous languages and also the field of onomastics, mainly known through Latin inscriptions. The discovery of inscriptions written in indigenous languages in the Peninsula, as well as the wealth of onomastic records that have survived, allows us to define two important linguistic areas with a reasonable amount of clarity: one linguistic area is not Indo-European and was found in areas of the south and the Levant; the other is Indo-European and was dominant in the center, north and west of the peninsula (Fig. 6).
3. Archaeological records are not easily reconciled with the two above sources, and this lack of correlation has led the fields of archaeology and linguistics to go their separate ways. Archaeology must function independently, mainly on the complex issue of the formation of the Peninsular Celtic world. On this subject, literary, linguistic and onomastic evidence - despite their undeniable value - can only be of limited use owing to the impossibility of determining exactly how far back such phenomena date.

3.1 Written Graeco-Roman sources

Despite the wealth of information provided by Classical authors on the subject of the Iberian

Peninsula, there are very few references to the Celts.³ The oldest sources simply describe the coastal areas of the Peninsula, mainly the South and the Levant, of which the Classical authors had first-hand experience. References to inland areas are a great deal more general and often vague. As a consequence, any information about the location of these peoples is far too imprecise to be of much value. Mostly, the authors simply made a cursory acknowledgement of their presence, and located them sometimes near cities or other presumably non-Celtic peoples, occasionally explaining their presence as a result of geographical accident.

Traditionally, one of the most ancient sources on the Iberian Peninsula is thought to be the Latin poem *Ora Maritima* (Mangas and Plácido 1994), written at the end of the fourth century AD by Rufus Festus Auienus, although some scholars believe that it presents the story of a voyage to Massalia from the sixth century BC, with a few later interpolations. Despite its controversial nature, a certain passage from the Voyage (129-145), which is on the whole excessively obscure, has been interpreted as the most ancient recorded reference to the Celts (Rankin 1987: 2-3; Schulten 1955: 36-37; etc.), along with allusions to a series of other peoples such as the Cempsí, Saefes and Berybraces who are difficult to characterize (195, 485).

Leaving aside the *Ora Maritima* for the moment, the first reference to the Celtic world was made by Hecataeus of Miletus (ca. 500 BC), who defined *Narbo* as a Celtic city (as well as *Nirax*, but the location of this city is uncertain). He placed the Greek colony of *Massalia* in the land of the Ligurs, close to the land of the Celts. Herodotus (2, 33; 4, 49) is credited with the first certain reference to the presence of Celts in the Iberian Peninsula, and the oldest evidence of the ethnonym *Keltoi*. In the fifth century BC, Herodotus indicated that the source of the river Istro (now known as the Danube) was in the land of the Celts, which stretched beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and bordered the land of the Kynesios (or Kynetes), who were thought to be the most western tribe in Europe.

Later on, there were repeated mentions of the presence of Celts in the Iberian Peninsula. Ephorus (in Strabo 4, 4, 6), ca. 405-330 BC, believed that the *Keltiké* occupied most of the Peninsula, as far as *Gades* (today's Cádiz). Eratosthenes (in Strabo 2, 4, 4, p. 107), ca. 280-195 BC, seemed to confirm the fact that the Celts reached the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula. He believed that border regions of Iberia were inhabited as far as *Gades* by *Galatae*, a term that was doubtless used as a synonym for the Celts. The references to Celts further inland are reflected in another passage of Pseudo-Scymnus (162 ff.) attributed to Ephorus, according to which the source

of the river *Tartessos*, now the Guadalquivir, began in the land of the Celts. Diodorus (25, 10) confirmed the presence of Celts in the south of the Peninsula. He indicated that when Amilcar arrived in the Peninsula in 237 BC, he had to face Tartessians and Iberians who fought alongside the Celts of Istolacio.

A rapid increase in information regarding Iberia occurred in the late third century BC, and particularly during the following two centuries, when the Peninsula became of increasingly strategic interest for Rome. Information came pouring in, not only about the geography of the area, but also about economic, social and religious structures. This information boom provides a much more complete overview of the Peninsular Celts, and allows us to pinpoint their settlements more exactly.

During the wars with Rome and the period directly after that, written sources modified the concept of *Celtica*, and applied it to areas to the north of the Pyrenees⁴, although this did not mean that there were no express references to the existence of Celtic populations in the Iberian Peninsula. In-depth analysis of the works of Polybius, Poseidonius, Strabo, Diodorus, Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder and Claudius Ptolemy sheds light on three distinct areas located in the center and the west of the Peninsula, in which the presence of Celtic peoples is explicitly indicated: the eastern Meseta, the northwest, and the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula. Clearly, this does not exclude the possibility of other areas that are not mentioned by these sources.

3.1.1. The Celtiberians

The first of the areas mentioned above corresponds to the inland regions of the Iberian Peninsula, where the Celtiberians would have been located (Fig. 3).⁵ This group was expressly considered by several authors to be Celtic (Poseidonius, in Diodorus 5, 33; Strabo 3, 4, 5; Martial *Epigr.* I, 55, 8-10 and X, 63, 3-4; Isidorus *Ethym.* 9, 2, 114). From the late



Figure 3. The main pre-Roman *populi* in the Iberian Peninsula (second and first centuries BC) (After Álvarez-Sanchís 2003, following Untermann 1992).

third century BC onwards, Graeco-Roman literary sources began to provide the earliest information on the Celtiberians and Celtiberia, and gave accounts of the names of Celtiberian peoples and their location. This information, which is at times contradictory, not to say blatantly imprecise, allows us to define the theoretical Celtiberian territory in two ways (Fig. 4):



Figure 4. Celtiberia: towns and *populi* (third to first centuries BC) (After Lorrio 2001).

- a) By using Strabo's descriptions of Celtiberia, or the use of the nouns "beginning" or "end" when referring to this area, such as *Clunia*, *Celtiberiae finis* (Plin. 3, 27), *Segobriga*, *caput Celtiberiae* (Plin. 3, 25), or Contrebia, *caput eius gentis*, referring to the Celtiberians (Val. Max. 7, 5, 5),
- b) By analysing the peoples thought to be Celtiberians and examining the location of cities linked to them, or by looking at peoples who occupied neighbouring territories but who were not Celtiberians. However, Classical sources and contemporary historiography do not coincide on these issues, mainly because of the different ways the Graeco-Roman authors used the terms "Celtiberian" and "Celtiberia". There is no single unanimous opinion regarding the links between peoples that could be considered Celtiberians, which include the Arevaci, Pelendones, Lusones, Belli and Titti, and occasionally Vaccaeii, Carpetani, Olcades, Lobetani, and even more distant groups such as Oretani, Bastetani, Bastuli or Celtici. There is similarly no shortage of authors who reject the ethnic content of the term altogether, and take it to refer to all inhabitants of an extensive area of the inland Peninsula.

The first reference to Celtiberia is made within the context of the Second Punic War, in Polybius' narration of the siege of *Saguntum* (3, 17, 2) in the spring of 219 BC. From this date onwards, information about Celtiberians and Celtiberia is plentiful and varied, since the Celtiberians were one of the key players in the various wars and battles that took place throughout the second and first century BC, which culminated in the destruction of *Numantia* in 133 BC. Celtiberia also played a vital role in the Sertorian Wars (Salinas 1996: 27-37).

The geographical concept of Celtiberia underwent a process of evolution following its first appearance in texts. It began as a rather generic concept, obvious in the most ancient literary testimonies, such as Poseidonius, for whom the Pyrenees separated Gaul from Iberia and Celtiberia (in Diod. 5, 35). Clearly, these initial concepts were vague and contained blatant errors. However, there was also a narrower definition that referred to the eastern Meseta and the right side of the Middle Ebro Valley (for an opposing viewpoint, see Gómez Fraile 1996, 1999, 2001). This concept was largely due to an increased understanding and knowledge of the ethnic complexity of the Peninsula. Such an overview was offered by authors such as Strabo, Pliny or Ptolemy, although Strabo included information that referred to both the extensive and narrower definitions of Celtiberia, which has been put down to his use of sources from different periods (Capalvo 1996: 52-53).

Strabo, who wrote around the time of Christ's birth, offered a very broad concept of Celtiberia using information provided by Polybius and Poseidonius. Many of the largest rivers of the Atlantic basin started there, such as the Douro, the Tagus, the Guadiana and even the Guadalquivir, as well as the Limia and the Miño, although Poseidonius believed this last example began in Cantabria. The easternmost point of Celtiberia was located in the *Idoubeda* - the Iberian Mountains - although Strabo himself placed a few Celtiberian cities even further to the east. According to Strabo (3, 4, 13), Celtiberia was divided into four territories, of which he only made reference to those inhabited by the Arevaci and Lusones, although Polybius (35, 2) and Appian (*Iber.* 44, 48-49, 50, 61-63 and 66) revealed that the other two corresponded to the Belos and Belli and Titthi tribes. A little further on, Strabo (3, 4, 19) indicated that some believed that there were five areas. Several candidates were proposed as inhabiting this fifth zone, including the Vaccaeii, who were considered Celtiberians by Appian (*Iber.* 50-52, 53-54) although in general they appeared in sources as two separate peoples. In all probability, this fifth section was inhabited by the Pelendones, whom Pliny (3, 26) described as Celtiberians.

Pliny's writings reflected the administrative situation in Hispania following the reforms introduced by Augustus; in his descriptions of Hispania Citerior he only referred to the Arevaci (3, 19; 3, 27) and Pelendones (3, 26; 4, 112) as Celtiberians. However, in the second century AD, Ptolemy, in his description of the province of Tarraconensis, treated the Arevaci (2, 6, 55) and Pelendones (2, 6, 53) as separate from the Celtiberians (2, 6, 57), whom he considered another ethnic group, and placed all these peoples on an equal footing (see García Alonso 2003: 295-297, 301-310, 326-343).

Analysis of the literary sources reveals an enormously complex Celtiberia whose geographic scope and ethnic composition are difficult to define and substantially changed during the process of the Roman conquest and subsequent Romanization. It is important to remember that over three centuries passed between the oldest references to the Celtiberians and Ptolemy's writings. During this period, the wars and battles and later on the administrative reforms surely had a marked impact on the Celtiberian lands.

The fact that the term "Celtiberia" did not originate there makes it even more difficult to assess, as do the frequent contradictions found in its usage and application in literary sources, which can sometimes but not always be explained by chronology. As for the term *Celtiberi*, it appears to be used to refer to a people considered to be a mixed group (Untermann 1983, 1984). Diodorus, Appian and Martial certainly used it in this way, and believed that the Celtiberians were Celts mixed with Iberians, although for other authors such as Strabo, there was a definitive domination of the Celtic component in this mixture. Even if not all scholars believe that the concept "Celtiberian" refers to an ethnic unit (Gómez Fraile 1996: 172; Koch 1979: 389), it is equally important to study aspects of the indigenous features that could have been passed on to visitors to the area, such as customs and languages, since they could form the basis of a proven identity (Burillo 1998: 121-146). The Celtiberians could be considered an ethnic group insofar as they included subordinate ethnic units, just as the Gauls or the Iberians did, but on a smaller scale, without evidence for centralized power or even a political hierarchy (Burillo 1993: 226).

In short, the true significance of the terms "Celtiberian" and "Celtiberia" in the different contexts in which they were used is unknown, although it is likely that they had ethnic and purely geographical connotations. It has been suggested that the term "Celtiberian" could have been used to refer to the "Iberian Celts" (Tovar 1989: 83), even though, as we have already pointed out, the Celtiberians were not the only Celts on the Peninsula. Possibly this term was simply used to

highlight the personality of these people within the Celtic world (Ciprés 1993a: 57).

The Berones were another Celtic population (Str. 3, 4, 5) that inhabited the area now known as La Rioja, on the right bank of the Upper Ebro River (Tovar 1989: 77-78). According to Strabo (3, 4, 12), they settled to the north of the Celtiberians, were neighbours of the Cantabrian Coniscos, and had been part of the "Celtic immigration". He stated that they inhabited the city of *Varia*. Ptolemy (2, 6, 54) also mentioned this city, which he calls *Vareia*, along with *Tritium Megallum* and *Oliba*.

3.1.2. The Celtici in the southwest

Many sources concur in pointing to the presence of Celtic populations in the southwest of the Peninsula. Strabo (3, 1, 6) echoed Poseidonius when he mentioned the *Keltikoi* as the main inhabitants of the region located between the rivers Tagus and Guadiana, approximately where the Alentejo (Portugal) stands today.⁶ There were a few Lusitanians living among the Celtici who had been transferred there by the Romans from the right banks of the Tagus River.⁷ They shared the same "gentle and civilized" character of the Turdetani. Strabo put this down to the fact that they were neighbouring populations, and Polybius proposed that they were related, "although the Celtici are less [civilized] because they generally live in hamlets" (Str., 3, 2, 15). The Celtici from Guadiana had blood links with the Galician Celts, since there had been large-scale migration to the northwest of these Celts along with the Turduli (Str., 3, 3, 5). Their most famous city was *Conistorgis* (Str., 3, 2, 2), which, according to different sources, belonged to the Cunetes or Conii (App., *Iber.* 56-60). Similarly, Strabo (3, 2, 15) indicated that the Celtici established colonies, such as *Pax Augusta*.

Pliny (4, 116), writing in the mid first century AD, placed the Celtici in Lusitania, and stated that the inhabitants of the *oppidum* of *Mirobriga* "are called Celtici" (Plin., 4, 118). Ptolemy (2, 5, 5), in the second century AD, provided a list of Celtici cities in Lusitania.

In addition to the territories already mentioned, the Celts settled in *Baeturia*,⁸ an area located between the rivers Guadiana and Guadalquivir (Plin., 3, 13-14). According to Pliny (3, 13), *Baeturia* was divided "into two parts and contained among a few minor peoples: the Celts, who lived next to Lusitania, and the Turduli...". For Pliny (3, 13), the Celts that inhabited *Baeturia* were Celtiberians - who had come from Lusitania - as demonstrated by their rituals, language and the names of their peoples, known in Betica by nicknames. In Celtic *Baeturia*, which can be located in the basin of the river Ardila (Berrocal-Rangel 1992: Fig. 2), he mentioned a few cities whose names coincided with a Celtiberian city, such as *Nertobriga Concordia Iulia* or *Segida Restituta Iulia*.⁹

Pliny (3, 13) also included some other cities in *Celtica*, located outside *Baetura*, including a few of them in the hills near Cádiz and Malaga, and to the south of the river Guadalquivir.

The Celticization of *Baetica* is evidenced by toponyms of cities that are considered Celtic (Tovar 1962: 360 ff.), such as *Segida Augurina* (Plin., 3,10) or *Celti*, in the *Conventus Hispalensis* (Plin., 3, 11).¹⁰ Ptolemy (2, 4, 11), in the second century AD, listed the cities belonging to the "Celtici of *Baetica*": *Arucci*, *Arunda*, *Curiga*, *Acinippo* and *Uama*. A few of these coincided with those mentioned by Pliny, although he included *Seria*, *Segida* and *Nertobriga* among the towns belonging to the Turdetani (Ptol., 2, 4, 10).

The presence of Celts in Betica - indicated more or less explicitly in texts spanning the period from the most ancient sources up until Flavius Philostratus II (*vit. Apoll.* 5, 2, 166), ca. 200 AD - and their links with the Celtiberians are supported by the ostensible location of the *Ultima Celtiberia* (Liv. 40, 47) - that was conquered by Sempronius Gracchus in 179 BC - in the *Uterior* province (Capalvo 1994, 1996: 107-116; Pérez Vilatela 1989: 258, 1993: 428; for an opposing perspective, see Ciprés 1993b: 282 ff.), because toponyms of the cities of *Munda* and "the city that the Celtiberians call *Certima*" have been identified as modern-day Monda and Cártama, in the province of Málaga.

3.1.3. The *Celtici* in the northwest

The northwest of the Peninsula is the third area where Graeco-Roman geographers and historians explicitly indicated the existence of Celtici populations,¹¹ all of which settled in *Gallaecia Lucensis*. By analysing certain passages from Strabo (3, 1, 3; 3, 3, 5), Pomponius Mela (3, 10-11; 3, 13) and Pliny (3, 28; 4, 111), we can confirm that a whole series of populations were grouped under the umbrella term Celtici, including the Neri, the Supertamarci, whose existence has also been confirmed through epigraphs (Albertos 1974-75), the Praestamarci and possibly also the Cileni, and the Artabri, who according to Mela

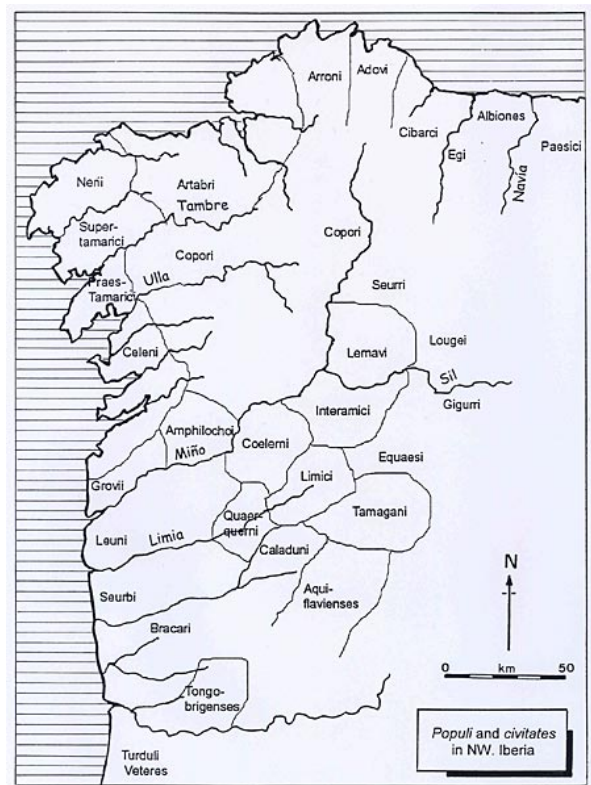


Figure 5. Suggested distribution of the main *populi* and *civitates* in the northwestern Iberian Peninsula according to Roman sources (After González Ruibal 2003).

(3, 13) were *celticae gentis*. These *Keltikoi*, according to Strabo (3, 3, 5), were related to the Celtici from the Guadiana region that migrated with the Turduli as far as the Limia River, where it would seem that the two groups separated. The Artabri then continued their journey north without the Turduli.

The Artabri, or Arrotrebae settled in the area surrounding cape *Nerium*, which could well be modern-day Finisterre; the Neri were probably neighbours of the Artabri, and lived on the west coast of the Peninsula (Mela 3, 11); the Supertamarci and the Praestamarci were linked to the Tambre River, respectively settling on the north and south banks of this river. The Cileni settled further to the south (Fig. 5).

3.1.4. The Gauls of the northeast

Finally, we must mention the passages from Classical sources that refer to the presence of Gauls in Hispanic territory. With the exception of the reference made by Eratosthenes to the *Galatae* (in Str., 2, 4, 4), a term which should be interpreted as a synonym for Celts, the scanty information available points to much later dates, from the late third century BC onwards. Thus, much of this presence can be interpreted as infiltrations by groups of Gauls who came from the north of the Pyrenees.

In Livius' narration of the events that took place between 214 and 212 BC (24, 41), he referred to the death in combat of Moenicoeptus and Vismarus, two *reguli Gallorum* who were allied with the Carthaginians. The booty was mostly made up of *spolia plurima Gallica*: a great number of golden torques and bracelets. The names given to these rulers originated from the words for them from outside the Peninsula (Albertos 1966: 158, 253; Tovar 1977: Footnote 15). However, they could be put in relation to the Celts from the Meseta according to Schulten (1935: 85).

There are better records of the presence of Gauls in the northeast. Owing to the geographical proximity of this area to Gaul, contact would have been particularly intense, as the toponymy (see below) and the archaeological record (Almagro-Gorbea and Lorrio 1992: 414) demonstrate. The context for Caesar's famous quotation lies here (*Bell. ciu.* 1, 51). In the year 49 BC, he indicated the arrival at his camp (situated opposite the city of *Ilerda*) of a contingent made up of Gallic cavalymen and Ruthenian archers, accompanied by over 6,000 men together with their servants, women and children.

In short, Classical sources indicate the presence of Celts in the Iberian Peninsula from at least the fifth century BC onwards. From the third century BC on, they locate Celtic groups in

three well-defined areas: the center, the southwest, and the northwest. However, the relationship between the various populations and individual characteristics were far from certain.

3.2. Linguistic and epigraphic evidence

The value from an onomastic perspective of the large amount of epigraphs written in Latin that have been found in the Iberian Peninsula will be discussed later. Furthermore, a series of epigraphic testimonies in indigenous languages have also been found, and their distribution is restricted to a narrower geographical area than the one indicated by literary sources or by onomastics.¹² There are basically two epigraphic areas relating to Indo-European languages (Fig. 6):

1. The Celtiberian zone,¹³ defined by the discovery of texts in an archaic Celtic language, some of them written using the Iberian alphabet - which had been adapted from Iberian at some point in the second century BC - and some in the Latin alphabet, dated to the first century BC, although in a few cases the texts are dated after the birth of Christ. There are different types of epigraphic documents:

hospitality *tessera*, religious rock inscriptions, coin inscriptions, burial inscriptions, ceramic graffiti, etc. There were also extensive public documents, such as the first and third Botorrita Bronzes. Most of these discoveries were made within the eastern Meseta and the Central Ebro Valley, the area identified as Celtiberia by Classical sources, also including adjacent territories.

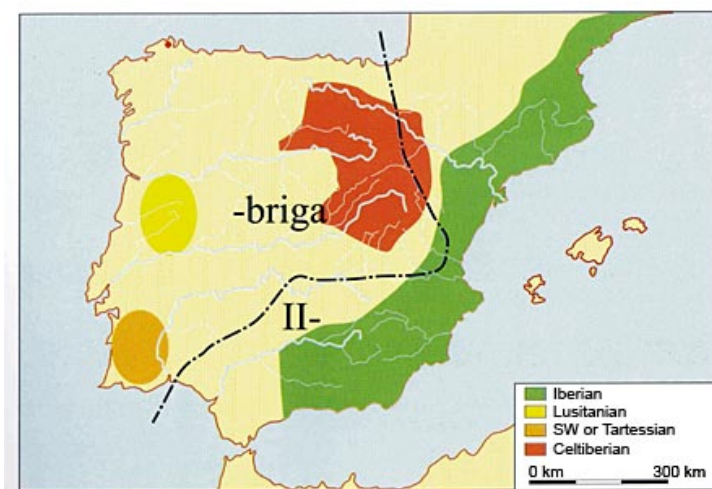


Figure 6. Basic division between Indo-European and Iberian linguistic areas in the Iberian Peninsula, with Late Iron Age-Roman epigraphic evidence for different indigenous languages (After Villar 2001).

2. From the west of the Peninsula there is a small number of inscriptions written in the Latin alphabet in an Indo-European language that is different from Celtiberian, which has been named Lusitanian owing to the geographical distribution of the discoveries. These inscriptions are later in date, from the first few centuries AD. Although most researchers argue that these texts exhibit Indo-European language features that differ from Celtic (Gorrochategui 1987; Schmidt 1985; Tovar 1985; Villar 2001: 118), it has also been proposed that the language is linked to the Celtic sub-family, possibly representing a Celtic dialect that is different from Celtiberian (Untermann 1987).

A brief mention should be made of the southwest or Tartessian inscriptions (which are mostly from mortuary contexts dated between the seventh and sixth centuries BC). They were

initially thought to be related to a non-Indo-European language, but subsequently the possibility arose that they were written in a western Indo-European language, and more specifically a Celtic one (Correa 1985, 1989, 1990, 1992; Untermann 1995c, 1997: 165-166, 2001: 196 ff.). However, difficulties in deciphering these texts have cast some doubt upon this interpretation.

The co-existence of several Indo-European languages, some of which are Celtic but others perhaps not, was a generalized phenomenon that reflected the immense complexity of the Indo-European Peninsula when the Romans arrived, complicated even further by the presence of this Mediterranean superpower.

The information provided by the documents written in indigenous languages that have been found is enhanced by the study of onomastics, known to us through the works of Graeco-Roman authors, and above all by studying epigraphs. Epigraphs have been found written in indigenous languages - either in the Iberian or Latin alphabets - and also in the form of Latin inscriptions, which are much more numerous, and which date back to the Imperial period (Albertos 1983: 858 f.). Onomastic evidence¹⁴ mainly consists of anthroponyms, toponyms, theonyms and the names - formed from anthroponyms - of the supra-family kinship groups or clans (González 1986; Pereira 1993; among others).

Toponymy is of great interest owing to its conservatism, a characteristic that makes it more reliable than personal onomastics, which are much less stable. Toponyms ending in *-briga* are the most widespread onomastic element in Celtic linguistics (Albertos 1990; Villar 1995: 153-188). There are good records of this suffix, which is clearly Celtic in origin, and means "fortified place" (from the Old Irish *brig*, genitive *breg* meaning 'hill'; see Marstrander 1913 *Dictionary of the*

Irish Language), in the continental Celtic territories, although it is found with much greater frequency in the Iberian Peninsula (Fig. 7). The geographical distribution of such toponyms defines a wide area that encompasses the central and the whole western part of the Peninsula, including the

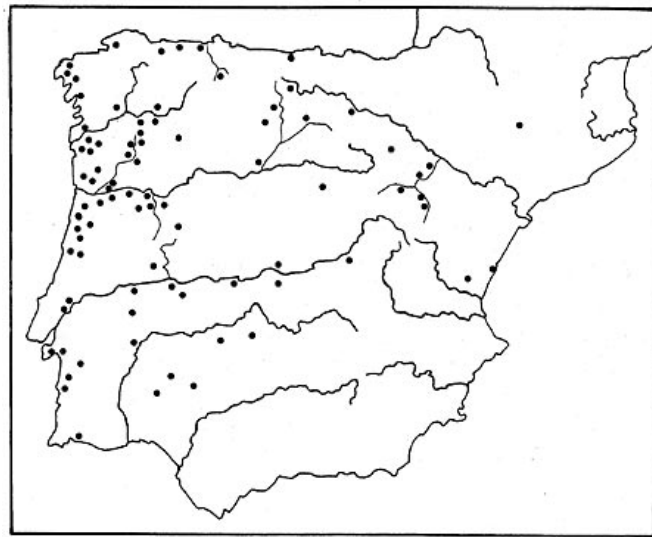


Figure 7. Main Celtic place-names in Iberia: toponyms ending in *-briga* (After Albertos 1990).

southwest, where they co-exist with Tartessian epigraphic findings. This fact, as with the Gallic toponyms ending in *-dunum*, perhaps should be interpreted as later evidence of Celticization (Rix 1954). This is particularly the case with toponyms found at the most westerly points of the Peninsula, which could possibly be linked to the expansion of Celtiberia. Usually, toponyms ending in *-briga* contain other Celtic components, but there is also an important presence of non-Celtic indigenous prefixes, mainly to be found in the west, such as *Conimbriga*. This is even more evident when associations with Latin names are brought into the equation, such as *Caesarobriga*, *Augustobriga*, *Juliobriga* or *Flaviobriga* that demonstrate that this toponym was still being widely used long into the Roman period.

Another group of toponyms include the suffix *Seg-* (Untermann 2001: 201-204) whose etymology can be explained by the Celtic word *seg* meaning 'victory' (Old Irish *seg*, see Delamarre 2001: 228-229; Evans 1967: 254-257); they are occasionally linked with toponyms ending in *-briga*, such as *Segobriga*.

If toponyms that include *Seg-* and *-briga* allow us to define an area of Celticization, or perhaps even Celtibericization, a different meaning should be given to toponyms ending in *-dunum*, meaning 'hill, fortress' (Delamarre 2001: 130), which occur within a much narrower area in the Iberian Peninsula, but are extremely frequent in the rest of Celtic Europe, and can most probably be linked to Gallic groups to the north of the Pyrenees. This toponym is clearly of a later date, mainly from the Roman period. Since its geographic distribution is concentrated in the northeast of the Peninsula, it can be linked to other historical, archaeological and toponomical evidence recorded in this area and interpreted along the same lines.

The study of personal onomastics is extremely interesting, even though it is less reliable than toponymy because it is less stable and is subject to the mobility of individuals. The Romans played a crucial role in this phenomenon, both directly and indirectly: not only did they relocate villages and people (Str., 3, 1, 6), but also the wars against Rome affected the movement of individuals. We now have at our disposal a complete anthroponymic corpus that allows us to study this aspect with a certain degree of accuracy.¹⁵

There seems to be a characteristic anthroponymy common to Indo-European areas defined by the distribution of toponyms ending in *-briga*. This anthroponymy, generally Indo-European although not always clearly Celtic (Albertos 1983: 860-861; de Hoz 1993a: 367-369), provides a certain feeling of homogeneity, as, for example, in the case of the anthroponym *Ambatus* (Fig. 8A).

Nevertheless, there are concentrations of anthroponymic series, which, on occasion, are clearly dominant in a certain area: *Cloutius*, *Clutamus* or *Camalus* (Fig. 8B), in the west of the Iberian Peninsula, *Boutius*, *Tancinus*, *Tongetamus* or *Pintamus*, in the Central Lusitania, etc. Therefore, it would not be entirely inaccurate to talk about Lusitanian or Lusitanian-Galician personal onomastics, regardless of the fact that often their distributions overlap, thus making it difficult to pinpoint the precise geographical locations of the towns mentioned in literary sources.

Ethnic anthroponyms such as *Celtiber* and their variants are perhaps of even greater importance. These anthroponyms helped to define negatively a purely Celtic and/or Celtiberian area. It is thought that these names were used to describe non-native individuals, to categorise them and indicate their origin. They are of greater interest for the following reason: in addition to contributing to the definition of what is not within the Celtic area (hence 'define negatively'), they also highlight areas to which Celtic people emigrated. In the case of Lusitania and Vettonia, this emigration must have taken place on a fairly large scale.

In order to obtain a better understanding of Celtic society it is crucial to understand the concept of their clans or supra-family organization structures (Albertos 1975; González 1986; González and Santos 1993; de Hoz 1986: 91-98, Pereira 1993), which included the descendants of a certain individual by whose name they were identified. These family structures were normally recorded using the plural genitive form of an adjective derived from an anthroponym, and often appeared in indigenous onomastic formulas, both in Latin and Celtiberian inscriptions. A typical formula would be: *Lubos* (the individual's name), of the *alisokum* (name of the family group), son of *Aualos* (father's name), of *Contrebia Belaisca* (place of origin). Despite the large number of individuals who were named in this way, repetition of a certain combination was relatively infrequent. When this did arise, the two individuals were either blood relatives (father, son or

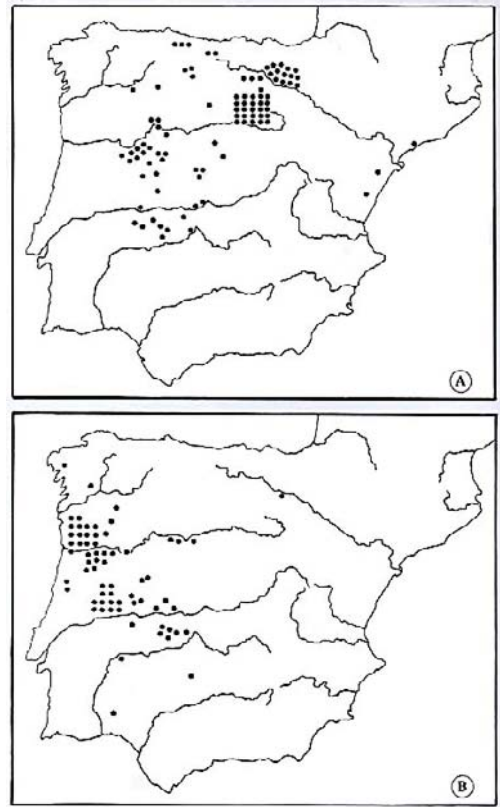


Figure 8. Some Celtic personal names in Iberia: A, *Ambata/-us*, *Ambatio*. B, *Camala/-us* and related (After Abascal, unpublished).

brother), or lived in separate areas located very far away from each other. This system allows us to put together extended family units - grouping up to four generations at a time (de Hoz 1986: 97-98) - which form very small groups. The geographical distribution of these "plural genitives" encompasses the area known as Celtiberia according to Classical sources, and areas in the center, to the north of the Tajo River, as well as in Cantabria, with an important concentration in Asturias (Fig. 9).

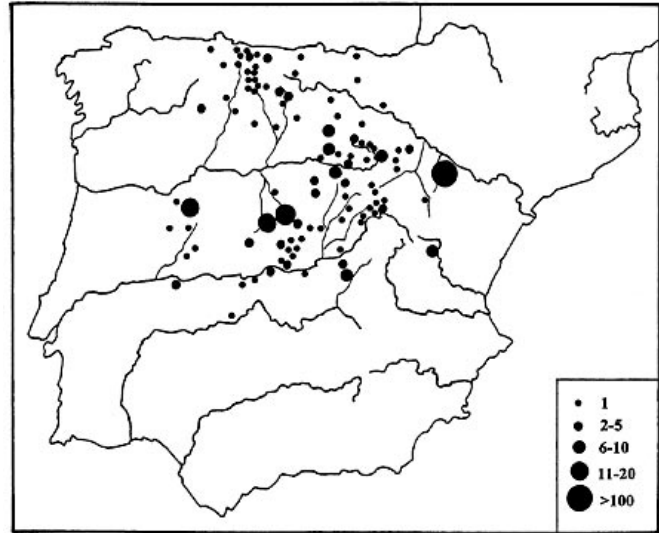


Figure 9. Supra-family organization structures (After González 1986, modified and enlarged).

The west of the Iberian Peninsula had its own set of anthroponymic and linguistic features (see de Hoz 1994; Untermann 1994; etc.). It also had its own exclusive theonymy, with deities such as *Bandua*, *Reue*, *Cosus* and *Nabia* (García Fernández-Albalat 1990; Olivares 2002; Prosper 2002; Untermann 1985b, 1994: 34 ff.; Villar 1993-95, 1994-95, 1996). There are records of these deities in areas of modern-day Portugal, Galicia, the western border of the Meseta region, and in Extremadura.¹⁶ Regardless of the differences in theonyms, there are structural elements that, according to Olivares (2002: 257), link the religion practiced in Lusitania and Galicia with the rest of the Celtic areas of the continent, both pantheons including the same number of gods, who in turn possessed similar qualities. Recently it has been suggested that the names of certain indigenous deities such as *Bandua*, *Reue*, *Quangelus*, *Trebaruna*, *Nabia*, *Arentius* and *Arantia* are specifically Lusitanian, and could be used to define the boundaries with other *populi* (Olivares 2000-2001). The presence of a genuinely Celtic theonym, *Lugus*, is significant. The geographical distribution of this theonym spread throughout Celtiberia and *Gallaecia lucensis* (Almagro-Gorbea and Lorrio 1987: Map 7; Marco 1986, 1987: 59-61; Tovar 1981). Olivares (2002: 257-258) proposed that, despite the different names given to Celtiberian and Lusitanian-Galician deities, suggesting the existence of a certain cultural difference, "the most characteristic elements of their gods were the same in both areas, thus showing that they shared the same religious and ideological universe" (Olivares 2002: 258) (Fig. 10).¹⁷

However, the study of onomastics allows us to properly identify Celtic Hispania. This

geographical area is defined by the presence of toponyms ending in *-briga*, and by a characteristic Indo-European anthroponymy that enables us to distinguish between different regional groupings, which can on occasion be extremely important. This is certainly the case with anthroponyms having an ethnic content. On the other hand, the "supra-family organization structures" are concentrated in the central and northern Peninsula and are absent in the west, which had its own exclusive theonymy.

3.3. Archaeological evidence

Information provided by archaeology is essential in our reconstruction of society in the centuries immediately preceding the beginning of the Christian era, which is partially known thanks to the information provided by Graeco-Roman historians and geographers. Moreover, archaeological records allow us to analyze the foundation of the Peninsular Celtic world and determine the cultural processes that led to its development and later expansion. Over the last few decades, we have gained increasing knowledge about the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age in the Iberian Peninsula, and consequently have been able to interpret material culture that in theory corresponds to the Celts much more accurately, and detect links with other related fields such as linguistics or religion (Almagro-Gorbea 1992, 1993; Almagro-Gorbea and Lorrio 1987). Archaeology enables us to approach this process with a certain degree of chronological accuracy, as opposed to other disciplines such as linguistics, which in theory should adhere closely to the dates provided by the written documents themselves.

During the first millennium BC, at least one group of Hispanic Celts, through their contact with the Tartessians or the Iberians, assimilated elements that came from the Mediterranean; these elements included weaponry, the potter's wheel, urbanism and the alphabet. The extent of this process of assimilation meant that this group of Celts developed a material culture that was clearly distinguishable from the Central European Celts of Hallstatt and La Tène. This would certainly shed some light on why they are difficult to understand using traditional approaches, and would also



Figure 10. Celtic deity names in the Iberian Peninsula (After Olivares 2002).

justify the mixed nature of these people - Celtic and Iberian - alluded to by Classical authors when they refer to Celtiberians (Diod., 5, 33; App., *Iber* 2; etc.).

This archaeological evidence also enables us to analyze the process of ethnogenesis of the Celtiberians, despite the difficulties in applying this term before it was actually coined by the Graeco-Roman authors. Clearly, this area is extremely interesting, since it is one of the few cases in which all the analyzed sources point to their Celtic nature, at least during the Wars with Rome. Thus, the appearance of certain material culture elements, settlements, funeral rites and socio-economic structures, which were characteristic of the Celtiberian world throughout its evolutionary process, enable us to pinpoint when and where that process began: around the seventh or sixth centuries BC in the highlands of the eastern Meseta (Lorrio 1997a: 261). Therefore, as we will see later on, the use of the term "Celtiberian" is appropriate when referring to the archaeological cultures located in the areas of the Upper Tagus, Upper Jalón and Upper Douro Rivers, in the eastern Meseta and in the Iberian Mountains, from the formative stages onwards, which occurred around the aforementioned dates (see Fig. 15). The continuity shown in the cultural material (Lorrio 1994a-b, 1997a: 258, Fig. 110) of this area of the Meseta enables us to link archaeological evidence with historical or ethnic evidence, given its highly peculiar nature within an area that almost completely coincides with Celtiberia, as defined by the Classical authors. The Celtiberians were considered a Celtic people. Celtiberian was spoken in this area, at least during the historical period, and is the only language that has been identified as unequivocally Celtic in the whole of the Iberian Peninsula (see Fig. 11).

On the other hand, the discovery of elements that could be considered Celtiberian in areas that are not strictly within Celtiberia could be viewed as an indication of the Celtibericization, and therefore Celticization of those areas. This would not have required large-scale ethnic movements but could have been an intermittent process that had a cumulative effect, with a few dominant groups imposing themselves, local migrations or even the acculturation of the substratum (Almagro-Gorbea 1993: 156, 1995b). If this theory is correct, then the geographic dispersion of a few elements like horse fibulae (Almagro-Gorbea and Torres 1999) or certain typically Celtiberian weapons such as bi-globular type daggers (Lorrio 1997a: Fig. 8) could be interpreted as signs of this expansion and therefore the process of Celticization, which is also attested in the distribution of the ethnic anthroponyms *Celtiber* and their variants, or of toponyms ending in *-briga*. From a linguistic point of view, this process is evident from the appearance of texts written in Celtiberian outside of

the theoretical Celtiberian zone. Most of these texts have been found within the Meseta, but some have been discovered in more remote areas such as Extremadura.

Clearly, this evidence does not negate the possibility that there were other Hispano-Celts besides the Celtiberians - a fact that literary sources appear to confirm with regard to the Berones - or that this process of Celtibericization occurred in areas where there had previously existed a Celtic component that is difficult to identify. A particularly complex picture begins to emerge in relation to those ethnic groups whose formative process has been determined by archaeology, and whom no Classical author considered specifically Celtic, or whose language is unknown, as is the case with Lusitanian, whose Celtic character is far from being universally accepted. If we view the Celtic world in this way, the variability within time and space makes it impossible to view it as uniform and "simple". Recent discoveries and knowledge have shown that the reality of this world was extremely complex.

4. The genesis of "Celtic"

Research into and knowledge of the Celtiberians is crucial to understand the Celts of the Spanish Peninsula. Firstly, the Celtiberians played an important role in the context of Celtic Iberia. Secondly, disparate sources such as literature, linguistics, onomastics and archaeology - which deal with aspects such as society, religion, language or material culture - all point to the fact that they were a Celtic people, a fact which ethnonymy also confirms. Current research and thinking places the ethnogenesis of the Celtiberians around the seventh or sixth century BC, or perhaps even as far back as the eighth century BC. This process is fundamental to our understanding of the Iberian Peninsular Celts themselves.

4.1. Ethnogenesis and archaeology: the case of the Celtiberians

Traditionally, archaeological studies of the Celtiberians have been restricted to what we could term the Historical period, which spans the period from the late third to the first century BC. Ever since Bosch Gimpera's time, the previous culture was called the Post-Hallstatt period, or simply the Second Iron Age. This approach to Celtiberian archaeology remained unchanged until Almagro-Gorbea (1986-87, 1987) began to alter perspectives on this question. Quite rightly, he highlighted the need to extend this analysis even further back in time to the sixth century BC because from then on there was a basic continuity in archaeological finds that means we can justifiably talk of a Celtiberian culture. This same conclusion has also been drawn from research

into the continuity of customs surrounding the arrangement of graves in a number of cemeteries from the sixth century BC up to the Roman conquest (Lorrio 1997a: 258, Fig. 110). This cultural continuity can also be discerned in towns and socio-economic structures. Therefore, the term "Celtiberian" can justifiably be used as an archaeological category from the sixth century BC onwards (Fig. 11). However, this continuum in material culture from the First Iron Age into the Roman era does not mean that the Celtiberians lived throughout this period in exactly the way they were portrayed by Greek and Roman authors writing between the third and first centuries BC (Ruiz Zapatero 1999).

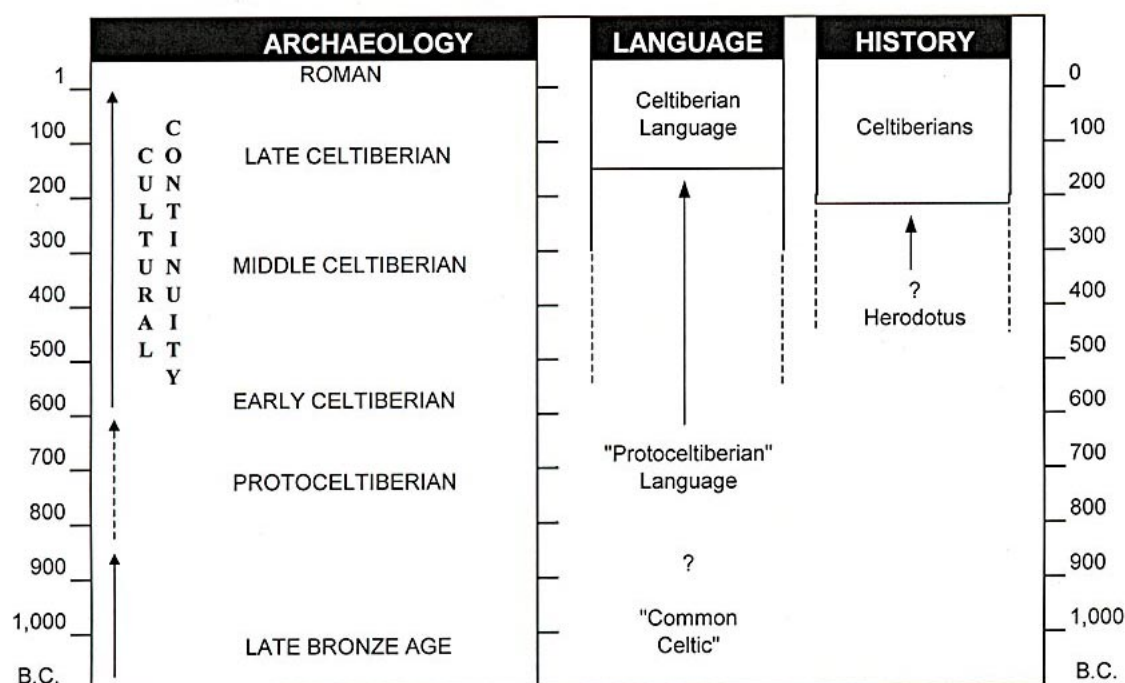


Figure 11. Development of the Celtiberian culture (After Lorrio 1997a).

The difficulty lies in how to establish the origin of three different cultural components - ethnonyms and their ethnic background, material culture and language - without there being a strict correlation between them (Fig. 12). Hence, an ethnonym found in Classical texts does not mean that the people it designated would have recognized this name as referring to them. Moreover, this clearly does not imply that, before they came into contact with Roman culture, they did not recognize their own ethnic status by assigning a generic name to themselves. The ethnonym corresponds to a period in history, but we cannot neglect the possibility that before this time there was already such a term that classified them as an ethnic group. If this is the case, then it would have evidently been different from the name bestowed upon them by the Romans, since the term

Celtiberi was created by the Romans to refer to an ethnic group with mixed cultural characteristics - Celtic and Iberian - which were expressly indicated by the Graeco-Roman authors themselves. Even though literary sources do not talk specifically about each of the ingredients contained within the *mélange*, we could hazard a guess that the Celtic components would include their language, religion and city names, all of which were arguments used by Pliny to characterize the Celtici in *Baeturia* as Celtiberians. The characteristics of the Iberian people, on the other hand, would include their urbanism, the defensive systems of their towns and cities and a large portion of their material culture.

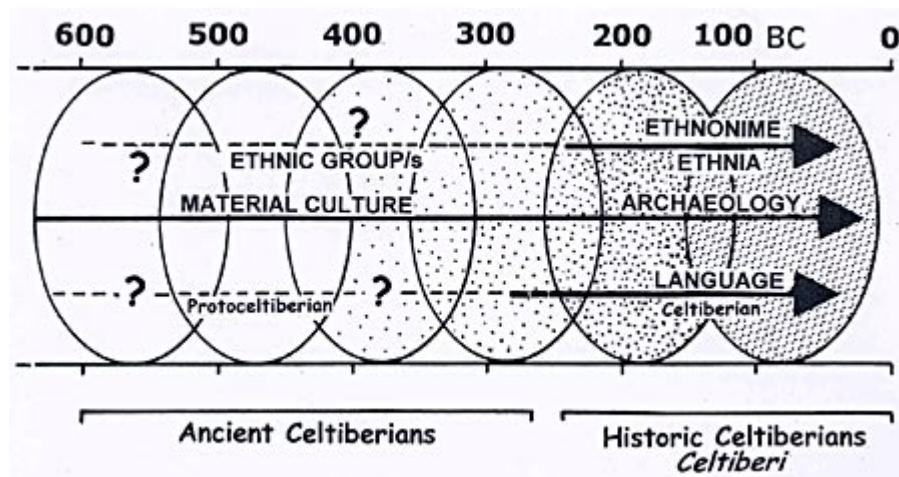


Figure 12. Ethnogenesis process of the Celtiberians (After Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1999).

It is simply impossible to search for the origin of an ethnonym at a time when most societies were illiterate. However, although it is difficult, we believe it is possible to look for the concept of Celtiberian ethnicity. The ethnic reality reflected by writers in antiquity has a few clear archaeological correlations despite the fact that links between ethnicity and material culture are complex, and finding them in archaeological records is complicated (Emberling 1997; Hall 1997; James 1997, 1999; Jones 1997). However, this does not deter us from examining this issue in relation to the Peninsular Iron Age (Lorrio 2000; Ruiz Zapatero and Álvarez-Sanchís 2002). The most serious problem is not the exploration of links between ethnicity and material culture when we know that there were ethnic realities; it is far trickier to use archaeological evidence to discover if such realities actually existed before they were mentioned in written texts. We do not know if there were ethnic groups who would recognize themselves as such before historical Celtiberia was defined. Even if they did exist, clearly these prehistoric or "ancient Celtiberians" would not have corresponded exactly to the Celtiberians of the Roman period, at least from the point of view of the

ethnic reality. However, at the same time, there is no doubt that the former immediately preceded the latter. We find a similar situation with the Celtiberian language. Clearly, we cannot confirm anything with great certainty before the date of the most ancient inscriptions, around the mid second century BC. We can merely conjecture that in previous centuries they must have spoken a language that we could call *Proto-Celtiberian*, a term we could apply, for ease of reference, to any linguistic state prior to the Celtiberian we know through epigraphs (de Hoz 1993a: 392, Footnote 125). Another issue involves the origins of this 'proto-Celtic' language, and when it arrived in the eastern Meseta and the right banks of the Middle Ebro River.

It is only possible to trace material culture back along a continuous line to the early sixth century BC. Therefore, archaeology confirms that the basic elements of Celtiberian cultural reality were established from this phase onwards. These basic elements included ceramic and metallurgic traditions, typical weaponry, fortified settlements, and mortuary rituals - although these were quite diverse - and economic organization. Of course, this archaeological continuity does not imply that there was ethnic or even linguistic continuity. But certainly, if there are no sharp breaks in the archaeological record, it is difficult to prove the arrival of new populations and a new language at any point between the sixth century and the late third century BC. Therefore, we must attempt to recreate a historical process that would allow the existence of new ethnic and cultural contributions without a detectable change in the material culture record. Given the complexity of this possible process, the simplest and most coherent hypothesis would be to imagine that the formation of the Ancient Celtiberian ethnic group(s) and the adoption of a Celtic language coincided with the beginnings of an archaeological culture from the Ancient Celtiberian phase (ca. 600-450 BC). This hypothesis would then pre-suppose the existence of "prehistoric" Celtiberians who were different from the Celtiberians of the Roman period, yet somehow the same, at the dawn of the historical process during which this category evolved.

The archaeological record not only provides information about Celtiberia and the Celtiberians from the historical period, it also enables us to examine the process of the formation and evolution of Celtiberian culture and territory, a phenomenon that dates back centuries before the presence of the Romans in the area. Analyses of dwellings and burial grounds, as well as weaponry and crafts in general, have enabled us to establish the cultural sequence of the Celtiberian world (Lorrio 1997a: 258, Fig. 110). A general periodization has been established for this culture, based on burial records and various Celtiberian cultural manifestations. The proposed

periodization comprises four phases that cover the period from the eighth to the first centuries BC: a formative period about which we only have sketchy information and for which we have reserved the term *Proto-Celtiberian* (ca. eighth/seventh century to mid sixth century BC); an initial or *Early Celtiberian* phase (ca. mid sixth to mid fifth century BC); a development or *Middle Celtiberian* phase (ca. mid fifth to late third century BC); and a final or *Late Celtiberian* phase (late third to first century BC). The aim of this is to bind the complex Celtiberian reality into a continuous sequence that can be applied to the whole of the Celtiberian territory.

4.2. Looking back: The origin of the Celtiberians and the 'proto-Celtic' culture

Terms such as Urnfield culture, Hallstatt, Post-Hallstatt or Celtic have frequently been used in an attempt to establish a connection with European archaeology, thus more or less accepting the invasionist theories which relate the formation of the Celtiberians to the arrival of successive waves of Celts from Central Europe (see Lorrio 1997a: 16-24). This thesis was defended by Bosch Gimpera (1932), who postulated the existence of various invasions in an attempt to combine the historical and linguistic sources with the archaeological evidence. This resulted in a constricting line of Spanish archaeological research, in view of the difficulty of correlating these cultures with those of the Iberian Peninsula, while the idea of successive invasions was not confirmed by the archaeological evidence (Ruiz Zapatero 1993: 45-47).

The linguists upheld the invasion hypothesis even though they were unable to offer any information on the chronology of these movements or the routes by which the invaders supposedly arrived. The oldest language to be considered pre-Celtic included Lusitanian, a language that some researchers consider a Celtic dialect, whilst the most recent is the so-called Celtiberian language, which was by that time fully Celtic.

The restriction of the Urnfield culture to the northeast of the peninsula, linguistically an Iberian area (non-Celtic and not even Indo-European), and the absence of that culture in Celticized areas, made it necessary to reconsider the invasionist theories. Even if these theories accepted the notion of a single invasion by the Urnfield culture, this still would not explain the phenomenon of the Celticization of the peninsula.

Throughout this entire process of investigation, linguists and archaeologists have worked separately. Archaeologists have tended either to look for exogenous elements that would prove the invasionist theory, or, even if they have not gone so far as to deny the presence of Celts in Iberia, to at least restrict the use of the term Celts to the evidence provided by the linguists and by epigraphs,

regardless of the information provided in literary sources. In fact, the difficulty of correlating the linguistic data and the archaeological evidence has led the two disciplines to go their separate ways, which has made it difficult to obtain a holistic perspective, since a linguistic hypothesis cannot be fully accepted if it does not acknowledge the archaeological evidence, which in turn cannot be explained without a coherent evaluation of the linguistic information.

An alternative interpretation has been proposed by M. Almagro-Gorbea (1992, 1993, 2001). He takes as his starting point the difficulty of maintaining Bosch Gimpera's or Almagro Basch's theory that the origin of the Hispanic Celts can be related to the Urnfield culture, which did not spread beyond the north-eastern quadrant of the Peninsula (Ruiz Zapatero 1985), but who gave rise to a people whose culture and language were both Iberian, utilizing a language which was neither Celtic nor, apparently, Indo-European. In Almagro-Gorbea's view, their origin must be sought in the Indo-European 'proto-Celtic' substratum preserved in the western regions of the Peninsula, which existed in the Late Bronze Age, at the start of the first millennium BC. He considered this culture to be 'proto-Celtic' because its characteristic elements were Celtic. These elements were more archaic than the Central European Celts, since they were derived from Atlantic traditions that were almost certainly introduced during the period of the Bell Beaker culture. According to Almagro-Gorbea (2001: 101), this would explain the affinities that run along the Atlantic Celtic world, stretching from the British Isles to the Iberian Peninsula, whose origin and characteristics cannot be explained by Celtic invasions from Central Europe, hence it seems more appropriate to define them as "Indo-European". Such elements include the practice of offering weapons to water sources, creating rock altars, and leaving the bodies of warriors who had died in combat to be devoured by vultures. They could be linked to Indo-European ancestral religious rituals such as those described in the Lusitanian inscription at Cabeço das Fraguas, which refers to a sacrifice comparable to the Roman practice of *souveturilia* or the Hindu *sautramani*. They are also similar to those referred to by Strabo when he talks of hecatombs and human sacrifices (Str. 3,3,6-7; Liv. *Per.* 49). The deities, specifically those of the western Peninsula with names such as *Bandua*, *Cosus*, *Navia*, *Reve* or *Trebaruna*, displayed etymology and characteristics that could be considered Celtic.

For Almagro-Gorbea (1993: 146-152; 2001: 102), the Celtiberian culture emerged from this 'proto-Celtic' culture, although it was refined by the arrival of the Urnfield culture from the Ebro Valley to the Iberian Mountains, the future Celtiberia, which happened around the ninth or

eighth century BC. This would explain the cultural, socio-economic, linguistic and ideological similarities between these two cultures, and the progressive assimilation of the 'proto-Celtic' substratum by the Celtiberians. From the sixth century BC on, the Celtiberians began spreading further afield, absorbing the Atlantic 'Proto-Celtic' substratum - or perhaps we should refer to it as an Indo-European culture, for the aforementioned reasons - and exploiting these affinities. Thus, the Iberian Celts emerged from a long and complex process of Celticization, which did not exclude ethnic movements such as those occasionally referred to by the literary sources. However, the influence of one dominant population, as proposed by invasionist theories, is no longer considered to be a crucial element in explaining the emergence and development of the Iberian Celts. This process, which can be tracked through the changes registered in archaeological findings, indicates that the Celtiberians evolved, and spread out over the peninsula, which led to the acculturation of other substrata, based on the Celtiberians' socio-cultural organization of warrior elites.

According to Almagro-Gorbea (2001: 110), this process would have intermittently unravelled over a long period of time, and would have varied in different areas, depending on the substratum, the period, the intensity and the duration. Hence, the Celticization of Iberia could be conceived of as a cumulative process that developed "mosaic-style", which would certainly explain the personality and diversity of the different Celtic populations in the Iberian Peninsula (Fig. 13).

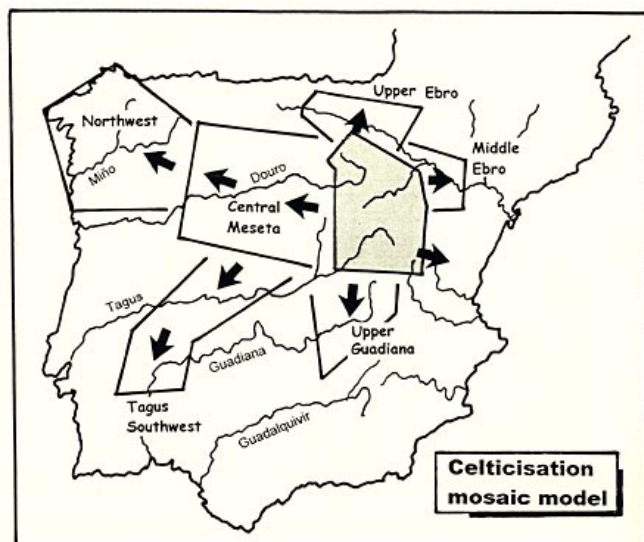


Figure 13. The "mosaic model" for the Celticization of Iberia from the Celtiberian nuclear area (Drawn after Almagro-Gorbea data, pers. comm.).

However, our deeper knowledge and understanding of the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age in the Iberian Peninsula has meant that we have been able to determine the undeniable influence of the Urnfield culture from the northeast on the formation of the Celtiberian world. This phenomenon is confirmed by burial rituals, important traditions of ceramics and metallurgy, and certain fortified settlements. The ancient Celtiberian world emerged out of the interaction between the socio-economic model imposed in the eighth and seventh centuries BC by the

northeastern peninsular Urnfield culture, and the indigenous culture, which played an important role in this process (Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1999: 26, 34).¹⁸

There is evidence of ethnic contributions originating in the Ebro Valley and the highlands of the eastern Meseta (Arenas 1999: 246; Lorrio 1997a: 260-261, 372; Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1988, 1999: 26, 34).¹⁹ Therefore, the possibility that these infiltrating Urnfield groups may have brought with them an Indo-European language should not be rejected, even if their true role in creating the Celtiberian world has yet to be determined.

Be that as it may, the trans-Pyrenean origin of the Urnfield groups of the northeast would seem beyond all doubt; the penetration, at least in its initial phases (which can be dated around 1100 BC) of human groups, which were of little importance in demographic terms, is generally accepted (Maya and Barberá 1992; Ruiz Zapatero 1985, 1997). In view of the continuity of the material culture in the northeast through the first millennium - if the Indo European character of this contribution is accepted - a possible explanation of the continuing dominance of an Iberian language at a late date is what Villar (1991: 465-466) calls "failed Indo-Europeanization". According to this theory the Indo-European languages of the northeast, probably in the minority, must have waned as those who spoke them were culturally and linguistically "Iberianized". That at least some of the Urnfield groups spoke an Indo-European language of a Celtic or 'proto-Celtic' type seems to be a very credible proposition, as the case with Lepontic would later confirm: a Celtic language spoken in the north of Italy from at least the sixth century BC linked with the Golaseca culture that shared its roots with an Urnfield group culture, the Canegrate culture (de Hoz 1992b; de Marinis 1991). Thus, it could be postulated either that "the migratory Urnfield groups were so small that they did not succeed in imposing their own language on the peoples of the substratum, or the Iberian transformation largely erased the Indo-European linguistic features that had hypothetically been assumed by the natives" (Maya and Barberá 1992: 176).

However, Almagro-Gorbea (forthcoming) does not believe that the solution is to trace the origins of the Iberian Celts back to the Urnfield people or that the classic theory proposing that the Celts arrived on the peninsula with the cultures of Hallstatt D or La Tène is tenable. These theories do not explain the early arrival of Celts in western Iberia. According to Almagro-Gorbea (1994 and forthcoming), the best solution would be to "link the Celts with a wide, fluid and polymorphous Atlantic Bronze Age 'proto-Celtic' culture".

5. The Iberian Celts: a multidisciplinary interpretation

After all the different elements relating to the issue of the Celts in the Iberian Peninsula have been analyzed, we can conclude that the reality of the Celtic community in this area was a highly complex issue that included the following features:

1. The homogeneity of Celtic Hispania as opposed to Iberian Hispania, based on characteristic onomastics, which were Celtic or at least Indo-European in origin.
2. The existence, in Celtic areas of the Peninsula, of disparate linguistic evidence. Some of this is clearly Celtic, such as Celtiberian, an archaic Celtic language, recorded in a series of epigraphic documents in the Iberian or Latin alphabet. But there were also other languages that are more difficult to define, at times Celtic and at times Indo-European, like Lusitanian. Furthermore, Celtic names have also been found in inscriptions written in Tartessian.
3. The extraordinarily complex picture painted by literary sources, which vary in both content and usefulness. These sources describe the nature of Celts such as the Celtiberians and Berones. At other times, we can draw our own conclusions based on the use of the ethnonym *Keltikoi* or *Celtici*, which is applied to several populations from the southwest and northwest of the Peninsula, or based on their links with the Celtiberians, as is the case with the Celts of *Baeturia*. Similarly, it is worth highlighting the cultural proximity between the Celts and other populations in the central and western Peninsula, as is possibly the case with the Vettones, Vaccaei, Cantabri or the Astures, which confirms the linguistic and onomastic evidence.
4. The presence of Celts, according to literary sources, does not appear to be limited exclusively to the areas in the central and western Peninsula, and they are described in other areas such as the south, which are generally considered to be Iberian. Pliny even mentions a Celtic population in Betica. The northeast seems to be a different case, where the presence of Celts appears to be linked to influences from Gauls from the north of the Pyrenees, as indicated by their toponyms ending in *-dunum*, the names of some of their rivers, such as the *Gállego* or the *Gallo*, or the existence of a *pagus gallorum*, among other things.
5. Finally, material culture enables us to paint more individualized portraits of some of the "Celtic" archaeological groups, by recording certain elements, generally objects of prestige with considerable ideological value such as horse collars, or bi-globular type daggers, whose geographical distribution coincides with Celtic Iberia as defined by other documentary sources analyzed. As for their origin, we could justifiably defend the Celtic nature of those archaeological groups whose origin dates back at least to the dawn of the Early Iron Age at the turn of the sixth century BC, and which remain continuously up to the period of the wars with Rome. These are groups whose nuclei are situated in areas where at a later date historical Celtic populations are known to have lived, and in which there is also evidence of a Celtic socio-political organization and religion, as well as linguistic proof that a Celtic language was spoken.

In general, the first four elements discussed chronologically take place quite late, between the late third and first centuries BC, or even later than that. This evidence provides a relatively uniform panorama, which perhaps is not such a far cry from the process of Celtibericization described by literary sources and recorded in the archaeological record, which could conceal the prior Celticity of some of the areas of the center and west of the Peninsula.

Only archaeological records allow us to examine the stages immediately prior to this period with any certainty. Although some literary sources refer to this period with clarity, most of them are much vaguer in their accounts, and we are unable to determine how far back the onomastic and linguistic elements described can be dated. Presumably, some of the elements described that were present when the Romans conquered Hispania and during the subsequent Romanizing process already existed in a more developmental stage during these earlier periods. Some researchers believe that their origin could date back to the beginning of the Iron Age, around the seventh or sixth century BC, and they may even be older than that. The Celtiberian zone is the most appropriate area to analyze the process of formation of the populations described by Graeco-Roman historians. However, new theories proposed by Almagro-Gorbea, for whom the origins of the Celts lies somewhere at the dawn of the Bronze Age towards the second half of the third millennium BC, raise new questions, and demand a complete reexamination of studies of Celtic populations in Iberia.

6. "Celtic" archaeological groups (Fig. 14)

6.1. The Celtiberian group

According to the literary sources, Celtiberia was a large area in the interior of the Iberian Peninsula (see below). An analysis of the cemeteries, and also the weapons and the material culture, has made it possible to establish the cultural sequence of the Celtiberian world, from at least the sixth century BC to the Roman Conquest (Fig. 15) (Lorrio 1997a).



Figure 14. "Celtic" archaeological groups in the Late Iron Age of Iberia.

The *Early Celtiberian* period (ca. 600-450 BC) is documented in the highlands of the eastern Meseta and the Iberian Mountains, in the regions of the Upper-Douro-Upper Tagus-Upper Jalón Rivers. The new Celtiberian culture emerged in this area. This new archaeological group could be defined by the following elements: 1) the appearance of the first hill-forts (locally called *castros*, small settlements in high areas with natural defences and man-made defensive structures); 2) the establishment of the first cremation cemeteries (Burillo 1990); and 3) a whole range of ceramics and new metallic objects, many of which were forged from the new metal, iron. Such objects had not previously existed in local pottery and metallurgy traditions (Burillo 1991; Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1999). The distribution of this Celtiberian group in the highlands of the eastern Meseta may have been linked to the possibility of raising cattle there, the availability of salt resources and the exploitation of iron ores in the region (Lorrio 1997a: 264-270).

A settlement pattern appears to have emerged at this early stage that would continue to be used right through to the end of the Celtiberian period (Fig. 15). This pattern was based on the almost exclusive use of *castros*, which were distributed all along the river valleys on hilltops, hillsides and in river breakwaters (Arenas 1999; Burillo 1995; Lorrio 1997a: 65-71; Ruiz Zapatero 1999). Even if we only know about them from surface data, there must have also been a few open settlements on the plains. However, the characteristic habitat was certainly the hill-fort. The earliest hill-forts were very small (0.2 – 0.5 hectares), rarely bigger than one hectare (Lorrio 1997a: 67). The natural defenses of their settlements were further improved by several methods: they sometimes dug out defensive ditches, or set in a belt of closely sunk stones (*chevaux-de-frise*), but they almost always built dry-stone walls (Romero 2003). We have very limited

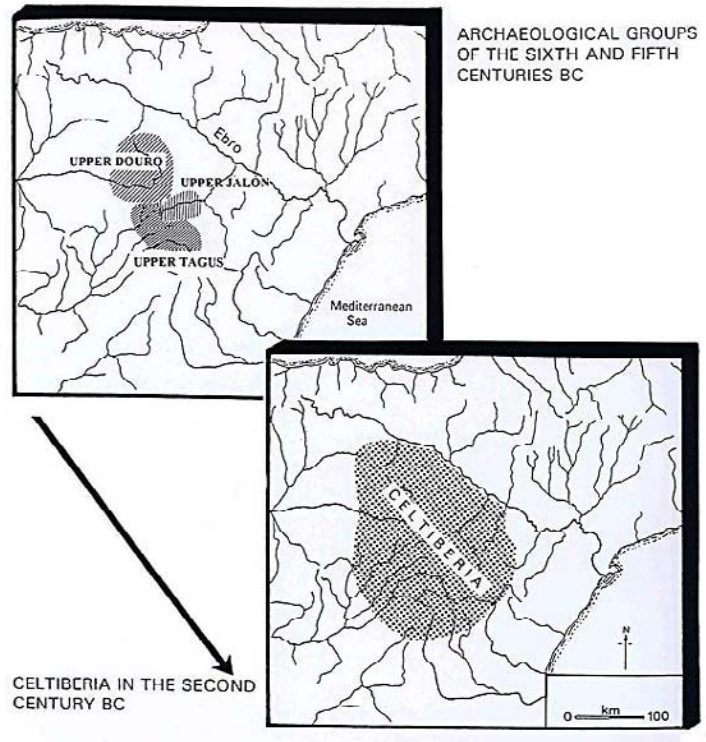


Figure 15. From ancient Celtiberian groups to Celtiberia (After Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1999).

information on their internal organization, but it would seem that the most prominent features were those found at La Coronilla (Cerdeño and García Huerta 1992): the houses were rectangular and built of stone, which would remain the model of a Celtiberian home until the Late period (Cerdeño and Juez 2002). The adjoining walls were closed to the outside to form a rampart, and doors opened onto the interior of the hill-fort. The largest settlements had scarcely over a few hundred inhabitants. There was no settlement hierarchy, and the communities were small, fairly homogeneous and self-sufficient (Ruiz Zapatero 1999: 109).

The first Celtiberian cremation cemeteries were located close to settlements, mostly at a distance of between 150 meters and just over 300 meters (where both were in clear view of the other), and generally near rivers or streams (Lorrio 1997a: 111-114), a fact almost certainly linked to the symbolic liminal function represented by the course of rivers in the Celtic world. The bodies were incinerated in the cemeteries, although the precise locations of the *ustrina* are difficult to pinpoint, and the cremated bones, adornments, weapons and other personal belongings were placed in urns, and buried in graves. Sometimes the ashes were buried without an urn, in containers or bags made out of organic material. Furthermore, in some burial sites, the location where an urn was buried was marked with a stone *stela* (Lorrio 1997a: 125, Fig. 50). Early excavations have provided us with knowledge of a ritual that arranged the tombs in straight lines, like streets, as in the cemeteries of Aguilar de Anguita and Luzaga (Fig. 16) (Lorrio 1997a: 114-117). The inequality of the grave goods or funeral offerings reveals the incipient social differentiation practised by these peoples, as well as the presence of a "warrior" class, whose tombs can be distinguished by the weapons contained therein (Fig. 17). This early social elite was buried with relatively austere items: long spearheads, curved knives, and double-sprung fibulae (brooches). During this early period, there were no swords or daggers in the graves (Lorrio 1997a: 262).

During the *Middle Celtiberian* period (ca. 450-225/200 BC), the Celtiberians secured and



Figure 16. Tombs with stelae in straight rows in the cemetery at Centenares (Luzaga, Guadalajara). (Photo: Museo Cerralbo).

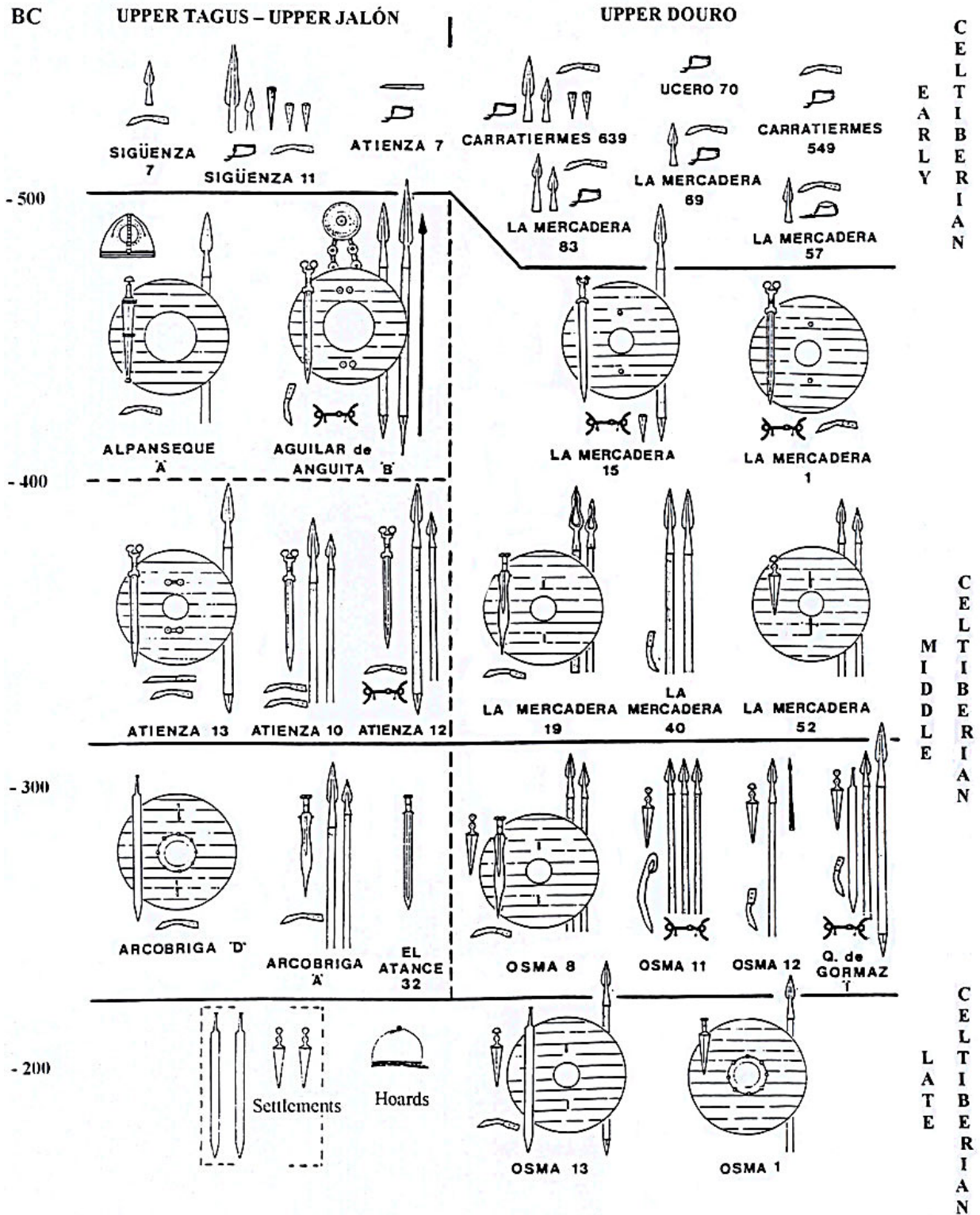


Figure 17. Evolution of the funerary equipment in Celtiberian cemeteries (After Lorrio 1997a).

stabilized the areas settled in the Early period, and began to occupy new lands such as the right bank of the Middle Ebro Valley (Capalvo 2001). The settlements grew in size (some of them between two and five hectares) and number, and the number of cemeteries increased (Fig. 18). All of this indicates sustained demographic growth and systematic occupation of territory. The continuity between this period and the Early phase bears witness to the fact that the communities were increasingly tied to the land, and had begun to adopt a form of territorialization. The majority of the hill-forts had a central road or space. The houses were rectangular, with adjoining walls and were grouped into blocks. New defensive methods were implemented such as double walls, angled walls that date as far back as the siege warfare of Hellenistic times such as Guijosa (Guadalajara) (Lorrio 1997a: 90, Fig. 28,1), and rectangular towers and ditches are more widespread than in the previous period. These defensive methods would be fully developed in the Late period, such as the ditch built at *Contrebia Leukade* (La Rioja), which was particularly spectacular (Fig. 19). It was excavated into bedrock, and its perimeter was nearly 700 meters, with a width of between seven meters and nine meters, and a depth of eight meters. The volume of rock excavated was around 40,000m³, which involved an enormous amount of collective work (Hernández Vera 1982: 122).



Figure 18. Celtiberian cremation tomb at Carratiermes (Soria) cemetery. (After Argente et al. 1991).



Figure 19. A view of the ditch at *Contrebia Leukade* (La Rioja). (After Lorrio 2001).

As previously mentioned, there was a large increase in cemeteries, something which indicates that the communities had increased in size. The number of tombs in some of these burial sites gives us an idea of this (Fig. 20): approximately 5,000 in Aguilar de Anguita, nearly 2,000 in Luzaga, 1,200 in Gormaz (Soria), and over 800 in Osma and Quintanas de Gormaz (Soria). Some others were smaller: Almaluez, Alpanseque (Soria), and *Arcobriga* (Saragossa) had 300 tombs and La Mercadera (Soria) only 100 (Álvarez-Sanchís and Ruiz Zapatero 2001:

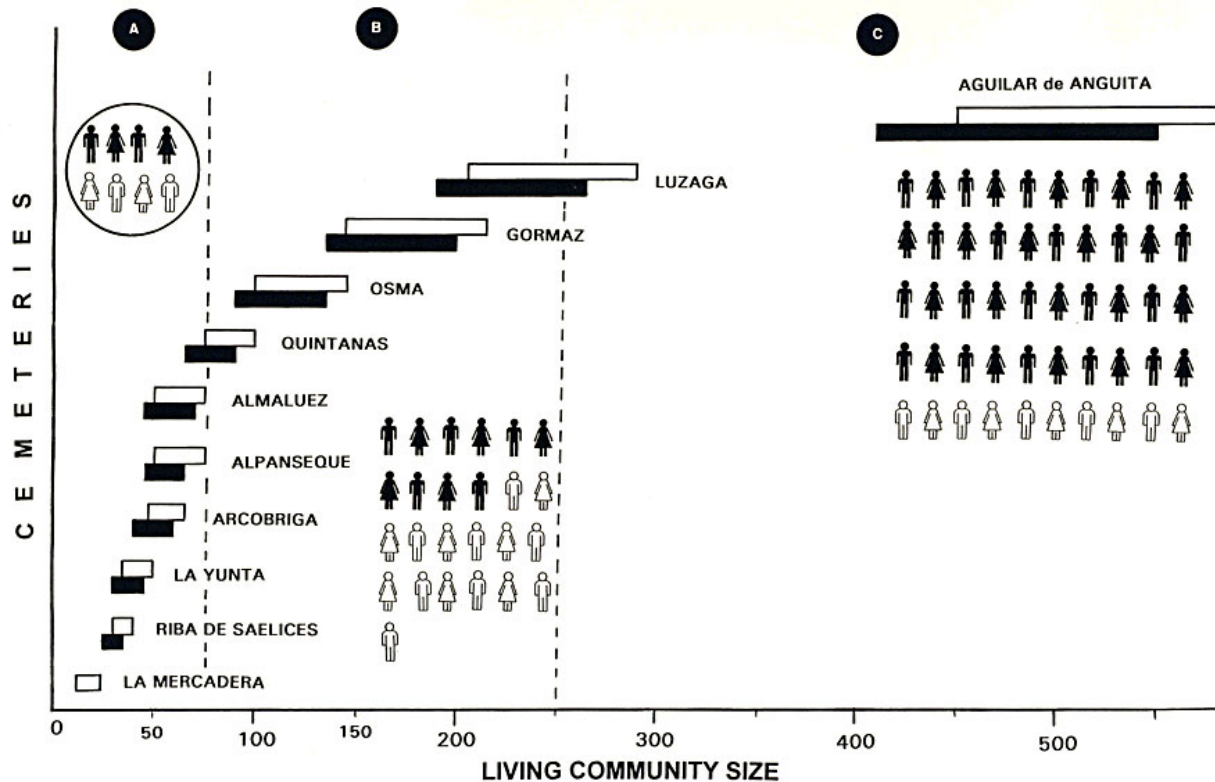


Figure 20. Demographic estimates for Celtiberian cemeteries: living community size estimated from mortuary population. In black, correction factor of 10 %; in white, 20 %. Each figure represents ten individuals. (After Ruiz Zapatero and Álvarez-Sanchís 1999).

67-70). Unfortunately, since most of the burial sites were excavated in the first few decades of the twentieth century the records are inadequate, and regrettably there are only a few sites available to us now that have not been excavated. The obvious inequality exhibited by the grave goods bears witness to a process of clear social differentiation. During this period, we see the appearance of aristocratic tombs with very complete panoplies (Lorrio 1997a: 275-283, 314). The "wealth" of the tombs can be measured by the number of objects left as offerings as well as the amount of work required to construct them. This allows us to establish the order of social ranks. Those who were buried with numerous weapons and horse harnesses belonged to the

social elite, and would have been mounted warriors or *equites*. The next highest rank consisted of warriors who were buried with expensive weaponry including swords, knives, lances, shields, and bronze breastplates. The tombs of the third highest rank to be buried with weapons included more modest grave goods, only lances and shields, and occasionally a sword. Naturally, most of the graves belonged to the general population, who were buried without weaponry and with varying degrees of tomb "wealth". We have very little knowledge of the internal organization of the burial sites, since only those that have been excavated recently have been surveyed properly, as at Carratiermes (Argente et al. 2000), and El Raso (Fernández Gómez 1997). At least two types of cemeteries can be discerned (Lorrio 1997a: 144): in the first type there is a wide range of wealth, and a pyramidal structure with a small number of aristocratic tombs at the pinnacle. Despite the aforementioned problems with earlier excavations, the majority of burial sites seem to fall into this category. The second type of cemetery is much less common and can be categorized as "fairly wealthy" to "very wealthy" with a high percentage of tombs containing weaponry, for example La Mercadera (44%) and Ucero (35%). There is a great deal of variation between Celtiberian cemeteries, and it is tempting to link this with possible funeral customs of different Celtiberian groups with distinct identities (Lorrio 1997a: 146).

The *Late Celtiberian* period (ca. 225/200 - first century BC) was undeniably a period of transition and profound change, largely as a result of the "clash" against Rome, which would eventually lead to the fall of the Celtiberians. As a result of native evolutionary processes, the Celtiberian communities adopted more urban ways of life. Thus, cities began to emerge that were over 10 hectares and sometimes even 20, with public buildings, monumental architecture, and sometimes a grid layout. At times these cities emerged via a process of synecism, as in other areas of the Mediterranean. The Classical sources (Liv. 40, 33 and 47; Str., 3, 4, 13) mention all the settlement size categories, from the smallest villages to the big cities, and classify them as follows: towers (*turres* or *pyrgoi*), villages and castles (*vicos castellaque*), large villages (*megalas komas*) and cities (*urbs*, *poli*, *civitas* or *oppida*). However, it is difficult to reconcile this information with the archaeological remains that have been found (Burillo 1998: 213-214; Lorrio 1997a: 319-321). The hierarchical order of cities in the Middle Ebro Valley has been established according to which cities minted silver coins (Burillo 1998: 237, 294-297). A further innovation was the use of writing by the Celtiberians, first on coins from the mid-second century BC (Domínguez 1988), and later in other materials (Rose 2003) including the laws written on

bronze to be publicly displayed, such as in *Contrebia Belaïska* (Saragossa) (Beltrán Lloris 2001). For this they first used the Iberian and later on the Latin alphabet. In cemeteries weapons seem to disappear from the tombs, which is a sign that funeral ideology had changed along with the criteria for defining social status.

Precious metal objects, collected in family treasure troves or community depositories

and not in the graves themselves, replace weaponry as a mark of social status (Delibes et al. 1996). A strong Iberian influence can be observed in bronze and pottery objects, such as the ones from *Numantia* (Figs. 21-23), which gives them a definitive personality within the Celtic world to which they belonged, as their stylistic and ideological elements attest. The development of a truly monumental architecture should also be mentioned (Fig. 24).



Figure 21. Celtiberian pottery with polychrome painting from *Numantia* (Soria). (After Jimeno et al. 2002).



Figure 22. *Signum equitum* or bronze "sceptre-terminal" depicting a rider seated between two back-to-back horses. Note the human heads under the animals' front hooves and beneath their bodies. This is a characteristic element from a high-status tomb at *Numantia* (Soria) dated to the second century BC. (After Jimeno 1994).



Figure 23. A horseman fibulae from *Numantia* (Soria), showing an enemy's severed head. (After Jimeno et al. 2002).

The Celtiberian communities of the second and first centuries BC were linked via the *oppida*, which acted as central units (Burillo 1998: 210). The cities had effective control of the

surrounding land, and also housed socio-political institutions such as the Public Assembly, and the Councils of Elders or Nobles, which are referred to in the sources as *Senates* (Fatás 1987). Above the cities were the ethnias or *populi*, which according to Classical authors made up the Celtiberian collective. Although references to the *populi* do not always agree, it seems that the Celtiberian collective was made up of the Arevaci, the Lusones, the Belli, the

Titthi and probably the Pelendones. The relationships between the Celtiberian ethnias varied, and included specific alliances at the time of undertaking military action (Burillo 1998: 225 ff.).

Classical sources and epigraphy also provide information about other institutions such as the *hospitium*, clientship and *devotio* (Ramos Loscertales 1924, 1942; Salinas 2001b). The *hospitium* involved the acceptance of a stranger by a family group or a particular community. The official recognition of this action came in the form of the hospitality *tessera*, two sheets of bronze (or silver in exceptional circumstances) with inscriptions in Iberian or Latin, which were joined together to form one single piece. They included geometric or animal shapes, or the image of two hands joined together. As for content, some had short inscriptions that referred to one of the participants, whereas other inscriptions were longer, mentioning both parties involved in the pact (Sánchez Moreno 2001; Tovar 1948). Clientship was a device for the purpose of integrating people of different social standing that involved mutual obligation; in general the patron offered protection and material compensation in exchange for services from the clients, which included military services. This institution existed between members of the upper social ranks and groups of lower social status, as well as between ethnias or *populi*. The *devotio* was a formula that contained a strong religious and ideological component, whereby the warrior would swear to protect the life of his superior and even give up his own life in order to do so.

When the Romans arrived in the Meseta in the second century BC, the Celtiberians were expanding into several peripheral areas, as they had been doing during previous centuries,



Figure 24. The *horreum* building at *Contrebia Belaisca* (Saragossa) from the north. At the front, the colonnade and shafts of columns and capitals indicating that it was abandoned. (After Beltrán Lloris 2001).

spreading outwards from the eastern Meseta. This process was particularly intense towards western regions of the Iberian Peninsula, where genuinely Celtiberian objects such as horse collars and bi-globular daggers have been found. These objects have been discovered as far as the southwest (Celtic *Baeturia*) and provide archaeological confirmation of the migrations of *Celtici* indicated by the written sources as well as linguistic and epigraphic evidence (Berrocal-Rangel 1998).

The Celtiberian resistance to the Roman occupation is exemplified by Rome's blockade of *Numantia*. In the summer of 133 BC this heroic Celtiberian town was destroyed by the Roman general Scipio after nearly a year of siege (Fig. 25) (Jimeno et al. 2002: 90-91). The example of the Numantians has been widely used in modern and contemporary "public use of Spanish history" (de la Torre 1998).



Figure 25. The Last Day of *Numantia* (133 BC). Painting by Alejo Vera (1881) at the *Diputación* of Soria. Partial view.

6.2. The Vetton group

The Vettones were one of the most important *populi* in Celtic Hispania (Álvarez-Sanchís 1999; Salinas 2001a; Sánchez Moreno 1996, 2000). Roman writers located them in the gently undulating plains and mountains of the western Meseta (Fig. 26), especially between the Tormes, Douro and Tagus Rivers (Roldán Hervás 1968-69). After the disappearance of the Late Bronze Age Cogotas I culture, there followed a period about which knowledge is still patchy (Álvarez-Sanchís 2000). This era was characterized by castle settlements such as Los Castillejos de Sanchorreja in the mountainous areas, and by open settlements in the land next to the Douro River that were similar to those of the Soto culture (from the Early Iron Age in the Middle Douro). The communities from the mountain areas were tied to the land, an unknown phenomenon up to that time, and received imports and products from the Tartessians in the south of the Peninsula, who in turn were influenced by trade with Phoenician merchants who had established themselves in Andalusia's coastal regions. Throughout the fifth century BC an important transformation occurred in the western regions of the Meseta: firstly, some of the most

important nuclei were abandoned or moved, and secondly, there was a drastic decrease in the exchanges that had arrived from the south, after the fall of the Tartessians.



Figure 26. The cultural area of the Vettones in Western Meseta with main settlements and the boundaries with other *populi* according to Classical written sources (After Álvarez-Sanchís 2001).

At the beginning of the fourth century BC, a series of changes came about that have been attributed to a process of Celticization whose origins should be sought in the Celtiberian zone. These changes were as follows: an increase in fortified settlements, many of them built following new designs and on a much bigger scale than before; an expansion of the ritual of cremation and cemeteries with weapons; and lastly, innovations in material culture such as the widespread use of iron metallurgy and the first ceramics made on a potter's wheel. This archaeological group has been named Cogotas II and also "Culture of the *Verracos* (boars)" owing to the discovery of characteristic crude zoomorphic sculptures made out of granite, an abundant material throughout the mountainous areas of this region (Álvarez-Sanchís 1994, 1999: 215-294; López Monteagudo 1989). The great reorganization of the social landscape, begun in the fourth century BC, would continue into the second century BC. According to historical references (Roldán Hervás 1968-69), the Vetton territory coincided with the region occupied by Cogotas II or the "Culture of the *Verracos*". Therefore we can deduce that this group could be identified with the early Vetton period, following the same argument used above for the Celtiberians (Sayas and López Melero

1991).

Land seems to have acquired a new economic value, and in the case of the Vetton people, pasture fields were particularly prized given their inclination to raise cattle. This enables us to understand the intense occupation of optimal pasture areas such as the Amblés Valley or the Yeltes and Agueda Rivers in the Salamanca region (Álvarez-Sanchís 1999: 115-122). There was a great deal of compartmentalization of land between communities that lived in large hill-forts (which could be better termed *oppida*), and the *verracos* sculptures were used as landmarks to divide up pasture areas.

The most characteristic elements of the Vetttones were the hill-forts or *oppida*, their cemeteries, the famous zoomorphic sculptures, certain types of ceramics (such as those decorated with a combing technique), and certain weapons and metallic adornments (Ruiz Zapatero and Álvarez-Sanchís 2002). The Vetton settlements were mostly new in design and layout, and were located on hilltops, in river breakwaters, meanders, and on valley slopes. They were between 20 and 80 hectares in size with good defenses (Fig. 27) consisting of moats, stones sunk into fields (*chevaux-de-frise*), and stone walls, sometimes with solid bastions (Fig. 28) and several walled enclosures which are typical of the Vetton area (Cabré 1930; Cabré et al. 1950; Fernández Gómez 1986 Vol. I;



Figure 27. Stone walls and *chevaux-de-frise* at the hillfort of Las Cogotas (Ávila) (Photo: A.J. Lorrio).

Ruiz Zapatero and Álvarez-Sanchís 1995). There was no hipodamic urbanism, and the housing was usually made up of free standing square or rectangular units adapted to the topography of the interior of the hill-forts. In a few cases, houses were erected outside the walled enclosures, and Classical sources refer to the existence of an outlying area when Hannibal conquered *Salmantica* in 220 BC. On the whole, the internal organization was quite different from the Celtiberian urban model (Ruiz Zapatero and Álvarez-Sanchís 2002). In the *oppidum* at Ulaca (Ávila), a possible sacred or ritual area has been documented that contains two structures carved into the rock: a

sanctuary with a sacrificial altar, and a sauna (Ruiz Zapatero and Álvarez-Sanchís 1999). The sanctuary is a rectangular space carved out of the rock that was probably covered. Next to this a large cliff was used to create access to the upper part with a double set of steps, a type of platform with several intercommunicating hollows through which liquids could flow (Álvarez-Sanchís 1999: 310). The sacred nature of the structure can be discerned owing to the parallels with the Roman world, the most expressive example of which is the Portuguese sanctuary at Panóias (Rodríguez Colmenero 1999), with Latin inscriptions that refer to the animal sacrifices carried out there. The victims' entrails were burned in

hollows or casks, and the blood was poured into other cavities to flow down to the lower part of the rock, whilst the deities were worshipped. The sauna at Ulaca is a rectangular structure, also cut into the rock, which has three areas: a wide antechamber, a small chamber with two benches on each side, and the oven or fire chamber. It has been linked with the initiation baths of warriors, such as the "*pedras formosas*", the famous saunas of the "*Cultura Castreña*" or *Castro Culture* in the northwest (Almagro-Gorbea and Álvarez-Sanchís 1993). It would certainly confirm Strabo's (3, 3, 7) reference to steam baths used by the inhabitants of the areas surrounding the Douro River.

The best-known Vetton burial sites were excavated in the first decades of the previous century: Las Cogotas (1,613 tombs) (Cabré 1932; Castro 1986; Kurtz 1987) and La Osera (2,230 tombs) (Baquedano 2001; Cabré et al. 1950). A few recent excavations have broadened our knowledge of the Vetton funeral culture, even if far fewer graves have been found in these contexts: El Raso (123) (Ávila) (Fernández Gómez 1986 Vol. II, 1997) and other burial sites in Extremadura. Vetton cemeteries have a series of peculiar characteristics (Álvarez-Sanchís 1999:

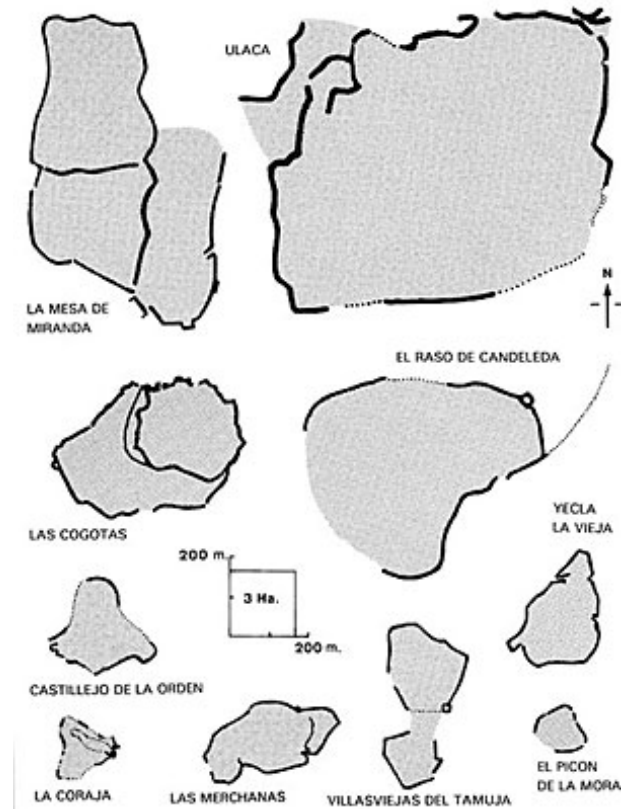


Figure 28. *Oppida* and settlement sizes in the Vettones area (After Álvarez-Sanchís 1999).

172): 1) the use of cremation ritual; 2) tombs with urns in graves, sometimes with small protective rocks and occasionally with *stelae* (Las Cogotas), and in small burial mounds weighted down with stone (La Osera, La Coraja); 3) the location of cemeteries opposite to and near the settlement gates (150-300 meters); 4) cemetery proximity to streams; 5) concentrations of graves in well-marked areas with empty spaces between them (four in Las Cogotas and six in La Osera), which have been interpreted as the mortuary plots of family or kin-groups. As far as we know, there are no cemeteries at the westernmost tip of the Vetton territory, perhaps because they have not yet been discovered, or more probably because they may have shared the same funeral customs as the areas throughout the Atlantic coast and the northwestern area of the peninsula that have not produced any evidence for cemetery areas and whose mortuary rituals have left no recognizable archaeological trace (Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1995).

Analyses of the grave goods from between the fifth and second centuries BC have enabled us to reconstruct a picture of Vetton communities. The cemetery at Las Cogotas provides a good illustration of the model of society derived from mortuary evidence (Fig. 29). Of the 1,447 tombs recovered, only 224 contained grave goods, 15.5% of the total. The social ranks or categories identified were as follows (Martín Valls 1986-87: 75-76): 1) Warriors with sumptuous offerings, weapons and horse harnesses. Different levels of 'wealth' can be discerned, and these make up just over 18% of the tombs containing grave goods. Among the weapons were antenna swords with sheaths decorated with silver *niello* inlay, some long swords from La Tène I, a few *falcata* (the famous Iberian sword with a curved blade), so-called *frontón* and bi-globular daggers, shield umbos and braces, and spearheads. 2) Artisans, buried with gravers and other tools, represent

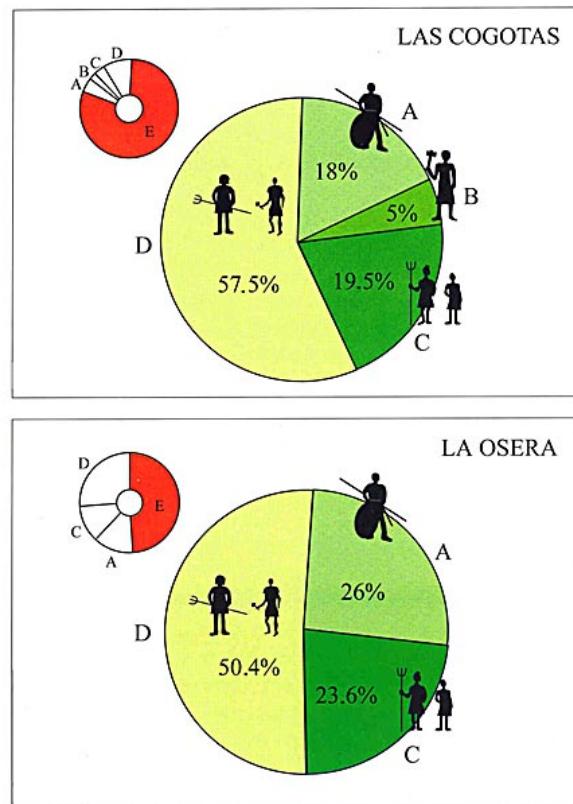


Figure 29. Distribution of social categories according to grave goods at the cemeteries of Las Cogotas and La Osera (Zone VI): A= warriors, B= craftsmen, C= women, D= others and E= tombs without goods (After Álvarez-Sanchís 2001).

around 5% of the total. 3) Women, in general buried with spindle whorls and small adornments (bracelets, rings, fibulae), make up nearly 20%. 4) Individuals not linked to any specific category make up the vast majority, 57.5% of all tombs containing grave goods, in general ceramic vases and a few simple adornments. Finally, the tombs without grave goods presumably represent simple country folk and perhaps also non-free individuals or slaves; these represent 84.5% of the total number of tombs recovered.

Verracos are the typical Vetton sculptures of pigs and bulls (Fig. 30), carved in blocks of granite, which always represented the entire body of the animals on pedestals (Álvarez-Sanchís 1999: 215-294; López Monteagudo 1989; Martín Valls 1974). The size varied from just under a meter in length and a meter high, to extremely large pieces over two and a half meters in size. Within the



Figure 30. Stone sculpture of a typical *verraco* from Ulaca, at Solosanco village (Ávila) (Photo: G. Ruiz Zapatero).

general scheme in which they were sculptured, anatomical details such as well-defined sexual organs were sometimes added. The statues were always male animals. We currently know of nearly 400 such sculptures from sites throughout the western Meseta, Extremadura and the Portuguese region of Tras-os-Montes (Álvarez-Sanchís 1999: 224-226). This exhibition of Vetton culture is unparalleled in other Peninsular Celtic groups. The chronology of the *verracos*, which are almost always found outside well-defined archaeological contexts, is difficult to establish. In general, their presence in non-Romanized hill-forts allows us to date them between the fourth and first centuries BC, since the Roman conquest led to the abandonment of these *castros* (Álvarez-Sanchís 1999: 277). The Latin inscriptions found on some of the sculptures date to the first and second centuries AD, which would seem to indicate that this indigenous rite survived and was still practiced in the Roman era. It is even possible that these were much later inscriptions, tacked on to pre-Roman sculptures.

The significance of these enigmatic sculptures is controversial. The first interpretations, based on the *verracos* that appeared in a few hill-forts or close to their gates, considered their role to be magical or religious, related to the protection and fertility of the cattle, the main source of wealth for these people. In the Roman period, a few *verracos* were used as *cupae*, covering

graves, as was the case with those excavated in Martiherrero (Ávila) (Martín Valls and Pérez Herrero 1976). However, those that have Latin inscriptions must have had a role in funeral customs, since they carry epigraphs with the names of the deceased and his or her kin. However, there are very few sculptures that support both interpretations. Most of the pieces appear in rich lush fields and pasture land, close to sources of water and several kilometers away from the settlements. We believe that these specimens may have been used as landmarks or visual aids in the countryside to signal pasture areas, and vital resources for the cattle during the summer months or periods of drought (Álvarez-Sanchís 1994). The settlement elite would have controlled access to such areas and resources. This new hypothesis is strongly supported by analyses of locations and visibility in regions such as the Amblés Valley (Álvarez-Sanchís and Ruiz Zapatero 1999). Thus the sculptures appear to have been used by the Vetton cattle-farming communities mainly as a means of organizing and exploiting land.

The notion that the *verracos* were used to define areas of property or control fits in well with the image of the hierarchical society revealed by the Vetton cemeteries. The wealth of the aristocracy was probably determined in part by the possession of large numbers of cattle. The exploitation of the land, access to pasture lands and control of agricultural resources must have been the pillars of power of this social elite during the Second Iron Age (Álvarez-Sanchís 2003: 55-63).

6.3. The Vaccean group

According to Poseidonius, the Vaccaeii were one of the most 'civilized' *populi* of the Meseta region (Sanz Mínguez and Martín Valls 2001). They inhabited the sedimentary plains of the central Douro Valley (Fig. 31) (Delibes et al. 1995; Romero et al. 1993), and they were mentioned in the sources as early as 220 BC owing to Hannibal's campaign through the inland territories of Iberia. Previously, this region had been inhabited by the Soto de Medinilla group (ca. 800-400 BC), which defined the Early Iron Age. The main characteristics of the Soto people were as follows: they created the first stable settlements, where they lived for long periods of time and in which they constructed round houses from wood and adobe; they developed an intensive cereal economy on the fertile soil of the valley bottoms; and they shared a fairly homogeneous material culture (they had highly standardized ceramic traditions and in their metallurgy the earlier use of bronze was later replaced by iron). We do not know about the



Figure 31. The territory of the Vacceans and the distribution of their main settlements in the Middle Douro Valley (After Sanz Mínguez and Velasco 2003).

funeral rituals of the Soto people, which apparently rules out the existence of cremation cemeteries, even though this possibility is hinted at on occasions (Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1995). The origins of the Soto culture in the Middle Douro are controversial (Romero and Ramírez 2001). Some have highlighted the lack of continuity between the Soto and the Late Bronze Age tradition (Cogotas I), whereas others have sought links with the Urnfield cultures of the Ebro Valley, in particular with Cortes de Navarra. Although this would enable us to trace the Soto Celtic substratum, some of the most typical Soto characteristics also show southern influences. Certainly, the Soto communities maintained strong identity traits until the late fifth and early fourth centuries BC, a period that witnessed the phenomenon of effective Celticization and the formation of the Vaccean group.

The emergence of the Vaccean culture was marked by the appearance of the first

cremation cemeteries (which had not previously existed), a settlement pattern based on the *oppida* (true cities on a grand scale), and the widespread use of iron metallurgy and ceramics decorated on a potter's wheel. Unlike their Celtiberian neighbours, they did not have an indigenous epigraphy, nor did they mint coins.

Vaccean settlement was concentrated around large urban nuclei, which were usually between 15 and 20 hectares in size (Wattemberg 1959). These nuclei were located far apart, and there was no hierarchical organization (Sacristán 1989; Sacristan et al. 1995). The largest Vaccean *oppida* had a population of a few thousand inhabitants, substantially more than the previous modest communities of the Soto people. The Vaccean city walls were made out of adobe and wood, and had defensive ditches. There were large residential areas and the outskirts were situated outside the city walls. There were areas for depositing rubbish, and also for the production of craftwork, such as at Carralaceña in Pintia, which had potter's wheels and large ceramics kilns (Sanz Mínguez and Velasco 2003). The streets were fairly regular, and divided up the housing into blocks, made up of rectangular houses. Unfortunately we know very little about Vaccean urbanism and the internal organization of domestic units and other areas, although excavations such as those of Pintia are providing a great deal of information (Fig. 32). These urban centers really were city-states. The sources highlight the importance of the Vaccean *oppida* when they indicate that Roman campaigns were launched against specific cities, or when they mention councils of elders or assemblies which had the capacity to choose leaders and make declarations of war (González-Cobos 1989).



Figure 32. Reconstruction of furnaces and a loom area in a house at *Pintia* (After Sanz Mínguez and Velasco 2003).

Cremation cemeteries characterized Vaccean mortuary ritual. Regrettably, we only know of around six of these, and of these six, the one at Las Ruedas (Pintia) is practically the only one that has been properly excavated and studied. Around 70 tombs (not all of them 'complete') have been examined in Las Ruedas (Sanz Mínguez 1998). The community buried there reveals an extensive chronology from the beginning of the fourth century BC to the late first century AD and there is evidence for a clear pattern of social differentiation. At the pinnacle of the social

scale were the equestrian elites, exemplified by Tomb 75, that of a Vaccean chieftain or leader buried with 25 grave good items (Fig. 33) (Sanz Mínguez et al. 2003): highly valuable metal objects including a dagger with damascene work, a *caetra* shield, two spearheads, a knife, a highly sophisticated saddle, and a decorated bone handle. The rest were ceramic containers, and there were also some animal offerings (Sanz Mínguez et al. 2003). Below this social stratum, two additional ranks of 'wealthy' tombs have been identified. These graves contained numerous objects, imported items and symbols of authority, in particular weapons (Fig. 34). Most of the burials, over 80%, have grave goods composed of simple weapons, ceramics and glass adornments (Fig. 35). Members of the lowest rank were buried without grave goods; the cremated remains were buried directly in dug-out graves. Furthermore, the cemetery must also have been a place of worship for the living, as we have deduced from the external markers for the graves, and the fact that they did not bury one on top of the other. The identification of a horizontal stratigraphy indicates that the cemetery was plotted according to a radial model.

We also know of two other rituals: firstly, the burial of infants (under one year of age) under the floors of houses, which is linked with funeral practices of the Ebro Valley, and the Mediterranean area; and secondly, the practice of leaving the bodies of warriors who had fallen on the battlefield to be devoured by vultures, which is well documented in texts about Celtiberians and



Figure 33. Artistic recreation of the warrior in Tomb 75 at Las Ruedas, *Pintia* (After Sanz Mínguez and Velasco 2003).

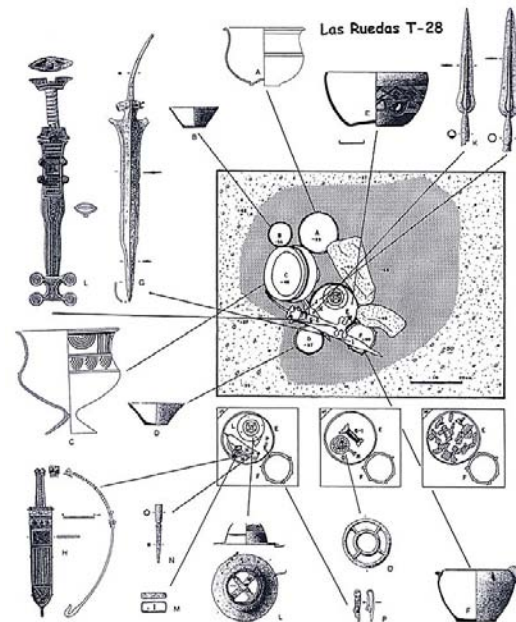


Figure 34. Grave goods in Tomb 28 at Las Ruedas, *Pintia* (After Sanz Mínguez 1998 modified).

iconography (Lorrio 1997a: 345, Fig. 129; Sopena 1995: 210-212, Fig. 44, 53, 54). Hence, on the whole, the Vaccean funeral culture leads us back to the mortuary traditions of the Celtiberian zone. This supports the idea of a process of acculturation that spread outward from the eastern areas of the Meseta.



Figure 35. Vaccean pottery from Tomb 37 at Las Ruedas, *Pintia*. Third to second centuries BC (After Sanz Mínguez and Martín Valls 2001).

6.4. The *Castro Culture* in northwestern Iberia

At the end of the nineteenth century, the link between northwestern Iberia and Celtic settlement at the end of the Iron Age was established. However, this link has been critically analyzed only in the last few years and interpretations have diverged from this traditional view (Calo 1997; Carballo 1996; González Ruibal 2003; Hidalgo 1996; Parceró 2000, 2002; Romero Masía 1976; Silva 1986, 2001). The issue can be summed up as follows: The *Castro Culture* has its origins in the Late Bronze Age, and there is evidence for continuity and an indigenous evolution throughout the Early Iron Age. The Celtic elements are later in date and are limited to linguistic information (toponyms and anthroponyms), certain divinities, references to Celtic peoples in Classical sources, and some archaeological findings (such as torques, a few helmets, and elements pertaining to the 'warrior sculptures'), all of which brings us to the end of the Iron Age (Lorrio 1991). In other words, the *Castro Culture* of the northwest can be explained in indigenous terms beginning in the Late Bronze Age, and only from the Late Iron Age on can Celtic elements be found. Moreover, the links with the Meseta throughout the Iron Age are weak and limited to the eastern areas of the northwest, without penetrating further inland towards the coastal areas. This makes it difficult to affirm that the Celticization of the northwest was a result of the same process of Celticization of the western Iberian Peninsula originating in the nucleus area of Celtiberia. Hence the different interpretations regarding the Celtic issue in the northwest are understandable: 1) Almagro-Gorbea (1992, 2001: 100-101) has attempted to demonstrate that in these Atlantic regions, a 'proto-Celtic' substratum must have existed from the Late Bronze Age

on; 2) most Galician archaeologists have emphatically rejected the notion of Celts in that region, unless a detailed explanation of what is understood by this ethnic category in archaeological terms is provided beforehand (Peña Santos 1992); and 3) ancient and religious historians defend the use of Celtic models and the existence of a Celtic society (Brañas 1995, 2000; Garcia Quintela 2002).

Archaeological analysis of the first millennium BC in the northwest has uncovered some vital clues regarding the Celtic question, following the recent study by González Ruibal (2003), who provides the best and most up-to-date theory. Around the tenth and ninth centuries BC (Late Bronze Age II/III), the first hill-forts appear in northwest Portugal and southwestern Galicia. These were the most dynamic and active areas at that time and throughout the entire millennium (although a few open villages still remained), and various archaeological and environmental indicators point to demographic growth and a greater tie of the people to their lands. The first hill-forts were built and settled at high altitudes with fairly substantial defenses, round cabins and a few prestige elements, such as bronze and gold. The communities that lived there were beginning to develop a hierarchical social system that was based neither on kinship nor on the ownership of prestige but rather on land ownership. During the late ninth and early eighth centuries BC, the open villages were abandoned, and the defense systems of some hill forts were reinforced. Also at this time, the Atlantic exchange system began to unravel - deposits of bronze items in rivers, lakes and bogs became rarer - and the first Phoenician elements, which followed the Portuguese Atlantic coast up from the South-West of Iberia, finally reached the beaches of northern Portugal and southern Galicia. Between 800 and 400 BC (the Early Iron Age), the *Castro Culture* communities further developed the tendencies of the previous period: they lived almost exclusively in formidable hill-forts (the focal point of each community), always located in areas that jutted out of the landscape with good visual control of the surrounding area. The round house is the standard dwelling type, following the tradition of the Late Bronze Age and providing the base of more complex Late Iron Age dwellings (Fig. 36). Bronze hoards had disappeared forever, and control of land became the

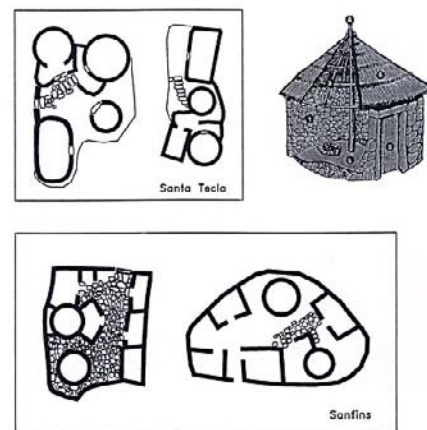


Figure 36. Dwellings and domestic structures of the Late Iron Age in northwest Iberia (After Fernández-Posse 1998).

primary means of accumulating wealth.

The Late Iron Age (400-100 BC) witnessed the emergence of more unequal and complex societies, the regional compartmentalization of land and a strong differentiation of material culture (González Ruibal 2003: 384 ff.). In fact, more than likely different types of society co-existed in the different regions of the northwest (Fernández-Posse and Sánchez Palencia 1998). From the mid second century BC on, the presence of the Romans in the areas surrounding the northwest meant the beginning of a series of disturbances that would culminate in Roman conquest and domination, and the appearance of cities in the southwest of the region (125 BC - AD 50) (Sastre 2002). Finally, we can talk about a Gallaecian-Roman culture (see Tranoy 1981).

Around 400 BC, the hill forts that had been previously built were either abandoned or remodelled (Fig. 37). They were spread throughout the valleys, at the lowest points, close to well-irrigated lands, and with uniform visibility of all the surrounding area. The population was growing substantially, since the number of hill forts doubled or trebled in many areas. This was doubtless the result of agrarian intensification, as indicated by storage structures (made of interlocking wood and in pits), and the increase of farming implements (mainly hoes and sickles). In material culture, ceramic traditions underwent important changes, as did adornments and clothing, especially brooches. Smaller hill forts (between one and two hectares) increased their defensive features, had more elaborate gates, and frequently had numerous ramparts.

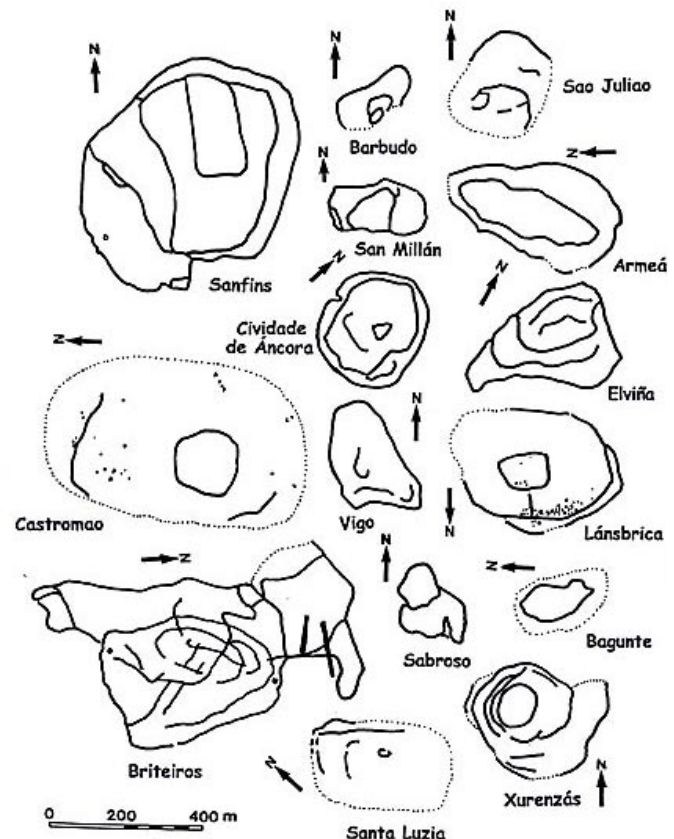


Figure 37. *Oppida* and hillforts of the Late Iron Age in northwest Iberia (After González Ruibal 2003).

Around the end of the second century BC, *oppida* began to emerge in southwestern Galicia and northwestern Portugal (Fig. 38). These were large urban nuclei with a few thousand inhabitants, with substantial public structures such as urban sanctuaries, cisterns, cobbled streets and water pipes. The origins of the *oppida* were unequivocally indigenous, even



Figure 38. Aerial view of the *oppidum* of Sanfins (Paços de Ferreira) (After Silva 2001).

though they reached their zenith during the first century BC. According to González Ruibal (2003: 320), these great agglomerations were "key places for conducting business and displaying wealth".

Two typical elements of the *Castro Culture* of the northwest are the "Gallaecian Warriors", stone sculptures believed to depict 'chieftains' (Calo 1994), and the sauna baths, with monumental entrances, often decorated slabs, like the *pedra formosa* at Briteiros (Almagro-Gorbea and Álvarez-Sanchís 1993; Silva 1986: 53-60). Interestingly, both phenomena have been attributed to Celtic traditions. The Gallaecian or Lusitanian-Gallaecian Warriors²⁰ are full-body sculptures (Fig. 39) that in general lack archaeological contexts, although in Citania de Sanfins one of these monuments towered above the main gate to the town (Silva 2003: 47). A late date range in the first century AD is generally accepted for these statues, suggesting links with Roman sculptures, although it seems more likely that they were linked to the warrior *stelae* documented in the west of the Peninsula from the Bronze Age on (Almagro-Gorbea and Lorrio 1992: 418; Lorrio 1991: 31-32). Some of these warriors bear Latin inscriptions, confirming their late date, although the onomastics they display are clearly indigenous, from the area of Gallaecia/Lusitania,



Figure 39. Stone sculpture of "Lusitanian warrior" from Lezenho (Portugal). (After Almagro-Gorbea 1991a. Photo: Palazzo Grassi).

which in general is considered Celtic. Given their location in towns, they have been interpreted as heroic representations of important elders, probably local chieftains, sculpted for the purpose of reinforcing the position of the elite, although they may also have had a role as protectors of the community. Just like the Lusitani, they carry a *caetra* (a round shield that is concave on the outside), which covers the abdominal area, and a dagger. The dagger is always sheathed and held by the warrior in his hand, something which makes it difficult to identify, although the characteristics of the sheaths and the shapes of the handles enable us to identify them as one of the most characteristic Celtiberian weapons, the bi-globular dagger. Some of the warrior statues also hold an unsheathed sword, and in rare cases have helmets, such as the warrior at Sanfins, who wears a Celtic-Italic *Montefortino* type of helmet, or a model derived from that helmet type. They wear short tunics, sometimes decorated, fit to the body with a belt. Sometimes they appear barefooted, sometimes wearing greaves or gaiters. They also wear torques and *viriae* or bracelets on their forearms, a custom generally considered typically Celtic.

The excavations of Santa Maria de Galegos in Barcelos, Silva (1986: 53-60) confirmed that the *pedras formosas* were saunas or baths (Fig. 40), although the ritualistic nature of these constructions was not entirely clear. However, they have been linked to initiation rituals of young warriors by Almagro-Gorbea and Álvarez-Sanchís (1993; for an opposing viewpoint, see



Figure 40. "Sauna" at Sanfins (Paços de Ferreira, Portugal. Photo: A.J. Lorrio).

Ríos González 2000). Their origins are unquestionably native (Almagro-Gorbea and Álvarez-Sanchís 1993); they could hardly be indigenous imitations of Roman baths, since the oldest baths in the northwest are from the first century BC, and there are no parallels outside this region, although there is an example among the Vettones. The appearance of Roman *tegula* tiles in some of these baths does not necessarily mean that they correspond to the date the baths themselves were founded. There were two types of sauna. One was a smaller type, without a cool room, and without flagstone entrance. This type is found dotted throughout northwestern Galicia and eastern Asturias. The other type is bigger, and has flagstones that separate the cool room from

the warm room. In the earlier sauna these stones are rough, and in the later sauna they are much more elaborate. This second type can be found in the area around Braga. They carry engravings which further attest to the local character of these baths, whose themes correspond to those found on the stone warriors.

In short, the strong continuity evident in the *Castro Culture* leaves few openings for external influences originating in the Meseta, the area from which, presumably, the Celtic elements would have arrived. The architecture in certain regions in eastern Galicia and the mountains of León, with angular designs and straight roads, could be linked to influences from the Meseta. The same could be said of some fibulae, for example, certain symmetrical types like the *torrecilla* or the horse brooches, as well as certain silver torques. However, no ceramics from Celtiberia or the Meseta are found in this region. It is true that in addition to these elements, over 120 gold and bronze torques (Fig. 41) could also be classified as belonging to a Celtic tradition (Castro Pérez 1990, 1998). Examples of these torques are also found on the Lusitanian-Gallaecian warrior sculptures, as well as the *viriae* or bracelets on their forearms, a few helmets from the La Tène culture, the small circular shields, and daggers and short swords, which could be linked with the weapons in the Meseta burial sites. These objects may have arrived via the Lusitanian culture rather than the northwestern sector of the Meseta. In any case, the idea of a Celtiberian model of society with warrior elites, organized according to the clientship model, with abundant weapons and horses as status symbols, meets with serious difficulties in the northwest (González Ruibal 2003: 335-336). Here, until a very late date, the warriors only possessed spears and daggers, and lacked the prestigious weaponry typical of the Meseta. They practised a form of 'group battle' and it seems that the figure of the aristocratic warrior did not exist. Horses were also not widely present, although it is true that we do not have evidence such as the saddles and harnesses found in the tombs of the Meseta, since we do not know how the peoples of the northwest conducted their burials, which in any case would not have been like the cremation cemeteries of the Celtiberians, Vettones and Vaccaei.

Furthermore, as we have seen, there were hardly any horse collars, and equestrian iconography



Figure 41. Gold torque from Burela (Lugo). (After Almagro-Gorbea 1991a. Photo: Palazzo Grassi).

was similarly rare. In other words, Celtic archaeological elements in the northwest are in the minority, late in date, and must be set against the background of societies that had strong local roots and their own evolutionary process that started in the Late Bronze Age. Leaving migrations to one side, although they are referred to by some Classical texts, it seems most reasonable to conclude that the gradual Celticization of the western areas of Iberia was above all the result of a peculiar acculturation process. We still do not have the keys to explaining this process.

The problem with existing interpretations regarding Celticism in the northwest might be due to the fact that research is approached from two radically opposed standpoints that do not admit critical debate: one perspective only wishes to discuss Galician archaeological data without contrasting it with information from Classical sources, paleolinguistics, religion or ideology, while the other strand of research constructs a discourse in which Classical references, archaeological, linguistic, ideological, religious and even ethnographical data are blended in a strange amalgam that makes it difficult to sustain a cohesive historical argument. This situation stigmatizes the issue of Celticization as a legitimate subject of academic research, making matters worse by leaving it wide open to manipulation in the hands of pseudo-researchers and Celtophiles with more enthusiasm than intelligence or scholarly training.

6.5. The Astures and the Cantabri

The Astures are closely related to Gallaecian peoples of the northwest and also to the northern Cantabri, which did not go unnoticed by Strabo (III, 3, 7) when he stated that all aspects of the lifestyle of these three cultures were similar (de Blas and Villa 2002; Esparza 2001; Fernández-Posse 2001). Their individuality was well defined by the absence of urban and civilized practices. Their lands stretched from the Galician region to the Sella Valley to the east, whilst to the south they occupied the northwest corner of the Meseta up to the Esla River that bordered the Vaccean territory. They were also neighbours of the Vettones. However, we cannot be sure how closely the indigenous communities prior to the Roman Conquest matched the boundaries defined by the Roman administration.

If we simplify the situation, the groups to the north of the Cantabrian Mountains, between Navia and Sella, can be distinguished from the inland groups around the mountains of León, El Bierzo and the Zamora mountains, who spread very slightly out toward the plains of the Douro River (Fanjul and Menéndez 2004; Camino Mayor 1995). The Asturian *castros* (Berrocal-Rangel et al. 2002; Maya 1988, 1989; Maya and Cuesta 2001; Ríos and García de Castro 1998) as for

example Campa Torres, San Chuís, Morrión, Caravia, Llagú and many others, shared a few common features with the Galician hill forts further west and the Cantabrians toward the east (Peralta 2000). The Meseta *castros*, on the other hand, had more affinities with the Vaccean region. A similar phenomenon occurred in Cantabria, as attested by the famous hill fort and cemetery at Monte Bernorio (Palencia)



Figure 42. Aerial view of the *oppidum* of Monte Bernorio (Palencia). (After Peralta 2000).

(Esparza 1982), on the northern borders of the northern Meseta (Fig. 42). An archaeological culture has been named after this settlement, Miraveche-Monte Bernorio, which also takes its name from a cemetery in Burgos. A few elements from this culture are sufficiently well known and understood so as to differentiate this area from the region located to the north of the Cantabrian Mountains (Torres Martínez 2003). However, the link between this region and the Vaccean and Celtiberian areas in particular remains clear, and is attested by funeral rituals such as cremation, although the typology of their spectacular grave goods allows a certain degree of individualization in that respect (Fig. 43). Unfortunately, we have no information on the burials of the Astures; undoubtedly they were funeral rituals that, as in the entire northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, have left no archaeological traces (Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1995). One element that particularly stands out is their precious metalwork, with extraordinary pieces such as gold torques from Cangas de Onís and Langreo, and the diadem from Moñes (Fig. 44) (Eluère 1986-87; Marco 1994, 1996), whose iconography is closely linked with Celtic mythology. The techniques of crafting such pieces and the stylistic details link such precious metalwork with the traditions of the *Castro*



Figure 43. Celtic "warriors" from northwestern and northern Iberia. A: with spears and "Monte Bernorio-type" dagger, gold torque, fibulae, *caetra*, and bronze belt plate. Details for the boots have been taken from a ceramic votive piece. B: with spear, bi-globular dagger and *caetra* (small round shield). Adornments are taken from warrior stone sculptures. (After Álvarez Peña 2002).

Culture of the northwest. Other silver objects found to the south of the Asturian region, however, have links with Celtiberian precious metal work, such as the exceptional treasure of Arrabalde 1 (Fig. 45) (Delibes et al. 1996).



Figure 44. Gold diadem from Moñes (Asturias). (After Perea 1995).



Figure 45. "Arrabalde 1" treasure (Zamora). (After Fernández-Posse et al. 2002. Photo: Museo de Zamora).

The origins of the oldest Asturian and Cantabrian *castros* are controversial, since the pre-Roman and Roman periods for fortified settlements have not always been properly differentiated and dated. It appears that the oldest forts could date back to the Early Iron Age. However, the fort settlements of the cultures in the north of the Iberian Peninsula have traditionally been linked to the final phase of the Roman conquest of Iberia, and consequently, research has revolved more around ancient history than archaeology. The final stand of the Cantabri and Astures, which was widely documented in the chronicles of Roman writers, was brought to an end by the Romans in the wars that took place between 29 and 19 BC (González Echegaray 1999; Peralta 2000: 259-282; Sánchez Palencia and Mangas 2000). This victory ushered in an era of total Roman Imperial control of the Iberian Peninsula.

6.6. Celts in the southwest

As we saw previously, the presence of *Celtici* in southwestern Iberia is well documented in literary sources. Perhaps the most frequently quoted reference is from Pliny, who, writing in the mid-first century AD, stated that these *Celtici* were "descended from the Celtiberians and came from Lusitania, as proven by their practices of worship, their language and the names of their towns..." (*Nat. Hist.* 3, 13-14). Archaeological research has shown that Pliny's text was simply a Roman *interpretatio* of a far more complex indigenous reality whose roots are to be found at the end of the fifth century BC (Berrocal-Rangel 1992, 2001; Velázquez and Enríquez

1995).

From the fourth century BC on, in the areas of Alentejo, in Portugal, and in the Extremadura stretching down to the north of Huelva, a series of important changes came about (Berrocal-Rangel 2003: 211): firstly, the appearance of fortified settlements (riverside forts and small *oppida* with stone walls and barriers made by sinking stones into the ground), such as Mértola, Capote, Pasada del Abad and Mesas do Castelhino; secondly, handmade ceramics that developed out of prototypes from Meseta. The imprinted designs were made both with fine line incisions and excision techniques; there were also fibulae typical of La Tène I and II; and finally, antennae-hilted sword of "Alcacer" type (Fig. 46) and a few other elements that are linked to cultures from the Late Iron Age in Meseta. We have practically no knowledge of the funeral rituals of the southwestern Celts, but we do have good documentation on aspects of their religious rituals, such as the repository for votive

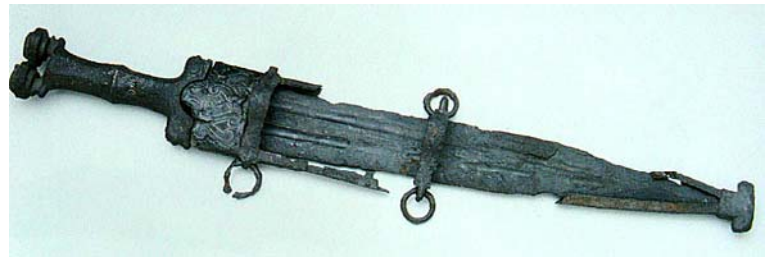


Figure 46. Antennae-hilted sword ("Alcacer" type) from Alcacer do Sal cemetery (Portugal). (After Almagro-Gorbea 1991a. Photo: Palazzo Grassi).

offerings at the shrine in Capote (Fig. 47) (Berrocal-Rangel 1994). Here we know that the sacred ceremony included a great community banquet and sacrifices. Many aspects of the southwestern Celtici still need further research. However, they undoubtedly provide a good example of how an intrusive Celtic group can be identified archaeologically. There are a few elements which are probably Celtiberian in origin: the La Tène swords and antennae-hilted "Atance" type swords; the horse brooches from the burial site in Herdade das Casas, Alentejo, approximately dated to the third or second century BC; or the bi-globular dagger from Capote, dated to the second century BC. There is also further anthroponymical evidence, especially certain toponyms such as *Nertobriga*, *Arcobriga* or *Segida*, elements that date back to the second



Figure 47. Shrine at Capote (Badajoz). (Photo: A.J. Lorrio).

century BC, or perhaps even later (Berrocal-Rangel 2003: 210-213). The origin of these influences, which according to Pliny came from *ex Lusitania*, are verified in the location of the Celtiberian mint at *Tamusia* in the *castro* at Villasviejas del Tamuja (Botija, Cáceres) in the west of Lusitania (Hernández et al. 1989). Here, the most recent cemetery is dated to the second century BC, and confirms the presence of elements that clearly originated in Meseta, such as the bi-globular daggers (Hernández and Galán 1996). Even the name of the stream itself, the Tamuja, which flows to the base of the *oppidum*, confirms this identification.

In short, it would seem that the process of Celticization of the indigenous substratum in the southwest was not uniform, but arose as a consequence of gradual demographic contributions from small groups of Meseta cultures, who had a familial social structure, spoke a Celtic language and whose economy was based on cattle farming, which was adapted to the rich pastureland of the region between the Tagus and the Guadiana rivers.

7. The Iberian Celts from a European perspective

Even though we recognize that there are many unresolved problems and issues regarding the Iberian Celts and their links with the Celts from the other side of the Pyrenees, we believe that it is possible to establish a series of firm and interesting conclusions:

1. It is absolutely essential to abandon once and for all the traditional interpretation that links the Peninsular Celts with the La Tène culture, a fact that has been used for decades as the criteria to exclude Iberia from the Celtic world, or at best refer to it as the setting for a strange and atypical regional group, the Celtiberians. Some European theories now explicitly recognize this fact, and admit the existence of a group with its own identity that emerged before the migratory movements of the La Tène culture. This has also happened in interpretations relating to other European regions, as is the case with the Lepontic language and the Golasecca culture in northern Italy.
2. The emergence of the Celtiberian culture in the sixth century BC has created a new paradigm to understand the process of Celticization of the Iberian Peninsula. It has also forced scholars to construct scenarios to explain the complex relationship between the Celtic language, ethnicity and material culture. We do not have all the answers, but we have managed to create some different frameworks to think about the Celtic question, and suggestive hypotheses are emerging that can be compared with each other.

Whereas the Iberian Celts were previously considered as something peripheral to continental *Celtica*, the shattering of the classic paradigm, the need to rethink the "language-ethnicity-material culture" contents and the possibility to do this from new standpoints, places

the Iberian Peninsula in an advantageous position. We can use European Celtic worlds in a fruitful comparative analysis (Alberro 2003). We should not forget that the evidence of Celtic languages in Iberia (especially Celtiberian where discoveries are constantly being made that increase the number of available texts and inscriptions) is among the richest of Celtic Europe. Furthermore, the information on Peninsular Celts contained in Classical sources is also much more extensive than that of other European regions, with the exception perhaps of Gaul, and the need to consider differentiated material cultures in the different Peninsular Celtic groups provides an impetus to rethink the significance of material culture itself. Therefore, it is not surprising that studies of Iberian Celtic culture in the last fifteen years can be considered the most ground breaking of all Celtic Europe. We would even go as far as to suggest the Iberian Peninsula provides a vantage point for a renewed vision of the European Celtic world, since we are convinced that currently the views of archaeological Celticism are strongly conditioned by two factors: the geographical-cultural perspective from which analysis is carried out, and the theoretical position of authors. Celts are seen differently in Germany, the United Kingdom or Spain, and in turn, the historical-cultural, processual or radical post-processual paradigms impose different filters for approaching the Celts as a subject of study.

Endnotes

¹ Recently, Lenerz-de Wilde (2000-2001) has returned to this question, and has suggested that the formation of the Celtiberian Culture could be related to the migration of a Celtic population that had links to La Tène culture, as the finds of swords and brooches demonstrate. Nevertheless, the formation of the Celtiberians did not occur owing to mass immigration in the fifth century. The flourishing of the Celtiberian culture in the fifth and fourth centuries was rooted in migratory movement - although small in terms of actual numbers - which led to the formation of a new elite (Lenerz-de Wilde 2000-2001: 347).

² Recently, other authors have re-visited this question with variable results. Manyanós (1999-2000) looked at the question of Peninsular Celticization, and interpreted it as a double process that was focused on the west in relation to the Atlantic Bronze Age, and also on the eastern Meseta, in relation to the infiltration of the Urnfield Cultures, which would then go on to form part of the Celtiberian culture. In this way, Manyanós attempted to harmonize Almagro-Gorbea's theories with those offered by others, including our own, although with slight variations. Arenas (2001-2002) has also broached the issue of the origins of the Celtiberian world, and tried to explain its genesis and evolution in relation to the Mediterranean world.

³ For more on the information provided by Greek and Roman authors about Hispanic Celts, see Tovar (1977) and Koch (1979). A general overview of the literary sources on the Celts can be found in Rankin (1987), Dobesch (1991) and Freeman (1996).

⁴ See Polybius 3, 37, 8-9 and 3, 39, 2; Poseidonius, in Diodorus 5, 35; Strabo 3, 1, 3; 3, 2, 11; 3, 4, 8; 3, 4, 10; 3, 4, 11.

⁵ See the aforementioned bibliography of Burillo (1998) and Lorrio (1997a, 2000) for information regarding the definition of Celtiberia and Celtiberians according to literary sources.

⁶ See Schulten (1952: 139-140); Tovar (1976: 194-195); Maia (1985: 172-176); Pérez Vilatela (1989, 1990, 2000); Berrocal-Rangel (1992); Capalvo (1996: 117-123); etc. for further information about the Celtici of the southwest and south in general.

⁷ Pérez Vilatela (1989, 1990, 1993, 2000) has identified the Lusitanians who participated in the wars of the second century BC as being those who lived to the south of the Tagus River, along with Celtic populations of the southwest, which would explain the almost total lack of references to this people in sources from this period.

⁸ For information about the geographical boundaries of Celtic *Baeturia* and the list of cities identified by Pliny, see García Iglesias (1971), Tovar (1962: 363 ff.), Berrocal-Rangel (1992: 29-72).

⁹ The *cognomina* "Iulia" of some of these peoples reflects, according to Berrocal-Rangel (1992: 36, 50), that the definitive integration of these *oppida* into the Roman legal system must have occurred during Caesar's reign.

¹⁰ However, Untermann (1985a: footnote 15; 2001: 205) has expressed serious doubts about the Celtic nature of this toponym, proposing that it might be a non-Indo-European toponym from the *Basti* or *Urci* form.

¹¹ See Tranoy (1981: 41), Tovar (1989: 124, 136-141), etc. for more on the Celtic character of the populations mentioned by literary sources, and their geographical location.

¹² A general overview, with a wealth of bibliographical references, can be found in works by Villar (1991: 443-466), de Hoz (1993a) and Gorrochategui (1993).

¹³ See Untermann (1983, 1995a-b), de Hoz (1986, 1995), de Bernardo (2002), Jordán (1998), etc.

¹⁴ See de Hoz (1993a: 366-369), for onomastic evidence with full bibliography.

¹⁵ A general overview can be found in Albertos (1983) and Abascal (1994), where the essential bibliography is listed. Also see Albertos (1985, 1987), Villar (1994) or Untermann's study (1996: 121-180) of the onomastics of the Botorrita third Bronze (225 different names in total).

¹⁶ It has been suggested that the names of certain indigenous deities such as *Bandue*, *Reue*, *Quangelus*, *Trebaruna*, *Nabia*, *Arentius* and *Arantia* are specifically Lusitanian, and could be used to define the boundaries with other *populi* (Olivares 2000-2001).

¹⁷ Recently, Almagro-Gorbea (2002 and forthcoming) claimed to have identified the oldest Celtic theonym currently known to us in a graffito found on a piece of pottery dating back to the second quarter of the sixth century BC discovered in Huelva. This would confirm the presence of the Celts in Tartessos.

¹⁸ However, the limited information available on the end of the Bronze Age in the eastern Meseta makes it difficult to assess the influence of this substratum in the formation of the Celtiberian world. Arenas (1999: 246) does not believe that the complex Cogotas population, a characteristic culture of the Late Bronze Age of the Meseta (Fernández-Posse 1986; Castro et al. 1995), or other related cultures, should be placed at the beginning of the Proto-Historical sequence proposed for several parts of Celtiberia, although certain evidence confirms the continuity of these settlements in at least some areas (Lorrio 1997a: 260, Fig. 110).

¹⁹ Nevertheless, Almagro-Gorbea refers to "new people who came from a certain 'cultural off-shoot' of the Urnfield people that stretched to the Ebro valley, who gradually settled in this area in around the ninth or eighth century BC. They formed small groups of farmers whose burial methods are still unknown to us, which prevents us from including them with the Urnfield Cultures or with the Atlantic traditions" (2001: 102).

²⁰ According to Strabo (3, 4, 3), the lands occupied by the Lusitani were bordered by the Atlantic to the west and north, the Tagus River to the south, and the Carpetani (?), Vettones, Vaccaeii and Callaeci to the east. Some authors group the Callaeci in with the Lusitani.

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