



## ***Celtiberians: Problems and Debates***

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### **Abstract**

The Celtiberians are undoubtedly the people from ancient Hispania that have attracted the highest level of interest among scholars within the different disciplines (e.g. archaeologists, linguists, and historians). This critical review of the post-1998 literature on the Celtiberians has been divided into nine sections: the meaning of the word "Celtiberians", the Celtiberian language, the formation of the Celtiberian culture, population, Celtiberian migrations, economy, the study of rituals through an examination of ceramics, mortuary rituals, and Celto-mania and the Celtiberians.

### **Keywords**

Celtiberians, Iberian Peninsula, Celts, Urnfield Culture, Celtiberian language, City-states

## **1. Foreword**

The length of this paper and the diversity of issues it addresses have led reviewers to recommend the inclusion of "a brief indication of the structure of the article and the range and order of coverage". This text presents a critical review of the seminal studies carried out in the last few years about Celtiberians, and addresses the following themes:

1. The word "Celtiberian" has varied in meaning through time. It has been used to signify the "Celts of Iberia" as well as defining the inhabitants of the Central Iberian Mountain Range and its environs.
2. Our present understanding of the language spoken by the Celtiberians has evolved gradually as a result of the on-going discoveries of Celtiberian inscriptions. There is no consensus regarding the origin of the first Celtiberian speakers. Some scholars defend the theory of a cultural penetration through the Pyrenees with the arrival of the Urnfield

people; others associate the first Celtiberian speakers with the Atlantic Bronze Age. A number of scholars have even suggested that the Celtiberian language was Indo-European but not Celtic.

3. Some scholars maintain that there was a continuous process of ethnogenesis, which would push the search for the origins of the Celtiberian culture back to the third millennium BCE. However, the author of this paper is more inclined to focus on the ruptures that mark social and political developments. The emergence of the Celtiberian states gave rise to a new cultural entity, parcelled out in the territory, for there never was a unitary state associated with Celtiberia. Language was a shared element in Celtiberia, although it was spoken in an area larger in size than Celtiberia itself. Another element that set Celtiberians apart from Iberians was a social structure based on lineage, although this eventually expanded through all of the Iberian interior territories.
4. Celtiberian *castros* (hillforts) display a central-street layout that dates to the beginning of the first millennium BCE. The structure of the houses, on the other hand, is characteristic of the historical period. Celtiberian *oppida*, which acted as aristocratic seats and served as the heart of these "city-states", established a settlement hierarchy in the territory. The minting of coins in the Celtiberian language took place in the same period as the Roman invasion.
5. Some scholars believe that there were a series of Celtiberian migrations, first to Celtic Baeturia (in the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula) around the second century BCE and later to Carpetania (in the mid Tajo River basin) and Aquitania during the first half of the first century BCE (after the Sertorian Wars).
6. Peasant communities with a farming type of economy inhabited the hillforts. The *oppidum* of Segeda, described in this paper, is a good example. The bronze plaque of Contrebia Belaisca demonstrates the construction of long water canals as well as the existence of an irrigation system. Stockbreeding was an important activity, although there was no transhumance. Recent archaeological analyses provide us with a better knowledge of the nutritional diet of the Celtiberian populations. There was a significant increase in iron mining, which took on industrial characteristics at the end of the second century BCE. Silver also was extracted from the Celtiberian territory. Metrological studies confirm the existence of a weight unit of 15 grams with multiples of 450 grams.
7. Based on pottery analysis we suggest the existence among the Celtiberians of a libation ritual that played an important role in the consolidation of relations within extended family groups. A true agricultural colonisation was fostered by the governors of the city-states.
8. Recent excavations of necropoli have provided us with a better understanding of the cremation ritual practiced in the area during this time. There is no reliable evidence indicating that Celtiberians carried out human sacrifices.
9. Celtiberians have not been immune to modern re-interpretations: they have been

incorporated into the Celto-mania phenomenon of contemporary society, in certain cases combined with worrying neo-Nazi ideologies.

## 2. Introduction

The term "Celtiberian" is one of a number of compound words from antiquity (e.g. Celto-Ligurian, Lybian-Phoenician, Indo-Scythian, etc.) that arose as a definition of certain peoples who, according to external observers (usually Greek), displayed a set of ethnic characteristics that differed from those described by the individual terms comprising their names. For instance, the Hellenic-Galatae were considered Gauls in Greek territory. However, there is a dual interpretation in the case of the Celtiberians. Based on data from Poseidonius, Diodorus (*Hist. Univ.*, 5, 33, 38) defined them as a racial combination of Iberians and Celts. This opinion was shared by Marcial of Bilbilis (L, X, *Ep.* 65), who considered himself a son of Celts and Iberians. On the other hand, Appian (*Iber.* 2) affirmed that Celtiberians were Celts who had settled among the Iberians. This latter opinion was shared by Strabo (III, 4, 5), who made a reference to "the Celts who now call themselves Celtiberians and Berones". These "Celtiberians", along with the "Celts" of the Iberian Peninsula, have been termed "Hispanic-Celts" by Javier de Hoz (1988) (Fig.1).



Figure 1. Celtiberians and other ethnic groups of the Iberian Peninsula in the second century BCE (after F. Burillo 1998: Fig. 1).

The study of the Celtiberians demands an inter-disciplinary approach based on data obtained from linguistic, archaeological, and documentary sources. In the early twentieth century, nonetheless, historicist theories - first and most fervently defended by P. Bosch Gimpera (1921) - maintained that race, peoples, language, and archaeological culture were bounded and binding phenomena. This approach meant that cultural changes within a territory could be understood only in terms of invasions. During the 1970s, invasionist theories ceased to be the only explanation for the formation of the Celtiberians. Today, interdisciplinary studies are indeed still in use, although the disparity of information provided by the sources from which each discipline draws, compounded by their different chronologies, disciplinary particularities, and dissimilar theoretical frameworks, account for the lack of consensus among the different scholars involved in the study of these peoples.

The abandonment of the notion that language is irrevocably bound to culture in social formations has led to the emergence of a more cautious approach to the interrelation of different forms of data - even among the scholars who are most pessimistic with regard to the methodology - by underscoring the particular individual characteristics of each discipline and the absolute requirement of a temporal correspondence in the sources used. This was the case, for instance, with the Celtiberian language during the first and second centuries BCE - a period that allows for the precise data of Greco-Roman writers to be combined with the information from archaeological sites. On the other hand, the information available for earlier periods derives exclusively from the archaeological record. Despite this difficulty, there is a common awareness among linguists, archaeologists, and historians that we are studying different manifestations of the same human group, and are therefore required to seek converging points in understanding Celtiberian communities and their formative processes.

The following pages contain an outline of some of the aspects that I regard as being most noteworthy in the study of the Celtiberians throughout these past few years. The two publications considered especially significant in this field appeared in the late 1990s. These are Alberto J. Lorrio's doctoral thesis (*Los Celtíberos*), published in 1997, which provides an insight into the culture of the Celtiberians, and F. Burillo's book *Celtíberos: Etnias y estados*, in which the historical processes of these peoples (particularly during the later stages) are analysed.

### **3. Celtiberia: One Word with Diverse Meanings**



The first references to Celtiberia date to the end of the third century BCE and mention a vast, indefinite territory - a vague region in the Iberian Peninsula's hinterland. During this stage, Celtiberians were referred to as the "Celts of Iberia", thus being distinguished from other Celtic groups such the Gauls. Nonetheless, Pérez Vilatela (1999: 52) has suggested that these Celtiberians should be identified as the Galatae of the Iberian Peninsula, as mentioned by Erastothenes of Cyrene in the third and second centuries BCE (Fig. 3).

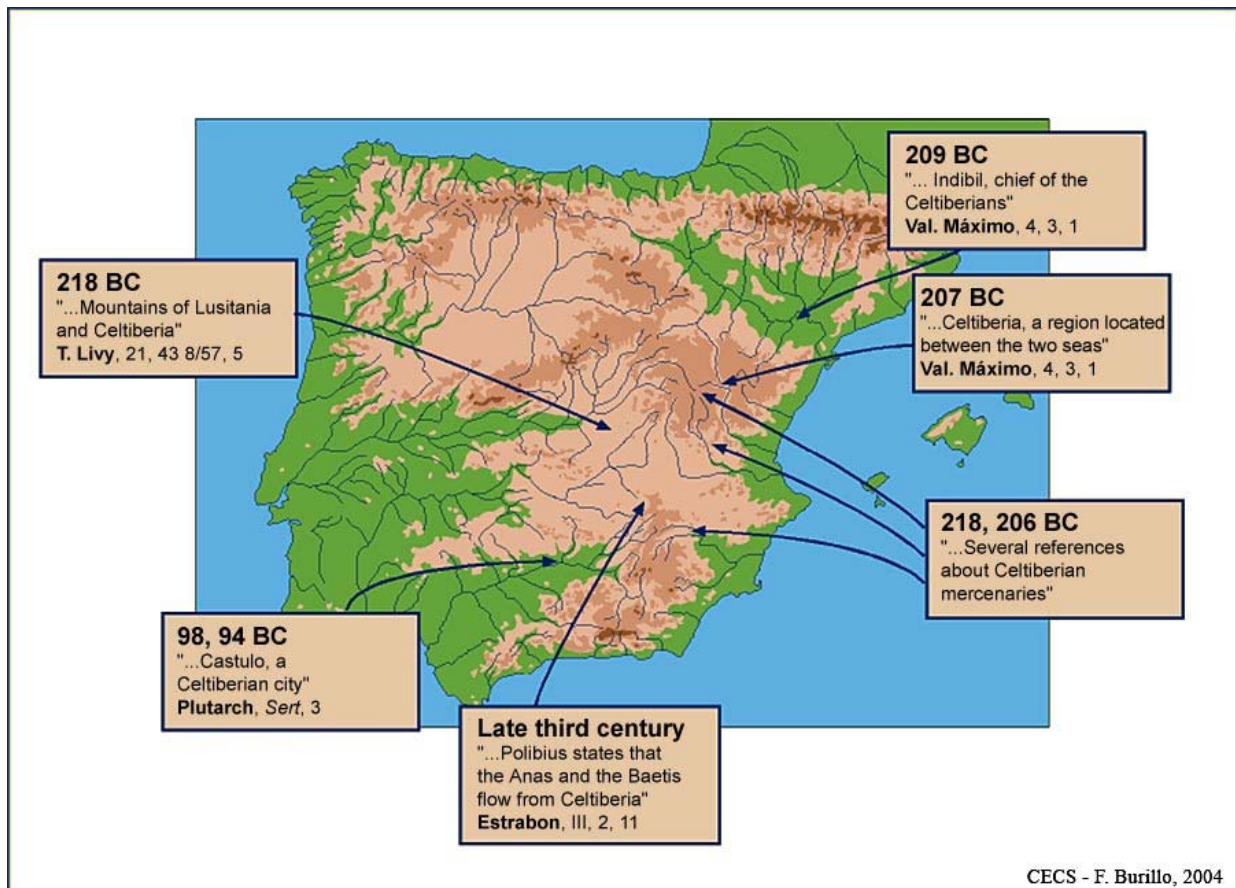


Figure 3. Classical authors' generic understanding of the Celtiberians (after F. Burillo 1998: Fig. 3).

The progress of the Roman conquest significantly reduced the area of the territory referred to as Celtiberia, so that by the mid-second century BCE it was already limited to the Central Iberian Mountain Range and its immediate environs (Fig. 4). Thus, the inhabitants of this region (i.e. the Celtiberians) became detached from other Celtic groups of the Iberian Peninsula, such as the Celts.

The geographical division of Celtiberia into two areas (i.e. Citerior and Ulterior) based on Livy's reference (40, 39) of 180 BCE, has been generally accepted by scholars focusing on the study of Celtiberia. Thus, Celtiberia Citerior is identified as the territory of the Iberian Mountain

Range bordering the Valley of the Ebro River, and Celtiberia Ulterior with the Iberian Mountain Range territory bordering the Duero River. In response to this approach, Alvaro Capalvo (1993) adopts a literal interpretation of the Classical sources and maintains that the area of Celtiberia Ulterior (or Final Celtiberia) is to be found in fact in Andalucía, as Arbois de Jubainville already affirmed in 1893. This suggestion seems to lack any corroboration or refutation by other historians of antiquity, although Pilar Ciprés (1993: 283-285) rebuffs it and defends the more traditional interpretation.

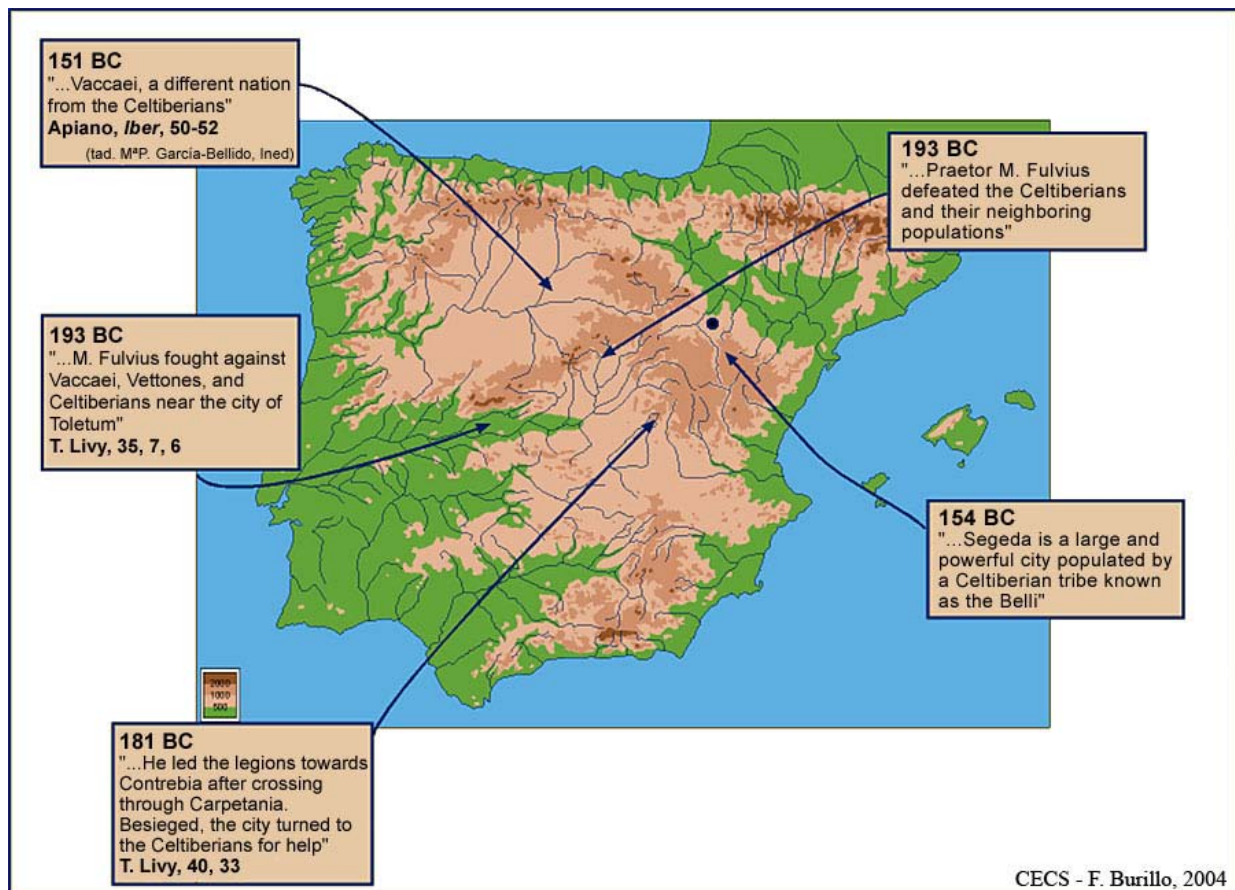


Figure 4. Classical authors' restrictive understanding of the Celtiberians (after F. Burillo 1998: Fig. 4).

In the third book of his *Geographia* Strabo focuses on the Iberian Peninsula, thus providing us with one of the most important documents for the study of Celtiberia as well as precise information regarding its geographical boundaries. This author affirms that Celtiberia was divided into four areas.

One of the most analysed issues of the last few years has been Strabo's four part division of Celtiberia. The Classical interpretations take us back to Causabon's portrayal, in which only two of the four component areas of Celtiberia are identified (i.e. the Arevaci and the Lusones),

reconstructing the other two parts with data derived from other Classical authors and choosing between the names of Pelendones, Belli and Titti (García y Bellido 1945; Schulten 1952). However, Luciano Pérez Vilatela (1989-90) has pointed out that the third part would consist of undefined Celtiberians, reconstructed from the information found in Pompey's texts, in which they are linked to the cities of Segobriga and Bilbilis. The fourth part would be composed of an amalgamation of Celtiberians and Vaccaeii, whose cities would have been Segesama and Intercantia. Alvaro Capalvo (1995), on the other hand, asserts that he can identify in Strabo's texts the name of each of the four parts of Celtiberia: namely Cratistos, Uracos, Lusones, and Arvacti (or Arevaci). Marcos García Quintela (1995) accepts the traditional interpretation of Strabo's text (which demonstrates that other authors recognise a fifth division in Celtiberia), and believes that this fifth area is to be located, along with other Celtic territories, in the central region referred to by Ptolemy as Mediolon.

### 3.1. Vaccaeii and Celtiberians

"Vaccaeans" is the name given to a pre-Roman ethnic group located in the mid Duero River basin. One of the current scholarly debates concerns the association of the Vaccaeii with the Celtiberians. Three distinct standpoints can be currently recognised with regard to this issue. The first regards the Vaccaeii as a component of the Celtiberian ethnic group, thus recognising a Celtiberian cultural unity that extends throughout the entire Duero River basin. The second position maintains that the eastern Celtiberians should not really be considered as such, for they stand in fact as the division of the central area of Celtiberia into the Duero River basin area and the Tajo River basin area. The third point of view, which is the one I subscribe to, considers Celtiberians as distinct from the Vaccaeii, thus conceptualizing Celtiberia as an area that encompasses the Central Iberian Mountain Range and the limits of the sedimentary basins of the Ebro, Duero, and Tajo Rivers.

Pilar Ciprés's (1999) analysis of Strabo's work has identified a selective and interpretive process in the author's portrayals of "Celtiberia" based on the opinion of different authors in antiquity. Thus, one can recognise references to a generic Celtiberia in the first historical sources, followed by references to a more defined and concrete Celtiberia during the Roman conquest. However, Celtiberians are also identified as the powerful unit of peoples composed of Vaccaeii and Celtiberians who confronted Rome. It is because of this that Strabo lists a selection of the cities that played a significant role in the Civil Wars and the wars of the Roman conquest.



Notwithstanding, there is only one source in the Classical texts that would allow us to confirm an ethnic link between the Vaccaei and the Celtiberians - that of Appian (*Iber.* 50- 52) in reference to the events of 151 BCE, which is most often translated as "the Vaccaei, Celtiberian peoples, neighbours of the Arevaci". Federico Wattenberg (1959), who was later followed by the School of Salamanca (Martín Valls and Esparza Arroyo 1992), made use of this quote to defend the notion of an upper Meseta (High Plateau) with a Celtiberian archaeological uniformity that spread through the entire Duero River basin.

The second theory is defended exclusively by José María Gómez Fraile (1997; 1998; 1999; 2001) in his doctoral thesis *Los Celtas en los valles altos del Duero y del Ebro*. Based on the interpretation of Classical texts, he associates Celtiberia with the central region of the Tajo and Duero River basins, thus excluding the eastern area of the Central Iberian Mountain Range, where cities such as Bilbilis, Contrebia Belaisca, and Segeda are located.

I personally subscribe to M<sup>a</sup>. Paz García-Bellido's (1998) interpretation of the above-mentioned quote: i.e. "the Vaccaei, a nation different from that of the Celtiberians", thus putting the text in line with the rest of the known Greco-Roman sources, which draw a distinction between Celtiberians and Vaccaei and locate the historical Celtiberia within the Central Iberian Mountain Range.

#### **4. The Celtiberian Language**

Since the nineteenth century, linguists have characterised Celtic languages as a group as archaic, peripheral Indo-European languages. However, in the case of the Celtiberian language, it was only in 1973 - when the first bronze plaque found in the Celtiberian city of Contrebia Belaisca, in Botorrita (Zaragoza), was published - that the international community acknowledged the Celtic nature of these epigraphs, some of which had been documented long before in the Iberian Peninsula (Gómez Moreno 1949; Tovar 1961). The distribution rates and characteristics of these texts demonstrate that the peoples who settled in the so-called historic Celtiberia spoke a language that belonged to the Celtic group, and which, as a result of its geographic location, has come to be known as the Celtiberian language (Untermann 1997; Jordán 1998). This is in fact the only pre-Roman language from the Iberian Peninsula that linguists on the whole have considered Celtic (De Hoz 1993; Gorrochategui 1996; Tovar 1985; Villar 1991, 1995), for only Jürgen Untermann (1995) defends the ascription of Lusitanian to the Celtic

group.

The traditional classification of the Celtic languages is based on the evolution of the hypothetical Indo-European phoneme  $*k^w$ , which has remained in Gaelic as the Celtic  $K^w$  western group and evolved in Gaulish and Breton into  $P$ , thus giving rise to the so-called eastern group. However, this classification is no longer valid due to the advent of a more recent and profound understanding of the two most ancient Celtic languages - Celtiberian (which would be included in the former category), and Lepontic (included in the latter). One of the several archaic characteristics shared by both languages is the syntactic order, which is similar to Lepontic, i.e. (S)ubject, (O)bject, (V)erb (Schmidt 1993) (Fig. 5).

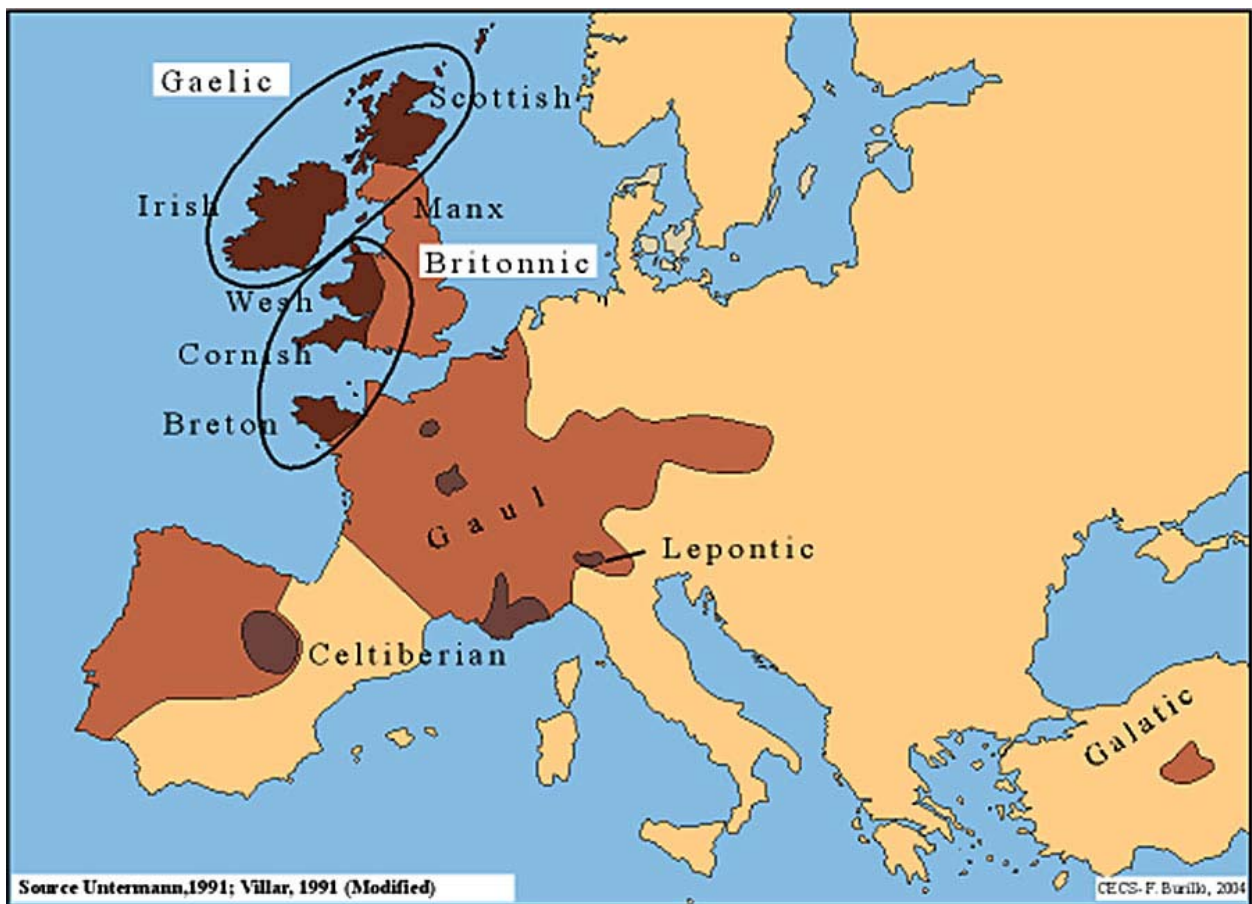


Figure 5. Distribution of the Celtic languages (after F. Burillo 1998: Fig. 35).

Whether Celtiberian displayed a linguistic uniformity or not is an issue that requires further investigation. In the Middle Ebro River valley, the Celtiberian language converged with the Iberian language, giving rise to a middle ground that could be described as bilingual (Burillo 1998: 128). Certain linguistic particularities have been identified within the Celtiberian sector of

this territory and appear to qualify as dialectic features. Hence, the Berones seem to have spoken a form of Celtiberian that differed in certain ways from the form spoken by the Belli, as reflected in the different uses of the desinences "-kos / -kom" found on the coinage inscriptions of their cities and - as pointed out by Untermann - the different endings of the singular genitive "-es/-os".

The use of nasal elements in the Celtiberian script is a different issue, however. Traditionally, scholars have interpreted the dissimilarities in this feature as a geographical variation, dividing Celtiberia into an eastern and a western territory. However, de Hoz (1986: 53) has maintained that this variation is based in fact on a chronological difference. This has been confirmed by J. Rodríguez Ramos (1997), who argues that the dispersion of this linguistic trait is based on temporal rather than spatial coordinates.

The first written form of the Celtiberian language originated during the first quarter of the second century BCE and eventually gave rise to the Luzaga (or occidental) type of sign system. The Botorrita (or eastern) type is not related to the previous Celtiberian script but to the more modern Iberian script of the Levante region. Its origin dates back to the second half of the second century BCE. Nonetheless, a number of scholars still defend the theory of a geographic basis for this Celtiberian linguistic variation. Xavier Ballester (1999: 260), for instance, identifies the advent of writing in the territory of the Berones as taking place in the later stages, thus equating the Berones to the Numantians in this respect. The origin of these traditional misconceptions - linking the differences in the Celtiberian sign system with spatial rather than temporal variations - is to be found in the interpretation of the Luzaga text, which constitutes the basis of the eastern-model theory and is often considered only in terms of the location of its retrieval. In any case, the reference "*arekoratikubos*", which starts the text, completely rules out any possibility that the document could have been written in the city of Arekoratas, whose location still remains unknown but should probably be sought in the territory of the Ebro River valley somewhere between Segeda and Calagurris - two cities with which Arekoratas shared the first minting of Celtiberian coins.

#### 4.1. The Urnfield Culture peoples and the Celtiberian language

When, how, and through which areas did the Indo-European language enter the Iberian Peninsula, eventually giving rise to the Celtiberian language? These are the questions that have set the agenda for an important part of the linguistic investigation. The most plausible theory suggests that the Indo-European language arrived with the Urnfield Culture peoples, who,

originating from Central Europe, started crossing the Pyrenees towards the end of the second millennium BCE. Javier de Hoz (1997) distinguishes three stages:

1. Common Celtic displays a series of eastern linguistic characteristics. Hence, given the historical dates of other languages belonging to this Indo-European linguistic group of the circum-Pontic territory, the emergence of proto-Celtic speakers must have taken place in eastern Europe ca. 2000 BCE.
2. At least by 1500 BCE, the above-mentioned proto-Celts had settled in a relatively western position within Europe and were in contact with proto-Germanic and proto-Italic speakers.
3. Lepontic constitutes the oldest written example of a Celtic language (dated to the sixth century BCE and linked to the Golasecca culture). Hence, its divergence from other languages such as Celtiberian (which displays even more archaic features), or Gaulish (with clear signs of linguistic transformations), must have taken place before this (De Hoz 1992). The ascription of the Golasecca culture to the Urnfield Culture and its presence in the above-mentioned territory north of the Alps as of 1200 BCE leads us to identify this date as the point of divergence between Lepontic and the remaining Celtic languages. Despite the fact that Javier de Hoz points out that this does not necessarily imply that all the Urnfield Culture groups spoke Celtic-type languages, the interpretation of this picture appears to indicate that the Celtiberian language diverged ca. 1200 BCE, sharing cultural links with the Urnfield Culture people.

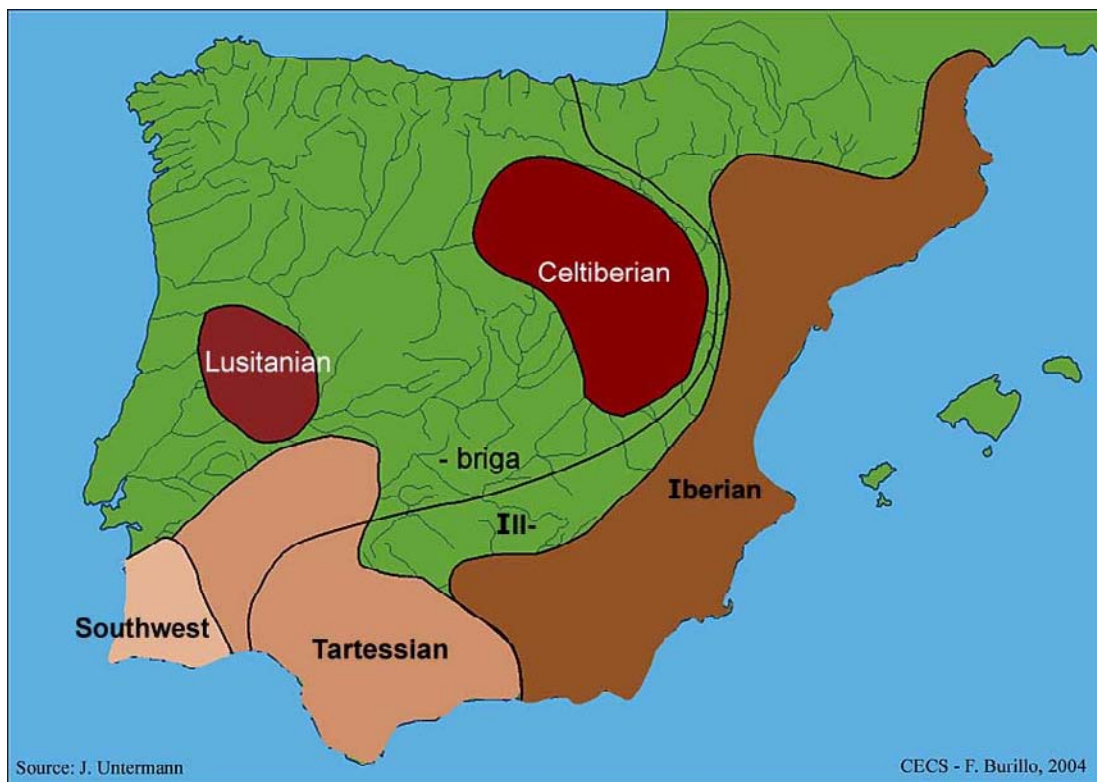


Figure 6. Distribution of inscriptions in indigenous languages on the Iberian Peninsula (after Untermann 1997).

The Indo-European specialist Patrizia de Bernardo (2002) defends the existence of a "Common Hispanic Celtic" language, uniform and very ancient, which spread through much of the Iberian Peninsula during its initial stage. The distribution area of this language was reduced at a later stage and it developed in a central territory of the peninsula - Celtiberia. The more peripheral territories preserved a set of archaic linguistic forms that would gradually give rise to several Celtic nuclei of diverse forms and intensities during different periods. Eventually, these nuclei would receive linguistic influences of migrating Celtiberians as well as other Celtic elements. Patrizia de Bernardo thus identifies the Urnfield Culture as the origin of Celtic languages in the Iberian Peninsula, regarding the arrival of a single nucleus of Celtic-speaking people as sufficient to account for all dialectic variants. In order to account for the absence of Celtic languages in the northeast of the Peninsula during the historical period, the author follows Javier de Hoz, who suggests that all Celtic languages in the area were eradicated by the exposure to non-Indo-European stimuli (namely Iberian cultural elements).

#### 4.2. Other suggestions for the origin of the Celtiberian language

Jürgen Untermann (1995) does not agree with the idea of an early Indo-Europeanisation process in the Iberian Peninsula, as presented by Colin Renfrew (1987) and Francisco Villar (2000, 2001). According to Untermann, all the linguistic evidence of the Indo-European type found in the Iberian Peninsula (i.e. ancient European hydronyms, Lusitanian, and Celtiberian) arrived with the Celtic languages, which can be traced back to an origin located somewhere in Central Europe. The author admits the lack of sufficiently robust evidence to identify an absolute date for their adoption into the Iberian Peninsula, although this process must have taken place after the Neolithic expansion described by Colin Renfrew. However, this approach is not entirely consistent with the more traditional interpretation (which associates the presence of Celtic languages with the Urnfield Culture incursions), for there is no trace of the latter's presence in the Ebro River valley during the historical period.

As an alternative, Untermann suggests three hypotheses:

1. The importers of the Celtic languages might have been small groups of people who did not leave any traces in Aquitania. However, this seems to conflict with the large distribution area of the Celtic languages in the Iberian Peninsula and with the languages' complexity and heterogeneity.
2. There might have been a preliminary continuity of the Celtic territory through which non-Indo-European languages would later spread. This approach would lead us to

abandon the view of Basques as direct descendants of an autochthonous population.

3. The third view is considered by Untermann as the most plausible, and coincides with archaeological evidence put forward by M<sup>a</sup>. Luisa Ruiz-Gálvez (1998: *passim*). It suggests that the Celticisation process of the Iberian Peninsula resulted from the influence of people who arrived via the Atlantic Ocean in an area located between French Brittany and the mouth of the River Garona, finally settling along the Galician and Cantabrian coast.

#### 4.3. Celtiberian: A non-Celtic Indo-European language?

The city of Contrebia Belaisca is the site that has yielded (and indeed is still yielding) the longest Celtiberian texts. The publication of the third bronze plaque found there, for instance, has resulted in a review of many of the basic concepts that constitute our knowledge of the Celtiberian language. Jürgen Untermann points out the existence of Celtiberian phonetic and morphological features that bring the language closer to Italic, such as the ablative ending in *-o-*, which is characteristic of standard Indo-European but nonexistent in the Celtic languages. This leads him to suggest that "as indicated by the new evidence and discoveries, we must decide whether Celtiberian ought to be excluded from the Celtic-language type and linked, for instance, with Italic tongues, or whether the notion of proto-Celtic as thought in comparative linguistics is in need of a fundamental revision" (1999: 648).

Francisco Villar is of a similar opinion with regard to reviewing our traditional understanding of common Celtic and points out new elements of the Celtiberian language that are not found in other Celtic tongues, such as the voicing of the */s/* in an intervocalic position and the sonant-consonant-vowel context. Nonetheless, his interpretation of these variations differs from those of Untermann. Villar defends an unusual understanding of the Indo-Europeanisation process in the Iberian Peninsula and emphasises that "the characteristics that appear to link Celtiberian with Italic but are not present in other Celtic languages have two causes: the influence exercised by an Indo-European Italic-type substratum that preceded Celtiberian, and the language that affected and coexisted with Celtiberian until the Roman period" (2000: 430). McCone (2001) identifies links between Celtiberian and Italic in the declension forms, but considers that none of the already known phenomena are capable of demonstrating that Celtiberian diverged from common Celtic at a particularly early stage. Still, the author offers a hypothetical genealogical tree in which Celtiberian is portrayed as the first language to diverge from common Celtic. Undoubtedly, the publication of the fourth bronze plaque of Botorrita

(Villar 2001) and other minor Celtiberian texts (Almagro-Gorbea 2003) have stirred new reflections among linguists with regard to these issues.

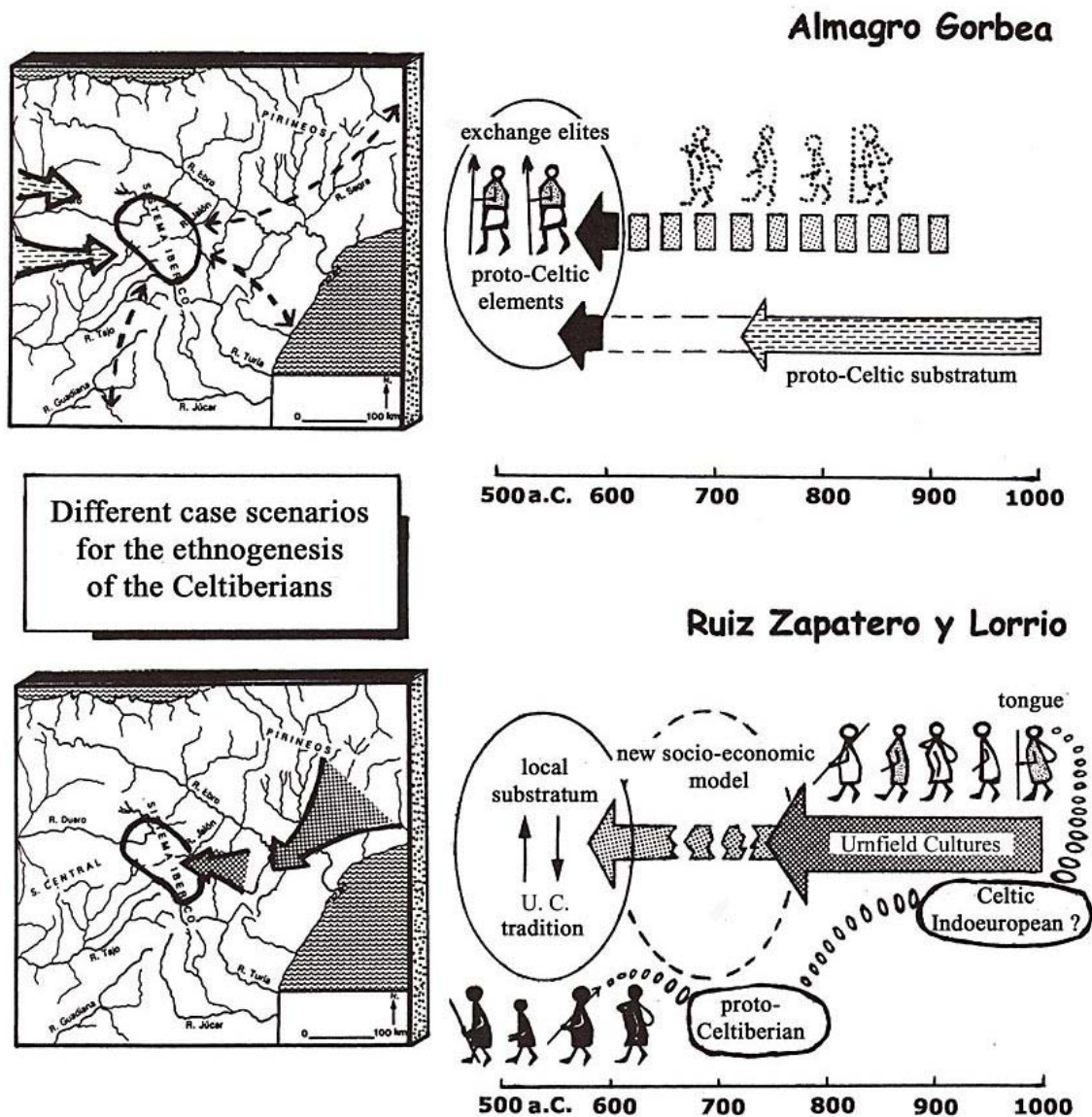
## **5. The Formation of the Celtiberian Culture**

Until the 1970s, archaeologists defended the Celtic factor as the only element in the cultural formation of the Celtiberians. The presence of Celts in the Iberian Peninsula was accounted for by reformulating the invasionist theory developed by Pedro Bosch Gimpera (1932). There was a general consensus regarding the Celts' arrival through the Pyrenees and the only sources of disagreement revolved around the precise mountain pass through which they entered the peninsula and the number of incursions (or cultural waves) that could be recognised. The existence, nature, and boundaries of certain cultural groups were directly extrapolated from the archaeological evidence. The Tumulus Culture, for instance, was characterised by the use of tumuli, of incised pottery and the subsistence strategy practiced was pastoralism. On the other hand, the Urnfield Culture, an agricultural society that buried their people in urns, could be identified by their grooved pottery. From a linguistic standpoint, the origin of the Celtiberian language was linked, as we have seen, to the arrival of the Celts.

However, the new theoretical perspectives coincided with the realisation that incised pottery originated from within the Iberian Peninsula (Arteaga and Molina 1977). This implied the deconstruction of the most characteristic feature of the Tumulus culture as well as the most important aspect of the ancient Celtic elements of the *Meseta* (the high plateau in the mid Duero River basin), so that the Urnfield Culture people were defined as the only archaeological evidence for the Celtic presence in the peninsula. This Celtic presence was conceived as the result of small-scale incursions that started taking place between 1100 and 900 BCE, evolving later at an autochthonous level and giving rise to the regional differences that were previously explained in terms of the arrival of different ethnic groups (Almagro-Gorbea 1975; Ruiz Zapatero 1985).

Towards the end of the 1980s, scholars of the Universidad Complutense School developed a theory that emphasised the influence of the indigenous substratum in the *Meseta*. According to this position, the indigenous substratum assimilated various external elements during its evolution (particularly from the Urnfield Culture people) until the formation of the Celtiberian world (Almagro-Gorbea 1986-87; Lorrio 1999a; Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1988).

The traditional Urnfield Culture theory is still in use today, although new suggestions - such as incursions from the Atlantic (Alberro 2002, 2003, 2004), or the concept of relations with Iberian peoples during the creation of the Celtiberian culture - have emerged as well. In any case, an underlying urge to discover a nonexistent primordial origin can often be recognised in many of these theories, as if the subject matter consisted of a biological birth rather than the development of a complex sociocultural unit. The solution is to be found instead in the study of the historical process.



Source: G. Ruiz Zapatero and A. Lorrio, 1999, fig 5

Figure 7. Different scenarios for the ethnogenesis of the Celtiberians (after G. Ruiz Zapatero and A. Lorrio 1999: Fig. 5).



## 5.1. The Celtiberians and the Urnfield Culture

The traditional theories linking the emergence of Celtiberian peoples with the Urnfield Culture incursions are defended mainly by Gonzalo Ruiz Zapatero and Alberto Lorrio (1999).

Their principal arguments can be outlined in three points:

1. The presence of the Urnfield Culture in the Celtiberian territory. Jesús Arenas's studies (1999a, 1999b) on the territory of Molina de Aragón have revived the presence of grooved pottery as an indicator of small "colonial" incursions originating in the Ebro River valley during the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. The indigenous substratum played an active role, as evidenced by the permanence of certain traditions such as the pottery with Boquique-type decoration, which leads Zapatero and Lorrio to assert that it is from this interaction that the ancient Celtiberian sphere emerged (1999).
2. The continuity of the Celtiberian complex from the sixth century BCE until the historical period. Martín Almagro-Gorbea (1986) was one of the first to recognise and defend the continuity evidenced in the archaeological record of the Celtiberian culture throughout this vast period of time, particularly with regard to mortuary ritual and weaponry. It is based on this evidence that Gonzalo Ruiz Zapatero and Alberto Lorrio (1988) point out the existence of a preliminary "proto-Celtiberian" stage in the high mountain ranges of the Jalón, Duero and Tajo Rivers, followed by the "Prehistoric Celtiberian" or "Ancient Celtiberian" stage.

They identify the pottery and metallurgic traditions, a characteristic weapon type, the habitation in *castros* (hillforts), funerary rituals (despite a relative diversity), and economic organisation as basic elements that can be used to distinguish the Celtiberian cultural unit around the sixth century BCE. The authors conclude in a bold way that we are thus dealing with a group of [ancient Celtiberians] with a cultural, ethnic, and linguistic identity that is firmly established as part of their essential features. Nonetheless, in light of an analysis of the historical process based on social - rather than cultural - indicators, it would seem inappropriate to consider Celtiberians as such before the emergence of actual Celtiberian city-states (Burillo and Ortega 1999).

3. The expansion of the Celtiberians from a nuclear area. Gonzalo Ruiz Zapatero and Alberto Lorrio (1988) subscribe to the views of those who defend the existence of a Nuclear Celtiberia, located in the high mountain ranges of the Jalón, Duero, and Tajo Rivers. According to this argument/model, the expansion towards the Middle Ebro River valley and the limits of the Tajo River's sedimentary basin originated in this area, giving rise to the consolidation of the Historic Celtiberia referred to by Classical authors during the High Imperial Period. The authors accept Ignacio Royo's (1990) suggestion that this expansion must have taken place during a late stage (as indicated by the cultural solidity and marked conservativeness of the Late Urnfield Culture people of the Ebro River's right bank) and can be tentatively dated to 350 BCE or even later. In my opinion, though, there is a lack of evidence to substantiate this

hypothetical expansion.

4. On the other hand, basing her argument on normative cultural historical criteria, Majolie Lenerz-de Wilde offers a synthesis of her book *Iberia Céltica* (1991) in the article *Los Celtas en Celtiberia* (2001). The author analyses the presence of swords, fibulae, and La Tène I brooches in a number of necropolis burials of the Celtiberian territory, and claims that the origin of these artefacts does not arise as a result of trade, gifts or contact with mercenaries, identifying them instead as "armament and elements of clothing of a group of people who originated in Central Europe" (Lenerz-de Wilde 2001: 329). Lenerz-de Wilde maintains that these people arrived in the fifth century BCE and makes use of this axiom to account for the emergence of the Celtiberian culture, the art of metalwork, and the formation of a new local elite. I am of the opinion that there is no archaeological evidence to corroborate this suggestion.

## 5.2. Celtiberians, Atlantic Bronze Age, and the Cogotas culture

M<sup>a</sup> Luisa Ruiz-Gálvez's (1990, 1997, 1998) work on the Atlantic Bronze Age of the western Iberian Peninsula's leads her to defend the existence of stable maritime contact among Atlantic coastal populations in the past. According to this author, one of the effects of this activity was the infiltration of Indo-European languages through that area into the peninsula. Since there is insufficient archaeological evidence to demonstrate the existence of large-scale migrations, Ruiz Gálvez concludes that these social and commercial relations continued for a long period of time, mediated by the use of Indo-European. The author draws on the interpretation of the archaeological record to point out that the periods of most intense activity took place during the Chalcolithic/early Bronze Age and the late Bronze Age. According to this view, the language spread from the peninsula's Atlantic coast to the western *Meseta*, giving rise in this area to the Celtiberian language as identified in the historical period.

Although Martín Almagro-Gorbea has stood out as a keen defender of the Iberian Peninsula's Celticisation as a result of incursions through the Pyrenees, he developed a new suggestion during the 1990s based on what he termed "cumulative Celticity" (Almagro-Gorbea 1993a, 1993b, 1997). Almagro-Gorbea's approach revolves around a fundamental fact, which is that a large proportion of the north eastern territory of the peninsula (where the so-called Urnfield Culture developed) was populated by Iberian language speakers during the historical period, so that the Celtiberian language is portrayed as being isolated from the Celtic languages that developed in France and northern Italy. He identifies a proto-Celtic substratum that was in existence during the second millennium BCE in the *Meseta*, constituting the culture known as Cogotas I. This substratum emerged from an Indo-European ideological base that arrived via the

Atlantic during the Bronze Age and would eventually assimilate a variety of elements from the Urnfield Culture, the proto-Tartessian sphere, and later the Iberian sphere. This, according to the author, gave rise to a proto-Celtic substratum in the Celtiberian nuclear area, spreading the Celtic manifestations mentioned by the written sources to the rest of the peninsula. However, this suggestion has been the subject of a number of critiques (Arenas 1999b: 195; Burillo 1998: 109; Ruiz Zapatero and Lorrio 1999: 34).

### 5.3. Emphasising the Iberians

Jesús Arenas (1999a, 1999b) maintains that the only fact that could allow us to defend the notion of Celtiberians as Celtic comes from the third century BCE, when epigraphic evidence corroborates the existence of a Celtic language in the Iberian Mountain Range. Nonetheless, this author affirms that the contacts with the rest of Europe must have taken place earlier than is often assumed (although he does not specify the date or the manner in which this language reached the peninsula).

Based on a strictly archaeological analysis, Arenas underscores the dissimilarity of the Celtiberian culture to the traditional archaeological concept of Celticity based on the Gallic La Tène culture, owing to the irregularities found in aspects as diverse as weaponry or mortuary rituals. He deconstructs the emphasis given to the role of the Cogotas I phase and reduces the indigenous substratum to a set of itinerant peoples during the late Bronze Age. The seventh century BCE marked the emergence of cremation necropoli and the end of the sedentarization process in higher-altitude towns. The author points out that the Urnfield Culture people were not the only possible source of influence with regard to the adoption of cremation rituals. In fact, he shares with Alfredo González Prats (2002) the view that other sources also played an important role, including the Mediterranean area as well as local processes that were already taking place within the peninsula itself. He stresses the fact that these and other elements reflect the emergence of the archaic Celtiberian culture and the existence of relations with the paleo-Iberic sphere of the Levante region. The presence of Semitic colonisers and the demand for metallurgical and cattle products from the interior of the mountain range area are presented as the motivating factors for this development. Nonetheless, the colonial influences of the Greeks and Phoenicians have been studied in areas close to the Levante region, such as Lower Aragón, revealing the arrival of imports and the subsequent social and cultural transformations in the area (Ruiz Zapatero 1983-84) - a process that did not occur in the interior of the Iberian mountain

region.

#### 5.4. Historical processes as the object of study in the development of Celtiberian peoples

So-called historic Celtiberia is defined in modern historiography as the geographic territory referred to by that name during the second half of the second century BCE as a result of the Roman intervention in the Central Iberian mountain region and its environs. In the interpretation of this issue, Strabo's text (I, 2, 27) remains valid and particularly enlightening: "I say that, due to the fact that the Greeks called all areas known to the north by the same name (i.e. Scythians or Nomads), like Homer, and later did the same thing with the people who were discovered to the west, calling them Celts and Iberians, or composite names such as Celtiberians and Celto-Scythians (referring to different peoples by the same name as a result of ignorance), all regions to the south, close to the ocean, came to be known as Ethiopia".

There never was a Celtiberian state - not even a Belli or an Arevaci state. What Classical sources reveal and archaeology confirms with regard to the historical period is the existence of a territory that was politically atomized into various city-states. This absence of a Celtiberian political unity explains the lack of a development of identity processes that could have been reflected in specific aspects of the material culture or settlement patterns and might be used today to identify a Celtiberian phase through the interpretation of the archaeological record. Needless to say, material culture will be of even less use in understanding these peoples' previous historical phases, given that it has not been demonstrated to belong exclusively to a group of people with a common political base, so that the distribution of material culture is only indicative of cultural, social or economic relations. Hence, we must reject the use of certain elements (e.g. the hooked belt buckles that have been wrongly interpreted as Celtic, biglobular daggers, La Tène fibulae, horse fibulae, etc.) as identifiers of a Celtiberian essence (Lorrio 1999b), of Celtiberian territory (Lorrio 1999b), or related groups (Manyanós 1999; Olaria and Manyanós 1999).

The process of the Celtiberian conquest and assimilation caused the spread of writing, the development of coinage and the production of other written texts (Beltrán 1995). This implied the emergence of a language with Indo-European affiliations (therefore clearly distinct from the Iberian language), the establishment of traditions as characteristic as the *hospitium* pacts (which are known through the *tesserae* or incised plaques), and the continued existence of extended family groups (which are not found in the Iberian area, either). However, neither the spread of

the Celtiberian language nor these socio-cultural structures were restricted to historic Celtiberia, for their existence has been documented in other areas of the peninsula's hinterland. Hence, the boundaries of the Celtiberian language can only be identified in the area of contact with the Iberian language through the data provided by preserved epigraphic evidence. In this case, the studies that have been carried out demonstrate that there was no frontier, but rather a vast zone of contact - a true bilingual territory (Burillo 1998: 128).

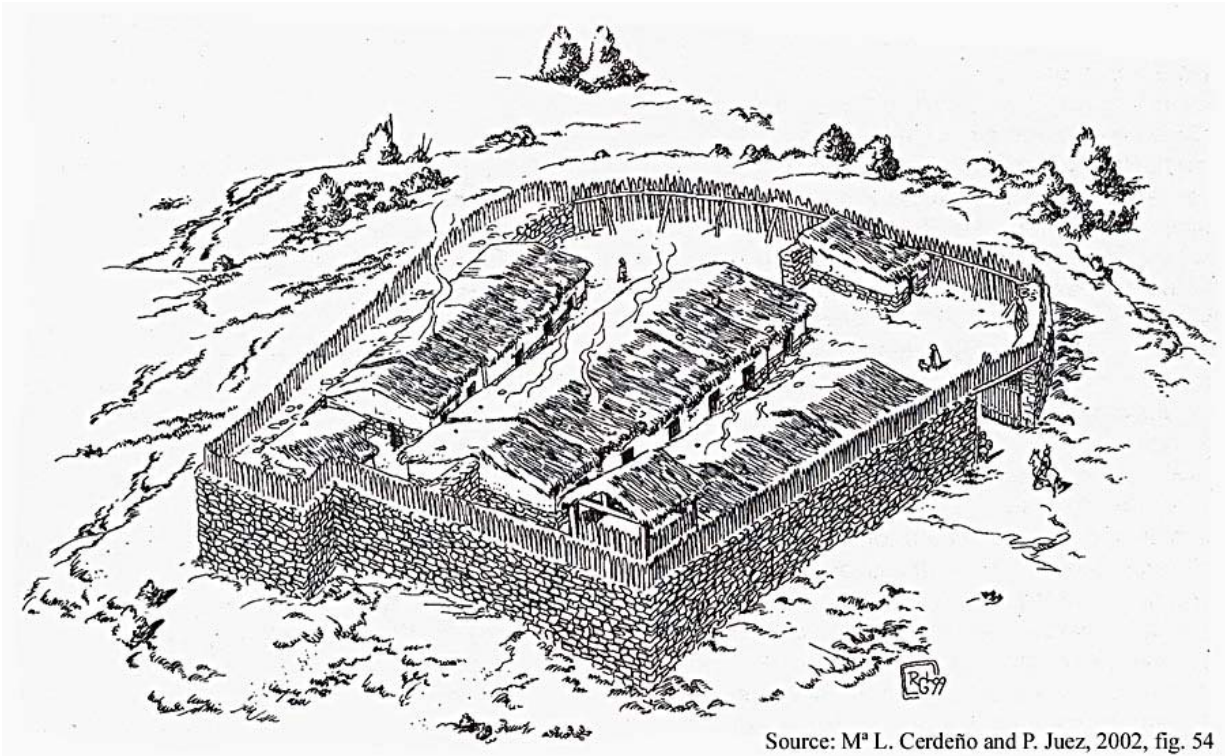
Given the autonomy of elements such as language, material culture, and political structures, all that is left to the scholar is the analysis of the historical process affecting the peoples who occupied a particular territory. In this field, the emergence of a state marks an absolute limit in the development of social formations, thus demanding an analysis of the different historical stages. An example of this approach can be seen in the article *El proceso de formación de las comunidades campesinas en el Sistema Ibérico (1.400-400 a. C.): Algunas consideraciones acerca del concepto de ruptura* (Burillo and Ortega 1999).

## **6. The Population**

The study of settlement patterns in different Celtiberian territories has yielded a better knowledge of the population structure, particularly after the application of central place theory, one of the most prominent successes of the analytical methods of spatial archaeology (Burillo 1982). Its application to the historical stage in which Celtiberian society reached the political structure of a state (with the city acting as the nucleus) demonstrates the existence of two types of settlements based on size (Burillo 1986). The first site class is the rural settlement, with an area that is always less than a hectare. Given that these settlements often display defensive elements, we could define them as *castros* (hillforts). The second site class is the urban settlement, with an area in excess of five hectares (often ranging between ten and forty hectares) (Almagro-Gorbea 1995a, 1995b). This template has been confirmed in the Celtiberian territories that are in proximity to areas where the *castro* system is found, such as the La Huerva Valley (Burillo 1980), and Serranía de Albarracín (Collado 1995). It is replicated in the Upper Duero (Jimeno and Arlegui 1995) and reflects Livy's reiterated references (XL 47) to *castella, agros et urbem*, summarizing in a generic way the existing population model (Rodríguez Blanco 1977: 173).

### **6.1. The *castros* or villages**

The Celtiberian *castros* constitute a particular social structure that remains stable through time, judging by the continuation of the internal characteristics of the settlements (Ortega 1999; Burillo and Ortega 1999) (Fig. 8). The most immediate origin of these *castros* is to be found in Cinca-Segre settlements with a central street, which emerged toward the beginning of the first millennium BCE. These settlements were all similar in size and hosted populations that ranged between 80 and 250 inhabitants. They seem to have lacked a hierarchical system, a common characteristic of autonomous units with a generalised, stable production system and an independent organisation of the labour process. The absence of larger settlements with higher concentrations of wealth demonstrates the existence of a social element that impeded the development of inter-dependent communities.



Source: M<sup>a</sup> L. Cerdeño and P. Juez, 2002, fig. 54

Figure 8. The *castro* (hillfort) of El Ceremeño of Herrería, Guadalajara (after M.L. Cerdeño and P. Juez 2002: Fig. 54).

The fact that all houses within these settlements display a similar size indicates that these societies were homogenous, egalitarian, and classless. These settlements do not increase in size over time, for there are no cases of houses built outside the defensive walls, adjacent to one another or in independent quarters. The boundary of each settlement is created by the rear walls of the houses, and all the internal space is used up from the beginning of the foundation (or, in any case, the use of the space is planned out from the first stages). The limited area of the

settlements with a central street is insufficient for a population large enough to ensure reproduction by relying exclusively on its inhabitants. Hence, men and/or women would have had to migrate to neighbouring communities, all of which operated under a patrilineal social system. Population growth would therefore invariably occur outside the original settlement, thus constituting a system for the appropriation of agriculturally exploitable land. As Ruiz Zapatero (1995) has aptly pointed out, an expansive model constituted by a segmentary-lineage social system affected these late Bronze Age communities and spread throughout the entire Middle Ebro River valley during the late Bronze Age/Iron Age I phases. As evidenced by the settlement of Castellares of Herrera de los Navarros in Zaragoza (Burillo 1983), this *castro* system, constituted by settlements with a central street, would remain as part of the state organisation that developed in Celtiberia along with the emergence of the first cities.

The excavations carried out in the *castro* of El Ceremeño of Herrería in Guadalajara (Cerdeño and Juez 2002) reveal how one of these small settlements was erected in the sixth century BCE and rebuilt after a fire without modifying the limits of the defensive walls. The new settlement was rebuilt within the perimeter of the pre-existing walls following the central street model, although - in accordance with the tendency of other settlements at the time - the dimensions of the houses (which remained rectangular) were reduced. The final abandonment of the settlement at an indefinite stage of the full Celtiberian period is yet another example of the sequence of destructions and abandonment identified through several settlements of the Middle Ebro valley before the emergence of the first city-states, constituting a process that I have defined as the Early Iberian Period Crisis (Burillo 1989-90).

## 6.2. The *oppida* or cities

The name used by the Celtiberians to refer to their cities remains unknown. Jürgen Untermann (1996: 120) maintains that it might have been the Celtiberian word *\*kortom*. However, references in the Classical sources illustrate how Greek and Roman terms were used inconsistently in the past. The Vaccaei city of Intercantia, for instance, was identified by Appian (*Iber.* 53) with regard to the events of 151 BCE as a *polis*, by Livy (*Per.* 48) as an *urbs*, and by Valerius Maximus (3, 2, 6) as an *oppidum*. Moreover, Ampelius (18) used the term *civitas* to refer to Contrebia in 143 BCE.

Out of these terms, modern historiographers often prefer to make use of the name *oppidum*, for it refers exclusively to a settlement type regardless of its juridical meaning, which

is not the case with the terms *polis* or *civitas*. Nonetheless, we are confronted with the fact that *oppidum* is being used generically to refer to large settlements with political formations as dissimilar as those in the Iberian area of the high Guadalquivir (Ruiz Rodríguez 1987), the Vettones (Álvarez Sanchís 2003) or territories of the European hinterland (Collis 1984; Wells 1984). Undoubtedly, the common denominator linking the urban nuclei of such a vast geographic spectrum (including Celtiberia) is their difference from the Classical city type. This, on the other hand, is not to say that these diverse models displayed any degree of homogeneity (Burillo and Ortega, forthcoming).

The archaeological identification of the point at which the first Celtiberian cities emerged remains an open question, mainly due to the difficulties caused by the lack of direct evidence. Judging by the study of the changes in the settlement patterns along the River Huecha in the Middle Ebro River valley, one could argue that the city emerged as a result of the Early Iberian Period Crisis (Burillo 1998: 222; Burillo and Ortega 1999: 135). This occurred toward the end of the fifth century BCE, along with the emergence of urban structures in other territories such as those of the Edetani (Mata 2001) or the Vaccaei (Sacristán 1986). With regard to the High Duero region, Alfredo Jimeno (2000) has opted to date the emergence of the first cities to the third century BCE - i.e. a century after the transition from the early to the late Iron Age in the *castros* of Soria (Romero 1999). In any case, this phenomenon constitutes an internal process that developed in Celtiberia prior to the Carthaginian and Roman presence.

Celtiberian cities - like the Iberian cities of the Middle Ebro River valley - acted as the seat of the city-state. In the case of Contrebia Belaisca, this is reflected by the *senatus*, made up of *magistratus* and presided over by a *praetor*, a position mentioned in the Latin bronze plaque of Botorrita (Fatás 1980: 101), or by the aristocracy and nobility mentioned in the Classical sources under different names, e.g. the *ajvrastos* (Apianus *Iber.*, 53) or the *eujgenei*, beheaded by Pompey after the capture of the city of Lagni (the latter being allied to the Numantians) (Diodorus XXXIII, 17).

The influence of the city transcends the mere urban nucleus. The city controls a territory (i.e. the field in which the *castros* are distributed) politically and economically. Cities are owners of the entire land, be it cultivated, barren or forested. Urban development implies that there was no land without an owner, and no settlement was located beyond a city's controlled area - at least theoretically. For instance, Appian's reference to Gracchus's distribution of land in Complega's



environs in 179 BCE (Appian *Iber* 43) demonstrates the existence of a pre-established proprietorship of the land - the presence of large estate owners who must have belonged to the nobility. It is precisely the proprietorship of the land that constitutes the basis for the political system of the city by generating social stratification (Sastre 1999). A number of elements from the latest studies carried out on Celtiberian cities are worth pointing out:

1. Contrebia Belaisca, on the hill of Minas of Botorrita (Zaragoza), has become internationally renowned for yielding four large inscribed bronze plaques - one in Latin and three in Celtiberian. Three of these are of a normative or juridical nature and mention various settlements. *Tokoitos*, *Sarnikio* and *Akaina*, none of which has been found in any other written source, are named in the first plaque; the documented cities of *Salduie*, *Alaun* and the unknown city of the *Sosinestani* are named in the second plaque; while *Karolom* (which has not yet been located), belonging to the coin mint of *karaluz*, and *Aranti* (associated with the coin mint of Aratid/Aratikos) in Aranda del Moncayo (Zaragoza) are mentioned in the fourth plaque (Fig. 9).



Figure 9. Contrebia Belaisca, a large mud-brick building (interpreted as a *horreum*) (photo F. Burillo).

The third plaque consists of a census and indicates how the city of Botorrita became populated at a stage in which social and economic integration into the Roman sphere were in progress. It displays a long list of names supposedly belonging to inhabitants of the city during the first quarter of the first century BCE. In this list, along with predominantly Celtiberian individuals (whose precise origin cannot be determined), other Iberian, Roman, and Greek names are featured.

The text reveals how this city - and presumably other cities within the territory as well - became a focus of immigration, giving rise to a true cultural and linguistic

cosmopolitan environment. Appian's noteworthy text describes the emergence of the city of Colenda under a completely different set of circumstances in 181 BCE before this process had taken place. This city was inhabited by Iberians and Celtiberian Lusones who emigrated from their places of origin as a result of the Roman incursions. This evidence allows us to confirm that the war brought about the creation of true mixed communities.

A number of excavations have been carried out in this city since 1970 (Medrano and Díaz 2000; Villar 2001), the latest ones on the hilltop itself, which marks the limit between the city and the moat. A large mud-brick building (interpreted as *horreum*) and a series of chambers, wrongly interpreted for some time as a tannery (Díaz 1997), have been identified in this area. Nonetheless, the plaster-coated storage pits found in these units are indeed characteristic of spaces used as storehouses, some of which served as wine presses (Beltrán Lloris 2002: 456). The archaeological evidence that has allowed the dating of the defensive wall to the fourth century BCE has not yet been published.

2. Nertobriga. A series of excavations have been carried out in the environs of the locality of Almunia de Doña Godina in Zaragoza (Medrano and Díaz 2000), leading to the discovery of the 18 hectare Imperial city in Eras del Romeral de Calatorao. However, not enough evidence has been amassed to determine the location of the Celtiberian city, which, as in other cases, should be found in relative proximity.
3. Designed to devise and implement a programme for the development of ongoing research, the preservation of the archaeological site, and its publication, a Master Plan that has resulted in the review of much material from older excavations is presently being carried out in Numantia under the supervision of Alfredo Jimeno. The more recent excavations have focused on a necropolis that is located on the hill slope where the city itself lies. They have yielded enough evidence to demonstrate that the city's chronology coincides with that of Celtiberian Numantia, destroyed in 133 BCE. On the other hand, the excavations carried out in the city's access zone have revealed the presence of decorated pottery in stratigraphic contexts corresponding to the first century BCE. This is not consistent with more traditional interpretations, which associated these material types with the Celtiberian stage (Jimeno et al. 1999, 2002).
4. The Segeda Project was initiated in 1998 and has allowed archaeologists to confirm the existence of two cities known by this name: Segeda I, on the hill of Mara, destroyed by Nobilior in 153 BCE, and Segeda II, erected shortly after the destruction of Segeda I in the latter's environs (specifically in Durón of Belmonte de Gracián, Zaragoza) and destroyed during the Sertorian wars. In addition, a nearby Roman camp has been discovered in the plains of Mara. The archaeological excavations have been focused on Segeda I and have corroborated the chronology outlined in the Classical sources. The site has yielded two-story houses on the hill slope, one of which contained a wine press. Moreover, parts of three houses have been documented in the sedimentary terrain adjacent to the hill. These houses are associated with the populations mentioned in the Classical sources as having undergone a process of

synecism. A stretch of the defensive wall that prompted the declaration of war has also been located (Burillo 1999; 2001a; 2001-02; 2003) (Fig. 10).



Figure 10. Segeda I, Hill of Mara, Zaragoza (photo F. Burillo).

Both Segeda I and Segeda II minted coins inscribed with a name that is presently read as *Sekeida* (Rodríguez 2001-02). This is the only mint that has been the subject of a doctoral thesis, written by Mariví Gomis (Gomis 2001) (Fig. 11). The vast quantities of coins produced, together with the long minting period, which lasted for more than a century, have provided scholars with a sound understanding and historical interpretation of the existing coin variations (which can be divided into three stages).

Although Mariví Gomis links these variations with the particular needs arising from different wars and confrontations, other interpretative possibilities could be considered as well. The mints produced immediately before Nobilior's attack of 153 BCE were - according to Otero (1998) - intended to fund the enlargement of the walled precinct mentioned in the Classical sources as the excuse used by Rome to initiate the Celtiberian wars. I believe that the third coin issue, which is composed of an extremely high number of mints, could have resulted from the need to plan the new city of Segeda II, dig up its large moat, erect its defensive wall, and urbanize its interior (Burillo 2001b). Hence, only its latest mints would have been destined for use in the Sertorian wars.



Figure 11. Coin from Segeda I, 160 BCE. (photo F. Burillo).

## 7. Celtiberian Migrations

One of the best sources of information regarding the migrations of Celtiberian populations within the peninsula is the following account in Pliny (*N.H.*, III, 3, 13): "The Celtici arriving from Lusitania originate from the Celtiberians, and this is manifested through the religious rites, the language, and the names of the *oppida*, which are identified in Baetica by their cognomen: Seria, which is called Fama Iulia, Nertobriga, which is called Concordia Iulia, Segida, called Restituta Iulia...". But which particular historical stage is Pliny referring to?

### 7.1. Celtiberians and Celtic Baeturia

García y Bellido (1952) regarded this text from Pliny as an example of internal migration - a substantiation of the Celtic peoples' movements, which, in his opinion, had a permanent and endemic character. Nonetheless, a sounder archaeological knowledge of the Iberian Peninsula's southwest will be required in order to successfully interpret the Classical text in relation to this historical process. At present there is no consensus on its interpretation.

The disappearance of the last political manifestation in the Tartessian periphery implied

the abandonment of the eastern-type settlements (such as Cancho Roano) ca. 400 BCE (Celestino 2001). The Oppida Culture (a term coined by Almagro-Gorbea [1993a; 1995a; 2001] subsequently emerged. It is precisely at this point, according to Almagro-Gorbea, that the ethnic input mentioned by Pliny took place, resulting from the penetration of Celtiberian elements, warriors who originated in the *Meseta*, *Vaccaei*, and Celtiberians. Luis Berrocal (1996; 1997; 2001) subscribes to this view and links these Celtici with the emergence of *castros* and small oppida during the beginning of the fourth century BCE. However, he points out that, in the second century BCE, the Roman presence fostered an increase in the population, the presence of a Celtiberian elite, and the emergence of new foci such as Nertobriga or Fornacis, which would not imply a substantial change in the indigenous Celtic social structure.

Nonetheless, Alonso Rodríguez (1993, 1995) emphasises that the so-called oppida of the beginning of the fourth century BCE are no such thing and that, given their reduced dimensions, should be referred to instead as *castra*. The decline and abandonment of these *castros* during the second century BCE gave rise to the oppida mentioned by Pliny, which - as was the case with Nertobriga - emerged *ex novo* as a result of the Roman policy of control and concentration of the indigenous populations.

All this suggests that Pliny's narrative refers to a later event, which could be dated back to the mid-second century BCE and associated with the Roman conquest. This appears to be corroborated by the numismatic evidence. The mint of *Tamusia* was traditionally located by scholars in the Celtiberian territory of the Middle Ebro River valley, in the vicinity of the Jalón River, due to the iconographic character of its coins (which coincide with the last series of the *sekaiza* issue) and to the Celtiberian nature of its legend, initially interpreted as *tanusia* (Villaronga 1990) (Fig. 12). However, the more recent association of this mint with the *oppidum* of Villas Viejas de Tamuja (Botija, Cáceres), excavated by Hernández et al. (1989), leaves no place for doubt, given the significant concentration of *tamusia* coins, the permanence of the toponym, as well as the retrieval of elements as characteristic of the Celtiberian sphere as the *hospitium tesserae* (García-Bellido 1995; Pellicer 1995; Sánchez and García 1988). The linguist Javier De Hoz (1992) has explained these facts in terms of migrating Celtiberians.

It is also worth pointing out the abundance of coins from Celtiberian mints (such as *Arekoratad*, *Titiakos*, and particularly *Sekeida*) in settlements of the above-mentioned Extremadura territory. The fact that they are not *denarii* but bronze coins indicates that their

presence cannot be associated with trade or payments to Roman soldiers. The origin of these coins has thus been explained in terms of people who arrived from Celtiberian spheres, carrying their money with them (Blázquez Cerrato 1995; García-Bellido 1995: 212, 2001; Otero 1993). The reasons for this migration should be sought in the exploitation of mines and the metallurgic transformations that developed in the Extremadura territory (Burillo 1998: 305-312; Canto, in press), rather than in presumed transhumant movements (Vega et al. 1998).

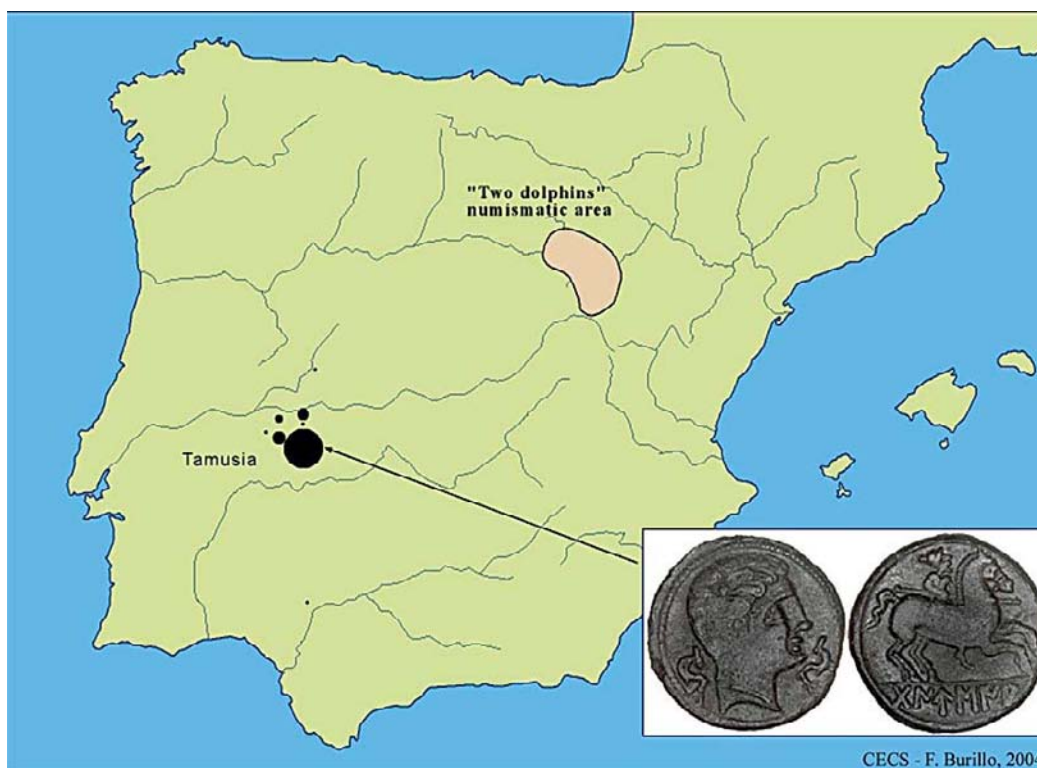


Figure 12. Bronze *as* (reverse and obverse) with two dolphins motif from Tamusia, distribution of coin finds and the distribution area of the two dolphins motif (after F. Burillo 1998: Fig. 88).

While analysing the group of Celtiberian coinage depicting the two dolphin reverse motif, I asked myself whether there could be an undiscovered Celtiberian mint in the territory, as in the case of the *tamusia* issue (Burillo 1998: 304). Subsequently, M<sup>a</sup>. Paz García-Bellido and Cruces Blázquez (2001: 367) went a step further and suggested that *Sekeida* and *Titiakos* coins might have been minted in Extremadura itself. This would imply the separation of these mints as well as the emergence of new settlements. M<sup>a</sup>. Paz García-Bellido affirms that the population of these settlements could have originated in an Arevacian Segeda (which has not yet been identified) as opposed to a Bellian Segeda: "All the indications are that a migration of Segedan people to Extremadura took place around the second century BCE. We do not know whether this

was organised - or indeed allowed - by Rome" (2001: 147). Cruces Blázquez, on the other hand, has put forward an alternative theory: that groups of people originating from Segeda settled in Villasviejas de Tamuja, bringing with them the currency of *Sekeida* and soon after minting coins with the new toponym of *Tamusia* (2002: 264).

F. Pina (in press) adds a new interpretation to this late Celtiberian presence. The author analyses the deportations launched by the Roman state during the Republican period as a result of armed conflict and points out that a number of Hispanic cases, such as the Celtiberians, could well be added to examples of deportation already known to us through the Classical sources (i.e. of the Picenti, the Campani, the Ligures, the Apuani, the Aquei, etc.) after their encounters with Rome. Such a *deditio* could have been carried out in the Iberian Peninsula's southwest, establishing new settlements or increasing the population of already existing ones, as in the case of the documented examples.

## 7.2. Celtiberians in Carpetania

The city of Segobriga, mentioned in the Classical sources of the Roman Imperial Period, is located on the hill of Cabeza de Griego in Saelices (Cuenca). Other Classical references alluding to earlier chronologies have also been associated with this city: Frontinus (*Strategemata* 3, 10, 6) mentions that Viriatus headed towards Segobriga from Segovia in 146 BCE, while Strabo (III, 4, 13) writes "moreover, Segobriga and Bilbilis, around which Metellus and Sertorius fought, are cities of the Celtiberians", which would allow us to date the event back to 74 BCE (Almagro Basch 1983; Almagro-Gorbea and Abascal 1999). However, in my opinion there is no archaeological evidence to corroborate the latter date.

Despite the fact that archaeological remains dating back to the fifth century BCE have been recovered in Cabeza de Griego, these are quite scarce and have been found out of stratigraphic context, thus demonstrating merely the existence of a small settlement, possibly a *castro*, which would date back to this time. The archaeological excavations carried out on the walls of Segobriga, which circumscribed an area of 10.5 hectares, have allowed the dating of the earliest levels back to a pre-Augustean period, certainly no earlier than the Caesarian period, thus evincing the existence of a large urban plan that included the construction of defensive walls, a sewer, and a tower as of the year 10 BCE (Almagro-Gorbea and Llorio 1989).

The association of the city of Segobriga with an earlier chronology is corroborated by the above-mentioned Classical sources as well as the existence of the *Sekobiriked* mint. The

distribution of coins from this mint, as demonstrated by M<sup>a</sup>. P. García-Bellido (1994), radiates out from Cabeza de Griego, where not a single one of these coins has been found. Instead, most are concentrated in the eastern zone of the northern *Meseta*, which is the area that should be explored in the search for the indigenous city known as Segobrix.

Hence, the city of Segobriga in Cabeza de Griego ought to be considered an *ex novo* foundation. Its emergence should be associated with that of other cities located in Celtiberia on elevated points with similar topographic features. They all share an origin that coincides with the disappearance of - at least - one nearby city. Thus, Bilbilis Italica on the hill of Bámbola of Calatayud (Zaragoza) emerges after the disappearance of Segeda II in Durón de Belmonte de Gracián (Zaragoza) and the Celtiberian Bilbilis in Valdeherrera of Calatayud; Leonica in San Esteban del Poyo del Cid (Teruel) is founded after the destruction of Caridad of Caminreal (Teruel), possibly the mint of *Orosid*; and Segobriga appears after the disappearance of Contrebia Carbica, located in Fosos de Bayona of Villasviejas (Cuenca), approximately six kilometres away on the Cigüela River (Burillo 1998: 320ff.).

This said, Segobriga includes some exceptional evidence, such as the fact that its first mints with the legend SECOBRIS were engraved using the same die as the last issues of *Karbika* (Ripollés and Abascal 1996: 23), which ratifies the continuity of the migration to the nearby city. Roman epigraphy of the Imperial period offers evidence of a different nature, however, including the presence of the ethnonym Celtiber in Segobriga, which is "not commonly found in the territory of the ethnic group itself" (Tovar 1977: 177) and the anthroponym Argaelus, clearly associated with Uxama or others such as Cantaber, Bilbilitanus, Gallus and Tolletanus (Gómez Pantoja and García Palomar 1995). This would indicate the existence of an immigration process originating from different territories, not exclusively Celtiberian. Segobriga replaced the city Contrebia of the Carpetani; hence, Pliny's reference (*N.H.* 3, 4, 25) to *caput Celtiberiae* - generally translated as the beginning of Celtiberia, not the capital of Celtiberia - reflects a movement towards the south of the territory known as Celtiberia.

### 7.3. Celtiberians in the north of the Iberian Peninsula and in Aquitania

F. Pina's work (in press) defending the existence of Celtiberian deportations organised by Pompey at the end of the Sertorian wars (ca. 72/71 BCE) is based on the unanimous accounts offered by the written sources. Pina draws on the late reference of Jerome (*Contra Vigilantium*), which states that the city of Convenarum - associated with Lugdunum in Aquitania - was



populated by Vettones, Arevaci, and Celtiberians. This would demonstrate the existence of a forced movement of people to the south of the Galliae.

F. Pina puts forward two new hypotheses in relation to these migrations instigated by Pompey. The former suggests that the city of Pompaelo (Pamplona) was founded or repopulated by Pompey with Hispanic deportees belonging to the above-mentioned groups; the latter that the city of Calagurris Fibularia - possibly located by the River Gállego, in the province of Huesca - took its name from the Celtiberian Calagurris located in Calahorra, where its ancient inhabitants would have originated.

Arturo Pérez's (2002) analysis of the Imperial period onomastics associated with the *municipium* of Aeso investigates a fact that was already known: namely the presence of *cognomina* related to the Celtiberian sphere. The more straightforward cases - such as *M. Licinius L. f. Quir. Celtiber* and his daughter *Licinia Numantina* - are complemented in his study by other examples from the aristocracy of the *municipius*, such as *Aemilii*, *Fraternus*, *Maternus*, and *Paternus*, also believed to have originated in the Iberian Peninsula's hinterland.

The absence of documentary data shedding light on the origin of these alleged Celtiberians has led scholars to consider the hypothesis that they consisted of people deported by Rome after Celtiberia's documented uprisings during the first years of the first century BCE (Mayer and Rodá 1996: 223; Rico 1997: 183). Arturo Pérez believes that there also might have been groups of people who migrated willingly in search of a better economic situation, or even that the Celtiberian constituent settled through different periods. In any case, the author dates the presence of these immigrants - who gave rise to the territorial restructuring of the Galliae and northern Hispania - back to the foundation of the city of Aeso. Archaeological evidence dates this to the end of the second century BCE, although the historical context associates the emergence of Aeso with the end of the Sertorian wars, as in the case of the cities of Gerunda, Iluro, Lugdunum Convenarum and Pompaelo.

## **8. Economy**

There is no reason why we should not regard the population of the Celtiberian *castros* as peasant communities (Wolf 1982) that based their subsistence strategies on agricultural and herding activities, with the family as the basic unit of production and consumption. In fact, peasant societies do not aim to maximize profits, but instead strive for a balance between

consumption and labour. Hence, they tend to develop the greatest possible economic diversification and a subsistence strategy that is based on the exploitation of all the resources available: agriculture, livestock breeding, hunting, gathering, as well as mining activities and handicrafts (Ortega 1999). Archaeology has demonstrated how the emergence of Celtiberian cities did not imply the disappearance of the *castro* system. On the contrary, the system was integrated into the new state organisation, so that peasant communities saw themselves needing to produce surplus demanded by the urban aristocracy. This demand for surplus would later increase with the arrival of the Romans.

### 8.1. Agriculture

Carpologic studies carried out by Carmen Cubero (1999) on seeds from several sites in the Celtiberian area and its environs demonstrate the existence of a dry farming economy based on cereal cultivation. The analyses carried out in Castellar of Berrueco (Zaragoza) have identified the presence of various species of long and short cycle cereals (common



Figure 13. El Castellar of Berrueco, Zaragoza (photo C. Polo).

and hard wheat, barley, oats, and millet) as well as leguminous plants, such as vetch (Fig 13). This has led scholars to consider the hypothesis that crop rotation might have been practiced, which would imply a more efficient organisation of the agricultural year (Cubero 1995).

There is a broad consensus based on the belief that the most important technological change in the protohistoric period was constituted by the development of agricultural iron tools. This development can be dated in the sedimentary basin of Cinca-Segre back to the early Iberian period, i.e. the sixth to fifth centuries BCE (Alonso i Martínez 1999). The great significance of this technological development became evident to us (Burillo et al.1999) while analysing the Celtiberian settlement in the environs of the Gallocanta Lake. We noted the existence of a true agricultural colonisation with the ensuing new settlements established in close proximity to the most fertile territories during the second century BCE. We asked ourselves why these territories had not been occupied prior to this time, considering their outstanding soil fertility. Even

settlements dating back to the Neolithic period are often found in proximity to areas that display an advantageous edaphic constitution, but this appears not to have been the case in this area. The excavation of one of these settlements, Castellar de Berrueco, finally revealed that limestone had been extensively used as construction material. This finding was a key element in understanding how the carbonated layer that must have been formed on the surface of the soil surrounding the lake would have made agriculture an impossible task without the use of a plough pulled by oxen. Indeed, this technology was already known within the Celtiberian sphere before it was widely applied. However, the political conditions that fostered this agricultural colonisation (emerging as a result of the development of the Segedan city-state) were still lacking.

The advantages of irrigation as a system of agricultural intensification that increases the overall yearly production yields are obvious. However, identifying its use through archaeological analysis constitutes a problematic task. Carpologic analyses do not allow us at present to determine whether a humid area received an artificial input of water in the past (Cubero 1999: 61). The only direct source of evidence available is found in the bronze plaque of Contrebia, dating to 87 BCE (Fatás 1980): a ruling on the layout of a long water canal. This, however, is attributed to the integration of the Middle Ebro River valley into the Roman political system. No constructions such as canals or dams dating to the Celtiberian period have been found. Hence, the only sources of information available must derive from territorial analysis, i.e. the distribution of settlements in proximity to areas that could have been prone to this kind of exploitation (such as the early Iron Age settlements discovered along the course of the Lower Huecha (Aguilera 1995). An alternative indirect means of approaching this issue consists of the analysis of agricultural tools associated with labour in areas of irrigated land, such as the hoes retrieved in Caridad of Caminreal, which date back to the beginning of the first century BCE (Vicente 1988). The actual spread of these types of cultivation remains unknown, although it would not be far-fetched to consider the existence of orchards in proximity to stable settlements during the first millennium BCE.

## 8.2. Livestock breeding

Although there still are significant flaws associated with archaeofaunal analyses, the recent application of such studies has brought about a substantial change in our understanding of livestock breeding, for the investigations carried out until the 1970s were almost exclusively based on data derived from documentary sources. M<sup>a</sup>. Fernanda Blasco (1999) has recently

analysed the patterns that can be observed in the stockbreeding activities of a vast territory in the northern half of the Iberian Peninsula during the late Iron Age, demonstrating the existence of two primary groups: one in which bovines predominate over ovines and caprines, and another one in which the opposite is true. The presence of porcines is generally low in both groups. There seems to be a pattern in relation to these two models on the one hand and the geographic location of the settlements and the local environmental features on the other. Thus, the Upper Ebro, North Tajo, and Duero River basins would have offered favourable conditions for pasture for bovine livestock, whereas the central and eastern areas of the Iberian Peninsula - where the historical Celtiberia was located - would have provided less favourable conditions for pasturage and therefore relied predominantly on ovi-caprine exploitation, thereby continuing the stockbreeding tradition of the second millennium BCE in Teruel's Iberian Mountain Range (Burillo and Picazo 1997). This model, referred to as the Mediterranean Pattern, was characterised by the predominance of ovi-caprines (which are better adapted to the generally poor grazing environment of these landscapes), complemented by the breeding of bovines and porcines. However, an important change took place in the settlements of the first millennium BCE, consisting of a significant decrease in the reliance on hunting for procuring protein in the diet.

We often encounter a series of stereotypes and misconceptions associated with the Celtiberian populations during the arrival of Rome, arising as a result of superficial and erroneous interpretations of the Classical sources. Thus, Celtiberians are often understood as primarily cattle-herding societies. This would require movement to summer pastureland through transhumance routes, thus giving rise to large-scale movements of people. Joaquín Gómez-Pantoja (1995) joins the ancient historians in critically reviewing these documentary sources. He demonstrates the frequent use of stereotypes by ancient authors, leading to a portrayal of the Celtiberians and other pre-Roman populations of the Iberian Peninsula's hinterland as barbarians and shepherds, in contrast to the cultivated agricultural populations of the Mediterranean shores. Although Gómez-Pantoja affirms with regard to the herding-strategy references in the Classical sources that "when analysed from a detached, objective perspective, these texts have a smaller determinative value than we would like to admit" (1995: 496), he does agree with the idea of constant migrations in the Celtiberian society. Moreover, he opts to defend the notion of transhumance routes during the Roman Imperial period by interpreting the distribution rates of

Clunia and Uxama emigrants' epigraphs, which, according to the author, tend to be located either in mining zones or in areas that are crossed by royal dales of the *Mesta* (the powerful Livestock Association of Castille in the Middle Ages). This affirmation has not been corroborated, nor has the suggestion of dating transhumance activities to the pre-Roman period. Joaquín Gómez-Pantoja believes that M. Fulvius Nobilior's attack on the coalition of the Vettones, Vaccaei, and Celtiberians in 193 BCE was carried out with the intention of disabling the use of the summer pastureland and the herding paths. He also maintains that the Celtiberian *hospitium tesserae* were designed to mediate pacts required by various communities linked by transhumance routes. These elements defending the use of transhumance were later compiled, developed, and justified by Manuel Salinas (1999) and Eduardo Sánchez-Moreno (2001).

I believe that the idea of annual migrations to faraway territories in search of summer pastureland in Celtiberian society lacks any documentary or archaeological basis. Most importantly, such a phenomenon is not consistent, as we have already mentioned, with the social model of stable peasant communities displayed by the Celtiberian *castro* system. Nobody can deny the existence of herding activities in pre-Roman communities. However, this subsistence strategy was absolutely integrated with agriculture, which is not to say that it became a predominant activity in higher altitude territories. Obviously, species with stabling needs, such as sheep, require a regular source of pasture, but large migrations or transhumance movements are not necessarily required to obtain them. Transterminance, i.e. short distance movements (with a maximum duration of one or two days), might have constituted a means of obtaining fresh pasture that is still practised in high-altitude regions. This seems to be the most plausible model for the period we are concerned with, parting from the assumption that the ecosystem and cultivation systems did not allow for continued herding in the vicinity of the *castros*.

### 8.3. New scholarly strategies for the study of the nutritional diet

The last few years have seen the development of new analytical techniques that have contributed to increasing our knowledge of the nutritional diet of the Celtiberian populations, thus increasing simultaneously our knowledge of the agricultural and herding strategies of these communities.

An analysis of trace elements and stable isotopes was carried out as part of a general study of human skeletal remains retrieved from the necropolis of Numantia (Jimeno et al. 1996). It was determined that these bones reflected a predominant consumption of vegetable products

with results of 58.4%, including a frequent intake of dried fruits definitely identified as acorns. The consumption of meat, on the other hand, was limited to 28% of the dietary total. This nutritional diet challenges the traditional belief that Celtiberians - and particularly the Numantians - consumed large amounts of meat as a result of their herding activities. Furthermore, the written sources providing information about Numantia usually focus on the period of the Roman conquest, thus describing the circumstances and consumption characteristics of a war economy, in which all the available resources were exhausted (including the livestock). This panorama should not be uncritically extrapolated to the stable, routine circumstances of a community not in a state of war. Moreover, as was the case with the period immediately following the Middle Ages, the quantity of meat consumed by people would have been determined by the status of the individual.

Jordi Juan-Treserras and Juan Carlos Matamala adopt a different approach in their analysis by examining silica phytoliths and other microscopic chemical and biological elements retrieved from grinding stones, the interior bases of pots, and the floor surfaces of particular settlements. The study of three ceramic containers from the early Iron Age *castro* of Solejón de Hinojosa de Campo in Soria, for instance, revealed the presence of wheat flour, a mixture of "yoghurt" with cereals, and beer residues (Tarancon et al. 2003). The identification of starch granules found in the orifices of the active surfaces of grinding stones retrieved from Numantia in old excavations has allowed scholars to recognise a differentiated grinding process for cereals and acorns in the past. Moreover, the presence of cereal granules that had been moistened and heated up suggests the presence of part of the process for the preparation of beer or *caelia* (as described in the Classical sources), or for the preservation of the grain against parasites (Checa et al. 1999). With regard to the city of Segeda, analyses have revealed that a large earthenware jar had been used to store wheat, while two pots contained residues of gruel, acorns and a potage made out of borage (*Borago officinalis*), which is still a widely used vegetable in the Middle Ebro River valley. Moreover, a caliciform vase and a colander yielded traces of dairy products; a crater and a drinking cup had contained wine; and another drinking cup revealed traces of beer (Juan-Treserras and Matamala, forthcoming). It has traditionally been thought that the use of wine at Segeda was indicated by the presence of Italic amphorae. However, a press uncovered in one of the excavated areas of the site revealed the existence of the local cultivation of the grapevine in this Celtiberian city as well.

#### 8.4. Mining and metallurgy: Iron and silver

When Pliny (34, 144) mentions the quality of iron in Hispania, he makes a reference to only two Celtiberian cities: Bilbilis and Turiaso. He thus confirms the general opinion of many other authors with regard to the metallurgical skill of the Celtiberians (Lorrio 1997: 303). These two cities (important metal-working foci during the High Empire Period), inherited an iron working tradition that was developed earlier throughout other areas of Celtiberia. Analyses carried out on the weaponry retrieved from the necropolis of Carratiermes, for instance, have revealed that the iron used was already a form of steel, although developed with old techniques (hence containing variable quantities of carbon, large amounts of slag, and non-metallic inclusions). The metal was hardened by forging and sudden cooling in water (Rodríguez Morales 2001: 278).

The references to Turiaso are often associated with Moncayo - the highest point of the Iberian Mountain Range, displaying abundant small, superficial, and easily exploitable sources of goethite and high-grade limonite as well as readily available sources of fuel. The studies carried out by Enrique Sanz et al. (2001) in this area have allowed scholars to identify several sources of iron, areas with high concentrations of slag, and a large foundry oven in Sierra de Toranzo.

Nonetheless, we are still in need of a systematic study of the mining activities in Bilbilis' environs. The archaeological excavations carried out in the nearby city of Segeda I have uncovered a small foundry oven that was abandoned halfway through the second century BCE. The fact that it was situated inside a house in one of the quarters of the city indicates that it was used for domestic production. Archaeometallurgical analyses of the slag have provided results indicating a high ferric content, which are a result of the primitive technology used (Rovira and Burillo 2003). The iron minerals found at surface level in a vast territory around the city of Segeda I and the exploitation strategies applied to them did not differ very much from those of Moncayo, as evidenced by the small open air mines identified along the Mesa River in La Cabeza de Maranchel of Mazarete (Guadalajara), where rich oligist and limonite strata were exploited (Martínez and Arenas 1999).

Sierra Menera (located between the provinces of Teruel and Guadalajara) is the area of the Iberian Mountain Range that displays the highest concentration of metallogenetic iron. A number of small fortifications associated with large slag mounds have been identified in the

territory (Fig. 14). These slag mounds have provided evidence of an intensive and specialised extraction and foundry process, which must have been carried out according to the criteria for the exploitation of metal sources developed by Rome in Celtiberia around the second century BCE, thus giving rise to large quantities of surplus that would have been managed throughout this first stage by the city of Caridad of Caminreal in Teruel (Burillo 1998: 279; Polo 1999; Polo and Villagordo 2003).



Figure 14. Small fortifications of Sierra Menera, Teruel (photo F. Burillo).

The origin of the silver used for the production of *denarii* is an issue that has puzzled scholars for some time. The local exploitation of silver sources in the area has been generally ruled out on the basis that the written sources make no references to silver mines in the Iberian Mountain Range or the Ebro River valley. Other possible sources have therefore been considered, including mercenaries, trade, theft, and tribute from other groups (Burillo 1997a; 1998: 278). Nonetheless, the presence of this metal in different opulent assemblages such as those of Driebes and Salvacañete and the explicit references to the large quantities of silver looted during the Roman conquest (García Riaza 1999) reveal that it must have been an abundant and important metal in Celtiberia. The best confirmation of this lies in the fact that one *denarius* was the equivalent of 80 *ases*, whereas in Rome at that time one *denarius* was the equivalent of 120 *ases*, that is, 40 more *ases* per *denarius* than in Celtiberia.

### 8.5. Metrology: weights and measurements

The study of the metrologic systems used in the Celtiberian territory is still at an incipient



stage of investigation. Unlike the Iberian area, where numerous weights have been found (Fletcher and Mata 1981), none have yet been retrieved in Celtiberian territory. The small bronze ingots from the city of Bilbilis in Valdeherrera of Calatayud and Contrebia Belaisca in Botorrita (Medrano 1987; Medrano and Díaz 1987) display unequal, often low, weights. Hence, they must have served a different purpose - perhaps as monetary units (García-Bellido 1999: 379).

The group of weights found closest to the Celtiberian area belongs to the Beronian settlement of La Hoya (La Guardia, Alava) and dates back to the fourth century BCE. Each of the seven weights retrieved represents a unit of 18.51 grams (Llanos 2002). Thus, half the value of each unit is approximately 9.25 grams, which M<sup>a</sup>. P. García-Bellido (1999: 380) associates with the weight system discovered at the site of Cancho Roano in Extremadura dating back to the fifth century BCE. The weight system displays two variants: one consisting of 9.4-gram units (coinciding with the shekel documented on the Syrian coast), the second consisting of 9.2-gram units with multiples of 36.5 and 146 grams, which take on the form of units marked with a globule (García-Bellido 2001: 153). A recent study by Leonard A. Curchin (2002) defends the existence of a particular metrologic pattern in the Iberian Peninsula's hinterland based on nine-gram units.

The opulent hoard assemblages of the Vaccaei occasionally include various types of silver ornaments: single hook funicular torques, bracelets, hair bands, and spiralforms. The presence of particular marks on these pieces and the fact that they often display homogenous weights indicate that they might have been intended as objects to be exchanged according to their specific weight and therefore as a form of pre-monetary currency. If this was indeed the case, their basic unit would not have been 3.65 grams, as suggested by E. Galán and M<sup>a</sup>. Ruiz-Gálvez (1996) using the Roman weight system applied to *denarii*, but rather 45 to 55 grams. The torques found in Padilla (Valladolid) with three marks of 147 and 145 grams link this weight system with the 146-gram unit of Cancho Roano. This connection between the Vaccaei and the southeastern Iberian Peninsula seems to be corroborated by the previous close links shared between the Tartessians and the Duero River depression area via the Silver Route (an ancient road that linked Galicia in the northwest with Cádiz in the southwest). The trading relations thus established would have contributed to the creation of a lasting, common metrologic framework that would have promoted the transactions between both areas (García-Bellido in press).

The conquest of the Ebro River valley resulted in the procurement of a vast amount of

precious metals, gold, and silver by the Roman treasury (García Riaza 1999). The exact quantities are given in Roman pounds and talents, and include notes on the source of the metals as well: raw metal (*infectum*), coins (*signati*), and jewelry, possibly torques (*coronae*). Strangely, only the latter are numbered, perhaps due to the standardisation of their weight. The silver funicular torque found in the Celtiberian territory of Cerrada del Cabecico del Palomar of Camarillas (Teruel) weighs 150 grams (Herrero et al. 1994) and therefore coincides with the above-mentioned metrology (Burillo 1995) (Fig. 15).



Figure 15. The torque of Camarillas, Teruel (photo M.A. Herrero).

M<sup>a</sup>. P. García-Bellido (1999: 383) has made an interesting suggestion with regard to the metrology of the Celtiberian region by considering the possibility that the oldest bronze coins in the territory formed part of a unique weight system based on 14-15-gram units (i.e. one tenth of the above-mentioned pattern). This would imply the existence of metrologic autonomy within a Roman-conquered territory. The torque of Camarillas, the two torques of Salvacañete (weighing 74 and 102 grams) that were concealed during the Sertorian Wars (Cabré 1936), and the silver ingots found in Driebes (with an average weight of 448 grams) would thus constitute multiples of this unit. That is to say, a 15-gram unit would produce multiples of 75, 105, 150, and 450 grams.

With regard to the measuring units for length, it has been confirmed that the mud bricks which were in use throughout the building systems of the Middle Ebro River valley as early as the late Bronze Age displayed a standardised set of dimensions (Asensio 1995). According to Leonard A. Curchin (2002), Celtiberians made use of a measuring unit referred to as the Celtiberian foot, which was the equivalent of 24 centimetres, although its variations through time and space remain to be elucidated. Larger measuring units for distance were most probably used as well, particularly in the construction of buildings. This has been corroborated by the archaeological identification of modules that acted as a guide for the design and internal division

of rooms and houses (Burillo 1983). However, no studies have yet been carried out in this precise field.

One of the lines of investigation developed as part of the Segeda Project has involved the development of an Information Technology System for the calculation of vessel volumes using their profile drawings. The first study has been applied to a set of 15 *kalathoi* retrieved during the excavations carried out in Area III of Segeda I (Cano et al. 2001-02). The analysis of the vessel capacities carried out by Juan Carlos Calvo (2001-02) revealed the use of a measuring unit similar to the Greek *kotyle* of 0.283 litres, observable in two vessels with a 40-unit capacity, one with a 25-unit capacity, and one with a 10-unit capacity. Nonetheless, it must be borne in mind that this vessel type was used as a honey container (Juan 2000) and had very diverse origins. In fact, two of the vessels identified originate from an Emporion sphere (Conde 1992).

## **9. Pottery: Images, Codes, and Rituals**

Pottery is one of the most widely used elements for the study of the preserved manifestations of the past. The reinterpretation of the codes in certain figures, the signs, and their arrangements, as well as analyses of the aims originally pursued through pictorial representations and the functions of the vessels displaying them constitute some of the lines of study in this field. The post-processual theoretical strand, with Ian Hodder (1991) as one of its most notable proponents, supports the study of this new form of idealism - the quest for the symbolic aspects of culture, in which pottery iconography constitutes one of the most promising features. Nonetheless, post-processualism is also the approach that tends to lead to the most debatable conclusions, due to its use of inadequate analogies and subjective interpretations lacking sufficient documentary evidence. Still, such an interpretive difficulty should not imply the rejection of this figurative universe, which constitutes a true window to a better knowledge of the society that produced it.

The decorations on the pottery of Numantia undoubtedly constitute the largest repertoire of images of the Celtiberian territory. The case of a painted warrior with a wavy figure protruding from his mouth, for example, has been interpreted as an ideogram - the symbolisation of speech. José Manuel Pastor (1998) has inquired into the meaning of a series of S shapes found as the only decorative element on two trumpets from Numantia. The fact that these S and double spiral shapes also appear on Iberian decorations of the Edeta region associated with musical

instruments and/or dancing figures has led the author to suggest that they constitute ideograms representing the notion of sound. Pastor has used this same interpretive template to explain the S signs on the pottery of both cities, which may have been intended to represent the movement of the wings or the chirps of birds depicted on the pots.

One of the most frequently occurring signs on the pottery of Numantia is an anchor- or T-shaped symbol associated with circles, horses, and equestrian scenes. It has also been found on the front of a stone box. Ricardo Olmos (1986) has identified this symbol with the schematised drawing of a palm tree inspired by a Hispanic-Carthaginian coin. However, the disparity in the chronologies between the symbol and the coin rules out this possibility. Gabriel Sopeña maintains that this Numantian symbol is in fact related to the hammer of Sucellos, "the fundamental Celtic deity" (1995: 256-262), although the only basis for this argument rests on the assumption that all the allegedly Celtic territory shared common gods and symbols. The analogy in this case is therefore indefensible, given that there is no evidence of the presence of this deity in the Hispanic sphere (vid: Marco 1994), and, even supposing there was, that would only imply that the symbol indeed represents a hammer, which is the sign of a particular deity. Finally, José Manuel Pastor (1998) defends a similarity between this symbol and the object carried by the horseman depicted on the reverse face of the Arsaos coins. He therefore refers to the symbol as *signa equitum* (i.e. a banner or insignia). Nonetheless, these symbols tend to be supported by a staff and carried by horsemen, as depicted on the reverse face of the coins, whereas the above-mentioned symbol always appears on its own and in different shapes and positions. Two bronze *signa* have been retrieved from Numantia, one in the city and the other in the necropolis. The former depicts two half horses joined by a saddle. The latter displays the same figure with an added horseman. Given the dimensions of these figures, they have been interpreted as staffs of status (Jimeno et al. 2002: Figs. 49, 54).

### 9.1. A libation ritual among Celtiberian family groups

The studies by Carmen Aranegui (1997) and Consuelo Mata (2001) carried out on Edetan vessels with text and/or decoration have demonstrated the existence of fine ware and custom-made vessels in the Iberian sphere whose function has been associated with liturgical acts or high-status symbols. Custom-made vessels are also found in the Celtiberian sphere, although they do not coincide in shape or function with their Edetan counterparts (Burillo 1997c). The Celtiberian inscription *luanicoo : coorinau* has been found painted on the rim of an unusually

large *oinochoe* from Numantia. The inscription seems to consist of a name of a kin member in the genitive plural and a definite article (De Hoz 1986: 58). A similarly shaped vessel has been retrieved from Caridad of Caminreal, displaying the most complex decoration found so far in the city as well as an inscription in Celtiberian painted in a similar position as that of the Numantian vessel (Fig.16). The inscription reads *bescuauzueticubos*, which is a dative or ablative ending of plural in *-ubos*, thus expressing a sense of "effect upon" or "reference to" a group of people. These similarities between vessels from two Celtiberian cities (distant in space yet sharing a similar chronology, for both appear to date to the first quarter of the first century BCE) have led me to propose the idea that these custom-made containers were intended to be used as part of a ritual associated with extended family groups. This suggestion is corroborated by a scene on a pottery shard from Numantia that has been interpreted as the representation of a sacrifice (Wattenberg 1963: 217). The main figure is depicted holding an *oinochoe*, which is being used in this scene as a ritual libation vase. This confirms that certain unusual vessels were used in rituals that were of importance to the general community within the Celtiberian territory. The fact that both Numantia and Caridad have yielded vessels used as cups (in this case with graffiti in endings associated with extended family groups [*nouantikum*, *cambarocum*] as opposed to individuals, as is most often the case with regard to marked property) leads me to suggest the existence of rituals among the extended family groups of Celtiberia in which alcohol (i.e. wine, beer, etc.) was consumed.

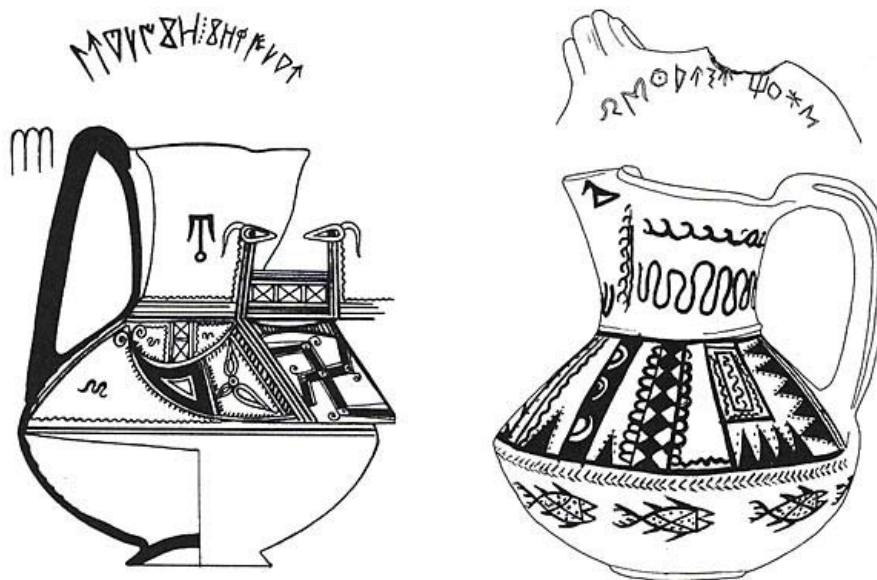


Figure 16. *Oinochoes* from Numancia in Soria and La Caridad of Caminreal, Teruel (after F. Burillo 1997c).

This demonstrates that the fully urbanised Celtiberian society, at the time of integration into the Roman political and social system, maintained its tradition of relations among kin members and was therefore in need of external ritualization in which the consumption of alcohol created a bond between community and identity that would concomitantly ensure its own continuity. The continuation of this tradition should not be set in opposition to the state development achieved in Celtiberia, though. Instead, it ought to be understood as a different category - a social structure of relations that encompasses nuclear families sharing common links. In fact, the coexistence of these different levels (i.e. individual, nuclear family, extended family, and city) are manifested by the most complete formulae of the Celtiberian *origo*, such as that of the Ibiza stela (Gómez Moreno 1949: n. 120): *tirtanos abulocum letontunos ce belicios*, i.e. "Tirtano of the Abulocos, son of Letontu of the city of Belicio", which constitutes the clearest evidence of the continuity of family groups in the Celtiberian city-states.

## 10. The Archaeology of Death

The 1980s saw a substantial change with regard to the study of necropoli as scholars moved from the mere analysis of grave assemblages and urns to the multidisciplinary study of aspects such as funerary rituals and Celtiberian social structures, approached from the perspective of the newly developed processualist strand known as the archaeology of death. The papers submitted to the *II Simposio sobre los Celtíberos* dedicated to Celtiberian necropoli exemplified this change (Burillo 1990).

The archaeological evidence of a mortuary nature from the Celtiberian and Iberian territories points toward a dual-natured ritual associated with age throughout the entire first millennium BCE. Whereas fetuses, newborn babies, and lactating infants were inhumed in domestic spaces, the rest of the population was calcined and buried in cremation necropoli, which limits the application of anthropological analyses.

### 10.1. Cremation necropoli

The first cremation necropoli of the Middle Ebro River valley emerged during the late second millennium BCE in the sedimentary basin of Cinca-Segre, associated with central street *castra*, as a funerary manifestation of the new social structures. These new interment practices assimilated the cremation ritual originating in Central Europe and merged it with local burial mound traditions (Royo 1990). The funerary model spread to the right bank of the Ebro River

into the Iberian sphere of Lower Aragón and the Celtiberian sphere of the Iberian Mountain Range. However, whereas in Lower Aragón the Early Iberian Period Crisis gave rise to a dramatic change in mortuary rituals, the archaeological record of the latter tends to reflect continuity with regard to the cremation cemeteries until the historical period.

A re-examination of the information obtained from the numerous Celtiberian necropoli excavated during the early twentieth century reveals the scarcity of closed contexts and the ensuing impossibility of carrying out studies on the social aspects of these communities (Álvarez-Sanchís 1990). Only exceptional cases, such as the necropolis of La Mercadera (Soria) (Taracena 1932), have allowed new studies to be carried out (Lorrio 1990). La Mercadera is the cemetery of a warrior society constituted by a small population of 12 to 24 individuals buried in the site over a period of 150 years. A relatively small number of tombs contain swords and horse trappings, which have been interpreted as the manifestation of a hierarchical social structure. An alternative interpretation is that this might have been the cemetery of a peasant community structured in extended families, in which peasants would have carried weapons and the best grave assemblages would belong to the highest status individuals or the heads of families (Burillo and Ortega 1999).

New excavations are providing scholars with substantial progress in the understanding and interpretation of interred remains. The investigations carried out by Jesús Arenas and Luis Cortes (1995) in the necropolis of Aragoncillo en Guadalajara have yielded a series of structures that were previously unknown or undocumented in Celtiberian necropoli (Fig. 17). Twenty-five accessory deposits of ashes have been found associated with thirty single parallel graves. They contained pottery and faunal remains, a large ash deposit of 63 m<sup>2</sup> with vessel fragments, and platforms that contained no burials, some belonging to *ustrinae* (places

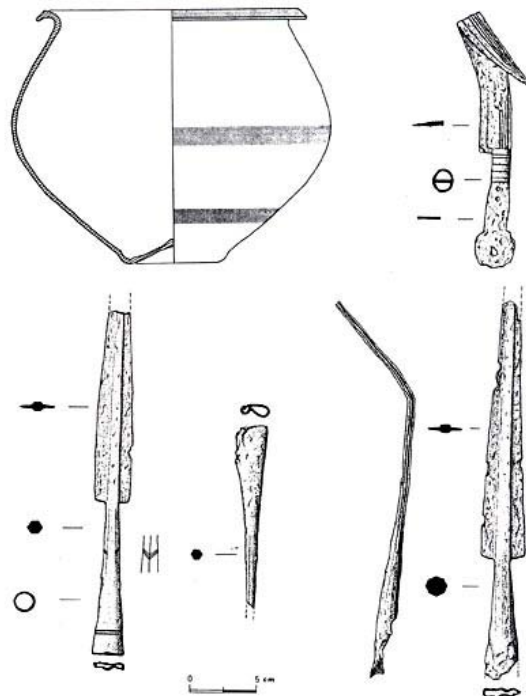


Figure 17. Urn and grave-goods from the necropolis of Aragoncillo, Guadalajara (after J. Arenas and L. Cortes 1995).

where cremation had been carried out), others with offerings, including non-cremated animal remains. The interments in this necropolis began between the sixth and fifth centuries BCE and continued until the third and second centuries BCE. During the earlier stages, the burial rituals displayed a considerable variability as well as large quantities of offerings and sacrificed animals, whereas at a later stage offerings became increasingly rare and libation rituals were introduced.

After several years of excavation at the necropolis of Carratiermes in Soria, José Luis Argente has left us with his posthumous work on the site (Argente et al. 2001). Carratiermes is identified as the interment place of the Celtiberian city of Tiermes, which provides a window on the processes of change that took place in this settlement from the earliest use of the cemetery in the sixth century BCE until its abandonment in the first century AD. Six hundred and forty-four tombs have been excavated in an area of three hectares. This has produced a vast amount of information about different aspects of the material culture: pottery types, weapons, adornment (some of which had only been found in previous excavations in a fragmentary condition, such as breastplates), etc. Archaeosteological studies have revealed a balanced male to female ratio, as well as the existence of 28 tombs with double cremations consisting of mothers and their children or adult male and female individuals. The average life expectancy was not more than 30-35 years, although a number of individuals lived to 60 or 70 years of age. Studies have revealed a change affecting the interment rituals. An increase in the opulence of the grave assemblages during the earlier stages has been documented, so that the graves containing the highest quantities of weaponry and bronze objects can be narrowed down to the fourth century BCE. At a later stage, the grave assemblages are significantly poorer, until all evidence of weapons and adornments finally disappears during the third stage (ca. 180 BCE).

The necropolis of Numantia had been sought with little success for decades until its recent discovery in the southern hillside where the city itself lies (Jimeno et al. 1996). The necropolis occupies an area of one hectare and, thus far, 156 of its tombs have been excavated. Of these tombs, 31.8% contained exclusively faunal remains, which have been interpreted as "symbolic interments, conditioned by the difficulty of recovering the deceased person's body" (Jimeno et al. 1996: 37). All the tombs display a very simple structure: the remains were deposited in small holes, some of which were occasionally marked by stelae and protected by stone slabs firmly set on the surface. The average contents of human remains in each tomb are



reduced to 5.73 grams. There appears to have been a selection of specific parts of the human body, for only the longer bones and the cranial fragments were interred. The chronology of the necropolis coincides with that of the Celtiberian city prior to 133 BCE. Hence, the presence of grave assemblages containing weapons, bronze adornments, small pottery vases, etc., is an unusual feature, for such items are rarely found in Celtiberian necropoli of similar chronologies. The tomb distributions reveal an interesting spatial division into two broad sections, and the analysis of their contents has allowed scholars to identify the existence of social inequality, which is also manifested by evidence of dissimilar nutritional diets.

The ongoing excavations at the necropolis of Herrería, associated with the above-mentioned *castrum* of El Ceremeño, is producing an extraordinary chronological sequence, leading us to a more detailed understanding of the on-going investigations (Cerdeño et al. 2002). Radiometric dates have confirmed a previously inconceivable antiquity for the establishment of cremation rituals in the Iberian Mountain Range. Calibrated dates have provided results indicating that cremation was already in use in a necropolis arranged with stelae by the thirteenth century BCE. This necropolis contains a series of tumuli dated back to the ninth century BCE (calibrated), similar in their characteristics to those of Cinca-Segre and Lower Aragón. This confirms the establishment of funerary rituals by the so-called Beaker Culture people of the Middle Ebro River valley. On the other hand, a number of scholars (Arenas 1999a, 1999b; González Prats 2002) suggest different foci, such as the southeastern Iberian Peninsula, as areas to bear in mind when considering the origins of cremation rituals in the so-called Celtiberian necropoli.

## 10.2. Inhumations and the problem of human sacrifices

Given that the death ritual applied to children and adults consisted of cremation from the early first millennium onwards, inhumations constitute a rare exception (apart from newborn and foetus burials). Some of the inhumations discovered reveal that they are mainly the result of accidents, such as the eight-year-old child discovered under some rubble in the city of Contrebia Belaisca (Díaz 1994). Other cases have proven harder to interpret, such as the adult molar and two phalanges associated with a foetus' cranial vault found next to the turriform structure of Montón de Tierra of Griegos (Collado et al. 1994).

Documentary and archaeological evidence confirms the practice of human sacrifice in the sphere of certain Indo-European and Celtic peoples (Marco Simón 1999). However, this should

not be seen as an uncritical generalisation applicable to all areas considered Celtic, which assumes that all of the ancient Celtic lands constituted a recognisable unit in time and space that shared a single culture, something that was never the case (Ruiz Zapatero 2001).

Frédérique Horn (2003) has carried out a comprehensive study on the representations of human heads and the skull remains found throughout the Iberian Peninsula, demonstrating that these are far from being limited to the traditional severed-head interpretation. The representations found on pottery seem to belong to two distinct iconographic styles: one displaying Mediterranean influences, and the other identified as Celtic. Their meanings might have been diverse: glorification of the warrior status, the representation of ancestors or divinities, funerary masks. This interpretive ambiguity can be extended to the head depicted on the horse-type fibulae, which is often interpreted as a severed head (Almagro-Gorbea and Lorrio 1992; Medrano and Díaz Sanz 2000). With regard to skull remains, the only assemblage definitely identified as the manifestation of a ritual act involving the exposure of human remains has been found in the northeastern Iberian Peninsula (Pujol 1989: 301-314). The preserved skulls (some of which were impaled) share certain characteristics with finds from Gaul, whose links with the northeastern areas of the peninsula have been corroborated by the predominance in the latter area of La Tène material: fibulae and swords. The only remains of this type identified in the Celtiberian territory were retrieved from Numantia. Although this find has been interpreted as a trophy head (Taracena 1943), the absence of the lower jaw and any traces of exposure have led a number of scholars to interpret the skull as evidence of non-warrior ritual.

The Marquis of Cerralbo defended the existence of a Celtiberian human sacrificial stone in Monreal de Ariza (Aguilera y Gamboa 1909). Despite the fact that a lack of archaeological evidence has led most scholars to consider this a "mythical and fantastical" suggestion (Burillo 1997b: 237), a number of people still believe in the validity of this interpretation (Lorrio 1997: 333; Birkhan 1999: 394). Archaeological excavations carried out in the vicinity of the stone, which was interpreted by its discoverer as a Celtiberian gathering place, have concluded that the exact function of this structure remains undetermined, although it is certain that it only dates back to the Middle Ages (Alfayé et al. 2001-02). In any case, the general attraction of gory Celtiberian myths persists, and so legends continue to emerge, such as the discovery of new "sacrificial stones", for example in Bulbuenta (Gracia 2000).

## **11. From History to the Present: Celto-mania Reaches the Celtiberians**

The Celts are undoubtedly one of the most influential ancient ethnonyms for processes of identity formation in modern societies and have developed into a living example of erroneous portrayals of the historical past, mainly because the link between Celticity and modern identity is based on the assumed existence of a homogenous and stable Celtic culture or group of peoples (previously referred to as races) (Ruiz Zapatero 1993).

The term Celt originally had an alienating connotation, for this was the word used by the ancient Greeks to refer to barbarian, foreign cultures. Thus, a dichotomy was established between the recognised areas of the Mediterranean with their Classical cultures on the one hand, and the unknown territory of continental Europe on the other. This duality remains in use today, although applied from the perspective of re-invention and re-interpretation, with significant changes in its original implications. The so-called "new Celts" have appropriated the Greek term and are now a proud, self-defining, self-differentiated people, often despising those who are alien to their culture and identity. These new Celts identify themselves through a negation of the contrary, i.e. the "other" culture - nowadays Occidental, previously (and always) Semitic.

Fernando Pereira (2000) has carried out an analysis of the development of the Celtic myth in history and concludes by pointing out that in contemporary contexts the phenomenon has developed into a sort of "magic hat" used by any and all types of ideology: imperialist and anti-imperialist, ultraconservative and left wing, pre-Christian and esoteric.

The "I Celti" exhibit displayed in the Palazzo Grassi in Venice in 1991 adopted the phrase "prima Europa" as a subtitle. This offered a parcelled out understanding of Europe, set in opposition to the Classical cultures that developed in the Mediterranean region. The fact that the co-ordinators were charged with the task of emphasising an ideological base for a new macroethnia (i.e. the European Community) does not justify this simplistic portrayal of the past. This uniform vision of what constitutes "Celticity", disregarding notions of time and space and set in opposition to the Classical world, is defended by recognised scholars such as Venceslas Kruta (2000: 4-9), who maintains that there is an omnipresent and multiform Celtic heritage manifested throughout the different artistic phases of history in Europe: Gothic, Romanticism, Art Nouveau in contrast to Renaissance and Neoclassicism. Taking this simplification at face value, one could well argue that Gaudí therefore constitutes the leading exponent of Celticity in the twentieth century!

The post-Spanish Civil War period was characterised by a strong emphasis on the archaeological justification of Spain's claims to participation in Europe's historical heritage. The ideological base of this process was an ultraconservative one, and Julio Martínez Santa Olalla (1946) stands out as one of its most fervent defenders, arguing for the continuity of Central European cultural elements. This led to a disregard for the Iberian culture, which became associated with Africa.

Today, as Julián Ortega (1999-2000) points out, Celto-mania has also manifested itself in groups having ultraconservative, neo-Nazi ideology who share clear links with other violent and xenophobic groups in several parts of Europe and the USA. These include, amongst others, musical bands such as "Céltica", political associations such as "Celtíberos Segovianos", who have adopted insignias like the SS or the cross in an O (i.e. the nimbus cross, which is internationally recognised as the Celtic cross by definition), and the "ultra" gang based on Málaga known as "Clan Celta". In these cases, "Celtic" is synonymous with the ancient, white Europe: Aryan and anti-Semitic (Fig. 18).

"Celticity" is also being used in attempts to revitalise certain nationalisms, based on the differences emphasised by this reinvented ethnic entity. Its manifestations are very diverse and even contradictory. Two Spanish regions stand out as the most active *foci* for the defence of this new Celtic identity, adopted as one of the features that validates their political autonomy: Galicia and Asturias (Falquina et al. 1999). I shall only cite as one example a comment made in reference to one of the many institutions incorporating the term "Celtic" in Galicia - the football team "Celta de Vigo". The newspaper article *Todos somos celtas* suggests that the name "Celta de Vigo" should be extended to the entire city of "Vigo", and includes a series of statements that



Figure 18. Illustration of Nazi-Spanish ideology on a leaflet (after P.O. Costa, J.M. Pérez and F. Tropea 1996: Fig. 22).

many of us would associate with a very specific political and historical stage of Spain's past: "The name of the football team has grown to symbolise an entire nation, a race, and an Atlantic impulse that are set in opposition to all the rest - we the Celts, they the Iberians" (Hernández 1998: 10).

The phenomenon emerging in the geographical space of the Iberian Mountain Range is a more recent one (Fig. 19). Various regions of the Autonomous Communities of Aragón, Castilla León, Castilla la Mancha, and La Rioja decided to get together under the name "Espacio Celtiberia" in the *Jornadas* of Daroca in the year 2000. The reason that these regions were motivated to form such an alliance stems mainly from an attempt to revitalise the economy of their demographically depressed territory. Their proposal was accepted by the European Community as part of the programme for economic development known as Leader Plus, which encompasses the time range between 2001 and 2006.



Figure 19. The historically themed "Vulcanalia" celebration in Mara, Zaragoza (photo F. Burillo).

## 12. Epilogue

The peoples encountered by Rome during the conquest of the Central Iberian Mountain Range and its environs spoke an Indo-European language belonging to the Celtic group. The

linguistic Celticity of this group has acted as a pivotal point for archaeological and historical studies of Celtiberia, to the extent of producing on numerous occasions portrayals of the Celtic world as a uniform and stable phenomenon, often overlooking the cultural aspects shared by the Celtiberians with other neighbouring groups, such as the Iberians.

Regardless of the relations and influences (whether these are close or remote) that can be traced as part of the study of the different aspects that make up a society, the Celtiberians never constituted an identifiable social, cultural, or political unit. Hence, the study of this group must be geared toward an analysis of the historical process that developed throughout an amalgamation of populations that inhabited a territory defined by Classical writers as "Celtiberia".

The frequent retrieval of Celtiberian texts over the past few years constitutes a promising step towards an advance in our knowledge of these people. Moreover, archaeological excavations in villages, cities, and necropoli are providing a vast amount of information that will also contribute to a better understanding of the Celtiberians in the near future. However, it can only be hoped that the unfortunate impulse to search for new racial and nationalistic identities in the historical past of the Celtiberians will be counteracted by a more dynamic understanding of history and an appreciation of the Celtiberian historical heritage, which has the potential of becoming a key element in the social and economic development of one of the most demographically depressed territories of the Iberian Peninsula: the Central Iberian Mountain Range.

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