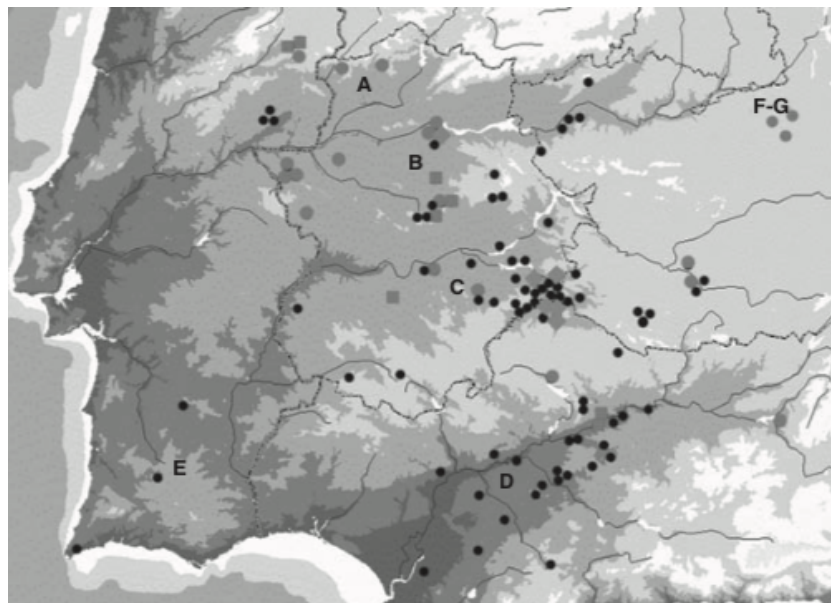


For my report I will be focussing on the linguistic influence of the Romans on Celtic cultures within the Iberian Peninsular by studying the presence of Latin for inscriptions in stone, focusing particularly on Stelae but also graffiti. Therefore I must first ascertain the following: the function of the stelae in Celtic culture, how pre-Roman compares to post Roman stelae, using specific case studies from around the Iberian Peninsular, and finally which linguistic changes were adopted on response to Roman interaction.

Romanisation in Celtic Iberia

Before I explore the evidence of Roman involvement on the Celt-Iberians, a brief explanation for why there was such an active Roman influence and its effect should first be reasoned, for which one must look at the cultural implications of an expanding empire. For example it was expected, but not enforced, of Roman citizens to speak Latin, partake in official public cults and also uphold certain historical traditions and customs (Lloris, 1999). They would also have to follow an urban mode of life incorporating common usage of certain public monumental buildings, literacy -in Latin- and imagery (Lloris, 1999). Although no religion was enforced within the provinces, there was nonetheless a perceived threat to indigenous cultural heritage, leading to a resurgence of Celtic identity that incorporated material culture influenced by Rome (Sanjuán, González and Gómez, 2012). It is the archaeological evidence of this conflict that I feel provides the best insight into Roman influence in Celtic Iberia, particularly with the repurposing of stelae.



(Distribution of warrior stelae in South Western Iberia, after Murillo Redondo, Morena López, and Ruiz Lara 2005)

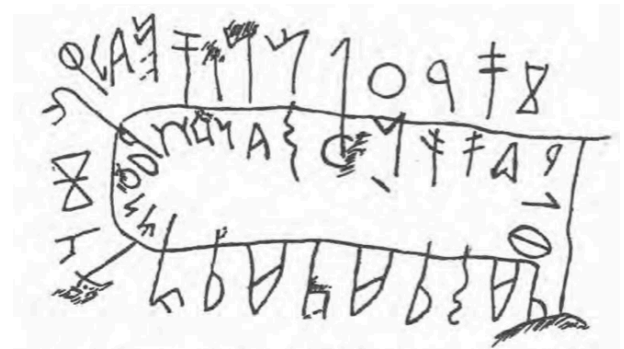
Original Function of Stelae and Early Examples

Unfortunately the exact role of stelae is unknown; this is due to many factors, firstly, most stelae were discovered accidentally, making it harder for an archaeological context to be ascertained, secondly, very few have original inscriptions from their erection besides names. Regardless, it has been proposed that stelae were used to commemorate the death of distinguished members of a community, such as warriors. The imagery carved into them meant to invoke guardians for the deceased as well as materialise the memories of them (Sanjuán, González and Gómez, 2012).

Earlier stelae contained little text, mostly depicting cult based imagery, particularly funerary iconography; a good example of this is the Zurita Stele, one of the Cantabrian Stelae. This particular stele depicts a fallen warrior being eaten by a vulture, a bird supposed to fulfil the psychopomp role within the journey to the afterlife in Celtic culture (Simón, 2005). An alternative purpose has been proposed after consideration of their geographical context, suggesting they served to mark paths and territorial boundaries, placed in locations of strategic importance (Ruiz-Gálvez Priego and Galán Domingo 1991). Regardless of the original purpose of the stelae in Iberia, their significance as an expression of cultural identity renders them highly important within Celtic culture both before and after the Roman conquest of Spain.

Language and Script in pre-Roman Iberia

It can be and is argued that Mediterranean contact has always influenced the languages in the Iberian Peninsular. The dominant script found in this region, Tartessian, shares many similarities with both the Phoenician and Greek alphabets, however the execution of syllabaries also implies an Etruscan influence (Woudhuizen, 1998-1999). Introduced and developed by coastal communities with more exposure to mediterranean culture, the writing system is composed of semi-alphabetic, semi-syllabic script that was mainly used for coins and inscriptions. Its primary use on the coast meant it was not well suited to Celt-Iberian language within central Spain, meaning it was not widely adopted and therefore usage was limited, with only seven stone stelae bearing inscriptions (Curchin, 1995). Those that did contain inscriptions tended to follow the format, or name formula, that follows this sequence, although the order is interchangeable: clan name, the term of kinship and finally the personal name, as demonstrated in the stele from Fonte Velha, Bensafrim (Woudhuizen, 1998-1999). This stele reads *"For Atikuos, son of Korelinos; Ravannaros, of the gens Tudosiemana."* (Woudhuizen, 1998-1999, pg. 173). However the script has yet to be consistently deciphered, with only a few individual words in later inscriptions being recognised, even then by association as opposed to a result from direct translation. Nonetheless the use of the identifying an individual in relation to the monument does support claims for its use in a funerary context.



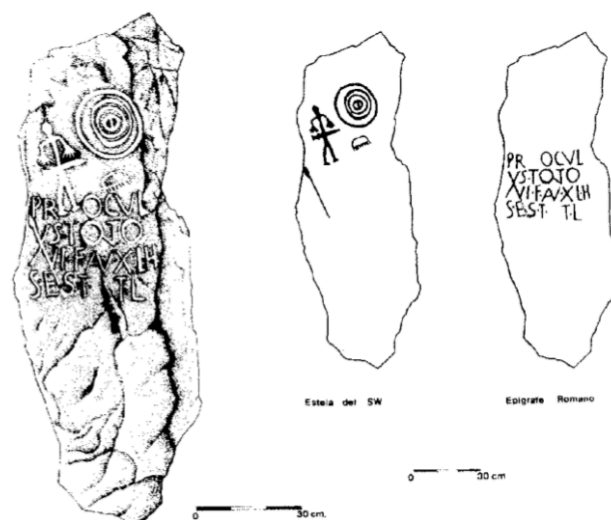
Stone stele from Fonte Velha, Bensafrim (after Schmoll 1961, 52 and Harrison 1988, 143, Fig. 96)

What is interesting to note is an existing knowledge of Latin prior to Roman conquest as well as the speed with which it was spread, this is potentially due to the similarity between the structure 'Celtic' and Latin language making assimilation easier (Curchin, 1995).

Celtic Stelae in Roman Times

Warrior stelae have been cut and re-inscribed to be Roman grave slabs, one case being a stele found at Chillón that had been repurposed as a funerary slab for 'Proculus, son of Toutonius' (Fernández Ochoa and Zarzalejos Prieto 1994). This continuation of using stelae within a funerary context reflects a degree of cultural continuation from Celtic Iberia, as well as the respect Roman settlers had for the pre-existing practices. It is noted in this stele that the Latin inscription is interrupted and formed around the original carving, so as not to disrupt it, suggesting a reverence for this practice (Sanjuán, González and Gómez). For example, the name 'Proculus' is broken in half so that the legs of the man in the carving remain undisturbed and the text indents on the left hand side to remain clear of the shaft of the spear. Moreover I would extend this assumption and propose a two way

assimilation of culture, wherein Roman settlers would adopt Celtic customs as a form of integration or bricolage .



Stele found at Chillón, Guadalajara, Spain. (Sanjuán, González and Gómez)

Lasting Effect of Roman Influence

As previously stated, the domination of Celtic Iberia by Roman conquest caused a revival of Celtic identity, or rather, a refusal to abandon the previous culture, and instead use Roman influence to demonstrate this identity. With the introduction of Latin and Roman culture, particularly literature, evidence can be found of graffiti that shows how the Latin alphabet was adapted to the Celtic language (Curchin, 1995). Moreover the most lasting result of Roman influence on Iberian language is the modern day dialect in Spain, Castilian, which is of Romantic derivation as opposed to Celtic, evidence of the eventual domination of Latin over Celtic language. The influence of the Roman conquest may appear to diminish Celt-Iberian culture, however through increased literacy within central Spain, a new culture emerged. Despite being a Roman province, the identity of the Iberians was never lost, instead it was promoted through the production of Latin poetry, particularly that by Martial of Bilbilis, who self-identified as Celt-Iberian (Curchin, 1995). I therefore argue that Roman influence within Iberia was a large factor in the preservation and promotion of Celtic identity in Iberia.

Conclusion

To conclude, the Roman conquest in Iberia influenced many aspects of Celtic life. Although it came to dominate native practices, it also provided a platform from which Celtic-Iberian identity could be expressed. Furthermore the Celtic heritage was not eradicated by the Romans but rather preserved through the re-purposing of stelae as well as the increase of literacy that not only allowed expression of identity but also allowed for the unification of Celtic-Iberians through a common language.

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