

SUMMARY

The existence of Celts in the Iberian Peninsula is attested by the linguistic evidence and by the information provided by the Graeco-Latin historians and geographers. The earliest descriptions of the Celts, apart from the disputed *Periplus* of Avienus, come from Herodotus, who already in the 5th century B.C. said they were to be found in the Iberian Peninsula. However, it was not until the latter centuries of the pre-Christian era that the names of the peninsular Celtic tribes and the territories they occupied were known: the Celtiberian and Beron tribes in the Eastern Meseta, the Iberian System and the Middle Valley of the Ebro; the Celtic tribes in the Southwest; and various groups of Celtic filiation, clearly differentiated from other non-Celtic tribes, in the Northwest, Galicia and the North of Portugal.

According to the literary sources (Chapter II,1.1), Celtiberia was a large area in the interior of the Iberian Peninsula. There was not always unanimous agreement about its territorial boundaries, and there were substantial differences, if not contradictions, between the Graeco-Latin authors whose works refer to it in greater or lesser detail. The sources sometimes describe Celtiberia as occupying a large area, roughly equivalent to the Meseta, which is the description found in the oldest texts, written in the early years of the Conquest, and is how Strabo described it, with Idoubeda —the Iberian System— to the East, although he considered Segeda and Bilbilis, both located in the Middle Ebro Valley, to be Celtiberian towns. Together with this general concept, there is another more limited one which locates Celtiberia in the highlands of the Eastern Meseta and the Iberian System and in the lands on the right bank of the Middle Ebro Valley. Authors such as Pliny and Ptolemy do not offer a very clear definition either. Thus Pliny (3, 19; 3, 25-27) considers that the Celtiberians only included the Arevaci and Pelendones, whose occupation of the Upper Duero is well known, and the inhabitants of Segobriga. Ptolemy (2, 6) discusses the Arevaci and the Pelendones separately

from the Celtiberians, to whom he attributes a number of towns located between the Middle Ebro and the Cuenca region.

Thus the territorial limits of the Celtiberia described by the classical writers are inexactly defined, and must in any case have changed in the course of time. Neither are the tribes included under the generic term of Celtiberian clear, although it seems beyond all doubt that the Arevaci, Belos, Titos, Lusones and Pelendones fell into that category. However, the inclusion of groups such as the Olcades or Turboletas is more questionable.

The theoretical Celtiberian territory defined by the literary sources coincides, more or less, with the area covered by inscriptions in the Celtiberian language in the Iberian or Latin alphabet. There is also evidence of particular personal names restricted to Celtiberia which co-existed with others names of Indo-European origin which were more widely spread through the West and North of the Peninsula. This picture of Celtiberia is that of a later period, at the time of the Roman Conquest or later, and we have to turn to the archaeological record to identify the extent of Celtiberian territory in the centuries before the arrival of the Romans.

An analysis of the settlements and the cemeteries, and also the weapons and the material culture, has made it possible to establish the cultural sequence of the Celtiberian world (Figure 143), so that for the first time we have a general periodisation for this Culture which, although produced mainly from the funerary record, integrates the various manifestations of Celtiberian Culture. Nevertheless, the diversity of the areas which make up this territory should be remembered, and also the unequal extent of our knowledge of them. The periodisation proposed suggests three successive phases, with a formative period for which the term Proto-Celtiberian is reserved: an initial phase, or Early Celtiberian (ca. mid-6th century - mid-5th century B.C.),

a phase of development or Middle Celtiberian (ca. mid-5th century - end of the 3rd century) and a final or Late Celtiberian phase (late 3rd-century - 1st century B.C.).

The demonstrated continuity of use of the cemeteries whose seriation has been possible mainly thanks to an analysis of the military equipment left in the graves, fully justifies the use of the term «Celtiberian» from at least the 6th century B.C. But that is why, initially, this term should be restricted to what can be considered the heartland of historical Celtiberia, limited to the highlands of the Eastern Meseta. This continuity is confirmed by the settlements themselves, which display an evolution parallel to that recorded in the cemeteries, as in the case of the material culture and the socio-economic structure.

In this way it would seem more accurate to use the term *Celtiberian* to refer to a geographically and chronologically well-defined cultural system, which lasted unbroken from the 6th century B.C. to the Roman Conquest. The continuity observed in the archaeological record would thus permit the use of an ethnic term from the formative period of this Culture, despite the difficulties that its use implies for referring to specific archaeological entities.

A basic problem is that of explaining the formation of the Celtiberian Culture. Terms such as *Urnfield Culture*, *Hallstatt*, *post-Hallstatt* or *Celtic* have frequently been used in an attempt to establish a connection with European archaeology, thus more or less accepting the invasionist theories which relate the formation of the Celtiberians with the arrival of successive waves of Celts from Central Europe. This thesis was defended by P. Bosch Gimpera (Chapter I,2), who, on the basis of historical information and evidence of a linguistic nature, postulated the existence of various invasions in an attempt to combine the historical and linguistic sources with the archaeological evidence. To do this he adopted the Central European sequence: *Urnfield Culture-Hallstatt Culture-La Tène Culture*, for the Iberian Peninsula. This opened up a constricting line of Spanish archaeological research, in view of the difficulty of correlating these cultures with the cultures of the Iberian Peninsula, while the idea of successive invasions was not confirmed by the archaeological evidence (Ruiz Zapatero 1993). The hypothesis of invasions was maintained by the linguists (Chapter I,3), but without being able to offer any information on their chronology or the route by which they arrived. The oldest, considered pre-Celtic, would include Lusitanian, a language which for some researchers should be considered a Celtic dialect, whilst the most recent would be so-called Celtiberian, by this time fully Celtic (Chapter XI).

The restriction of the *Urnfield Culture* to the Northeast of the Peninsula, linguistically an Iberian area, i.e. non-Celtic and not even Indo-European, and the absence of that culture in celticised areas, made it necessary to

reconsider the invasionist theories, since not even by accepting a single invasion, that of the *Urnfield Culture*, could the phenomenon of peninsular Celticisation be explained.

The difficulty of correlating the linguistic data and the archaeological evidence has led the two disciplines to go separate ways, which has made it difficult to obtain an all-embracing vision, since a linguistic hypothesis cannot be fully accepted if it does not acknowledge the archaeological evidence, and this cannot be explained without a coherent evaluation of the linguistic information.

One alternative interpretation has been proposed by M. Almagro-Gorbea (1986-87, 1987a, 1992a, 1993; Almagro-Gorbea & Lorrio 1987a), who takes as the starting point the difficulty of maintaining that the origin of the *Hispanic Celts* can be related with the *Urnfield Culture*, which did not spread beyond the Northeastern quadrant of the Peninsula (Ruiz Zapatero 1985). In his view, their origin must be sought in the «Proto-Celtic» substrata preserved in the western regions of the Peninsula. The Celtiberian Culture would have emerged from this proto-Celtic substrata (Almagro-Gorbea 1992a, 1993), and this would explain the various similarities between the two and the progressive assimilation of that substrata by the Celts.

However, the paucity of information relating to the late Bronze Age in the Eastern Meseta (Chapter VII,1) makes it difficult to evaluate the substrata in the formation of the Celtiberian world, although certain evidence does seem to confirm continuity of occupation, at least in the area where the Celtiberian phenomenon appeared with greatest force: the Upper Tagus-Upper Jalón-Upper Duero.

At present the Celticisation of the Iberian Peninsula appears to have been a complex phenomenon in which a unique and very specific ethnic ingredient, implicit in the invasionist assertions, can no longer be considered an indispensable element for explaining the emergence and development of peninsular Celtic Culture, of which the Celtiberians are the best-known group.

However, there is evidence of ethnic characteristics originating in the Ebro Valley, recorded in the highlands of the Eastern Meseta, as the settlement of Fuente Estaca (Martínez Sastre 1992), would appear to confirm, with *Urnfield* materials and a C14 date of 800 ± 90 B.C., which permits it to be attributed to the **Proto-Celtiberian** period (Chapter VII,1). This was the stage immediately before the appearance of certain elements considered essential to the Celtiberian Culture, such as the cremation cemeteries or fortified settlements.

The possibility that these infiltrating *Urnfield* groups may have brought with them an Indo-European language should not be rejected, even if their true role in creating

the Celtiberian world has yet to be evaluated. At the present stage of research it would be hazardous —but tempting, none the less— to link the arrival of these groups with the introduction of a «proto-Celtiberian» language, a term used by de Hoz (1993a: 392, footnote 125) to refer to «any stage of language which comes between Celtic before its differentiation into dialects and the historical Celtiberian attested by the inscriptions».

Be that as it may, the trans-Pyrenean origin of the Urnfield groups of the Northeast would seem beyond all doubt, the penetration, at least in its initial phases (which can be put around 1100 B.C.) of human groups, which were of little importance in demographic terms (Ruiz Zapatero 1985; Maya & Barberá 1992: 176 ff.), being accepted. In view of the continuity of the material culture in the Northeast through the first millennium, if the Indo-European character of this contribution is accepted, a possible explanation of the continuing dominance of an Iberian language at a late date is what Villar (1991: 465 f.) calls «failed Indo-Europeanisation». According to this theory the Indo-European languages of the Northeast, probably in the minority, must have waned as those who spoke them were culturally and linguistically «Iberianised». That at least some of the Urnfield groups spoke an Indo-European language of a Celtic or proto-Celtic type seems very probable. Thus it could be postulated that «either the migratory Urnfield groups were so small they did not succeed in imposing their own language on the peoples of the substrata, or the Iberian transformation largely erased the Indo-European linguistic features that had hypothetically been assumed by the natives» (Maya & Barberá 1992: 176).

The transition of the 7th-6th centuries B.C. saw the shaping of what has been called the **Early Celtiberian**, evidence for which is found in the highlands of the Eastern Meseta and the Iberian System. It was characterised by important innovations in patterns of settlement, burial rites and technology, with the adoption of an iron-working metallurgy. The first stable settlements in this territory appear at this time. Several settlements attributed to this phase are of the fortified type, although other highland sites without artificial defences are also documented. The oldest cemeteries on the Eastern Meseta can also be dated to this period, their continuous use from the 6th to the 2nd centuries B.C., or even later, having already been mentioned. Some of them display a characteristic internal organization, with lines of graves, which are generally marked with stelae (Chapter IV,2). The grave goods indicate that the society had a strong warrior component, with a hierarchical social structure, the weapons —notable for the long spearheads and the absence of swords or daggers— appearing as an external symbol of prestige (Chapter IX,1).

The appearance of the Celtiberian elites could be due to the rise of dominant groups in the Cogotas I Culture of the Late Bronze Age, although there may have been external demographic factors (Almagro-Gorbea 1993: 146 f.). The true part played by these factors in this process is, however, difficult to determine. Certainly the new socio-economic organisation would have led to a growing concentration of wealth and power in the hands of those who controlled resources such as grazing lands, saltworks —essential for stockraising and ironworking— or iron production, which made it possible to produce effective weapons at an early date, thus explaining the development of a progressively more hierarchical warrior society.

An analysis of the material culture of the cemeteries and settlements in the initial phase of the Celtiberian Culture reveals the existence of contributions from various origins and a variety of cultural traditions. With regard to the objects found amongst the grave goods, it can be postulated that some of these came from the South, such as some double-springed broochs, belt buckles that had between one and three hooks, or the first iron objects, including long spearheads and curved knives. Another possibility, by no means exclusive, is that some of these elements came from areas close to the colonial world in the Northeast of the Peninsular via the Ebro Valley, together with the ritual itself, cremation, and the urns that formed part of it; this would be confirmed by their shapes, which can be linked with the Urnfields. A similar origin has been suggested for the tumulus burials of the Eastern Meseta which, however, are very poorly documented. On the other hand, the presence of stelae lined up is a local feature, unparalleled in the Urnfields or the Celtic world.

The chronology of this initial phase of the Celtiberian cemeteries is not easy to determine since practically the only elements which can be more or less reliably dated are the broochs.

The find of «chevaux-de-frise» associated with a wall and rectangular towers in a settlement in Catalonia has led to reconsideration of how this defensive system originated. It is found in an Iron Age Urnfield setting, and is dated to the second half of the 7th century B.C. (Garcés *et al.* 1991, 1993). This dating, earlier than those commonly accepted for the Sorian hillforts, and its geographical location in the Lower Segre, would confirm the Central European filiation established for it by Harbison (1971), with the wooden stockades of the Hallstatt C.

The type of settlement (Chapter III), consisting of rectangular houses with walls closed to the outside to form a rampart, characteristic of the Celtiberian world, but not exclusive to it, is likewise well recorded in the Urnfield settlements of the Northeast, although this urban layout is known from the Middle Bronze Age.

The presence of the elements analysed, and the different influences referred to in the Eastern Meseta, should not necessarily be related with movements of population but should not exclude them either, since the role of the indigenous substrate in this process has yet to be determined. However, the existence of ethnic contributions from the Ebro Valley is attested in the area, as the open settlement of Fuente Estaca demonstrates.

From the 5th century B.C. and for the next two centuries the **Middle Celtiberian** period developed, in the course of which regional variations appeared which make it possible to define cultural groups which can sometimes perhaps be related with the *populi* known from the literary sources. An analysis of the cemeteries, and principally of the metal objects placed in the graves, particularly weapons, has enabled this period to be divided into various subphases, which however are difficult to correlate with the information obtained from the settlements, sometimes only known through surface materials (Chapter VII,3). At the end of this period the lands of the right bank of the Middle Ebro Valley appear to be fully integrated into Celtiberia, although it is not yet sufficiently clear when and how what might be termed the «Celtiberisation» of this area occurred (Royo 1990: 130 f., figure 2).

The cemeteries emphasise growing social distinctions, with the appearance of aristocratic tombs containing grave goods that consist of a good number of artefacts, some of which can be considered exceptional, such as the bronze weapons or the wheel-turned pottery (Chapters VII,3.1.1 and IX,2). This important development initially appears to be restricted to the Upper Henares-Upper Tajuña, and to the southern part of the province of Soria belonging to the Upper Duero and the Upper Jalón rivers. It could be related to the livestock wealth of the area, control of the saltworks or the production of iron, but its privileged geographic situation should not be forgotten, since this area constitutes a natural pass between the Ebro Valley and the Meseta. The proliferation of cemeteries in this area could be associated with an increase in the density of the population, which would imply more systematic occupation of the land.

The grave goods of the warrior tombs include swords, of the antenna and *frontón* types, which are recorded together in the South of the Peninsula from the beginnings of the 5th century B.C. Spearheads, usually accompanied by their ferrules, are also present. The panoply is completed with the shield, which has a boss of bronze or iron, the curved-back knife, and, in some cases, bronze disc-breastplates and helmets. Horse harnesses are frequently found with them, which indicates the high status of the personages with whom these objects were placed.

With regard to the origin of the different types of objects found in the graves, various influences are clear: on one hand, from the North of the Pyrenees, through the Ebro Valley, and on the other, from the lands of the South and the East of the Peninsula, of Mediterranean inspiration. A good example of this is offered by the weapons, perhaps the most significant elements of the grave goods. Thus the various types of antenna swords reflect two influences, one from Languedoc, certainly through Catalonia, as would seem to be the case of the Aguilar de Anguita type, and Aquitaine, as the few examples of the Aquitanian type would confirm, which are certainly imported pieces, and the Echauri type swords. The local character of the antenna swords of the Aguilar de Anguita and Echauri types demonstrate the considerable metallurgical development in the Eastern Meseta from an early date. A different origin could be defended for the *frontón* swords, which can be assumed to be of Mediterranean origin, coming from the South of the Peninsula at the beginning of the 5th century B.C.

Similarly, a foreign origin can be postulated for the bronze weapons —helmets, breastplates and large bosses—, which display similar themes and decorative technique and thus suggest a common origin, although the possibility that they were made in local workshops cannot be discounted. This foreign origin is particularly obvious in the case of the disc-breastplates, which are inspired by *Italic* pieces and for which a 5th century B.C. date is proposed (Chapter VII,3.1.1).

The other materials, such as various kinds of broochs, belt buckles, spiral adornments or pectorals made from bronze plates, display similarities with a wide variety of items from different periods and places, frequently Mediterranean, attesting various origins and ways of arrival, although in many cases they could be locally-produced pieces, as the geographical dispersion of the finds demonstrates. An origin in the Iberian area is evident in the case of the first wheel-turned pieces arriving in the Eastern Meseta.

From the end of the 5th century the progressive displacement of the centres of wealth towards the lands of the Upper Duero can be observed. This can be related with the outstanding role played from this time on by one of the most powerful Celtiberian *populi*: the Arevaci. This is demonstrated by the high proportion of graves containing weapons in the cemeteries located on the right bank of the Upper Duero that can be attributed to this period. This coincides with the impoverishment of the grave goods, including the virtual disappearance of weapons, in other parts of Celtiberia (Chapter VII,3.1.1 and IX,3).

The presence of Iberian-type weapons is unusual in

the Upper Duero, while from the mid-4th century B.C. onwards La Tène type swords appeared in the cemeteries of the Upper Henares-Upper Jalón, and reached their fullest expression the following century, authentic La Tène pieces having been recorded, as the find of certain sword scabbards would indicate (Chapter V,2.2.1.1).

Given the entirely indigenous characteristics of the panoplies to which these weapons belong, it is possible that they were brought by Celtiberian mercenaries or were perhaps exotic pieces that arrived through exchanges of prestige goods.

With regard to the settlements, new systems of defence were incorporated during this phase, such as buttressed walls and rectangular towers, which co-existed with the characteristics «chevaux-de-frise», already recorded in the earlier phase (Chapters III,2 and VII).

The period between the end of the 3rd century B.C. and the 1st century B.C., the **Late Celtiberian**, seems to be a period of transition and profound change in the Celtiberian world (Almagro-Gorbea & Lorrio 1991).

Its most outstanding feature could be the trend towards an increasingly urban way of life, which should be seen in relationship to the preceding process of urbanisation in the Tartessian-Iberian world and the appearance of *oppida* in Central Europe. This is shown by the grouping of towns into federations referred to in the sources, and the possible transformation of the funerary ideology reflected by the grave goods, which could explain the increasing appearance of jewellery, perhaps as an element of status replacing weapons as a social symbol. A strong Iberian influence can be observed in the bronze and pottery objects, which gives them a definite personality within the Celtic world to which these creations belonged, as their stylistic and ideological elements attest. Within this process of urbanisation the probable appearance of writing should be considered (de Hoz 1986a, 1995a). Coinage — dated from the mid-2nd century B.C. — provides evidence of writing, but the diversity of alphabets and their rapid adoption suggests it arrived from the Iberian areas to the South and East at an earlier date. The existence of laws written in bronze (Fatás 1980; Beltrán & Tovar 1982) and the development of a truly monumental architecture should also be mentioned (Beltrán 1982; Almagro-Gorbea 1994a: 40) (Chapter III,4).

For this final phase, we have the information provided by the literary sources, which makes it possible to analyse the socio-political organisation of the Celtiberians in depth, and provides a more complex panorama than that available from the archaeological evidence alone (Chapter IX,4). There are descriptions of family or supra-family kinship groups, socio-political institutions such as *senates* or *assemblies*, non-kin institutions such as the *hospitium*,

client or age groups, and ethnic and territorial entities whose names are known for the first time. These same sources offer information of great interest on the economic organisation of the Celtiberians, and coincide in describing their society as being predominantly pastoral in character, which would have been complemented with subsistence farming (Chapter VIII,1).

Another key feature of this period appears to be the continuing expansion of the Celtic world in the Iberian Peninsula, apparently from one nucleus, largely identifiable with the Celtiberia of the written sources. This process, according to archaeological and historical evidence, was still fully active in the 2nd century B.C. (Almagro-Gorbea 1993: 154 ff.), and would have extended westwards, as proved by the geographical dispersion of the horse broochs (Figure 8,A) or genuinely Celtiberian weapons such as the bi-globular type dagger (Figure 8,B), which even reached the lands of Celtic Beturia. This coincides with the information provided by the literary sources (Pliny 3, 13) and the linguistic and inscriptional evidence (Chapters II,2 and XI).

The phenomenon of Celtiberian expansion in the Iberian Peninsula, in a similar way to Italy, came up against a parallel expansion of the urban Mediterranean world. The Carthaginians, from the last third of the 3rd century B.C., and, subsequently, the Roman world, initiated a series of confrontations which would culminate in the Celtiberian Wars, one of the main episodes in the process of shock, absorption and destruction of the Celtic world by Rome.

By way of a final reflection, some points of interest can be made:

1. The historical and linguistic evidence enables the Celtiberians to be clearly defined as having an ethnic identity and a Celtic language of their own during the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. The area described in the classical sources and indicated by the linguistic evidence has its own archaeological personality. But the Celtiberian Culture of the latter centuries B.C. is simply the culmination of an unbroken historical process which had its origins in the 6th century B.C., so from that time onwards the term Celtiberian can legitimately be used for the communities of the Upper Duero and the Upper Tagus.

Archaeological study of the Celtiberian region has uncovered very little information for the 8th and 7th centuries B.C., theoretically Proto-Celtiberian, and the same is true of the final stages of the Late Bronze Age. This is a serious problem which is now beginning to be tackled.

2. If, as we have said, the Celticisation of the Iberian Peninsula did not occur through the Urnfield communities of the Northeast, and there were no migrations or breaks

in the general sequence of the Celtiberian period, then the explanation has to be sought at the beginning of the period, ca. 600 B.C., and the period immediately before.

3. The implantation of a language such as Celtiberian demands a «critical mass», i.e. a fairly large population in which the majority were speakers of the Celtic language. Therefore some kind of proto-Celtiberian language must already have existed in the 6th century B.C. in an area where Indo-European elements had doubtless made their mark at an earlier date. This would explain the famous remark of Herodotus (2, 33; 4, 49) that there were Celts in the Iberian finis terra in the 5th century B.C.

4. It is evident that there were Celtiberian elements in areas which were not strictly speaking Celtiberian, and this can be interpreted as indicative of the processes of Celtiberianisation, given the expansive force of this culture, and therefore, of Celticisation of these territories. This would not have required large-scale ethnic movements but could have been an intermittent process that had a cumulative effect, with a few dominant groups imposing themselves, local migrations or even the acculturation of the substrata (Almagro-Gorbea 1993: 156). The dispersal of Celtiberian weapons—such as the bi-globular daggers— can be seen as indicative of this expansion and the consequent process of Celticisation, and it is also attested by the distribution of the ethnic personal names *Celtius* and *Celtiber* and their variants, of place-names ending in *-briga*, etc., a fact evidenced by texts in the Celtiberian language in non-Celtiberian parts of the Meseta and more remote areas.

In any case, the phenomenon of Celticisation tended to occur towards the West of the peninsula, possibly

because the tribes in these areas belonged to a common Indo-European substrata and were also noted for their wealth in terms of livestock, which must have attracted the attention of the Celtiberian peoples in their process of expansion.

5. Seen in this way, the Celtic world would have changed in the course of time and from one place to another, and cannot therefore be regarded as a monolithic unit, and this is largely confirmed as the data increases, indicating considerable complexity.

6. We would emphasise the distinctive personality of the Celtic world in the Peninsular and, within in it, Celtiberia, compared with the Celtic world on the other side of the Pyrenees. This is explained by its considerable exposure to the influence of Iberian Culture, displayed in aspects such as the adoption of the potter's wheel, the technology of working with fine metals, the type of weapons used, coinage, writing, etc. In addition there is its marginal situation at the western end of Europe, remote from the cultural currents which had a decisive effect on the continental Celts, who can be identified with the Hallstatt and La Tène cultures.

7. The Celtiberians came in this way to be a very important part of Celtic Culture, although scholars of the Celts have often excluded the Iberian Peninsula from their general monographs on this proto-historical people, basically because they have identified the Celts with the Hallstatt and La Tène cultures. The importance of the Celtiberian Culture can best be understood within the processes of ethnogenesis of the Iberian Peninsula and the general framework of the Celtic world.