Local Deities in the Pantheons of the civitates in the North-West of Hispania. Processes of Change, Integration and Identity Creation

I. Spatial and chronological scope

From the time of the Principate, the north-western area of Hispania covered the *conventus Asturum* or *Asturicensis*, *Bracaraugustanus* and *Lucensis* and was inhabited by the population groups of the *Astures* and the *Gallaeci*. In terms of present-day geography, it extended from approximately the River Sella in the west of what is now Asturias and the Esla in León – which, according to the information provided by classical authors, separated the *Astures* from the *Cantabri* – as far as the River Douro to the south (Fig.1). For a long time, it was seen by traditional historiography as a scarcely Romanised marginal area, but today there is no doubt that in this 'finis terrae', as in the rest of *Hispania citerior*, Rome spread the political model of the *civitas*, the basic framework for the study of provincial religion in the Roman period.

What must be taken into account is the date at which this process began, as it differs from the early beginnings in the east and north-east of the aforementioned province. This area became part of the Roman Empire at different points in time since, while the *Gallaeci* were conquered following Junius Brutus' campaigns in 138 BCE, it was not until the Principate, with the end of the Cantabrian-Asturian Wars in 19 BCE, that the *Astures* and the *Cantabri* were vanquished.

As a consequence of the settlement characteristics of the period prior to the Roman conquest and the area's late incorporation and integration into the Empire (at least in the westernmost part), what is found is an eminently rural land-scape (in contrast to the east and north-east of *Hispania citerior*), since the process of reorganising the pre-existing communities and the subsequent creation of the *civitates* began most notably with Augustus and was strengthened by the Julio-Claudian dynasty, with Tiberius being a key figure in this process (Strabo.

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3.3.8)¹. However, there can be no doubt that the consolidation and development of the new political and administrative system took place under the Flavian dynasty and most clearly following the concession of the *ius Latii*, the consequence of which was the creation and reorganisation of the majority of the *civitates* with Latin rights which, furthermore, in some instances do not follow the model of the classical city-state². In these cases, the central place (when found) is not an *op-pidum*, as in the classical city-state, but a simple hillfort (*castellum*). In other words, the classical model of the *civitas* with its *oppidum* and its *ager*, which is clearly documented in the east, north-east and south of the peninsula, does not always fit with the *civitates* of this area. All these characteristics make it a paradigmatic area to verify and observe, on the one hand, the diversity of different geographical and historical areas in the *Hispaniae* and, on the other hand, to analyse the integration of and the processes of change experienced by the societies of the Iberian Peninsula within the Roman Empire, including those concerning religion.

Without forgetting these peculiarities, it should be emphasised that this geographical area is characterised by an abundance of epigraphic evidence of different types and, together with the Lusitanian area, it is the richest area in the peninsula in terms of religious epigraphic sources alluding to the local deities of Indo-European Hispania. Indeed, there are more than 130 theonyms in all their variations referring to non-Mediterranean deities³. Consequently, it is not

¹ M.C. González-Rodríguez, *Notas sobre los pueblos del norte en época de Tiberio: cambios y transformaciones*, in R.M. Cid López, E.B. García Fernández (eds.), *Debita verba. Estudios en Homenaje al Profesor Julio Mangas Manjarrés*, Oviedo 2013, 221-33.

² As happens, for example, with the *Adovi* in the case of the *Gallaeci* (Plin. *Nat.* 4.111) and the *Zoelae* in the case of the *Astures* (*CIL* II 2633), to name two paradigmatic examples within the two population groups in the north-west of Hispania.

³ This number has been calculated on the basis of my own revision of religious epigraphy of the three conventus in the north-west of Spain and that carried out by Redentor in the Portuguese part of the conventus Bracaraugustanus: A.J. Redentor, A cultura epigráfica no conventus Bracaraugustanus (Pars occidentalis). Percursus pela sociedades brácara da época romana, 2 vols., Coimbra 2011. Tranoy (A. Tranoy, La Galice romain, Paris 1981, 264-307) had counted 108 deities. Logically, the number of finds has increased since the 1980s and uncertain instances have been checked (vide M.C. González-Rodríguez, Noms des divinités préromaines du Nord-Ouest Hispanique: bilan provisoir, in J. d' Encarnação (coord.), Divindades indígenas em análise. Divinités pré-romaines: bilan et perspectivas d'une recherche, Coimbra-Porto 2008, 81-104; Ead., Problemas de división y restitución de nombres de divinidades indígenas en la epigrafía votiva del noroeste español: el ejemplo de Couxil (Cartelle, Orense-Hispania Citerior-), in J. A. Arenas-Esteban (ed.), Celtic Religion across Space and Time. IX Workshop F.E.R.C.AN., Toledo 2010,130-37; Ead., Revisiones epigráficas del corpus de Gallaecia: nuevos hallazgos y viejos problemas, in A. Hofeneder, P. De Bernardo Stempel (eds. with M. Hainzmann and N. Mathieu), Théonymie celtique, cultes, interpretatio - Keltische Theonymie, Kulte, interpretatio. X. Workshop F.E.R.C.AN., Paris 24.-26. Mai 2010, Mitteilungen der Prähistorischen Kommission 79, Vienna 2013, 11-24; Ead., Para una historiografia de la religión

surprising that the area has been, and still is, a very interesting field of study for both linguists and historians, which has fostered a considerable number of analyses concerning the nature, etymology and characteristics of these deities⁴.

The problem is that the Latin inscriptions are the main source (and the only one, save exceptions provided by archaeology) for the study of expressions of provincial religion in this territory – Asturian and Gallaecian-Roman religion – and they are characterised by being largely private and by having been found outside any archaeological context.

This means that the religious inscriptions of this region present serious and insurmountable problems for establishing an absolute and certain chronology⁵ and can only tell us that the vast majority of the religious evidence dates from the Flavian Era and later. As a result, the chronology of this study is determined by the dating provided by the few inscriptions offering information to that effect and covers the first and second centuries CE.

Another aspect that should not be forgotten is that all the inscriptions fall

hispanorromana en el marco de la civitas. Particularidades provinciales: el paradigma de los cultos locales en el Noroeste, in Revista de Historiografía 28, 1, 2018, 73-94; Ead., Nombres de divinidades locales en el Noroeste español: revisitando a Mª Lourdes Albertos, in Veleia 38, 2021,183-238 and Ead., F. Marco Simón, Divinidades y devotos indígenas en la Tarraconensis: las dedicaciones colectivas, in Palaeohispanica 9, 2009, 65-68. However, it should be highlighted that the number of dedications, that is inscriptions in which they are mentioned (given the abundance of repetition), is much higher. In the 'Monte do Facho' (Donón, O Hío/Cangas, Pontevedra) alone, a total of 125 inscriptions have been found, of which 65 include texts alluding to the Deus Lar Berus Breus. See the complete corpus in M. Koch, Monte do Facho. I. Die epigraphische Hinterlassenschaft des römischkeltischen Heiligtums auf dem Monte do Facho (O Hío/Cangas, Galicien). I. El legado epigráfico del santuario céltico-romano en el Monte do Facho (O Hío/Cangas, Galicia), Berlin 2019, 1-69 and Th. Schattner, J. Suárez Otero, Altares votivos dedicados al dios Lar Berobreus en el Monte do Facho (O Hío, Galicia). De lo formal a lo ritual, in Boletín Auriense 50, 2020, 399-442.

⁴ In this sense, and as a sample of the work carried out in the field of linguistics, it suffices to mention the studies by J. De Hoz, *Testimonios lingüísticos relativos al problema céltico en la Península Ibérica*, in M. Almagro-Gorbea, G. Ruiz Zapatero (eds.), *Los Celtas: Hispania y Europa*, Madrid 1993, 357-403; B. Prósper, *Lenguas y religiones prerromanas del occidente de la Península Ibérica*, Salamanca 2002 and P. De Bernardo Stempel, *Centro y áreas laterales: formación del celtibérico sobre el fondo del celta peninsular hispano*, in *Palaeohispanica* 2, 2002, 89-132; *Ead., I nomi teoforici del celta antico. Individuazione, classificazione, divinità venerate e cronologia relativa*, in A. Sartori (ed.), *Dedicanti e cultores nelle religión celtiche*, Milano 2008, 73-104; *Ead., Celto-Roman and Other Divine Names Found in NW Spain (Conventus Asturum, Lucensis and Bracarensis)*, in K. Matijevic (ed.), *Kelto-Römische Gotthheiten und ihre Verehrer; Akten des 14. F.E.R.C.AN.-Workshops; Trier, 12.-14. Oktober 2015*, Rahden/Westf. 2016, 189-228. For the rest of the bibliography on this subject, see González-Rodríguez, *Para una historiografía* cit.

⁵ The difficulties in dating religious inscriptions are well known, even more so in the geographical area of this study. On the use of the term *deus/dea* see M-Th. Raepsaet-Charlier, *Diis deabusque sacrum. Formulaire votif et datation dans les Trois Gaules et les deux Germanies*, Paris 1993.

within the process of Roman territorial organisation in this part of *Hispania citerior*, which resulted in adjustments and readjustments to, as well as the reorganisation of, the pre-existing local communities so that they could adapt to the new historical period that commenced following the conquest. In this new historical phase after the concession of the *ius Latii*, the new civic communities, created and reorganised by Rome, achieved the status of Latin *civitates*, with *municipia* being practically non-existent. In fact, there is only one certain *municipium* in this area, that of *Aquae Flaviae* (*AE.* 1973, 304; *AE.* 2000, 745). Not even in the case of the so-called 'capitals' of the three *conventus – Lucus Augusti*, *Asturica Augusta* and *Bracara Augusta –* can this category be established with certainty⁷.

Meanwhile, the absence of *municipia* and colonies does not mean that the transformation and organisation of the pre-existing communities into peregrine and later into Latin *civitates* failed to bring with it modifications and attachments at their heart; indeed, the opposite was clearly the case. The spread of the *civitas* brought about changes and new narratives as regards the relationships between human communities and deities, and at the same time the significant political and social transformations also modified cult practices and their material contexts⁸. When it comes to discovering and analysing these changes, our frame of reference must be the 'religious constitution' of the municipality of *Irni* (El Saucejo, Seville) in *Baetica*. This municipal law helps us to identify the principles that governed the *religio* of a *municipium* in the west of the Empire, and also – without accepting that it might simply be repeated elsewhere – serves as a mirror in the case of the Latin cities, especially in the case of those about which there is more information available suggesting that they were organised following this model.

Another aspect which should not be forgotten is that, in the case of the people of the north-west – and the north of Hispania in general – our knowledge of the rites used in the pre-conquest period is minimal. All that is known from the Latin inscriptions is that the Roman rite, and therefore the repetitive language

⁶ On the inappropriate use of this nomenclature see P. Le Roux, *Les villes du gouvernement et de la administration sous l'empire en Hispania: questions de lectures*, in *Revista de Historiografia* 25, 2016, 17-27.

⁷ On this problematic question see E. Ortiz-de-Urbina, *Las comunidades hispanas y el derecho latino*, Vitoria-Gasteiz 2000, 128-138, 167 and Ead., *La Hispania civica en la Naturalis Historia: las CCXCIII civitates de Hispania citerior*, in P. Ciprés (ed.), *Plinio el viejo y la construcción de Hispania citerior*, Vitoria-Gasteiz 2017, 221-243. As I have indicated, referring to *Asturica Augusta* «Con la alusión a *Asturica urbs magnifica* (3, 28), entre los *populi* del *conventus Asturum*, [Pliny the Elder] estaría poniendo de relieve la transformación del campamento de la *Legio X Gemina* en un asentamiento civil en el principado de Tiberio y comienzos del de Claudio, como sugieren los testimonios arqueológicos» (Ead., *Plinio el viejo* cit. 230).

⁸ P. Le Roux, *Divinidades indígenas en la Hispania indoeuropea*, in *Veleia* 16, 2009, 33-49.

found in the epigraphic sources, is the same as in any other part of the Empire and should, therefore, be analysed under the premises and characteristics of the Roman votum with its bilateral and conditional character. The cultores who dedicated an altar to a deity with a non-local name did so following the guidelines of the Roman vow⁹ as shown by the use of v.s.l.m. and its variants. The religious behaviour reflected in these texts corresponds to that of Roman rites¹⁰, the only ones that are known, as unfortunately there is little or no information relating to this for the pre-conquest period¹¹ and its interpretation is problematic¹². This Roman influence can be seen not only on the supports and in the content of epigraphic monuments, but also in the limited amount of architecture associated with local deities, as Garrido, Mar and Martins have shown in their multidisciplinary work on the renowned 'Fonte do Ídolo' of Bracara Augusta, where the theonyms *Nabia* and *Tongus Nabiagus* are recorded. A detailed analysis of all the epigraphic evidence, archaeological remains and iconographic representations registered in this *locus sacer* has enabled a measured interpretation of this interesting place of worship which, according to these researchers, in the first century was subject to a process of monumentalisation that integrated this sacred place into the canons of the Roman cult system¹³.

- ⁹ As Scheid points out, the religious culture of Gaul and Germania prior to the conquest «était sans doute analogue en sa forme à celle du monde mediterranéen»: J. Scheid, *Introduction*, in D. Castella, M.F. Meylan Krause (dirs.), *Topographie sacrée et rituels. Le cas d'Aventicum, capitale des Helvètes. Actes du Colloque International d'Avenches. 2-4 novembre 2006*, Basel 2008, 13-20 (15).
- ¹⁰ See Le Roux, *Divinidades indígenas* cit. 276 and González-Rodríguez, Marco Simón, *Divinidades y devotos* cit.
- ¹¹ S. Alfayé, *Santuarios y rituales en la Hispania Céltica*, *BAR International Series 1963*, Oxford 2009, 27. As I have indicated, referring to the natural spaces of worship of the Hispanic Celts: (Alfayé, *Santuarios y rituales* cit. 25-30) «a pesar del carácter indígena del teónimo en la mayoría de estos lugares de culto no existen testimonios materiales de prácticas rituales prerromanas» whether it be due to «la ausencia de estructuras arquitectónicas monumentales y el carácter perecedero de las ofrendas rituales allí celebrados no haya dejado huella en el registro arqueológico» or because «la aparición de esos espacios de culto acuáticos' responds to 'un fenómeno religioso post-conquista romana» (Alfayé, *Santuarios y rituales* cit. 27). The latter hypothesis seems most appropriate in this case.
- ¹² On some problematic archaeological finds in the north-west referring to sacrifices and of controversial interpretation, see X.L. Armada, O. García, *Bronces con motivos de sacrificio del área no-roccidental de la Península Ibérica*, in *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 76, 2003, 47-75 and E. Castro Vigo, *Un nuevo ejemplar de los llamados bronces votivos sacrificales*, in *Gallaecia* 28, 2009, 131-8.
- ¹³ See A. Garrido, R. Mar, M. Martins, *A fonte do Ídolo. Análise, interpretação e reconstitução do santuario, Bracara Augusta Excavaciones arqueológicas* 4, Braga 2008, XIX, 53 and 66. This sanctuary is located outside the city limits of *Bracara Augusta* and forms a sacred monumental complex that underwent a clear evolution in the first century of the city's existence (Garrido, Mar, Martins, *A fonte do Ídolo* cit. 59 and 64). As these researchers indicate (64-65), this sacred place eloquently shows the rapid change in mentality and patterns of representation hidden be-

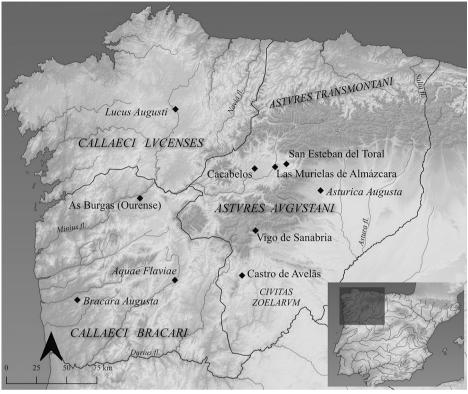


Figure 1 - The *conventus* of the NW of Hispania: principal locations cited in the text. (Map: M. Fernández Corral).

II. Local cults: some examples

As has already been pointed out, the list of confirmed local deities in the north-west of Hispania numbers over a hundred of a wide range of types¹⁴ and can by summarised as follows:

1. Simple name: Cohuetene¹⁵; Coso; Edovio; Lacubegi; Porolo; Tilleno; Verore; etc.

neath the Romanisation process of the local populations and could have played an important role in the next phase following the founding of the city and facilitated the accession of the indigenous population to the architectural prototypes of the Roman matrix.

- ¹⁴ Vide de Hoz, Testimonios lingüísticos cit. and M.C. González-Rodríguez, Die lateinische Epigraphie Hispaniens als Quelle für die keltische Gesellschaft und Religion, in Veleia 18-19, 2001-2002, 39-60.
- ¹⁵ Theonyms with unknown nominative form are transcribed with the declension recorded in the inscription.

- 2. Epithet used as theonym: *Abolodeneco; Atilaeco; Bormanico; Larauco; Mentoviaco; Tameobrigo*; etc.
- 3. Deity name + epithet: Ariounis Mincosegaeigis; Bandue Aeiobrigo; Bandue Bolecco; Coso Oenaego; Laho Paraliomego; Lugubu Arquienobo; Madarssu Soelagau; Moelio Mordonieco; Navia/Nabia; Revve Anabaraego; Reve Beisuto; Reve Reumirago; etc.
- 4. Association of theonyms: Reve Larauco; Reae Bandu.
- 5. Generic Latin term (deus/a-dominus/a) + local deity name: dea Cenduedia; deus Aernus; deus Bodus; deus Lar Berus Breus; deus Vacus Caburius; deus Vagus Donnaegus; deus dominus Cossus Segidiaecus; dea Degantia; deis Queunuris; diis Cegeaigis; etc.
- 6. Latin theonym defined by a local epithet: Genius Asturicensium; Iuppiter Candamius; Iuppiter Ladicus; Lar Circeiebaecus Proenetaecus; Lar Ocaelagus; Lares Tarmucenbaeci Ceceaeci; Lares Erredici; Mars Cairiociego; Mars Tillenus; Tutela Berisi; Tutela Bolgensi; etc.

As can be seen in the examples collected, the local theonyms of the north-west of Hispania display a great diversity of combinations¹⁶, which demonstrate a multitude of deities and the wealth of variety in the local pantheon. Given the impossibility of analysing each and every dedication in detail, this chapter will focus on those inscriptions that provide more information about provincial religion in this part of *Hispania citerior*, and which allow us to reveal its role in the creation of the different identities recorded after the Roman conquest.

1. Public dedications

Once the *civitates* in this area of *Hispania citerior* had been created and reorganised, as is known from the municipal laws of *Baetica*, it was the authorities (magistrates) of the new communities who would have been in charge of installing civic pantheons in which both classical and local deities are found. Given the characteristics of these *civitates* in this part of *Hispania citerior*, in most cases it is very difficult to define the pantheons of each one due to, on the one hand, a lack of information about the circumstances of the finds and, on the other hand, a lack of knowledge concerning the precise *fines* of the *civitates*. Consequently,

¹⁶ On the construction of divine onomastic sequences *vide* (among others): N. Belayche *et al.* (ed.), *Nommer les dieux. Thèonymes, épithètes, épiclèses dans l'Antiquité*, Turnhout 2005 and C. Bonnet *et al.*, *Les dénominations des dieux nous offrent comme autant d'images dessinées (Julien, Lettres 89b, 291b). Repenser le binôme théonyme-épithète*, in *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religione* 84/2, 2018, 567-591.

this task is always complicated and difficult to establish with certainty. In fact, in the only confirmed municipium known, Aquae Flaviae (Chaves, Portugal), the evidence reflects a rich and varied pantheon revealing dedications – all of them found in the town centre – to classical gods with very significant epithets, such as Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Municipalis (AE. 1973, 305)¹⁷; Tutela Municipii Aquiflaviensium (AE. 2000, 745); and Concordia Municipum Municipii Aquiflaviensium (AE, 1973, 304), Concordia stands out among all these civic gods, with her cult extending throughout the *civitates* of the Western Empire from the Principate onwards. It could be a reference to civic harmony and cohesion from an ethnic, judicial and social viewpoint among the possible heterogenic groups making up the new community, after Rome's policy of displacement, amalgamation and overhaul in the area. Such heterogeneity is reflected in the epithets accompanying the dedications to the Laret's: Tarmucenbaeci Ceceaeci¹⁸; Findenetici and Erredici¹⁹. These last determinants are recorded in inscriptions found on the outskirts of the city centre of what is present-day Chaves, and seem to refer to the corresponding tutelary deities of the different groups that constituted the local population's identifying reference point prior to the conquest and now became incorporated within the new civic identity of the citizens of Aquae Flaviae.

As has just been demonstrated, this is a matter of an official pantheon of a Flavian municipality, chosen and installed – as shown by municipal law – by the first magistrates. In this pantheon, above all the gods of the Roman pantheon are recorded whilst previous cults are not eliminated, but merely adapted and reinterpreted, as seen in the case of the Lares with which some local gods are associated or assimilated.

1.1. In contrast to the scarcity of the presence of local deities in the only municipal pantheon in the north-west, more significant examples of local cults can be detected in some of the *civitates* with Latin rights founded by Augustus, as is the case of *Asturica Augusta* (Astorga, León), an important point of attraction for the local elite of the *conventus Asturum*

¹⁷ Found in the area of the *forum*. See P. Le Roux, *I.O.M. Municipalis: dieux et cités en Occident sous le haut-empire*, in M. Mayer, J. Gómez Pallarés (coords.), *Religio deorum. Actas del Coloquio Internacional de Epigrafia. Culto y Sociedad en occidente*. Sabadell 1993, 405-413.

¹⁸ This example appeared, according to Leite de Vasconcellos (J. Leite de Vasconcellos, *Religiões da Lusitânia na parte que principalmente se refere a Portugal.* 2, Lisboa 1905, 179-180), four leagues from the city, more or less, like the other two dedicated to the Lares: at one and three leagues respectively.

¹⁹ Tranoy, *La Galice* cit. 303. To these dedications should be added that made to *Hermes Devoris* by a *flamen* (*Id*, *La Galice* cit. 302), dated to the second half of the second century CE and found in Outeiro Seco (Chaves, Vila Real, Portugal).

The pantheon in this city is characterised by the substantial presence of deities from the classical pantheon whose *cultores* belonged to the Roman administrative system²⁰, but together with these dedications there are others referring to significant local deities. Such is the case of the inscription dedicated to *Vagus Donnaegus* (*CIL*. II 2636; *ERPLe*. 29), which from its support, content and form could be dedicated to any classical deity.

The support is a marble plaque, which was reused from the floor of a Roman villa of the late imperial period²¹ situated in the town of La Milla del Río, 20 km from Astorga and whose text, engraved on the front and right and left sides (not preserved today), reads:

deo | Vago Donnaego | sacrum res p(ublica) | Ast(uricae) Aug(ustae) per | mag(istratus) | G(aium!) Pacatum | et Fl(avium) Proculum | ex donis || curante Iulio N[e]pote (Fig. 2)²².

The importance of this religious inscription, which can be dated to late first century or early second century CE resides in the fact that it is a dedication of a public nature: the mention of *res publica*, the allusion to local magistrates (*magistratus*) and the formula *ex donis* leave no room for doubt. What it is, therefore, is a dedication to the local god *Vagus Donnaegus* on behalf of the *res publica* of *Asturica Augusta* by its magistrates, financed by the monetary donations²³ of the *cultores* and carried out by a *curator*.

The expression *ex donis* is not very frequently seen in Latin epigraphy in the Western Empire. In fact, it has only been definitely recorded in three other religious inscriptions outside the peninsula, one of which was found in *Latium*

²⁰ The *Asturica Augusta* pantheon possesses great wealth. It has dedications to Fortuna (*ER-PLe.* 34); *Fortuna Bona Redux* (*ERPLe.* 35); *Fortuna Redux Sancta* (*ERPLe.* 36) and to the Capitoline Triad (two examples: *ERPLe.* 39 and 40). The majority of the dedicators of these deities are people connected with the Roman administration since the city played a key role in the administration and exploitation of the gold mines in the north-west.

²¹ M.A. Rabanal, S.M. García, *La Milla del Río y Robledo de Torio en los manuscritos de Fidel Fita y Colomer*, in *Astorica* 14, 1995, 203-210 (205).

²² Since its accession in 1861, the inscription has been preserved in the Museo de León (inventory no. 3055), having been restored in 1994 (*Museo de León. Guía*, Junta de Castilla y León. Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 2007, 74-76). An earlier work of mine is dedicated to the analysis of some aspects of this inscription; see M.C. González-Rodríguez, *Los santuarios del territorio en las civitates de la Asturia Augustana: el ejemplo del Deus Vagus Donnaegus*, in J. Mangas, M. Á. Novillo (eds.), *Santuarios suburbanos y del territorio de las ciudades romanas*, Madrid 2014, 205-223.

²³ The translation of this expression is donations (T. Mañanes, *Inscripciones Latinas de Astorga*, Valladolid 2000, no. 106; González-Rodríguez, *Los santuarios* cit. 210) or collection (*ERPLe*. 29).

et Campania (Lanuvium) and two in Moesia Inferior (Novae)²⁴. The three texts, dated to the second century CE, the first one more specifically to the year 136, are religious inscriptions (with no allusion to the votum) and contain dedications of statues of Juno, Hygieia and Aesculapius respectively. Furthermore, they are inscriptions that, like the one being analysed, relate to an 'official' field, since the first one was dedicated by the emperor Hadrian and the other two by legati Augusti. To these three inscriptions another two texts from Aquileia, which register the formulaic variant de doneis, should be added²⁵.

This is related to monetary offerings that the *cultores* made to the deities, the donations alluded to in rubric LXXII of the *Lex Coloniae Genitivae Iuliae* (*pecunia stipis*)²⁶, intended for the *sacra* of the colony. If there was a surplus, these donations could have had another religious end and fulfilled other needs of the *loca sacra* of the colony, such as restoration work or improvements to the place of worship (*aedes*) or its embellishment. In other words, the coins donated to the deity (*pecunia sacra*) could be used for another type of offering, provided that this was for the conservation and decoration of the sanctuary. This transformation possibility of the *pecunia sacra* is connected with the characteristics of the *loca sacra* and the *res sacrae* in Roman religion and the regulations referring to the improvement and decoration of the former and the utilisation of the latter. As Facchinetti indicated²⁷, responsibility for this task fell to the local authorities.

²⁴ CIL. XIV 2088; D 316: Latium et Campania | Regio I. Lanuvium: Imp(erator) Caes(ar) divi Traiani | Part(hici) f(ilius) divi Nervae n(epos) | Traianus Hadrianus Aug(ustus) | pont(ifex) max(imus) trib(unicia) pot(estate) XX co(n)s(ul) III p(ater) p(atriae) | I(unoni) S(ospiti) M(agnae) R(eginae) statuam ex donis aureis | et arg(entariis) vetustate corruptis | fieri et consecrari iussit | ex auri p(ondo) III et arg(enti) p(ondo) CCVI. - ILNovae 7; IGLNovae 16; GeA 451: Moesia inferior. Novae: Hygiam | ex donis arg(enteum) | p(ondo) IIII unc(iis) VII[3] | M(arcus) Clodius | Laetus leg(atus) | Aug(usti) f(aciendum) c(uravit). - PLINovae 115; GeA 440; AE 1998, 1131; AE 1999, 93 b: Moesia Inferior . Novae: [A]esculapium | ex donis arg(enteum) | p(ondo) V unc(iis) V | C(aius) Mansuanius | Severus Leg(atus) Aug(usti) f(aciendum) c(uravit). In both cases they are statue pedestals.

²⁵ CIL. I^2 2822 = Inscr. Aq. 22 and CIL. I 1456 [b] = Inscr. Aq. 21.

^{26 ...}Quotcumque pecuniae stipis nomine in aedis sacras datum inlatum erit, quot eius pecuni|ae eis sacri {i}s superfuerit, quae sacra, uti h(ac) l(ege) < f(ieri)> | oportebit, e ideo deaeve, eius ea aedes erit, fac|ta < fuer>i<n>t, ne quis facito neve curato neve interce|dito, quo minus in ea aede consumatur, ad | quam aedem ea pecunia stipis nomine da|ta conlata erit neve quise am pecuniam alio | consumito ne[v]e quis facito, quo magis in | alia re consumatur. See also the Lex a vicanis Furfensibus templo dicta (CIL. IX 3513, lines 10-12: ...Quae pequnia recepta erit, ea pequnia emere, | conducere, locare, dare, quo id templum melius, honestius seit, liceto; quae pequnia ad eas | res data erit, profana esto, quod d(olo) m(alo) non erit factum. The term stipis in this sense can be seen in CIL. I 1105 – stips Apollinis – or in CIL. X 3781 – stips Dianae in the temple of Diana Tifatina in Capua.

²⁷ G. Facchinetti, *De doneis: una proposta per l'interpretazione di due importanti documenti epigrafici aquileiesi*, in *Aquileia Nostra* 77, 2006, 106-138 (112).

as is shown in the provisions laid out in the *Lex aedis Furfensis* dating from the year 58 BCE. Thus, it is perfectly understandable that in the case of the *Asturica Augusta* text, along with the formula *ex donis*, the *magistratus* of the *civitas* also appear. They would be, in this case, those responsible for carrying out this task, although it is impossible to specify their precise characteristics due to lack of information.

What could the intended purpose of the donations to the god Vagus Donnaegus have been? Tranov raised the possibility of these donations being destined for the acquisition of sacrificial animals²⁸. This is a likely hypothesis given the importance of this rite in the *religio*, but in my opinion another interpretation is possible²⁹. If this text is compared with the three previously mentioned that contain the same formula ex donis and whose purpose – as in the case in hand – was not the *solutio* of a *votum* but the dedication of statues to different deities of the Mediterranean pantheon, I believe that the Astorga inscription could have been making an implicit allusion to the same end. That is, here too it could be a case of the dedication of a statue to the god Vagus Donnaegus. This proposal is reinforced by the typology on the support of the Astorga text: a plaque (3.6) cm in diameter) with letters engraved on the right side, which could lead to the hypothesis that it may have been fixed on the front of the pedestal which might have served as the base for the image of the deity. In addition to this, there is also the fact that together with the city magistrates there is also a *curator* who must have been responsible for the erection of the statue³⁰.

If this interpretation is correct, as in the aforementioned case of *Bracara Augusta*, this could be a place of worship that brought together the three paradigmatic elements of Roman culture: architecture (a possible *aedicula* where the monument must have been located)³¹; sculpture (the representation of *Vagus Donnaegus*) and writing. As it is undoubtedly a dedication of a public nature, this is a possibility which cannot be ruled out and the historical context alone which frames it – with all the characteristics listed – enables an appropriate assessment to be carried out.

²⁸ Tranoy, La Galice cit. 299.

²⁹ González-Rodríguez, *Los santuarios* cit. 214–215.

³⁰ The *curatores* were responsible for supervising the carrying out of public work. See J.F. Rodríguez Neila, *El trabajo en las ciudades de la Hispania Romana*, in *Id. et al.*, *El trabajo en la Hispania Romana*, Madrid 1999, 9-118 (40). In general they are found in inscriptions that, as with that of Astorga, mention the *res publica*, as can be seen in *CIL*. II² 7 976; *IRPCádiz*. 523 and 540; in *Mauritania Caesariensis*: *CIL*. VIII 9325 and in *Britannia*: *AE*. 1949, 156; *RIB*. 12270.

³¹ Most researchers who have studied this text, from Fidel Fita in 1864, whose manuscript is entitled 'Templo de la Milla del Río' have related it to the existence of a sacred building.

In the current state of knowledge and since the plaque has been reused, it is not possible to determine the exact place in the territory of the *civitas* of *Asturica Augusta* where this sanctuary was located and, as Marco Simón pointed out³², whether it was a place of worship «in the suburban area that would have had the role of symbolically defining the territory of the *civitas*».

Ultimately, it is worth highlighting that this inscription of a public nature allows us to determine that in *Asturica Augusta*, a simple Latin *civitas*, legal measures in terms of *religio* that both the *lex* of the *Colonia Genitiva Iulia* and the *lex sacra* of *Furfo* include are found in force, and that there was a local deity that the city magistrates of *Asturica Augusta* chose – among others and together with more besides (as is the case of Fortuna or the Capitoline Triad) – as one of their tutelary deities. The choice and creation of a civic pantheon (together with the corresponding rites, festivities and places of common worship) offered the elite of *Asturica Augusta* the possibility to choose the most appropriate gods for the protection of their city, thus building a pantheon with a totally new combination and hierarchy in accordance with the status of the most important *civitas* in this Roman administrative district. The new pantheon required new associations and endowed some ancestral deities with a new identity and functionality, as in this case of *Vagus Donnaegus*³³ who became, or was officially redefined as

³² F. Marco Simón, *Integración, interpretatio y resistencia religiosa en el occidente del Imperio*, in J. M. Blázquez, J. Alvar (eds.), *La romanización en Occidente*, Madrid 1996, 217-238 (219-220): «...lugar de culto suburbano que tendría como misión el encuadramiento simbólico del territorio de la *civitas*».

³³ This same deity is repeated with the epithet Caburius - de(o) Vaco Caburio in another inscription also found in the same city of Astorga (ERPLe. 28). On the processes of change and redefinition of local gods in the Roman period in other areas and provinciae of Celtic Europe which have similarities to the area analysed, vide (among others): M. Dondin-Peyre, Celtiques? Romains? Indigènes? Importés? Divinités et pratiques religieuses dans l'empire romain d'Occident, in M. O. Charles-Laforgue (Études réunies par), Les religions dans le monde romain. Cultes locaux et dieux romains en Gaule de la fin de la République au III^e siècle après J.-C.: persistence ou interpretatio?, Arras 2014, 75-93; R. Haüssler, Signes de la 'romanisation' à travers l'epigraphie: possibilités d'intérpretations et problèmes méthodologiques in Id., (ed.), Romanisation et épigraphie. Études interdisciplinaires sur l'acculturation et l'identité dans l'Empire romain, Montagnac 2008, 9-30 and Id., La religión en Bretagne, in F. Hurlet (dir), Rome et l'Occident (IIe siècle av. J.-C.-IIe siècle ap. J.-C.). Gouverner l'Empire, Rennes 2009, 491-523; M.-Th. Raepsaet-Charlier, Cultes et territoire, Méres et Matrones, dieux celtiques. Quelques aspects de la religión dans les provinces romaines de Gaule et de Germanie à la lumière de travaux récents, in L'Antiquité classique 84, 2015, 173-226; J. Scheid, Réflexions sur le Mars trévire, in V. Brouquier-Reddé, E. Bertrand et al., (eds.), Mars en Occident. Actes du Colloque International Autour d'Allonnes (Sarthe), Les sanctuaires de Mars en Occident, Rennes 2006, 35-44; W. Spickermann, Les provinces germaniques: un champ d'analyses pour l'histoire des religions, in F. Hurlet (dir.), Rome et l'Occident (Ile siècle av. J.-C.-Ile siècle ap. J.-C.). Gouverner l'Empire, Rennes 2009, 451-90 and W. Van Andringa, La religion en Gaule

(and this is crucial), a polyadic deity, receiving forms of worship (and even of representation) which are totally Roman.

1.2. Another interesting testimony of the public worship of a local deity is provided by the *civitas Zoelarum*, also in the *conventus Asturum*. This is a particular *civitas*, different from the case of *Asturica Augusta*, which exemplifies the peculiarities of some of the civic communities of the area perfectly. It is, on the one hand, a community without an *oppidum* functioning as both a political-administrative and religious centre, but rather there is a simple hillfort (the hillfort of Avelãs, Bragança, Portugal). On the other hand, it possesses unique constitutive and organisational characteristics since, as can be deduced from the second part of the inscription (*CIL*. II 2633), this *civitas* was formed and organised in the year 152 CE from various pre-existent *gentes* – the *gens Zoelarum*, who gave their name to the *civitas*, to which were added the *gentes Cabruagenigorum* and *Visaligorum*³⁴. It was therefore a civic community clearly differentiated from the classical city-state, which reflects the heterogeneity of the *civitates* in northern Hispania.

The inscription that interests us, which has unfortunately disappeared, was found in the aforementioned hillfort and was dedicated by the *ordo Zoelarum* to the god *Aernus* (*CIL*. II 2606: *deo* | *Aerno* | *ordo* | *Zoelar(um)* ex *voto*³⁵, which also means that its public nature is unquestionable. This dedication could be interpreted as the materialisation of the important role that new pantheons played in the creation and affirmation of new local identities. The elite of the *civitas Zoelarum* formulated vows in a Roman style (as indicated by the formula *ex voto*) in honour of the protective deity chosen by the magistrates, thus fulfilling their collective religious obligations and proclaiming their identity, whilst also showing their membership of a singular civic body and displaying their *pietas*.

romaine. Piété et politique (Ier-IIIe siècle apr. J.-C.), Paris 2002; Id., Religion and the Integration of Cities in the Empire in the Second Century AD: The Creation of a Common Religious Language, in J. Rüpke (ed.), A Companion to Roman Religion, Oxford 2007, 83-95; Id., Religions et intégration des territoires de l'Europe occidental à l'Empire romain, in Pallas 80, 2009, 307-316 and Id., New Combinations and new statutes: the Indigenous Gods in the Pantheons of the Cities of Roman Gaul, in J. A. North, S.R.F. Price (eds.), The Religions History of the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews and Chhristians, Oxford 2011, 109-138.

³⁴ On the interpretation of this text see M.C. González-Rodríguez, *Los astures y los cántabros vadinienses. Problemas y perspectivas de análisis de las sociedades indígenas de la Hispania indoeuropea*, Vitoria-Gasteiz 1997, 71-73 with the previous bibliography.

³⁵ The same deity is the object of a private dedication in the same place: $deo \mid [A]erno \mid Lu-cr(etius) \mid Valens \mid ex \mid voto (ERBR 2).$

From this perspective, the worship of the god *Aernus*³⁶ should not be interpreted as an example of resistance to Romanisation in a rural area, but should be assessed within the framework of the change in identity which the *Zoelae* community underwent (in the distant past a *gens*, as is indicated in the first part of *CIL*. II 2633) in order to adapt to the new situation imposed by the *Pax Romana* and its reorganisation and constitution as a *civitas*. In this respect, the new communal religion, with its ensuing rites and festivities in honour of the tutelary god, had to offer a clear utility in the creation and affirmation of the new civic identity so necessary within a context and territory such as that of these *civitates* in the North devoid of an *oppidum*.

Other cults, such as that of *Madarssu Soelagau*, found in the territory of this same *civitas* can be assessed in a similar vein³⁷. This case concerns an inscription found outside the hillfort/central place of the *Zoelae*, specifically in Vigo de Sanabria (Galende, Zamora), at the northernmost limit of the *civitas*. On this occasion the dedicator is a private individual, *Burrilus Avelci f(ilius) ex{s} gente Abaniciorum ex{s} v(oto)* (*HEp.* 7, 1997, 1072; *HEp.* 10, 2000, 627), that is, a *civis Zoelarum* with a peregrine onomastic formula³⁸ and a member of a different gens from those registered in this community's well-known hospitality pact. From this it can be deduced that the *civitas Zoelarum* encompassed more people than those known from *CIL.* II 2633, and *Burrilus* demonstrated his identity via a local onomastic system and, more interestingly, fulfilled a vow of honour not to the tutelary deity of the city (*Aernus*) but, most probably, to that of the *gens* that he belonged to, whilst at the same time he formed an integral part of the *civitas Zoelarum*. Burrilus' cult preference would lean, in this case, towards a more singular and particular 'minor' cult, that of the *gens Abaniciorum*.

In this way the hierarchy of the pantheon of the *Zoelae* is quite clear and eloquent. *Aernus* must have been the civic god receiving public worship (also private) in the central place, while *Madarsu Soelagau* received private worship outside the hillfort/capital, as befits a deity of the pantheon of one of the integral parts of the *civitas* (the *gens Abaniciorum*).

Despite the evidence being scarce and fragmentary, it does provide data that

³⁶ On this deity (also recorded outside the territory of the *civitas Zoelarum – HEp.* 6, 1996, 735–see, among others, J.A. Arenas-Esteban, R. López-Romero, *Celtic divine names in the Iberian Peninsula: towards a territorial análisis*, in J. A. Arenas-Esteban (ed.), *Celtic Religion across Space and Time. IX Workshop F.E.R.C.AN.*, Toledo 2010, 148-179 (164); J.C. Olivares, *Los dioses de la Hispania Céltica*, Madrid 2002, 103-104, 108–109 and A. J. Redentor, *Manifestações religiosas e onomástica na civitas Zoelarum*, in *Conimbriga*, 45, 2006, 253-73.

³⁷ Redentor, *Manifestações* cit. 261–262.

³⁸ See E. Ortiz-de-Urbina, Onomastic practice and socio-juridical condition: on dedicants of indigenous deities in the conventus Asturum, in QLSD. 4, 2014, 95-116 (100-101).

allows us to outline, in the case of this paradigmatic *civitas*, a complex and distinctive cult reality arising within the context of the organisation of the northern people into cities – a historical time full of change in every field and from which the gods and their cults were not exempt.

1.3. This is the state of affairs that is implied, as it is in the territory of the conventus Asturum, in the limited amount of epigraphic information available for the cults of other rural communities, such as the case of the communities called castella who, as with the pagi and the vici, also found a useful formula for demonstrating and affirming their identity in common worship. This is what can be deduced from an inscription dedicated to the goddess Cenduedia – deae | Cendu|ediae | sacru|m castellani (AE. 1995, 855; ERPLe. 4) – by some castellani whose name remains unknown, but which, given its find-spot, must have been situated in the territory of the Asturian civitas of Interamnium Flavium (Ptolemy 2.6.28), the central point of which may have been at Las Murielas de Almázcara (Congosto, León). The goddess Cenduedia also appears here as the tutelary deity of this secondary urban settlement and of its inhabitants, who, in this case, were responsible for the dedication. Given the characteristics of society and settlement in north-western Hispania, the role of common new cults must have been extremely significant for strengthening the bonds and the cohesion between different local communities. The latter, at the same time as they offered and celebrated the new collective rites in the Roman way, affirmed their identity as castellani within the framework of the new civitates created and reorganised by Rome from the pre-existing context.

2. Private dedications

2.1. Among the abundant evidence for the private worship of local deities in the north-west, the six dedications which stand out clearly from the rest are those to *Reve/Revve Anabaraego* in the *civitas* of *Aurium* (Orense) in the *conventus Bracaraugustanus*, which can be dated to between the mid-first century CE and the first decades of the second century³⁹. In this case the most significant aspect is that five of them were found in an archaeological context, specifically

³⁹ Dates which coincide with the rest of archaeological objects associated with them, especially with the cameo made from glass paste showing a bathing scene: J.M. Eguileta, *Ourense. sucesión de ciudades estratificadas por el tiempo: el entramado romano*, in *Porta da Aira* 12, 2008, 51-106 (59-60) and C. Rodríguez Cao, *Sondaxes arqueológicas valorativas na Casa dos Fornos. Rúa das Burgas nº 2. Unidade de execución 2, área I da cidade de Ourense*, in *Ourense. A cidade, da orixe ao século XVI. Catálogo*, Ourense 2009, 93-104 (94-97).

in the sanctuary known as 'Las Burgas' in the above-mentioned city of Orense. Furthermore, their importance also lies in the fact that these inscriptions constitute, at present, the most numerous examples of dedications to a local god in an urban context in the whole of the north-west⁴⁰.

The texts read as follows:

- 1. Reve | Ana|bara|ego⁴¹
- 2. Revve | Anabar(aego) | Quintio | Domiti|orum l(ibertus) | v.s.l.m⁴²
- 3. Revve | Anabar(aego) | C(aius) Faber<i>us | Hy{a} metus / v.s.l.m⁴³
- 4. Revve | An/abaraego | T. Flavius | Flavinus⁴⁴
- 5. Revve Anabara|ego | Severus Lu|perci | v.s.l.a⁴⁵
- 6. Revve An(abarego) | Memmius Evaristus | v.s.l.m⁴⁶

The first element of this deity's name, *Reve/Revve*, is also recorded in four other votive inscriptions from the same province of Orense: *Revve Reumirago*⁴⁷; *Reve Amoaego (HEp.* 7, 1997, 501); *Reve Larauco (IRG.* IV, no. 94; *HEp.* 7, 1997, 483) and *Reve Veisuto (IRG.* IV, no. 93; *HEp.* 2, 1990, 541). Similarly, it is repeated in present-day Portugal, for example in three inscriptions dedicated to *Reve Langanidaeigui*⁴⁸. This was a matter, therefore, of a well-known deity in

⁴⁰ In Lugo there are four dedications to *Verore* and one to *Virrore Viliaego* (*IRPLu*. 11-14).

⁴¹ X. Rodríguez González, Una dedicación a Reve en el entorno de Las Burgas (Ourense), y su significado en el contexto arqueológico, in Boletín Auriense 25, 1997, 51-60; HEp. 7, 1997, 528; Eguileta, Ourense cit. 65; Rodríguez Cao, Sondaxes arqueológicas cit. 96; B. Prósper, Reve Anabaraeco, divinidad acuática de las Burgas (Orense), in Palaeohispanica 9, 2009, 203-214 (204) and M.C. González-Rodríguez, As dedicacións a Revve Anabaraego no marco da relixión romana provincial da época altoimperial, in J.M. Eguileta, C. Rodríguez Cao (coords.), Aqua, divi, urbs. Auga, deuses e cidade. Excavacións arqueolóxicas nas Burgas (Ourense): Casa dos Fornos e traseiras das rúas do Vilar, Cervantes e do Baño, Ourense 2012, 59-81 (73).

⁴² Eguileta, *Ourense* cit. 59; Rodríguez Cao, *Sondaxes arqueológicas* cit. 95; Prósper, *Reve Anabaraeco* cit. 204; *AE*. 2009, 594; González-Rodríguez, *As dedicacións* cit. 75.

⁴³ Eguileta, *Ourense* cit. 59; Rodríguez Cao, *Sondaxes arqueológicas* cit. 96; Prósper, *Reve Anabaraeco* cit. 204; González-Rodríguez, *As dedicacións* cit. 76.

⁴⁴ Eguileta, *Ourense* cit. 59; Rodríguez Cao, *Sondaxes arqueológicas* cit. 96; Prósper, *Reve Anabaraeco* cit. 204; *AE*. 2009, 596; C. Rodríguez Cao, *As Burgas de Ourense. CD 102 A 2008/175-0. Memoria de Excavaciones del Proyecto: Ampliación á excavación en área das sondaxes valorativas en As Burgas / V.E. 2 ÁREA I (Casa dos Fornos) E Área 2 (Trasera de as Burgas) Na cidades de Ourense*, Ourense 2010 (unpublished); González-Rodríguez, *As dedicacións* cit. 77.

⁴⁵ Rodríguez Cao, As Burgas cit.; AE. 2014, 674; González-Rodríguez, As dedicacións cit. 74.

⁴⁶ Rodríguez Cao, As Burgas cit.; AE. 2014, 675; González-Rodríguez, As dedicacións cit. 78.

⁴⁷ M.L. Albertos, *Teónimos hispanos*, in J. M. Blázquez, *Primitivas religiones ibéricas. Vol. II. Religiones prerromanas*, Madrid 1983, 477- 488 (488).

⁴⁸ J. d'Encarnação, A. Guerra, *The current state of research on local deities in Portugal*, in J. A. Arenas-Esteban (ed.), *Celtic Religion across Space and Time. IX Workshop F.E.R.C.AN.*, Toledo 2010, 94-113 (107).

western Hispania, and what individualises the different dedications is, in each case, the determiner.

Without going into the complex and much debated problem of its etymology⁴⁹, an analysis that will be left to linguists⁵⁰, what seems to be beyond doubt is that this can be identified as a deity linked to flowing water, in this case specifically to the therapeutic virtues of the mineral-medicinal spring waters of 'Las Burgas', located on the right bank of the River Barbaña, which can reach a temperature of up to 66.3°C⁵¹. This would appear to be borne out by the archaeological context in which inscriptions 2 to 6 appeared, that is together in a porticoed area incorporated within a spa infrastructure⁵².

Although the texts are laconic, as is usual in votive epigraphy, the onomastics of the dedicators offer certain information about their legal status⁵³. They undoubtedly included an *ingenuus* and *peregrinus* (text no. 2) and a freedman (text no. 3), while the rest (texts nos. 4 and 5) could be either Roman citizens or *peregrini* benefitting from the *ius Latii* as freedmen concealing their condition. Taken as a whole, the onomastic study of the *cultores* allows us to observe an absence of local personal names and that the range of the faithful of the *Revve Anabaraego* is heterogeneous, which does not make it easy to classify them into just one social group and one single legal category. None of them mention their *origo*, which would lead us to think they are citizens of the *civitas Auriensis*, since otherwise they would have alluded, as is usual, to their original homeland.

As far as cult practices are concerned, with the information available to date, the only certain point is that the *cultores* of *Reve/Revve Anabaraego* were familiar with the Roman rite, as shown by the altars with the *foculus* and their votive formulae. The formula *v.s.l.m.* demonstrates that it is a question of a rite (regardless of the deity's name and the legal category of the dedicators) which followed the rules of Roman cults. The use of this formula means that the devotees knew its meaning and practised the rite that it represented. The altar is comparable to an archive document that constitutes proof of the fulfilment of the votive contract, which, as a general rule, involved a sacrifice

⁴⁹ In this field, as Moralejo points out, «es todo muy problemático y lo difícil está en el método mismo, en hacer con cierta seguridad la etimología de nombres propios a los que les falta el apoyo de los comunes correspondientes y un conocimiento mejor de las realidades culturales en que se insertan»: J.J. Moralejo, *El epíteto teonímico Anabaraeco*, in *Boletín Auriense* 23, 2002, 77-86 (81).

⁵⁰ On this subject see, among others, de Bernardo Stempel, *Centro y áreas* cit.; Ead., *Celto-Roman* cit. and Prósper, *Reve Anabaraeco* cit.

⁵¹ Rodríguez Cao, Sondaxes arqueológicas cit. 94.

⁵² Rodríguez Cao, Sondaxes arqueológicas cit. 93-104.

⁵³ González-Rodríguez, As dedicacións cit.

about which the altars that preserve *foculi* (nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6) provide us with indirect data.

Near the *Revve Anabaraego* sanctuary, an altar has also been found, in a secondary context, dedicated to the Nymphs (CIL. II 2527): Nymphis | Calpurn|ia Abana | Aeboso(celensis) | ex visu / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens)⁵⁴. The presence of this dedication in the setting of the 'Las Burgas', but whose exact provenance remains unknown, has led to this evidence being assessed in terms of Roman interpretatio and understood as the identification/translation of the local god - Revve Anabaraego - with the name of these Roman deities. If we were dealing with a phenomenon of these characteristics, it would seem logical to think of it as an indigenous *interpretatio*, that is, in order to engrave this inscription in Latin, the name of a Roman deity with similar characteristics to those of the indigenous deity was chosen. This hypothesis is plausible if it is considered that there is an epigraphic testimony that reads... vos aquae ferventes siv[e v]os Nimfas [si]ve quo alio nomine voltis adpe[l]ari... (CIL. XI 1823)⁵⁵. However, even if this possible equivalence is accepted, it should not be forgotten that the question of *interpretatio* is a multifaceted subject, one that is very complex and difficult to determine from a single decontextualised inscription dedicated by a dedicator from outside the region. In other words, there are insufficient data to enable us to be certain that the local deity Revve Anabaraego underwent a process of interpretatio/translation under the advocacy of Roman deities, the Nymphs. At this time, no data exist that would allow us to state that the confirmed place of worship in the Roman era at 'Las Burgas' was frequented as such in the pre-Roman period⁵⁶, and as long as archaeology fails to provide us with definite evidence in this respect. there is no alternative to continuing to work with mere hypotheses. As has already been mentioned, it must not be forgotten that, despite the non-classical

⁵⁴ The cult of the Nymphs is one of the most widespread in the Western Empire and also in Hispania (*vide* R. Toutain, *Les cultes païens dans l'empire romain. I, 1: les provinces latines. Les cultes officiels; les cultes romains et gréco-romains*, Paris 1907, 380–384 and most recently, P. Ciprés, M.C. González-Rodríguez, *Nueva lectura e interpretación del ara de Cabriana (Lantarón, Álava) dedicada a las Ninfas: HAEp 2531*, in *Munibe. Antropología-Arkeología* 70, 2019, 271-83 with previous bibliography).

⁵⁵ See P. De Bernardo Stempel, M. Hainzmann, *Sive in theonymic formulae as a means for introducing explications and identifications*, in J.A. Arenas-Esteban (ed.), *Celtic Religion across Space and Time. IX Workshop F.E.R.C.AN.*, Toledo 2010, 28-39 (30 and 37).

⁵⁶ There is currently no archaeological indication of activity at the site during the pre-Roman period. About this problem in the Celtic area of the Iberian Peninsula in general, see the well-documented and complete study by Alfayé, *Santuarios y rituales* cit. On this same subject in the Gauls, see Van Andringa, *La religion* cit. 87-132.

name of the deity, it is recorded in Latin sources from the Roman period and in an architectural and cult context in line with Roman cultural patterns.

Ultimately, it is very difficult to identify in the sources the *interpretatio*⁵⁷. based on the similarity between local and classical deities, which allows the non-classical name of the deity to be 'translated' into Latin and a list of equivalences between culturally and linguistically different pantheon deities to be established with any degree of certainty. These equivalences and translations are clear when there are written sources, as in the case of the few bilingual (or trilingual) inscriptions from the Empire, in which the different names of the same deity depending on the language used are recorded. Similarly, there are others that record theoryms connected by the Latin conjunction sive, which links the main name to an additional one⁵⁸, and for which there is currently no evidence in the north-west. However, these specific examples aside, there are many problems in establishing the equivalences or identifications and subsequent exact translations between the deities of the different pantheons with certainty. It is worth bearing in mind that the interpretatio of a deity is an official procedure that, as with other Roman religious formulae, must be validated by the civic authorities, that is the local elite, and there is no proof that this happened in the case being examined here.

In conclusion, the area of the sanctuary of 'Las Burgas' and its surroundings bear testimony to the presence of votive inscriptions of a private nature related to the different cult devotions and preferences of the citizens of *Aurium* and of outsiders such as *Calpurnia Abana*, and all of them situate us within the framework of Roman cult rites and practices. In general, this sanctuary can be compared with that of the source of the Clitunno, described in detail by Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* 8.8). In both cases there are certain similarities: the characteristics of the water – in the *Clitumnus* it is crystalline and cold while in that of the *Revve Anabaraego* it is hot with mineral properties; the presence of various deities as is intrinsic to polytheism; in both cases there is a separation between profane and sacred areas; in the two sacred areas there is a space

⁵⁷ On this question see (among others): C. Ando, *Interpretatio Romana*, in Id., *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire. The Transformation of the Classical Heritage*, Berkeley 2008, 43-58 and M. Bettini, *Interpretatio romana: categoria o congettura*, in Id., *Dèi e uomini nella città. Antropologia, religione e cultura nella Roma antica*, Roma, 2015, 35-55. Sometimes also linked to the phenomenon of what is known as syncretism, another concept of extremely dangerous application when studying ancient religions since such an expression covers a modern concept of religion, which, as other researchers have pointed out, tends to reduce the divine to one unit, but, in the ancient world, religion was polytheistic and therefore its use for the subject in question involves an anachronism.

⁵⁸ de Bernardo Stempel, Hainzmann, *Sive in theonymic* cit.

for baths and there are examples of votive inscriptions (at the source of the Clitunno on different supports and in that of *Revve Anabaraego* on altars); in both there are examples of votive offerings⁵⁹. The main difference between the two *loca sacra* is that, as opposed to the *Clitumnus*, here there is no trace of a statue to the deity. Be that as it may, Pliny the Younger's description helps us to understand better this health-giving sanctuary, which may have been a sanctuary on the outskirts of the *civitas* of *Aurium*⁶⁰.

2.2. Among the testimonies of deity names formed from a Latin theonym and a local epithet an interesting inscription from Asturica Augusta, found, as is usually the case, without any archaeological context, is dedicated to a deity whose name coincides with that of the civic body (cives or populus) of the ancient city of Astorga. This altar clearly exemplifies the problems that exist in the face of a decontextualised inscription with a controversial interpretation. This is due to the deteriorated state of the piece, on which the complete text has not been preserved, as a result of the fracture affecting the right-hand side of the epigraphic field (Fig. 2). Taking these features into account, there is a debate concerning the reading of the theonym ([G(enius)] sive [D(ea)] Asturice[nsi]*um*) and the nature and characteristics of the dedicator.



Figure 2 - Dedication to the [G(enius)] Asturice[nsi]um by the eques Cae[sia]nus Ag[ri] cola. Astorga (León). (ERPLe 19). (Photo: J. Gorrochategui. Edition: M. Fernández Corral).

From the remains of the engraving preserved at the beginning of the text,

the *crux* in the first line may form part of a curved, open letter which could be a G, whilst in the space of the *crux* in the second line the remains of a vertical stroke can be made out. In the case of the latter, it could be a

⁵⁹ In that of the *Revve Anabaraego* the most interesting artefact is a cameo made from glass paste.

⁶⁰ Eguileta, Ourense cit.

letter I. Therefore, the transcription of the epigraphic text, in my opinion must be: [G(enio)] Asturice|[nsi]um Cae|[sia]nus Ag|[ri]cola eq(ues) [coh(ortis)] Fl(aviae) I Lusit(anorum) / $[c]urator^{61}$.

I believe that the deity to which the altar is dedicated is the Genius⁶² of the *civitas* of *Asturica* (*Augusta*), and the person responsible for carrying out the dedication – *curator* – would have been *Caesianus Agricola*, *eques* of the cohort Flavia Prima of the Lusitanians⁶³.

The dedicator who made the inscription places us within the field of religious dedications carried out by members of the army in the area and reminds us of that made by Ti. Claudius Sailcius eq(ues) c(o)hor(tis) III Lusitanorum to the $dis\ deabusq(ue)$ Coniumbric(ensium) (CIL. II 432).

In the case that concerns us, the dedicator's name and his allegiance to a military unit appear with the word *curator* (in the last line of the inscription, after the name of the cohort), which has been interpreted both as a religious position⁶⁴ and as being of an economic and financial⁶⁵ or military nature⁶⁶. I would be inclined to favour a simpler assessment of this term related to the formula *cura*, *sub cura*, *curare*, in the sense of «incarichi circoscritti, affidati ad una o più persone, così occupanti un officio pubblico, come semplicemente privati, per la esecuzione delle

⁶¹ I agree with García Martínez's suggestion: S.M. García Martínez, ¿Dea Asturica o Genius Asturicensium? Una revisión crítica, in Astorica 17, 1988, 263-270 (266–269). For variants of the reading see AE. 1987, 611; HEp. 1, 1989, 108, 384; HEp. 2, 1990, 132, 439; HEp. 3, 1993, 105, 242; HEp. 7, 1997, 376; AE. 1998, 762; HEp. 16, 2007, 452.

⁶² In the case of all the deities in the province of León that carry the term deus/a, this is developed, as in the following examples: deus Bodus (ERPLe. 2); dea Cenduedia (ERPLe. 4); dea Degantia (ERPLe. 16); deus Vacus Caburius (ERPLe. 28); deus dominus Cossus Segidiaecus (ERPLe. 6); etc. The testimonies of the cult to the Genius in the North-west were studied by J. d'Encarnação, O culto ao Génio no Noroeste Peninsular, in Cuadernos de Arqueologia. Série II, 2, 1985, 41-49. See also Tranoy, La Galice cit 302 and for the whole of Hispania: B. Goffaux, Le culte au génie de la cité dans la péninsule ibérique romain, in Pallas 66, 2004, 157-79. On the cult of the civic Genius in Hispania citerior see M.C. González-Rodríguez, Culto al Genius cívico en la Hispania citerior, in E. Ortiz-de-Urbina (ed.), Ciudadanías, ciudades y comunidades cívicas en Hispania. De los Flavios a los Severos, Sevilla 2019, 189-212 and on the cult of the civic Genius in Roman religion see G. Ferri, Tutela urbis. Il significato e la concezione della divinità tutelare cittadina nella religione romana, Berlin-New York 2010 (Parte seconda: La divinità tutelare cittadina nella religione romana: Il Genius e la formula sive deus sive dea).

⁶³ The proposal of the reading *cohors* as opposed to that of *ala* had already been mentioned in *AE*. 1987, 611. See more recently S. Perea Yébenes, *Eques curator*, in *Revista Portuguesa de Arqueología* 10, 1, 2007, 247-257 (250–251).

⁶⁴ J. Mangas, J. Vidal, *La dea Asturica*, in *Studia Historica*. *Historia Antigua* 2-3, 1984-1985, 305-314 (313).

⁶⁵ García Martínez, ¿Dea Asturica cit. 269.

⁶⁶ Perea Yébenes, Eques curator cit. 250-251.

più svariate opere di carattere pubblico e privato...»⁶⁷. The dedicator, *Caesianus Agricola*, must also have been responsible for carrying out and supervising the dedication and the placing of the altar. If this suggestion is correct, this is a similar situation to that which appears in the previously examined dedication that the *respublica* of *Asturica Augusta* made to the deus *Vagus Donnaegus* through the magistrates (*CIL*. II 2636; *ERPLe*. 29), which reads: *curante Iulio N[e]pote*.

In both inscriptions the Latin expressions *curator*, *curante*, placed at the end or on the side of the text respectively, appear to be alluding to the same thing – to the responsibility and supervision needed to ensure that the religious dedication was carried out correctly. The only difference is that in the case of the dedication to Vagus Donnaegus it is undoubtedly a public dedication, while the one that concerns us now is a private one, given the size of the piece and the clear absence of data which confirms it to be of a public nature. However, there is another point that the two have in common and which should be highlighted, namely that neither of the two inscriptions is of a votive nature, since they do not contain the formulae intrinsic to this type of dedication. Therefore, this is not a question of the fulfilment of a vow on behalf of the *cultores*, such as those shown in religious dedications that bear the formula *votum solvit libens merito* or any of its variants, which stereotypically express the completion of the last phase of the Roman vow or *solutio*. The absence of this or of any another votive formula would indicate that in both cases the offering was not carried out after the deity had responded favourably to the dedicators' petition as is usual in the Roman *votum*, but that, on the contrary, the faithful (the city of Asturica Augusta in one case and Caesanius Agricola in the other) had been able to make the offering beforehand without waiting for the deity invoked to fulfil their part as befits the framework of the votive contract⁶⁸.

As a result, these two dedications, found in the territory of the *civitas* of *Asturica Augusta*, that initially appear to be very different are closer together in terms of content and, most probably, also as regards their chronology since both can be dated to between the late first century or the early second century CE⁶⁹. Both inscriptions appear to be reflecting homage rather than the fulfilment of a vow of a civic nature made with two local deities.

⁶⁷ E. De Ruggiero, *Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romane* II, Spoleto 1910, 1321.

⁶⁸ Ch. Daremberg, E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines* I/2, IV/2, Paris 1877, 972-973; M.C. González-Rodríguez, E. Ortiz-de-Urbina, *La fórmula voti compotem aliquem facere y sus variantes en la epigrafia latina del occidente romano*, in *Epigraphica* 79, 2017, 253-273.

⁶⁹ Despite the difficulty in dating these inscriptions found out of context and for which the palaeographic criteria of other areas of Hispania are not valid, I consider that the chronology proposed by Mangas, Vidal (*La dea Asturica* cit. 313), who date the piece to a time close to Caracalla's administrative division in the third century CE, is too late, and agree with that given by Rabanal, García, who propose a date between the late first and early second centuries CE [*ERPLe*. 67].

Regarding the name of the deity to whom the dedication is made -[G(enius)]sive [D(ea)] Asturice[nsi]um – given that the state of the epigraphic field unfortunately prevents a totally certain reading, thus making it impossible to determine which of the two possibilities is correct, it could be of interest to venture beyond the unsolvable problem of the name and to focus on the function and nature of the deity. In this sense, the question that might be raised is whether the functions and nature of the deity would be very different if the dedication were made to the Dea⁷⁰ instead of to the Genius Asturicensium⁷¹, as is also suggested here, or whether they would be similar. It is worth bearing in mind that the Genius, a clearly Roman religious concept, is a deity linked to the ability to generate and to existence⁷² and therefore dedications to the civic Genius can be seen as a reflection of the life force, of the dynamism of the civic community. The Genius of a civitas can be understood as the sacred expression of that civic community, a kind of 'divine double'73 who is responsible for the tutelage and protection of the community, of the *cives* – in this case the citizens of *Asturica Augusta*. In this respect, to make a dedication to the Genius of the city means placing oneself beneath the refuge and protection of a deity who watches over the existence and destiny of the civic community and is, at the same time, a way of recognising and exalting the community⁷⁴. Such a situation is very similar to the one that is behind the divinisation of the *civitas* itself (*dea Asturica*) since, as Lepelley has indicated: 'Adorer le génie de la cité était donc, pour la collectivité civique, une manière de se vouer un culte à elle-même⁷⁵.

Thus, the inscription in question, most probably dedicated to the Genius of the civic community of *Asturica Augusta*, can be interpreted as a clear way of praising the *res publica*, in this case the *res publica Asturicae Augustae* and, consequently, as a manifestation of civic patriotism (regardless of the *origo* of the dedicator). In other words, whether it be a dedication made to the *Genius* or to the *Dea Asturicensium*, what should be highlighted is that both the type of deity and the purpose of the offering coincide. In both cases the aim is that the tutelary deities should watch over the *salvs* and the wellbeing of all the *cives* in a way familiar to Rome and many other *civitates* of the Western Roman Empire.

⁷⁰ Mangas, Vidal, *La dea Asturica* cit.; J. Mangas, *La divinización de Asturica (Astorga) y la divinización de ciudades en la antigüedad*, in *Lirba* 9-10, 1986, 4-5.

⁷¹ García Martínez, ¿Dea Asturica cit.; ERPLe. 19; Perea Yébenes, Eques curator cit.

⁷² R. Schilling, *Rites, Cultes, Dieux de Rome*, Paris 1979, 415-444 and Ferri, *Tutela urbis* cit. ⁷³ Schilling, *Rites* cit. 430.

⁷⁴ CL. Lepelley, Une forme religieuse du patriotisme municipal: le culte du Génie de la cité dans l'Afrique romaine, in G. Ch. Picard et al., Histoire et archéologie de l'Afrique du Nord: Actes du Ve Colloque International réuni dans le cadre du 115e Congrès national des Sociétés savantes (Avignon, 9-13 avril 1990), Paris 1992, 125-137; Goffaux, Le culte cit.; González-Rodríguez, Culto al Genius cit.

⁷⁵ Lepelley, *Une forme* cit. 126.

In conclusion, the inscription from Astorga can be considered a magnificent example of the process of strengthening civic pantheons in the north-west of Hispania, more specifically in the *conventus Asturum*, and of the key role that the Roman army must have played in the diffusion of cults 'in the Roman way'.

III. By way of assessment

In sum, it should be emphasised that in the north-west of Hispania, as in other parts of the western provinces of the Roman Empire, the integration and reorganisation of local communities led to a remodelling of existing religious systems. This process brought with it the creation of mixed civic pantheons in which the reformulated local deities, together with the Roman ones, acquired new prominence. It could be said that they were deities which had changed their identity and acquired a new status, like the dedicators (of a public or private nature) who carried out the dedications.

In this part of *Hispania citerior*, as in other territories of Celtic Europe⁷⁶ the civic elites used non-classical theonyms to construct distinct and unique local cults. Deity names such as *Craro*⁷⁷; *Laho Paralomiego*⁷⁸; *Mentoviaco*⁷⁹; *Moelio Mordonieco*⁸⁰; etc. do not necessarily indicate that it was a 'pre-Roman' deity, but may be among the detoponymic deity names⁸¹ created in the Roman period, as with the historical *regiones*.

Ultimately, the cult to local deities in the north-west of Hispania allows not only the cultural changes following the conquest and the generalisation of Roman rites to be observed, but also the role played by them in the construction, development and renegotiation of the communities organised, reorganised or created by Rome in this region. This was true not only of the *civitates* but also of the different 'identities' recorded at the heart of the civic communities of this area, as is the case of the *castella*; the *gentes* and even kinship groups or *cognationes*. These groups of blood relatives recorded among the inhabitants of some of the *populi* of the north-west of Hispania would have had to redefine and reformulate their cults in line with their integration into the *civitates*. In some cases this process served to demonstrate

⁷⁶ de Bernardo Stempel, *I nomi* cit. 95–97; Haüssler, *Signes* cit. 18.

⁷⁷ Albertos, *Teónimos* cit. 480.

⁷⁸ Albertos, *Teónimos* cit. 484.

⁷⁹ Albertos, *Teónimos* cit. 483.

⁸⁰ Albertos, *Teónimos* cit. 483.

⁸¹ de Bernardo Stempel, Celto-Roman cit. 214–215.

their cohesion and identity as well, as appears to happen in the case of the *dea Degantia* (*CIL*. II 5672)⁸², who could be interpreted as the tutelary deity of the *cognatio* of the Argaeli recorded in a late first-century CE inscription from the *civitas* of *Bergidum Flavium* – Cacabelos (León) – in the *conventus Asturum*.

All these identities, developed within the framework of the civic communities in which different local realities came together, were complemented by other wider ones that also reflect the wealth and role of the 'regional' deities, as in the case of the *Lares Calaeciarum*. This epithet refers to the name of the historical *regio* of *Calaecia sive Callaecia*, which covered the *conventus Lucensis* and *Bracaraugustanus*, and which is recorded in a text that reveals the cult preferences of an imperial freedman, as can be seen in an inscription found in the *civitas* of *Lucus Augusti* (the modern city of Lugo): *Iovi Optimo Max(imo)* | *Numini[b(us) Aug]stor(um)* | [Iunioni R]e[g]inae | Veneri Victrici | Africae Caelestis | Frugifero | Augustae Emeritae | et Larib(us) Calaeciar(um) | [S]aturninus Aug(usti) lib(ertus) (IRPLu. 23; AE. 1980, 595 bis).

In conclusion, from the testimonies seen here, it is possible to draw up a list of deities with greater or lesser functions in this area of the north-west of Hispania and which range from the protective deities of a regio – Lares Calaeciarum – to the protective deities of the civitates of different juridical status – deus Vagus Donnaegus and deus Aernus –; of the castella – dea Cenduedia – and of the gentes – Madarssu Soelagau – and the cognationes – dea Degantia. All these are local protective deities from the different historical situations in which the inhabitants of the north-west, who granted them different identities, found themselves.

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82 Deae | Degant(iae) | Flavia Fl(avii) | in hono(rem) Argael(orum) | f(ecit) l(ibens). On the interpretation of this text see M.C. González-Rodríguez, M. Ramírez Sánchez, Observaciones sobre la fórmula in hono. Argael. en un epígrafe de Cacabelos, León (CIL. II 5672), in Palaeohispanica 10, 2010, 63-79. Abbreviations: AE.: L'Anné Épigraphique; CIL.: Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum; D.: Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae; ERBR.: A. Redentor, Epigrafia romana da região de Bragança, Lisboa 2002; ERPLe.: M.A. Rabanal, S.M. García Martínez, Epigrafia romana de la provincia de León: revisión y actualización, León 2001; GeA.: C. Schmidt Heidenreich, Le glaive et l'autel. Camps et piété militaires sous le Haut-Empire romain, Rennes 2013; HEp: Hispania Epigraphica; IGL. Novae: Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae (Mésie inférieure), Bordeaux 1997; IL. Novae: V. Bozilova, J. Kolendo, L. Mrozewicz, Inscriptions latines de Novae, Poznan 1992; IRG. IV: J. Lorenzo Fernández (ed.), Inscripciones Romanas de Galicia, IV. Provincia de Orense, Santiago de Compostela 1968; Inscr. Aq.: J.B. Brusin, Inscriptiones Aquileiae, 3 Bde., Udine 1991-1993; IRPCádiz.: J. González, Inscripciones Romanas de la Provincia de Cádiz, Cádiz 1982; IRPLu.: F. Arias vilas, P. Le Roux, A. Tranoy, Inscriptions romaines de la province de Lugo, Paris 1979; PLINovae: L. Mrozewicz, Paleography of Latin inscriptions from Novae (lower Moesia), Poznan 2010; RIB.: The Roman Inscriptions of Britain.