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THE DEDITICII OF THE TABULA ALCANTARENSIS

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## THE DEDITICII OF THE TABULA ALCANTARENSIS

The bronze tablet from a hilltop near Alcántara, of Roman bridge fame in western Spain, registers a *deditio* made in 104 B.C. to L. Caesius 'imperator', no doubt the governor of Hispania Ulterior, by a Spanish community. Their name, unfortunately, is incomplete: 'populus Seanoc[...]' or 'Seanoc[...]'.<sup>1</sup> The name - such as it now is - is not known otherwise. But it can probably be completed as 'Seanocensis' (or, as will be seen, perhaps 'Seanocus'), an ethnic adjective. A further, tentative identification can also be tried.

I. A town called Searo seems to have existed in north-west Baetica. Before Augustus' time this province, of course, formed the southern quarter or so of Ulterior. One bit of evidence for Searo is a fragmentary inscription found in north-west Baetica and attesting (it seems) a 'Sea[rensis]'. Or more likely 'Sea[ronensis]', to judge by other ethnic adjectives formed from towns ending in '-o': thus 'Castulonensis' from Castulo in eastern Baetica, 'Tarraconensis' from Tarraco. More decisive are Spanish coins inscribed 'Searo' to register their place of issue. They form part of a southern group.<sup>2</sup>

There is also the Elder Pliny. In his geographical survey of the Spains, he mislocates a number of south Baetican communities, in the juridical *conventus* of Hispalis, to the north of the same *conventus*, mixing them up with genuine northern places. One such is the Siarenses Fortuales - i.e. the community of Siarum - which as inscriptions show lay well south of the River Baetis. It looks as though he got two or more lists of towns confused, because some southern names resembled some northern ones; then other places in the affected lists were dragged along too. Thus there was a town Cerit or Ceret in the north of the *conventus* (coins exist from it, for example) - but not in Pliny's survey of that area, where instead he locates Callenses Aeneanici. That is, the titled town Callet which in reality lay in the south, near Siarum of the Fortuales. And just as Callet has ousted Ceret, so Siarum seems to have removed Searo.<sup>3</sup>

North-west Baetica, the region just south of the River Anas (Guadiana), is quite a distance from Alcántara: anything from 120 to 180 kilometres. And 'Sear(on)ensis' is not at first glance all that close to 'Seanoc[ensis]' either. On the other hand, the precise form of the town name, or of the ethnic adjective drawn from it, may have varied in Roman usage. Callet produced 'Callenses'; and there are the Bletonenses, forbidden by the Senate in about 95 B.C. from carrying on human sacrifice, whose town was it seems Bletisa in the northern

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<sup>1</sup> AE 1984, no.495, citing R.López Melero et al., *Gerión* 2 (1984) 265-323; J.S.Richardson, *Hispaniae: Spain and the Development of Roman Imperialism 218-82 B.C.* (Cambridge 1986) 199-201.

<sup>2</sup> 'Sea[rensis]': *Ephemeris Epigraphica* 8, p.379 no.79a, and p.500; A.M. de Guadan, *Numismática Ibérica e Ibero-romana* (Madrid 1969) 213 for SEARO coins.

<sup>3</sup> Pliny, *NH* 3.14; B.D.Hoyos, *Historia* 28 (1979) 449-54 for full discussion.

half of Ulterior, near today's Salamanca. Salamanca's own name had many ancient forms: in Polybius Ἐλευαντική, in Livy *Hermandica*, Καλματική in Plutarch and (as *Salmatice*) in the Antonine Itinerary, more compactly Καλματίς in Polyaeus.<sup>4</sup> The tribe called *Bargusii* by Polybius seem to be Livy's later *Bergistani*, with *Bergium* their town. And the *Salluvienses* of the recently discovered tabula *Contrebiensis* (from *Celtiberia*) are pretty clearly of the same community which lent its name to the *turma Salluitana*, the Spanish cavalry unit granted Roman citizenship 'for valour' by Pompeius Strabo in 89 in north Italy; a community whose coins, in turn, name it *Salduie* in Iberian script while Pliny names it *Saldubia* or *Salduba*. None of these is an exact parallel to *Searonenses/Seanocenses*, but they do suggest that identity between these two is conceivable.<sup>5</sup>

What of the distance? It could be that the bronze was, for some reason, at a later date, taken from northern *Baetica* and deposited (or lost) near *Alcántara*. Or perhaps the misbehaving *Seanocenses* had fled northwards when retribution loomed in the shape of *L. Caesius*; were caught (the *Tagus* may have been a barrier) and forced to surrender; and this bronze tablet was one of various copies engraved in *Caesius*' camp for the leaders of the band, one of whom managed to leave his behind when the march homeward began.<sup>6</sup>

II. Even in a more settled age, like the early Empire, the interior of *Lusitania* had relatively few communities. None of those previously known bears a name anything like '*Seano*'. Particularly notable is the absence of any such name among the eleven *Lusitanian* communities, urban and rural, that raised the funds two centuries later to build *Alcántara*'s mighty bridge over the *Tagus*. They list themselves as the *Igaeditani*, *Lancienses Oppidani*, '*Talori*' or (more probably) *Tapori*, *Interannienses*, *Colarni*, *Lancienses Transcudani*, *Aravi*, *Meidubrigenses*, *Arabrigenses*, *Banienses* and *Paesuri*.<sup>7</sup> Presumably these had a special interest in a reliable crossing at that spot; even though some lay quite a distance from the *Tagus*, like the *Aravi* and it seems the *Banienses* near the River *Douro* to the north, and the *Me(i)dubrigenses* by the *Mons Herminius* (the *Serra da Estrêla* in central Portugal). A

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<sup>4</sup> *Bletonenses*: Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.* 83; Richardson (note 1) 159 n.13. Ancient names for Salamanca: Polybius 3.14.1; Livy 21.5.6; Plut. *Moral.* 248E; *Itin. Ant.* 434.4; Polyaeus 7.48.

<sup>5</sup> *Bargusii/Bergistani*: Pol. 3.35.1; Livy 34.16.7-10, cf. 34.21.1 (*Bergium*); J. Briscoe, *A Commentary on Livy Books XXXIV-XXXVII* (Oxford 1981) 79. *Tabula Contrebiensis*: J.S. Richardson, *JRS* 73 (1983) 33-41 for an introduction; *Hispaniae* (note 1) 164-65. *Turma Salluitana*: Degrassi, *ILLRP* 515. *Salduie*: Guadan (note 2) 190. *Saldub(i)a*: Pliny, *NH* 3.24.

<sup>6</sup> The *tab. Alcant.* does not explicitly record itself as 'done in camp' (Richardson, *Hispaniae* 200 suggests that it has been lost from the final [13th] line), but that was hardly obligatory. Other military-administrative decisions carried out in *caestreis*: *ILLRP* 515 (note 5); and 514 (= *ILS* 15), *L. Aemilius Paullus*' freeing of the *servei Hastensium* dwelling in *Turris Lascutana* and guaranteeing to them their town and territory 'dum populus senatusque Romanus vellet'. This phrase and the accompanying guarantee are very close to those in the *tab. Alcant.* (lines 8-11).

<sup>7</sup> *CIL* 2.760 = *ILS* 287a; authenticity disputed by H. Galsterer, *Untersuchungen zum römischen Städtewesen auf dem iberischen Halbinsel* (Berlin 1971) 62-64; defended by B.D. Hoyos, *Athenaeum* 56 (1978) 390-95. *Tapori* rather than '*Talori*': Hoyos, 394-95.

community like the 'Seanoc[...]', if residing where the tabula was found, would have been closest of all to the crossing. Was it there and too poor to pay - or did it lie elsewhere?<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, in the Second and early First Centuries B.C. most of Lusitania was still pastoral and unurbanised. Even in Trajan's day the urban state of several of the bridgebuilders looks fairly fresh: four still use tribal names (Aravi, Colarni, Paesures, Taponi) although the Aravi, at least, were now a civitas. And the Igaeditani, who certainly had a town - today's Idanha in Portugal - never called it 'Igaedi': they preferred Civitas Igaeditanorum. Like Civitas Aravorum further north, suggestive of an earlier rural condition. Again, there were only a few centres issuing coins (in either Iberian or Latin script) in inland Lusitania during the Second and First Centuries B.C., a contrast to the plethora in what was later to be Baetica and in eastern Citerior. Few, too, the inhabited centres mentioned in the wars with Viriathus, in the 140s and 130s, and after.<sup>9</sup>

The *dediticii* of the tabula had 'agros et aedificia' and 'leges' as well as other (movable?) belongings. They sound like an agricultural and organized community with permanent buildings. Perhaps one might object that if they did have a town Caesius would have used 'oppidum' in lieu of 'aedificia'. But it would be rash to build much on that.

The tabula concludes, interestingly, 'deque ea re eos [?] qui aderunt ...] / eire iussit (vacat) legatos Cren[us? ...] / Arco Cantoni f. (vacat) legates [...]' (legates as a nominative plural occurs in other later Republican texts). The word 'legatos' does not construe: it looks like an error (for 'legates' again?). J.S.Richardson points out that the place where Caesius 'bade them go' ought to be given. Its absence may be another slip by the - harassed? - engraver. Richardson thinks that the needed word might be 'Romam'; but notes that sending envoys to Rome in a case like this lacks parallel. Nor in fact is it the envoys whom Caesius orders. A better supplement would be 'domum': the text might have read 'eos [omnes domum ...] / eire iussit', he ordered them all to go home. Home, conceivably, to Searo.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Aravi (Civitas Aravorum) near Marialva, 130 km. north of the bridge: Hoyos (prev. note) 391 n.5. Banienses: CIL 2, p.xliv ad no.2399 = J.Vives, *Inscriptiones Latinas de la España Romana* (Barcelona 1971) no.47/48, 'civitati Baniens(ium)' at Moncorvo; presumably Torre de M., Portugal, on north side of R.Douro 20 km. N.N.E. of the Aravi. Me(i)dubrigenses: Bell.Alex. 48.2 (attacked by Romans, fled to the Mons Herminius); cf. Pliny, 4.118, 'Medobrigenses qui Celtici cognominantur, M. qui Plumbari'; A.Schulten, *Fontes Hispaniae Antiquae* 5 (Barcelona 1940) 83; cf. R.Grosse in *Der Kleine Pauly*, ed. K.Ziegler and W.Sontheimer (München 1979) 3.1134.

<sup>9</sup> Igaeditani: Vives (prev. note) no.1036 'civitas Icaedi(tana)'; CIL 2.435 = Vives, no.72 'Icaeditanorum lib(ertus)'. Igaedus was the local deity (Vives, no.5995). No town locatable for the Colarni, Paesures or Taponi even in imperial times. For towns striking coins in the Second and First Centuries B.C., see maps in Guadan (note 2), redone in colour in A.M.Montenegro Duque and J.M.Blázquez Martínez, *Historia de España*, 2nd edn. (Madrid 1982) I.1. 300, 344-47, cf. 123. For places in the wars: maps in H. de Esp.<sup>2</sup>, 70, 85, 96, 113, 114, 133; cf. 141 (coin-hoards of the Sertorian War, 82 to 72 - in Lusitania only one site, Idanha). On Lusitanian economy and society: J.M.Blázquez Martínez in *Estudios de Economía Antigua de la Península Ibérica*, ed. J.Caro Baroja et al. (Barcelona 1968) 225-30, 232-40; cf. Richardson, *Hispaniae* 147 ('semi-nomadic' in Second Century).

<sup>10</sup> Tab.Alcant. 11-13. 'Legates': Richardson, 201, citing Degrassi, *ILLRP* 2, p.497. 'Legatos': cf. Richardson, 200; *ibid.* on missing destination.

III. Another item deserves a mention. Various persons in central and north-west Celtiberia appear on inscriptions with an ethnic epithet after their names: like 'L.Licinius Seranus Avvancum' and (in the dative) 'L.Efondo Crastunonis f. Calnicum', both in the neighbourhood of Numantia. The epithets must be genitive plurals, 'of the Avvances' or (if contracted from 'Avvancorum') 'of the Avvanci', 'of the Calnicescici'. Indeed on another stone is 'Alla Verna Legirnicorum'. These are the names of gentes or clans. Now on a slightly damaged stone of Numantia we find one 'Nonius Quintilianus Sfaniofum'.<sup>11</sup> A very unusual (in Spain anyway) combination of the two initial consonants - unless what originally was inscribed was not SFANIOCVVM but SEANIOCVVM. That recalls the Alcántara tablet. Is the gens (?) Seaniofum linked with the 'populus Seanoc[...]', and should this be completed as 'Seanocus' (or 'Seanocorum')?

Upper Celtiberia being a good five hundred kilometres from the region of Alcántara, this would imply a band of Celtiberians raiding right across Spain and into southern Ulterior, then being chased out by the governor of Ulterior and cornered at the Tagus (unless Caesius were a pursuing governor of Citerior). Even if several gentes were involved, this scenario looks a good deal less likely than the troublemaking 'Seanoc...' being from Searo in the later Baetica. Still, if 'Seaniofum' is the right reading in Nonius Quintilianus' case, it could be a related name. The Baetican town Searo lay in what Pliny, confirmed by Ptolemy, terms Baeturia Celtica.<sup>12</sup>

IV. Searo lay comparatively near to the Roman-dominated region of Ulterior, the Baetis valley and the south coast. Could its people, as late as 104 B.C., still have been free to raid other parts of the province, and would the authorities have dealt with them like this when they caught them?

The idea might surprise. But it can be supported. Just where Roman authority extended, and what it meant away from the coast and the Baetis valley, would have been a moot question much of the time down to the later First Century B.C. Certainly there were Roman expeditions across central and north-west Spain - D.Brutus Callaicus' in the 130s, P.Crassus' in the 90s, Julius Caesar's in 61. All penetrated into Callaecia (Galicia), all produced claims of triumph and subjugation, and all failed to impose any lasting control. The Lusitanians of central western Spain also continued to give trouble. In Celtiberia, the storied destruction of Numantia in 133 was not the subjection of that region either. Other Celtiberian peoples remained combative and, in practice, pretty independent. Beyond them, peoples of the north-western plains, like the powerful Vaccaeii, were even freer of Roman authority. The Vaccaeii were again at war with the Romans as late as 56; and whatever Metellus Nepos'

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<sup>11</sup> CIL 2. 2836 (with the editor Hübner's comment, pp.388-89); cf. 2827 ('Avvancum'), 2826 ('Calnicum'). Vives (note 8) groups all such forms in his collection together (nos. 5457-5491), followed by others with definitely genitive forms (5493-97: 'Legirnicorum' at 5494). Note also 5493 ('ex gente Abilicorum'), 5495, 5497, for the term gens.

<sup>12</sup> Pliny, NH 3.13-14; cf. Ptolemy, Geogr. 2.4.11.

success then, there were plenty of triumphs celebrated 'ex Hispania' from the 40s to the 20s.<sup>13</sup>

Even down in the later Baetica things may not have been steadily peaceful. True, Brutus Callaicus established a town Brutobriga (probably for surrendered Lusitanians) in southern Lusitania. But most Roman foundations in inland Lusitania belong to the First Century B.C. and reflect campaigns like those of the Sertorian War. Thus Q.Metellus Pius' foundations Metellinum (Medellín) on the upper River Anas and Castra Caecilia to its north, dating to the 70s. In Augustus' time a Roman colony, established in the heart of the modern Alentejo in southern Portugal, bore the noteworthy name Pax Iulia (Beja). Endemic, even if usually local, fighting in Baetica as late as the 40s is suggested in the eyewitness account of Caesar's Spanish campaign of 46-45: towns sited on defensible hills and well fortified, towers and other strongpoints dotting the countryside.<sup>14</sup>

The events to be inferred from the *tabula Alcantarensis* would fit such a context. The 'Seanoc...' had to surrender 'all the prisoners, horses and mares that they had taken' (lines 5-6). Then they were declared free and their own property and possessions guaranteed. It sounds less like a serious attack on or war with the Romans in Ulterior, more like a raid against neighbouring provincials; maybe the latest and most serious flareup of old feuds among communities only fitfully prepared to accept Roman domination. Ulterior was going through another period of disturbances: a rather earlier governor, Q.Servilius Caepio, had triumphed 'de Lusitanis' in 107 and there are brief notices of further fighting in 102, 101 and later years. We may doubt that L.Caesius, who returned home to unremitting obscurity, achieved more than temporary and partial pacifications.<sup>15</sup> But that does not lessen the interest and value of his *tabula Alcantarensis*.

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<sup>13</sup> The rate and the reality (or unreality) of Roman conquest inland beyond the Tagus and the Ebro valley are assessed by B.D.Hoyos, *The Romanisation of Spain: a Study of Settlement and Administration to A.D. 14* (D.Phil. thesis: Oxford 1971) 145-54. For the expeditions of Brutus, Crassus and Caesar see T.R.S.Broughton, *Mags. of Rom.Rep.* 1.483, 485, 487 (Brutus); 2. 180 (Caesar); Schulten, *Fontes H.A.* 4 (Barcelona 1937) 135-40 (Brutus), 152-53 (Crassus); 5. 10-15 (Caesar). Other Lusitanian warfare: Richardson, 158 (late Second Century); Caesar, *Bell.Civ.* 1.44.2 (mid-First). Celtiberian warfare after 133 e.g. by T.Didius from 98 to 93 and by his successor C.Valerius Flaccus between 93 and 81 (Richardson, 158-60). In the course of Didius' doings, a revolt occurred at Castulo - a town well within the normal bounds of Ulterior - thanks to misbehaviour by Roman troops wintering there (Plut., *Sertor.* 3). *Nepos vs Vaccaeii*, 56-55: Dio 39.54.1-2; MRR 2.210. There probably was point to the series of triumphs 'ex Hispania' from the 40s to the early 20s (Ehrenberg and Jones, *Documents ... of Augustus and Tiberius*<sup>3</sup>, pp.32-36 sub a. 43, 36, 34, 33, 28, 26).

<sup>14</sup> Brutobriga: Stephanus Byz. s.v.Βρουτοβρία; coins, showing ship and tunnyfish and found in inland Lusitania, H. de Esp.<sup>2</sup>, 1.1. 102; Hoyos (prev. note) 10 n.1. Metellus Pius' towns: see e.g. H. de Esp.<sup>2</sup>, 137. Pax Iulia: e.g. P.A.Brunt, *Italian Manpower 225 B.C.-A.D. 14* (Oxford 1971) 593; Hoyos, 122. Places fortified even in 40s: Bell.Hisp. 8.3-4, 'propter barbarorum crebras excursiones'. Cf. Dipo, 29 milia p. (45 km.) west of Emerita and thus in Searo's general area (*Itin.Ant.* 418.3; cf. Guadan, 128, for coins) - 'validam urbem' in the Sertorian War, and it withstood the Romans for several days (Sallust, *Hist.* 1. 113M).

<sup>15</sup> Caepio: Richardson, 158. Warfare after 104 B.C.: Richardson, 158-59 and n.10 - in 102, 101, 99 and then the long proconsulate of P.Crassus.