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KELTISCHE GÖTTERNAMEN ALS INDIVIDUELLE OPTION?

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Maria Manuela ALVES-DIAS; Catarina GASPAR

Celtic theonyms as an individual option in Portuguese Lusitania

Regardless of its characteristics and its era, more than anything else, a religious cult is a cultural phenomenon and as such, it is shared by a larger or smaller group of persons. The individual practice of a cult is inevitably made within the collective religious framework, whether it is the state, the city, the group or the family. The development and building of a cultural identity of each individual in the group is determined by his/her personal trajectory and in particular, by his/her contact with other cultures\(^1\). When the individual religious options are studied involving the choice of a theonym to be venerated, it means understanding the autonomy of each person within the group. It is difficult to explain the reasons underpinning the choices registered in the epigraphs where reality is static and where most times we do not know what individual paths were followed. Nevertheless, here and there, we may partially discern the route; one of the clearest cases of an individual religious choice is that made by *Toncius Toncetami* which we shall be talking about further on.

Most of the examples of cults based on known local gods have a private\(^2\), individual nature whereby a relationship is established between the worshipper and the deities. This relationship may be expressed in an epigraphic text mentioning that a promise has simply been honoured or the god has been duly thanked.

The case of Toncius Toncetami – two political-religious choices.

*Toncius Toncetami* lived during mid-2nd century A.D.\(^3\) and we know about him through his religious practices and his military career. He says of himself that he was an *Igaeditanus*\(^4\), which allows us to connect the man and the community, or rather, the *civitas Igaeditanorum*. The two inscriptions were discovered to be in use at a house in Fundão, a town situated some 40 Km from Idanha-a-Velha, although they are now under the protection of the National Archaeological Museum in Lisbon. When the discovery was first reported, J. Leite de Vasconcelos put forward the idea that the two altars could have come from Idanha-a-Velha\(^5\). It is interesting to note that in the funerary inscriptions coming from the *civitas*,

\(^1\) Cf. HOFSTEDE et al. (2010) 6-7.
\(^3\) We are working according to the dates put forward by J. Cardim Ribeiro for the two altars – 2nd century A.D. - cf. CARDIM RIBEIRO (2002) 374 and 427; other authors situate the date immediately before the Flavians owing to the way the texts are structured - cf. LE ROUX (1982) 192.
\(^4\) He was born in the ancient town of Egitania, known as Idanha-a-Velha today, which possesses an important collection of epigraphs - cf. ALMEIDA (1956); also see SA (2007); the funerary inscriptions in this region were recently reviewed by FERREIRA (2004). Furthermore, LEFEBVRE (2011) 154-155 refers to this person in connection with his work.
\(^5\) Cf. LEITE DE VASCONCELOS (1895) 231. Also see LAMBRINO (1957) 87-109.
explicit mention is made of their Igaeditana\textsuperscript{6} origin, so that given this context, it would not be amiss to refer to his connection to Egitania, and even to the fact that he was living there.

The first altar is dedicated to Trebaruna:

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{trebaruna_altar.png}
\caption{Trebaruna altar}
\end{figure}

\textit{Ara(m) pos(uit) / Toncius / Toncetami / f(ilius) Igaedit(anus) / milis / Trebarune / l(ibens) m(erito) v(otum) s(olvit)}

(RLLS\textsuperscript{7}, p. 374 - MNA E-6167)

The second altar in honour of Victoria:

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{victoria_altar.png}
\caption{Victoria altar}
\end{figure}

\textit{[T]oncius / [T]oncetami / f(ilius) v(eteranus) miles / s}i\textless g\textgreater nifer / [c]oh(ortis) II Lus(itanorum) / Vii(ctoriae) / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito) / Ardunus / Comini f(ilius) f(ecit)

(RLLS, p. 427 - MNA E-6168)

\textsuperscript{6} See for example, the epitaphs of Flaccilla (HEp 13, n° 881) and Decia Vetusta (HEp. 13, n° 964).

\textsuperscript{7} RLLS = CARDIM RIBEIRO (2002).
**Toncius**' individual path shows that he was divided between at least two distinctly different cultural contexts: one of them had to do with his birthright in the Civitas Igaeditanorum; while the other condition or conditions were shaped by his military career. As was mentioned above, there are other inscriptions bearing reference to a person’s origins among the epigraphs found at Idanha-a-Velha. In **Toncius Toncetani**’s case, this origin is referred to only in the altar dedicated to Trebaruna and appears in the line preceding miles. For its part, the word miles appears in a distinctive position, placed exactly halfway at 1.5, where there is no mention of the military unit in which he was serving.

In the second inscription dedicated to Victoria, no reference is made to his status as an Igaeditanus. Rather, his rank in the army is described as veteranus miles / si<g>nifer / [c]oh(ortis) II Lus(itanorum). The reference to the cohort is normal in military inscriptions such as these. The function of the signifer identifies him ideologically speaking within the army owing to the fact that the signiferi were standard-bearers among the other duties they performed.

In dealing with these two inscriptions, it may be thought that **Toncius** had changed his choice of religion partly because he was exercising new duties in the Roman army. The individual choice of venerating a Roman goddess, *Victoria*, would match his changing cultural identity after having spent a significant period in military service. From this perspective, if the two inscriptions were taken out of context, they could be understood as an example of what has traditionally been called the ‘process of Romanization’ where the army played an extremely important role.

Nevertheless, this view may counteracted by examples of inscriptions that were dedicated to local gods made by other soldiers who had served in the army long enough to have been awarded duties of an ideological nature. An example of this is the following inscription discovered in Reiriz de Veiga, in the Orense province of Galicia:

8 The same goddess is referred to in the well-known inscription found at Cabeço de Fráguas and she is venerated individually in four other texts apart from the epigraph above: Crissus / Talaburi / filius / Aebosocelensis Tfr/ebaroni / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito) (Coria, Cáceres - cf. CPIL Caceres, nº 217); Aug(ustae) Trebar[unae] / M(arcus) Fidius Fidi filius (Quirina) / / magistratus III Vir praefectus Fa[brum] Caparra, Cáceres - cf. H. E. nº 93); Trebaron/ne v(otum) s(olvit) / Voconus / Voconis filius (Lardosa, Castelo Branco - Cf. G. A. R. C. A. (1984) 73-74; Trebar[unae] III Vir praefectus Fa[brum]); M(arcus) Marius Pamphilus et T(itus) Fl(avius) Didimus (CIL III, 13582 - Telmis, Egypt - M(arco) Horatio Numisiano mil(itii) coh(ortis) II Lusitanorum tironi[-] M(arco) Mario Cutilio (?) / sumus hic ad [-] Mariolus Lept Minus / [-] anno XII / Nerva Traia[n]o Avg(uusto) / germ[ano] Dacico [-][-]; CIL III, 8733 - P(ublio) Bennio / Sabino / III Vir(o) iure dic(undo) / auguri III Vir(o) i(ure) dic(undo) / quinquennali(i) flam(i) / Augustali praefect(o) / coh(ortis) II Lusitanorum / equitatae. Roldan Hervas (1974) 266, attributed to the cohorts of the Lusitan and dated during the Julio-Claudian and the Flavian periods, underlining that exceptionally "la cohors II Lusitanorum aparece por primera vez en Egipto, en época trajano-hadrianea". The date given in CIL III, 13582 does not enter into discrepancy with the chronological assessment of the **Toncius** altar.

9 The same cohort is only found documented in the following inscriptions: CIL III, 13582 - Telmis, Egypt - M(arco) Horatio Numisiano mil(itii) coh(ortis) II Lusitanorum tironi[-] M(arco) Mario Cutilio (?) / sumus hic ad [-] Mariolus Lept Minus / [-] anno XII / Nerva Traia[n]o Avg(uusto) / Germ[ano] Dacico [-][-]; CIL III, 8733 - P(ublio) Bennio / Sabino / III Vir(o) iure dic(undo) / auguri III Vir(o) i(ure) dic(undo) / quinquennali(i) flam(i) / Augustali praefect(o) / coh(ortis) II Lusitanorum / equitatae. Roldan Hervas (1974) 266, attributed to the cohorts of the Lusitan and dated during the Julio-Claudian and the Flavian periods, underlining that exceptionally "la cohors II Lusitanorum aparece por primera vez en Egipto, en época trajano-hadrianea". The date given in CIL III, 13582 does not enter into discrepancy with the chronological assessment of the **Toncius** altar.

11 After the publication of LAMBRINO (1957), it has subsequently been suggested that the inscription dedicated to Victoria was made in the absence of **Toncius**, owing to the fact that at the base of the altar the inscription Ardunnus / Comini filiius fecit has been engraved. Indeed, it does not seem to us that Ardunnus had any interference in **Toncius’** choice, but rather, that he only had the monument made.
In this inscription, the signifer that bore the Galeria tribe ensign, which was apparently further removed from the local elements, worshipped an indigenous goddess.

If Toncius Toncetami’s two altars are placed in context, or to be more precise, in the context of the Civitas Igaeditanorum, the individual choice of paying homage to a local deity and a Roman deity no longer seems to us to be an example of a ‘process of Romanization’. Let us see why. This municipality was very heterogeneous as much from the ‘ethnic’ point of view as from a religious stance. Monuments are known to have been built in honour of various Roman and local gods:

Inscriptions dedicated to Jupiter:

Iovi / [--] (HEp. 4, nº 1036)
Iovi O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Vegeti/[n]us Vege/[ti f(ilius) a(nimo)] l(ibens) v(otum) s(olvit) (Hep. 15, nº 478)
Iovi Chrysyseros (!) / I(ga)editanorum lib(ertus) / v(otum) a(nimo) l(ibens) s(olvit) (CIL II, 435)
Titus Claudi/us Rufus / [I]ovi o(ptimo) m(aximo) / ob reper[ta / a]uri p(ondo) CXX[---] / v(otum) l(ibens) s(olvit) (CIL II, 5132)

Inscription dedicated to Juno:

Iuno/ni Ca/bura/[---]VI (AE 1961, nº351)

Inscriptions dedicated to Mars:

Marti / Flavius / LO[----] (AE 1967, nº 138)
Marti / V[--]CS / Comini[j]us / Man(?) f(ilius) (CIL II 436)
Bassus / Tangini / Marti / v(otum) l(ibens) s(olvit) (RLLS, p. 427)
Marti / Flavius / Igaedit(an[i]) / lib(ertus) / Ariston (HEp. 2, nº 771)
Severus / C[--]S f(ilius) / Marti / ex / voto (AE 1967, nº 139)

Inscriptions dedicated to Venus:


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Veneri / Aug(ustae) / sacrum / in honorem / Rufinae / Reburrini f(iliae) / Severa mater / filiae (HEp. 12, nº 622)

Inscriptions dedicated to the Sun:
Soli / Turli/ni (AE 1961, nº 355)

Inscriptions dedicated to Victória (besides the one mentioned above):
Victoriae / Maurio Marci / f(ilius) v(otum) l(ibens) s(olvit) (HEp. 2, nº 774)
Victor/iae [---] / ------ (RAP, nº 445)

Inscriptions dedicated to the civitas and to other gods:
Genio / municipi (HEp. 8, nº 598)
Genio ------ (HEp. 3 nº 472)
Laribus / Reburs / Rufini f(ilius) / v(otum) s(olvit) (HEp. 4, nº 1037)

Igaedo / Caetro/nia / Vitalis / v(otum) l(ibens) a(nimo) p(osuit) (AE 1967, nº 137)

Other local gods:
Rectus / Rufi f(ilius) / Reve / Langanidai gui v(otum) s(olvit) (RLLS, p. 374)

The heterogeneousness of the deities worshipped in the civitas indicates a society where it would be common to revere both local and Roman gods. It is curious to note that in this community, side by side with the cult to the Genius of the civitas, we have the local deity of the civitas Igaeditanorum which is Igaedus, as well as Munidi Igaed(itanae or -itanorum). There is the same sort of religious heterogeneity in the outskirts of the civitas.

We know about other soldiers in this community but in no other case have we been lucky enough to find inscriptions that are dedicated by the same person to different gods. Among the civilians, we know about the case of Caius Cantius Modestinus, a local do-gooder renown for his euergetism, who was responsible for building the temples in Egitania in honour of

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[13] In the text, we have chosen to transcribe only the inscriptions that were discovered in Idanha-a-Velha. Nevertheless, we cannot fail to refer to the inscriptions dedicated to Erbine, found in Segura (Idanha, Castelo Branco), which are ethnically associated with the Igaeditani: Andercius / Allucqui f(ilius) / Erbine / Iaedi / Cantibidone / v(otum) l(ibens) a(nimo) s(olvit) e Capito Pir/siri f(ilius) / Erbi/ne Iaidi / Cantibidone / l(ibens) a(nimo) v(otum) s(olvit) – cf. CURADO (1988) 6.; cf. also PROSPER (2002) 217.

Mars and Venus\textsuperscript{15}. The personal choice made by Toncius Toncetami does not digress from the accepted parameters of his community; neither do the two altars lead us to think that there was a functional equation between Trebaruna and Victoria as some authors have suggested\textsuperscript{16}. The cultural identity of this person as well as of others people in the same community was built in this same organic diversity. One of the drawbacks that we are prone to as academics, leads us to isolate the different elements making up a society’s cultural composition and, rather than considering it an organic reality, we take it to be a collection of engraved stones (votive, honorary and funerary) which at most, should be used to illustrate the pathway that historiography has ‘traced’ about them. This is why disagreements have always surfaced about the classification of worshippers and all the more so, when perceiving the reasons underlying the individual’s choices in terms of religion.

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\textsuperscript{15} Cf. MANTAS (2002) 231-234.

\textsuperscript{16} The idea here is taken from J. Leite de Vasconcelos - cf. LEITE DE VASCONCELOS (1905) 301-302.

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