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## The Navigability of the River Ebro: A Reason for Roman Territorial Planning in the Ebro Valley

Communicated by Cosima Möller

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# The Navigability of the River Ebro: A Reason for Roman Territorial Planning in the Ebro Valley

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The aim of this paper is to show how the Roman territorial planning patterns in the Ebro valley were always at the service of the strategic and economic importance given to this waterway by Rome, in the context of a policy of conquest and of economic exploitation. Firstly, the literary and archaeological documentation will be exposed to prove that the Ebro River was navigable upstream as far as Vareia (Varea-Logroño). Secondly, attention will be paid to the territorial limits of the *Conventus Caesaraugustanus* and to the circumstances which surrounded the origin and promotion of the most important towns in this *conventus*. It will be shown that this territory was structured and organized based on the Ebro and its tributaries.

Im vorliegenden Artikel soll belegt werden, wie die römische Raumordnung im Ebro-Tal primär auf die strategische und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung des schiffbaren Flusses Ebro ausgerichtet war, welcher der römischen Eroberungs- und Exploitationspolitik diente. Zuerst werden die literarischen und archäologischen Belege dafür angeführt, dass der Ebro flussaufwärts bis nach Vareia (Varea-Logroño) schiffbar war. Im Anschluß werden die territorialen Begrenzungen des *Conventus Caesaraugustanus* behandelt und die Umstände, unter denen die wichtigsten Stadtgemeinden dieses *conventus* gegründet wurden und aufstiegen. Es wird gezeigt, dass dieses Gebiet anhand des Verlaufs des Ebro und seiner Nebenflüsse strukturiert und organisiert wurde.

Ebro; *Conventus Caesaraugustanus*; *Graccurris*; *Pompelo*; *Dertosa*; *Celsa*; *Caesaraugusta*; *Vareia*; *Cascantum*; *Calagurris*.

The River Ebro was navigable from Antiquity to the 15th century with hardly any changes. However, the constant human intervention in the Ebro valley's landscape has modified this river in such a way that it has worsened its conditions of navigability. The present-day Ebro bears little resemblance to the old Ebro since the immense use of water resources, the encroachment on the floodplains, dams, diversion canals, the deforestation, etc. have changed it so much. Therefore, it can be claimed that in Antiquity, its riverbed was deeper and wider, and its flow more regular and larger. Consequently, ancient peoples enjoyed excellent navigability conditions, in addition to the benefits that river transport offered compared to road transport, such as carrying more load, in a faster and safer way, and at reduced cost.<sup>1</sup> Because of these benefits, the Roman writers on agriculture held the view

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1 Plin. *Nat.* 21.73; Plin. *Ep.* 10.41.2; Tac. *Ann.* 13.53. Sillières estimates that the price of oil increased 108% for every 100 miles if it was transported by road, 86% if transported by donkey, 13.6% by river downstream and 27.2% by river upstream; as for the wine, the increase would be between 130–160% by road, 18% by river downstream and 36.4% by river upstream (Sillières 2000–2001, 435). On comparative costs for

that it was better for an owner to have his property near a navigable river or the sea, then the surplus could be exported and the necessary goods imported in this way.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, the Ebro also had other added values. First, alongside the Rhone, it is the only major river in Western Europe that flows into the Mediterranean, the epicenter of economy and civilization in Roman times. Second, it runs, together with its tributaries, through a depression which widens towards the east. This broad basin has allowed human settlement, especially in the central part, something which Cuadrat calls ‘the Ebro’s gift’.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the Ebro is a natural way of access to the Meseta Central (“Inner Plateau”), since it connects the Meseta Central with the Mediterranean and, together with its tributaries, has enabled the layout of a communications network, converting the Ebro valley into a crossroad.

To conclude, the Ebro and its tributaries are the demographic and economic nerves of the valleys through which they run. For Rome, this river was a boundary line where they established their operational base to expel the Carthaginians, and then to extend their dominance throughout the Iberian Peninsula. At that time, there were not many miles of road, so the Ebro played an important role in the supply of the troops. However, for Rome, this river was also a corridor which ensured the economic exploitation of the valley and a trade route for Italic products.

The aim of this paper is to show how the Roman territorial planning patterns in the Ebro valley were always at the service of the strategic and economic importance given to this waterway by Rome, in the context of a policy of conquest and of economic exploitation.

## I The River Ebro as a waterway: The documents

### I.1 Greek and Latin sources

The ease of communication that the rivers of the Iberian Peninsula offered Rome explains well why the ancient authors were interested in the conditions of navigability.

When the consul Cato came to the Iberian Peninsula in 195 BC, one of his assignments was to explore the hinterland. In this way, he became familiar with the direction, dimensions and characteristics of the Ebro valley, and he affirmed that this river was *magnus, pulcher* and *pisculentus*.<sup>4</sup> Cato says nothing about its navigability, but almost 150 years later, Caesar mentioned, when recounting the battle which he fought against the Pompeians near *Ilerda* (Lérida), that Afranius and Petreius had ordered all the vessels on the Ebro to be confiscated and to be taken to *Octogesa* (c. Mequinenza), a city located on the Ebro, c. 50 km from the Pompeian military camp<sup>5</sup>.

In his work *Geography*, Strabo writes that the Ebro takes its sources amongst the *Cantabri*, flows through an extended plain towards the south, between the Pyrenees and the Idubeda massif (Iberian System), and is fed by the rivers and other waters coming down from these mountains.<sup>6</sup> Due to his interest in emphasizing the Roman features of this interior region, he names some of its cities:<sup>7</sup> *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza) and *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro), on the banks of the Ebro; *Ilerda* (Lérida), *Osca* (Huesca) and *Tarraco* (Tarragona), not far from the river. He also mentions *Calagurris* (Calahorra), *Pompelo* (Pamplona) and

goods transport, see Duncan-Jones 1974, 366–369; Soto Cañamares and Carreras Monfort 2009, 307; 315–318.

2 Var. *R.r.* 1.16.6; Cat. *Agr.* 1.3.

3 Cuadrat Prats 2003, 11.

4 Cato *Orig.* 7.5.

5 Caes. *BC*, 1.61.

6 Str. 3.3.8; 3.4.6; 3.4.10.

7 About this question see F. Beltrán Lloris 2006b, 222.

*Oiasso* (Irún). The last two cities are related to the Roman road that started in *Tarraco* and reached the *gens Vasconum* of the Cantabrian coast, connecting the *Mare Nostrum* with the *Mare Extremum*. It is clear that Strabo is more interested in the routes that connected the Ebro valley with the Mediterranean and Rome than in the wars of conquest and the pre-Roman peoples. According to him, the communications conditioned the degree of Roman character and this partly explains that the *Cantabri*, so far from the principal routes of communication, ‘have lost the instinct of sociability and humanity’.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the economic exploitation of the territories conquered by Rome was also important for Strabo: Turdetania is a very fertile region watered by the *Baetis* (Guadalquivir), a river which promotes the exploitation of this region and on which the most important cities<sup>9</sup> are located. Lusitania is a rich region watered by the *Tagus* (Tajo) and other minor, but mostly navigable rivers.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, Strabo describes the Iberian Peninsula not only in terms of barbarism versus civilization, but also in economic terms. This explains the importance given to the rivers of the Iberian Peninsula in his account. Regarding these rivers, he mentions the length of the navigable course and the capacity of the vessels.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, he says nothing about the navigability of the Ebro, although it is the only large peninsular river which flows into the Mediterranean, the center of commerce and civilization. The reason for this omission is to be found in his sources; in this case, Posidonius. This geographer, who is Strabo’s main source for the third book, was in the Iberian Peninsula c. 95 BC but had direct knowledge of neither the River Ebro nor its valley.<sup>12</sup>

Pomponius Mela, for his part, only cites the abundant flow of the lower course of the Ebro. He calls it ‘the mighty *Hiberus*’ that runs besides *Dertosa*.<sup>13</sup> The first mentioning of the navigability of the river is found in Pliny, who states that the Ebro is enriched by its commerce and navigable for ships from the town *Vareia* (Varea-Logroño) along a route of 260 miles (c. 385 km).<sup>14</sup> According to Avienus, who calls the Ebro *oleum flumen*,<sup>15</sup> certain foreign seafarers used to go upriver to trade with the people living along the riverbank and to buy agricultural products from them. These seafarers were probably the Phocaeans, thus this news must date from the 4th century BC or before.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, the poet Claudian calls the Ebro *dives Hiberus*. This name can be related to the Roman inscription *Flumen Hiberus* which appears on the pedestal of a statue, next to what could be the right foot of a representation of the River Ebro as a river divinity.<sup>17</sup> Both testimonies prove that the Ebro, like the Tiber and the Nile, was considered a good god who, along with its abundant flow, provided the region with life and sustenance. For this reason, the Ebro was worshipped.<sup>18</sup>

## 1.2 Archaeological evidence: the wine amphorae

The wine amphorae found in the Ebro valley are the best evidence of the rich river trade mentioned by Pliny. These amphorae are proof that the Ebro and its tributaries were the

8 Str. 3.3.8. On the concept of the barbarism in Strabo, see Thollard 1987.

9 Str. 3.2.1; 3; 4; 6.

10 Str. 3.3.1; 4.

11 Str. 3.3.4 (Duero); 3.3.1 (Tajo); 3.2.3 (Gadiana); 3.2.3 (Guadalquivir).

12 On this journey, Posidonius traveled the Mediterranean coast, visited the *Turdetania* and went a stretch of the *Baetis* (Guadalquivir) upstream.

13 Mela 2.90.

14 Plin. *Nat.* 3.3.14.

15 Av. *O.m.* 505.

16 Av. *O.m.* 503.

17 *CIL* II, 4075, p. 972 (*Tarraco*, Tarragona).

18 On the legends about the Ebro, see Marcuello Calvín 1996; Beltrán Martínez 2003.

supply routes for an army whose mission was to conquer Celtiberia and the rest of the inland of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>19</sup>

From the first half of the 2nd century BC onwards, Italic wine arrived in the Ebro valley in amphorae produced mostly in the south of Italy. The first documented examples of amphorae were Greco-Italic in origin and they transported Italic wine from Campania, Latium and Etruria.<sup>20</sup> At the end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 1st century BC, these amphorae were replaced by the Dressel 1 type (A, B, C), which has been found in the final phase of most of the Iberian and Celtiberian archaeological sites in the Ebro valley.<sup>21</sup> Other types of amphorae linked to the Italic wine trade in the Ebro valley are the Brindisi amphora, which lasted until the turn of the era;<sup>22</sup> the amphora 'Ruscino' from the region of the Gulf of Leon, dating from the late 2nd century to the first quarter of the 1st century BC;<sup>23</sup> the Dressel 2-4, which replaced the Dressel 1 at the end of the 1st century BC;<sup>24</sup> and the Lamboglia 2, whose production lasted from the end of the 2nd century to the beginning of the 1st century BC.<sup>25</sup> Other types are also attested, such as eastern amphorae filled with Aegean wine,<sup>26</sup> Dressel 6<sup>27</sup> and amphorae from Gaul<sup>28</sup>.

The greatest concentration of amphorae finds belongs to the end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 1st century BC. Despite the definitive end of Numantia, there were still conflicts between the Roman army and the native population of the Ebro valley during these years. It is also the time when Sertorius arrived in the Iberian Peninsula and established his tactical operations center in the Ebro valley.

At the end of the 1st century BC, the Italic wine imports experienced a spectacular decline on the Catalan coast and in the Ebro valley. From the middle of the 1st century BC onwards, the vineyards which extended along the coastal area from *Emporiae* (Ampurias) to the south of *Tarraco* (Tarragona) and along the inland hills began to export their wines to Italy (*Ostia Antica, Pompeii*), the Germanic frontier, Great Britain and Gaul via the Rhone and the Ebro valleys.<sup>29</sup> The amphorae finds at all these sites prove the existence of a craft which produced containers in accordance with the most common Roman prototypes of this time. This activity was caused by a surplus of wine production.<sup>30</sup> It also proves the

19 For an overview of this river trade, see Guiral Pelegrín and Navarro Caballero 1999, 67–83; on the trade in wine, see, M. Beltrán Lloris 1982, 319–330; M. Beltrán Lloris 1987, 51–74; M. Beltrán Lloris 2008, 271–318; Miró 1990, 333–354; on the trade in olive oil, see M. Beltrán Lloris 1983, 515–545; M. Beltrán Lloris 2008, 274; 299–309; and on the marble trade, see Cisneros Cunchillos 2003, 157–168.

20 Archaeological sites: Los Castellares (Herrera de los Navarros), *Segeda* (Belmonte de Gracián) and *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro).

21 Archaeological sites in the Zaragoza province: *Bursau* (Borja), *Segeda* II (Durón de Belmonte de Gracián), Castillo de Miranda (Juslibol), *Contrebia Belaisca* (Botorrita), Burgo de Ebro, Fuentes de Ebro and *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro). Archaeological sites in the Teruel province: El Palomar de Oliete, Cabezo de Alcalá (Azaila), La Bovina de Vinaceite, Alcañiz, Cabezo de La Guardia (Alcorisa) and La Muela (Hinojosa de Jarque). Archaeological sites in the Huesca province: Monzón and El Puntal de Ontiñena.

22 Archaeological site: *Segeda* II (Durón de Belmonte de Gracián).

23 Archaeological site: Cabezo de Alcalá (Azaila), in the Sertorian period.

24 Archaeological sites: *Bursau* (Borja) and *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro).

25 Archaeological sites: *Bursau* (Borja), *Segeda* II (Durón de Belmonte de Gracián), *Contrebia Belaisca* (Botorrita), Cabezo de Alcalá and *Contrebia Leukade* (Inestrillas – Aguilar del río Alhama).

26 Archaeological sites: Cabezo de Alcalá (Azaila) and *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro).

27 In *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza), an Augustan *aureus* dating to 19–18 BC was found in the amphorae field of the Tenerías' Square. This find provides chronological evidence pointing to the end of the reign of Augustus for the Dressel 9. On this amphorae field, see Cebolla Berlanga, Domínguez Arranz, and Ruiz Ruiz 2004, 463–472.

28 Archaeological sites: *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza) and *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro).

29 On these wines, see for example Plin. *Nat.* 14.71; Sil. 3.369–370 and 15.177; Mart. 7.53.6 and 13.118.

30 For a list of archaeological sites with winemaking facilities, see Peña Cervantes 2010, 195 (Tab. 16), 196 (Tab. 17), 206 (Fig. 57). For the implementation of a new production model in relation to wine, see Olesti Vila 1996–1997, 425–448; Revilla Calvo 1992–1994, 145–163; Revilla Calvo 1993; Revilla Calvo 1995; Víctor 2008, 99–123; Revilla Cal 2010, 25–71.

existence of a well-organized transport network, in which the waterways played a crucial role.

In the export of these wines up the Ebro, the following Hispanic amphorae were used: Tarraconense 1 and 2, Pascual 1, Dressel 2–4, Oberaden 74 and Dressel 28.<sup>31</sup> The Tarraconense 1 was manufactured in the potteries of the Laietanian area during the second half of the 1st century BC.<sup>32</sup> The same is true for the Tarraconense 2.<sup>33</sup> The Pascual 1 began to be produced c. 40 BC. Its period of widest distribution was the reign of Augustus, and, to a lesser extent, that of Tiberius. From this time onwards, its presence in the traditional market of Gaul decreases; in the second quarter of the 1st century AD, this type is no longer recorded in western Gaul and it disappears permanently around AD 60 to 70.<sup>34</sup> Considering the finds, the Pascual 1 came early to the Ebro valley and its presence there continued until about the 60s of the first century AD. All of this shows a large-scale export of the Laietanian wine during the Augustan period.

The Dressel 2–4 is contemporary of the Pascual 1. The former began to be manufactured in the last decades of the 1st century BC. This evidences the boost which the vineyards of the Catalan coast<sup>35</sup> experienced under Augustus. The Dressel 2–4 reached its peak in the period between the reign of Tiberius and the middle of the 1st century AD, that is, when it replaced the Pascual 1 as a wine container. Since then, this type dominated the wine market until its gradual disappearance under the Flavians or perhaps early in the reign of Trajan. This form is much more dispersed along the Ebro valley than the Pascual 1 and most of the finds should be dated to the first decades of the 1st century AD.<sup>36</sup>

Two other imperial types which we find in the Ebro valley are the Oberaden 74 and the Dressel 28. These are small amphorae with ovoid body and flat bottom, which were very appropriate especially for shallow draft boats used for river transport, but also for land

- 31 On the typology of the Tarraconensian amphorae, see Miró 1988; López Mullor and Martín Menéndez 2008, 33–94. These amphorae were manufactured in potteries situated in the territory of *Emporiae* (Ampurias), *Gerunda* (Gerona), *Baetulo* (Badalona), *Iluro* (Mataró), *Barcino* (Barcelona), *Aquae Calidae* (Caldas de Malavella), *Tarraco* (Tarragona), *Valentia* (Valencia) and *Saguntum* (Sagunto). Its production area extended inland to the Vallès. On these potteries, see Etienne and Mayet 2000, 198–199; Revilla Calvo 2004, 163–172.
- 32 Archaeological sites: *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza), around 35 to 30 BC; *Contrebia Belaiska* (Botorrita); *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro), from the year AD 20 until the city was abandoned (ca. AD 68); Palao (Alcañiz), around AD 54 to 60; and El Villar (Castejón de Monegros).
- 33 The amphora with the stamp *IVLIVS THEOPHILVS* found in *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza) belongs to this type; see M. Beltrán Lloris 2008, 276–277.
- 34 Archaeological sites: *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza), *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro), Bañales (Uncastillo), the Roman *villa* El Torreón (Ortilla), Cerro de San Esteban (Poyo del Cid), Morrón del Cid (La Iglesuela del Cid), *Ilerda* (Lérida) and in the region of Ribera del Ebro (Asclines – Ascó and Mora). On the upper Ebro, it is found sporadically in Álava (San Andrés – Argote and Las Ermitas – Cabriana) and Guipuzkoa (Gueteria and Santa María del Juncal – Irún).
- 35 The presence of the Dressel 2–4 in Gaul, on the Germanic border and in Great Britain is more limited than the presence of the Pascual 1, but not so in Italy. This seems to have been its main market (Revilla Calvo 1995, 54). About the increase of the wine production under Augustus, see Peña Cervantes 2010, 163–167.
- 36 Archaeological sites in the province of Zaragoza: *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza), Farasdués (Ejea de los Caballeros), Torre de Molinero (San Juan de Mozarrifar), *Arcobriga* (Cerro Villar, Monreal de Ariza), *Bilbilis* (ca. Calatayud), *Contrebia Belaiska* (Botorrita) and *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro). Archaeological sites in the province of Huesca: El Villar (Castejón de Monegros), Labitosa (Cerro del Calvario, la Puebla de Castro) and the Roman *villa* Las Coronas (Pallaruelo de Monegros). Archaeological sites in the province of Teruel: Palao (Alcañiz), El Poyo del Cid and Iglesuela del Cid. Archaeological sites in the province of Lérida: *Ilerda* (Lérida) and the Iberian settlement Gebut (Soses). Archaeological sites in La Rioja: the pottery of La Maja (Pradejón) and *Calagurris* (Calahorra). Archaeological sites in Navarra: *Pompelo* (Pamplona), *Cascantum* (Cascante), La Aguadera (Viana) and the Roman *villa* of Arellano (Arellano). Archaeological sites in Álava: San Andrés (Argote – Treviño), Espejo, Cabriana (Miranda de Ebro – Lantarón) and Laguardia. Archaeological sites in Cantabria: *Iuliobriga* (Retortillo – Campoo de Enmedio) and Camesa – Rebolledo (Valdeolea). Archaeological sites in Guipuzkoa: Gueteria, Santa María del Juncal (Irún) and Irún.

transport. The type Oberaden 74 was the first flat bottom amphora which was manufactured in the Iberian Peninsula, especially in the potteries of Campo de Tarragona and Bajo Ebro,<sup>37</sup> just as the real Romanization of the interior of the Peninsula began. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to think that this type was designed for river transport.<sup>38</sup> We would then be faced with a conquest of the interior via the rivers.<sup>39</sup>

The amphora Oberaden 74 appeared in the Ebro valley around 30 BC, during the Cantabrian Wars, and its production ended around AD 60, when the Gauloise 4 monopolized the wine market in the *limes Germanicus* and *limes Britannicus*. Its period of greatest distribution lasted from 20 BC to AD 20, in both the Ebro valley and the *limes Germanicus*. That is why Carreras Monfort and González Cesteros think that the birth of this amphora type could be related to the supply of wine to the army via the Ebro during the Cantabrian Wars and, a little later, during the military campaigns in Germania.<sup>40</sup>

This emergence of wine production on the Tarraconensian coast seems to stop at the end of the 1st century AD because the Hispanic wine amphorae are no longer found in Ostia during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian.<sup>41</sup> However, the disappearance of the Hispanic amphora types does not mean a crisis of the Tarraconensian coastal vineyards, since, although some wine facilities were abandoned at the end of 1st century AD, others continued to be fully operational throughout the 2nd century AD. Part of the wine was probably marketed locally, but it is more likely that another part was marketed in remote areas, using other containers instead of amphorae. Besides, other containers were suitable for small vessels with shallow draft used for river transport, or for the combination of river and land transport in a single journey, like barrels or wineskins, which are very difficult to detect archaeologically; or dolia or large ceramic containers produced locally, etc.<sup>42</sup>

In this context, we should not forget two facts which had to affect the wine production of the Catalan coast. On the one hand, the rise and the spread of the wine from Gaul had to be a strong competition for the Tarraconensian wine whose level of export and, of course, market area would be diminished. On other hand, from the 2nd century AD onwards, many regions began to produce their own wines, as the Ebro valley, whose climate and soils were suitable for the culture of grapevines.<sup>43</sup>

37 In the potteries where this type was manufactured, the Pascual 1 or the Dressel 2–4 were also produced. Carreras Monfort and González Cesteros (2012, 213) believe that perhaps the Oberaden 74 was used for river or land transport, or to store another type of wine, different to the wine which the Pascual 1 and the Dressel 2–4 contained.

38 As is the Gaulois 4 of Gaul, where the rivers were also one of the main vehicles of inland Romanization (Carreras Monfort and González Cesteros 2012, 214–215).

39 García Vargas, Roberto de Almeida, and González Cesteros 2011, 264. Archaeological sites (Oberaden 74): *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza), *Bursau* (Borja), *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro), *Arcobriga* (Monreal de Ariza), Los Bañales (Uncastillo), *Palao* (Alcañiz), *La Vispesa* (Tamarite de Litera), *Ilerda* (Lérida), *Els Vilars* (Arbeca), *Aitona* (Lérida), *Dertosa* (Tortosa) and *Pompelo* (Pamplona). Archaeological sites (Dressel 28): *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza), *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro), *Bursau* (Borja), Los Bañales (Uncastillo), *Calagurris* (Calahorra) and *Pompelo* (Pamplona).

40 Nearly 90% of the finds of Oberaden 74 have been located in Augustan archaeological sites of the *limes Germanicus*, the Rhone and the Ebro valleys (Carreras Monfort and González Cesteros 2012, 217–218; 221; 225).

41 M. Beltrán Lloris 1987, 64.

42 The use of barrels is attested in Gaul, *Germania* and *Britannia* from the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD (stela of Cabrières d'Aigues, Museo Calvet – Avignon, see Bouvier 1999–2000, 299, fig. 1); Varro mentions wineskins of wine and olive oil which came to the coast on the backs of donkeys (*R.r.* 2.6.5). On the use of these containers for wine, olive oil and salted fish, see Marlière 2000; Marlière 2001, 181–208; Marlière 2001–2002, 128–179.

43 There is archaeological evidence of wine production in the Ebro valley in the south of Navarra (the Roman *villa* of the Musas of Arellano, Funes, Los Villares de Falces, Puente Fustero and El Cerrao) and in La Rioja (Berceo, Camino del Pago, La Morlaca in Villamediana, Hornos de Moncalvillo and Medrano). To this archaeological evidence, Marcial's description of the estate which Marcella gave him in *Bilbilis* (*ca.* Calatayud) must be added. Besides, in this estate, there was a vineyard among other things (Mart. 13.31).



Regarding the wine of *Baetica*, it had a minimal presence in the Ebro valley. It arrived in amphorae of the types known as Haltern 70, Dressel 28 and Dressel 7/8, all of them documented in *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro). The first type archaeologically dates from the early Augustan period to the turn of the era and, in smaller quantities, is documented until Claudian times.<sup>44</sup>

The distribution of amphorae in the Ebro valley confirms, without doubt, the role of the Ebro and its tributaries in the wine trade. The roads were used when there was no river access, and that would explain the amphorae finds in the provinces of Álava, Guipúzcoa and Cantabria. The vessels would sail up the river as far as its limit of navigability. There, the goods would be moved into carts and onto pack animals to travel to their destination. In this combination of waterway transport by shallow draft boats and overland transport, the small flat-bottomed amphorae (Oberaden 75, Dressel 28) would have been very practical.

Finally, in this river and overland transport network in the Ebro valley, there are two questions which must be stressed. The first question relates to the role played by some cities as redistribution centers, for example *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro) and *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza). The second question involves the relationship that existed between the rise of the wine trade and the historical events which took place in the Ebro valley, namely: the submission of Celtiberia, the Sertorian Wars (83–73 BC), Caesar's Civil War (49 BC) and the Cantabrian Wars (29–19 BC). In these conflicts, the Ebro was the rearguard of the Roman army in its advance towards the interior and the west of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>45</sup> Besides, it is well-known that the Roman army was a major consumer of both good quality and poor quality wine. The latter would have been part of the official supply.

## 2 A territorial organization at the service of a river

There is no doubt that the River Ebro was navigable upstream as far as *Vareia* (Varea-Logroño). However, when the Roman settlement patterns in the Ebro valley are studied, this detail is often forgotten. It is also often forgotten that the navigation, by sea or by river, was the most important means of transport in classical Antiquity and that the ports and waterways were used for trade and communication more than the roads. In this regard, given this 'detail', we are going to focus our attention first on the territorial limits of the *Conventus Caesaraugustanus*, and, second, on the circumstances which surrounded the origin and promotion of the most important towns in this conventus.

### 2.1 The *Conventus Caesaraugustanus*

Pliny reports that *Hispania Citerior* was divided into seven *conventus iuridici*. He locates each one of them, he names their capitals and their *populi*, but he does not mention anything about the function of this provincial organization.<sup>46</sup> Although Pliny provides little information, there is no doubt that the conventus had a territorial nature in the beginning, because they were territorial districts into which the provinces were divided and had a capital from which they took their name. Seen this way, the *conventus* was a link between two administrations, the local and the provincial, so that they performed administrative functions of diverse nature.<sup>47</sup> With regard to their chronology, it is now

44 M. Beltrán Lloris 1987, 60.

45 Sanmartí Grego 1985, 157–158.

46 Plin. *Nat.* 3.3.7–13 (*Baetica*); 3.3.18–28 (*Hispania Citerior*); 4.20.117–118 (*Lusitania*).

47 About these districts and their functions, see Albertini 1923, 83–104; Sancho Rocher 1978, 171–194; Dopico Cainzos 1986, 265–283; Ozcariz Gil 2006, 17–26.

generally accepted that they were created under Augustus, due to his territorial policy and his policy of reorganizing the empire's administration.

According to Pliny, the *populi* living within the boundaries of this conventus were the *Ilergetes*, *Iacetani*, *Suessetani*, *Sedetani*, Celtiberians (*Berones*, *Arevaci*, *Belli*, *Titti* and *Lusones*) and, finally, the *Vascones*.<sup>48</sup> From this information, the approximate boundaries which we can draw for this district would be the following: The northern boundary would consist of the Pyrenees while the eastern boundary north of the Ebro would follow the River Segre and its tributary, the River Noguera Pallaresa, then, south of the Ebro, the eastern boundary would be the Aragonese region of Maestrazgo. In the south and southwest, the boundary would continue along the River Guadiela, a left-bank tributary of the Tajo's headwaters. The western boundary would proceed first along the mountain ranges of Guadarrama, Somosierra, Pela and Ayllón, and along the rivers Henares and Jalón as far as Almantes, La Virgen, Moncayo y Madero; then, after passing along the counties Cameros and Sierra de la Demanda, the western boundary would reach the River Tirón to cross the Ebro in order to go into the mountain ranges of Cantabria, Urbasa and Aralar as far as the River Urumea and continue along its course until reaching its mouth on the Cantabrian Sea.<sup>49</sup>

These boundaries delimit a territory that coincides with one of the three areas into which the Ebro basin is divided, the middle Ebro and its tributaries on both sides. This area begins in the Conchas de Haro (La Rioja), a natural gorge which the river has made between the Obarenes Mountains and the Cantabrian Mountain Range. Once it has left this mountain range, the Ebro becomes wider and slower. The border ends in the Catalan Coastal Range, at the same level as Mequinenza and Fayón, where the rivers Cinca and Segre flow into the Ebro. Altogether, this area reached from the navigable section of the Ebro to the stretch of meanders which significantly prolonged the navigation at this point.

It is possible that in the area of the aforementioned stretch of meanders, the goods were transported overland and returned to the waterway once again at Celsa. This change in transport, from waterway to land, would not have been too annoying if we consider that in the lower Ebro, the navigation may have allowed larger ships, such as in the Guadalquivir, and sooner or later, the goods had to be moved to smaller vessels if they were to go up the Ebro. Unfortunately, the shortage of sources does not allow the confirmation of any assumptions regarding this matter.

Another question to be taken into account is the opening of the *Conventus Caesaraugustanus* to the Cantabrian Sea, the *Mare Externum*. As mentioned above, the western boundary of the *conventus* extended north of the Ebro from the furthest point at which the river is navigable (Conchas de Haro, La Rioja) to the River Urumea. It thus embraced a limited coastline where *Oiasso* (Irún) is located. The latter was a port city which was part of the ports network of the Bay of Biscay (*Flaviobriga* – Castro Urdiales, *Vesperies*, *Menosca* – Guetaria?, *Lapurdum* – Bayona and *Burdigala* – Burdeos), within a context of intense silver mining in Roman times. This explains why the road which started in *Tarraco* reached *Oiasso* (Irún) after passing through *Pompelo* (Pamplona); so from *Pompelo* it went, like in Ptolemy's account, 'to the *Vascones* of the edge of the ocean'.<sup>50</sup> The waterway Ebro–Arga also reached *Pompelo* and from this city, the road mentioned above would be used. These would be the two routes which would be employed to transport the silver from the surrounding mines, as it seems that the purpose of the port was principally to meet the demands of the local population.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, it is evident that the Ebro, through one of

48 Plin. *Nat.* 3.24.

49 These are the limits fixed by Albertini, which are now generally accepted, see Albertini 1923, 95–102; see also Sancho Rocher 1981, 62–63.

50 Str. 3.4.10. About the road *Tarraco* – *Oiasso*, see Amela Valverde 2000–2001, 201–208; Amela Valverde 2011, 119–128.

51 Urteaga Artigas 2005, 106.

its tributaries (Arga), was a safe route between the *Mare Externum* and the *Mare Nostrum* in the *Conventus Caesaraugustanus*.

In conclusion, Rome perceived this geographical area as a homogeneous space which connected the Mediterranean Sea (*Mare Nostrum*) with the Cantabrian Sea (*Mare Externum*) thanks to the rivers, on which shallow draft vessels sailed, and roads. For this reason, from Augustus onwards, this area became a region with the Ebro as the vital axis for exploiting the resources of this territory.

## 2.2 The cities

### 2.2.1 Bulwark-cities: *Gracchuris* (Alfaro) – *Pompelo* (Pamplona)

Both *Gracchuris* and *Pompelo* were Roman enclaves intended as settlements for the local indigenous population. They did not enjoy a privileged legal status, but each was founded by a general who gave the respective city its names: Tiberius Gracchus the Elder and Pompey the Great. However, as we shall see, this is not the only thing they have in common.

The presence of the consul Cato in the Ebro valley meant the control of the inferior and medium basin up to the rivers Gállego and Huerva, which encompassed the *Iacetani* and *Suesetani* north of the Ebro and the *Sedetani* and *Ausetani* to its south.<sup>52</sup> From then on, this sector of the Ebro valley was turned into the rearguard of the Roman army, as they advanced towards the interior of the Iberian Peninsula, to Celtiberia. But before all of that, Rome needed to institute an effective dominion over this territory and establish a security perimeter between its zone of influence and the Celtiberian territory. This new strategy explains the foundation of *Gracchuris*.<sup>53</sup>

In 180 BC, when Gracchus arrived in *Citerior* as a governor, he directed all his actions to achieve this defensive belt in the Ebro valley and to attain a non-belligerent attitude of its inhabitants and their loyalty to Rome. To accomplish this, he made pacts with the Celtiberians regarding the military personnel and the tribute with which they had to provide Rome. Gracchus also banned the construction of new cities and approved a new land distribution system which would end the insecurity and poverty caused by the lack of land in the community because this was seen as a threat to the conquerors.<sup>54</sup> In 179 BC, the first Roman settlement was founded on the right bank of the River Ebro, the *oppidum Gracchuris*,<sup>55</sup> on top of a prior settlement, *Ilurcis*.<sup>56</sup>

*Gracchuris* is situated on the right side of the Ebro, on the Eras de San Martín, in the outskirts of the town of Alfaro (La Rioja). The position of the city benefits from the surrounding natural defenses, therefore it has an excellent strategic position. It is located on a small elevation from which it dominates the mouths of the rivers Aragón (N/E) and Alhama (S/W) into the Ebro. Its location near the Ebro ensured the regular and safe provisioning of the army while they advanced towards the center of the Iberian Peninsula. The River Aragón gave way to the villages on the left riverside which had been recently seized, whereas the River Alhama was a convenient and rapid way of natural infiltration into the heart of Celtiberia.<sup>57</sup> It was the first Roman settlement established in the Ebro valley that served as a defensive and strategic enclave, with the Ebro as an easy way of

52 On the activity of Cato in *Hispania*, see Martínez Gázquez 1992.

53 Something very similar also explains the foundation or re-foundation of *Illiturgi* (Mengíbar), an Iberian settlement which, interestingly, was also situated next to a river, the Guadalquivir.

54 Ap. *Ib.* 6.43.

55 Liv. *per.* 41.

56 Fest. p. 97M.

57 On the characteristics of this route of penetration, see Hernández Vera and Casado López 1976, 26–27.

access from the Mediterranean, and an excellent bulwark which helped to conquer the northern lands and Celtiberia.

More than 100 years later, after the death of Sertorius at the hands of his lieutenant Perpenna (73 BC), Pompey the Great put an end to the Sertorian resistance in the Ebro valley and returned triumphantly to Rome at the beginning of the year 71 BC. But before returning, he severely punished the indigenous cities which had supported Sertorius and established the city of *Pompelo* (Pamplona), which, according to Strabo, later was the most important city in the territory of the *Vascones*.<sup>58</sup>

Its location, like *Graccurreis*, had a great strategic importance. From there, one had access to the Pyrenees, to the *Mare Externum*, and, via the River Arga, into the Ebro valley. In this way, the foundation or re-foundation of this enclave meant the Roman control of the *saltus vasconum*, a way from the Ebro valley out to the Atlantic and, on top of that, an access route for a future conquest of *Aquitania* from the Ebro, via the mountain pass of Lepoeder in the Pyrenees.

The foundations of *Graccurreis* and *Pompelo* were not random acts, but a conquest plan designed from the River Ebro. The latter was a necessary waterway for supplying the army and a penetration axis towards the north, west and the Meseta Central. Viewed in this light, geostrategic factors determined the positioning of both these cities. They were intended as bulwarks in border territory, and they made it possible to conquer new territories, maintain peace in the newly subdued regions or open new routes of communication, like in the case of *Pompelo*, the one which connected the Ebro with the *Mare Externum*.

### 2.2.2 The port city of Caesar: *Municipium Iulia Hiberia Ilercavonia Dertosa*<sup>59</sup>

In Antiquity, the close connection between maritime and river transport is evident in the main port cities of the Catalan coast. They were all situated near an estuary. This peculiarity was not accidental; it was the result of implementing a settlement pattern that, where feasible, favored a connection between the sea and a river developed from an urban nucleus. From north to south, this occurs in *Emporiae* (Ampurias), between the rivers Ter and Fluviá; *Blandae* (Els Padrets, Blanes), next to the Tordera; *Iluro* (Mataró), on the Argentoná; *Baetulo* (Badalona), next to Besós; *Barcino* (Barcelona), on the Llobregat; *Tarraco* (Tarragona), next to the Francolí; and, finally, *Dertosa* (Tortosa), on the Ebro. In some cases, this started settlement reorganization (*Iluro*, *Baetulo*) or the urban remodeling of an enclave (*Emporiae*, *Tarraco*?).<sup>60</sup>

*Dertosa* was the connecting link between the Mediterranean Sea and the River Ebro, a natural waterway leading into the interior of *Citerior*. Its location on the left side of the Ebro estuary and in the vicinity of a natural harbor on the coast<sup>61</sup> made it one of the most important commercial enclaves in the Iberian Peninsula, on the Mediterranean, and one of the main redistribution points from the coast towards the interior and the other way around. This pattern continued into the 3rd century AD and throughout the Visigoth era until the beginning of the 7th century. The present Tortosa lost this prestige a long time ago because the river is no longer navigable.

58 Str. 3.4.10. On a revision of Salustio *Hist.* 2.93 and the foundation of *Pompelo*, see Pina Polo 2009, 196–202; 2011, 138–142.

59 About the legal status of *Dertosa* and its presumed colonial status under Pertinax, see Pena Gimeno 1993, 581–596; Mayer I Olivé 2009, 61–69. According to Abascal Palazón, *Dertosa* became a *municipium* during the second trip of Augustus to Hispania, 27–24 BC (Abascal Palazón 2006, 76).

60 An overview of the regional planning and the cities in the peninsular northeast, see Pina Polo 1993, 77–94.

61 The Ebro delta formation is very recent; see Dupré 1987, 32.

The existence of this double port, maritime and river, which drove its urban development, is evident in the only two issues which its mint coined. On the asses and semisses coined in mid-1st century AD, there is a maritime vessel (*navis oneraria*) on the obverse, and the legend MVN HIBERA IVLIA on the reverse. Another type of coin has a river vessel with the legend ILERCAVONIA on the reverse.<sup>62</sup> The asses of the second and last issuance, coined under Tiberius (AD 14–37), show a maritime vessel on the reverse and the legend DERT M H I ILERCAVONIA; and the semisses present the same ship and a dolphin.<sup>63</sup> These nautical motifs, which also appear in the epigraphy of *Dertosa*, exemplify very well the maritime and commercial spirit of the *Dertosani*, to which Pliny referred,<sup>64</sup> and of their city, which Strabo calls *κατοικία*, a generic term for town but also for ‘colony’.<sup>65</sup> Also, its seaport was not left out of the long-distance trade, as inferred from the fragment of the life of Galba by Suetonius. The Roman biographer relates a favorable omen which took place after the proclamation of Galba as emperor; the vision of a ship from Alexandria which arrived in *Dertosa*, loaded with arms, but without any person to steer it or any sailors or passengers on board. This vision meant that the gods accepted the appointment of Galba.<sup>66</sup>

However, the fame of this Caesarean port is not clearly reflected in the archaeological record because the excavations carried out so far have been archaeological investigations at specific locations in Tortosa determined by the urban development of the current city. To this fact, the difficulty of excavating in an area with a very high water table must be added. To date, archaeological finds do not satisfactorily explain the duality *Hibera-Dertosa* posed by the literary and numismatic sources. Besides, they are not conclusive with regard to the location of the double sea-river port.

The *Hibera-Dertosa* duality allows three possible interpretations which are difficult to confirm archaeologically. First, the possibility exists that there were two nuclei located at different sites. This has generated debate about where each of them would have been. Second, we could have before us a toponymic duality for the same enclave. Third, it could be a double indigenous-Roman center. Then, we would have habitat continuity and *Dertosa* would not be a foundation *ex novo*.<sup>67</sup> The existence of an elevation on the banks of the Ebro which dominates much of the river valley, the hill Zuda, has led Diloli Fons to suggest, using classical sources, archaeological data and numismatic finds, that the *Hibera* mentioned by Livy in the context of the Second Punic War could be located on this hill.<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, there was an Iberian nucleus, a precursor of the Roman city. Its importance in the surrounding area would grow because of its strategic location at the mouth of the Ebro, the route of entry for the supplies of the Roman army. Later, during Caesar’s Civil War, the city joined the camp of Caesar, providing grain and men.<sup>69</sup> However, while the granting of Roman citizenship on the collective level (municipalities) was one of the measures which Caesar applied ‘to those who had displayed any good will toward him’,<sup>70</sup> *Hibera* had much more to offer, and with this, we refer to its position at the mouth of the Ebro. From our point of view, with the promotion of *Hibera* to municipality, Caesar

62 On the chronology of this issue, see Pena Gimeno 1993, 589–590.

63 Villalonga Garrigues 1979, nos. 939; 1075. An iconographic study of these coins can be found in Llorens and Aquilué Abadías 2001, 35–53.

64 Plin. *Nat.* 3.23. The funerary inscription of *Aulus Caecilius Cubicularius* has the symbol of a ship with extended sails, placed between the *tympanum* and the inscription (*CIL* II, 14-1, 800, tab. 12 = *CIL* II, 4065).

65 Str. 3.4.6.

66 Suet. *Galb.* 10.4; see also D. C. 64.1.2.

67 On the first and second proposal, see Genera I Monells and Járrega Domínguez 2009, 125–126.

68 Liv. 23.28. Diloli Fons 1996, 53–68; Diloli Fons 2008, 109–126.

69 Caes. *Civ.* 1.60.

70 D. C. 43.39.5

laid the first stone of the economic exploitation of this region along the Ebro, which obviously had to start from its mouth. After the Sertorian Wars and Caesar's Civil War, almost all of the Iberian Peninsula was conquered. Then, it was time to regularize the economic exploitation, and this would only be possible with the implementation of a regional policy at the service of the main communication routes, the rivers.

Finally, with respect to the location of the double river-sea port, sources tell us nothing and archaeology clarifies little. But facing the evidence of archaeological campaigns carried out in recent years, we can be sure that the port which existed in Tortosa until the beginning of the Modern Age was a continuation of the Roman port. There is general agreement on placing it in the southern sector of the city, defined as the southern *suburbium* of *Dertosa*. This *suburbium* followed the path of the Ebro, and, considering the finds of amphorae, major trade activities like transport and exchange of goods in connection with a river port took place here.<sup>71</sup> The lack of structures can be explained by the nature of the estuary, a long and narrow channel with beaches on both sides where the *naves oneariae* will have had an anchorage with a boat service to carry men and goods to the mainland. On its beaches, the ships would load and unload the goods.<sup>72</sup>

If we add the Augustan road which crossed the Ebro on its way from *Tarraco* into *Dertosa*<sup>73</sup> to this double port, the importance of this Caesarean town as an important communications nucleus in *Hispania Citerior* is more than evident.

### 2.2.3 The first colonies: from *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro) to *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza)

The foundation of *Celsa* and, soon after, *Caesaraugusta*, both located on the banks of the Ebro, is the continuation of the policy of economic conquest via the Ebro which Caesar initiated when he conceded municipality status to *Dertosa*. As in this case, the colonies were situated at very strategic positions on the river axis of the Ebro.

*Colonia Victrix Iulia Lepida*, later *Celsa*, is situated on the left bank of the Ebro, near the mouth of the River Aguasvivas, on a rise with terraces gently sloping towards the bank of the Ebro, in the municipality of Velilla de Ebro. It was an *ex novo* foundation that would not have been very far from the pre-Roman settlement *Kelse*.<sup>74</sup> The *conditor coloniae* was Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, the proconsul of *Hispania Citerior* (48–47/44–42 BC), who continued Caesar's regulations. In 44 BC, he founded the colony probably with settlers who came mostly from southern Gaul, as García y Bellido suggests.<sup>75</sup> Later, in the year 36 BC, Lepidus fell into disfavor and the cognomen *Lepida* was changed to *Celsa*, the Latinized name of the native settlement (*Colonia Victrix Iulia Celsa*).

In relation to the reasons for the foundation of *Celsa*, it is generally accepted that one of them was to combat the Pompeian influence in the Ebro valley. It is true that the Iberian *Kelse* was one of the crucial points for the supply of the Pompeian army during Caesar's Civil War, because Pompey had, when he was governor of *Hispania Citerior*, established close and extensive patronage relationships there. A proof of this is the fact that when the sons of Pompey were defeated in the Battle of Munda (45 BC), they fled to the northern

71 Arbeloa I Rigau 2008, 92.

72 The estuary of the Ebro in Tortosa would have had a width of 2 to 3 km (Genera I Monells 2003, 177).

73 Str. 3.4.9.

74 The name *Kelse* has been preserved in Gelsa, a municipality on the left bank of the Ebro about 4 km upriver. It is possible that in the vicinity of this town, the pre-Roman settlement was located.

75 *Caes. Civ.* 1.51, see García Y Bellido 1959, 466. García-Bellido García de Diego, from the study of coins of *Celsa* and *Kelse*, brings the foundation date forward to 48–47 BC (García Bellido García de Diego 2003, 278–279).

Ebro, where they had almost all their support confront Caesar's troops.<sup>76</sup> When the war ended, the colony was founded in order to punish the main Pompeian bastions, among which *Kelse* was included.<sup>77</sup>

We do not reject that this intention, Caesar's settlement policy, had a part in the foundation of the colony, but we think that the chosen location speaks for itself. It was, above all, the continuation of the policy of economic exploitation from the river, and *Celsa* was the second stage. It is possible, as Pita Merce suggests that next to this stretch of the Ebro, there was already an ancient road of the *Ilergetes* from *Ilerda* to *Kelse*, with a bridge made of boats to cross the river and perhaps, a river port.<sup>78</sup> The strategic nature of this region in the territory of the *Ilergetes* was already known to the Romans from their first confrontation with this nation (206 BC). This is why they did not hesitate to place their second control point of the waterway Ebro there. To complete their work and make the new colony an even more favorable settlement, they replaced the bridge of boats by one made of stone which formed part of the road that came, via *Ilerda* (Lérida), from *Tarraco* (Tarragona).<sup>79</sup>

From this time on, due to its position on the Ebro banks and the proximity of the only existing bridge which allowed to cross the Ebro, *Celsa* became the administrative center of the Ebro valley and the redistribution center for goods transported on the river, judging by the amphorae finds (see above pp. 4–9).<sup>80</sup> It was, no doubt, its position as a communications center that, in 19 BC, led Agrippa to locate the imperial mint there. This mint produced gold and silver coins to pay the troops, pay for the transfer of the legions to *Germania*, for the northeastern road infrastructure and the urban program of a new colony, *Caesaraugusta*.<sup>81</sup>

However, this excellent strategic settlement was depopulated slowly until it was abandoned during the reign of Nero or Galba.<sup>82</sup> Unfortunately, the lack of information about the end of this colony only allows us to speculate, but there is a series of events which could well explain its end. The most conclusive is the foundation of *Caesaraugusta* in the years 14–13 BC, in a much more central position for the control of the central Ebro valley, as the conquest and pacification of the Iberian Peninsula had finally ended. In addition, it was a *colonia immunis* and that would certainly make it attractive for the elite of *Celsa* to move to the new colony, thus *Celsa*'s urban decline began. However, *Celsa* had a stone bridge to cross the Ebro and this was more than enough for the colony not to be abandoned<sup>83</sup> so that only the destruction of the bridge, as a result of a flood,<sup>84</sup> or the fact that there was

76 Str. 3.4.10; D. C. 45.10.

77 Amela Valverde 2001, 22–23; Amela Valverde 2001–2002, 245; García Bellido García de Diego 2003, 275.

78 Pita Merce 1976, 77.

79 Str. 3.4.10.

80 In *Celsa*, goods arrived from Italy and from the south of Gaul, wine from the Catalan coast and salted fish from *Baetica*, pottery from Tarsus and from North Africa; Tunisian, Italic and Greek marbles; Egyptian faiences, etc. (M. Beltrán Lloris 1997, 32).

81 García Bellido García de Diego 2003, 277; 283–285. The imperial mint was closed in 18 BC, but *Celsa* continued to provide the military camps in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula and in *Germania* with bronze coins, until, between 2 BC and AD 4, this role of 'military mint' passed to *Calagurris* (Calahorra) (García Bellido García de Diego 2003, 288).

82 F. Beltrán Lloris 2000, 60.

83 The bridge was probably built when the colony was founded or even just before the foundation. The two pieces of evidence which we have do not help much, namely: the years in which Strabo wrote his *Geography*, 29–7 BC; and that he also mentions, in the same passage in which he speaks of this bridge, *Caesaraugusta*, founded in 14 to 13 BC.

84 A flood as the cause of the destruction of this bridge has already been mentioned by Gómez Pantoja 1992, 296.

not enough resources for the maintenance of the bridge would explain the abandonment of *Celsa*, not only the proximity of Augustus' colony.<sup>85</sup>

Looking at *Caesaraugusta*, its geostrategic location was excellent. The new colony was founded on the right bank of the Ebro, on the site of the Iberian *Salduie*,<sup>86</sup> in a place where natural ways, the rivers Huerva, Gállego, and Ebro, converged, and another one, the River Jalón, was very close. It was a very suitable location to access the Meseta Central via the rivers Huerva and Jalón, the territories to the north of the Ebro and the Gauls via the River Gállego, but also the regions of the upper Ebro and the *Mare Externum*, either following the River Ebro upstream to *Vareia* (Varea-Logroño) or first the Ebro, then the River Arga. It was also very suitable, of course, to control the flow of goods which came to the Ebro valley from the Mediterranean. To these waterways, we must add, from an early time (9–4 BC) onwards, the Roman roads which converged in *Caesaraugusta*<sup>87</sup> in a radial arrangement, a bridge to cross the Ebro and, finally, a river port.<sup>88</sup> It is evident that its foundation by Augustus as a *colonia immunis* of Roman citizens in the years 14–13 BC was due to its excellent location in the center of the middle Ebro.<sup>89</sup> From the new enclave, the Romans designed and initiated a project to invest all these roads with an economic purpose, in which the necessity of supplying the Roman army must have played an important role. All of this required the construction of a bridge over the Ebro and a river port.

Regarding the bridge, Strabo, who was very interested in emphasizing the true essence of Rome in this inland region, mentions the bridge of *Celsa*, those of *Dertosa* (Tortosa) and *Vareia* (Varea-Logroño), but he writes nothing about the bridge of *Caesaraugusta*.<sup>90</sup> Perhaps, the Greek geographer says nothing about this bridge because his sources did not know it or because in the time when he wrote his *Geography* (29–7 BC), *Caesaraugusta* did not yet have a stone bridge<sup>91</sup>.

The second important element for the economic life of *Caesaraugusta* was its river port. The archaeological evidence is scarce, but some pieces of evidence locate this port downstream of the current stone bridge near the Roman forum. The forum was located in the northeastern sector of the colony and not at the intersection of the *Decumanus Maximus* and *Cardo Maximus*.<sup>92</sup> This port would have consisted of wooden docks where the goods were loaded and unloaded.<sup>93</sup>

By a quirk of fate, the foundation of *Celsa*, closely linked to the economic activity developing along the river, determined the abandonment of Cabezo de Alcalá (Azaila)<sup>94</sup> and the displacement of *Ilerda* (Lérida) as a control center in the Ebro valley. But later, the foundation of *Caesaraugusta* brought *Celsa* to an end. All these changes can only be un-

85 The elite of *Celsa* probably went to *Caesaraugusta* attracted by the fiscal advantages of living in a colony free from taxes. This circumstance may have implied a decrease in income for Lepidus' colony.

86 Because of its central position on the Ebro, *Salduie* had a mint at the end of the 2nd century BC (García Bellido García de Diego and Blázquez Cerrato 2001, 71–72); for the same reason, the *turma Salluitana* commemorated on the Bronze of Ascoli was enrolled there (about this document, see Criniti 1970).

87 About these roads, see F. Beltrán Lloris and Magallón Botalla 2007, 105–106.

88 It is definitely possible that, at this point of the River Ebro, there had been a natural ford or even a pier or a small river port already, and that was why the *turma Salluitana* was recruited there (Pina Polo 2003, 200–204).

89 On other opinions about its foundation, see Gómez Pantoja 1994, 170–175; Gómez Barreiro 2003, 292–294. In relation to the political connotations of the name of this colony, see F. Beltrán Lloris 2000, 77–78.

90 Str. 3.4.10. This omission is not surprising, because he does not mention the navigability of the Ebro, but that of the other peninsular rivers (see above p. 3).

91 The Roman bridge in *Caesaraugusta* would have been in the same place as the current stone bridge. On this Roman bridge, see Liz Guiral 1985, 69–70; Fernández Casado 2008, 402–407.

92 About the location of the river port, see Aguarod Otal and Erice Lacabe 2003, 144.

93 On archaeological evidences of these wooden docks, see F. Beltrán Lloris and Magallón Botalla 2007, 34.

94 Roddaz, 1986, 331.



derstood from the point of view of the Ebro as the main economic artery in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula.

#### 2.2.4 The Augustan municipalities on the upper Ebro: *Cascantum* (Cascante), *Graccurris* (Álvaro) and *Calagurris* (Calahorra)

Of the three voyages which Augustus made to Spain, the third one (15–13 BC) was the most productive in regard to the administrative and territorial reorganization. Cassius Dio reports that during this trip Augustus ‘colonized numerous cities in Iberia’.<sup>95</sup> It is indisputable that, in addition to colonial foundations, there were also promotions to municipality status of indigenous cities or towns or proto-urban enclaves suitable for continuing the economic conquest up the Ebro due to their excellent geostrategic locations. At the same time, the emperor’s presence in Hispania showed his guardianship of the new communities and strengthened the patronage relationships with the local elite.<sup>96</sup> This is what happened in *Cascantum* (Cascante), *Graccurris* (Álvaro) and *Calagurris* (Calahorra).

About the *municipium iuris latini Cascantum*, there is little information, but its location on the left bank of the River Queiles, a tributary of the Ebro, and c. 10 km away from the right bank of the Ebro, must have been a crucial factor in its promotion to Roman municipality.<sup>97</sup> Originally, it was a Celtiberian city which belonged to the Lusones people (*Kaiskata*) and minted coins, first with the legend *kaiskata*, then with that of *Mun(icipium) Cascantum* in the series of Tiberius. Its territory reached the current municipality of Alagon, meaning it would border on the territory of *Caesaraugusta*.<sup>98</sup>

The position of *Graccurris* at the confluence of the rivers Aragón, Alhama and Ebro was also exceptional. For this reason, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus turned this indigenous settlement into a defensive bastion during the military conquest of the Ebro valley. Because of this, it was also very suitably located for becoming a redistribution center of goods from the Ebro and its tributaries. That explains the profound changes which its urbanism experienced in the first half of the 1st century AD,<sup>99</sup> and the fact that Tiberius granted it the privilege to mint coins. It also explains its promotion to a municipality governed by Roman law. This promotion should be dated, as in the case of *Cascantum*, not under Tiberius, but under Augustus, because *Graccurris* was also part of his administrative and territorial reorganization.<sup>100</sup>

Finally, we have to mention *Calagurris* (Calahorra), located on a natural plateau from which it dominated the mouth of the River Cidacos into the Ebro. In this case, the promotion to municipality of this *civitas stipendiaria* would have been formalized in the year 27 BC, when Augustus went there on his way to the north, where he was going to take charge of the Cantabrian Wars.<sup>101</sup>

It appears that behind the promotion of *Calagurris*, taking place before that of *Cascantum* and *Graccurris*, there was another motive. According to Espinosa Ruiz, the personal link which had developed between the emperor and the *calagurritani* of his personal

95 D. C. 54.23.7.

96 On the voyages of Augustus to *Hispania* and its impact on the administrative and legal organization, see Abascal Palazón 2006, 63–78.

97 Plin. *Nat.* 3.24.

98 About this limit, see F. Beltrán Lloris 2006a, 242; Andreu Pintado 2006, 35–37.

99 For example, the building of a great hydraulic complex, see Ariño Gil, Hernández Vera, and Núñez Marcén 1998, 219–236; Ariño Gil, Hernández Vera, and Núñez Marcén 1999, 239–260.

100 Hernández Vera, who does not take this into account, dates its promotion under Tiberius, because for him, the only pieces of evidence for its change of status are the coins which were minted under this emperor (Hernández Vera 2002, 180–181).

101 D. C. 53.25.2; 5. The first monetary emissions of the *Calagurris* mint support this chronology; see Espinosa Ruiz, 2011, 77.

guard would explain the early promotion of *Calagurris* to the municipal rank. In addition to a generous donation, Augustus would have given the right of citizenship which, in the long term, meant the constitution of the *municipium Calagurris Iulia Nassica* in 27 BC.<sup>102</sup> Needless to say, the new municipality which was in possession of the full Roman franchise, and not the Latin franchise as in the case of *Graccurris* and *Cascantum*, was also thought to be a strategic point in the policy of economic conquest by river.

On the other hand, the location of *Calagurris* on a high plateau provided this Roman municipality with a scenographic character which, although it is not comparable to that of *Bilbilis* (c. Calatayud),<sup>103</sup> would be a symbol of Roman power and of how far a community which showed its loyalty to Rome could advance, at a moment when Rome had opened a front in the north.<sup>104</sup>

The Roman presence in the Iberian Peninsula implied the implementation of a territorial planning policy whose purpose was the exploitation of the resources of the recently conquered territory and the establishment of a market for Italic products. In this undertaking, the waterways were the main protagonists. We are, in short, faced with a totalizing view of the territory which is to be structured and organized based on the Ebro and its tributaries, so we can speak of an establishment of a river model of territorial planning in the Ebro valley.

102 Suet. *Aug.* 49.1. Espinosa Ruiz 2011, 76–77.

103 About this scenographic character of *Bilbilis*, see Pina Polo 1993, 90–91.

104 The archaeological excavations in 2000 identified the foundations of a tower of mid-1st century AD which was part of the walls that surrounded the hill of San Francisco. On this excavation, see Cruz 2001, 145–162; Iguácel de la Cruz 2007, 425–436.

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