

 **ἡραμέναι καὶ ὀνομαστοτάται πόλεις.**
**CHOICE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE CITIES IN
STRABO'S BOOK III***

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Abstract: This paper aims to be a summary presentation of the criteria and perspectives involved in the choice and description of the cities mentioned by Strabo in Book III of his *Geography*. To this end, by way of introduction and before delving into the pages devoted to Iberia in a monographic way, some questions will be dwelt on which, although widely known, should not be overlooked when trying to understand the chorographical description constructed by Strabo. Having contextualised Strabonian literary production as a whole, we will focus our attention on *book III* and, more specifically and as has already been mentioned, on the elements that mark the way cities are presented in Hispanic territories.

1. A necessary contextualisation

As is well known, there is very little biographical data available on Strabo, and all of this, without exception, comes from internal references made in his *Geography*¹. The first years of his life are marked by the serious political-mil-

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For Strabo's textual quotations, we have used the edition by S. Radt. Translation from Spanish to English: David W. Wilson.

¹ In order to trace the biographical development of Strabo, the following works, some of them already classics, may be useful: HONIGMANN 1931, cols. 76-155; AUJAC-LASSERRE

itary events that are taking place in the Mediterranean. His birth, around 64 B.C., coincides with the end of the independence of the kingdom of Pontus, his native land. The active participation of his family, with varying degrees of luck, in the intrigues that led to the fall of the Mithridatic dynasty would bring about his ruin when Pompey succeeded Lucullus in the eastern territories². These family setbacks will not rob Strabo of the educational and intellectual *cursus honorum* expected of a young man in his position. In this way, in his youth he will come into contact with the main schools of thought at the hands of recognised masters and will undertake journeys that will lead him to know, first hand, the territories of the eastern Mediterranean front, Greece, Egypt and the Italian peninsula. All this in a social and cultural environment that, given indirect references, such as his various stays in Rome or his journey along the Nile accompanying his friend, the Prefect Gaius Aulus³, had to be, in all probability, bilingual. Strabo attributes a central role in the development of culture to which the Romans are directly indebted to the Greeks⁴. This influence has extraordinary consequences from a political point of view, as it was at the root of Rome's domination of the world⁵. As a privileged witness to the fall of the Mithridatic monarchy and the definitive disappearance of the Ptolemies in Egypt, Strabo is also fully aware that the fragmented political map that emerged after Alexander's death in the eastern Mediterranean is now a thing of the past. Greece and the Aegean have been permanently displaced from their role as the political and geographical centre of the ecumenical world⁶, giving way to Rome, which is in the process of completing its transformation, both externally and internally, into the only power in the Mediterranean. Although Greek by birth and education, Strabo grew up in Roman environments and, in his writings, the author is concerned with giving an account of the complex historical process that led to the birth of a new geostrategic order on an ecumenical scale. The *Pax Romana* led by Augustus had brought with it the overcoming of the inveterate Greek *versus* barbarian antinomy, replacing it with that of Roman *versus* non-Roman or

1969, pp. VII-XLVII; CLARKE 1997, pp. 92-110; ENGELS 1999, pp. 17-44; DUECK 2000; ROLLER 2014, pp. 1-34.

² STR., X 4, 10.

³ STR., II 5, 12; XI 11, 5 and XVII 1, 46.

⁴ STR., IX 2, 2.

⁵ BIRASCHI 1998, pp. 1079-1097, esp. p. 1094.

⁶ PRONTERA 2011, pp. 167-182, esp. p. 168.

foreign⁷. Although this statement must be qualified⁸ and cannot be applied in the same way to all the descriptions contained in the *Geography*⁹, Strabo does not hesitate to recognise the almost absolute might of the conquering power¹⁰ and defend the need for a political society overseen by a single leader and under a single administration¹¹.

It is, as we say, in this political and cultural context of transit between Republic and Empire that Strabo will begin his literary activity. As Strabo himself points out, the composition of his *Geography* was preceded by the writing of extensive *historikà Hypomnēmata*¹². If we follow the *communis opinio*, this work would have comprised of forty-seven volumes, of which the first four would probably have been an introduction that would have served to present the period prior to 146 B.C.¹³. From the fifth book onwards, he would have faced the

⁷ CLAVEL-LÉVÊQUE 1974, pp. 75-93, esp. p. 85.

⁸ Although, in the first instance, the use of the opposition as a descriptive mechanism of ethnicities constitutes the framework of the Strabonian narrative, the defining criteria of ethnicity are much more complex for the author, especially in the case of civic identities, since this definition involves specifying the real impact of Rome on the emergence of the different provincial identities: VAN DER VLIET 2003, pp. 257-272. Likewise, Strabo's interest in ethnography differs, by far, from traditional Greek models, of which Herodotus would be the most prominent representative, to come much closer to a rhetoric of justification of the conquest based on the disinterest which certain peoples would generate precisely because of their degree of barbarism: VAN DER VLIET 1984, pp. 27-86.

⁹ Thus, the civilizing role of Rome will be much more emphasized by Strabo in the books dedicated to the West. In some areas of Iberia and Gaul or in Germania, the author would link the progress of civilisation and the primacy of order over barbarism to the advance of the Roman armies. On the contrary, presenting the image of the Anatolian and Euxine territories, Rome would be, in many cases, presented as a simple foreign power that is focused on eradicating the last strongholds of independent Hellenism: LASERRE 1982, pp. 892-894. A more nuanced position from an ethno-cultural perspective in: WOOLF 1994, pp. 116-143.

¹⁰ STR., VI 4, 2 and XVII 3, 24.

¹¹ STR., VI 4, 2 and XVI 2, 38.

¹² STR., I 1, 23.

¹³ *Contra* RIDGEWAY 1888, p. 84, who, in a pioneering and barely known work, proposes that Strabo would have written, in reality, two historical treatises: one, composed of forty-three books, would contain the *Ta meta Polybiou* or continuation of the *Histories*; the second work, in four books, would be the one that Strabo himself refers to in II 1, 9, in his criticism of the historians of Alexander and their lack of credibility and would constitute, in the eyes of this researcher, the *historikà Hypomnēmata per se*. He takes up and defends this same theory: DUECK 2000, pp. 69-70. In line with this hypothesis, some specialists have proposed that these four books were a History of Alexander the Great: ODDO 1915, p. 12; PÉDECH 1974, pp. 129-145. It has also been suggested that, in his *Historical Commentaries*, Strabo had similarly proposed to continue the *Universal History*

task of continuing the *Stories* of Polybius, recounting the period between the fall of Corinth and the destruction of Carthage, the end of the Republic and the advent of Augustus¹⁴. Unfortunately, only about twenty fragments of this historical production have survived in the most optimistic of estimates of the editions¹⁵. In spite of this textual loss, certain indications may lead us to infer the structure of the historical work and, consequently, its aspirations, from the geographical work¹⁶. It is a recurrent idea that, in the *Commentaries*, Strabo assumed and made his own the historiographic line opened by Polybius, characterised by the narrative *polymorphia* and marked by the search for pragmatic utility, by the selection of arguments considered worthy of memory and agreeable and by renunciation of the precision of the details. Through the definition of varied objectives and the use of different literary genres – a point, precisely, in which originality and, at the same time, the limits of Strabo’s production reside – of the conception of his work as a colossal work, of wanting to have a dual audience: the soldier-politician and the educated man with broad ranging concerns, Strabo would have defined, as he explains in a well-known paragraph of his *Geography*¹⁷, his own concept of historical work. In this, from Herodotus’ intention of safeguarding the feats of men from oblivion and the need for the permanence of the historical work defended by Thucydides – which would be added to the principles established by Polybius in his *Histories* and a certain background of moral philosophy possibly inherited from Posidonius – to the direct questioning of political leaders, the main recipients of his work¹⁸. Nor is it a trivial question as to why Strabo decided to place the beginning of his work not at the point where the philosopher of Apamea had finished his, as would have been expected, but to link it to the last events described by Polybius¹⁹. From this perspective, it is not unreasonable to think that Strabo intended to correct the Posidonian work and revive the Polybian Hellenistic vision. At the time when Strabo was writing, to question the legitimacy of Roman he-

of Ephorus, hence those first introductory books: PRANDI 1988, pp. 50-60. Finally, the impact of Alexander on Strabo’s historiographic production has recently been analysed in GÓMEZ ESPELOSÍN 2018, pp. 37-56.

¹⁴ MADDOLI 1988, p. 18; LASSERRE 1982, p. 870.

¹⁵ In fact, scholars do not reach an agreement in order to be able to establish a closed cast of fragments: OTTO 1889, pp. 20-214; MÜLLER, *FHG* III, 1849, pp. 490-494; JACOBY, *FGH Hist* 91; AMBAGLIO 1990, pp. 377-424; BIFFI 2002, pp. 37-51; ROLLER, *BNJ*, 91.

¹⁶ DIHLER 1989, p. 154; LASSERRE 1984, pp. 11-26.

¹⁷ STR., I 1, 22-23.

¹⁸ AMBAGLIO 1990, pp. 384-389 and 406.

¹⁹ Several loosely elaborated explanations have been presented: HONIGMANN 1931, col. 86; GABBA 1974, pp. 640-641; AMBAGLIO 1990, p. 393; CANFORA 1999, pp. 263-269.

gemony, its causes and its philosophical and moral foundations was out of place in the political-historiographic debate²⁰. The *Pax Augustea* would have made it possible for an author like Strabo to undertake the task of re-reading the past in order to explain a present full of prosperity, balance and peace²¹. Strabo's unwavering defence of the civilising mission of Rome²² separates him from some of his illustrious predecessors and led to him realising that, once the historiographic route had been exhausted, it was necessary, for the sake of this principle of usefulness to the elites that guides his literary production, to undertake the writing of a geographical encyclopaedia²³.

Contrary to what happened with the *Historical Commentaries*, Strabo's geographical work has reached the present day practically in its entirety, with the exception of the final part of *book* VII, which would most probably have contained, the description of Macedonia and Thrace.

The structure of the work is well known. Thus, it is divided into two clearly differentiated parts. The first two books, also called *Prolegomena*, contain a whole ideological and theoretical reflection on geography as a discipline, a fierce defence of Homer's authority and a criticism of a list of authors whose selection is far from random²⁴; after dealing with the dimensions of ecumenism and the problems of cartography, the final part of *book* II closes with a summary description of the inhabited earth and a critical examination of the astronomical data essential for its representation of the globe²⁵. With this exercise in erudition and correction²⁶, Strabo seeks to demonstrate that he respects and knows those he considers his "predecessors" in the discipline, thus becoming affiliated with a double Hellenistic literary and cartographic tradition. At the same time, and through his comments, he draws his own concept of geography, which he defines as a philosophy, an interdisciplinary knowledge that has to be useful to the educated man and to the government, in an attempt to lay the foundations of a literary genre in which history on the one hand, and physical and mathematical-astronomical sciences on the other, converge²⁷.

²⁰ In order to understand the changes in position reflected in the historical works of the three authors it is fundamental, in our opinion: MOMIGLIANO 1984, pp. 226-238.

²¹ AMBAGLIO 1999, pp. 393-395.

²² STR., II 5, 26.

²³ AMBAGLIO 1999, pp. 398-399.

²⁴ STR., I 1, 1; 1, 21-23.

²⁵ STR., II 5, 1-40.

²⁶ STR., II 1, 41-48.

²⁷ PRONTERA 1984, pp. 189-256.

Following this long theoretical prologue, a chorography begins which will describe to us the ecumenical process in a general clockwise fashion. Thus, **book III** is dedicated to Iberia, **book IV** to Gaul, Britannia and Cisalpine Italy, **books V and VI** to Italy; Northern and Central Europe, Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace will occupy **book VII**; Greece and its islands will be the protagonists of **books VIII, IX and X**; Asia Minor will occupy **books XI, XII, XIII and XIV**; India and Parthia will be dealt with in the next book; the Near East be the subject of the XVI and Egypt, Ethiopia and North Africa will serve as a colophon²⁸. Seen as a whole, the structure of the ecumenical description emphasises the sequence of continents – Europe: **books III-X**; Asia: XI-XVI and Libya: XVII – already dictated by the periplus²⁹.

Although not free of incongruities – attributable to errors or overlaps in the sources used, or to Strabo's own limitations when it comes to facing theoretical approaches devised by intellectually more capable minds than his – we cannot deny that *the Geography* forms a *unicum* within the Greek-Latin literary tradition. This *kolossourgia*, as its author likes to call it³⁰, constitutes an extraordinary compendium of different literary traditions: ethnographic, mythographic, historical, periplographic, cartographic, etc. This circumstance does not prevent us from realising that we are before a complex geographical project with its own personality, the novelty of which consists in developing, on an ecumenical level, an idea latent in tradition since Hecataeus' times: the geographical landscape acquires a natural character only if it is described as a historical landscape, the result of human action, of political action on a given territory³¹. If we read *the Geography* from this perspective, we are forced to assume a series of key ideas. Firstly, landscape acquires a geographical nature (and can therefore

²⁸ It is striking how the number of volumes devoted to the geographical discipline has increased along with the advance of this periegetic tradition, in which Strabo's work is partly rooted. Thus, the seventeen books of *Geography* culminate a line opened by the two Hecataean books, continued by the seven books of Eudoxo's Γῆς περίοδος and developed, in the Hellenistic period, by Artemidorus, in its eleven volumes, and which is largely a reflection of the sustained increase in the body of information from political-military history: MARCOTTE 2002, pp. LV-LXVI; PRONTERA 2016, pp. 239-258, esp. p. 247.

²⁹ PRONTERA 1992, pp. 277-317. In spite of Strabo's evident reluctance towards periplographic documentation (I 2, 23; I 2, 23; I 2, 23; I 4, 1, 4; XV 2, 12, for example), this was undoubtedly widely used by the author since – besides the information it could provide him with – it also supplies him with a structural skeleton both for his work, in general, and for certain sectorial descriptions, in particular: GONZÁLEZ PONCE 2016, pp. 139-165; CLARKE 2017, pp. 47-59.

³⁰ STR., I 1, 23.

³¹ CRUZ ANDREOTTI 2004, pp. 9-20; CRUZ ANDREOTTI 2010, pp. 13-24.

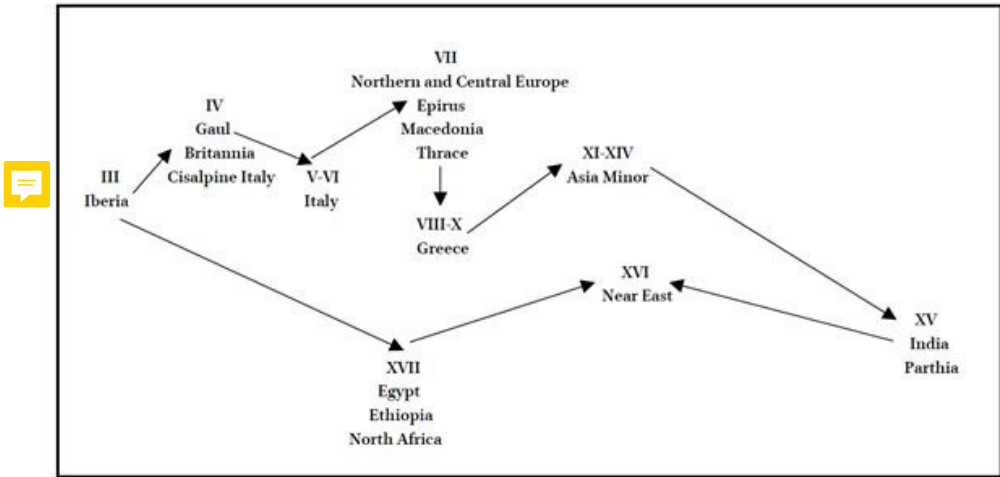


Figure 1. Diagrammatic itinerary of the chorographical description of the ecumenical event in Strabo

be described as such), insofar as it is the result of collective action. Consequently, geography is constituted as a discourse in which the historical dimension of space is essential. As a direct consequence of the above, Strabo's text cannot be read or interpreted as a fixed image of diverse synchronic realities, but as a description resulting from a cumulative process. Secondly, the cartographic construction of the ecumene is not the end of the work itself, but occupies an instrumental place, as it serves to provide a spatial framework for historical processes. Thirdly, this geo-historical approach conditions the choice of sources to be used and forces Strabo to make an intellectual effort to give them a new meaning in order to adapt them to the chosen perspective. Finally – and this circumstance seems substantial to us for the understanding of Strabo's work – the role of the city in the narrative is not that of the physical description of a simple geographical entity that has to be located and characterised in a specific spatial environment, but that of the articulating element *antonomasia* of the geo-historical discourse.

2. The Iberia(s) of Strabo

The chorography begins with the description of Iberia in book III of *Geography*. In our opinion, its pages contain the practical expression of many of the theoretical keys that we have just unearthed. Strabo did not personally know

the western Mediterranean territories, therefore all his considerations about them are based on the information gleaned from the works of other authors. This circumstance forces us to question the sources used and the use that the author makes of them and clearly marks the cartographic, ethnic and cultural picture drawn by the Amaseian, which, as it is made from materials corresponding to different historical stages, presents a marked diachronic character that is not exempt from incongruities that are sometimes difficult to overcome. Thus, a first reading of **book III** shows how Strabo combines, on the descriptive level³², a unidirectional perspective of a hodological nature – typical of periplus and itineraries – and a two-dimensional perspective – in which the use of geometrical references and the mention of spatial landmarks invite us to think that the geographer was fluent in the field of cartographic knowledge –³³, without this implying, on the contrary, that Strabo designed a set of maps to accompany his work³⁴. Although the ultimate aim of his treaty is certainly not to draw up regional charts, Strabo's compilation of general and partial measures sometimes suffers from a systematic screening that gives rise, at first sight, to incompatibilities and incongruities from a cartographic perspective³⁵. Thus, in order to make the analogy³⁶ or strong image of an Iberia similar to an extended ox hide feasible³⁷, Strabo attributes a length of 6,000 stades³⁸, a maximum width of 5,000³⁹ and a minimum of just under 3,000 at certain points to the Iberian Peninsula, especially near the Pyrenees⁴⁰. At the same time, he commits the

³² Overall, very descriptive contextualisations of the content of **book III** in: BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ 1971, pp. 11-94; BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ 2006, pp. 237-249; LOWE 2017, pp. 69-78. Much more detailed and transversal are the approaches of: DOMÍNGUEZ MONEDERO 1984, pp. 201-218; PLÁCIDO SUÁREZ 1987-1988, pp. 243-256; PRONTERA 1999, pp. 17-29; TROTTA 1999, pp. 82-99; GARCÍA QUINTELA 2010, pp. 49-72; CASTRO-PÁEZ-MORET 2018, pp. 73-107.

³³ BEKKER-NIELSEN 2017, pp. 125-136, esp. 128; MORET 2017, pp. 178-191, esp. pp. 178-179.

³⁴ GOSSELIN 1790, pp. 4 and 58-59; DUBOIS 1891, p. 354; PRONTERA 2010, pp. 81-87.

³⁵ MORET 2017, p. 182. Similarly, we should not lose sight of the fact that, with Strabo's pen, measurements also have a literary function, since this numerical data helps the reader to construct their own mental map of the ecumenical world: GEUS-GUCKELSBERGER 2017, pp. 165-177.

³⁶ On comparative procedures as mechanisms in geo-mapping: MANGANI 1990, pp. 57-76. On the use of geometric figures or familiar objects as a method of "cartographic" representation: BERTRAND 1989, pp. 63-73; DUECK 2005, pp. 19-57; BIFFI 2012, pp. 181-214.

³⁷ STR., II 1, 30; II 5, 27 and III 1, 2.

³⁸ STR., II 4, 4; II 5, 27 and III 1, 3.

³⁹ STR., II 5, 27 and III 1, 3.

⁴⁰ STR., III 1, 3.

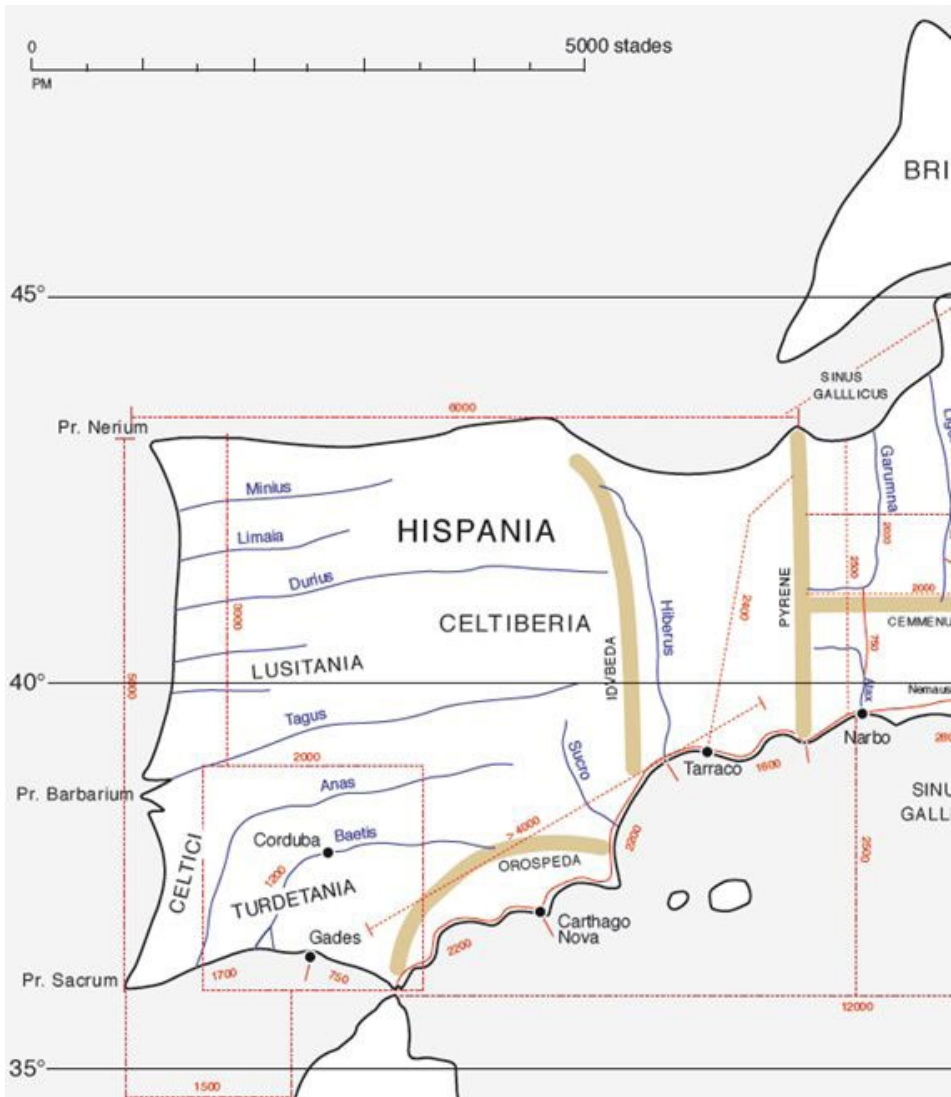


Figure 2. Proposed restitution of the “map” of Iberia according to Strabo (according to P. Moret)

aberration of placing Byzantium to the north of Masalia⁴¹. Finally, he stipulates the height of the Mediterranean triangle – that is, the straight line between Narbonne and the parallel Columns, Strait of Sicily, Rhodes – in 2500 stades, preferring, for a cardinal and controversial point on which the construction of

⁴¹ STR., II 5, 8.

the figure of Western Europe depends, the use of measurements taken from sea and land routes, rather than those proposed by Hipparchus⁴². This choice, together with the erroneous orientation of the Pyrenees, causes a deformation in the image of all of Western Europe by lengthening it in an east-west direction. This cartographic regression with respect to the Alexandrian map is explained by Strabo's clear preference for an empirical method to the detriment of the astronomical and mathematical system devised by Eratosthenes⁴³ and by a selection of data guided by a clear political intention⁴⁴.

To these calculations, we must add the physical limits specified in **book III**: to the east, the Pyrenees, perpetuating, as stated, their erroneous orientation; to the south, the Mediterranean Sea to the Columns and then the Atlantic Ocean to the Sacred Promontory; from this cape to the Cape Nerium **would be the western margin and, finally, from Cape Nerium to the Pyrenees would be the septentrional**⁴⁵. So, an almost quadrangular shape is built, with a southwest vertex on the Sacred **promontory**, a northwest vertex on the Artabrian Promontory and a somewhat narrower opposite side, drawn by the Pyrenees. The articulating nodes of this perimeter will be, following the periplographic tradition, the capes, constituting the orographic water system as the backbone of the interior spaces⁴⁶.

Once a coherent general image has been drawn up in which the different regional chorographies can be inserted, the starting point of the description is set by Strabo on the Sacred Promontory⁴⁷. This landmark has a double function. The most obvious, as already stated, is geographical. Strabo considers it to be the most westerly point in the whole ecumenical world⁴⁸, depriving the Gades-Columns region of its secular role as *finis terrae*, definitely along the

⁴² STR., II 4, 3; II 5, 8-9 and II 5, 40-41.

⁴³ MORET 2017, pp. 182-186.

⁴⁴ BIANCHETTI 2008, pp. 17-58, esp. p. 46.

⁴⁵ STR., III 1, 3.

⁴⁶ PRONTERA 2007, pp. 49-63; COUNILLON 2018, pp. 125-144.

⁴⁷ STR., III 1, 4-5. The Sacred Promontory has a religious character that has been maintained, without the solution of continuity, throughout Antiquity, reaching the medieval period, both Christian and Muslim. It is in this context that the news of Artemidorus transmitted by the geographer must be inserted: SALINAS DE FRÍAS 1988, pp. 135-147; ROMERO RECIO 1997, pp. 389-406; ROMERO RECIO 1999, pp. 69-82.

⁴⁸ STR., II 5, 14. Although, without much foundation, Berger (fr. III A, 2) and Roller (fr. 53) attribute the origin of this information to Eratosthenes, the text is not so clear, leading us to think more of the source for this precise data being Posidonius, who is mentioned explicitly and precisely in relation to the observations he made during his stay in Gades, than Eratosthenes or Pytheas: MORET 2017, p. 173.

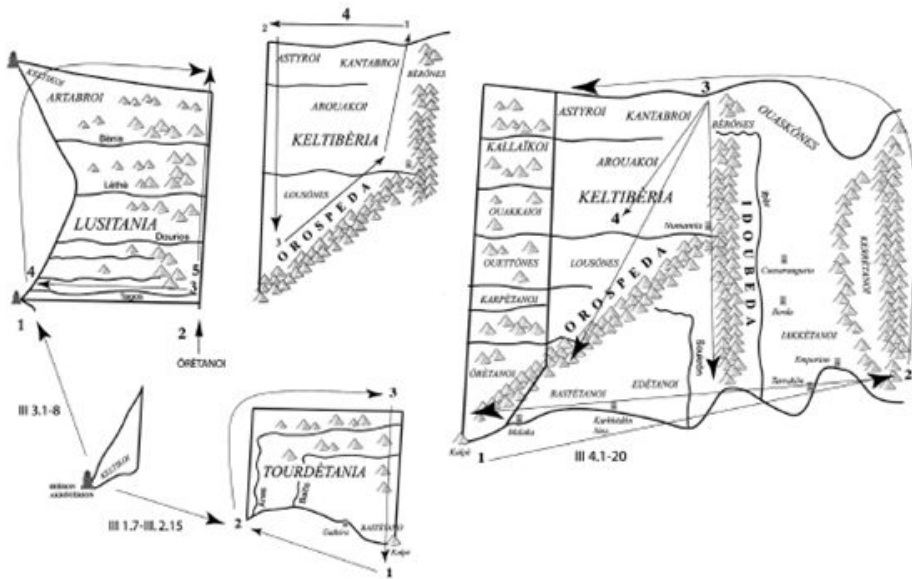


Figure 3. Description by chorographical zones of the Iberian Peninsula in [book III](#) (according to P. Counillon)

path opened up by Pytheas and Eratosthenes. Against this background, the promontory acquires a fundamental diagrammatic character since, by forcing a redefinition of the shape and orientation of the Iberian Peninsula, the east-west projection of Europe as a whole is accentuated even more. At the same time, the Hiéron Akrôtérion plays a diegetic role in describing the southern side of Iberia and, description progresses, the western side. From this point Strabo draws four large chorographical areas: Turdetania, Lusitania, the coastal stretch Calpe-Pyrenees and the inland areas from Celtiberia to the Cantabrian coast, closing [book III](#) with the island epilogue⁴⁹.

This general framework was created, as has been previously stated, in the particular description of these areas that have just been mentioned, a double geographical and historical discourse converges through which Strabo establishes – through a subtle and nuanced subordination of climatic and geographical determinism⁵⁰

⁴⁹ COUNILLON 2007, pp. 65-80.

⁵⁰ STR., II 5, 26: ...τῆς δ' οἰκησίμου τὸ μὲν δυσχείμερον καὶ τὸ ὀρεινὸν μοχθηρῶς οἰκεῖται τῇ φύσει, ἐπιμελητὰς δὲ λαβόντα ἀγαθοὺς καὶ τὰ φαύλως οἰκούμενα καὶ ληστρικῶς ἡμεροῦνται, καθάπερ οἱ Ἕλληνες ὄρη καὶ πέτρας κατέχοντες ὄκουν καλῶς διὰ πρόνοιαν τὴν περὶ τὰ πολιτικά καὶ τὰς τέχνας καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σύνεσιν τὴν περὶ βίον, Ῥωμαῖοι τε πολλὰ ἔθνη παραλαβόντες καὶ τὴν φύσιν ἀνήμερα διὰ τοὺς τόπους ἢ

of the character of the inhabitants of each region⁵¹ – a centre-periphery model. In this model, the main parameter to be taken into account will be the capacity and predisposition of the different populations to develop in a society organized around the polis⁵². However, this radical, gradual and graphic division between the different Hispanic territories and their respective inhabitants is, in Strabo's words, already part of the past⁵³, and the city is precisely one of the main mechanisms that Rome will use to integrate the hostile areas of the centre and north of the Iberian Peninsula into the Augustan Empire.

3. *The most powerful and renowned... The cities of Iberia in Strabo*

A first reading of the Hispanic chorography serves to confirm what has previously been stated: Strabo constructs his narrative of Iberia around the absence or presence of cities in the different ethnographic areas. The presentation of these urban centres has, in book III, some quite clear characteristic features. Firstly, the useful character that Strabo wants to imprint on his *Geography*⁵⁴ leads us to the antipodes of Plinius. Strabo is not interested in the number of cities that populate the peninsula⁵⁵, hence he considers this as exaggerated the figure of two hundred that some sources place in Turdetania⁵⁶; of boasting or flattery, the number of three hundred that, according to Polybius, Tiberius Gracchus would have destroyed in his campaigns of conquest⁵⁷; and, directly, of being unable to distinguish between village and city to those others who dare to calculate the existing cities in Iberia⁵⁸ at more than a thousand. In this way,

τραχεις ὄντας ἢ ἀλιμένους ἢ ψυχροὺς ἢ ἀπ' ἄλλης αἰτίας δυσοικητοὺς πολλοῖς τοὺς τε ἀνεπιπλέκτους ἀλλήλοις ἐπέπλεξαν καὶ τοὺς ἀγριωτέρους πολιτικῶς ζῆν ἐδίδαξαν.

Significantly, the interest in the influence of climatic and environmental conditions is generally limited, in ancient Greek thought, to peoples who do not develop in a culture of citizenship: PRONTERA 2003, pp. 13-26, esp. pp. 14-17.

⁵¹ THOMPSON 1979, pp. 213-230.

⁵² STR., III 4, 12-19. THOLLARD, 1987; CIPRÉS TORRES 1993, pp. 259-291; CIPRÉS TORRES 2006, pp. 177-197; CIPRÉS TORRES 2012, pp. 235-279; CIPRÉS TORRES-CRUZ ANDREOTTI, 1998, pp. 107-145.

⁵³ CLAVEL-LÉVÊQUE 1974, pp. 75-93, for the territory of Gaul but extrapolated to book III.

⁵⁴ STR., I 1, 22-23.

⁵⁵ The catalogue would amount to seventy-nine if we follow the Radt edition. See complete list in CASTRO-PÁEZ 2019, pp. 34-45, esp. p. 41.

⁵⁶ STR., III 2, 1.

⁵⁷ STR., III 4, 13.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

Strabo does not aspire to make an exhaustive and uniform ‘catalogue’ of urban centres; in fact, a rough sifting through the information reveals precisely the opposite: a descriptive inequality⁵⁹ that leads us to ask what selection criteria he has built his presentation of Hispania on. In our opinion, the first of these would be the weight that the various literary traditions carry in the way that Strabo makes geography; then, and in direct relation to the above, there would be the prior screening imposed by the available sources, all of which are of a textual nature, given that, as we know, Strabo did not know the peninsula personally, nor did he make use, as far as we know, of complementary oral information to describe it. In addition to these two conditions, there are two other aspects. The first of these is linked to the narratological register: Strabo devotes special and extensive attention to those **cities** which, for geographical and/or historical reasons, are, in his eyes, worthy of being mentioned in his discourse⁶⁰. This axiological sorting which, as we shall see in some examples, is in itself quite selective, comes to underpin and complement another structural discriminatory element, on this occasion, in a cultural, ethnic and identity key⁶¹: not all territories have the natural resources which are indispensable for the development of political life and many, although they enjoy these resources, clash with the innate incapacity of their inhabitants, given their belligerent and harsh attitude, to making the most of them and organise themselves politically.

Tradition, available sources, epainetic rhetoric and ethno-identity and cultural principles would therefore be the criteria that would have marked, in our opinion, the selection of **cities** collected by Strabo in his **book III**. These criteria are felt, as we will see below, on the two great discursive levels that articulate the narrative: the geographical level and historical record. If we focus on the first of these, we see that urban centres are located, in a general way, taking as references oro-hydrographic landmarks or coastal features, singularly, capes or promontories. The cartographic dimension finds its place here in the narrative although, normally, it occupies an ancillary position within the account. At this level, the possibilities presented by these **cities** from an economic point of view included: the agricultural and livestock wealth of their *hinterland*; the ease of the transportation of people and goods – the navigability of rivers and marshes is particularly important; the existence of infrastructures – roads, fishing and commercial ports, salt factories, etc. At the same time, if we read **book III** again, not looking for a fixed image of the geography of the peninsula in the

⁵⁹ PÉDECH 1971, pp. 234-253.


⁶⁰ COUNILLON 2007, pp. 65-80.

⁶¹ CRUZ ANDREOTTI 2019, pp. 1-12; CASTRO-PÁEZ 2019, pp. 34-45.

first years of the Empire, but starting from a diachronic perspective, we manage to see, in its lines, the different stages of the Roman conquest and the reflection, in *Hispania*, of the political conflicts that shook Rome during the last century of the Republic. It is in this historical record that an epainetic and axiological rhetoric around the **city** becomes more evident. Thus, in the context of the Second Punic War, *Gades* – because of its *foedus* with Rome; *Corduba* – because it was the first colony founded by the victors⁶²; *Saguntum* – *casus belli* of the confrontation⁶³; and *Cartagonova* – in its condition of capital of the Barcids and because of its strategic position – will be the δυναμμένα πόλεις protagonists of the story. Along with them, *Tarraco* – the port where the Scipions landed and μητρόπολις the region⁶⁴ – is also of great interest; and *Emporion* – as an economic bridge between Marseilles and the Levantine coast and for its unique system of mixed Greek-indigenous government⁶⁵. At this point in the description, the secular and recurrent prestige of *Gades* and the Polybian quill seem to

⁶² STR., III 1, 8: ...ἔστι δ' ἡ νῆσος αὕτη τᾶλλα μὲν οὐθὲν διαφέρουσα τῶν ἄλλων, ἀνδρεία δὲ τῶν ἐνοικούντων τῇ περι τὰς ναυτιλίας καὶ φιλία πρὸς Ῥωμαίους τοσαύτην ἐπίδοσιν εἰς πᾶσαν εὐτυχίαν ἔσχευ ὥστε καίπερ ἐσχάτη ἰδρυμένη τῆς γῆς ὀνομαστοτάτη τῶν ἀπασῶν; STR., III 2, 1: ...πλεῖστον δ' ἦ τε Κόρδυβα ἠϋξῆται (Μαρκέλλου κτίσμα) καὶ δόξη καὶ δυνάμει καὶ ἡ τῶν Γαδιτανῶν πόλις, ἡ μὲν διὰ τὰς ναυτιλίας καὶ διὰ τὸ προσθέσθαι Ῥωμαίοις κατὰ συμμαχίαν, ἡ δὲ χώρας ἀρετῇ καὶ μεγέθει, προσλαμβάνοντος καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ Βαίτιος μέγα μέρος· ὄκησάν τε ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ῥωμαίων τε καὶ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ἄνδρες ἐπίλεκτοι, καὶ δὴ καὶ πρώτην ἀποικίαν ταύτην εἰς τούσδε τοὺς τόπους ἔστειλαν Ῥωμαῖοι.

⁶³ STR., III 4, 6: ... πάλιν δ' ἐπὶ θάτερα τοῦ Σούκρωνος ἰόντι ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκβολὴν τοῦ Ἴβηρος Σάγουντον κτίσμα Ζακυνθίων, ἦν Ἀννίβας κατασκάψας παρὰ τὰ συγκείμενα πρὸς Ῥωμαίους τὸν δευτέρου αὐτοῖς ἐξήψε πόλεμον πρὸς Καρχηδονίους.

⁶⁴ STR., III 4, 7: Μεταξὺ δὲ τῶν τοῦ Ἴβηρος ἐκτροπῶν καὶ τῶν ἄκρων τῆς Πυρήνης, ἐφ' ᾧ ἰδρυταὶ τὰ ἀναθήματα τοῦ Πομπηίου, πρώτη Ταρράκων ἐστὶ πόλις, ἀλίμενος μὲν, ἐν κόλπῳ δὲ ἰδρυμένη καὶ κατεσκευασμένη τοῖς ἄλλοις ἰκανῶς καὶ οὐχ ἥττον εὐανδροῦσα νυνὶ τῆς Καρχηδόνας. πρὸς γὰρ τὰς τῶν ἡγεμόνων ἐπιδημίας εὐφυῶς ἔχει, καὶ ἔστιν ὡσπερ μητρόπολις οὐ τῆς ἐντὸς Ἴβηρος μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἐκτὸς τῆς πολλῆς 

⁶⁵ STR., III 4, 8: Καὶ ἡ σύμπασα δ' <ἡ> ἀπὸ Σηλῶν σπανίζεται λιμέσι μεχρὶ δεῦρο. ἐντεῦθεν δ' ἤδη τὰ ἐξῆς εὐλίμενα καὶ χώρα ἀγαθὴ τῶν τε Λαιητανῶν καὶ Λαρτολαιητῶν καὶ ἄλλων τοιούτων μεχρὶ Ἐμπορίου αὐτὸ δ' ἐστὶ Μασσαλιωτῶν κτίσμα ὅσον τετταράκοντα διέχον τῆς Πυρήνης σταδίους καὶ τῶν μεθορίων τῆς Ἴβηρίας πρὸς τὴν Κελτικὴν· καὶ αὕτη δ' ἐστὶ πᾶσα ἀγαθὴ καὶ εὐλίμενος (...) ὄκουν <δ'> οἱ Ἐμπορίται πρότερον νησίον τι προκείμενον, ὃ νῦν καλεῖται Παλαιάπολις, νῦν δ' οἰκοῦσιν ἐν τῇ ἡπείρῳ. δίπολις δ' ἐστὶ, τεῖχει διωρισμένη, πρότερον τῶν Ἰνδικητῶν τινος προσοίκους ἔχουσα, οἱ καίπερ ἰδίᾳ πολιτευόμενοι κοινὸν ὅμως περιβόλον ἔχειν ἐβούλοντο πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνας ἀσφαλείας χάριν, διπλοῦν δὲ τοῦτον, τεῖχει μέσῳ διωρισμένον· τῷ χρόνῳ δ' εἰς ταῦτο πολίτευμα συνῆλθον μικτόν τι ἐκ τε βαρβάρων καὶ Ἑλληνικῶν νομίμων, ὅπερ καὶ ἐπ' ἄλλων πολλῶν συνέβη.

be at the base of the selection and the careful presentation of these urban centres⁶⁶. In contrast, the rest of the cities follow one another almost like a rosary, jumping from one location to another, with little more than the consigning of their names. Here, the weight of Artemidorus – and of other periplographic sources and/or itineraries not always easy to detect – would have marked these telegraphic enumerations from the outset.

The rise of the River *Iber* is the geographical setting for the second great episode of the Roman conquest and the initial echoes of the civil wars in Hispanic lands⁶⁷. On this occasion, the protagonists would be, in the first case, those cities that presented fierce resistance to the conquest and that became the visible head of the Celtiberian opposition: *Segeda* and, above all, *Numantia*, the most renowned in the region⁶⁸. Once again, we can feel the Polybian influence in Strabo's geo-historical account, although, as he himself reminds us, it is weakened in this case by Posidonius' points⁶⁹ and, above all, by his own reluctance to attribute a deep-rooted and widely developed urban network to the areas of control attributed to the Celtiberians⁷⁰. This "vacuum" of cities is even more palpable in the account devoted to the western side of the Hispanic map. With the exception of a few mentions of Viriatus – whom he accused of being a

⁶⁶ Suffice it to note that the description of *Cartagonova* in Polybius (X 6, 10) and the debt that Strabo has with it is a paradigmatic case.

⁶⁷ BELTRÁN LLORIS 2007, pp. 217-240; BELTRÁN LLORIS 2017, pp. 525-540.

⁶⁸ STR., III 4, 13: Αὐτῶν τε τῶν Κελτιβήρων εἰς τέτταρα μέρη διηρημένων οἱ κράτιστοι μάλιστα πρὸς ἔω εἰσι καὶ πρὸς νότον, οἱ Αρουάκοι, συνάπτοντες Καρπητανοῖς καὶ ταῖς τοῦ Τάγου πηγαῖς· πόλις δ' αὐτῶν ὀνομαστοτάτη Νομαντία. ἔδειξαν δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν <ἐν> τῷ Κελτιβηρικῷ πολέμῳ τῷ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους εἰκοσαετῆ ἡγεμονίᾳ· πολλὰ γὰρ στρατεύματα σὺν ἡγεμόσιν ἐφθάρη, τὸ δὲ τελευταῖον οἱ Νομαντῖνοι πολιορκούμενοι διεκάρτησαν πλὴν ὀλίγων τῶν ἐνδόντων τὸ τεῖχος. (καὶ οἱ Λούσωνες δὲ ἔφθαι εἰσι, συνάπτοντες καὶ αὐτοὶ ταῖς τοῦ Τάγου πηγαῖς). τῶν δ' Αρουάκων ἐστὶ καὶ Σεγήδα πόλις καὶ Παλλαντία.

⁶⁹ STR., III 4, 13: Πολυβίου δ' εἰπόντος τριακοσίας αὐτῶν καταλῦσαι πόλεις Τιβέριον Γράκχον κωμωδῶν φησι τοῦτο τῷ Γράκχῳ χαρίσασθαι τὸν ἄνδρα τοὺς πύργους καλοῦντα πόλεις, ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς θριαμβικαῖς πομπαῖς. καὶ ἴσως οὐκ ἄπιστον τοῦτο λέγειν· καὶ γὰρ οἱ στρατηγοὶ καὶ οἱ συγγραφεῖς ῥαδίως ἐπὶ τοῦτο φέρονται τὸ ψεῦσμα καλλωπίζοντες τὰς πράξεις. ἐπεὶ καὶ οἱ φάσκοντες πλείους ἢ χιλίας τὰς τῶν Ἰβήρων ὑπάρξει πόλεις ἐπὶ τοῦτο φέρεσθαι μοι δοκοῦσι τὰς μεγάλας κόμας πόλεις ὀνομάζοντες. οὔτε γὰρ ἡ τῆς χώρας φύσις πόλεων ἐπιδεκτικὴ πολλῶν ἐστὶ διὰ τὴν λυπρότητα ἢ διὰ τὸν ἐκτοπισμὸν καὶ τὸ ἀνήμερον οὐθ' οἱ βίοι καὶ πράξεις αὐτῶν – ἔξω τῶν κατὰ τὴν παραλίαν τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς – ὑπαγορευοῦσι τοιοῦτον οὐδέν· ἄγριοι γὰρ οἱ κατὰ κόμας οἰκοῦντες, τοιοῦτοι δ' οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν Ἰβήρων· αἱ δὲ πόλεις ἡμεροῦσιν οὐδ' αὐταὶ ῥαδίως, ὅταν πλεονάζῃ τὸ τὰς ὕλας ἐπὶ κακῷ τῶν πλησίον οἰκοῦν.

⁷⁰ CRUZ ANDREOTTI 2003, pp. 185-227, esp. p. 215.

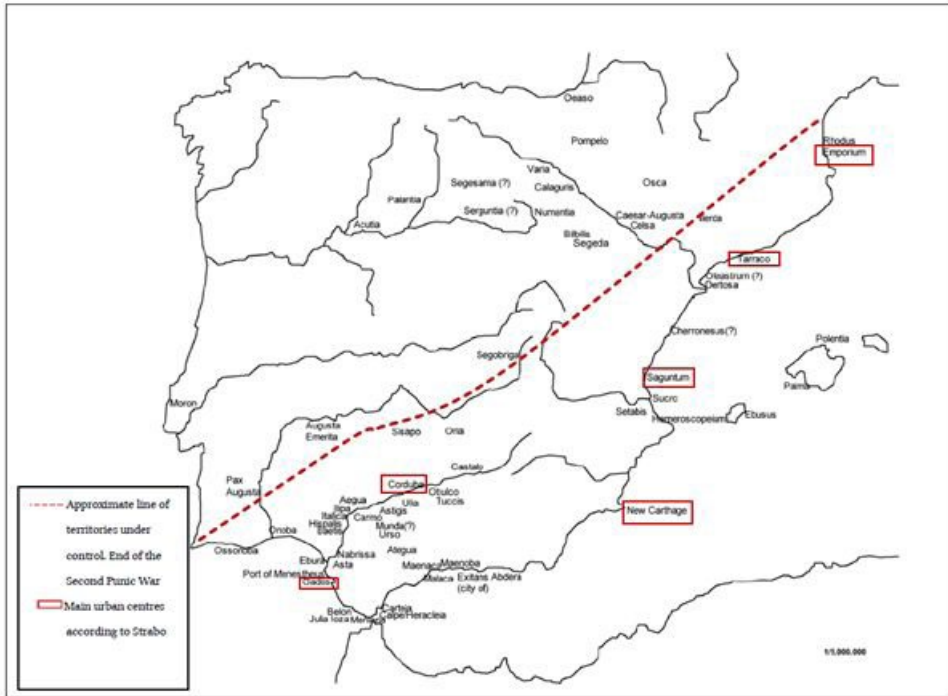


Figure 4. First phases of the conquest. Main urban centres

bandit⁷¹ – and Decimus Iunius Brutus – who established his base of operations against the Lusitanians and Callaicans in *Moron*⁷² – the discourse in terms of space and time, based on the cities in which he lived, gives way to ethnographic description.

⁷¹ STR., III 4, 5.

⁷² STR., III 3, 1: δύο δ' ἀναχύσεις ἐν τοῖς ὑπερκειμένοις ποιεῖται πεδίοις, ὅταν αἱ πλημῖαι γένωνται, ἴωστε πελαγίζειν μὲν ἐπὶ ἑκατὸν καὶ πενήκοντα σταδίου καὶ ποιεῖν πλωτὸν τὸ πεδῖον, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐπάνω ἀναχύσει καὶ νησίον ἀπολαμβάνειν ὅσον τριάκοντα σταδίων τὸ μῆκος, πλάτος δὲ μικρὸν ἀπολείπον τοῦ μήκους, εὐαλδὲς καὶ εὐάμπελον. κεῖται δ' ἡ νῆσος κατὰ Μόρωνά πόλιν εὖ κειμένην ἐν ὄρει τοῦ ποταμοῦ πλησίον, ἀφεστῶσαν τῆς <ἐκ>τὸς θαλάττης ὅσον πεντακοσίους σταδίου, ἔχουσαν δὲ καὶ χώραν ἀγαθὴν τὴν πέριξ καὶ τοὺς ἀνάπλους εὐπετεῖς, μέχρι μὲν πολλοῦ καὶ μεγάλοις σκάφεσι, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν τοῖς ποταμίαις (καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸν Μόρωνά δ' ἔτι μακρότερος ἀνάπλους ἐστί). ταύτη δὲ τῇ πόλει Βροῦτος ὁ Καλλαϊκὸς προσαγορευθεὶς ὀρητηρίῳ χρώμενος ἐπολέμησε πρὸς τοὺς Λυσιτανούς καὶ κατέστρεψε αὐτούς. τοῖς δὲ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἑπιπέτραις ἐπεχείρησε τὴν ὄλιον, ὡς ἀνεῖχει τοὺς ἀνάπλους ἐλευθέρους καὶ τὰς ἀνακομιδὰς τῶν ἐπιτηδείων· ὥστε καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν Τάγον πόλεων αὐτὰ κράτισται.

sources to know that, in these territories, the **city** as a political-administrative, historical and geographical entity, is a very functional and well-known phenomenon. Strabo himself tells us, for example, about the numerous **cities** that populate the territory of the Artabrians, although, significantly, he does not list them⁷⁷.

However, for Strabo, the existence of **cities** and foundational mechanisms, as civilising elements, are only operative in the septentrional, central and western areas of the peninsula in a unidirectional way. In this way, the **cities** of native origin do not guarantee, by themselves, the civility of their inhabitants, which is why Rome granted itself the right to destroy them and to take control of the process of (re)founding⁷⁸. In this sense, we believe that there are two texts referring to the Celtiberians that are paradigmatic in terms of how and who controls the urban phenomenon and its effects. Thus, on the one hand, there would be the resounding coda with which Strabo closes the controversy regarding the number of **cities** that populate the peninsula, which have already been mentioned a few lines above⁷⁹. On the other hand, there would be the civilising effect that radiates from Turdetania and that materialises in those mixed foundations established in formerly belligerent and uncontrolled territories, and that serves as a finale, precisely, to the description of the southern territories⁸⁰.

The different phases through which the civil conflict between the *Populares* and the *Optimates* in the peninsula goes through will be the next historical step detectable in Book III. Thus, as has already been mentioned, on both sides of the banks of the *Iber* the death throes of the Sertorian campaigns will be felt, and these notes will serve as an introduction to the clashes between

⁷⁷ STR., III 3, 5: ἔχουσι δὲ οἱ Ἀρταβροὶ πόλεις συχνὰς ἐν κόλπῳ συνοικουμένας, ὃν οἱ πλεόντες καὶ χρώμενοι τοῖς τόποις Ἀρτάβρων λιμένα προσαγορεύουσι.

⁷⁸ CANTO 2001, pp. 425-476; CASTRO-PÁEZ-MORET 2018, pp. 73-107; CRUZ ANDREOTTI 2019, pp. 1-12; CASTRO-PÁEZ 2019, pp. 34-45.

⁷⁹ STR., III 4, 13: ἐπεὶ καὶ οἱ φάσκοντες πλείους ἢ χιλίας τὰς τῶν Ἰβήρων ὑπάρξει πόλεις ἐπὶ τοῦτο φέρεσθαι μοι δοκοῦσι τὰς μεγάλας κώμας πόλεις ὀνομάζοντες. οὔτε γὰρ ἡ τῆς χώρας φύσις πόλεων ἐπιδεικτικὴ πολλῶν ἐστὶ διὰ τὴν λυπρότητα ἢ διὰ τὸν ἐκτοπισμὸν καὶ τὸ ἀνήμερον οὐθ' οἱ βίοι καὶ πράξεις αὐτῶν – ἔξω τῶν κατὰ τὴν παραλίαν τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς – ὑπαγορεύουσι τοιοῦτον οὐδέν· ἄγριοι γὰρ οἱ κατὰ κώμας οἰκοῦντες, τοιοῦτοι δ' οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν Ἰβήρων· αἱ δὲ πόλεις ἡμεροῦσιν οὐδ' αὐταὶ ῥαδίως, ὅταν πλεονάζῃ τὸ τὰς ὕλας ἐπὶ κακῷ τῶν πλησίον οἰκοῦν.

⁸⁰ STR., III 2, 15: αἶ τε νῦν συνφικισμένα πόλεις, ἢ τε ἐν τοῖς Κελτικοῖς Παξ Αὐγοῦστα καὶ ἡ ἐν τοῖς Τουρδούλοις Αὐγοῦστα Ἡμέριτα καὶ ἡ περὶ τοὺς Κελτίβηρας Καισαραυγοῦστα, καὶ ἄλλαι ἔναι κατοικίαι τὴν μεταβολὴν τῶν λεχθειῶν πολιτειῶν ἐμφανίζουσι· καὶ δὴ τῶν Ἰβήρων ὅσοι ταύτης εἰσὶ τῆς ιδέας τογάτοι λέγονται (ἐν δὲ τούτοις εἰσὶ καὶ οἱ Κελτίβηρες, οἱ πάντων νομισθέντες ποτὲ θηριωδέστατοι).

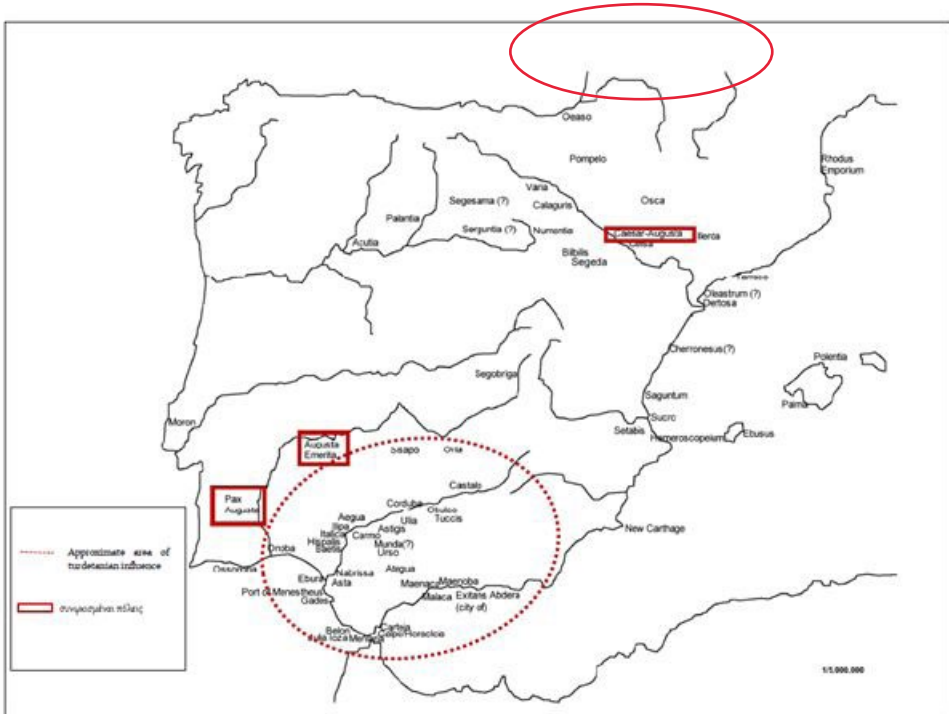


Figure 6. Turdetania and the συναϊκισμένα πόλεις

Pompeians and Caesarians, the early stages of which also occurred in this geographical area⁸¹, and later in the Guadalquivir valley. Once again, the cities serve

⁸¹ STR., III 4, 10: ἔθνῶν ἡ χώρα, γνωριμωτάτου δὲ τοῦ τῶν Ἰακκητανῶν λεγομένων. τοῦτο δ' ἀρξάμενον ἀπὸ τῆς παρωρείας τῆς κατὰ τὴν Πυρήνην εἰς τὰ πεδία πλατύνεται καὶ συνάπτει τοῖς περὶ Ἰλέρδαν καὶ Ὀσκαν χωρίοις τοῖς τῶν Ἰλεργετῶν οὐ πολλὴ ἀπωθεν τοῦ Ἴβηρος (ἐν δὲ ταῖς πόλεσι ταύταις ἐπολέμει τὸ τελευταῖον Σερτώριος – καὶ ἐν Καλαγοῦρι Ὀυασκῶνων πόλει καὶ τῆς παραλίας ἐν Ταρράκωνι καὶ ἐν τῷ Ἡμεροσκοπεῖω – μετὰ τὴν ἐκ Κελτιβήρων ἔκπτωσιν· ἔτελεύτα δ' ἐν Ὀσκα. καὶ ** Ἰλέρδας ὕστερον Ἀφράνιος καὶ Πετρήϊος οἱ τοῦ Πομπηίου στρατηγοὶ κατεπολεμήθησαν ὑπὸ Καίσαρος τοῦ Θεοῦ). διέχει δὲ ἡ Ἰλέρδα τοῦ μὲν Ἴβηρος ὡς ἐπὶ δύσιν ἰόντι σταδίους ἑκατὸν ἐξήκοντα, Ταρράκωνος δὲ πρὸς νότον περὶ τετρακοσίους ἐξήκοντα, πρὸς ἄρκτον δὲ Ὀσκας πεντακοσίους τετταράκοντα. διὰ τούτων δὲ τῶν ἰσθμῶν ἢ ἐκ Ταρράκωνος ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐσχάτους ἐπὶ τῷ Ὠκεανῷ Ὀυάσκωνας τοὺς κατὰ Πομπαιλῶνα καὶ τὴν ἐπ' αὐτῷ τῷ Ὠκεανῷ Ἰοιδάσουνα πόλιν ὁδὸς ἐστὶ σταδίων δισχιλίων τετρακοσίων πρὸς αὐτὰ τὰ τῆς Ἀκυιτανίας ὄρια καὶ τῆς Ἰβηρίας. Ἰακκητανοὶ δ' εἰσὶν ἐν οἷς τότε μὲν Σερτώριος ἐπολέμει πρὸς Πομπηῖον, ὕστερον δ' ὁ τοῦ Πομπηίου υἱὸς Σέξτος πρὸς τοὺς Καίσαρος στρατηγούς. ὑπέρκειται δὲ τῆς Ἰακκητανίας πρὸς ἄρκτον τὸ τῶν Ὀυασκῶνων ἔθνος, ἐν ᾧ πόλις Πομπαιλῶν, ὡς ἂν Πομπηίου πόλις.

to articulate the narrative: *Oscā* – where Sertorius' days ended tragically –, *Ilerda* – Pompey's centre of operations, dramatically forced to surrender by Caesar – and *Munda* – the metropolis in the middle valley of the Guadalquivir where the future dictator will definitively defeat the *Optimates*. Many other urban centres of varying importance pivot around it, but with two clear links in common: their location on the banks or in the vicinity of these two great vectors of Roman penetration into the peninsula, such as the *Baetis* and the *Iber*, and consequently their already long, and in some cases century-old, link to the *Urbs*.

The closure to the whole process of transformation from republic to empire that is illustrated by Strabo in Book III through the peninsular **cities** has its crowning moment in the Augustean military operations. On this occasion, all the mechanisms work again: some irreducible peoples in this case, Cantabrians and Asturians – located in a harsh and rugged habitat, and with an innate tendency to savagery and barbarism –, will require the presence of the emperor himself and Agrippa, his right-hand man, to achieve their submission. Once they have been neutralised, the reorganisation not only of the Mediterranean coastal areas and those linked to the *Baetis* and *Iber* basins, but of the entire peninsula, will not be long in coming. The obsolete bi-provincial model will give way to administrative restructuring which will, as has already been stated, be the culmination of the Strabonian narrative⁸².

Sertorius' progress in Hispania is broken down and systematised in SALINAS DE FRÍAS 2006, pp. 153-174. For an introduction to the Pompeian and Caesarian campaigns, see HARMAND 1970, pp. 181-204; FERREIRO LÓPEZ 1988; AMELA VALVERDE 2002.

⁸² STR., III 4, 20: Νυνὶ δὲ τῶν ἐπαρχιῶν τῶν μὲν ἀποδειχθεισῶν τῷ δήμῳ τε καὶ τῇ συγκλήτῳ, τῶν δὲ τῷ ἡγεμόνι τῶν Ῥωμαίων, ἢ μὲν Βαιτικῇ πρόσκειται τῷ δήμῳ, καὶ πέμπεται στρατηγὸς ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἔχων ταμίαν τε καὶ πρεσβευτὴν· ὄριον δ' αὐτῆς τεθείκασι πρὸς ἡῶ πλησίον Καστλῶνος. ἢ δὲ λοιπὴ Καίσαρός ἐστι, πέμπονται δ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ δύο πρεσβευταί, στρατηγικός τε καὶ ὑπατικός, ὁ μὲν στρατηγικός ἔχων σὺν αὐτῷ πρεσβευτὴν, δικαιοδοτήσων Λυσιτανοῖς τοῖς παρακειμένοις τῇ Βαιτικῇ καὶ διατείνουσι μέχρι τοῦ Δουρίου ποταμοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐκβολῶν αὐτοῦ (καλοῦσι γὰρ οὕτω τὴν χώραν ταύτην ἰδίως ἐν τῷ παρόντι· ἐνταῦθα δ' ἔστι καὶ ἡ Αὐγοῦστα Ἡμερίτα)· ἢ <δὲ> λοιπὴ – αὕτη δ' ἐστὶν ἡ πλείστη τῆς Ἰβηρίας – ὑπὸ τῷ ὑπατικῷ ἡγεμόνι στρατιάν τε ἔχοντι ἀξιόλογον τριῶν πρυτανῶν καὶ πρεσβευτῶν τρεῖς. ὧν ὁ μὲν δύο ἔχων τάγματα παραφρουρεῖ τὴν πέραν τοῦ Δουρίου πᾶσαν ἐπὶ τὰς ἄρκτους, ἦν οἱ μὲν πρότερον Λυσιτανούς ἔλεγον, | οἱ δὲ νῦν Καλλαϊκοὺς καλοῦσι· συνάπτει δὲ τούτοις τὰ προσάρκτια μέρη μετὰ τῶν Ἀστύρων καὶ τῶν Καντάβρων (ρεῖ δὲ διὰ τῶν Ἀστύρων Μέλσος ποταμός· καὶ μικρὸν ἀπωτέρω πόλις Νοῖγα καὶ πλησίον ἐκ τοῦ Ὠκεανοῦ ἀνάχυσις ὀρίζουσα τοὺς Ἀστυρας ἀπὸ τῶν Καντάβρων). τὴν δ' ἐξῆς παρῶρειον μέχρι Πυρήνης ὁ δεῦτερος τῶν πρεσβευτῶν μετὰ τοῦ ἐτέρου τάματος ἐπισκοπεῖ, ὁ δὲ τρίτος τὴν μεσόγαιαν· συνέχει δὲ τὰ τῶν <τογάτων> ἤδη λεγομένων ὡς ἂν εἰρηλικῶν καὶ εἰς τὸ ἡμέρον καὶ τὸν Ἰταλικὸν τύπον μετακειμένων ἐν τῇ τηβεννικῇ ἐσθῆτι (οὗτοι δ' εἰσὶν οἱ Κελτίβηρες καὶ οἱ τοῦ Ἰβηρος πλησίον ἐκατέρωθεν

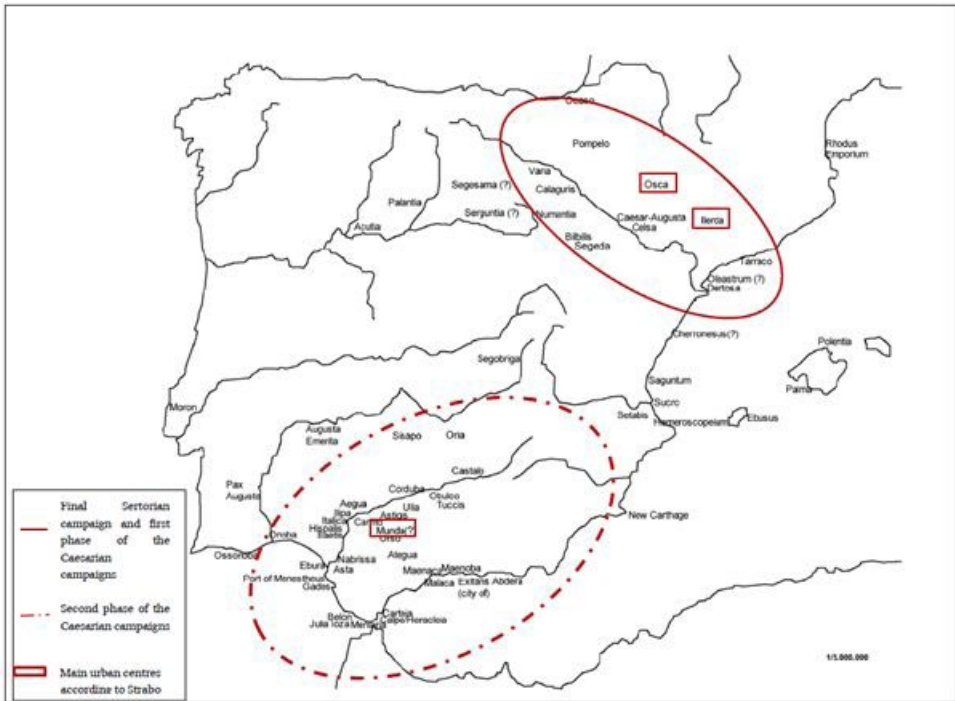


Figure 7. Civil wars in Hispania. Main urban centres

This whole late-Republican and high-Imperial stratum of the geo-historical account in Book III can no longer depend, as is logical, on two of Strabo’s three great referents, so far, as were Polybius and Artemidorus. On the contrary, there is no doubt that the ethnographic traces of Posidonius continue to be evident in the depiction of the Cantabrian ethnic groups and it is possible that the episodes linked to Pompey owe more to the sage of Aramea than his successor suggests⁸³. However, it is also true that being a contemporary author – or almost – of many of the events recounted, some of the information

οικοῦντες μέχρι τῶν πρὸς θαλάττη μερῶν). αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ ἡγεμῶν διαχειμιάζει μὲν ἐν τοῖς ἐπιθαλαττιαίοις μέρεσι, καὶ μάλιστα τῇ Καρχηδόνι καὶ τῇ Ταρράκωνι δικαιοδοτῶν, θέρους δὲ περιείσιν ἐφορῶν αἰεὶ τινα τῶν δεομένων ἐπανορθώσεως. εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ ἐπίτροποι τοῦ Καίσαρος, ἵππικοὶ ἄνδρες, οἱ διανέμοντες τὰ χρήματα τοῖς στρατιώταις εἰς τὴν διοίκησιν τοῦ βίου.

⁸³ It ought to be taken into consideration that, in addition to *On the Ocean*, Posidonius would have written a general historical work called to continue that of Polybius and a *History of Pompey*, with whom he would have had a close relationship: LAFFRANQUE 1964, pp. 109-151.

he tells us could have come to his knowledge during his various stays in Rome or thanks to his contacts with the Roman military elite – for instance his friendship with the Prefect Gaius Aulus, with whom he would have travelled around Egypt. Nor do we think it is unreasonable for Strabo to use a source of Latin origin, such as the historical work of Caesar and the corpus linked to it⁸⁴ or, as has been proposed for other books, the geographical work of Agrippa and even that of Augustus himself⁸⁵.

If, finally, we move on to the cultural criterion in a literary perspective, we see how Homeric aetiology and exegesis are used to make the extreme western lands of the ecumene apprehensible to the Greek imagination. Thus, mythical or supposedly mythical places – in this specific case, cities of the same name⁸⁶ – enter into historical-literary criticism not to “overcome” the mythical state, but to serve as a basis and support for the process of knowledge and appropriation of the West. The direct consequence of this process, already seen from a Latin perspective, will be Romanisation⁸⁷. From this approach, the guiding thread that guides Strabo’s narrative would rest on two main pillars: firstly, the search for rational causes for Posidonius; secondly, the speculations and taste for the (false) etymologies characteristic of Asclepiades of Myrlea, who makes the theory of exoceanism and the evemerization of the Homeric stories by Crates of Malos his own⁸⁸. This discursive register would appear in book III in response

⁸⁴ Some indications, such as Strabo’s mention of *Munda* as the metropolis of the region (III 2, 2) may point in that direction, although the philological difficulties of the corpus lead us to be prudent and take this more as an option than a certainty: CASTRO-PÁEZ 2021, 117-124.

⁸⁵ Here again we come up against the problems generated by the transmission of these sources, which have given rise to a wealth of literature that is not accessible in the framework of this work. In the case of Agrippa, there is no consensus among researchers when it comes to establishing the very nature of the geographical work of Augustus’ son-in-law, defending the existence of a geo-descriptive text, a map, or both elements, the latter being complementary to the former. To a greater extent, the very small number of fragments attributable, undoubtedly, to the possible text only complicates its assessment: ARNAUD 1990, pp. 1182-1298 for a complete state of the question. In the case of Augustus, the intrinsic problems of the *Res Gestae* are compounded by the controversies regarding other epigraphic documents such as the Bembibre’s bronze and the substantial interpretative variations that the acceptance of certain hypotheses entails from a legal, administrative and chronological point of view: LASSERRE pp. 867-896; RAMAGE 1987.

⁸⁶ *Port of Menestheus*: STR., III 1, 9; *Odysssea*: STR., III 2, 13; *Amphiloichi, Hellenes, Opsicella*: STR., III 4, 3.

⁸⁷ PÉREZ VILATELA 1995, pp. 321-344; PRONTERA 2017, pp. 175-184.

⁸⁸ Especially, in the excursus collected in STR., III 4, 3 regarding the presence of the *Nóstoi* in peninsular lands.

to different casuistry. Thus, the mention of places related to the mythological cycles in peninsular lands, above all, referring to the journeys of Odysseus (*Odysseia*) and the other *nostos* (*Amphilochi*, *Hellenes* or *Opsicella* – the latter three located in such an eccentric territory as the Callaican-Cantabrian area –) respond to a rationalist mechanism that was developed during the Hellenistic period and with which the aim was to recreate, in distant lands, a picture of cultural references that would allow the alien character of these places to be attenuated in the Greek world⁸⁹. This mechanism is developed on the basis of a critical and historical-literary reflection and not in an unconscious way as it certainly could have been produced in archaic times during the colonial expansion. Together with this mechanism of euhemerism we would also find a call for etymology that would also seek, in an exercise so much to the liking of ancient ethnography, to establish links – even if fictitious – with familiar toponyms to the Greek ear. Hence those pairs like *Zacynthus/Saguntus*⁹⁰ or *Tartarus/Tartessus*⁹¹ that seem to have their origins in terminological speculations developed by Asclepiades in a context of the Hellenization of the origins of the Iberian Peninsula. Although perhaps the most significant example of this record is again to be found in *Gades* and his area of influence. Due to its location, it has been linked since archaic times to the theories of exoceanism and the controversy surrounding the Columns as ecumenical landmarks – with all the connotations that this entails – and it is the location of Heracles' last civilising feats⁹².

It is, we believe, by taking into account all these elements that we should try to approach the role of the city in Strabo's book III. Although this depends, and in no small part, on the set of sources available Strabo, we think that it may be of great interest to analyse it with these three registers in mind and see how they are prioritised, in one case or another, by the author to insert the peninsular urban frameworks into such a specific historical process as the culmination of the Hispanic conquest by Rome.

⁸⁹ PRONTERA 2017, p. 175.

⁹⁰ STR., III 4, 6.

⁹¹ STR., III 2, 12.

⁹² STR., III 5, 3-10. Regarding the role played by *Gades* in the Phoenician-Punic and Greek world, in general, and the role of the temple, in particular: TSIRKIN 1981, pp. 21-27; CRUZ ANDREOTTI 1994, pp. 57-85; ÁLVAREZ MARTÍ-AGUILAR 2014 pp. 13-33.

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