Paganism and Pagan Survivals in Spain up to the Fall of the Visigothic Kingdom

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Paganism and Christianity in Spain Before the Council of Elvira

[1] To understand the pagan practices that survived in early Christian Spain it is necessary to make a study of the paganism that existed in the Peninsula before the coming of Christianity. Hence this opening chapter will be devoted to a rapid survey of the various peoples that settled there and a more detailed account of their religious beliefs and practices.

THE PEOPLES THAT SETTLED IN SPAIN

The earliest history of Spain like that of most countries is very obscure. [1] According to A. Schulten, the first inhabitants of the Peninsula were probably the Ligurians, for a long period the principal people of western Europe. [2] Only a few facts are known about their origin, their language, and the extent of their settlement. The assertion of some historians that the Ligurians and the Iberians were two branches of the same race is unfounded.

The Iberians are known to have been in Spain about the year 700 B.C., though doubtless they had come there much earlier. Their origin is a matter of dispute. Schulten, Gsell, Bosch-Gimpera claim that the Iberians came from Africa. [3] Between this people and the pre-Celtic inhabitants of Ireland there seems to have been a very close connection. In early Ireland and Spain the bodies of the deceased were often dismembered; this unusual burial practice [2] argues for a similarity of civilization if not of race. [4] The writing on the famous Clonfinloch stone of Ireland is strikingly similar to that found on the walls in some places of southern Spain. [5] The Iberians were the most important people to settle in Spain; they gave their name to the Peninsula and to the important river, the Iberus (Ebro).

Probably between the years 700-500 B.C. a new people, the Celts, entered Spain. [6] Their first settlements were in the table-lands of central and northern Spain; later they brought the greater part of the western coast under their control. Their presence in this latter section is attested by many places with the Celtic ending *briga*, [7] such as Conimbriga (Coimbra), Caesarobriga (Talavera de la Reina), and Caetobriga (Setúbal).

Probably about the year 400 B.C. the Iberians of Provence invaded Spain and conquered the Celts in the table-lands and along the western coast. The Iberians who settled in the table-lands were known as the Celt-Iberians to distinguish them from the Iberians in other parts of Spain. [8] Though the Celts were conquered, their influence did not die out entirely. The weapons used by the Celt-Iberians, the clothing that they wore, and the deities that they worshiped testify to the presence of the Celts in this locality. But the system of government adopted by the Celt-Iberians, their manner of waging war, and their traits of character are certainly Iberian.
The vast mineral wealth of Spain, tin, copper and silver, became known at an early date to the Phoenicians who had preceded the Iberians and the Celts to Spain. About the year 1000 B.C. they established a trading post at Gades (Cadiz), which later became one of the most important cities of early Spain. They gained control of a large portion of southern Spain, and probably established settlements at Tartessus, Agadir and Belon. To the tribes of southern Spain they brought the benefits of a higher civilization and probably taught them the alphabet.

In the eighth or seventh century B.C. the Greeks began to trade with the tribes of southern Spain and along the Mediterranean coast. In the fourth century B.C. they made settlements in northeastern Spain. Colonies were founded at Emporion (Castellon de Ampurias) and Rhodus (Rosas) by the Greeks, but no settlements were made by them in southeastern Spain.

After the Carthaginians in the sixth century B.C. had firmly established their position in North Africa they invaded Spain and gradually gained control of the Phoenician settlements there. While the history of the Carthaginians in Spain is very obscure at this early period, they seem to have founded colonies at Nova Carthago (Cartagena), Malaca (Málaga) and at other places along the Mediterranean coast. It was not until the time of Hamilcar, Hasdrubal and Hannibal in the third century B.C. that the Carthaginians pushed their conquests into western Spain. They never succeeded in subduing a number of the tribes of Cantabria and modern Portugal.

The Romans did not enter Spain before the Punic Wars of the third century B.C. During the Second Punic War Spain played an important part, and the victories which the Roman armies won there ultimately sealed the doom of Carthage. The Romans now began a systematic conquest of the Spanish tribes, and most of Spain was definitely under their control after the fall of Numantia in 133 B.C. It was more than a century later before the fierce tribes of Cantabria submitted to the Roman yoke. Rome remained in control of the Peninsula until the invasion of the Germanic peoples four centuries later. The history of Spain under the empire was very peaceful and Roman civilization gradually penetrated throughout the Peninsula.

NATIVE RELIGIONS OF SPAIN

Just as the history of the early Ligurians, Iberians and Celts in Spain is very obscure, so little is known about their primitive religious beliefs. For example, did the Druids, who in the time of Caesar were the religious leaders of the Celts of Gaul, ever come to Spain? None of the ancient Greek and Roman writers of Spanish history mention their presence in the Peninsula. H. Hubert thinks that the Druids may have been known there by a different name. But from the words of Caesar that Druidism came from Britain and that those who wished to become Druids went there to study, J. Pokorny, H. d'Arbois de Jubainville and G. Dottin conclude that Druidism was a pre-Celtic institution, which the Celts adopted after their conquest of Britain. As Druidism did not in all probability exist in Spain, the fusion of the Iberians and the Celts could be accomplished more easily and doubtless in the course of time many changes were made in the religion of both peoples. It will therefore be necessary to discuss the Iberian and Celtic religions as if they were but one.

Greek and Roman writers seldom mention the religious beliefs of the early inhabitants of Spain and this lack of source material makes the study of the native cults of Spain less satisfactory than that of the neighboring peoples of Africa and Gaul. It is true that beginning with the first century of the Christian era, there are many inscriptions to the native gods. But, as the inscriptions in themselves do not furnish details about the worship that was practiced, there are some difficult problems which have not yet been solved. For example, should the names of such deities as A biafelaesurraecus, Ahoparaligomenus and Crougintoudadigoa be spelled as one word or several words? In many cases only the name of the god or goddess is given. On some of the inscriptions to the native gods there are
words written in a native language, which still puzzles the investigators. (18)

For the sake of clarity the more important deities will be discussed first, and then the less prominent
gods and goddesses (those worshiped on mountain tops, in the rivers, the fountains, and at the sacred
stones). This will be followed by a list of the deities, whose names only are known to us, and the places
where inscriptions to them have been found.

The most noted of the native deities of Spain was Endovellicus. (19) About fifty inscriptions have been
found on which his name is mentioned. The center of his cult seems to have been near the city of Ebora
(Evora) in modern Portugal. There have been various attempts to explain the meaning of the name of
this deity, but the etymologies are merely arbitrary. (20) Endovellicus is sometimes invoked as the god
of health; in other inscriptions he is addressed as the Deus Sanctus (21) or the Numen praesentissimum
et praestantissimum. (22) Most of the inscriptions to Endovellicus have been found on a high hill, and
hence Leite de Vasconcellos concludes that he was the god who protected the locality in which he was
usually invoked. (23)

To Ataecina, a female deity, about twenty inscriptions have been [6] found. (24) Her cult was more
widespread than that of Endovellicus, for the inscriptions appear in various parts of southern Portugal
and in western Andalusia. The frequent shortening of her name on the inscriptions indicates her
widespread popularity. (25) Ataecina is identified, for example, with the Greco-Roman goddess
Proserpina, who was looked upon as an agrarian deity, and as the queen of Hades presiding over the
region of the dead. She is addressed in the inscriptions as Sancta, Domina, Servatrix and Invicta. In an
inscription at Merida this goddess is requested to recover some clothes which have been stolen. (26)
Ataecina was probably a Celtic deity, though her name is not found in other countries where the Celts
had settled. (27)

Besides Endovellicus a number of other deities appear to have been invoked on the tops of mountains.
In a mountain near Braga called Distertius (Distercio) an inscription was found to Dercetius,
preumably the god of the mountain. St. Aemilian, who lived in the sixth century A. D., later retired to
this mountain. Here, according to St. Braulio, his seventh century biographer, he experienced the
"mockeries of the ancient scoundrel" (28) who, Toutain surmises, was the god Dercetius. (29) Two ex-
votos have been found in the mountains of this same section to the gods Brigus (30) and Cabuniaegenis-
(31) At times the cult of Jupiter is associated with that [7]of a native god. Thus Iuppiter Ladicus-
(32) appears to have been invoked on the mountain near Lugo, which is today called Ladoco. Iuppiter
Candamius (33) was, according to Hübner, the deity who presided over the mountain near Astorga, now
known as Candanedo.

There are clear traces of the worship of rivers, especially in northern and western Spain. An inscription
has been found to the god Durius, who presided probably over the river of this same name, Durius
(Douro). (34) To the north of this same river near the city of Bracara (Braga) the names of the gods,
Tameobrigus and Durbeicus have been found. (35) It has been suggested that these gods watched over
the rivers known today as Tamaio and Avo. (36) Five inscriptions to the goddess Nabia have been
discovered. (37) She was probably a river deity and her name lives on in the river Navia of northern
Spain.

The divinities who watched over fountains seem to have been especially dear to the natives of Spain.
An inscription found upon a fountain outside of the city of Bracara (Braga) is dedicated to the god
Tongoenabiacus. (38) On the stone above the fountain is the picture of a person standing who holds in
his left arm what appears to be a basket of fruit. Toutain suggests that this is a picture of the fountain-
god Tongoenabiacus and that he is supposed to bring fertility to the country-side.\(39\) Around Guimares, still famous for its mineral water, two inscriptions have been found to the god Bormanicus.\(40\) Whether he was a Celtic or Ligurian deity is still a matter\[8\] of dispute.\(41\) The Nympae were often invoked as the goddesses of fountains. This cult was pre-Roman, as is evident from the fact that most of the inscriptions to the Nymphs have been found in western and northwestern Spain. Dedications to the deity that watches over the fountain are found in such formulas as \textit{Aquae Eletes},\(42\) west of Salmantica, and \textit{Fons Saginieisin},\(43\) near Astorga.

The worship of the \textit{Lar} and \textit{Genius} in Spain is frequently in the last analysis a native cult, as is clear from the epithets applied to them.\(44\) Thus at Capera (el Villar) there is an inscription to the \textit{Lares Gapeticorum Gentilitatis}.\(45\) There are also inscriptions to the \textit{Lares Turolici, Cerenaeci, Cusicelenses}.\(46\) In these same sections of western and northwestern Spain the Roman \textit{Genii, Dii} and \textit{Lares}, were often invoked as the protectors of the towns, localities and travelers, as the \textit{Dii Deaeque Coniumbricenses, Genius Turgalesium, Genius Laquiniesis} and \textit{Lares viales}.\(47\)

The natives of Spain regarded many rocks and stones as sacred. Thus among the inscriptions to Endovellicus is one which reads as follows: "\textit{Endovolico Itilia Anas relictum a Majoribus Animo Libens Posuit.}"\(48\) The words \textit{relictum a majoribus} refer probably to the \[9\] stone itself, which was sacred in the family of Julia, and hence was worthy of being offered to Endovellicus. Even in the worship of the fountain-deity, Tongoenabiacus, the essential part of the worship was the stone above the fountain on which the name and probably also the image of the god were engraved.\(49\)

The most curious of all these sacred stones is one found near Braga. The inscription is as follows: "\textit{Diis Deabusque Aeternum Lacum Omnibusque Numinibus Lapitearum cum hoc templo sacravit . . . in quo hostiae voto cremantur.}"\(50\) The word \textit{templum} in this inscription probably designates the stone itself upon which the victim was burnt. It may have been at one of these sacred stones that the Lusitanians sacrificed their prisoners of war to one of their gods by cutting off their right hands and inflicting upon them other tortures.\(51\)

On the promontory of St. Vincent, which in ancient times was thought to be the most western point of the inhabited world, some stones were also regarded as sacred. Strabo says that the natives were wont to turn these stones about and pour an oblation on them. And he adds: "It is not lawful to offer sacrifices at this place, nor at night even to set foot on the promontory because, as the people say, the gods occupy it at this time."\(52\) Even at the present time the people avoid visiting the cape at night.\(53\) Probably there existed the belief, not uncommon among primitive people, that the souls of the dead dwelt in certain stones which, when turned about, were capable of producing rain.\(54\)

The other deities, worshiped by the native Celts and Iberians, were local gods and goddesses about whom only the name is known. There are about eighty of these deities. In the following list they are arranged according to the locality in which inscriptions to them \[10\] have been found.\(55\) The symbol \* denotes that the name of the deity is uncertain.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Astorga} -- Aernus, Ameuncus, Bodus, Caraedudis, Coso, *Degante, Mamdica, *Menoviacus, Vaccaburius, Vagdonnaegus.
  \item \textbf{Cáceres} -- Angefix, Arentius, Bandoga, Beantunaecus, Bidiesies, *Boutes, Caparenses, *Eaecus,
\end{itemize}

Lisbon -- *Aracus, Bandiarbariaicus, *Carneus, Coniumbricenses.


Saragossa -- Obana, Stelatesa.


One hundred and thirty native deities are known to us by name, and there are about 230 inscriptions dedicated to them. As is evident from what has been shown above, the center of these native cults was in western and northwestern Spain. In the other parts of Spain there are no dedications to the native gods and goddesses. This does not mean that Rome had forbidden the people to worship them, but merely that the aborigines of southern and eastern Spain had adopted not merely the civilization, but also the religion of the Romans.

Whether these deities are Celtic, Iberian or even Ligurian is still an open question. Those gods whose names end in *aecus and *aegus seem to be Iberian. The deities that are undoubtedly of Celtic origin, as the *Matres, *Lugoves, and *Epona, the goddess of horses, are found near Clunia (Coruña del Conde) where some of the Celt-Iberians are known to have settled. Occasionally a group of people dedicates an inscription to the native deities, as that made by the collegium sutorum to the Lugoves, but as a rule most of the inscriptions are made by private individuals. The large number of these deities and the inscriptions to them prove their popularity among the people. As far as can be judged, the Roman civil and military officials in western and northwestern Spain seldom make any inscription to the native gods. The only exception appears to be that made by the city of Astorga to Vagdonnaegus. While the names of soldiers are on some of these inscriptions to the native deities, Toutain surmises that they were probably natives of Spain in the service of Rome.

When did the cult of these native deities come to an end? Toutain believes that there is no means of knowing if their worship was practiced in the third and fourth century of the Christian era. But he has overlooked the fact that as late as the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries many people of Spain were condemned by the missionaries and councils for the superstitious rites which they practiced at the fountains and stones.

THE RELIGION OF THE PHOENICIANS IN SPAIN

Besides the cults of the natives of Spain, the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans who settled there left an appreciable influence upon the religious life of the Peninsula. With the religion of the Phoenicians may be linked that of the Carthaginians, for the two people worshiped the same gods and had the same religious beliefs. Among the Phoenicians there was in each locality a deity known by the general name of Baal, whose power was limited to the place in which he was worshiped. In the city of Gades (Cadiz) there were two temples to Cronus and Melkarth (= "king of the city"). The god, Hercules Gaditanus, probably a Latinized form of Melkarth, was very popular among the Romans, and his name is often found on the coins used in Roman times. There are no extant remains of the Phoenician temples at Cadiz. Toutain has called attention to the fact that in Roman times there were in Africa and Spain many dedications to the Genius municipii. As most of the places where these inscriptions have been found had formerly been settlements of the Phoenicians he concludes that the worship of the local Baal of the Phoenicians continued under the Roman name of Genius municipii.
THE RELIGION OF THE GREEKS IN SPAIN

In the northeastern section of Spain, where the Greeks had established three colonies, the Greek cults were introduced at an early date. Strabo is authority for the statement that even the natives of these sections began to worship the goddess Artemis in the manner of the Greeks. Recent excavations made in the ancient city of Emporion have brought to light the remains of a temple to Asclepius and of a statue to Artemis. A number of other cults containing Greek elements were introduced later by the Romans and hence are treated in the next section.

THE RELIGION OF THE ROMANS IN SPAIN

The religion brought to Spain by the Romans is better known than that of the native, the Phoenician, and the Greek cults. Through centuries of settlement and administration the Romans exerted a tremendous influence upon the religious life of the Peninsula. The religion of Rome was spread throughout Spain by the army veterans and the Italians who settled there beginning with the second century B.C. But unfortunately we know almost nothing about the Roman cults in Spain before the empire. For convenience of treatment the Roman religion may be divided into the official and non-official cults. In the discussion of the official cults the plan of presentation adopted by Toutain will be followed, and in the non-official cults that by Wissowa.

The purpose of the official cults was to honor the emperor as the head of the state. This worship had been started in Spain during the life-time of Augustus. During the war against the Cantabrians about 25 B.C. the people in the Romanized city of Tarraco (Tarragona) had built an altar in honor of the emperor. This worship of the ruler that began so spontaneously became very popular in the Romanized sections of the Peninsula.

This popularity is evident from the fact that in Spain not only each province, but also each conventus (a juridical district embracing a certain number of towns), and very often each municipality had its own imperial cult. The writer has examined the Spanish inscriptions on which are found the names of flamines, flaminicae, and sevirales, who were closely associated with the imperial cult. In thirty-four towns of Baetica there is mention made in thirty-four inscriptions of the flamines, in eighteen of the flaminicae, and in thirty-four of the sevirales. In nine towns of Lusitania the flamines are mentioned ten times, the flaminicae eight times, and the sevirales eight times. In forty-five towns of Tarraconensis the flamines are mentioned sixty-five times, the flaminicae ten times, and the sevirales twenty-four times.

While the worship of the reigning emperor was the principal part of the imperial cult, Tiberius, as far as is known, is the only emperor mentioned by name in Spain. Occasionally there are inscriptions to the Numen or the Lares of the emperor. More frequently the cult of Augustus (the name by which the ruling emperor was usually known) was associated with that of other divinities. But the most popular form of the imperial cult in Spain was undoubtedly that of the divi.

In Spain the priest in charge of the imperial cult was generally given the title flamen divorum et Augustorum. This cult of all the divi is the more striking when it is remembered that it was not practiced elsewhere in the Roman world. A special priest in Spain was appointed to conduct the worship of each divus. Later when the women of the imperial household were declared divae a special priestess presided over the worship paid to them. While in other parts of the empire the oath which the civil official took mentioned as a rule only the reigning emperor, at Malaca (Málaga), and probably elsewhere in Spain the divi were also included. The oath taken by the officials of this city was in part as follows: "Facito ut is iuret per Iovem et divom Augustum et divom Claudium et divom
Vespasianum Augustum et divom Titum Augustum et genium Caesaris Domitiani Augustes deosque Penates...

This popularity of the cult of the divi was due very probably to the fact that when the Emperor Augustus had been declared a divus the people of Tarraconensis had asked and obtained permission from Tiberius to have a temple built in honor of the departed emperor. This action of Tarraconensis set an example to the other Spanish provinces.

The official cult also included the worship of the capitoline deities, Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, Iuno and Minerva. This cult spread throughout the provinces and in Spain, it is known to have been formally established at Hispalis (Seville) and Urso (Orsuna). Only five inscriptions in Spain have been found in which the three capitoline deities have been invoked together, and the occasions of these inscriptions seem to have been events of public interest. Juno is invoked on fifteen inscriptions in Spain and in four of them the title Regina is added. Minerva is sometimes invoked alone, and on four inscriptions she is called Augusta. The most popular of the three deities was undoubtedly Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, or I.O.M., as his name was usually abbreviated. Eighty-seven inscriptions have been found on which this name is mentioned.

The names of the natives of Spain are occasionally found on these inscriptions to the capitoline deities in which they are invoked separately, but not on those in which their names are joined together. Civil officials and freedmen, often with Greek names, predominate in the cult of Juno and Minerva. In the inscriptions to I.O.M. are to be found the names of slaves, freedmen and civil officials. But this cult of Jupiter as the head of the State was especially fostered by the soldiers in Spain. More than half of the inscriptions to him have been found near Braga and Lugo, where the Legio VII Gemina was stationed.

NON-OFFICIAL CULTS

Besides the cult paid to the Capitoline Jupiter, there was also the worship of Jupiter as the lord of the world. The evidence for this cult is seen in the inscriptions which are not followed by the words Capitolinus or Optimus Maximus. Jupiter enjoyed an especial popularity in Lusitania, for most of the Spanish inscriptions mentioning Jupiter are found there. On these inscriptions he is usually called Solutarius, which was probably a corruption of Salutaris. Jupiter was identified, as has been pointed out, with the native gods Ladicus and Candamius. Doubtless Celtius Tongi f. who dedicated an inscription to Iuppiter Repulsor, associated the worship of the Roman god with a native deity.

Next to Jupiter, Mars was probably the most popular Roman deity worshiped in Spain. There are more than forty inscriptions to him. As has been already pointed out, the name Mars is often followed by that of Augustus. The Roman god is sometimes called Pater, Invictus, Campester. In an inscription found at Tuy, near Braga, the name of a native god Caniociecus is added to that of Mars. Perhaps the name of the god Cosus was also connected with Mars in an inscription found at Brandomil, near Coruña, in Galicia. This proves that a native cult corresponding to that of Mars already existed in Spain before the coming of the Romans. But whatever modification the cult of Mars received in a Spanish environment the Italian names on a number of inscriptions to Mars, as Vettila Paculi, Cominius, Vibius Persinus, and Arruntius Initialis, seem to indicate that the old Roman cult as such was transplanted to Spain.

Juno was invoked in Spain as one of the heavenly deities. This cult of Juno Caelestis was probably Semitic in origin. Not far from Cartagena a temple had been built in her honor.
Neptune, the god of the sea, was especially honored in the seaport towns of Cadiz and Tarragona. (98) While in Africa and Gaul Neptune was often invoked as a fountain-deity, there do not seem to have been any fountains in Spain which were dedicated to him. (99)

Four inscriptions have been found in Spain to Silvanus, (100) which [18] Toutain has overlooked in his discussion of this Roman god. (101) Silvanus seems to have preserved in the Peninsula his Roman character as the god who watches over the fields. (102)

Tutela was probably the most popular abstract conception that was worshiped in Spain. Sometimes the name Tutela is found alone, (103) but more often the formula is met, Tutela colonorum Cluniensium, (104) or Genius Tutela horreorum. (105) All of the fourteen inscriptions in Spain have been found in western Tarraconensis. Three towns of the Peninsula have derived their names from Tutela: Tudela Vegún near León, Tudela de Duero near Valladolid, and Tudela not far from Saragossa.

At Saguntum (Sagunto) there was a temple dedicated to Diana, (106) and in this same city there is found an inscription which speaks of the various animals that have been offered to her. (107) In the northwestern section of Spain three inscriptions to her have been found as the patroness of hunters, Diana Venatrix. (108)

Besides the cult of Minerva as a capitoline deity, she was also invoked in Spain under the Greek aspect as patroness of the trades. (109) Most of the inscriptions to Minerva have been found in the Romanized sections of southern and eastern Spain. There were two temples built in her honor, one at Gades (Cadiz) and the other at Tarraco (Tarragona). (110)

As was mentioned above the Phoenician god Melkarth was probably worshiped at Gades under the name of Hercules. (111) The Greco-Roman Hercules was very popular in southern and eastern Spain where twenty inscriptions to him have been found. At Carteia [19] (Rocadilo) and Epora (Montoro) not far from Gades, mention is made on the inscriptions of the "priests of Hercules." (112)

About twelve inscriptions to Venus have been found in Spain. Her cult appears to have been popular in the southern and eastern parts of the Peninsula. In a number of these inscriptions, as has already been indicated, the name Augusta is added to that of Venus. (113) In an inscription that has been recently found she is given the title Victrix. (114)

Inscriptions have been found to Apollo in Lisbon, Braga, Valencia, and Cordova. (115) In one inscription there is mention of Asclepius and Apollo, (116) and near the modern town of Aroche in southern Spain there was a temple to Apollo and Diana. (117) The names of the persons dedicating these inscriptions were apparently oriental, such as M. Afranius Euporius, Vibia Trophime, and Calpurnius Alypion. (118)

Mercury was not as much honored in Spain as in Gaul, where the natives placed him first among the Roman deities. (119) Only about fifteen inscriptions are known to have been dedicated to him. (120) The center of his cult appears to have been at Cartagena where a temple had been built in his honor, and where the "fishermen and hucksters" dedicated a marble shaft to him. (121)

[20] At Cordova there was an inscription to the goddess Nemesis. (122) In the city of Evora an inscription, which is undated, referred to the "amici Nemesiaci." (123) Attention will be drawn to the "friends of Nemesis" in the following chapter.

Besides the above-mentioned deities which the Romans brought to Spain, there also came the worship of the gods of the dead, usually called Dii Manes or Dii inferi Manes. (124) On the tombs in Spain we
also meet the common formula: "May the earth be light upon thee." Almost forty inscriptions to the Manes have been found in Spain. Though the majority of them have been found in the Romanized portions of the Peninsula, a number of inscriptions in northwestern Spain have also been discovered. It seems from the names on these inscriptions, as Alluquius Andergus, and Mineas Sato, that the natives of Spain had probably identified the Roman Manes with their own gods of the dead.

ORIENTAL MYSTERY RELIGIONS IN SPAIN

The last forms of paganism to enter Spain during the first three centuries after Christ were the oriental mystery cults. The first of these was the religion of Phrygia, whose great goddess was believed to have saved Rome from disaster during the war against Hannibal. The principal characteristic of this Phrygian cult was the *taurobolium* or *criobolium*, a ceremony which is also found in the religion of Mithras. This rite, which the Spanish poet Prudentius has described, consisted in the slaying of a bull or ram on an open platform. The neophytes who stood beneath the platform allowed the blood which flowed through the crevices to pour over the different parts of their body and often in their eagerness moistened their lips with it. A spiritual meaning was attached to this ceremony. The descent into the pit was regarded as a burial, and the sprinkling with blood signified the beginning of a new life.

While there were two principal deities of this Asiatic cult, Cybele and Attis, the latter is seldom mentioned in the Spanish inscriptions. Cybele was usually addressed as *Mater Deum*. An inscription in northwestern Spain identifies her with the Roman goddess Juno. In the Balearic Islands a temple was dedicated to *Mater Magna et Atthis*. The inscriptions to the Phrygian deities are found in southern Lusitania and Baetica, in the northwestern section, and in the seaport town of Barcino (Barcelona). The names of many of the persons who dedicate these inscriptions are oriental, such as T. Licinius Amaranthus, Docyricus Valerianus, and Flavia Tyche. The earliest known inscription to *Magna Mater* in Spain was made in the year 108 A.D. The latest one that can be dated with certainty was made at Corduba (Cordova) about the year 238 A.D.

The Syrian cult of Atargatis seems to have been popular in southern Spain. Traces of this Syrian religion have been found at Cordova. An inscription found at Málaga refers to a settlement there of Syrian merchants who probably continued to worship the deities of their native land.

There are fourteen inscriptions to the Egyptian deities Isis and Serapis in Spain. While the title *Domina* is generally given to Isis, she is called in one inscription *Isidi puellari*, perhaps because she was regarded as the patroness of girls. An inscription discovered near a fountain may be an indication that Isis was regarded as a fountain-deity. An inscription to Isis at Corduba (Cordova) mentions the jewels and other precious ornaments which the worshiper offered to the goddess. One inscription to Serapis joins his name with that of Jupiter. Another inscription addresses him as *Serapis Pantheus*. Inscriptions in his honor are found in southern Lusitania, in Baetica, in northwestern Spain, and also along the Mediterranean coast, where there was a temple to Serapis at Emporion.

The inscriptions to these Egyptian deities are made by soldiers, slaves, or freedmen who have oriental names. At Valentia (Valencia) Isis is honored by the *sodalium vernarum*, who may have been descendants of oriental slaves. Among the oriental names may be mentioned those of Flaminica Pale, Livia Chalcedonica, and Sempronia Lynchis. The only inscription that can be dated with certainty is that found at Corduba (Cordova) in the middle of the second century.
About twenty-five inscriptions to Mithras have been found in Spain. The center of his cult appears to have been at Merida where a number of statues to Mithras have been discovered.\(^1\) He was also worshiped at Tarragona, in parts of Baetica, and in the military [23] sections of the northwest.\(^2\) Mithras is usually addressed as *Sol Dominus Invictus.*\(^3\) On an altar to him at Menda are engraved the words, *Ara Genesis Invicti Mithrae,* which probably refer to the birth of the god.\(^4\) The cult of Mithras appears to have been very popular in the middle of the second century A.D.\(^5\) Most of the inscriptions were made by soldiers.\(^6\)

The oriental mystery cults were popular in the maritime and military cities of Spain. No inscriptions to these eastern deities have been discovered in the central part of the Peninsula or in northwestern Lusitania. These religions did not make a deep impression upon the natives of Spain as may be judged from the fact that the names on the inscriptions are those of soldiers or of people evidently oriental.\(^7\) The oriental religions led to the practice of magic and astrology in many countries of the West. While Toutain stresses the paucity of documents in Spain in regard to magic and astrology, he believes that Spain was permeated with magic.\(^8\)

There is evidence, however, that the syncretistic movement which had been going on in Roman religion from a very early period reached its culmination when the oriental cults entered the empire.\(^9\) This syncretism and its logical consequence, pantheism, are evident in the Spanish inscriptions. Mention has already been made of the frequency with which the Roman deities were associated with Cybele, Isis, and Mithras. In northwestern Spain, not far from Bracara (Braga) an altar was dedicated to more than twenty Greco-Roman deities.\(^10\) Some of the other inscriptions are made to *Iuppiter Pantheus Augustus, Pantheus Augustus, Serapis Pantheus,* and [24]*Pantheus Tutela.*\(^11\) Five of these syncretistic inscriptions have been discovered in northwestern Spain and four in the province of Baetica. The other inscriptions are found in southern Lusitania and along the eastern coast.

**CHRISTIANITY IN SPAIN BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF ELVIRA (C. 306)**

The exact year in which Christianity came to Spain is a question that is impossible to settle from the extant evidence.\(^12\) There is no solid historical foundation for the claim that St. James preached the Gospel in Spain about the year 44 A.D. In his epistle to the Romans St. Paul had expressed the desire to evangelize Spain,\(^13\) and it seems probable from the words of St. Clement of Rome (c. 90 A.D.)\(^14\) and the Muratonic Fragment (c. 200 A.D.) that he actually carried this plan into effect. But if so there is nothing known about the place or the success of his labors. The story that SS. Peter and Paul sent seven missionaries to Spain is purely legendary. There are references to the existence of Christian churches in Spain in the writings of Irenaeus\(^15\) and Tertullian,\(^16\) both of whom wrote between the years 180 and 200 A.D., but evidence for the places in which Christianity was actually practiced comes only in the middle of the third century.

During the persecution of the Christians by the Emperor Decius in the years 249-251, the bishops of Legio-Asturica (León-Astorga) and Emerita (Merida), Basilides and Martial, had apostatized. Because such apostates could no longer retain their episcopal rank, the Christians in these towns had proceeded to elect others to fill the vacant Sees. Martial appealed to Pope Cornelius (253-255)\(^17\) and was reinstated. The people in their quandary turned to St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, and other members of the African hierarchy. In his reply Cyprian after reviewing the accusations brought against Martial and Basilides, declared that the Christians of León-Astorga and Merida had acted justly in choosing men to succeed the apostates, and that the reinstated bishop was not entitled to the obedience of the laity and clergy.\(^18\) The sequel to this first glimpse into the history of the Church in Spain is unknown.\(^19\)
The next record of Christianity in Spain is to be found in the Valerian persecution (257-259). The only martyrs in Spain were Bishop Fructuosus of Tarragona and two deacons of this city, Eulogius and Augurius.\(^{167}\) From the account of the martyrdom of Fructuosus, which is generally regarded as authentic,\(^ {168}\) it is evident that the Christians were already a strong minority in this city where the imperial cult had been deeply rooted. The martyred bishop, Fructuosus, was greatly beloved even by the pagans of Tarragona.\(^ {169}\)

During the fifty years that followed the martyrdom of Fructuosus nothing is known about Christianity in Spain until the persecution of Diocletian (303-305). The names of about fifty martyrs during this persecution have come down to us.\(^ {170}\) The places in which they were martyred were Corduba (Cordova), Calahorra (Calagurnis), Complutum (Alcalá de Henares), Emerita Augusta (Merida), and Caesaraugusta (Saragossa). The best known of the eighteen martyrs of Saragossa is the deacon Vincent. At Merida there was martyred a young girl of twelve years named Eulalia,\(^ {171}\) about whom an interesting discussion has recently been raised. G. Fliedner, the author of an article entitled, "Das Weiterleben der Ataecina,"\(^ {172}\) calls attention to the fact that in pagan times the goddess Ataecina was very popular in the city of Merida and throughout the whole of Lusitania, and that in the same region in early Christian times Eulalia was held in high veneration.\(^ {173}\) The same petitions, as Fliedner points out, are addressed to Ataecina and Eulalia. The titles given to Ataecina and Eulalia are somewhat similar. These facts are undeniable, but the conclusion which Fliedner draws that the honor paid to Eulalia was but a superstitious survival of the cult that had once been shown to Ataecina cannot be justified. A careful reading of the inscriptions to Ataecina clearly shows that the pagans regarded her as a deity. The Christians, on the contrary, are always aware of the fact that the favors which they have received, have come to them from God through the merits or intercession of Eulalia.\(^ {174}\)

The facts, summarized in the above paragraphs, are all that is known about Christianity before the fourth century. As we learn from the Council of Elvira, however, communities of Christians were to be found at this time in Baetica, Carthaginienis, eastern Tarraconensis, and also in the cities of the west and northwest. Probably also in some localities Christianity had penetrated into the country districts, where the churches were in charge of deacons.\(^ {175}\) According to the Adversus nationes of Arnobius (written about 300) there were "innumerable Christians" living in Spain.\(^ {176}\) While this statement may be exaggerated, the Church in Spain was in a flourishing condition, as is evident from the number of bishops at the Council of Elvira. The growth of the Spanish Church, aside from supernatural considerations, was due in part to the excellent roads which facilitated progress throughout the Peninsula,\(^ {177}\) to the long peace which Spain enjoyed since the days of Augustus, and finally to the fact that in no other province of the empire were Roman institutions so deeply rooted as in the Iberian Peninsula.

During the course of the fourth century Christianity became triumphant in Spain. But even before the Edict of Toleration, which marked the beginning of this momentous change in the religious life of the empire, had been proclaimed, there took place the Council of Elvira, an epoch-making event in the Church-history of Spain. The canons of this council give the best extant knowledge of the paganism in Spain at the beginning of the year 306, and the attitude which the hierarchy of the country took toward it.
Notes for Chapter 1


10. E. Hübner, *Monumento linguae ibericae*, n. 31. Schulten, *op. cit.*, col. 2025, thinks that the natives received the alphabet from Cretan traders who visited Spain.


19. Other forms of this name are: Indovelecus, *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*, II, 6269 (hereafter
referred to as C.I.L.) ; Idovelecus, ibid., 6330; Endovelecus, ibid., 5208.

20. Leite de Vasconcellos, Religiões da Lusitania, II, 124, 125.


22. Ibid., 131.


26. "Dea Ataecina Turibrigensis Proserpina, per tuam maiestatem te rogo, oro, obsecro, uti vindices quo mihi furti factum est; quisquis mihi imudavit, involavit minusve fecit eas res quae infra scripta sunt: tunicas VI, paenula lintea II" (the rest of the inscription is illegible)--C. I. L., II, 462.

27. A. Holder, Altkeltischer Sprachschatz, I, 342.


31. Ephemeris epigraphica, VIII (1899), n. 159.

32. C. I. L., II, 2525.


34. Ibid., 2370.

35. Ibid., 2377, 5563.


40. C. I. L., II, 2402, 2403. Inscriptions to a god named Borvo have been found near places famous for their mineral water, as Aix-les-Balas, and Bourbon Lancy. Cf. C. Vaillat, Le culte des sources dans la Gaule antique, pp. 20, 21.


42. F. Fita, Boletin de la real academia, 62 (1913), 543 (hereafter referred to as B. R. A.).

43. C. I. L., II, 5726.


45. C. I. L., II, 804.
46. Ibid., 431, 2384, 2469.
47. Ibid., 432, 618, 2405, 2417, 2518, 2572, 2987, 5634. J. Keune, "Lar," Roscher, Lexikon, II, 278, 279, calls attention to the frequency of inscriptions to the lares viales near Braga and Lugo.
48. Leite de Vasconcellos, Religiões da Lusitania, II, p. 138, n. 20. A number of painted stones dating back to the neolithic age have been found in Spain. These stones appear to have been connected with some religious cult. The pictures on these stones generally portray funeral and marriage ceremonies. Cf. H. Breuil and H. Obermaier, The Cave of Altamira; H. Breuil, Les peintures rupestres schématiques de la péninsule ibérique, II, 2, indicates on a map of Spain the various places where these painted stones have been found.
50. C. I. L., II, 2395.
51. Strabo, III, 3, 6.
52. Ibid., III, 1, 4.
55. The deities mentioned in this list are also given by Toutain, op. cit., pp.160-165. But while Toutain simply gives these names in alphabetical order, it has been thought best to list them geographically, in order that the reader may see at a glance the localities in Spain where the native cults were most deeply rooted.
57. C. I. L., II, 5788. Among the Romans the feast of the October Horse was celebrated in honor of Mars. Cf. G. Wissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer, p. 145; W. Fowler, The Roman Festivals, pp. 241-250. Whether the practices in vogue on the feast of the October Horse were celebrated in honor of Epona cannot be determined from the extant evidence.
61. Les cultes païens dans l'empire romain, II, 451-453.
65. Religion und Kultus der Römer, 2 ed.
imperial cult from 48 B.C. to 14 A.D.


68. The flamen was the priest in charge of the imperial cult. The funeral expenses of the flamen were often paid by the officials of the town or province. Cf. the inscription found at Valencia, Annales del centro de cultura valenciana, I (1928), 90-96.

69. The flaminica was the wife of the flamen. This name (flaminica) was often given to the priestess in charge of the cult of the divae. Cf. H. Samter, "Flamines," Pauly-Wissowa, VI, 2490-2492.

70. The sevirales were colleges generally composed of freedmen who took an active part in the municipal cult in Italy and in the provinces. On the sevirales cf. Beurlier, op. cit., 81-86.

71. C.I.L., II, 49.


73. Toutain, op. cit., I, 45, 46.


75. C.I.L., II, passim.

76. Toutain, op. cit., I, 55.


78. H. Dessau, Inscriptiones latinae, 6088. Toutain, op. cit., I, 56, declares that this oath proves the predominance of the divi in the imperial cult in Spain. Statues of the emperors Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius, who were worshiped as divi at Tarragona, have been discovered in this city. Cf. F. Poulsen, Sculptures antiques des musées des provinces espagnols, pp. 39, 40.

79. "Templum ut in colonia Tarraconensi strueretur Augusto, petentibus Hispanis, permissum datumque in omnes provincias exeniplum."--Tacitus, Annales, I, 78. Since the imperial cult was already known in the East, the term "omnes provincias" probably means all the Spanish provinces; cf. Beurlier, op. cit., p. 22.

80. C.I.L., II, 1194, 5439.


83. C.I.L., II, 1950, 4085, 4498, Rev. arch. 4 sér. XVII (1911), 486.

84. Heuten, op. cit., p. 567.

85. Ibid., p. 557.

86. Ibid., p. 552.


88. Toutain, op. cit., I, 284.

89. Hofer, "Solutorius"; Roscher, Lexikon, IV, 1153.


92. *C. I. L.*, II, 2600, 2990, 4083.


95. *C. I. L.*, II, 432, 468, 1938, 3027.


100. *C. I. L.*, II, 2496, 4089, 4499, 4615.


103. *Rev. arch.*, 5 sér. XXVIII (1928), 399.


111. See above, p. 12.

112. *C. I. L.*, II, 1929, 2162. Three statues of Hercules have been discovered in various parts of southern and eastern Spain; cf. Poulsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 60, 68.


115. *C. I. L.*, II, 173, 2004, 2411, 3725. Other Spanish inscriptions to Apollo are found in the *Rev. arch.*, 3 sér., XL. (1902), 343; *ibid.*, 4 sér., III (1904), 452. Two statues of Apollo have been discovered at Seville and Tarragona, cf. Poulsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 33, 34, 61, 62.

117. C. I. L., II, 964.


120. Only one Spanish inscription to Mercury has been found since the publication of the C. I. L., II; cf. Rev. arch., 4 sér., III (1904), 44.


122. Ibid., 2195.


125. "Dic qui legis: Sit terra tibi levis" - C. I. L., II, 4081; 4087, Rev. arch., 3 sér., XXXVI (1900), 346; ibid., 5 sér., XI (1920), 374.


127. Ibid., 2468.


129. Peristephanon, X, 1011-1050. At Tarragona there is a statue of a priest about to sacrifice a bull; cf. Poulsen. op. cit., pp. 55, 56.

130. C. I. L., II, 179, 805, etc.

131. Ibid., 2521.

132. Ibid., 3706.


135. C. I. L., II, 178. According to Toutain, op. cit., II, 111, this is the earliest inscription to Mater Magna in the western provinces of the empire.


137. Lantier, op. cit., p. 186.


140. C. I. L., II, 33, 981.


142. C. I. L., II, 4491.

143. Ibid., 3386.
144. Ibid., 5605.
145. Ibid., 46.
153. Ibid., p. 18.
154. Ibid., p. 16, n. 3.
155. Such is the opinion of R. Lantier, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
161. Romans, xv, 24.
165. *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, III, 735-743 (hereafter referred to as *CSEL*). This letter of St. Cyprian is not edited in Migne.
166. St. Cyprian died during the Valerian persecution in 258.
169. Ruinart, *op. cit.*, p. 265: "Et cum duceretur Fructuosus episcopus cum diaconibus ad amphitheatrum populus...condolere coepit, quia talem amorem habebat non tantum a fratribus sed etiam ab ethniciis."
171. Whether the St. Eulalia, venerated at Barcelona, is the same as the St. Eulalia of Merida is still

172. *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, CIV (1932), 111-120.


174. "Hujus itaque temporibus morborum pestem inediaeque inopiam ab urbe emeritensi et omni Lusitania....Dominus procul abegit meritisque sacrosanctae Eulaliae virginis longius pepulit." - Migne, P. L., LXXX, 138; after describing the marvelous manner in which a church of Merida was restored to the Catholic bishop of the city, the writer adds that this came about "nutuque Dei meritisque sanctae Eulaliae." - ibid., col. 150.


176. I, 16.

177. There is a very good map of Spain during the period of the empire at the end of C. I. L., II. Villada, *op. cit.*, I, i, 176, gives a map of the Roman roads in Spain and the Christian communities that were established along them. On the Roman organization in Spain, cf. E. Albertini, *Les divisions administratives de l'Espagne romaine.*