

WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE ROMANO-CELTIC WORLD. THE GODS OF THE ROADS

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1. October 1992 saw the discovery of two limestone altars in the Hungarian city of Szombathely, the former *Colonia Claudia Savaria*, inside the walls about one hundred metres from the former Roman city's southern gate. I learnt about this thanks to the journal sent to me by Prof. László Borhy. The first of these altars (85 cm high, 42 cm wide and 30 cm deep) was dedicated to *Itunus* and *Ituna* by two devotees, named *Quartus* and *Flavia Iulia*, as the willing observance of a vow (Fig. 1):

*Ituno e[st]
Itunae
Quartus
et Fl(avia) Iulia
v(otum). s(olverunt) l(ibentes) m(erito).*



Fig. 1: Ara of *Itunus* and *Ituna*.
Szombathely (Hungary)
(after Borhy and Sosztarits).

The second altar was 91 cm high, 58 cm wide and 36 cm deep, and was dedicated to the *Dii Itinerarii* “of the two roads” by *Lucius Pompeius Longinus*, in his name and those of his wife *Marcia* and his son *Rusticus*, again in fulfilment of a promise made previously (Fig. 2):

*Diis Itine[rariis]
utriusque [viae]
L(ucius) Pompeius Long[inus]
suo Marciaeque
coniugis et Rustici fili(i) nomine
v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).*



Fig. 2: Ara of the
Dii Itinerarii.
Szombathely (Hungary)
(after Borhy and
Sosztarits).

As the authors – BORHY and SOSZTARITS (1998) – pointed out, these theonyms are *hapax legomena*, related to the verb *eo, ire*, built on the substantive *itus, -us* (formed by the verbal abstract *-tu-*) and the suffix *-no-*. A well-known parallel is that of the substantive *portus* and the theonym *Portunus*. Thus *Itunus* and *Ituna* are the masculine and feminine forms of a deity that protected travellers or roads¹, and they are mentioned on the second altar as *Dii Itinerarii*, guardians of the roads. The two altars probably date from the end of the 1st century A.D. or the first half of the second, according to recent personal communication by Prof. Borhy.

Ancient Roman religion provided for the existence of deities that protected journeys to and from home, *indigita-menta* that seem to be hypostases of Juno. So we have *Abeona, Adeona, Domiduca, Interduca* (Augustinus, *De civ. Dei* 7.3). The influence of Latin cultural elements from the early 2nd century B. C. from Aquileia was highly significant in Pannonia, and this would explain the appearance of these theonyms in the Savaria area. But the fact that they are only found here suggests, as Borhy and Sosztarits have pointed out, that these are Latin “scientific” assimilations of native travellers’ deities, an interpretation that is borne out by the appearance in Savaria in the 18th century of an inscription,

no longer existent, dedicated to the *Dii Semitaticibus*, the gods that protected trails, which I will come back to later.

With regard to the expression *utriusque viae*, the explanation for this lies in Savaria’s topography: one way would have crossed the city via the southern gate and formed the *decumanus maximus*, while the other, without going into the city, would have gone round its walls and continued northwards.

2. In the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula, in the province of *Hispania Citerior*, Latin epigraphs document the establishment of the worship of certain deities, the *Lares Viales*, with very few mentions in the rest of the Empire, and this has led various authors to suggest that these Latin theonyms were really referring to indigenous deities traditionally venerated in the areas in which these inscriptions appeared.

So far we have found some 40 epigraphs dedicated to these deities, considerably more than those documented in studies carried out by ACUÑA (1971) or BERMEJO BARRERA (1986). Of these, two appeared in Asturias², three in the province of La Coruña³, nine in Lugo⁴, seven in Pontevedra⁵, four in Orense⁶ and seven in the north of Portugal⁷ and isolated

¹ Patrizia de Bernardo has proposed me another explanation of the etymology of *Itunus, Ituna*, in relation with the stem **pitu-*, “food”. They would be deities providers of food. I thank this explanations of Dr. de Bernardo, although the existence of such a parallel as *portus* and *Portunus* inclines me to accept the interpretation given by Borhy and Sosztarits.

² *Sem(pronius) Cas(sius) / Laribus / Vialibus / ex voto / sacrum*, Santianes de Tuña (Tineo), kept in Oviedo (CIL II 5734; Hep 1, 1989, 78); *Aram / Laribu(s) / Vialibu(s)*, Lugo de Llanera (Asturias), mid-2nd century (Hep 4, 1994, 67).

³ [*Laribus Vi(alibus) / Denton(ius) Vere(cundus) / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) a(nimo)*], Brandomil (Zas, La Coruña) (CIL II 5634; *Laribus / [V]*: PEREIRA MENAUT 1991, 115); *L(aribus) V(ialibus) / Val(erius) O / [..]++ / -----*, El Pino, Castrofeito (La Coruña) (PEREIRA MENAUT 1991, 155; Hep 4, 1994, 341); [*L(aribus) Vi(jale)bus) / Arc(---) / v(oto) p(osuit)*, (-osuerunt?). El Pino, Castrofeito (La Coruña) (PEREIRA MENAUT 1991, 157; Hep 4, 1994, 342).

⁴ *Lari(bus) Vial(i)bus*, Belesar, Chantada (Lugo) (HAEp 1715); *Lari(bus) / Vialib(us) / ex vo(to)*, Arcos, Pol (Lugo), Museo de Lugo (HAEp 1716); [---] / *Laribus / Vialibus / [---] / ex voto*. (Becerreá, former *Pons Neviae, mansio* of the *Itin. Ant.* -425, 2 and 430. 10-) Lugo (HAEp 308); *Lari(bus) / Vialib(us) / Placid(i) / na ex / v(oto) p(osuit)*, Neira de Jusá, Papín (Lugo) (HAEp 313); *Augg(ustis?) sa(crum) Laribus / vialib(us) MM(arci) Annii Varus / et Verianus [ex] / [centuria] I G(igurrorum?) pa(ter) et filius / ex voto*, Lugo, found next to the wall (CIL II 2572; HD 10.844); *Laribus / Vialibu(s) Caes(anus)*, Sta. Cruz de Parga, Guitiriz (Lugo) (ACUÑA 1971, 354); *Larei(bus) V(ealb)us a(ram) s(ua) p(ro) / s(alute) e(x) v(oto) p(osuit)*, A Graña, S. Pedro de Buriz, Guitiriz (Lugo) (ACUÑA 1971, 355); *Larebus / Viali(bus) ex v(oto) / Cl(outius?) Gauce(as) Crier(us) Veren(sis)*, S. Vicente de Castillós, Patón (Lugo), today in the Museo Provincial (reading by N. ARES

VÁZQUEZ, BCMPL, IX, 1973, 84; cfr. BERMEJO 1986, 199–200); *Laribus / Vialibus / ara(m) po(su)it) M[---]*, Sta. María de Temes, Carballedo (Lugo) (HD 7276).

⁵ *S(---) Lupus / vo(tum) s(olvit) l(ibens) / Laribus / Vialibus*, San Julián de Requeixo, Pontecesures (Pontevedra) (Hep 6, 1996, 758); *Rec/[t]us / La/ribu[s] / V[i]alibu[s] / s(olvit) l(ibens) [m(erito)]*, Santa María de Caldas de Reis (*Aquae Celena*) (Pontevedra) (HAEp 1744; [---] rec [---] / ---] us ge[---] / *La[ri]bu[s]--- / V[i]al[i]b[us]--- / -----*, Caldas de Reis (Pontevedra) (Hep 6, 1996, 710); *Laribus / Vialibus / ara(m) Pu(blius) O(ptatius) / v(oto) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*, Grava, Silleda (Pontevedra) (HAEp 1745; BAÑOS RODRÍGUEZ 1994, 291) (fig. 4); [*Laribus / Vialibus / A(---) v(otum) s(olvit)*], Torres d’Oeste, Catoira (*Turris Augusti*) (Pontevedra) (HD 13.417; BAÑOS RODRÍGUEZ 1994, 259); [*Laribus / V[i]alibus / [-c. 2-]V[-c. 3-] / -----*; [*Larib[us] V(ialibus) p(uell) / a(ram) p(osuit) / l(ibens) m(erito)*], Santa Cruz de Frago, Xeve (Pontevedra) (HAEp 1747; today it reads: ----- / +c. 3+ / OVV / ARP / PLM / -----; BAÑOS RODRÍGUEZ 1994, 249); *L(aribus) V[i]alib(us) / de s(ua) [p(ecunia)] / A.L+ / v(oto) p(o) s(uit)*, El Grove (Pontevedra) (BAÑOS RODRÍGUEZ 1994, 281; Hep 6, 1996, 747).

⁶ *Maxu(mus) [L]ov(essi) f(ilius) La/ribus Vi(alibus) / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*, Santa Comba de Bande (Orense), formerly *Ciuitas Limicorum* (CIL II 2518); [*Laribus / [V]ialibus / [V]allius / [M]aximus / ex voto*, La Puebla de Trives (Orense) (Hep 2, 1990, 580; BERMEJO 1986, 200, n. 43: [*Laribus / [V]ialibus / Ililum / [M]aximus / [ex] voto*); *Laribus / Vialibus / Silo Sil(onis) / [p]os[uit]* Taboadela (Orense) (Hep 2, 1990, 595); *Lari(bus) Vi(alibus) / Petro(nius) / ex vo(to)*, S. Xiao de Fontefria (Orense) (HD 011.043).

⁷ *Laribus / Vialib(us) PRO(?)*, S. Martín de Besullo (Comba, Portugal) (HD 002877); *Laribus / Vialibus / Mater(nus) / Rufi / l(ibens) a(nimo) p(osuit)* (LE ROUX, TRANOY 1973, 204–205); *Val(erius) / Ruf(us) / Laribus V(ialibus) / p(osuit)*, Castelo de



Fig. 3: The Cult of the *Lares Viales* in Hispania (map: B. Díaz).

epigraphs in the Spanish provinces of Burgos, La Rioja, Cuenca, Alicante and Granada (Fig. 3).

Thus, the *Lares Viales* are documented in the north-west of the Peninsula, with most of the occurrences in the *conventus Lucensis* and, to a lesser extent, in the *Bracaraugustanus* and the *Asturum*. As well as the thirty-odd epigraphs found in the north-west, the *Lares Viales* are also found on altars in other zones of Hispania Citerior corresponding to a substratum which might be considered Hispano-Celtic. This is the case with the three inscriptions in Alemtejo in Portugal and in the Spanish province of Cáceres⁸, one of them found in Alcuéscar, where nearly twenty inscriptions dedicated to the great Celtic-Lusitanian goddess *Ataccina* have been found, in a sanctuary lying between the Lusitani, Vetones and Carpetani (ABASCAL 2002). Other occurrences have been found in Clunia (Coruña del Conde, Burgos), the capital of one of the administrative regions of the Citerior,

and Segobriga (near Saelices, Cuenca), that is to say, in two ancient cities that marked the south-eastern and north-western boundaries of Celtiberia. Other epigraphs come from Cervera del Río Alhama (Rioja), whose source is not far from Numancia and which flows into the Ebro, and San Pelayo (Álava), in the upper Ebro⁹. Just two inscriptions break the uniformity of this religious geography typical of the Hispano-Celtic world: one found near the former *Dianium*, in Alicante (where at the end of the 2nd or beginning of the 3rd century, a certain Festivos consecrated an altar *ex somnio*, as a result of a dream, in a form documented for the first time in the Iberian Peninsula), and the other in a village of Granada in the Genil valley¹⁰.

All these epigraphs are characterised by their brevity and conciseness, with just the mention of the deity in the dative and sometimes the devotees, although the usual formulae of complying with a vow are included (Fig. 4). There are two

Neiva (Museo de Braga) (HD 000068); *Larib(us) Viali/bus Fl(avius) Sa/binus v(otum) / s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*, Braga (CIL II 2417); *Laribus / Vialibus / l(ibens) p(osuit) a(nimo)*, y en la otra cara: *Laribus Popillius*, Monforte (Portalegre) (Hep 3, 1993, 487); *Laribu[s] / [V]ialibus / [...]*, en la sede de la Junta de la Fregesia de Ervedal, Avis (GARCÍA 1987, p. 56); *Laribus / [V]ialib(us)*, Coimbra. (ETIENNE, FABRE, LÉVÊQUE 1976, 32–33; according to GARCÍA –1991, 420–, the hypothetical reading is uncertain, as there very few traces of letters in l. 2).

⁸ *Laribus / [V]ialibus / l.p. // Laribus / Popillius*, Monte das Esquilas (Monforte do Alemtejo) (Encarnação, 1995, 631–634); *Laribu[s] / Vi[alibus] / -----*, Alcuéscar (Cáceres) (Hep 5, 1995, 189); *[Sa]crum [La]/ribu[s] Vi[alibu[s]]*, Valdefuentes (Cáceres)

(Hep 2, 1990, 223. In lines 4–5, the name of the dedicator, perhaps Caecilius).

⁹ *V(alerius) Rebu/r(r)us ex vi/su Larib/us Vial/ibus sa/crum / (votum) r(eddidit?) l(ibens?) m(erito?)*, Clunia (Museo Arqueológico de Burgos) (HD 12044); *L(aribus) Via(libus) Amauca pro (H)elv(i)a Marce(II)a v(otum) s(olvit)*, Segobriga (Saelices), Cuenca (AE 1903, 185; HD 31.257); *[---]Ullici / Laribus / Vialibus / v(otum) S(olvit) o solverunt l(ibens) o libentes m(erito)*, Cervera del Río Alhama (La Rioja) (CIL II 2987).

¹⁰ *Festivos(!) / Laribus / Vialibus / ex somnio / votum sol/vit*, Setla (Dianium) (Alicante) (Hep 2, 1990, 16; HD 12.299); *T(itus) Papirius / Severus / Laribus V(ialibus) v(otum) s(olvit)*, Brácana (Granada) (HD 7548).

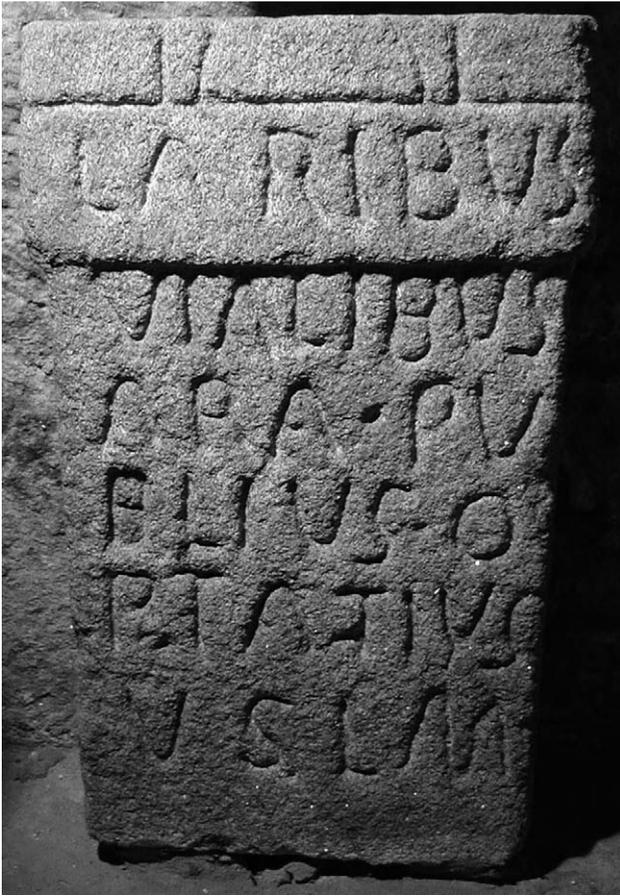


Fig. 4: Altar to the *Lares Viales* by Publius Optatius, Grava, Silleda (Pontevedra) (photo: F. Marco).

epigraphs that do not even show the names of the devotees, whose names usually correspond to individual Romanized names, but not Roman citizens. On just one epigraph the devotee, Titus Papirius Severus, has the *tria nomina*, although there is no mention of the tribe, and it is not surprising that this is the only inscription to have appeared in Baetica, in

Brácana, Granada (HD 7548). Caesanus, Gauceas, Crierus, Lovessus, Reburrus, Amauca or possibly Cloutius are indigenous anthroponyms recorded. In one case, it is indicated that the devotees of an altar found next to the city wall of Lugo (CIL II 2572), Varus and Verinianus, father and son, belonged to the 1st *centuria* of the *Gigurri*.

Outside the Peninsula, the *Lares Viales* have only been registered on very few epigraphs, found in Mauritania¹¹, *Falerii*¹² and Rome itself¹³.

The *Lares Viales* are mentioned by Plautus (*Mercator* 865) and Varro (*De ling. lat.* 6, 25), and the *Lar Vialis*, in the singular, appears in an inscription in Sarmizegetusa¹⁴, as well as being possibly documented in a copy of the protocols of the *Fratres Arvales* from the year 213, at the time of Caracalla (SCHEID 1998, 286). Especially interesting is a Romano-British inscription in Thornburgh dedicated “to the god who invented ways and paths” by two soldiers who were serving in areas with a clearly Celtic cultural influence¹⁵.

The fact is we have very few references to the ancient Latin *Lares* protecting travellers, and the same goes for the *Lares Permarini*, guardians of sailors, with hardly any occurrences in epigraphs¹⁶. These rare references to the *Lares Viales* outside the Iberian Peninsula are in marked contrast to the important role played by the *Lares Compitales*, who were venerated at crossroads (WISSOWA 1917, 170 ss.), where, as is well known, around the year 7 BC the cult of *Genius Augusti* was introduced in Rome, together with the *Lares Compitales*, converted into *Lares Augusti*, clearly the first step to the worship of the *Princeps*.

Possibly the inscription in Mainz (CIL XIII 6731) dedicated to the *Laribus / Competali / bus sive Quadrivi / alibus sac(rum)* is really directed to Celto-Germanic deities such as the *Deae Biviae, Triviae*¹⁷ and *Quadriviae* mentioned in inscriptions of *Aventicum* (Avenches)¹⁸. The cult of the *Quadriviae* is also found in Illyricum and Moesia in connection with

¹¹ Vieil Arzew –Portus Magnus–, CIL VIII 9755: [Laribus?] Vialibus Callimorphus, Liberalis Au[g]us[ti] disp[ensatoris] vi[k(arius)], very doubtful.

¹² CIL XI 3079: Laribus Compitalibus, Vialibus, Semitalibus.

¹³ CIL VI 36810–12: three altars found near the Via Portuensis are dedicated to the *Lares / Semitales*, *Lares / [C]uriales* and *Lares / Viales*, respectively. The *Lares Viatores* are attested in Narbonne: ... *sevir [Augustalis fecit(?) / C. Salius Stephanus?...] Laribus. Magnis et viator(ibus) / de suo restituit* (CIL XII 4320).

¹⁴ CIL III 1422: *Fortunae / Reduci Lari / Viali Romae / Aeternae / Q(uintus) Axius Aelia/nus v(ir) e(gregius) proc(urator) / Aug(ustorum) duorum*.

¹⁵ CIL VII, 271: *Deo qui vias / et semitas com/mentus est T(erentius) Ir/das? s(ingularis) c(onsularis) f(ecit) v(otum) l(aetus) m(erito) / Q(uintus) Varius Vita/lis [b(ene)ff(iciarius)] co(n)s(ularis) aram / sacrum resti/tuit Aproniano et Bradua co(n)s(ulibus)*.

¹⁶ Liv. 40, 52, 4; CIL XIV 4547, Ostia.

¹⁷ Diana is mentioned as *Trivia* (Verg., *Aen.*, 4, 511), and repre-

sented with a triple face at the cross-roads (*ibid.*, 7, 11; Macr., *Sat.*, 1, 9, assimilating her to Mercury). A passage of the *Acts of Saint Sinforian*, martyr of *Augustodunum* (Autun), the ancient capital of the Gaulish *Aeduï*, indicates that “Dianam quoque daemonium esse meridianum silvarum secreta perlustrans... Triviae sibi cognomen, dum triviis insidiatur, obtinuit”. And another curious passage of the life of Saint Theodor of Sycion –city of Galatia– alludes to his visit of a near place called Arkea, a cross-road that nobody could visit at noon, because it was the site where *Artemis* (the most venerated deity among the Galatians, according to Polybius, *De mulier. Virt.*, 20) terrified the travellers with her retinue of demons. Being protected by Christ, St. Theodor did not suffer the manifestations of the malign powers. I thank P. Lajoie the knowledge of both passages (about these ones, see REINACH 1904, 272–274).

¹⁸ CIL XIII 5069, 5070: *Bivis, Trivis, Quadrivis*; 11474; *Bivis, Trivis, Quadrivis*.

the *Legio XI* (KENNER 1989, 933–935), and appears in connection with the cult of *Silvanus* in the nearby sanctuary of Petronelle (the ancient *Carnuntum*). One inscription in this sanctuary gives details of how Caius Antonius Valentinus, a veteran of the *Legio XIV Gemina*, restored the walls and portico of a sanctuary dedicated “*Silvanabus et Quadribis*”¹⁹.

It seems clear that what we have here is a case of a Roman *interpretatio* of indigenous deities. *Silvanus* is associated with the *Lar Agrestis* in an inscription in *Clusium* (*CIL* VI 646), and in another one to the *Lares* (*CIL* III 3491, Budapest: [*Silva*]no domestico et Laribus). An altar in *Vindobona* (Vienna) is dedicated to *Silvanus*, the *Silvanae* and the *Quadriviae* by a signifer of the *Legio X Gemina* (*CIL* III 13497), and *Silvanus* appears with the epithet *viator* in inscriptions in Dalmatia²⁰. These extremely interesting dedications to female deities in the plural, and assimilated in their Latin expressions to crossroads or *Silvanus*, as guardians of travellers, undoubtedly constitute the “epigraphic expression” of ancestral deities. One veteran in the *ala Noricorum* consecrated an altar in Köln *Quadrivi[s] Trivis Viis Semitis*, in other words, to the deities of quadruple, triple and double crossroads and to the deities of paths (*CIL* XIII 8243), and a certain Quintus Sabinus Asclepiades dedicated another *ara* to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* and to the deities of roads and paths²¹. In Backworth (near Newcastle) a votiv offering of two silver cups was found. The bigger one contained several golden and silver rings, and one of the golden ones had the inscripción *Matr(onis) / Via(libus) C(aius) / C(ornelius) Ae(lianus)* (*CIL* VII 1299), written in letters of the 2nd. century. In the anel of the other vase (a *patera*) the epigraph *Matr(ibus) Fab(ius) / Dubit(atus)* (*CIL* III 1285) can be read. These Romano-British inscriptions clearly show, in my opinion, the nature of these goddesses: they would have been the *Matres* specifically carrying out their role of guarding and protecting those who travelled along the Romano-Celtic roads.

3. Following Cuevillas and Serpa Pinto’s proposal to consider the *Lares Viales* as indigenous deities, Lambrino suggested that the Latin *Lares* were introduced in the north-west of the Peninsula in the early 2nd century A.D. to assimilate the *numina loci*, in a syncretic process that resulted in the *Lares Viales* at the end of this century. Acuña Castroviejo has suggested a similar explanation, as have Alarcão, Etienne and Fabre. These authors have stated that the worship of the *Lares*, introduced by the *Flavii* in these barely Romanized north-western areas which steadfastly held on

to their Celtic traditions, “smothered the Celtic religion as it was, and its barbaric nature disappeared under the cloak of the *Lares*” (1969, 231). This would have been an ambiguous process, since “it was especially in the provinces and among their inhabitants that the concept of *Lares* or *Penates*, a precise concept in Roman thinking, took on, accompanied by the epithet *patrii*, its broadest, vaguest meaning, that of a protective deity, and came close to concepts such as *Genius*, *Tutela*, *Fortuna*, *Numen*, an indication of how Roman vocabulary was not really suited to indigenous deities” (*ibid.*, 233). The *Lares Viales* were the final evolution (2nd and 3rd centuries) of the topic *Lares* or the *Lares* of the *gentilitates* bearing indigenous epithets (LAMBRINO 233; ALARCÃO, ETIENNE, FABRE 1969, 227), while TRANOY (1981, 323) and PORTELA (1986) maintain that it was the higher degree of Romanization (an argument certainly questionable) of the *Callaicia Lucensis* – the area where these dedications are mostly attested – the reason for a direct replacement here of the old topic deities by the *Lares Viales*, without a secondary stadium characterised by the expression of the traditional gods such as the *Lares* with indigenous epithets. The question was revisited by J.C. Bermejo, who maintained that the cult of these deities went through two different stages: firstly a pre-Roman stage, involving deities of dominant groups in the north-west, and a second stage in which these old indigenous deities, probably Celtic, took the Latin name under which they appeared on the inscriptions and were downgraded to the category of popular deities, belonging to a “folk” culture (1986, 208). MANGAS (1983) was inclined towards a “pre-Celtic” god as the one assimilated to the *Viales*. More recently, PRÓSPER (2002, 277–281) has pointed to *Bandua* as the (Callaico-Lusitanian) god whose cult originated in the *Callaicia Lucensis*, that is after our *Lares Viales*, explaining the **bandu-* theme after **gwemt-tu-*, “passage, pass, ford”, which has semantic equivalences in Celtic in the toponyms formed upon the element *-ritum* (*Augustoritum*, *Lacoritum*, *Tadoritum*, etc.).

We have certain information that seems to reinforce the theory of the indigenous nature of deities expressed in epigraphs using these Latin theonyms. Without doubt, the most consistent information comes from Latin epigraphs with numerous mentions of *Lares* with epithets and indigenous dedicators in the same areas as the *Viales* are documented in. Particularly interesting here is the coastal sanctuary at Facho de Donón (Pontevedra), where several dozen inscriptions dedicated to a deity, *Deus Lariberus Berus Breus*, have appeared with variations in the expression of the components

¹⁹ *CIL* III 4441: *Silvanab(us) et Quadribis Augustis sac(rum) C(aius) Antonius Valentinus vet(eranus) leg(ionis) XIII G(eminae) murum a fundamentis cum suo introito et porticum cum accubito vetustate conlabsum impendio suo restituit Gentiano et Basso co(n)s(ulibus)*.

²⁰ *CIL* III 13202–13207, Urlike Strazine: *S(ilvano) V(iatori) S(acrum)* (TÓTH 1980).

²¹ *CIL* III 5524, Taurach (Radstad), Enns: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / et viis semit / ibusque / pro salute sua / Q(uintus) Sabinius / Asclepiades / v(otum) l(ibens) m(erito)* Museum of Salzburg.

of the theonym (FARIÑA BUSTO and SUÁREZ OTERO 2002; Koch 2005). Sometimes the family group which these deities protect is specified: *Lares Gapeticorum gentilitatis*, on an inscription from La Oliva (Cáceres) (CIL II 804), and *Lares Lubanc(i) Dovilonicor(um) horum, Albui(us) Cama[li] f(ilius) sacr(um)*, from Conimbriga. This altar is dedicated, I believe – and here I agree with J. Heurgon – to the *Lares* of “these *Dovilonici*”, that is to say, the ones who settled in the area of *Conimbriga*, implying that there were other branches living elsewhere, rather than the interpretation of ALARCÃO, ETIENNE and FABRE (1967), who suggest an elliptical *Laribus* in front of the word, *horum*, or the interpretation of BELTRÁN LLORIS (1992), who relates *horum* with the names of the dedicator which follows in the text.

These *Lares* with indigenous epithets and the *Lares Viales* are the counterpoint²² of the Roman *Lares* and the *Lares Augustales*, found in the much more Romanised cities of *Tarraconensis* (especially the capital) and particularly *Baetica* (map in Alarcão, Etienne y Fabre, 1969, 226).

Mentovicus, mentioned on two altars in Zamora (*HAE* 5–6, 1955–57, n. 886; *EE* 8, 407), was rather riskily interpreted as a deity protecting roads and journeys in general by BLÁZQUEZ (1961, 107–108, who suggested that the theonym was formed by *mens* and *via*, plus the suffix *-acus*. Another possible indigenous deity of the roads in Celtic Hispania was, in the opinion of VAN TASSEL GRAVES (1965, 171), the *Lugoves* mentioned on an *ara* in San Esteban de Gormaz (CIL II 2818) dedicated by a *collegium sutorum*, a shoemakers’ guild whose activity was certainly related to travellers, as well as in five inscriptions dedicated *Lugovibus Arquienis, Lucubo Arquienobo, Lucobo Arousa(bo) or Luc(obo) Gudarovis* (?) attested in the area of *Lucus Augusti*, that is, in the area where the cult of the *Lares Viales* is more intense (MARCO SIMÓN 2006).

As well as this information on Latin epigraphs, we also have another very interesting source, this time in the literary context, on the indigenous culture from which our *Lares Viales* emerge. Strabo stated that the *Cantabri* and other peoples in the north “place their sick on the roads, as the Egyptians used to do, for them to be cured by those who had suffered the same illness” (3, 3, 7). The religious nature of an indigenous custom interpreted in rational terms by Strabo has been shown by Lomas Salmonte, among others, suggesting that the placing of the sick on roads sought to safeguard the social group and transfer the illness outside the territory to some inanimate object, animal or person (1975, 65).

The famous text by Caesar about Mercury – that is to say, the Gallic deity assimilated to him – is well-known as being the most venerated god among the Gauls: “*Deorum maxime*

Mercurium colunt. Huius sunt plurima simulacra; hunc omnium inventorem artium ferunt, hunc viarum atque itinerum ducem, hunc ad quaestus pecuniae mercaturaeque habere vim maximam arbitrantur” (*BG* 6, 17). In fact, this is a deity that looks after roads and paths. The epigraphs and iconography certainly confirm Caesar’s observation, and one of the typical epithets for Mercury in Gaul was *Viator*, like *Silvanus* as I said earlier. There is a dominant current among historians that considers that Caesar’s Mercury is a Latin *interpretatio* of the pan-Celtic *Lugus*: *Lug* appears in Irish texts as having many skills (*samhildánach*). Based on this historiographically well-known association between Mercury and *Lugus* from D’Arbois de Juainville onwards (see MARCO SIMÓN 1986, 737–738; STERCKX 1998, 98–101), it has been suggested (BERMEJO 1986, 195, following VAN TASSEL GRAVES, 1965) that behind the road guardian *Lares* of the Hispanic north-west might be the *Lugoves* found on the previously mentioned Celtiberian stone of San Esteban de Gormaz and on others in the same zone of the *Conventus Lucensis* where there are more frequent appearances of Latin epigraphs dedicated to the *Lares Viales*.

Other data from later periods confirm the important role that roads or crossroads still played in popular religion after the arrival of Christianity. Saint Martin Dumienis, the 6th-century A.D. bishop of Braga, wrote in his work, *De correctione rusticorum*, sent to Polemius, bishop of Astorga, a city which belonged to his diocese, about the religious aspect of roads: “*Mulieres in tela sua Minerva nominare et Veneris diem in nuptiae observare et quo die in via exeatur, adtendere*” (*De corr. rust.* 16, 4 ss.), and emphasised the execrably diabolical custom of lighting candles at crossroads (“*Nam ad petras et ad arbores et ad fontes et per triuia cereolos incendere, quid est aliud nisi cultura diaboli?*”, *ibid.* 16), and in recent Galician folklore, crossroads are still a place for magic cures (as shown by TABOADA CHIVITE 1975, 108–110) and a typical location for the integration and separation of members of a social group, where collective welcomes to migrants or farewells to those leaving to do their military service take place (BERMEJO 1986, 230, based on information from Vázquez Varela). Martin of Dumio himself also reported the custom of throwing stones at certain points on the roads as an offering to a deity which he called Mercury: “(Mercurio) homines transeuntes iactatis lapidibus acervos petrarum pro sacrificio reddunt” (*De corr. rust.* 7, 17). And we know that in various locations in Europe, podomorphic objects were left at crossroads or hung from trees, in late mediaeval popular religious rituals opposed by the Christian authorities (GIORDANO 1995, 184, 192).

²² The *Lares Callaeciarum* mentioned in a dedication by Saturninus, the liberal procurator of *Asturia* and *Gallaecia* at the time of Augustus (*Hep* 8, 2002, 337) are a different case and reveal in my opinion a Roman plural divine personality, as well as Roman is the historical reality known as *Callaecia* (PEREIRA MENAUT 1983).

4. Graeco-Latin literature has relatively abundant examples of the importance of appeasing the gods during a journey. Sophocles' heroine (*Electra* 67) invokes the gods of the place she finds herself in, as well as those of her distant homeland. Xenon's papyrus, *Lond.* 2666, said that the custom of sacrificing to the local gods was to be found everywhere. The traveller would, on arrival, venerate the local gods as well as Zeus the hospitable (Lucian, *Amores* 6), and in the Roman Empire, the head of a body of Roman soldiers would always pay homage to the gods of the country in which the garrison found itself (NOCK 1972, 741): this is the reason for the frequent dedications by soldiers to the *genii locorum*. Just as an indigenous person would Hellenise or Romanise himself by going to the *gymnasium* or the baths, or by learning rhetoric, without giving up his ancestral gods, so a Roman would venerate the indigenous gods of the country he was visiting. This, as Veyne points out, might explain an apparent paradox: the epigraphic dedications to indigenous gods were often made more by Romans than the natives; this was the case with the dedications of the soldiers in Germania to the local *Matres* or *Matronae* (VEYNE 1989, 184). Veyne drew attention to a new type of piety in the Imperial era, which was shown by sitting in front of the gods and frequenting the temples. In the former case, travellers would pause on their journey, and there was a whole genre of epigrams advising travellers of what route to follow and the rural sanctuaries to make a pause (1989, 180). There were individuals who, out of kindness, would make small private and rural sanctuaries available to travellers (Apul. *Anthol.* 16, 249, etc.). The importance of *Hermes* as a god who protected travellers was well known in the Greek world.

Through *interpretatio*, as has been rightly stated (GIRARD 1980, 26), two dangers were avoided: that of upsetting – through neglect – the gods of the various areas in which the control of Rome was being exercised, and that of introducing new gods into the pantheon of a conservative city that was wary of the influence of foreign deities. Especially with soldiers, in view of the constant dangers they were exposed to in the activities they carried out in areas far from their homes, it is not surprising that they would try to appease the gods of the places they were serving in (one only has to remember the military patronage of sanctuaries to indigenous deities, such as *Coventina* in Carrawburgh or *Sulis* in Bath), and the same went for traders (with dedications to deities such as *Nehalennia*).

I hope these lines have been useful in drawing attention to the interest of two similar processes of *interpretatio* of indigenous deities identified with the gods of roads within the extreme confines of the Romano-Celtic world (the *Lares Viales* at the western limit of the Empire, and the *Dii Itinerarii*, *Itunus* and *Ituna* at the border of Pannonia with *Barbaricum*), together with the examples mentioned of gods of roads

and crossroads, which seem to have been commonly found in various areas of the Romano-Celtic world.

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