

## An Empire of Cities: Urbanization and Roman Rule in Second Century BCE Iberia

One of the key issues facing historians studying Roman imperialism generally, and Republican imperialism in particular, is a lack of administrative records, correspondences, inventories, or court records that historians studying other, especially modern, empires have. Consequently, it is harder for ancient historians to unearth details about the processes and structures within the Republic's imperial state. To circumvent this obstacle, Roman historians have tended to concentrate on questions about Rome's motives for expansion, why it successfully expanded, or what were the consequences of this expansion. Accordingly, we understand a great deal about why the Republic expanded and how the city-state responded to the challenges of empire but very little about how this Republican imperial state was actually created or maintained.

In this presentation, I will highlight how using the GIS can help us mitigate some of the obstacles stemming from the fragmentary historical record. Specifically, I employ the digital mapping software alongside data amassed by projects such as *Barrington Atlas*, *Pleiades*, *The Digital Atlas of Roman and Medieval Civilizations*, and the *Tabula Imperii Romani* to investigate the creation and perpetuation of ancient polities. Using data from these resources I have mapped Iberia's urbanization from the ninth through the first centuries BCE. Analyzing these maps reveals a clear pattern of increased urbanization over time, with a very significant increase taking place between the late fourth and the end of the first century BCE. These maps also make it clear that for the latter period there is a need for a series of maps with greater chronological density, i.e. a series of maps with a shorter amount of time between them. By further refining and expanding on the data used to produce the initial maps, it becomes possible to use GIS to throw

the relationship between the urbanization of Iberia and Roman expansion as well as the construction of the Republic's imperial state into sharper relief. These maps ultimately illustrate that the Republican imperial state was built on the relationship between local urban communities and Rome, a relationship that facilitated the Republic's control over space and peoples. Without a doubt, digital tools such as GIS, with their ability to use existing evidence in new ways and to look for patterns, providing ancient historians a new pathway for understanding the ancient world and its inhabitants. This is especially the case for analyzing the intersection of imperialism and urbanization since it readily lends itself to mapping.