

Romans, Italians and Natives and the origins of the Catalan wine industry in the first and second centuries B.C.

The extent and character of the Romanization of the Spanish provinces during the first and second centuries B.C. has long been the subject of considerable debate. The debate is often focused on the appearance of certain ‘Roman’ or Italian archetypes: rural and urban settlement, architecture, epigraphy and language for example, and whether or not these are prompted by native acculturation or the Italian and Roman immigration to the Peninsula. The goal of this paper is to consider the potential of amphora epigraphy as an indicator of Romanization.

The earliest amphorae produced in Catalunya are imitations of Italian Dr. 1 forms. From the middle of the first century B.C. these were replaced by a new form, classified as Laietana 1 or Tarraconense 1 amphorae and modeled closely on their Italian Dr. 1 prototypes. Although amphora stamps are rare on the earliest Dr. 1 imitations, both Latin and native names have been found. Stamps on Tarraconense 1 are more common and show increasing numbers of Latin names. Monserrat Comas i Solà (1998) and others have suggested that the appearance of Latin names points to an influx of Italian settlers into the region c. 50 B.C. Although quickly superseded by the more numerous and better studied Pascual 1 amphorae of the Augustan period, this paper will reconsider the value of the earliest Catalan amphorae. The paper contends that by reviewing the incidence of Roman, Italian and native epigraphy on local Dr. 1 and Tarraconense 1 amphorae we can better understand the extent and nature of Romanization in the region during the first and second B.C. – a period that remains both problematic and obscure in the history of Roman Iberia.

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