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## Hellenistic Influences in Iberian Sculpture

Our knowledge about the Iberian culture, especially about Iberian religion and history is very limited. Before the Second Punic War there are only very few references in Greek and Roman literature to the Iberian Peninsula, and in any case, little can be learned by them. Iberian epigraphy belongs mainly to late Hellenistic times. The short texts, written in local alphabets, can be read but not understood. Therefore, almost everything we can know about Iberian culture relies on the archaeological documentation, on the interpretation of the monuments and, if available, of their contexts<sup>1</sup>.

What archaeology calls the Iberian culture is in reality a mosaic of different local cultures within a period from the early 6<sup>th</sup> to the late 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. These regional cultures present common aspects like forms of pottery, architectural structures of houses and settlements, weapon, language and sculpture. All together, this evidence reflects an area in the South and in the East of the Iberian Peninsula with unsharp borders towards the West<sup>2</sup>.

Nevertheless, this "Iberian area" is a modern construction: Not all of the mentioned material do cover the same period of time nor the same geographical area. For example, the sculpture in the round is – with a very few exceptions – only present in the South-East of the peninsula<sup>3</sup>. The same can be said about the datation: most of the Iberian sculptures are to be dated in the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Only a few sites present sculptures of bigger scale in the Hellenistic period, in the time from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the late 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC.

Before we enter the subject of the sculptures of the Hellenistic time, we shall have a look back to the beginnings in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. As far as the archaeological documentation allows such statement, this is the time of the first sculptural monuments. At least, our first two chronological fix points are to be dated in this period: The tower monument of Pozo Moro (Albacete)<sup>4</sup>, and the first horseman of Los Villares (Albacete)<sup>5</sup>. Both are grave monuments from the Province of Albacete. Both monuments, located in short distance to each other, are dated by imported material, specially by Greek pottery, found inside or under the monuments.

<sup>1</sup> For a general introduction: SOCIEDAD IBÉRICA 1992; KOCH 1998; BLECH 2001. For the Iberian epigraphy: KOCH 1998, 207–19; UNTERMANN 1990; UNTERMANN 2001.

<sup>2</sup> KOCH 1998, maps on p. 38, 56–7; JAEggi 1999, map 1.

<sup>3</sup> For the Iberian sculpture in general see: CHAPA BRUNET 1985; CHAPA BRUNET 1986; RUANO RUIZ, 1987; BENDALA GALÁN *ET AL.* 1994; KOCH 1998, 169–87; JAEggi 1999, 96–142 map 16 (distribution); BLECH 2001, 451–59.

<sup>4</sup> For Pozo Moro, now reconstructed in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid see: ALMAGRO GORBEA 1983; OLMOS 1996; JAEggi 1999, 212 nrs. 89–91 fig. 42 pl. 8; BLECH 2001, 452, 615–18 figs. 187a, 187b, 248b, 248d pls. 212–14.

<sup>5</sup> For the earlier of the two horsemen from Los Villares: BLÁNQUEZ PÉREZ 1994, 91–4 pl. 3a, 4; JAEggi 1999, 212 nr. 92 pl. 8; BLECH 2001, 453, 612–13 pl. 207.

In difference of what occurs in Greece with statues like the Dame d'Auxerre and the so called Daedalian sculpture, there is no evidence in the Iberian Peninsula for a slow process of monumentalization. There are no links between the sculptures of small and big dimensions before the early 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Therefore, the development took the step from small to large scale in a very short period, something what in our opinion can only be explained by an inner socio-economic development of the Iberian societies: we could imagine, for example, that trade and related economic activities created wealth and a very well structured society with the arise of a new, powerful and self-confident elite<sup>6</sup>. This new Iberian aristocracy might have felt the need of new media for self-representation. And this need was fulfilled by the sculptures of big scale carved in local limestone.

The sculptures from this early period show stylized or schematized forms and very carefully carved details. The proportions of the bodies are often exaggerated and the perspective is simplified, as can show one of the reliefs from Pozo Moro with a warrior<sup>7</sup>: He seems to be fighting against a non-preserved enemy to the left, standing on enormous legs. Legs, arms and head are shown in profil, the body in frontal view. In similar way, disproportions emphasize the head and feet of the horsemen from Los Villares, as well as the head of his horse. The face of the first horseman from Los Villares is marked by very fine, precisely carved elements, looking like isolated formulae. The hair is rendered as ornamental bands.

Already in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC., the Iberian sculpture is very well developed and surprises by high technical and artistic standards, as two examples from this period may illustrate: The famous group of two warriors from Porcuna, a site in the Province of Jaén (Andalusia)<sup>8</sup>, and one of the Iberian sphinxes, from Agost (Alicante)<sup>9</sup>. The sphinx was most probably a grave monument distinguishing and at the same time protecting the burial. The warriors from the Cerrillo Blanco near Porcuna stood probably as donation in a sanctuary<sup>10</sup>. It's a complex and highly dynamic composition of a warrior who holds his horse and shield with the left hand and rams his spear with the right hand into the face of the defeated warrior on the floor. With his left foot he steps on the hand of this wounded enemy.

The surprisingly high quality and the advanced technique of the sculptures from Porcuna, as well as the iconography of the sphinx and some stylistic elements were the subject of a long discussion about the Greek influences and the relation between Greek and Iberian culture. Long time, scholars thought that emigrated Greek artists had collaborated with their Iberian colleagues or that the latter had been formed by Greeks<sup>11</sup>. Another long discussed question is about the presence of Greek colonists in coastal areas of Spain and their possible influence in the local cultures. But there is little archaeological evidence for a Greek presence or Greek colonization at the shores of the Iberian Peninsula. Only two small Greek settlements in the extreme North-East – Ampurias and Rhode – are confirmed by archaeology<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, the Greek-looking Iberian sculptures seem not to be the result of an intensive direct contact, but rather an adaptation by the indigenous culture of Greek elements, maybe imported by small objects, brought by international trade to the coasts.

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<sup>6</sup> See: KOCH 2001, 258–82; BLECH 2001, 451–59.

<sup>7</sup> ALMAGRO GORBEA 1983, pl. 23b; BLECH 2001, 213b.

<sup>8</sup> Jaén, Museo Arqueológico: GONZÁLEZ NAVARRETE 1987, 47–9 nr. 5, 67 nr. 8; NEGUERUELA MARTÍNEZ 1990, 63–71 nr. 4, 71-6 nr. 5, drawings 6-13 fig. 30 pls. 18-22; KOCH 1998, 186–87, 255 nr. 18; JAEGGI 1999, 104–5, 213 nr. 101 fig. 43 pl. 12; BLECH 2001, 457, 623 fig. 193 pl. 222a; JAEGGI 2007, 30–3 fig. 1. For the sculptures from Porcuna see also: OLMOS 2004; OLMOS 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional: GARCÍA Y BELLIDO 1971 56 fig. 78; CHAPA BRUNET 1986, 115–16 nr. 194 fig. 3,1; BLECH 2001, 455 fig. 191a; OLMOS ROMERA 1992, 97.

<sup>10</sup> It is not clear whether the sculptures from the Cerrillo Blanco belonged to a sanctuary or to a necropolis. Though in our opinion, the sculpture of a man holding two rams as offerings is a strong argument for the first possibility, NEGUERUELA MARTÍNEZ 1990, 242–44 nr. 30.

<sup>11</sup> About this question: JAEGGI 1999, 105–10 (with examples and bibliography); BLECH 2001, 455–59; JAEGGI 2007.

<sup>12</sup> DOMÍNGUEZ 1991; ROUILLARD 1991; KOCH 1998, 62–3; BLECH 2001, 427–37.

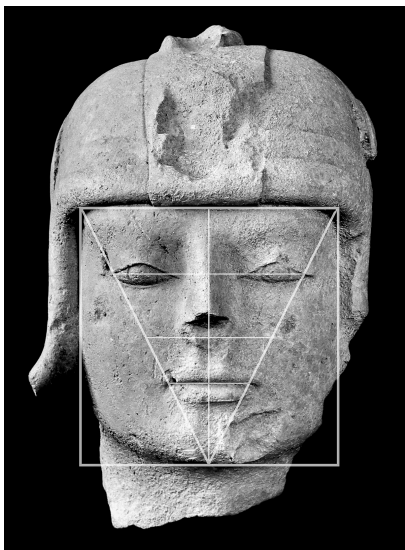


Fig. 1 – Head of a warrior from the Cerrillo Blanco (Porcuna, Prov. Jaén), Jaén, Museo Arqueológico (modified from BLECH 2001, pl. 221 (P. Witte); NEGUERUELA MARTÍNEZ 1990, pl. 54 (drawing)).

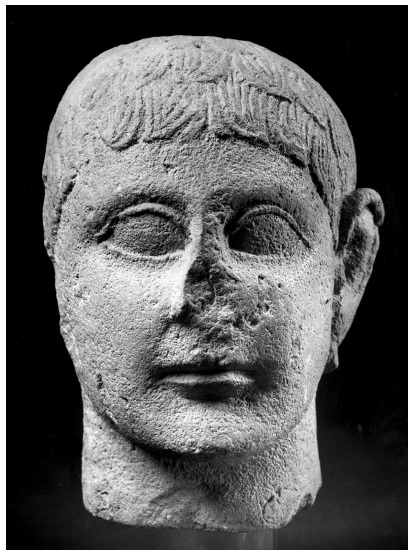


Fig. 2 – Head from the Cerro de los Santos (Montealegre del Castillo, Prov. Albacete), Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional (7586) (after JAECCI 1999, nr. 107 pl. 14 (neg. German Archaeological Institut, R 45-94-10, P. Witte)).

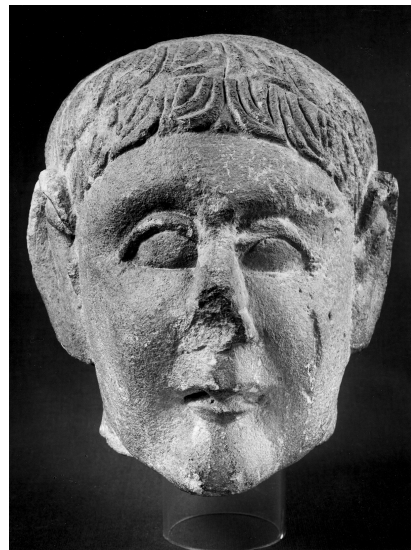


Fig. 3 – Head from the Cerro de los Santos, Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional (7587) (after JAECCI 1999, nr. 108 pl. 15 (neg. German Archaeological Institut, R 123-93-1, P. Witte)).

A closer look to the style of these sculptures confirms that they were carved by Iberian, local craftsmen: The only preserved head from the site of Porcuna shows a very simplified, schematic face with stiff expression<sup>13</sup>. Eyes, nose and mouth are rendered as formulae and distributed over the almost rectangular face according to a geometric construction (fig. 1).

The sphinx from Agost turns its head in a right angle to its body, but there are no movements of muscles visible. Body, neck and head are not perceived as an organic unity. In our opinion, both examples show clearly that no Greek artist was involved in these works.

In conclusion we can say that the Greek elements are assimilated and become part of the local aesthetic. These sculptures of large scale are the most remarkable aspect of the self presentation of the locale elites. Therefore these monuments express clear messages that could be understood by everybody living in that time in these regions. Nevertheless, for us, today, it's very difficult to understand these messages due to the lack of written sources. We have no texts that could explain us the names of gods, heroes and mythical creatures, nor the stories of fights and the myths. For the modern spectators, it's very difficult to guess what might have been the Iberian names and meanings of creatures like centaurs and sphinxes. The iconographies "travel", but not so the original contents. Neither do we know about the sculptors. We ignore their names and we don't know where they might have learned their art.

After the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC., the Iberian sculpture disappears as important medium for self-presentation from most of the sites. There are only a few sites with sculptures of high artistic quality in the Hellenistic period. Without any doubt, the most important is the Cerro de los Santos in the Province of Albacete with hundreds of sculptures of devotees, to be dated from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. (figs. 2-5; 8)<sup>14</sup>.

These offerings represent their donors, who are, in form to their statue, present permanently in the sanctuary and permanently placed under the protection of the worshipped divinity. In analogy to Greece, we may suppose that the sanctuary was also a place where the elites could exhibit social or political status.

<sup>13</sup> Jaén, Museo Arqueológico: GONZÁLEZ NAVARRETE 1987, 29 nr. 1; NEGUERUELA MARTÍNEZ 1990, 49–56 nr. 1 pls. 1-11, 54; KOCH 1998, 253 nr. 16; JAECCI 1999, 213, 104 nr. 99 pl. 11; BLECH 2001, 623 pl. 221; JAECCI 2007, 30–1 fig. 2.

<sup>14</sup> For the sculptures of the Cerro de los Santos see: RUIZ BREMÓN 1986; RUANO RUIZ 1988; RUIZ BREMÓN 1989; NOGUERA CELDRÁN 1994; JAECCI 1999, 111–22; 213–14 nrs. 103-12 pls. 12-16; BLECH 2001, 625–26 pls. 224, 228b. 229a, 232, 233; TRUSZKOWSKI 2006.



Fig. 4 – Head from the Cerro de los Santos, Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional (D-103-42) (after JAEGGI 1999, nr. 109 pl. 15 (neg. German Archaeological Institut, R 119-93-9, P. Witte)).

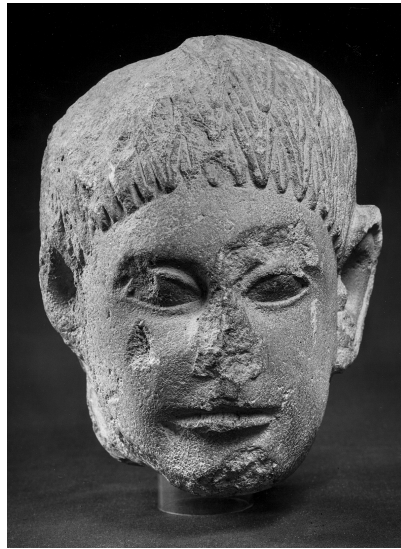


Fig. 5 – Head from the Cerro de los Santos, Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional (7513) (after JAEGGI 1999, nr. 110 pl. 16 (neg. German Archaeological Institut, R 106-94-13, P. Witte)).

Therefore, such sculptures could have had not only religious but also social and maybe even political functions and meanings.

The female votives are best represented by the so called *Gran Dama* offerente, a sculpture of about 1m 40 centimeters height and probably created in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>15</sup> Despite of this late datation, the *Dama* shows still very stylized forms with ornamentalized details. She stands still in a very stiff pose and holds a cup with her hands. Her face presents isolated formulae with big sized eyes – a composition that recalls the head from *Porcuna* and the style of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. There are no external influences visible, nor Greek nor Italic elements.

Unfortunately, there are no entire male sculptures preserved, but we do have a group of several intact heads, all of them of underlife-size (figs. 2-5)<sup>16</sup>. In difference of the female sculptures, the male heads of the same period show clearly new models, specially new hair-dresses: the hair is rendered as compact mass, fit tightly to the head like a cap. The curls are indicated with notched lines and recall clearly the hair-dress of models from Italy.



Very similar forms of curls and hair-dresses can be found on terracotta votive heads from Etruscan sanctuaries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>17</sup>, as may illustrate an example from *Cerveteri* (fig. 6)<sup>18</sup>. Many of them look very similar, some are made from the same mould, but differentiated after by adding some wrinkles. A good example offer two votive-heads from *Cerveteri*: though they are made by the same mould, one shows added wrinkles and a short, picked beard, the other a

Fig. 6 – Etruscan votivehead from Cerveteri, Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco (13973) (after HAFNER 1966/67, pl. 6,1, 6,2).

<sup>15</sup> Museo Arqueológico 3500: JAEGGI 1999, 114–15. 213–14 nr. 103 pls. 12-13; BLECH 2001, 625 fig. 252; TRUSZKOWSKI 2006, 97 nr. 54 pl. 30.

<sup>16</sup> See these four heads as examples: Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional 7513; 7586; 7587; D-103-42: JAEGGI 1999, 115–18, 214 nrs. 107-10 pl. 14-16. TRUSZKOWSKI 2006, 233, 239, 248 nrs. 258 F1, 277 F19, 315 G18, 318 G21 pls. 100, 103, 106.

<sup>17</sup> See for these heads in general with a few selected examples in the plates: HAFNER 1966/67, pls. 5,2, 6,1, 6,2, 10, 18; STEINGRÄBER 1980, pls. 69,4, 80,1.

<sup>18</sup> Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 13973: HAFNER 1966/67, 31 pl. 6,1, 6,2.

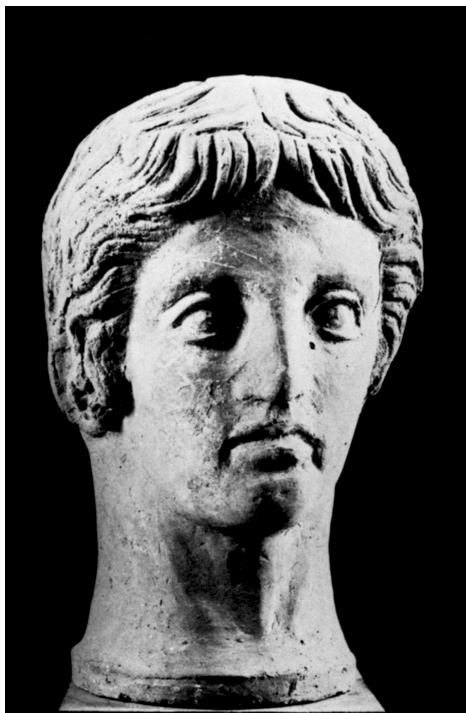


Fig. 7 – Etruscan votivehead from Cerveteri, Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco (13852) (after STEINGRÄBER 1980, pl. 70,1).

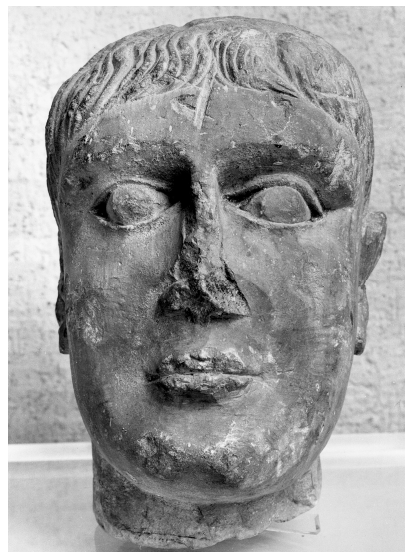


Fig. 8 – Head from the Cerro de los Santos, Albacete, Museo Arqueológico Provincial (7573) (after JAECCI 1999, nr. 111 pl. 16 (neg. German Archaeological Institut, R 9-79-1, P. Witte)).

smooth face (fig. 7)<sup>19</sup>. Such terracotta heads reached also the Iberian Peninsula as trade objects<sup>20</sup>, and influenced even the local production of terracotta votive heads<sup>21</sup>.

Coming back to the sculptures from the Cerro de los Santos, another fact is striking: even though all these heads show similar formulae for the eyes, mouth, ears, hair-dress, each head is clearly different: Some may show bigger eyes (fig. 2; 3), while others present eyes that stand very close together (fig. 3).

In our opinion, without going too far, we could see it as an effort to differentiate

one sculpture from another, with a very similar procedure as we have seen in the case of the Etruscan heads. Though we shouldn't talk about individualization, we can value these differences

as a new, more personal link between the offering and the donor, something that in later times is reinforced by inscriptions with the name of the donor. Despite the clear iconographical influences, the severe looking style with its stylized forms and additive composition of single formulae of eyes and ears looks still very local, according to the Iberian tradition and aesthetic.

Only in the latest period of life of the sanctuary the style changes also. A good example offers a head from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. in the Archaeological Museum of Albacete presenting a round, soft face with big round eyes and an 'Italic' hair-dress (fig. 8)<sup>22</sup>. Its curls are not rendered anymore as ornamentalized forms, but look rather like a freehand design. Nothing recalls the schematized forms of the Iberian style of previous centuries.

Unfortunately, there are no entire statues with body and head preserved, but the sculpture of a so called togatus may give an impression how the bodies under the Ibero-Italic heads might have looked like. In addition to its toga it wears even a partly preserved inscription in Latin with the name of the donor: probably „Licinius“<sup>23</sup>. All together, these statues look now almost as provincial Italic creations, and as the inscriptions reflect, their donor even adopted the new language, Latin, and probably a Latin name. The Cerro de los Santos is not an isolated case, as demonstrate the sculptures of "togati" from different sites in the South-East of the Peninsula<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 13852; 13854: HAFNER 1966/67, 39 pl. 10,1, 10,2; STEINGRÄBER 1980, 219 fn. 29, 232 pl. 70,1, 70,2.

<sup>20</sup> See as an example a head in Ampurias, Museo Monográfico 271: BLECH 1993a, 253 pl. 10a; JAECCI 1999, 139, 217 nr. 130 pl. 22.

<sup>21</sup> BLECH 1993a, 99 pl. 17; BLECH 1993b; KOCH 1998, 188–89; JAECCI 1999, 138–40, 217 nrs. 126–32 pl. 22.

<sup>22</sup> Albacete, Museo Arqueológico 7573: NOGUERA CELDRÁN 1994, 96–102 nr. 18-M0 pl. 30-3; JAECCI 1999, 118–20, 214 nr. 111 pl. 16; TRUSZKOWSKI 2006, 253 nr. 332 H1 pl. 109.

<sup>23</sup> NOGUERA CELDRÁN 1994, 118–21 nr. 26-MO.

<sup>24</sup> RUIZ BREMÓN 1986; HERTEL 1993, 39–40; TRILLMICH 1993, 265–66 fig. 114 pl. 27a; NOGUERA CELDRÁN 1994, 109–44 nrs. 25-MO - 45-MO pls. 52-72; ARCE ET AL. 1997, 395 nr. 188.

In conclusion we may say that there is a clear difference between the period of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. where the local elites assimilated some Greek elements, but developed their own and original aesthetic. The works of this period, even those with imported iconographies, express local contents that are difficult for us to understand. In contrast to this, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries, the regional aristocracies choose new, Italic models, at least for the male sculptures. The Cerro de los Santos sculptures present a new aesthetic of political power that is obviously inspired by the growing political and economical presence of Rome. This adoption of new models should not be misunderstood as a sign of submission, at the contrary: Italic models seemed to be up-to-date in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. and suited to express thoughts of "local" power and high social position. Nevertheless, in the later period of the sanctuary, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC., the use of toga and Latin cannot be seen as a merely fashion-suited choice, but do reflect the Roman domination and the new political situation in the East and South of the Peninsula. The readiness of part of the local elites to adopt new models, a new aesthetic and even a new language contributed to the fast Romanization of the eastern and southern parts of the Peninsula and to the creation of the first provincial culture in the expanding Roman Empire<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> For the romanization see: BLECH 1993a; ARCE ET AL. 1997; NÜNNERICH-ASMUS 1999; LUIK 2005; JAEggi 1999, 12–15. 181–96.

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