

A Roman in Name Only: An Onomastic Study of Cultural Assimilation and Integration in Roman Spain

Dustin Cranford (The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, NC, USA)

Abstract: *This paper studies the evolution of naming practices in Roman Spain as way to measure the limits of Romanization and determine the persistence of the indigenous culture. Onomastic evidence suggests that the indigenous population actively integrated itself into the Roman culture on its own terms, taking and leaving aspects of the Roman nomenclature at will in order to display romanitas, or Romanness. Upon close inspection, the names of many Hispano-Romans reveal a population that exhibited volition and agency in the process of Romanization. Variations in Roman naming components (e.g. voting tribes, filiations, tria nomina, etc.) show a selective adoption of the Roman nomenclature, while indigenous stems point to the persistence of many aspects of the indigenous culture. While there are many definitions and theories to Romanization, this study adopts what Leonard Curchin has described as the Integration Model, where the exchange between the Roman and indigenous culture produces a third, hybrid culture, or a provincial culture. Naming customs in Roman Spain point to the emergence of this provincial culture, one that adopted many features of Roman society, but equally preserved aspects of native Iberian customs. This study will explore various aspects of this topic, including the history of Roman Spain, the various parts of Roman nomenclature, and the actual onomastic evidence found in the Spanish provinces. To accomplish this goal, this paper will draw upon significant epigraphic evidence consisting of funerary and magisterial dedications, ranging from the second century BCE into the early third century CE.*