A Roman in Name Only

Spain is a perfect example of how a province’s indigenous culture can persist and even reassert itself within the framework of Romanization, specifically in the realm of nomenclature. This study will show that indigenous naming customs persisted, despite the abundance of Roman and names, which would otherwise denote a deep degree of Romanization. A local elite, for example, might take the names of his patron, completely mirroring the nomen, cognomen, and voting tribe. This same elite’s son might then replace or add a name of the more the indigenous variety, such as a patronymic, matronymic, or toponymic. Throughout the Principate, the Roman nomenclature, being so precise and rigid in its early form, would gradually be watered down throughout the provinces. Over time, the indigenous naming customs gradually reassumed prominence, with Celtic or Iberian nomenclature masked by Latinized forms. These practices eventually took the forms of a cultural hybrid, a mixture of both indigenous and Roman, which is characteristic of provincial cultures. By studying the evolution of the naming process in several Spanish cities via the use of inscriptions from the onset of the Principate through the Flavian dynasty, it will be possible to observe the development of cultural identity and solidarity in Spain under Roman rule.

This study will use several compilations and databases of Latin inscriptions found throughout Spain. The prime source for this study is the *Onomasticon Provinciarum Europae Latinarum* (OPEL), which is a catalogue of nomina and cognomina found in the former Roman provinces. The OPEL also lists the inscriptions where the names are found, which introduces the *Corpus Inscriptionem Latinarum* (CIL), a compilation of inscriptions, to this study. Furthermore, Richard Knapp has written *Latin Inscriptions of Central Spain*, which is an excellent source for interpreting these inscriptions. Leonard Curchin has provided an extensive list of Hispano-Roman magistrates in his book, *The Local Magistrates of Roman Spain*. After compiling an extensive list of names found throughout the provinces of Spain, and arranging them by chronology and region, a pattern emerges: The proper Roman name (i.e. the use of the *tria nomina* with voting tribe) makes a fleeting appearance, degrading slowly over time, while the indigenous naming customs gradually re-emerge and eventually overtake the Roman customs. The adoptive suffix, *-anus*, for example, would over time become a matronymic. Rampant uses of the diminutive and other modifications began to show the diminishing significance of formerly noble names. The patronymic’s use in Latin, marked with *F(ilius)* followed by the father’s name in the genitive, eventually came to be used purely as a cognomen, along with toponymic references. Examples such as these and more will demonstrate that, despite the apparent plethora of Romanized names, the indigenous culture of Spain persisted and actually achieved a tacit prominence.