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Further Linguistic Considerations on a New Celtiberian Bronze

Abstract

A new Celtiberian bronze in the Latin alphabet, probably dating back to the mid 1st c. BC, has been made public and partially studied in 2025. Recently, a welcome work has seen the light that includes a reliable photograph. It contains a number of minor text corrections of this Celtiberian bronze. Therefore, an adjustment of the author's previous views, as put forward in her preliminary work, published in *Voprosy onomastiki*, is in order. This article is complementary of the former one and shall address the problems inherent in the editor's personal interpretation of the bronze, as well as some issues regarding Celtic inflectional endings. Specifically, the paper focuses on the form of the non-neuter dual nom.-acc. ending, which continues *-ō in Irish and Gaulish and therefore significantly differs from the mark *-ō (< *-oh₁) inherited by most Indo-European languages. In all likelihood, the dual owes this innovative ending to the numeral *duyō 'two'. The author contend that Celtiberian took part in this important inflectional innovation, and that this text contains institutional terms suggestive of Celtiberian towns having had two co-rulers or military leaders. A number of new onomastic and lexical items are identified and when possible translated, the paper also aims to clarify some aspects of the syntax of the whole document. On the phonetic side, the author maintains her views on the disappearance of IE *-d in auslaut in the dialect of the Arevaci and the presence of ablative forms in this text, however, the idea that final nasals had been weakened is to be revised: in the author's present view, they had possibly been neutralised as -m and reflected as -<M> at least in the dialect of the Arevaci.

Keywords

Celtic languages; Celtiberian language; Indo-European language reconstruction; Celtic anthroponymy; Celtic toponymy; Celtic morphology; Celtiberian dialectology

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Дополнительные лингвистические соображения по поводу недавно обнаруженной кельтиберской надписи

Аннотация

Недавно найденная бронзовая табличка с кельтиберской надписью, выполненной латинским алфавитом и, вероятно, датируемой серединой I в. до н. э., была обнаружена и частично изучена в 2025 г. За прошедшее время была опубликована достоверная фотография надписи, предложен ряд незначительных исправлений текста. В связи с этим возникает необходимость скорректировать взгляды, изложенные автором данной статьи в предварительном исследовании (Вопросы ономастики. Т. 22, № 1). Настоящая публикация дополняет предшествующую статью, в новой работе рассматриваются проблемы, связанные с интерпретацией надписи ее публикатором, а также некоторые вопросы, касающиеся кельтских падежных окончаний. В частности, автор фокусируется на форме окончания номинатива-аккузатива двойственного числа (не среднего рода) **-ō*, имеющего параллели в ирландском и галльском языках и существенно отличающегося от показателя **-ō (< *-oh₁)*, который унаследован большинством индоевропейских языков. По всей вероятности, двойственное число обязано этим инновационным окончанием числительному **duiō* 'два'. По мнению автора, кельтиберский язык участвовал в этом важном флективном нововведении. Кроме того, исследуемый текст содержит институциональные термины, позволяющие предположить, что кельтиберские города управлялись двумя соправителями или военными вождями. Анализ фотографии позволил выявить ряд новых ономастических и лексических единиц и предложить их семантическую интерпретацию, а также прояснить некоторые аспекты синтаксиса всего документа. В области фонетики автор продолжает придерживаться ранее высказанной гипотезы об исчезновении ПИЕ **-d* в ауслауте в диалекте ареваков и о наличии в тексте форм аблатива, однако повторный анализ надписи подталкивает пересмотреть идею об ослаблении конечных носовых: они, возможно, были нейтрализованы в *-m* и отражались как *-<m>*, по крайней мере, в диалекте ареваков.

Ключевые слова

кельтские языки; кельтиберский язык; праиндоевропейская реконструкция; кельтская антропонимия; кельтская топонимия; кельтская морфология; кельтиберская диалектология

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Introduction

The new text in [Gorrochategui 2026] runs (updated readings are marked with bold letters):

MEDITTV ▪ CLOVTIOQ ▪ MEDITTO ▪ G
 TARMESCVNE ▪ NOVIORITIV ▪ **CENTVEDIA**¹
GORTAQVE ▪ IGEDANCINV ▪ GORTICAM
 BRADIOCAM ▪ DVREM ▪ EMVSE ▪ **ANCANGENNEQVE**²
SAIGLYM ▪ **DONIAICVM**³ ▪ DIAINIM ▪ **DVOQVE**⁴
CVAMO ▪ ESDOVCOVNVN ▪ COVRATOM
 GVSTAICE TRITANO ▪ CORIOTERIQ ▪ VENINVNOS
 NARIOQ ▪ MVGVRO ▪ ARGENACIQ ▪ CILIO ▪ COELEIQ
ANDRAICA⁵ ▪ ATTES ▪ ANEITTIQ

The new analysis of this text will be divided into segments corresponding to the major syntactic units. I shall specifically argue that the first unit constitutes the heart of the matter and describes the agreement, mentions the involved parties and contains a verb DVREM following the direct object GORTICAM BRADIOCAM and preceding a coda in the dative case EMVSE **ANCANGENNEQVE**, as dealt with at length in [Prósper 2025]. Two extensions of this basic message in the acc. sg., DIAINIM and COVRATOM, respectively preceded by genitives describe some of the relevant circumstances of the agreement, and are also governed by DVREM. The last three lines identify the witnesses/signatories of the agreement.

1. An Agreement between an Individual and a City

According to the interpretation of [Gorrochategui 2026: 241–242], the individual MEDITTV, previously identified as the nominative of a nasal stem, is a thematic form, identical to the father's name, and inflected for the dative case, and its ending stands for CCelt. **-ūi*. As for TARMESCVNE, in his view “La terminación en -e de la primera palabra susceptible de indicar origen, *Tarmescune*, causa problemas, en primer lugar porque es una desinencia raramente atestiguada en los textos y, en segundo lugar, por ser en apariencia difícilmente compatible con la expresión

¹Formerly CENOTOEDIQ, CENTVEDIQ or CENOTOELIQ.

²Probably to be read ANCANGEMNEQ, which can only be clinched after cleaning the object. At any rate, a late assimilation *-mn-* > *-nn-* would not alter its interpretation as an agent noun in *-mon-*. No admissible alternative has been proposed.

³Formerly SAICLV [-]ENINAICVM.

⁴Formerly DVOQVE; it was not clear whether the form was complete.

⁵Formerly AND[—]EA.

de procedencia”. These considerations can be dispensed with, since nobody would reconstruct **-e*. He immediately admits in passing that it could ultimately reflect Early Celtib. *-ez*, but omits the fact that this ending, going back to an innovative ablative **-ed*, is well attested in place names on coins, like *oilaune*, *oilaunez* [MLH-1: A.56], *barskunez* [Ibid.: A.38], *sekobirikez* [Ibid.: A.89]. For Gorrochategui, TARMESCUNE is a dative in **-eĭ* that conveniently agrees with MEDITTIV. I gather that, in his view, the nasal stem TARMESCUNE, which derives from *Tarmeskom*, can be used to refer to the citizens of this city. An objection immediately comes to mind: there is not a single parallel for a nasal suffix having acquired this function in Celtic. The usual suffixes used for those belonging to a place is *-iko-* and its variants, like *-ino-* and *-ik-(i)io-*. In this case one would definitely expect **tarmesk-ino-*, *-(i)io-*.

This individual is therefore held to have been called ‘Medittos, a citizen of Tarmeskom, from Novio Brittium’. This, however, compels Gorrochategui to accept a thematic ablative NOVIORITTIV. Alternatively, for this scholar, the place name was **Novio Brittium* (which is most unlikely in view of the existence of *Eburo Brittium* in westernmost Hispania), and NOVIORITTIV is a second name in the dative agreeing with the personal name *Medittu* (this time for unknown reasons endowed with a detoponymic suffix *-(i)io-*, not *-ūn-*). On balance, this seems intended to dispense with the very function of ablatives as expressions of provenance, which are unequivocally attested, for instance, in [MLH-4: K.1.1 B] (Contrebia Belaisca), but at the cost of introducing new functions for trivial suffixes and ending up with an individual who had two different origins.

But still another major problem underlies this interpretation of the first lines: the beneficiary of the agreement is in the dative, a novelty in Hispano-Celtic hospitality, where the gen. pl. is the norm, though it is used in more complex texts in Roman *tabulae hospitales* with verbs that demand it. The problem essentially revolves around how far we are willing to go when stripping endings of undesirable elements: while omission of final *-d* and *-m* is attested, datives in *-u* exist in Gaulish, but to my knowledge not in Celtiberian.

The second problem concerns a city, the other party of the agreement. The new reading CENTVEDIA for CENTOEDIQ *vel sim.* clarifies and at the same time obscures the whole issue. In Gorrochategui’s view [2026: 241] it *has* to be an appellative form. This is a slightly reckless assumption, since, to begin with, one cannot expect that sort of certainty from a change in the reading, and second, this form was already attested only as a divine name in the *conventus asturum* [cf. Prósper 2025: 108]. Gorrochategui, quite ingeniously, goes on to identify this sequence with the Latin expression *senatus populusque romanus*, and states that “un sentido como ‘conjunto de los primeros o principales de la ciudad’ sería muy apropiado”. In fact, his syntactic analysis seems to hinge on this assumption. But **kentū-ed(i)jā* means

‘outstanding, foremost’ and is not certain to be a noun literally meaning ‘council of the foremost citizens’. Even if ‘the highest’ has been substantivated, one wonders at the identification of this formula with the Latin one. *Senatus* and *populus romanus* are complementary entities in that the first represents the government and the second the people. But *gortā* is not ‘the people’. It means ‘the city’, and therefore comprises the authorities that issue documents. The *gorta*, in the above interpretation not the state but the population, sanctions agreements like *ROLENICAS GORTAS CAR* [cf. Martínez Chico & Prósper 2021] and *libiaka kortika kar* [MLH-4: K.0.5-2] without the decisive intervention of a complementary council or senate.

Gorrochategui rounds out his interpretation of this phrase with *IGEDANCINV*, an adjective in the nominative dual masculine $*-\bar{u}$ that agrees with *CENTVEDIA* and *GORTA* and derives from the place name *Igedankom*. The masculine ending would have ousted the expected dual feminine $*-a_i$ from $*-eh_2-ih_1$ (cf. OIr. *dí mnaí* ‘two women’) as in Mycenaean *to-pe-zo* ‘two tables’ (cf. Gk. *τράπεζα*). It should be noted, however, that the outcome slightly departs from the Roman model and demands a number of leaps of faith. For instance, following the “proximity rule”, the adjective would be expected to be inflected in the singular (ICelt. has not preserved any trace of the dual in the adjective, and the plural is used instead), and a verb in the singular would probably also be required (DVRES instead of DVREM). Gorrochategui tiptoes around this problem by stressing the difficulties associated with DVREM, which automatically deprives the whole text of anything looking like a verb in personal form (see below on *ESDOVCOVNVN*).

While Gorrochategui does not allow for the possibility that final *-m* has been weakened and possibly lost, omission of nasals in auslaut is, again, much of a pseudoproblem. It has been observed and repeated *ad nauseam* that nasals often fail to be noted in codas for psychological reasons [see Méndez Dosuna 2007]. While nasals can be easily restored in coda position in cases like [MLH-1: A.77] *sekotiaz lakaz* (= *Segontia Lanca*), their omission may occasionally prove lethal to the correct interpretation of grammatical relations in a complex document like this one. Let us cite the showcase example of Very Old Latin *HERCOLE DONV* / [D]EDERO [CIL 1: 61] (Praeneste, 3rd c. BC), where *DONV* is an acc. sg. and [D]EDERO is the antecedent of L. *dederunt* (except for the final *-t* taken from the present stem). There is a more serious problem with the interpretation of *IGEDANCINV* as a dual form, however. The dual ending $*-\bar{u}$ is not attested in Celtic. We shall come back to this question below.

To my mind, the first four lines are amenable to a number of alternative syntactic analyses:

a) *CENTVEDIA* is, in fact, a nominative. It consequently agrees in gender with *GORTA*. This paves the way for several interpretations:

CENTVEDIA GORTAQVE may be coordinated and then CENTVEDIA is substantiated, but IGEDANCINV(M) is a genitive plural. Alternatively, CENTVEDIA is simply alluding to the city called *Centuedia* ‘foremost’ (an appropriate title for both a city and a goddess), and the position of the enclitic copulative particle (where, in Latin at least, a sequence [†]CENTVEDIAQVE GORTA would be expected) is due to the fact that *gorta* + place name behave syntactically as a unit, like in phrases which end up as univerbations (*Villanueva*, *Villafranca*, etc.) or compounds (*Durham*, *Mannheim*).

It could even be the case that CENTVEDIA is synchronically an adjective, not a name, and CENTVEDIA GORTAQVE IGEDANCINV means ‘the main/capital city of the Igedancini’, possibly referring to Complutum. Judging from *konbouto* / *ikezankom* [MLH-1: A.74], the Igedanci were associated with a city, possibly more than one.⁶

Under any of these assumptions, MEDITTV can be explained as a nominative, and then this individual on the one side and the CENTVEDIA and the GORTA on the other side have signed an agreement (DVREM). The translation ‘the foremost and the city’ would imply that MEDITTV and CENTVEDIA GORTAQVE stand in asyndeton. By contrast, if CENTVEDIA GORTAQVE constitute a single phrase, -QVE is coordinating MEDITTV and CENTVEDIA GORTA. Alternatively, MEDITTV could be an instrumental form in *-ū, a possibility rejected by [Gorrochategui 2026: 241]. CENTVEDIA GORTAQVE IGEDANCINV is the subject, and the verb DVREM is not in the singular, as expected if Celtiberian imitates Roman usage to such a degree, but in the plural. A further caveat concerns word order, since the individual’s name in the instrumental preceding the subject yields a rather convoluted structure.

b) CENTVEDIA could be an ablative agreeing with TARMESCUNE and NOVIOBRITTV, possibly a flattering coda alluding to the fact that it is a foremost or central city. This does not necessarily entail a problem with grammatical gender, as in ‘la hermosa Oviedo’, ‘la bella Lugo’ (where synchronically *ciudad* or *villa* are understood). And the subjects are MEDITTV and the GORTA IGEDANCINV, coordinated by -QVE.

For [Gorrochategui 2026: 245], ESDOVCOVNVN cannot be a gen. pl., either. Since the text must have a verb, this is a 3rd p. pl. in -ont, apparently a preterite in which the vowel of the ending has been raised for no apparent reason (this is hardly a complex coda, since -t must have been dropped early on). That a finite verb (what is more, an imperfect, a category as yet unattested in Western IE dialects) should be endowed with a suffix -mno- or -uno- is not possible, firstly because such a present suffix does not exist and secondly because *deuk- ‘to lead’ originally only

⁶The syntactic relation of these forms is apparently anomalous, and *konbouto* might stand for [†]*konboutom*, or the text could mean ‘Ikezanian coin of / belonging to the city of Complutum’.

formed a basic thematic present **deuk-o/e-*, and its preterite was a sigmatic aorist (cf. L. *dūxī*, Toch. *tsauksā-* and OW. *duch*).

A look at all the instances of <M> and <N> in this document reveals that the ductus of this <N> differs from that of the other cases, where vertical lines are not even slightly tilted, and where the third stroke is often slightly curved inwards. It simply looks like an unfinished <M>, and the distance of this letter to the punct to the right of ESDOVCOVNVN is slightly too great. I conclude that the scribe intended to write <M> and unconsciously omitted a stroke. Interestingly, acceptance of final <M> for all the reviewed forms would set the stage for a revival of the hypothesis put forward by [Gorrochategui 1990]: MONIMAM ‘monument’ in [MLH-4: K.11.1] (Tiermes, Arevaci) could be traced back to **monī-man* (< **moneje-mŋ*).⁷ Final <M> would not be due to assimilatory or analogical processes, but simply to neutralisation of nasals in auslaut. This explains <M> in the 3rd p. pl. DVREM.

2. Still Another Direct Object: SAIGLVM DONIAICVM DIAINIM

We finally have a reading of a part that seemed hopelessly mangled. Gorrochategui [2026: 243] has provided no comment, except that this is a sequence of two gen. pl. forms depending on an accusative. As advanced in [Prósper 2025], DIAINIM may be traced back to **dī-agni-*, the action noun of **h₂eg-* ‘to carry, lead’ found in OIr. *áin* (fem.), with vocalisation of a velar sound in coda position that is peculiar to the Celtiberian dialect of the Arevaci. To begin with, DIAINIM may stand in apposition to GORTICAM BRADIOCAM and then it is governed by DVREM ‘ordered, issued’. DONIAICVM looks like a trivial derivative of IE **ǵ^hd^hom-iō-* ‘human’, and is well attested in Celtic: cf. OIr. *duine*, Br. *den*, MW. *dyn* ‘person’, *teuoxtonion* ‘for gods and men’ in Vercelli [cf. RIG-2/1: E-2]. DONIAICVM may consequently have meant ‘human groups’.

SAIGLVM goes back to **sagi-l-(i)io-* or possibly **sagi-lo-*, a considerably old agentive formation from **sag-iō/e-* ‘to seek’, through dialectal palatalisation **-Vgilio- > -Vgⁱlio-* [cf. Prósper 2025: 115]. As Schrijver [1995: 135] has contended, MW. *hael* ‘generous, noble; lord’, Cornish *hail* gl. ‘largus’, Breton *hael* ‘noble, generous’ may be traced back to a similar formation, but he reconstructs **so/eǵ^h-elo-* and then extends this conclusion to Gaul. DEPROSAGILOS, usually believed to mean ‘providing or searching for food’. A preform **sagilo-* would be convenient for the Brittonic forms but fails to show *-i-* affection of *-a-*. And **sag-(e)lo-* is less satisfactory. In that case, SAIGLVM DONIAICVM DIAINIM could be tentatively interpreted as ‘the offering/contribution of noble human groups’.

⁷ At any rate a better option than **moni-mā*, given that an accusative is not expected in the absence of a verb ‘gave’, *vel sim*.

3. And a Final Direct Object:

DVOQVE CVAMO ESDOVCOVNVN COVRATOM

3.1. DVOQVE CVAMO. A Celtiberian acc. dual?

Now that the reading of these two words seems certain, it is time to tackle their joint analysis, since they seem to make up a single phrase.

Indo-European had two basic forms of the numeral ‘2’: **du̯ō* and **du̯ō̄* (< **d(u)uoh₁(u)*); cf. L. *duo* (< **du̯ō̄* with iambic shortening), Gk. *δύο*, *δύω*, Goth. *twa* (< **du̯ō̄*), Skt. *d(u)vā*, *d(u)vau*, *dva-ká-* ‘joined as a pair’, Av. *duua* (< **du̯ō̄*), OCS. *dŭva*. The numeral **du̯ō̄/ō̄* was probably bisyllabic because of Lindeman’s rule, and has no dual ending because it was a lexical dual, or because of Kuiper’s Law, which states that final postvocalic laryngeals are lost in pausa.

Celtic might have inherited both, though this view is far from unanimous. While some scholars favour a preform **du̯ōu* [cf. EDPC: 110], Cowgill [1985: 20–25] reconstructed CCelt. **du̯ō* ‘two’ (fem. **du̯ī*) for OIr. *dáu*, OW. *dou*, and **du̯V-* for proclitic *da*, *di*. In my view, as expressed in [Prósper & Medrano Duque 2022: 39], **Cu.HV-* or **Cu.uV-* generally became **CuV-* at least in forms containing word-initial stops. This is likely to have occurred in the case of **b^hu.HV-* > **bu.V-* > **bu.uV-* > **b_uV-* (> ICelt. **bV-*).

The most promising case of reduction **du̯V-* > **du̯V-* in Italic may be Very Old Latin *DVENOS* > L. *bonus*. In my view it may be a match of Continental Celtic *VENISAMORVM* ‘bonissimorum’ [CIL 5: 7231] (Susa/Segusium, Alpes Cottiae, end of the 1st c. BC), Celtib. *VENISTI* (personal name in the gen. sg., Lara de los Infantes, Burgos), (as if) from an archaic superlative **duHen-ist(H)o-*, OIr. *den* ‘firm’. If *bonus* goes back to **duh₁-eno-* ‘well fixed’ as per [Neri 2017: 165, fn. 290], this would mean that both in Italic and in Celtic the secondary cluster **du̯-* eventually became **dV-* in Insular Celtic and **u̯V-* in Continental Celtic.

A compositional variant **du̯ō-* (with inversion of Lindeman’s rule) and other early instances of the form **du̯V-* became **dV-* in Insular Celtic but **u̯V-* in Continental Celtic: cf. the ethnonym *Vocontii* in the Narbonensis, cf. *vocontiorum* (Caesar, B. G. 1, 10, 5), Galatian *ὀκονδιάνοι* ‘twenties’; *Vocorii* ‘having two armies’ in the place name *ὠακορίον* (Ptolemy, Geogr. 2, 13, 3, Switzerland) or the personal name *VISADO*, *VISADI* in Lara de los Infantes, Burgos, from **du̯is-ad-* ‘pair’) [cf. Prósper 2016: 53] vs. ICelt. **do-*, OIr. *fō dí* ‘twice’ (< **du̯is*), and MW. compositional *dwȳ-* (< **dē-* < **du̯ei*).

It is consequently likely that the Celtiberian form **dú̯ō̄* remained disyllabic, as in Latin (< **du̯ō̄*) and Irish (and as opposed to Germanic), because the first syllable was stressed, and that Cowgill’s reconstruction of a single numeral **dú̯ō̄* for Proto-Celtic is correct. For the rest, **du̯V-*, as observed above, merged with

the corresponding compound variant **duV-* as **duV-* and the outcome underwent further reduction after the split-up of Celtic. In addition, this shows that PCelt. **-uV-* did not evolve into **-ouV-* early on: in OIr. *dáu*, OW. *dou*, **dou-* is the late outcome of internal changes.

The dual number is difficult to track down in Celtic. If the non-neuter nom.-acc. ending were **-oh₁*, as in Gk. *-ω*, Skt. *-ā*, Lith. *-ú*, OCS. *-a*, the outcome *-ō* would have evolved into *-ū* in Proto-Celtic, and we would find an OIr. nom.-acc. **fūr*, not *fer*. In Old Irish, nom.-acc. dual forms are always preceded by *da* ‘2’ and never show traces of raising of the vowel preceding the alleged ending *-ū*.

Malzahn [2000: 207 and fn. 8] has made a renewed case for the ending of the non-neuter nom.-acc. sg. being *-ō*, which the nominal system had acquired from the numeral ‘2’.⁸ For instance, Gaul. CISIAMBOS CATTOS VERCORETO (1st c. BC) on a coin of the Lexovii [RIG-4: 355] refers to two magistrates,⁹ and OIr. *da fer* goes back to **duuō uirō*.

This idea has a much longer history, however. One of its oldest and most illustrious upholders was Thurneysen [1927: 289], who, in speculating on the problem of the Gaulish magistrate names VERCORETO on coins and CASSIDANNO in La Graufesenque (whose attribution is more doubtful) stated that “Zur Dualendung *-ō* würde die lenierende irische Form *fer*, die auf den Abfall eines dunkeln Vokals weist, gut stimmen” and reminded the reader of Gk. *δύο*. This idea was reprised and insightfully developed by [Cowgill 1985: 27], who explicitly took the reconstructed masculine thematic ending **-ō* from Celtic **duuō*.

Attending to the case of Skt. *vrkau*, etc., others have argued for an ending **-ōu* > **-ou* > **-ō*, which could also explain the Gaulish forms [cf. Lewis & Pedersen 1989: 167; Thurneysen et al. 1946: 182], refuted by [Cowgill 1985: 27], which holds little promise because it more or less comes to say that Osthoff’s Law applied to **-ōu* and not to the dative ending **-ū*, which is the outcome of syncretism of **-ūi*, the instrumental **-ū* and the ablative **-ūō*, which must have merged in ICelt.

DVO CVAMO comes as a surprise in that it provides word-by-word confirmation of the very early replacement of inherited **-ō* by **-ō*, which is now plausibly attested in Continental Celtic. Unless a better hypothesis is put forward, it looks like CVAMO, with a short final /o/, is incompatible with all alternative endings more or less plausibly reconstructed for Old Irish, specifically **-ō* > *-ū* (by Proto-Celtic raising) and **-ōu* > **-ōu* (by Osthoff’s Law). Whether the numeral **d(u)uō* had

⁸The neuter is nasalising, as in *dáⁿ cennⁿ* ‘two heads’, and probably continues the nom.-acc. sg. **-om*.

⁹Lambert [1994: 52] considers VERCORETO(S) a nom. sg.

become an obligatory part of dual expressions, as in Irish, or not, is difficult to say. Needless to say, CVAMO is unlikely to be a gen. sg.

Since we know that the highest magistrature was often held by two men in the Roman Republic, as in the case of the *consules* and the municipal *duoviri*, one could entertain the possibility that CVAMO reflects an older **ko-ɥamo-* ‘co-ruler’,¹⁰ itself a compound of **ko(m)* ‘together, with’ and the superlative **uɸamo-* ‘highest’. This superlative is also found in the Lepontic personal name *uvamokozis* (Pres-tino, Transpadana, 6th c. BC) < **uɸamo-gosti-* < **(H)upm(H)o-* + *g^hosti-* ‘having the highest guests’, the Hispano-Celtic place name οὐαμα (Ptolemy, Geogr., 2, 5, Baetica) and the derivative VAMENSI [CIL 2: 989] and Skt. *upamá-* ‘highest’ [cf. Tovar *apud* Cowgill 1970: 116], and also Av. *upāma-*, OE. *ufemest*, L. *summus*, U. *somo*. Celtib. *uameiste* in [MLH-4: K.0.14] is unclear but looks related. Since this form concurred in Celtiberian with the more transparent **uxsamo-*, the suffix may have been lexicalised, as in L. *minister*, etc. It follows that, unless a better analysis of DVO CVAMO comes up, duals in *-ō*, perhaps originally restricted to phrases containing **duuō*, may be of Common Celtic age.¹¹

Celtib. **duuō kuɥamō* might then constitute a “duale tantum” formula denoting those sharing the highest place in public affairs, including war. That the CVAMO are identical to the *duoviri* of the Roman municipal administration remains possible. At any rate, at an earlier time, Celtiberia may have had a similar political organisation, namely a diarchy, as suggested by Appian (Hispania, 45–46), who, discussing the affairs of 153 BC, says: “The Arevaci convened immediately, even in the night, at Numantia, which was a very strong city, and chose Ambo and Leuco as their generals”.

3.2. ESDOVCOVNVN COVRATOM

Since the *duoviri* were elected by an assembly of the people, or perhaps in our case by a warrior aristocracy, one could go so far as to translate DVOQVE CVAMO ESDOVCOVNVN COVRATOM roughly as a sort of coda rounding out the text and standing in apposition to GORTICAM BRADIOCAM DVREM and SAIGLVM DONIAICVM DIAINIM (DVREM), meaning ‘(something) desired (or: ‘as desired’) by those electing the two

¹⁰ The reduction *-ouV-* > *-uuV-* seems comparatively regular in Celtiberian, as transpires from many examples listed in [Prosper & Medrano Duque 2022: 23–24].

¹¹ While at least one example of a lexicalised Celtic dual in **-ū* has been put forward, namely OIr. *cul* ‘chariot’ from **k^ue/olh₁-oh₁* ‘two wheels’, Stifter [2006: 144–154] has argued that in all but one of the few attestations of this word it has an obscure meaning or designates an unidentifiable part of the chariot, espouses the view that a dual form is impossible because **-ō* had been generalised and there was no reason for this form alone to have been spared the sweeping analogical change that ousted **-ū*, and reconstructs **kalu* (< **k^ulh₂-* ‘piece of ironwork’, from **kelh₂-* ‘to hit’).

highest magistrates', where the gen. pl. ending of ESDOVCOVNVN 'those who choose', probably a middle present participle that emphasises the subject's involvement in the action, has an agentive function. DVOQVE CVAMO is its direct object in the accusative. This would mean that the assembly ratifies the agreement, thereupon signed by witnesses or magistrates. Note that COVRATOM may be a substantivated participle 'will, desire'.¹² The word order is consistent with what we know of determinans + determinatum languages, in that ESDOVCOVNVN governs the previous phrase and in turn is governed by the participle COVRATOM or, if this has become a verbal noun 'wish', is a subjective genitive that depends on it.¹³

There follows a sequence of signatories preceded by a locative GVSTAICE, on which I tentatively said, after a short discussion of other possibilities, that "GVSTAICE would be 'under the office of', governing the four magistrate names in the genitive" [cf. Prósper 2025: 116]. The final line of the document now reads ANDRAICA ATTES ANEITTIQ. For Gorrochategui, ANDRAICA has to be a nom. sg. or a locative (in his view, a locative in **-āi*!) and could denote a magistrature. He admits that ATTES *could* be a nominative, which could lead one to see it as standing in apposition to ANDRAICA. This is attractive at first sight, but entails a number of unwarranted cultural assumptions: the document would be signed by a female, and one bearing two cognomina. But Gorrochategui also allows for a genitive. Though he does not state it explicitly, this would necessarily call for an unknown *-i-* stem **atti-*, since Celtiberian only had a consonant stem gen. sg. in *-os*.¹⁴

If ANDRAICA were a locative, one would have again attach credence to general loss of *-i* (and only *-i*) in word-final diphthongs. In point of fact, a locative ending *-ai* from **-eh₂-i* would be most unlikely to drop its glide, and if, as often happens

¹²Gorrochategui [2026: 246] has proposed to see COVRATOM as a borrowing from L. *curatum* (from **koisā-*). Since, however, the only attestations of <ov> (COVRAVERE, CIL I: 2949, Capua; COVRAVERVNT, CIL 9: 5019, Picenum) attest to hypercorrection due to the Latin monophthongisation /ou/ > /u:/, this idea not only requires a loanword from Latin, but also a similar monophthongisation in Celtiberian for which there is no evidence. Gorrochategui goes on to say that a confusion of both terms is not unthinkable: "pensar tambien en una confusión o influencia entre ambos terminos, de modo que el término técnico latino *curatum* se hubiera asimilado al patrimonial *couratom* o bien este hubiera aceptado el sentido técnico de aquel: 'curatum est'". This, however, would presuppose not only a lexical but also a syntactic borrowing, since the proposed structure, a periphrastic perfective passive that ousted the inherited synthetic forms, is peculiar to Italic. I fail to appreciate the advantage of this hypothesis, except to isolate ESDOVCOVNVN as a verb in personal form occupying the end of the sentence. Gorrochategui seems very suspicious of the idea that Celtib. *dures* and DVREM are verbs, as per [Prósper 2025], but has no alternative to offer.

¹³We cannot rule out the possibility that *both* DIANIM (and its complements) and DVOQVE CVAMO are depending on ESDOVCOVNVN, but our information is too paltry to pursue this idea any further.

¹⁴*Steniontes* in [MLH-1: K.1.3], Contrebia Belaisca, and *steniotes* in [MLH-4: K.17.1] cannot be standing for original **-es*, by the way the regular ending in Latin, since consonant stems show *-os* everywhere. Since the same name is attested in the dative as STENIONTE [Ibid.: K.11.1] (Tiermes, Arevaci), it is obvious that it belongs to a dialect showing an early monophthongisation of /ei/.

in IE, it has undergone syncretism with the dative in $-\bar{a}i$ from $*-eh_2-ei$, it would in all likelihood be preceded by a pre- or postposition *eni* ‘in’ when taking on locative functions. At all events, the ancient locative is likely to have been best preserved in locative expressions and place names, as in $\Theta\eta\beta\alpha\iota\gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\eta}\varsigma$ ‘born in Thebes’, O. *meḡiaí viaí* ‘in the middle of the way’.

From the syntactic point of view, ANDRAICA remains a hanging issue: even if ATTES were a highly idiosyncratic genitive, a female name followed by her father’s name and in the end her family name ANEITTIQ(VM) would be rather outlandish for the signature of a Celtiberian document. And the idea that the names of the four magistrates in the gen. sg. depend on ANDRAICA, denoting a magistracy or collegium, is conceivable but raises too many questions. ANDRAICA may perfectly well be an ablative, however, and in that case it means that the last of the four signatories was of a different origin that he wanted to be mentioned. It is clear that it could be a place name, and could go back to Celtib. $*anderajik-\bar{a}\delta$, a derivative of Celtic *andero-* ‘inferior’ from $*(H)\bar{n}d^h\bar{e}ro-$ (though postulation of medial syncope in Hispano-Celtic must be taken with caution).

Abbreviations

Languages

Av.	Avestan	ICelt.	Insular Celtic	OE.	Old English
Br.	Breton	IE	Indo-European	OIr.	Old Irish
CCelt.	Common Celtic	L.	Latin	OW.	Old Welsh
Celtib.	Celtiberian	Lith.	Lithuanian	PCelt.	Proto-Celtic
Gaul.	Gaulish	MW.	Middle Welsh	Skt.	Sanskrit
Gk.	Greek	O.	Oscan	Toch.	Tocharian
Goth.	Gothic	OCS.	Old Church Slavic	U.	Umbrian

Other abbreviations

acc.	accusative	gl.	glossed as	pl.	plural
fem.	feminine	nom.	nominative	sg.	singular
gen.	genitive	p.	person		

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