



Spring 2018

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## **Abstract**

This paper focuses on discussing whether there were varying levels of wealth in three individual pre-Roman settlements in the western Mediterranean. The goal of this paper is to answer the question of if the different indigenous settlements of Pontós, Alorda Park, and Lattara in the Western Mediterranean experienced variable levels of wealth detectable via the archaeological remains of their prestige goods and houses in the last age or period of their occupation.

## **Keywords**

Celts, Iberians, archaeology, wealth, Pre-Roman Mediterranean archaeology

## **Disciplines**

Ancient History, Greek and Roman through Late Antiquity | Archaeological Anthropology

## **Comments**

Written as a senior capstone for Anthropology.

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Wealth in the Pre-Roman Western Mediterranean: Pontós, Alorda Park, and Lattara

Colleen Maher

Dr. Benjamin Luley and Dr. Julia Hendon

May 2018

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people, without whom this paper would have been entirely impossible. My professors, specifically Professor Ben Luley, who has probably read this paper as many times as I have, and Professor Julia Hendon, whose invaluable advice encouraged me onward when I felt lost and unsure, as well as the rest of the Anthropology Department at Gettysburg College, which was a source unwavering support. I cannot express how grateful I am to the Catalan archaeologists, whose original research literally made my own possible, but also whose never-ending patience with my nonstop questions and long-distance email support brought this paper to fruition. These incredible individuals include David (“el Rojo”) Asensio, Jordi (“Susu”) Morer, and his entire family, whose hospitality made Catalonia feel like home, and the entire 2017 excavation team of Mas Castellar de Pontós, which quickly became one of the biggest groups of friends I have ever been blessed to know. Thank you all, from the bottom of my heart.

Me gustaría agradecer a las siguientes personas, sin las cuales este trabajo hubiera sido completamente imposible. Mis profesores, específicamente el catedrático Ben Luley, que probablemente haya leído este trabajo tantas veces como yo, y la catedrática Julia Hendon, cuyo valioso consejo me animó a continuar cuando me sentí perdida e insegura, así como el resto del Departamento de Antropología de Gettysburg College que fue una fuente de apoyo inquebrantable. No puedo expresar lo agradecida que estoy con los arqueólogos catalanes cuyas originales técnicas de investigación hicieron posible mi trabajo, a la vez que su paciencia interminable con mis preguntas inacabables y el apoyo por correo electrónico a distancia trajo este documento a buen término. Estas increíbles personas serían David (“el Rojo”) Asensio, Jordi (“Susu”) Morer y toda su familia, cuya hospitalidad hizo de Cataluña una casa. También agradecer a todo el equipo de excavación 2017 de Mas Castellar de Pontós, que rápidamente se convirtió en uno de los mayores grupos de amigos que alguna vez he tenido la suerte de conocer. Gracias a todos desde el fondo de mi corazón.

M'agradaria agrair a les següents persones sense les quals aquest treball no hauria sigut possible. A tots els meus professors, en concret al catedràtic Ben Luley qui s'ha llegit aquest treball tantes vegades com jo. També a la catedrática Julia Hendon que amb els seus consells m'ha donat l'empenta necessària per continuar endavant quan més ho he necessitat. Per suposat, també voldria agrair a la resta de membres del departament d'antropologia de la Universitat de Gettysburg i el seu suport duran tot aquest temps. No hi ha paraules suficients per donar les gràcies al equip d'arqueòlegs catalans que amb les seves originals tècniques de recerca i juntament amb una font inacabable de paciència per respondre les meves preguntes i els meus constants correus han fet possible la realització d'aquest treball. Aquest arqueòlegs són: David Asensio “El Rojo” i Jordi Morer “Susu” els quals amb la seva família han fet de Catalunya una casa per a mi. Vull incloure en els meus agraïments a tot l'equip d'excavació Mas Castellar de Pontós 2017 que ràpidament es van convertir en els meus amics i puc dir que ha sigut tot un honor haver-los conegut. Dono les gràcies a tothom de tot cor.

## **I. Introduction.**

This paper focuses on discussing whether there were varying levels of wealth in three individual pre-Roman settlements in the western Mediterranean. Two of these are Iberian, Mas Castellar de Pontós and the Ciutadella d'Alorda Park at Calafell, and they are located in modern-day Catalonia, the northeast portion of the Iberian Peninsula. The third settlement, Lattara, is located in Mediterranean France, in present-day Lattes in the region Languedoc, France. These were contemporary, indigenous peoples that lived in close proximity around the Mediterranean Sea; the Iberians occupied the area along the eastern border towards the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula, as well as north into modern-day France. The Celts occupied most of ancient France, branching also to the north and east. After this introduction, I will explain how the Iberians and Celts were similar and different, and the characteristics I am going to use to compare the relative wealth of Mas Castellar de Pontós, Ciutadella d'Alorda Park, and Lattara. These characteristics include quantity and concentrations of prestige goods, and house size and structure. After briefly explaining why I am using these features as my body of data, I will further explore their broader importance and meaning in the field of archaeology in my theory section. Next, I will present the more specific data on house size and structure, and prestige goods in the Iberian settlements and the Celtic, and briefly compare them in my "Archaeological Findings" section. In this segment, I explain starting from more general observation and gradually reach explicit detail from the supporting literature. In my concluding pages, I will first discuss my own hypothesis about what the differences in data between the three settlements mean, my insight into how these bodies of data compare, and what conclusions can be drawn from them. Finally, I will present a series of questions for future research for which this paper

has laid the foundation, many of which broach the idea of the relationship between wealth and inequality in the ancient world. The period of focus is the Iron Age, or the protohistoric period, from roughly the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century BC to the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC (Dietler 198).

In summary, the goal of this paper is to answer the question of if the different indigenous settlements in the Western Mediterranean experienced variable levels of wealth detectable via the archaeological remains of their prestige goods and houses in the last age or period of their occupation. The Celtic settlements of the area of pre-Roman Languedoc, France and the Iberian settlements of Northeastern Catalonia all traded with the Greek colonies in the area. However, based on varying quantities and concentrations of prestige goods, and the size and structure of the houses in the settlements of Pontós and Alorda Park experienced different levels of wealth by the end of the Iron Age, prior to the Roman conquest.

## **II. Background.**

The Iberians inhabited the area from just north of modern-day Perpignan, France all the way south to modern-day Cádiz, Spain, or from Andalusia, Spain north to Languedoc, France; a span of approximately 1000 km of coastline. Many of the settlements were clustered along either the coast or the rivers l'Ebre and el Guadalquivir, but they lived as far inland as 200 km from the coast. However, in the past, there has been a much stronger emphasis on the study of the Iberians that inhabited the southern part of these territories- the areas of the Iberian Peninsula that are today known as Murcia, Albacete, Alta Andalusia, and the southern parts of Valencia (Sanmartí and Santacana 2005: 5-7). The works of art discovered in these areas (including the famous Lady of Elche) feature Hellenistic and Orientalizing (eastern Mediterranean) themes, and are more often produced in stone and bronze, making them the more widely known Iberian works; these peoples to the south, then, are more often associated with the "Iberians" (Dama de Elche;

Sanmartí and Santacana 2005: 5-7). The Iberians to the north, then, are often excluded from the popular image of who the Iberians were. The northern and southern Iberians may differ in the remains of their artworks, but as far as sociopolitical development, are more or less indistinguishable. The sociopolitical organization from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age was based around the familial organization and local communities- a chiefdom level of organization, in other words. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century until the Roman conquest, the Iberians had

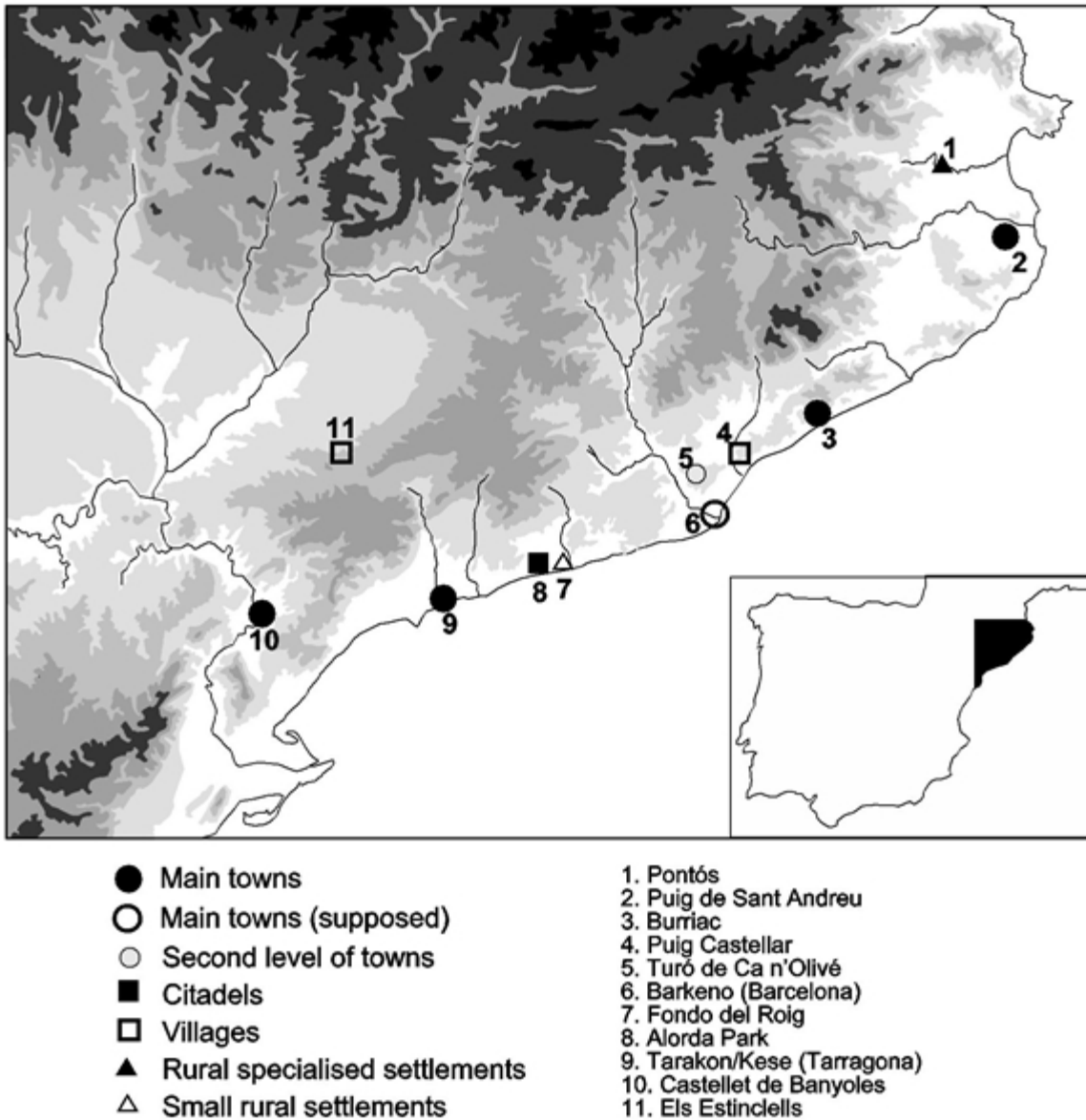


Figure 1. Map of Iberian settlements along the coast of Catalonia during the Iron Age (Belarte 2008:176).

expanded their population and political powers to become an archaic state. After the Roman conquest, the Iberian culture was so thoroughly dissolved that today we have no remnants of their indigenous culture aside from place names and archaeological findings (Sanmartí and Santacana 2005: 5-7). When I refer to the “Iberians,” I will be discussing primarily the groups to the north, but that is not to exclude these understandings of their culture from applying to those further south.

The terms for this area of land and the people that inhabited it that we use today come from ancient Greek texts- Ἰβηρία and Ἰβηρες, or *Ibería* and *Iberes*, respectively. While it is true that the Iberian peoples all along the peninsula experienced socio-political development throughout the late Iron Age, all of these settlements were not politically unified. In fact, Greek and Latin texts testify to the opposite, and so while there is evidence of one written Iberian language, there is no reason to believe that there were not multiple spoken versions. However, this written language is the only definitive unifying factor amongst the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula prior to Roman arrival. So, then, when the Iberian culture is referenced, what is truly being discussed is an aggregate of collections of ideas and different productions, although they are often more or less similar (Sanmartí and Santacana 2005: 29). Within these distinctions existed various tribes (Sanmartí and Santacana 2005: 33). The different Iberian settlements consisted of cities, villages, and farms, all of which were characterized as Iberian by hierarchical systems of administration that correspond to their sizes (Sanmartí and Santacana 2005: 60-62). Pontós, for example, was a rural specialized settlement, while Alorda Park was a citadel (Belarte 2008: 176). The economy was primarily agricultural, but mining was also another specialty.

The Celts, again, occupied the areas to the north and west of the Iberians, as well as even further north and east of modern France. The Celts were a remarkably varied group of people,



and at their height, they inhabited a very large area of Europe. Over the span of the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, the Celts emerged from the Hallstatt period in which they lived further east in Europe- closer to modern Germany- into La Tène period, at which point their inhabitation was



Figure 2. Iron Age Mediterranean France, IV-II BC (Luley 2016:37).

focused more to modern France. Written records of the Celts are (following a pattern) primarily available from ancient Greek and Roman authors, like Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, and Tacitus. The image these authors created of the Celts was that of the classic barbarian- the antithesis of a Greek or Roman. The terms that we use to address the Celts, Gauls and Celts, come from the Greek *Galli* and the Greek *Keltoi* or Latin *Celtae*, respectively. These terms were interchangeable, the distinction between the two described by Caesar as being ‘we call [them] Gauls, though in their own language they are called Celts’ (Cunliffe 1997: 2). *Keltoi*, according to Greek writer Pausanias, was the more long-established term. Cunliffe explains that to

distinguish between the terms, *Celtae/Keltoi* was a more general name that described the larger group of peoples that stretched “from north of the Alps to Iberia,” whereas *Galli* was a specific name used to reference those that moved towards the south and south-east (1997: 2). I will, however, continue to only use the term “Celts” in this paper.

The Celts were called barbarians and savages by the Greeks and Romans, but this was not because they were uncouth brutes that actually practiced cannibalism and human sacrifice. They were simply of a very different culture than the ever-refined Greeks and Romans. Indeed, the image that the contemporary writers painted of their enemies was rather wild- scarcely clothed warriors who could be either cowardly or animalistic and brutal, unruly and without organized government, and just overall unhuman in their daily action and behavior. The contemporary opinions and classical opinions of the Celts laid the foundation for this barbaric stereotype, which lasted until the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Cunliffe 1997). Differences often incite fear, and that was the case in the centuries prior to the rule of the Roman Empire- the Greeks and Romans feared the mead-drinking, druid-following, unruly Celts because they were so thoroughly different from themselves. The reality was that they were more egalitarian (compared to the Greeks and Romans; women even had legal rights in marriage), and that they were fierce fighters (head-hunting was an actuality, but was somewhat spiritual in that a retained head contributed to the holder’s power); opposed to Roman and Greek opinion, the Celts were an organized and prosperous group. The classical writers were not completely ignorant of the Celts’ ferocity in battle and their respect towards others via hospitality, thus ultimately creating the archetypical “Noble Savage”. The Celts were such a massive (and varied) group with enough power that their culture survived the Roman conquest of the continent- unlike that of the Iberians.

The Celts and Iberians inhabited large expanses of land respectively, making them obvious obstacles to the Roman expansion onto the continent. Both groups were conquered by the Romans in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. Pontós and Alorda Park were occupied from roughly the seventh and sixth centuries BC until the Roman conquest, and Lattara from about the fifth century onwards. These periods of occupation align mostly with the Late Iron Age in Europe (Luley 2016). Both groups traded with the Greeks, specifically with those in the colonies of Emporion, Massalia, and later, Rhode (present-day Empúries, Catalonia, Marseille, France, and Roses, Catalonia) (Sanmartí 2009). Pontós is located almost equidistant inland from Rhodes and Emporion on the coast. Calafell is located somewhat further south than modern-day Barcelona, but north of the city of Tarragona. In the Iron Age, the Ciutadella was located directly on the coast, overlooking the water. Today, the waterline has moved out a little over 1000 feet from the restored ancient citadel.

The Iberians and Celts were similar not only in their periods of occupation in the Mediterranean, but also, then, their culture. However, their differences are striking, as well. Their languages, for example, are different both in the linguistic families, and how they are understood today. Iberian seems to take more after the Phoenician language, as opposed to Greek. It is not only non-Indo-European (not classified), but it is also still not understood today. Archaeologist still await a Rosetta Stone-like discovery in order to better translate Iberian writings. Due to its similarities to Phoenician and examples of a Greco-Iberian alphabet, phonemes of the characters are decipherable (Sanmartí 2009). On the other hand, ancient Celtic is similar enough to modern Gaelic languages (and is Indo-European), and has been written using Gallo-Greek (Celtic language using the Greek characters), so that archaeologist have been able to translate Celtic writings (Cunliffe 1997, Dietler 2010). In addition, Iberian society has generally been considered

to be vastly more hierarchical, while today's academics hold Celtic society to have been more egalitarian (Luley). This second point will be approached again later in the conclusion, as wealth and inequality have been shown to correlate, in some cases. This paper, however, answers the question of whether or not there were detectable differences in wealth within and amongst the three settlements, using prestige goods and house size and structure as indicators.

The definition of wealth has changed over time and from culture to culture. In the ancient Mediterranean, the differences in wealth emerged with the growth of settlements into cities, when particular groups, reinforced by a warrior class, would hold the resources for the village in their palace storage rooms. This structure, the palace economy, emerged in the Late Bronze Age, and gave way to merchant trade in the early Iron Age. The palace economy in the middle and late Bronze Ages has been associated with the rise of civilization; which, as anthropology has evolved, has become more of a question of increasing hierarchy and inequality, than increasing productivity and wealth (Manning 2018:43). The expansion of trade in the early Iron Age led to greater acquisition of goods from other groups around the Mediterranean. Restricted access to these goods is what made them key for lending economic political power to their holders (Earle 1997:6). In the case of indigenous groups of the Mediterranean, these goods usually included wines, Greek Attic potteries, and precious metals (for groups without access to their own, metals weigh much more heavily as an object of wealth). Trade relations in the Western Mediterranean increased especially after the founding of the Greek (Phocaeen) colony of Massalia in 600 BC (Dietler 2010). Lattara was the nearest indigenous town to Massalia, followed by Pontós, and Alorda Park being the furthest. Pontós was located extremely close to Rhode and Emporion, relative to Massalia. Alorda Park remains the outlier to these main trade colonies along the western Mediterranean coast.

The house or dwelling may be defined in many different ways. A basic definition from Merriam-Webster is a building used by a group of people for a particular activity, usually in reference to a building used for habitation by either a family (or multiple families) or a certain group of people (“House”). How this definition applies to different cultures over time naturally varies, but during the Iron Age the purpose of the house was similar for both the Celts and Iberians. In general, the study of houses is integral to archaeology because “houses are ideal units...because their material remains are often still visible, accessible, and endowed with evidence of the socioeconomic process” (Deetz cited in Coupland and Banning 1996: 1). Households contain the remains of the “primary producing and consuming units” within a community- making them ideal sources for the study of the ‘wealth’ of a community (Coupland and Banning 1996: 1). Not only will my paper feature goods (bountiful prestige goods) found within ancient households, but will also correlate this data with the varying sizes of houses within these communities (if there are varying sizes), and how bigger houses reflect upon the socioeconomic status of the community. More generally, big houses are considered to be a particular interest of household archaeology because they often reflect relationships between the size of the house and the size of the household, roles of storage and privacy, and the activities that took place within the structure (Coupland and Banning 1996: 1-2). In this paper I intend to show if an exclusive number large houses within a community made up of smaller houses corresponds to the concentrations of prestige goods within that same community, and how these two bodies data coincide to create a picture of wealth within that settlement. I will then extrapolate this information to compare the three settlements to one another.

### III. Theory and Methodology.

The much of the previous research on Iberians cited in this paper is done by Spanish and Catalan archaeologists. The theoretical development of the archaeology within Spain and Catalonia is important to draw out prior to the analytical research of the aforementioned academics' work. Archaeological theory did not develop identically in all nations contemporarily; for example, archaeology diverged from Classics in the US prior to when it split in the UK (Millett 2012). In this same way, Spanish archaeology developed distinctly from both US archaeology and British archaeology. The development of the field of archaeology both in Catalonia and Spain as a whole was largely impacted by the Franco dictatorship. Thus, Spanish archaeology (especially after late 1970s and early 1980s hires) was especially receptive to left-leaning ideologies. The archaeology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century modern Iberian Peninsula seemed to skip the processualism period of archaeology, and seemed to go straight from historical archeology straight to post-processualist archaeology. The reason that Spanish archaeology was able to “skip steps” was because it had stayed comfortably within the microdetail-focused historical materialist archaeology to move on to the post-processualist tradition. Post-processualism ideas like postcolonialism, contact, agency, collective action, and *manipulation of the past*, all fit well within the comfort zones of the archaeologist that were hired from the 70s-80s and came to power during the late 80s and 90s. However, Spanish and Catalan archaeologists argue that the ideals of post-processualism still work within the framework of modern archaeology (without having ‘evolved’ via the steps that archaeology took in other nations), because they can be “treated without falling into the relativism and idealism that characterize” the more recent discussions of Spanish archaeology. In relation to the Franco dictatorship, and how it affected the development of the institution of archaeology in Spain, it is especially important to not fall into

the manipulation of the past (Berrocal 2013: chapter 1). The traditional cultural-historical archaeology worked so well in Franco-era Spain because it allowed academics to manipulate the historical record for “preferred explanations,” until the late 70s, when the nation was finally moving into its post-Franco period.

Prior even to this question of the development of the theoretical basis of the archaeological work done by Spaniards and Catalans on the Iberians, there was the influence of the archaeological methods of France and Germany. One of the earliest works on the Iberians, written in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Prehistòria catalana* (1919), was authored by Pere Bosch i Gimpera. Bosch i Gimpera was born in Barcelona, and educated at the University of Barcelona, but did his field training in Germany with forerunning German archaeologists of the time, Edward Meyer, Hubert Schmidt and Gustaf Kossina. Adolf Schulten, a German archaeologist that ended up working intensively on the Iberian Peninsula, and published *Tartessos* on the pre-Roman peoples of the Iberian Peninsula in 1922. With Bosch i Gimpera, he ended up creating the greatest compilation of ancient sources on Hispania.

Celtic archaeology really expanded from the classical vision come the twentieth century, especially after the two World Wars. Prior to the nineteenth century, archaeology concerning the Celts was of the antiquarianism tradition, and was led by the British, French, and somewhat the Germans, as well (Cunliffe 1996:11-16). While the newer image still retained the stereotype of the warrior intent on feasting and raiding, they also developed a more “homely, creative appearance in contrast to other barbarians,” and received a greater emphasis on their artistic and technical achievements (Cunliffe 1996: 17). The initial approach to “discovering” the Celts in Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula as opposed to west central Europe was made by Pere Bosch i Gimpera, too. The “hearth-and-home” interpretation of the Celts was the major change to their

image in the twentieth century, and as the 21st century approached, the only further adjustments of research have been a greater focus on coinage and oppida. The pan-European image has remained culturally and politically relevant and appropriate in Europe. The most important point to stress about the changing perceptions, ideologies, and archaeological work regarding the Celts is that the changing global political climate of the nineteenth into the twentieth century held reign over the large conglomerate “Celtic” group. Specifically, the Celts went from raiders broaching new territories for his kin during the imperialist nineteenth century, to the developed, artistic, protective craftsman in the twentieth. The Celts had previously been so unknown and the ideas about them so conflicting that the Celt became an “allegory” for changing European civilization (Cunliffe 1996:18). This theme of manipulating Celtic archaeology and culture continues into the modern day with the reawakening of Celtic culture and its reinterpretation (including in the form of neo-Druidism).

Wealth, in the most basic sense, is a surplus. In the sense of pre-Roman indigenous peoples, then, an appropriate definition of their wealth would be a surplus of goods that the society would regularly have a minimum working amount of (in the same way that a wealthy person today is someone with a lot of extra money to buy things beyond what they simply need to survive). These goods are things like agricultural crops, trade goods, metals, horses, or slaves for the ancient Iberians, and was largely the same for the Celts with a special emphasis on metals (and perhaps less so on horses, since horses were somewhat an Iberian specialty). The most accessible product to the largest number of the population within these societies are the trade goods (like Greek drinking vessels and other Greek ceramics, wine amphora), metals, and crops (to some extent). As such, I will focus on the first two of these in my paper as indicators of wealth. Trade goods and metals would also have the distinction of being prestige goods, meaning



that they were more difficult to obtain than something like a locally made ceramic, and so the acquisition of such objects translated into a symbol of wealth (and economic power) (Earle 1997). Prestige goods are a popular theme in archaeology and their significance to the archaeological record is inestimable. At the same time, how these goods are interpreted changes, as is the case with all data within anthropology and archaeology. As the theory behind anthropological and archaeological work changes, so too does the outcome of the interpretations of the data.

Archaeological theory related to big houses has often been related to speculation about large kin groups and social structures, use of space, and adaptation to climate. In this paper, however, I would like to address household archaeology theory relating to economic prosperity and organization of societies. According to Netting (1982) household size is associated with economic status, and Smith (1987) even more specifically states that household goods are associated with economic status in agrarian societies (Coupland and Banning 1996:1). One of Matson's main arguments in his comparison of Northwest and Southwest indigenous domestic arrangements is that economic organization is reflected in household organization and the physical domestic structures themselves (Matson 1996:116). Banning, too, argues that "larger households, and large structures to house them" can be a "response to economic incentives" (Banning 1996:182). A larger household, as Banning points out, is better able to be successful agriculturally, and thus support more exchange for imports, or support an elite (Banning 1996:182). Banning uses the example of the prehistoric Near East and Matson's work focuses on the Northwest coast and Southwest of North America, but I propose that similar theoretical ideas be applied to the pre-Roman, Iron Age Western Mediterranean. Certain Iberian settlements especially make the case for reflections of the economic status and organization to be reflected in

certain larger domestic structures. Comparing a big house to a common, smaller house, both in size/structure and concentrations of prestige goods, would then produce the conclusion that certain communities would have experienced different levels of wealth, and inequality.

My methodology in this paper is a combination of literature review, original research, and reinterpretation of existing data. Examples of archaeology of prestige goods and households and houses are not in short supply. In fact, there is a wide range of work done both in the worlds of Celtic archaeology and Iberian archaeology today. Research on Iberian house structures has already been done by academics like María Carme Belarte, and analysis of Greek ceramics in Iberian sites has been done in multiple contexts with a varied application of hypotheses (archaeologists like David Asensio, Enriqueta Pons, Rafel Jornet, Jordi Morer, Joan Sanmarti, and Joan Santacana are frequently coauthors on many of the articles included in my research on Iberian goods and settlements). I have excavated at Pontós, and spent time working on the floor of a house. I have also visited the restored site at Calafell with Jordi Morer, one of the directors at Pontós that also played a major role in the excavation at Calafell. My first-hand experience in Catalonia allows me to conceptualize the site reports and analysis of the features of the sites, as well as to visualize the context of the data the authors are discussing. For my discussion of the Celtic site of Lattara, I rely on review of a select group of sources- namely, analyses done by Benjamin Luley, and a wide survey of information on the Celts of western Mediterranean France from a book by Michael Dietler. This paper then focuses more on the reinterpretation of existing gathered data, and explaining how my hypothesis of its interpretation fits within the wider realm of archaeological work and theory. My work is unique because it simultaneously considers three distinct villages of two separate cultures, and how the popular modern theme of wealth would have operated in the terms of ancient peoples that did not necessarily rely on coinage or

monetary symbols, but other symbols of economic power; by considering what items these peoples valued (in the economic sense), how they gathered that value, and the subsequent social implications of amassing these items brings the ancient world into context with the modern.

#### **IV. Archaeological Findings.**

##### **A) Houses: Size and Structures**

House size and the relation between the sizes of different houses within a community allow archaeologists to draw conclusions about the hierarchy and inequality, “wealth,” and function of a site during its inhabitation. In the cases of Pontós, Alorda Park, and Lattara, there is one major difference that cannot be ignored. The two Iberian sites display not only larger and more complex houses than those of the *oppidum* at Lattara, but the variety of the structures within each settlement also reveals that there was a definitive degree of inequality at Mas Castellar de Pontós and the Citadel of Alorda Park at Calafell that Lattara simply did not have. The variables that make this comparison less definite are the many definitions of houses and possible uses and interpretations of space (especially in the ancient world) that exist. However, based off of a fairly simple definite of the house as a space, and the understanding of what/how many rooms construct a “house,” the assessment here significant. The sheer uniqueness of each settlement when cross-examined with one of the others allows for a reasonable environment of interpretation and analysis. The major takeaway from this analysis of house size and structure is that the Iberian sites irrevocably had greater levels of inequality amongst its inhabitants than those of Lattara.

Mas Castellar de Pontós presents a unique archaeological site not only in the global sense, but also within the smaller community of data of just Iberian sites. It is remarkably large, and is considered now to have been a “rural specialized settlement” (Belarte 2008:176). To clarify this

point, Pontós was supported widely by agricultural activity, evidenced by the silos surrounding the site throughout the centuries. It was not a mining community. It was, of course, fortified for the first two of its three periods of occupation, as Iberian settlements are wont to be, by walls and towers (Belarte 2008:177). Its continuous occupation has been divided into 3 periods or phases: the first, fortified phase began in the 7<sup>th</sup> century that lasted about 100 years until the second phase, which consisted of the 6<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. The third phase of Pontós began in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and lasted until the Roman conquest in the 2<sup>nd</sup>. These phases are characterized primarily by different stratifications of building on the site; so different buildings correspond to these distinct periods of Mas Castellar 0, Mas Castellar I, and Mas Castellar II. The period Mas Castellar I is the phase associated with a well-documented fortified town that was in use from at most 425 BC until 375 BC (period III) (fig. 4). It was later, during the excavations between 2009 and 2011, that a prior structure was discovered. The fortified town of Mas Castellar I was constructed immediately over its predecessor's remains- which had been destroyed in a “traumatic and brutal manner” (Asensio i Vilaró, Pons i Brun 2015:22).

The evolution of Pontós as a settlement is completely atypical in how it changes between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries (Asensio i Vilaró, Pons i Brun 2015:23). Its occupation dates to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, most notably beginning with the structure that I describe below, ES516 (the building described as being a part of Mas Castellar 0) (fig.3). Prior to its destruction, this building's internal

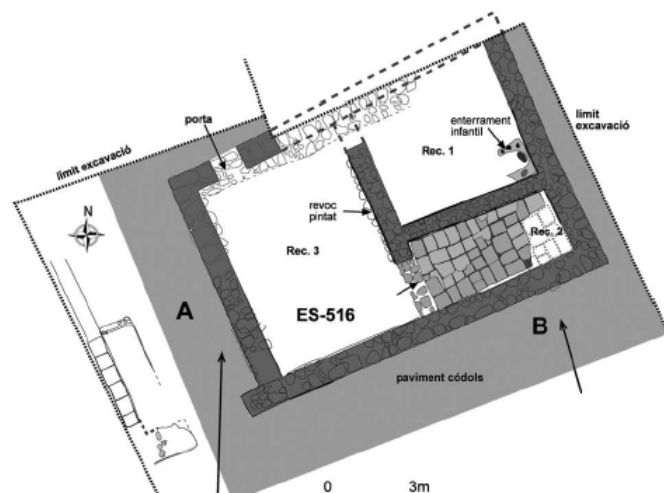


Figure 3. Mas Castellar 0 (ruined at the beginning of the 4th c.BC) (Asensio and Pons 2016:127).

subdivisions were paved with adobe of varying colors, its walls were plastered and painted with red decoration, with walls designed most probably as a defense. The building, while not quite as massive, had roughly the same floor and dimensions as the tower that was later built on top of its rubble. This

succeeding fortified structure consisted of a central nucleus structure, several fortification walls, and a huge tower that had a rectangular floor (base) 11.5x7 m.

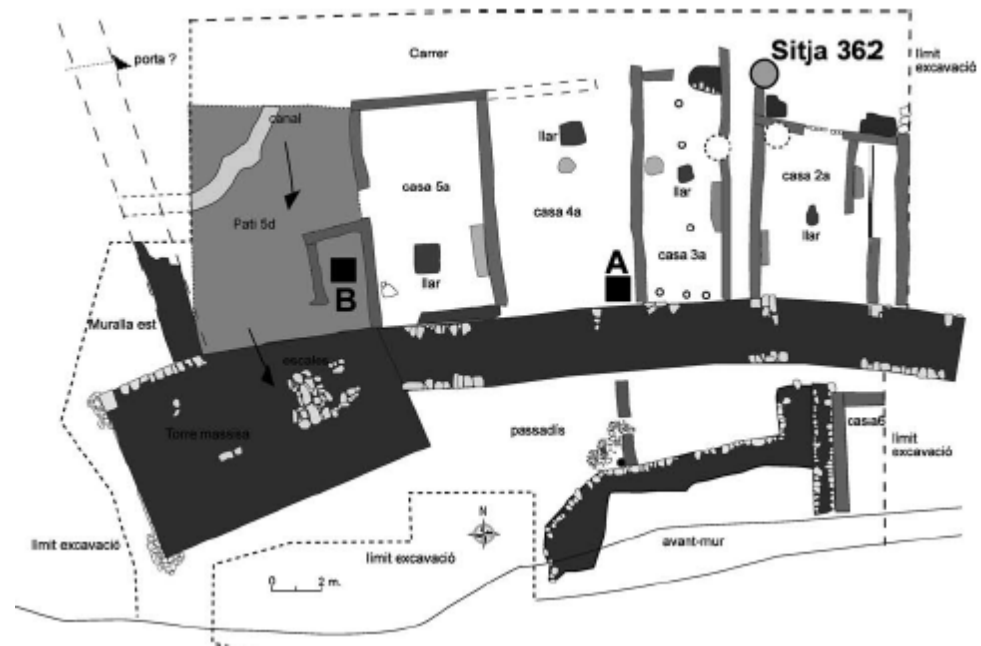


Figure 4. The fortified town of Mas Castellar I (period III: 425-375BC) (Asensio and Pons 2016:129).

There was a large, open patio in between the walls (from which the tower was accessible), and a “battery of rectangular areas” along the wall, which were simple domestic units (with an interior area of between 35 and 45 m<sup>2</sup>). The diverse sample of material culture found in the fortified settlement, including a fragment of a sandstone sculpture of a cat, as well as a deposit of Attic ceramics that were either of high quality or unusual, characterizes this miniature citadel where the local ruling class probably resided (Asensio i Vilaró and Pons i Brun 2015:22). The combination of the features of this second structure- the defensive walls, center, tower, and turret that created a funnel-shape, the battery of domestic structures along the southern wall- form a settlement easily recognizable as an Iberian *oppidum* of the northeast area of the peninsula (fig. 4) (Asensio, et al 2017:126).

The final and most recent settlement built at Pontós follows its predecessors in its unique characteristics. The third and final phase began around 250 BC and last until about 175 BC.

This final village was *not* fortified (unlike the grand majority of indigenous settlements), and was built on the upper part of the eastern slope of the hill that makes up the center of the entire area Mas Castellar de Pontós inhabited over more than five centuries. The majority of the area that was excavated of this settlement was

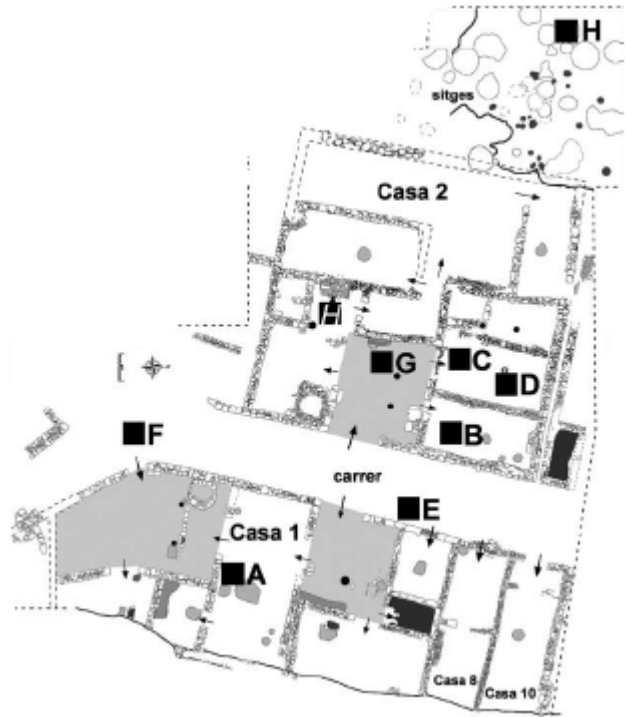


Figure 5. Mas Castellar II (250-175BC) (Asensio and Pons 2016:133).

comprised of two large houses separated by a big center street. The first of these large houses (Casa 1) had a square area of 438 m<sup>2</sup>, and the other 484 m<sup>2</sup> (basically mansions by ancient standards) (fig.5). They each had an open patio, with porticos supported by columns with rock bases; these houses (which Asensio and Pons describe as a sign of a new sector of habitat) are

interpreted as having been inhabited by families of high rank not only by their structures, but also by the material culture they contained.

Alorda Park has been nearly completely excavated (unlike Pontós) and is even partially reconstructed. Its period of occupation represents the entirety of the Iberian era. It is considered to be a fortified site with residential function (Asensio, et al 2005). Alorda Park is not only key because of these two facts, but also because from it archaeologists were able to draw the evolution of the Iberian house from the sixth to the fourth to the third centuries and so on. This makes it a very good example for discussing how Iberian houses changed and represented their society.

The earliest houses in the settlement were simple one-room structures, which come the fourth century became more compartmentalized (some were subdivided into 3 rooms) and larger. By the third century, the houses in Alorda Park became both more complex and more diverse. It is in this third period that houses became truly massive and representative of inequality within the



Figure 6. A recreation of the Citadel of Alorda Park, Calafell (Belarte Franco 2010).

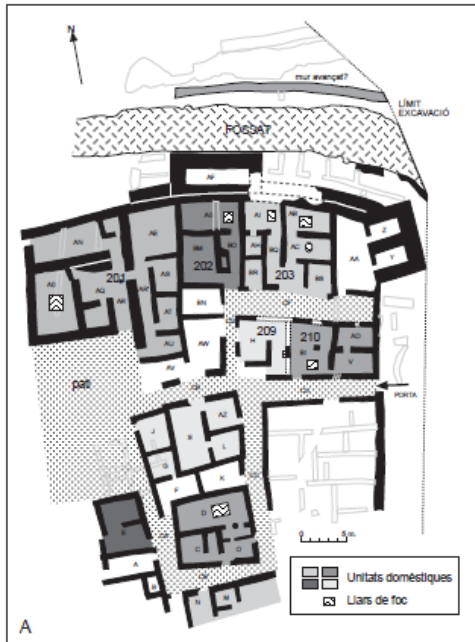


Figure 7. Diagram of the houses of Alorda Park (Calafell) during the 3rd century (Asensio et al. 2005).

settlement. These houses have between one and ten rooms (some even with annexed rooms) and surface areas between 15 and 280 sq m. Only three houses in this final phase of building exceeded the surface areas of the ‘average-sized’ house; the majority of the houses had more than two rooms, and a surface area of between 40 and 60 sq m. The largest of these three even had a second story, and it is this house that truly impresses with its central courtyard and its *opus signinum* floor (house/casa 201) (fig. 7) (Belarte 2008:188-189). It is

also within the floors of this house that the largest concentration of infant burials was found.

Lattara is easily recognizable as a Celtic *oppidum* because of how the settlement is structured (fig. 8). It features walls around its perimeter, a tower and turrets (or simply multiple towers), and domestic structures within the walls in addition to the structures outside of the wall. Walls are almost always interpreted as means of defense, especially in the case of *oppida* in areas where colonization was happening. Sometimes walls

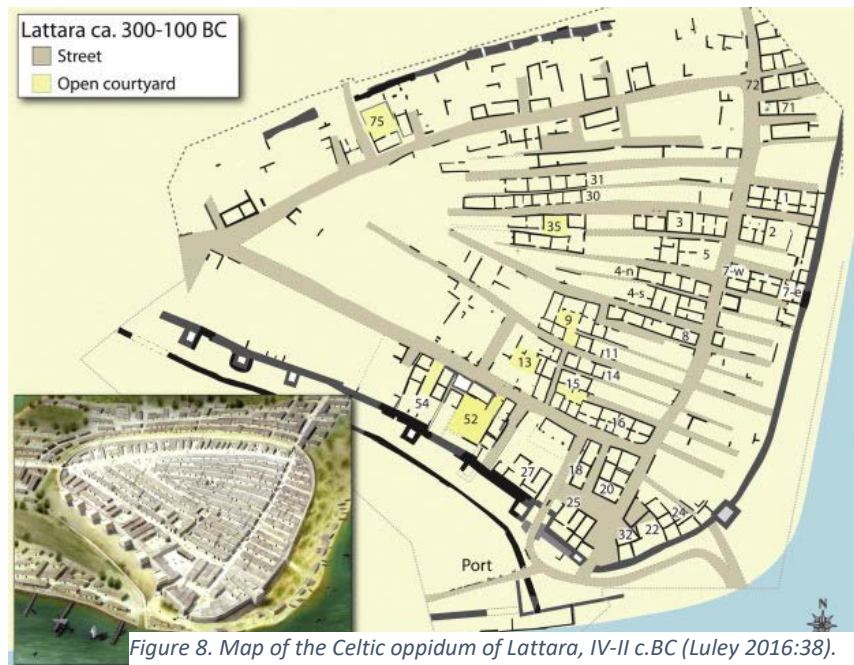


Figure 8. Map of the Celtic oppidum of Lattara, IV-II c.BC (Luley 2016:38).



were only built around a town after foreigners arrived- for example after Phoenicians or Greeks settled a new colony in the area (Dietler 2015). Towers were also a feature meant for defense and featured an entrance within an adjacent courtyard or plaza within the walls. Domestic structures within the walls were often organized into long, narrow rows. However, at Lattara there are examples of courtyard houses, which had the square or rectangular rooms oriented around a center courtyard; these courtyard houses are similar to the two large houses at Pontós, which each also featured central courtyards. At Lattara, however, the equal distribution of storage rooms and prestige goods leads experts like Benjamin Luley and Michael Dietler to hypothesize that these courtyard houses were not associated with a higher class of individuals, nor a concentration of wealth within particular groups.

The subject of houses is still somewhat unclear at Lattara. The exact social organization is not certain, so defining what a house or dwelling was becomes more difficult. In the basic, physical sense of a house being “individual rooms [that] were sometimes grouped together into larger units connected by internal doorways,” it is even still difficult to really discern what of the rooms grouped together would have constituted a “house” (Luley 2016:38). Despite the controversy over what a “house” was in ancient Lattara, the domestic spaces have been observed as “quite austere, with no monumentality or ostentation in terms of size or decoration” (Luley 2016:38). These courtyard style houses did not show up until the third and second centuries at a few settlements, but at Lattara (as well as the rest of the region), “small open courtyards in the front of houses that served as locations for domestic activities...[existed] as early as the fifth century BC” (Dietler 2008: 262,284). On the topic of the evolution of the house in Mediterranean France, Dietler states that:

the change in structure was from irregular oval or rectangular single room constructions to neatly rectangular units, and, eventually (during the Late Iron Age), to domestic units composed of multiple rooms of this type. The arrangement of these houses also changed from detached units with variable intervening spaces and orientations to tight alignment in contiguous clusters in rectilinear fashion, separated by streets onto which the domestic units opened (2008:263).

The changing structure of the domestic units and how they were built together in a community, in combination with the traits of walls and towers and the location on an easily defensible position (like a hill or port) create the full picture of an *oppidum*. However, at Pontós and Alorda Park there is evidence for larger houses among these smaller, bare, rectangular houses, too, which support the idea that the Iberians developed as a hierarchical society. This regularity in the domestic structures present a strong case for a relatively egalitarian society with no overwhelming centralized concentrations of wealth- although, considering the uncertainty about how many of the small units made one “house,” it could be feasible. The additional data that really cements the idea that the inhabitants at Lattara lived in egalitarian comfort is the archaeological evidence of storage rooms. Iron Age societies (in Iberian and Celtic societies of the Mediterranean alike) stored their agricultural goods in silos just outside the city center or in the fields beside the houses, and then in dolia in storage rooms. Dolia are massive ceramic containers that usually require small pits to be dug for them to sit upright in, which are discernable and recognizable in the stratigraphy. The evidence for storage rooms at Lattara shows a relatively even distribution across the settlement, and the rooms face out onto the street. If the storage rooms were being used by an elite retaining power over the goods, these rooms would have been concentration to only one or two areas, and they almost definitely would not have faced out onto the street (they would have been guarded rooms, not easily accessible on the street) (Luley 2016:41).

## B) Prestige Goods

From the data presented above, inequality within the ancient settlements of Pontós and Alorda Park is apparent in the differing sizes of houses. Lattara is distinct because the houses within the walls of the *oppidum* are all of the same size of two to three rooms. The concentrations of prestige goods within Pontós, Alorda Park, and Lattara individually tell us about a few possibilities of the ownership and usage of the rooms. For example, a high concentration of prestige goods within the rooms of one house, but the lack of similar goods in any other houses is a sign that there was economic inequality between these two houses. At Pontós, the evidence for a situation like this is strong, because the remains found within the largest house(s) are of much higher quantity of imported ceramics and amphorae (what I am using as my examples of prestige goods across all three settlements) as compared to rooms of smaller houses. Over the periods of occupation of Alorda Park, there have been multiple, contemporary houses consisting of more than three rooms (and in some, more than one floor), and each of these houses contained relatively high percentages of remains of imported ceramic and amphorae (relative to other nearby Iberian villages). While Alorda Park has been categorized as a citadel that functioned as the seat of an elite group, and Pontós as a specialized rural settlement, these labels “elite” and “rural” do not have direct connotations on the relative “wealth” between the two. In fact, comparing the sizes of the settlements in addition to their respective amounts and concentrations of imported goods reveals that Pontós was overall “wealthier” in the sense that there were both higher concentrations across more rooms as well as a great overall total amount of prestige goods. Lattara, however, presents a completely distinct set of data. Lattara’s percentage of imported goods versus that of their local ceramic is not as outstanding as that of the Iberian settlements, and these prestige goods are spread out fairly

evenly throughout the community. Its lack of particular concentrations of these prestige goods draws new parameters within which the methods of the evaluation of wealth then change. By this I mean that the measure of wealth within Lattara cannot be done in the same way as within Pontós and Alorda Park. While the manner by which the wealth within the settlements changes, the comparison across the three settlements altogether (or, even, across the cultures) becomes much more difficult. From these analyses, a comparison within each city and between the three, I suggest that 1) there were differences in “wealth,” and 2) these differences result in an assumption that Mas Castellar de Pontós experienced a level of access to imported goods that would make it the wealthiest out of the three settlements examined here.

In addition to these multiple phases of building, Pontós is also home to large quantities of Greek materials. As a settlement equidistant between Emporion and Rhode, it would be expected that the inhabitants of Pontós acquired more Greek ceramics. A primary example of the distinctiveness of Pontós is the building ES516; ES516 has been the subject of some debate- as to whether it was a sanctuary or religious building, or if it was a fortification. More recently the some of the directors of the site, Asensio, Pons, Morer and Jornet, have come to the conclusion that ES516 was a common structure type for the indigenous settlements of the zone, and that the structure may have been of the palatial type- but its exact function is not yet clear and certain (Asensio, Pons, et al 2015; 2017). From the second half of the sixth century to the mid-fifth century, ES516 was a large multi-space construction. It consisted of one center, rectangular block that was divided into three rooms. This center space had thick walls of 68-70 cm. At the time of publication of this article, only one of the three rooms had been completely excavated (enclosure 1 and 3 were only partially excavated, while enclosure 2 was completely excavated). In enclosure 1 (the smallest of the three central enclosures), an infant burial was discovered in

the corner. In the pavement of this same enclosure were discovered carbonized cereal grains, indicating that the room was probably used for storage. The floor of enclosure 2 was made up of adobe. To the west of this center block was enclosure 4, and to its south wall was enclosure 5. Evidence tells us that enclosures 4 and 5 were probably not roofed. They were separate from the center block; they had their own entrances and were not connected to enclosures 1, 2, or 3 via any doorways.

These external enclosures present some of the most interesting evidence about ES516. In the layers of the stratigraphy, the authors extrapolated from the findings (like an even, uniform layer of destruction) that there was probably a fire dating to the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. From this layer of destruction in enclosure 5, some exceptional (but poorly conserved) artifacts were found (125). This included bronze plates, supports, sconces, and cauldrons or bowls, all deformed by the fire, but remarkably intact nonetheless. In addition, a support for an Attic *lebes* (an Greek cauldron that would usually have a tripod sacrificial support, but was in this case more of a tiny pedestal) was found amongst the ceramic furnishings; the authors specifically point of this piece because it is without parallel in the entire region- *including* Emporion itself. Enclosure 4 is nearly identical to enclosure 5 in its structure (width of walls and entrances, open enclosure). In the layer of destruction in enclosure 4 held a massive amount of imported ceramics, within which there was a majority concentration of fine tableware. In fact, the Attic ceramics represent 80% of all of the ceramics uncovered from this collapse layer.

The ceramic found at Pontós are vital to the archaeological interpretations of the site. Ceramics are fundamental to any site, one specific reason (of many) because they give context to the stratigraphy. But the ceramics at Pontós are especially important because they represent a uniquely large and varied group of artifacts for one archaeological site. The amount of imported

ceramic increases exponentially in Phase II-III (450-425/400BC; Phase II/III is contemporaneous to the destruction of building ES516) to 56.5% of all pieces. Within this number, 90% of the pieces are pieces of fineware (fine crockery/better quality ceramic), an incredible change in the composition of imported ceramics. Exogenic amphora (amphora coming from external sources) made up a little over 8% of the composition, and the overwhelming majority (80%) of these pieces were Punic (Asensio et al 2017:129). The rest of the amphora were varying Greek types. The kitchenwares, however, represent a “monopoly” of Greek materials. The overall amount of imported ceramics increased, but fine Attic ceramic imports also experienced a change: figure and black varnish Attic ceramic imports went up, while gray monochrome pieces disappeared (Asensio et al 2017:129). Fine gray monochrome ceramic (also of Greek production- western Greek, specifically) made up the overwhelming majority of ceramic imports during Phase IIa (525-450 BC), which corresponds to when building ES516 stood (Asensio et al 2017:126-129). The final phase, Phase III (425/400-375/350 BC), is that of the fortified oppidum (Mas Castellar I) (Asensio et al 2017:133; Asensio i Vilaró, Pons i Brun 2015). The most notable changes about the composition of ceramics during this time are: importations dropped from 56.5% to 28.9%, Attic figure ceramic consumption dropped while black varnish Attic ceramic increased, and imported amphora doubled in number since Phase II/III (Asensio et al 2017:133).

In the final phase of construction at Pontós, Mas Castellar II, the two palatial houses at the upper-eastern side of the hill that makes up Mas Castellar present another set of artifacts. The exceptional artifacts uncovered between the two houses include a column that represented the marble altar of the Pentelic, *Ostrakon* (sherds of ceramics with inscriptions) ceramics that correspond to those from Emporion, black-varnished terracotta that featured a representation of

the funeral of Eros, and remains of plaster decorations (with remains of blue and red paint) meant to represent cornices, ova, garlands, and scrolls (Asensio i Vilaró, Pons i Brun 2015:23).

Based on the data presented in these recent articles on Pontós, it is easy to reinforce the idea that Iberian settlements existed in the form of hierarchical society. So, too, according to the archaeological material record, it is not uncalled for to suggest that certain inhabitants of Pontós enjoyed an especially high level of “wealth,” to our best understanding. Comparing the material culture at Pontós to that of Alorda Park also reveals that within the loosely linked federation of pre-Roman settlements, there was some variation to access and possession of materials that functioned as prestige goods.

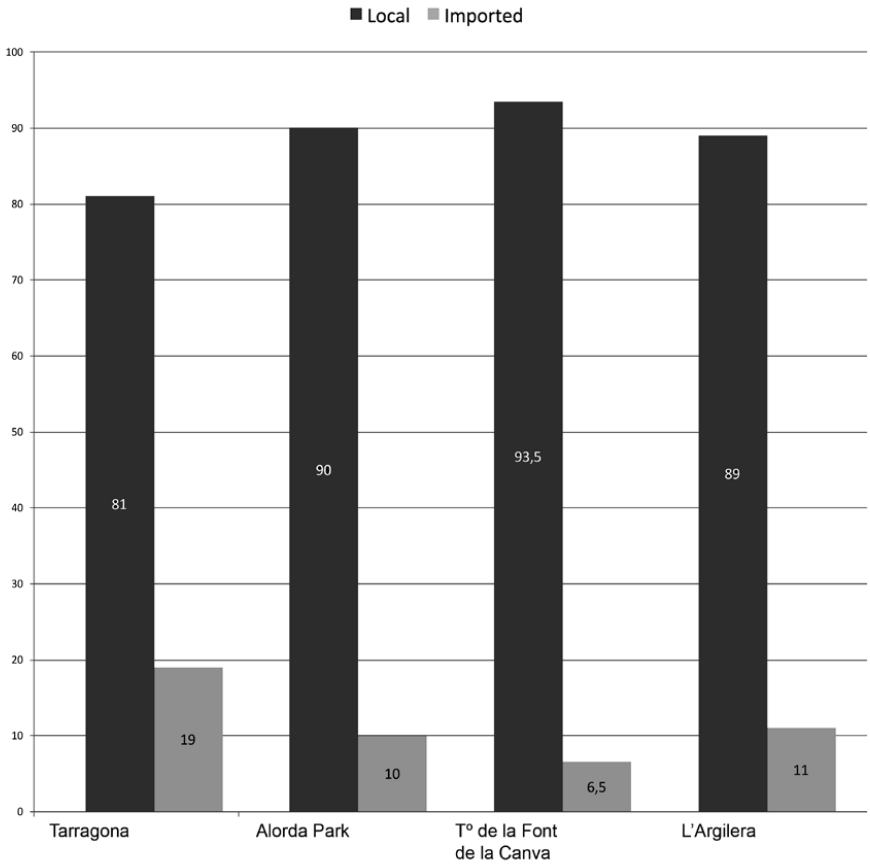


Figure 9. Percentages of the 4th century BC imported pottery in the same area along the central coast of Catalonia (Sanmartí and Asensio 2017:342).

states that the combination of the composition of the houses, in addition to the prestige goods,

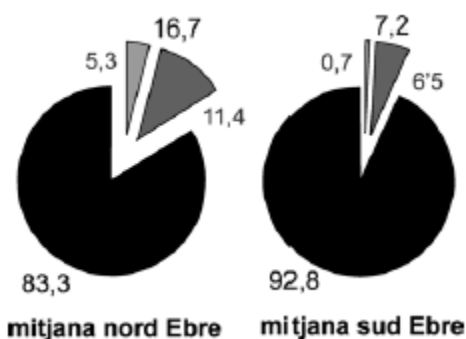
The excavations of Alorda Park in Calafell reveal “high quality imported materials” (Belarte 2008:189). Belarte

plainly

are interpretable as indicators of the wealth of the inhabitant of the miniature citadel, and that it was likely the “seat of the local Iberian elite” (2008:189). The fact that such a high quantity of these ceramics is imported is important because in the interpretation of the goods at this site, exogenous goods are considered to be prestigious goods, which then are a direct product of the hierarchical social segments (Asensio i Vilaró 2016:211). The demolition of this fortified settlement “provided a rich ceramic set (with 47,686 fragments and 1,796 weighted individuals), in which 19.8% are imported vessels (354 Ind.), distributed between 16.3% of tableware and commodities (289 Ind.) and 3.6% of amphoric containers (65 Ind.)”:

“Aquesta ciutadella aristocràtica fou abandonada entorn de 200 aC, amb uns estrats d’enderroc de cases, carrers i espais defensius que han proporcionat un riquíssim conjunt ceràmic (amb 47.686 fragments i 1.796 individus ponderats), en què el 19,8% són vasos d’importació (354 ind.), repartits entre un 16,3% de peces de vaixel·la i comunes (289 ind.) per un 3,6% de recipients amfòrics (65 ind.)” (Asensio i Vilaró 2016:211).

Another article presents different statistics considering the local versus imported pottery at Alorda Park. According to Sanmartí and Asensio (2017), a 10% maximum of all counted ceramics are imported at Alorda Park, opposed to the 90% of indigenous ceramics (fig. 9) (342, 343). The percentage of amphorae, which Sanmartí and Asensio consider the most valuable ceramics amongst the imports, at Alorda Park is an astounding 42.3% of all the imported



*imported ceramic individuals from the main urban centers in the north and south of the Ebro river (light gray: import amphoras, dark gray: fine tableware and common import ceramics, black: local production ceramics” (Asensio i Vilaró 2016:216).*

ceramics (343). So, too, do these authors point out that at Alorda Park a remarkable quantity of Attic ceramic (in comparison to other Iberian settlements in the area), but its distribution within the community is too irregular to draw any definitive conclusions about the social stratification of the citadel (343). However, these high levels do not mean that there are not even greater amounts of valuable artifacts elsewhere. In



fact, in the case of Alorda Park, sites north of the river l'Ebre such as Mas Castellar de Pontós prove this exact point (fig. 10) (Asensio i Vilaró 2016:215-216).

The number of indigenous or local ceramic fragments at Alorda Park is of such a high number that it is significantly more difficult to quantify than the imported ceramics and amphorae. Because of this, a specific algorithm was needed to reduce the number of fragments down to a reasonable number of individuals (whole ceramicwares). Usually, Iberian archaeology employs MNI, or minimum number of individuals, to find an approximation of individuals within a section of a site (Asensio i Vilaró 1996:63). To quantify the Iberian ceramics, they are first divided into painted and nonpainted, then into small, medium, and large containers. After categorizing the sherds, the mathematical algorithm is used, and the total number of Iberian fragments is reduced overall by an estimated 3,000 fragments (Asensio i Vilaró 1996:65, 67). The point of this process is to create a workable number with which the imported ceramic number of individuals can be contrasted (fig. 11). As a result, a more accurate measurement of the volumes of ceramic is available for comparisons like the aforementioned imported versus local, as well as for calibrating a better idea of how the volumes of ceramics changed over time

(fig. 12). This data helps distinguish between the different periods' inhabitants' access to these goods, which can lead to any number of interpretations of the different periods.

Combination of even distribution of prestige goods (traded goods) and the absence of signs of monopolization of agricultural goods point towards a more egalitarian community at Lattara than those of Alorda Park and Pontós. Control over cereal grains in the ancient world not only meant control over the survival of the rest of the community, but amassed surplus grains also translated to economic power. Cereal grains could be traded for things like wine and ceramic vessels from foreign traders, giving an individual or group with control over grains the ability to

increase their  
wealth via  
acquisition of  
goods (Luley

2016:39).

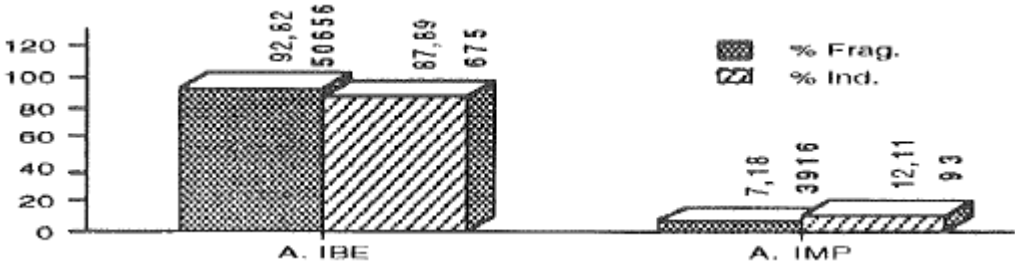


Figure 11. Iberic vs. imported amphorae (a global number throughout phases I, II, and II) at Calafell (Asensio i Vilaró 1996:67).

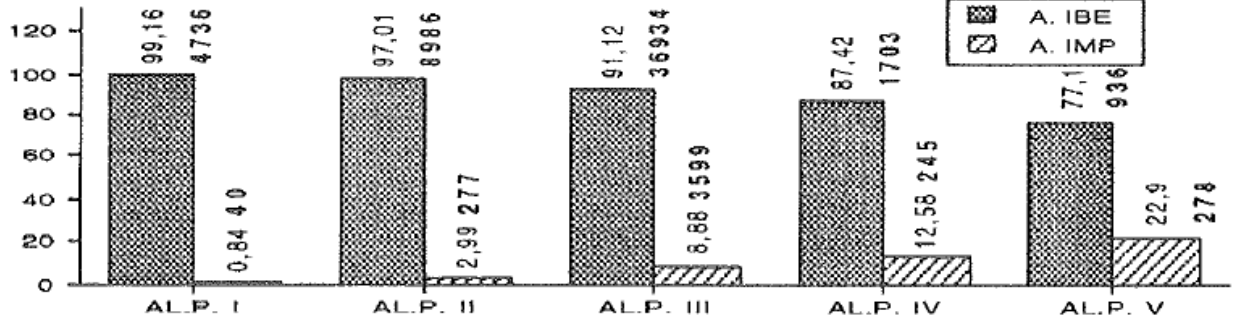
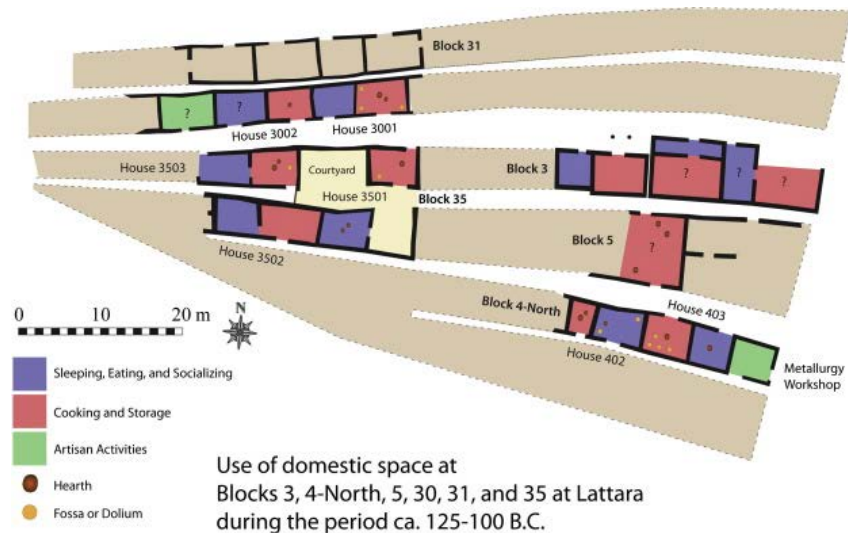


Figure 12. Iberic vs. imported amphorae per each temporal period at Calafell (Asensio i Vilaró 1996:67).

Imported goods at Lattara appear not to have any specific concentrations in any areas of the settlement. Although these goods have an even distribution across the village, certain rooms



have greater concentrations than others. However, this is interpreted as being related to the specific room's function, as opposed to separate houses containing greater concentrations (fig. 13)

Figure 13. Domestic space use based on archaeological evidence (Luley 2016:39).

(Luley 2016:43). The black

gloss fineware and amphorae were prevalent ceramic “prestige goods” at Lattara. Between 375 and 325 BC, the earliest period of ceramic data (contemporaneous to the previously mentioned fortified oppidum occupation at Pontós) described in Luley’s 2016 article on inequality in Eastern Languedoc, amphorae made up between 35 and 75% of ceramics, from block to block. Black gloss fineware stayed below 10% of all ceramics, no matter the block. Based only on these statistics, compared to Pontós especially, Lattara would have had a drastically lower level of wealth as a community.

Since the furniture and other items that would have functioned as prestige goods do not represent a large portion of the remaining material record at Lattes, and no overwhelming necropoleis excavated, I propose two different interpretations of the so-called “wealth” at Lattara. Either there was not a large body of these goods in ancient Lattara (within the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, especially prior to the Roman conquest), and the oppidum was relatively humble compared to settlements like Pontós, or the absence of evidence is not evidence for its absence

(Cunliffe 1997), and there is simply no way, as of yet, to compare the productivity and wealth of Lattara to Pontós or Alorda Park to the south. This second solution is the less controversial and the more acceptable of the two in terms of modern anthropological theory. So, too, might we consider the length of time Lattara was occupied (the 6<sup>th</sup> through the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries), and its continued occupation despite Greek colonies to each side, and conclude that Lattara definitely did not struggle to produce nor acquire the amount of goods to support a settlement of its size (Dietler 2008:260). To this point I reiterate that we have no definite understanding of how ancient peoples understood “wealth;” inequality unquestionably existed, at least to some degree, in most indigenous settlements in the Iron Age, but how the elite groups acquired their power is unclear from people to people, and settlement to settlement. Economic and military power are the most effective methods to achieving this hierarchical dominance, but there is simply no evidence to suggest the affirmative use and consequence of these at Lattara and more to suggest the opposite (Earle 1997:13).

## **V. Conclusion.**

In this paper, I have presented data representative of the respective wealth of the ancient Mediterranean settlements of Mas Castellar de Pontós, Ciutadella d’Alorda Park (Calafell), and Lattara. Mas Castellar de Pontós and the Ciutadella d’Alorda Park are both Iberian settlements located in Catalonia, and Lattara is a Celtic settlement in southern France. First, I presented contextual information on who the Iberians and Celts were, after which I reviewed some theoretical background. This included a brief history of Spanish and Catalan archaeology, theory on prestige goods, and theory about the analysis of houses in archaeology. Finally, I offer my own interpretation of an accumulation of data on Greek ceramics and amphorae from Pontós, Alorda Park, and Lattara. All three of these ancient settlements traded with the neighboring

Greeks, most often with their ports of Massalia, Rhode, and Empurion. I have proposed that in order to define a particular settlements' wealth, the quantity of trade artifacts like amphora and ceramic (specifically Greek ceramics; prestige goods), in addition to house size and structure, may be used together to determine an estimation. I used examples of both house size and artifact concentration to make an informed estimation about how wealthy these towns were, because large house size alone may not point towards more wealth in the settlement, but rather just more inequality. I then compared the three Iron Age towns and their respective degrees of "wealth" in order to determine how they are different. The Iberian and Celtic cultures are very similar and have many crossovers in their material culture. By establishing an estimation of how these three settlements compare in their wealth, there is a distinct way to differentiate between the indigenous groups of the Iberian and Celtic and demonstrate inequality in the ancient world.

The evidence of the archaeological records at Pontós, Alorda Park, and Lattara informs the conclusion that Pontós enjoyed a high level of trade and a great abundance of "wealth," while Alorda Park and Lattara both traded frequently, but do not present as impressively huge concentrations prestige goods in relation to their settlement size and structure in their material culture. These settlements' geographical locations, especially in relation to the important Greek trade colonies of the western Mediterranean area, are key to the amount of imported goods found at each site. It is entirely possible that it is the distances between the settlements and the Greek trade colonies had a direct effect on the amount of imported goods at each site; and as another factor to this point, the possibility that Pontós was within the radius of a theoretical *khora* of Emporion (like a suburb to Emporion's urban center) would play a massive role in increasing its access to these goods, in addition to explaining its periods of destruction (Asensio and Pons 2015:128). In the interest of continuing and expanding upon this research, I would suggest that

the high “level of wealth” in Mas Castellar de Pontós, and lower “level of wealth” in Lattara, be used to extrapolate an idea about how the inequality of wealth is reflection in social inequality. The Ciutadella d’Alorda Park at Calafell would probably sit outside of this analysis, or at the least require special consideration, because it is a seat or concentration of the higher end of the hierarchy of the Iberian society. Ideally, the questions to be addressed in the future would include whether these settlements grew in their wealth, or if the inequality grew? Did one family or a certain group hold most of the “wealth” and therefore most of the power? Or were wealth and political power unrelated? Perhaps the wealthy held power over those in political power due to their wealth. By determining how wealth and social power relate to one another in these three settlements, we can further discover how unequal power and wealth affected the development of state-level societies. I would be particularly interested in the question of power distribution in Alorda Park, and how this is reflected in the concentration of infant burials. In addition, I would ask why these three settlements have evidence of differing classes of wealth- perhaps it was merely the population size and density. Overall, I would like to stress that while I propose Pontós to be “wealthiest” in terms of its size, houses, and volumes of prestige goods, what has essentially been measured in this paper was these individual settlement’s access to these goods, and their material in equality in terms of house size.

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I affirm that I have upheld the highest principles of honesty and integrity in my academic work and have not witnessed a violation of the Honor Code.

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