

LAGOBRIGA EXPUNGED: RENAISSANCE FORGERIES AND THE SERTORIAN WAR

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Since the 16th century, scholars have thought that the modern Portuguese city of Lagos (located on the southern coast, in the Algarve) is the site and onomastic survival of an ancient city named Lacobriga (or Lago-briga, Laccobriga). So axiomatic has this assertion become, that any book on or map of Roman Iberia will indicate a city named Lacobriga some twenty miles east of the *Promunturium Sacrum* (Cape St. Vincent) on the site of modern Lagos.¹ I hope to show here that this identification is erroneous, as are two ancillary assumptions made by Schulten and most scholars: namely (1) that the Lacobriga, or properly, Langobriga, besieged by Metellus during the Sertorian War was located at Lagos, and (2) that the surrounding area, the Algarve (southwestern Portugal), was a major theater of operation in that war.²

The identification of Lagos-Lacobriga was first suggested by André de Resende. His grounds for the assertion were (1) Pomponius Mela's mention (3.1.7) of a Lacobriga somewhere on the southwest corner of the peninsula and (2) the similarity of the names.³ Resende may also have been aware of Plutarch's life of *Sertorius*, chapter 13, in which a city named Langobriga was besieged by Metellus and relieved by Sertorius. Plutarch does not locate the city, but Resende may have been eager to see Lagos as Mela's Lacobriga so that he could claim it was the Langobriga of Plutarch and thus put Sertorius in the general vicinity of Evora. Indeed, Resende's determination to make Evora Sertorius' headquarters led

¹ E.g., J. O. Thompson, *Classical Atlas* (London 1961) 48; R. Menendez-Pidal, *Historia de España* II (Madrid 1935) map, pp. 120-21, illustrating "Las Guerras Lusitanas;" A. Schulten, *Sertorius* (Leipzig 1926) 61, 71; *Fontes Hispaniae Antiquae* I (Barcelona 1937) 37; *RE* 346 (Schulten); *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* = *PECS* (Princeton 1976) 476 (J. Alarcão); A. Tovar, *Iberische Landeskunde* II (Baden-Baden 1976) 208; P. Mackendrick, *The Iberian Stones Speak* (New York 1969) 191. All dates are B.C.

² Thus Schulten, *Sertorius* 71; and following him, Menendez-Pidal 215; Tovar 208; *RE* 356 (Schulten). Cf. Broughton, *MRR* II 85, note 3.

³ *Libri Quatuor De Antiquitatibus Lusitaniae* (Eborae 1593), liber quartus "De Lacobriga."

him into more than geographical error and merits a short digression on his career.

The remarkable André de Resende was born in Evora (Alemtejo) in 1498 and educated in the Spanish Universities of Alcalá and Salamanca, where he studied Latin, Greek and Hebrew with such luminaries as Antonio Lebrija. After an eventful career as scholar and educator in various cities in Europe, he returned to his home town of Evora and established a school for Humanistic studies.⁴ Here he dedicated the rest of his life to teaching, writing about the local antiquities and forging inscriptions.

From his labors have issued several stones and two books of interest to this study. One of the books, *De Antiquitatibus Lusitaniae* (1593), contains the Lagos-Lacobriga identification mentioned above. The other, *Historia de Antiquidade do Cidade de Evora* (1553), contains a number of assertions about Evora which must either mystify or amuse a student of the Sertorian War. In chapter III of his History, Resende tells us that in return for the excellent services of an Evoran cohort, Sertorius made Evora his headquarters, built a house there and surrounded the city with a wall which also served as an aqueduct.⁵

Resende apparently learned all of this from two inscriptions. One of these, which he merely claimed to have seen before it disappeared, he transcribed, dutifully, in his writings and it is recorded, skeptically, by the *CIL* (II, 14°). It tells of the Evoran cohort and the aqueduct (see note 9). The other inscription survives, and is also listed in the *CIL* (II, 12°). Resende claimed he found this one in a building called the "house of Sertorius" in Evora. Fittingly, the inscription is for the health and safety of Sertorius' house, dedicated to the Lares by one Junia Donace, his maid, and three of his freedmen.⁶

As it happens, this surviving inscription is clearly a fake and is so labeled by the *CIL*. The one he only claimed to have seen once probably never existed. Other entries in the *CIL* associated with Resende which mention Q. Sertorius (II, 11° and 15°, his presumed epitaph) are also spurious figments of Resende's civic pride or antiquarian enthusiasm.

But even before the 19th century and the *CIL*, Resende's forgeries and consequent claims for Evora had met with spirited skepticism. In

⁴ *Grande Enciclopedia Portuguesa*, ad loc.

⁵ Resende's *History of Evora* is reprinted in a modern edition of his works, *Obras Portuguesas* (London 1963). See pp. 16-17.

⁶ Resende quotes the inscription in full in his History, *Obras* 17:

LARIB. PRO SALUTE ET INCOLUMI-
TATE DOMUS Q. SERTORII COMPETA-
LIB. LUDOS ET EPULUM VICINEIS
JUNIA DONACE DOMESTICA EJUS ET
Q. SERTOR. HERMES. Q. SERTOR CE-
PALO. Q. SERTOR. ANTEROS LIBERTI.

Resende's own time, the Bishop of Vizeu went so far as to say that Evora's so-called Sertorian wall-aqueduct had never carried water, nor could it have, nor had Sertorius ever been in the town, nor was the wall even Roman.⁷ Worse yet, the good Bishop said all this to the Portuguese King, João III, whom Resende was at the time trying to persuade to "restore" the aqueduct for historical and practical reasons. Resende therefore fired off an "Apologia pelo aqueduto de Sertorio" and managed to give it, in the king's mind at least, sufficient Sertorian pedigree to warrant restoration.⁸ João apparently "restored" the aqueduct in 1532. Later, in 1605, Philip II made further improvements and set up in the city's "Forum" three Latin inscriptions commemorating (1) the aqueduct's original construction by Sertorius, (2) the restoration by João III, and (3) Philip's own maintenance of the structure. The first of these is basically the text of that inscription Resende had claimed to have seen once (*CIL* II, 14°).⁹

⁷ *Obras Portuguesas* 18: "... nem a agua ca viera jamais, nem podia vir, nem Sertorio aqui estevera, nem a obra era romana ..."

⁸ *Ibid.* 18, note 3. What remains of Evora's wall is apparently of the 3rd c. A.D. (*PECS* 290 [Alarcão]). See also A. García y Bellido, "El recinto mural romano de Evora Liberalitas Iulia," *Conimbriga* 10 (1971) 85–92. The so-called Temple of Diana in Evora is so-called because Resende wished to connect it with Sertorius' patron deity (*Plut. Sert.* 11.3). It is probably imperial, of the Antonine period. Cf. G. Pereira, *Estudos eborenses* I (Evora 1947²) 37–42; F. J. Wiseman, *Roman Spain* (London 1956) 182; R. Etienne, *Culte impérial* ... (Paris 1958) 220–21; M. Almagro Basch in *Symposion de ciudades augusteas* I (Zaragoza 1976) 205.

⁹ I photographed and transcribed these inscriptions in the summer of 1977. They read as follows:

- (1) Q. SERTOR
HONOREM NOMINIS SUI ET COHORT. FORT
EBORENSUM MUNIC. VET. EMER. VIRTUTIS ERGO
DON. DON. BELLO CELTIBERICO DE QUE MANUBIIS
IN PUBLIC. MUNIC. EIUS UTILITATEM URB
MOENIVIT EOQUE AQUAM DIVERSEIS IN DUCT . . .
UNUM CONLECTEIS FONTIB. PERDUCENDAM CURAV.
- (2) IOANNES III LUSITAN. INDIAR ET IN AFRICA REX
CELEBREM AQUAE ARGENTAE DUCTUM A Q.
SERTORIO AN. LXXV ANTE D. CHRISTUM NATUM
EXTRUCTUM BARBARIE ET ANTIQUITATE FUNDI
TUS DEMOLITUM NOVA FORMA LIBERALI IMPEN
SA MAIORI AQUARUM COPIA ADIECTA XVII MIL
PASS DUCTU VERSUS P.P. IN URBEM REDUXIT
ANN. SALUTIS MDXXXII
- (3) PHILIP II AQUAM A Q. SERTORIO AB AGRIS
OLIM DIVORUM NUNC ODIVOR PERDUCTA
ET A IOANNE III RESTITUTAM REGNI ET PIE
TATIS HAE RES MUNIFICENTIA REGIA CONSER

All three of these monuments plus the dedication to the Lares by Junia Donace *et al.* are now in the basement of the Museo de Evora along with some empty paint cans, scrap lumber and another of Resende's putative creations (again featuring Junia Donace), which I have not seen published elsewhere:

I.O.M.
OBPULSOS A Q. SERTOR·
METEL. ADQ. POMPE IUN
DONACE CORONA ET SCEP
TR EX ARGUMNUSADTULIT
FLAMIN.PHIALA CAELATAM
HIERODULIS COENAM D.D.

Resende died in 1573 and has gone down in history as one of the great 16th-century forgers of inscriptions.¹⁰ Though his efforts to put Sertorius in Evora have failed, the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* has elevated the idea to the status of a "tradition."¹¹

Resende's forgeries, of course, do not prove that he was wrong about Lagos and the Lacobriga of Mela. There is, however, no evidence, literary, epigraphical, archaeological or onomastic to support such an identification. The tenuous similarity of the names proves nothing. There are at least thirteen cities in Portugal and Spain named "Lagos." As for any archaeological record: the scanty excavations done at Lagos around Monte Molião reveal no evidence of an Iberian city. There was clearly some considerable Roman occupation of the coastline in and around Lagos from the imperial period onwards, but pre-Roman finds are not common and there is no archaeological or epigraphical evidence for a pre-Roman, or, as the name, Lacobriga, suggests, a Celtic community at Lagos.¹²

This leaves us with the literary testimony of Mela. Resende had probably read him in an edition which had been emended at 3.1.7 to read *Lacobriga*, when in fact the MS reading is corrupt: *Lattobrigal*. Lacobriga is a reasonable emendation because there were other cities in Iberia by

VATAM CURAVIT BENEFICIS BENEFICUS
PONI STATUIT CIPPIS EBORENS ANTIQUAM
NOBILITATEM ATTESTANTIBUS FORUM

ILLUSTRAT ANNO·DOM·MDCV

¹⁰ Sandys, *Latin Epigraphy* (Groningen 1969) 27 f., and Hübner, *CIL* II, p. xi 17.

¹¹ PECS 290 (J. Alarcão): "According to one tradition, Sertorius established his base of operations in the peninsula here."

¹² A. Viana *et al.*, "Alguns objectos ineditos do Museu Regional de Lagos-Monte Molião," *Revista Guimarães* 62 (1952) 1-2; "De lo pre-Romano a lo Arabe en el Museo regional de Lagos," *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 26 (1953) 113-38. See also Tovar 208 and PECS 476 (Alarcão). See Schulten, *Sertorius* 71, note 359, for other Iberian toponyms beginning with *Lac-*.

that or a similar name.¹³ But even if one allows an emendation of Lacobriga, the city is not located by Mela on the *southern*, but rather the *western* coast of the peninsula, possibly in the vicinity of modern Setubal, as Braun has shown.¹⁴ Thus the most recent edition of Mela (Ranstrand, Stockholm, 1971) corrects *Lattobrigal* to *Caetobriga*, a city known from other sources to have existed near Setubal.¹⁵ But the city in question need not have been on the coast. Mela's formula for locating cities in this passage is imprecise and problematic.¹⁶ Given this and the textual crux, the Mela passage alone is very poor evidence for locating a city of any name, anywhere.

There is, however, other evidence for a city called Laccobriga in the vicinity of Setubal, in an area consistent with Mela's location of the city in question. Ptolemy (2.5.5) mentions a city of the Celtici, a *Laccobriga*, which according to his coordinates would have been due east of Olisipo (Lisbon), just across the Tagus estuary. Thus, if Mela's text is to be emended to Lacobriga, his city may well have been Ptolemy's Laccobriga. It is interesting to note here that Schulten (following Müller) also makes this connection, but he assumes that Ptolemy's coordinates for latitude were incorrect and so moves Ptolemy's Laccobriga down to the south coast, where he assumes Mela has clearly placed a city of that name.¹⁷

There is no evidence, then, for a city called Lacobriga at Lagos, and we come now to the matter of the city besieged during the Sertorian war (probably in 78). If it was not at Lagos, where was it? Plutarch, as we have

¹³ Resende must have read *Lacobriga* in his edition of Mela. Had *he* conjectured Lacobriga from *Lattobrigal* he probably would have said so. But he does not (see note 3). Other cities named Lacobriga were: one north of Pallantia, a city of the Vaccae (Pliny 3.26; Ptol. 2.6.4.9; *Ant. Itin.* 449.3); another east of Olisipo (Ptol. 2.5.5, see below). The city mentioned by Festus, p. 118M, is not located.

¹⁴ F. Braun, *Quellen und Forschungen*, Heft 17 (Berlin 1909) 40. The Mela passage (3.1.7 Ranstrand) reads as follows: *At Lusitania . . . in tria promunturia dispergitur: Anae Proximum . . . Cuneus ager dicitur, sequens sacrum vocant, magnum quod ulterius est. in cuneo sunt Myrtili, Balsa, Ossonoba, in sacro Caetobriga et Portus Hannibalis in magno Ebora. sinus intersunt: et est in proximo Salacia, in altero Ulistippo et Tagi ostium . . .* That Salacia and Olisippo are the cities in the bays created by the three promontories shows that the cities mentioned on the central promontory (i.e., Caetobriga and Portus Hannibalis) are thought of as being on the western not the southern side of Lusitania. See note 16.

¹⁵ Ptol. 2.5.2; *Ant. Itin.* 417.2. See Tovar 215 for a full discussion of the city.

¹⁶ For example, Mela names Ebora (Evora) as the city on the *promunturium Magnum*, although it is well inland and in no way part of a promontory. He also equates the *promunturium sacrum* with Cape Espichel. See Braun (above, note 14) for a discussion.

¹⁷ See Müller's text of Ptolemy (1883–1901) *ad loc.* (2.5.5) and Schulten 71. Part of Schulten's determination to place the war in the south stems from Sallust, *Hist.* 1.119: *Ille Conisturgim apud legiones venit. Ille* is probably Metellus. Conisturgis' location is not known (see Tovar 209). Even if it was in the Algarve as Schulten claims (p. 70), the Sallust fragment may mean only that Metellus was wintering his legions there as did Sulpicius Galba in 151–150 (Appian, *IB* 58). There is no implication that Metellus and Sertorius fought there.

seen, does not locate the city, nor does he actually name it; rather he names the people who live there. He calls them the *Langobritae* (*Sert.* 13.4), from which Ziegler in the Teubner text (1964) makes the reasonable emendation of *Langobrigae*: *-briga* being a common termination of Celtic town names throughout Iberia. The city's name, then, was *Langobriga* and *not* the presumed *Lacobra* of Mela or the *Laccobriga* of Ptolemy. Most modern writers overlook the fact that the di-gamma in Plutarch's city is the Greek rendering not of a *c* or a double *c* but of an *ng*.¹⁸ Now admittedly, Plutarch's lack of precision in transliterating proper names renders inconclusive any argument based on his spelling alone. But there was in fact a *Langobriga* in ancient Lusitania. It is mentioned on the *Antonine Itinerary* (421.7) as thirteen Roman miles south of *Portus Cale* (modern Villa nova de Gaia) just south of the Durius river. Plutarch does not give sufficient circumstantial detail to allow a certain identification of his city with this *Langobriga*, but he does imply that there were some mountains nearby,¹⁹ and the *Langobriga* of the *Itinerary*, although its exact location is not known, was in an area just east of which is a formidable ridge of hills or mountains rising to 1200 feet.²⁰

It seems, then, that the *Langobriga* of the *Antonine Itinerary* is the best candidate for the *Langobriga* of the Sertorian war. It was in Lusitania proper, the land of Sertorius' allies in this war. It fits the spelling of Plutarch's *Langobriga*, and it fits his circumstantial description, such as it is. Previous Roman commanders fighting the Lusitanians are known to have fought precisely in this area. Brutus Callaicus, for example, subduing the Lusitanian tribes in 136, conquered the town of *Talabriga* (Appian, *IB* 73), which is also on the *Itinerary* (421.6), listed as eighteen Roman miles south of *Langobriga*. Moreover, M. Perperna, Sertorius' lieutenant, captured *Portus Cale* at some point during the war (Sallust, *Hist.* 3.43). *Cale*, as we have noted, was only thirteen miles from *Langobriga*. There is good reason to believe, then, that Sertorius and Metellus fought in this area, and that northern Lusitania, the area north of *Olisipo*, towards and beyond the Durius river, was the theater of operations in the early part of the Sertorian war.

¹⁸ Cf. Procopius, *History* 6.22.11–12, where the Langobardi are rendered Λαγγοβάρδι; and 5.15.29 where Langovilla is Λαγγοβίλλα.

¹⁹ *Sert.* 13.5: ἄνδρας . . . ἐπέμψε διὰ τῆς ὄρεινῆς. Mommsen (*RG* III 21) and Bienkowski ("Kritisches Studien über Chronologie u. Geschichte d. Sertor. Kriegen," *WS* [1891] 156), think Ptolemy's *Laccobriga* east of the Tagus was Plutarch's *Langobriga*; but aside from the orthographic discrepancy, there are no mountains anywhere near the site of Ptolemy's *Laccobriga* (see Stahl, *De Bello Sertoriano* [Diss., Erlangen 1907] 50 f.). The *Lacobra* north of *Pallantia* (see note 13), aside from the orthographic problem, certainly seems too far north for an encounter between Sertorius and Metellus at this time (79–78).

²⁰ On the location of the *Antonine* *Langobriga* see Tovar 257 f. The town was no further south than Feira, and probably west of the mountain ridge (the western edge of the Serra do Caramulo) on which runs the modern National Highway (E50).

There is no evidence, in any case, that Sertorius and Metellus ever campaigned in southern Portugal, certainly not as far south as Lagos and the Algarve.