LATE ANTIQUE AND EARLY MEDIEVAL IBERIA

Rebecca A. Devlin

Bishops, Community and Authority in Late Roman Society

Northwestern Hispania, c. 370-470 C.E.

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Late Antique and Early Medieval Iberia

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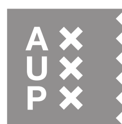

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To my family and especially Sam

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List of Abbreviations and Preliminary Notes

Abbreviations

CTheo	*Codex Theodosianus*
Not. Dig. Occ.	*Notitia Dignitatum in Partibus Occidentis*
PL	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina*
LV	*Leges Visigothorum*

Notes

All dates used will be CE unless otherwise noted.

Citations generally will follow Chicago Manual of Style and American norms for the capitalization of titles even when this is contrary to the publication custom of the country of origin, except in the case of journal titles. However, in the interest of space, the first citation of a source in each chapter only will include the author's last name, source title, year, and relevant page numbers. Subsequent references within each chapter will be limited to the author's last name and the page number, unless multiple works by the same author have been used in the manuscript; in such cases, a shortened version of the title will be included for clarity. The full record of the publication information can be found in the bibliography.

For clarity, in some cases the ancient names for cities and settlements have been used; when it is known, the modern place name, or the approximate location, is provided in the text within the chapters with the first mention of the site. In most instances, the modern names are used; when the ancient site names are known, they are provided in the text.

For consistency, Spanish conventions and spellings have been used for rivers, other bodies of water, and most geographic features, even when they appear in modern Portugal. However, some features have been translated to English for clarity.

All translations, photographs, and maps are my own, unless otherwise noted.

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1 Introduction: The Clerical Communities of Late Roman Gallaecia

Abstract: The fourth and fifth centuries were critical for the transformation of the episcopate in Gallaecia. A case study approach that assesses the social and economic motivations of particular clerical leaders and all status groups in the communities they served demonstrates that power did not automatically transfer to the church with the withdrawal of Roman imperial authority, and highlights the role the people had in creating a society centered around ecclesiastical leadership. Building on new scholarly approaches to heresy, the late Roman economy and non-elite contributions, and close readings of historical and archaeological evidence, this chapter argues that Gallaecian communities were part of larger late Roman religious, economic, social and political networks, and successful participation within them contributed to increasing ecclesiastical authority.

Keywords: Priscillian of Ávila; Orosius of Braga; Hydatius of Aquae Flaviae; the Suevic Kingdom; the late Roman economy; the Fall of Rome

Introduction

In 460, a band of Sueves captured the bishop Hydatius and held him hostage for several months in his church in Gallaecia, a Roman province in northwestern Hispania, modern Spain and Portugal (Figure 1.1).[1] The Sueves were a Germanic group who had entered Hispania and settled in Gallaecia several decades before, and Hydatius had acted as an ambassador between them

1 Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 196, 202, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana: Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire*, Burgess, ed. and trans. (1993), 112–115.

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and Roman authorities on numerous occasions.[2] The bishop's captivity in 460 served as a tool for negotiating a peace agreement; by the time he was taken by the Sueves, Hydatius had earned a reputation as a valuable patron to the people in the region, and it was known that without his protection lucrative rural estates and coastal settlements could be raided.

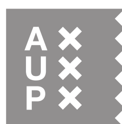
This example provides insight into the vital political, social, and economic roles bishops had within their communities in the later fifth century. Prior to the legalization of Christianity in the early fourth century, the influence of bishops was limited to guiding congregations on the margins of Roman society, but by the Early Middle Ages ecclesiastical leaders such as Hydatius had become important not only as spiritual advisors, but also as judges, diplomats, and civic protectors.[3] Moreover, by the sixth and seventh centuries bishops in Gallaecia and elsewhere in the Latin West held significant economic and social authority, controlled substantial estates, and oversaw large numbers of dependents, including enslaved individuals and freed persons tied to the church in perpetual patronage bonds.[4]

Much scholarship on the expansion of the episcopate's function in early medieval society has assumed that bishops filled a vacuum of leadership

2 It is difficult to determine from the extant sources the exact origins of the Sueves. Ancient Roman sources used the identifier to refer to a non-Roman group from the eastern end of the upper Danube. However, it is not clear if the Sueves in Gallaecia represented continuity with this group, since the term "Sueve" does not appear in sources after the first century until it is used in the context of their movement into the Iberian Peninsula in the early fifth. The group that settled in Gallaecia may have been associated with the group called "Quadi" in fourth-century Roman sources. Kulikowski, "The Suevi in Gallaecia, an Introduction" (2015), 134; Díaz, *El Reino Suevo (411–585)* (2011), 70–72. For other discussions on the origins of the Sueves and the degree to which there was continuity with those who moved to the Iberian Peninsula in the fifth century, see Droberjar, "The Emergence of the *Suebi* and Further Developments in Bohemia" (2018), 35–44; Tejral, "Suebi North of the Middle Danube" (2018), 45–60.

3 Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle, Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (2012); Van Dam, "Bishops and Society" (2007), 343–344.

4 Devlin, "Separating the Secular from the Spiritual: Wives, Sons and Clients of the Clergy in Late Antique *Hispania*" (2019), 343–347; Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (2005), 172; Barbero, Vigil, *La Formación del Feudalismo en la Península Ibérica* (2015), 53–54, 61–65, 103–104; Orlandis, Vázquez de Prada, *Historia Social y Económica de la España Visigoda* (1975), 96–101; Martínez Díez, *El Patrimonio Eclesiastico en la España Visigoda; Estudio Histórico Juridico*, vol. 2 (1959), ch. 1, 19–20. Ian Wood suggests that by 700, a third or more of western Europe was held by the church. Peter Brown argues this occurred through the gradual shift away from acts of public euergetism to munificence focused on attaining the treasure of heaven through gifts to the church and the poor, which contributed to the "managerial role" bishops assumed in the sixth century. Wood, *The Transformation of the Roman West* (2018), 81–83, 95–98, 101; Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, especially ch. 4, 376–380, 481–502.



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created by the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Yet the extension of ecclesiastical influence was not a simple consequence of the legalization of Christianity and a power deficit caused by the withdrawal of imperial authority.[5] Instead, the development of the episcopate was the result of dynamic processes to which all levels of society contributed, and which are best understood through close contextual and diachronic analysis. The research presented here builds on current trends in historical and archaeological inquiry that view the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the expansion of Christianity, and the emergence of medieval society as part of a long process of social, political, economic and cultural transformation. By moving away from assumptions that power automatically transferred from imperial and local secular authorities to the church, I am able to integrate more fully the role the people themselves had in creating a society centered around ecclesiastical leadership.

In the late third century, the emperor Diocletian initiated a reorganization of the Roman Empire and the creation of new provinces, including Gallaecia, which had previously been part of Tarraconensis (Figure 1.1). In 409, various tribes entered the Iberian peninsula, one of which, the Sueves, eventually set up a kingdom in (roughly) what was once Gallaecia, though they did at times expand their territorial holdings.[6] Starting in the late fourth century, bishops from Gallaecia were censured for their alleged participation in what was assumed to be a unique heresy: Priscillianism. Moreover, while the majority of Hispania was incorporated into the Visigothic Kingdom after the withdrawal of Roman authority in the fifth century, Gallaecia continued to be ruled by the Sueves until 585. Details such as these often have been used to support arguments for historical exceptionalism and to inform modern debates about regional and national allegiances, causing Gallaecia to be largely neglected in discussions of the late Roman and early medieval periods in Europe. However, I have not chosen to focus on northwestern Iberia because it was distinct from other regions of the late Roman Empire. By contrast, close readings of the available texts and analysis of new and existing archaeological evidence confirm that Gallaecia was part of larger social, political, religious, and economic networks. Thus, this study contributes

5 Claudia Rapp provides a useful overview of the various approaches in the scholarship concerned with the interpretation of the public role of bishops in Late Antiquity. Rapp, 7–13.

6 For interpretations of what constituted Gallaecia and the Suevic Kingdom, including maps, see Díaz, *El Reino Suevo*, 53–54, 78–79, 117–126, 153–154, 191–206, 295–298; López Quiroga, *El Final de la Antigüedad en la Gallaecia: la Transformación de las Estructuras de Poblamiento entre Miño y Duero, Siglos V al X* (2004), 30, 39–42, 374–375; Núñez García, Cavada Nieto, *El Nacimiento del Cristianismo en Gallaecia: Manifestaciones Pagano-Cristianas en los Siglos I–IV* (2001), 15–17.

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to the growing body of scholarship that challenges the view of Gallaecia as unusual or marginal.[7] In addition, historians and archaeologists now commonly accept that the best way to understand the late Roman and early medieval periods is in the context of particular historical circumstances and regional varieties.[8] In short, the norm throughout the Roman world was diversity at the local level. To understand the transformations that took place fully it is necessary to examine each region within its own specific context, and incorporate these assessments into our overall picture of the transition to the post-imperial period.

The fourth and fifth centuries were critical for the transformation of the episcopate.[9] As the example of Hydatius' captivity shows, even by the later fifth century, when the Romans still considered Gallaecia part of the Western Empire, bishops already had cultivated images of themselves as patrons who could be relied on to serve the social and economic needs of their communities, as well as to offer protection in times of distress. Accordingly, this book focuses on the specific clerical community in Gallaecia in the late fourth through late fifth century. By employing an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates both written and material evidence, this investigation puts bishops such as Hydatius in their larger social and economic contexts to elucidate how their roles within their local communities expanded.

7 See, for example, Sánchez Pardo, "Late Antique Atlantic Contacts: the Case of Galicia" (2020), 94; D'Emilio, ed. and trans., *Culture and Society in Medieval Galicia, a Cultural Crossroads at the Edge of Europe* (2015); Fernández, *El Comercio Tardoantiguo* (*Ss. IV–VII*) *en el Noroeste Peninsular a Través del Registro Cerámico de la Ría de Vigo* (2014), 479–481. For the problematic nature of the narrative of particularity, see Díaz, *El Reino Suevo*, 6–10.

8 For example, Rapp, 10–11; Ando, "Decline, Fall, and Transformation" (2008), 38. Chris Wickham suggests that preexisting social and economic differences in various regions were more significant in terms of post-Roman trajectories than the culture and economy of incoming groups; he also warns against making broad generalizations based on analysis of one region or constructing narrowly-focused national narratives. His comprehensive study shows that although there was regional variety there were also points of comparison, but the foundation of this extensive comparative work is analysis at the regional level. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (2005), 4, 10–11.

9 Purificación Ubric Rabaneda's assessment of the bishops in Hispania has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the expansion of episcopal power in the peninsula, but also in the Roman Empire more broadly. Like others, Ubric Rabaneda is interested in the relationship between the apparent power vacuum caused by the political and military crises of the fifth century, and the development of the church's prestige and presence in society. She emphasizes that the Hispano-Roman aristocracy did not disappear. Instead, classical values endured in Hispania over course of the fifth century; through the relationships they developed with the "barbarians," ecclesiastical leaders became heirs to Roman culture, and the inheritors of "Romanness." My investigation builds on her study and focuses on Gallaecia. Ubric Rabaneda, *La Iglesia en la Hispania del Siglo V* (2004), 39–68, 223–224.

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Figure 1.1 Map of the provinces of Hispania, ca. 400
Courtesy of: Jamie Wood

During the period under investigation, the individuals living and working in the northwestern peninsula experienced numerous transitions before and after the arrival of the Sueves and thus had to consistently develop new strategies to face them. An important component of my analysis is the attention given to the possible social and economic reasons people from all backgrounds—those from high-status groups, but also merchants, retailers, artisans, and other members of the non-elite—chose to give the clergy increasing authority, and how this varied among the different regions of Gallaecia. The application of a case study approach highlights the circumstances of each transitional period, and the various factors underlying the choices members of specific communities made.

Methodological and Theoretical Approaches to Community, Society, Bishops and the Late-Roman Economy

Defining terms

Before moving on, it will be useful to define my use of the terms community and society. There are many areas in which these two concepts overlap, but

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in general they refer to distinct types of relationships. Society and the social realm will denote the more institutional types of interactions that people had and the systems that facilitated them. All the men, women and children living in Gallaecia in the fourth and fifth centuries were part of a larger social system regardless of their status or personal and familiar loyalties. Following Anthony Giddens, I treat the social system as one that is structured by rules and resources, but also assume that the structure and the actors are dual parts of it. In other words, all persons involved are aware of their actions and are situated in a time and place, and draw upon rules and resources to produce and reproduce the social system. This process allows for continuity, but also for change and variety depending on the situation.[10] For all practical purposes, this approach means that diverse members of society, regardless of rank or status, participate in the process of structuration and therefore are accessible to the historian to a certain degree in the written and the material evidence. Thus, we can incorporate non-elite contributions into our assessments while also considering the needs and motivations bishops and other clergy had as members of families and various status groups, and in their roles as new social players within the emerging ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Although individuals have a degree of agency in creating and recreating the social system, membership in it is not necessarily elective, but rather a *de facto* aspect of existence. My use of community, on the other hand, assumes that its members are motivated to a certain degree to preserve and sustain their relationships and the real and perceived manifestations of them. Although individuals may be inspired to participate in aspects of the social realm in order to improve personal or familiar status, there is a greater collective relevance of such acts for a community. For example, a trading community shares an interest in maintaining levels of production, access to supplies, and connections to networks for distributing its goods because these things affect all of its members to some degree. This does not mean that membership in a community is necessarily discretionary, but there is a larger degree of mutual interest. Thus, although membership in a community certainly is dynamic and involves conflict, there are common goals and values among its members. Whether these commonalities owe to vocation, location, or a shared cultural heritage, something connects the members. Finally, communities also have hierarchical elements, especially since they are intrinsic parts of the social system.

For the purposes of this project, the bishops are analyzed not only as members of the community of church leaders, who shared a vocation and

10 Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (1984), 25–26.

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interest in the maintenance and development of religious institutions, but also as participants in localized, geographically based communities. In both arenas they had public and private interests and thus were players in the social system. The Christian communities, comprised of clerical leaders and the laity, of the various Gallaecian regions under examination constitute the central focus of this study. However, individuals in the late Roman world could be active members of the Christian community while still identifying as participants in other groups. Éric Rebillard's treatment of the relationship between Christians and pagans in late antique North Africa as discursive rather than binary offers a useful perspective for approaching the multiple and overlapping groups to which the lay and leading members of the churches in Gallaecia belonged.[11]

Defining the Overall Methodological Approach to the Project

Archaeological and historical writing on late Roman and medieval Spain since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been complicated by various factors, including intense regionalism, the legacies of the restrictive and longstanding policies of Franco, and prevailing attitudes in the peninsula about the Islamic period. Both before and during the Franco regime, the historiographical debates in Spain often supported political agendas, which were largely connected to a deep concern to define and understand modern "Spanishness" through the study of the Middle Ages.[12]

11 This is not unlike today; most people consider themselves to be members of various groups, and identifying with one does not necessary disqualify their sense of participation in another. Rebillard, *Christians and their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (2012), 1–8.

12 The most persistent debate in the twentieth-century historiography of medieval Spain centered on the ideas of Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz and Américo Castro. Both wrote primarily while in exile from Spain during the Franco regime and in the context of the concerns of the intellectuals of the so-called Generation of 1898, who sought to explain the decadence of the Spanish nation. Sánchez-Albornoz held a traditionalist view in that he argued for a Spanish character that dated back to pre-Roman times and which survived a series of foreign invasions: the Romans, the Visigoths, and the Muslims. According to Castro, "Spanishness" only emerged after the "Visigothic failure" or during the Muslim occupation, when the "dynamic tension" of the Jewish people, Muslims and Christians living in medieval Iberia created the modern Spanish cultural identity. To describe this tension, Castro applied the term *convivencia*, which recently has been challenged as an idealized myth. Sánchez-Albornoz, *Spain, a Historical Enigma* (1975), 28; Castro, *The Spaniards: An Introduction to their History* (1971), 48, 65. For recent reassessments of *convivencia*, see Barton, Portass, eds., *Beyond the Reconquista: New Directions in the History of Medieval Iberia* (*711–1085*)*: In Honour of Simon Barton* (2020); Fernández-Morera, *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise: Muslims, Christians, and Jews under Islamic Rule in Medieval Spain*

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The importance of this task and the intensity with which it was pursued has had an enduring legacy even in more recent scholarship, as historians and archaeologists continue to respond to and correct old ideas. This insular debate, which was focused on cultivating a Catholic national identity and the unique circumstances associated with centuries of Muslim rule, contributed to an image of Spanish exceptionalism or particularism, or as an exotic frontier zone for scholars outside of the peninsula.[13]

Strong regional or peripheral nationalist movements, as they often are called, in the eastern region of Catalonia, as well as in the northern Basque Country and Galicia, have also left their mark on the historiography of the Iberian Peninsula and Gallaecia in the late Roman and medieval periods. From at least the late nineteenth century, the political stability of Spain has been threatened by regional identities, which Franco sought to suppress in order to promote the image of a cohesive nation.[14] The peripheral nationalists, however, have asserted that they never were fully incorporated into what would later become Castilian Spain. This means that "nationalist" scholars in these regions have cultivated a history and archaeological past that demonstrates their separateness from the rest of the peninsula.[15] Particularly relevant to the project at hand, is the manner in which this approach has affected how late Roman Gallaecia and the Suevic Kingdom have been studied over the last two centuries. For example, despite a fair amount of current interest in Gallaecia, both archaeological and historical, there has been relatively little recent work on the Suevic Kingdom.[16] As Pablo C. Díaz explains, there have been various ideological reasons for this

(2016); Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (1996), 9; Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (1994), especially ch. 1.

13 Martín Viso, Escalona, "The Life and Death of an Historiographical Folly: The Early Medieval Depopulation and Repopulation of the Duero Basin" (2020), 34–35; Castillo Maldonado, "*Angelorum Participes*: The Cult of the Saints in Late Antique Spain" (2005), 151.

14 Harrison, "Tackling National Decadence: Economic Regenerationism in Spain after the Colonial Débâcle" (2000), 55–59.

15 Díaz-Andreu, "Archaeology and Nationalism in Spain" (1995), 47–54.

16 D'Emilio, ed. and trans., *Culture and Society*, 126. One area of continuing interest, which will not be discussed here, is Suevic coins and mints. They often are used to discuss the relative political power of the Sueves. Fernando López Sánchez, for example, argues that the coins demonstrate that the Sueves did not have real kings because they were connected to the Visigoths throughout the fifth century. López Sánchez, "Suevic Coins and Suevic Kings (418–456): The Visigothic Connection" (2010), 503–508, 535–536. Jorge López Quiroga presents a concise overview of the historiography of the Sueves and the Suevic Kingdom in his recent edited volume. He also notes the limited scholarship, particularly between 1977 and 2011. López Quiroga, "Los Suevos y el Reino Suevo. Un Viaje Historiográfico y un Preámbulo para una Historia sin Principio" (2018), 119–121.

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lacuna in the historiography. Although they essentially established the first Germanic kingdom in the former Roman Empire, converted to Catholicism, and ruled the northwestern region of the peninsula for 165 years, the Sueves have frequently been viewed as nothing more than a "false start."[17] We must contextualize this perception within Franco's opposition to strong regional identities. His regime encouraged studies of the Visigoths, who could be seen as the founders of a united, Catholic "nation," while it viewed the Sueves as a marginal phenomenon.[18] In contrast, supporters of Galician autonomy have had an interest in demonstrating that the Sueves represented a "precedent" or "point of departure" for the common culture that survives in Galicia, thus proving that the region has long been separate from the rest of Spain.[19] Works Galician authors produced in the second half of the nineteenth century that painted a mythical picture of the Sueves to support popular Romantic and nationalistic movements became foundational for later studies.[20]

This project seeks to align with more recent, data-driven approaches to the period by historians and archaeologists who recognize that arguments made about the origins of the Spanish character or to support modern regional political agendas are based on "subjective judgment" rather than evidence.[21] These studies and new archaeological evidence provide an excellent foundation for a reassessment of Gallaecia in the fourth and fifth centuries. In geographical terms, the region under investigation corresponds approximately to the Roman province of Gallaecia and parts of what would later become the Suevic Kingdom. More precisely, this consists of northern Portugal and, in Spain, modern Galicia, Asturias, León, Zamora and western Cantabria, Palencia, and Vallodolid. In broad terms, the eastern border of the area under study is the modern city of Santander and the southern border is the mouth of the Duero River in Porto, Portugal (Figure 1.2).

17 Díaz, *El Reino Suevo*, 6–9.

18 Harrison, "Tackling National Decadence," 55–59.

19 Díaz, *El Reino Suevo*, 9–10. See, for example, Elías de Tejada, Pércopo, *El Reino de Galicia hasta 1700*, vol. 1 (1966), 22, 39–52.

20 For example, historical sources were used to create fictional accounts, such as Galician author Benito Vicetto's novella about the Sueves, published in A Coruña in 1860, which emphasized how the Suevic style of dress and personal characteristics made them distinct from the Goths, while also claiming they were a people who were destined to come to Gallaecia, mix blood with locals and establish a continuous line of rule. López Quiroga, "Los Suevos," 119–121.

21 See, for example, Martínez Jiménez, Sastre de Diego, Tejerizo García, *The Iberian Peninsula between 300 and 850: An Archaeological Perspective* (2018); Chavarría Arnau, *El Final de las "Villae" en "Hispania" (Siglos IV–VIII d.C.)* (2007); López Quiroga, *El Final*. For assessments of older more subjective approaches, see Martín Viso, Escalona, "The Life and Death," 21–36; Boone, *Lost Civilization: The Contested Islamic Past in Spain and Portugal* (2009), 16.

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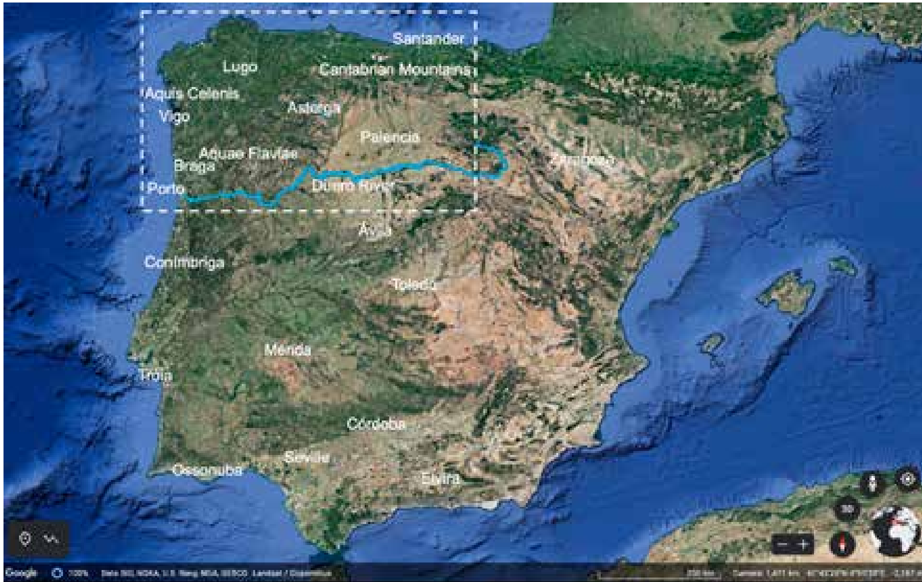

Figure 1.2 Map showing main locations and geographic features of late Roman Hispania mentioned in the text with area of study outlined
Map created by R. Devlin using Google Earth.

Focusing on Gallaecia in the late fourth through late fifth centuries supports numerous factors that have guided the methodological choices for this project. First and foremost has been my keen interest to avoid what Guy Halsall calls the "melting pot" approach to the study of the late Roman Empire and the Early Middle Ages.[22] Since there is a relative scarcity of source material for this period, frequently what is available is looked at in aggregate. However, this approach often compresses time and regional diversity and therefore leads to a homogenized view rather than one reflective of the dynamism behind the social, economic, and cultural changes that took place in the fourth and fifth centuries.[23] For these reasons, this project has been organized into five vignettes or case studies focused on specific Gallaecian clerics and their communities at particular chronological points: three before the arrival of the Sueves and two after.[24] This methodology allows a view of change and continuity over time, while also avoiding essentialized and

22 Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376–568* (2007), 25; Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (1995), 1.
23 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 1–3; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 25, 31–32.
24 Technically, the microhistory in chapter 6 is broken down into several shorter case studies of various Gallaecian episcopal sees at different chronological moments over the course of the fifth century.

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teleological conclusions based on our knowledge of subsequent medieval developments.

In order to construct the most complete view of past social groups it is necessary to analyze all the data available without privileging a single source type.[25] To be certain, the use of both material and written evidence requires a clear methodology so that one source category is not valued over the other. For example, efforts must be made to avoid using the archaeological evidence merely to support or illustrate conclusions based on the written sources. Therefore, I have evaluated the different categories of evidence—material, documentary, numismatic, legal, and epigraphic—separately and according to their specific contexts. After making conclusions based on this level of analysis, I have used these observations to arrive at higher-level explanations.[26] In addition, in order to understand more fully the specific bishops and clerics and the various lay communities they served within their own economic and social contexts, the initial stage of analysis centered on my case studies. To develop them, data was collected from all source types relevant to my questions about the social and economic context of the clerical communities in late and early post-Roman Gallaecia. Next, this evidence was assessed to determine times and places in which there was an overlap in the source material available so that, as much as possible, each study would include analysis of archaeological and historical sources. At this stage, the evidence also was used to detect potentially pertinent developments at specific chronological moments and in particular places. During this process, the beginnings of microhistories involving particular bishops and priests, as well as the local ecclesiastical and secular communities in which they participated, emerged. It became clear that it was possible to focus on specific Gallaecian episcopal sees to develop separate studies, each of which might span around twenty-five years. Fortunately, these microhistories also corresponded to discrete chronological points significant for understanding the dynamic and transformative late Roman period through the eve of the collapse of the Western Empire: in the late fourth century, and then in the early, middle, and later decades of the fifth century. The next step involved collecting more data, asking questions about episcopal authority and the specific social and economic contexts

25 Lavan, Bowden, eds. *Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology* (2003); Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society in Merovingian Gaul: Selected Studies in History and Archaeology, 1992–2009* (2010); Moreland, *Archaeology, Theory and the Middle Ages: Understanding the Early Medieval Past* (2010).

26 This roughly follows a process proposed by Guy Halsall. Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 4; Halsall, “Archaeology and Historiography” (2010), 45–47.

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of each case study, and analyzing the evidence to develop theories about the individual ecclesiastical communities and their connections to the people of various status groups within their sees. In the analysis for each microhistory, the focus centered only on the evidence that could be clearly connected to the time and location under examination.[27] After forming a view of the particular circumstances within each discrete study, which were defined by their own geographic and chronological limits, I was able to examine what the vignettes as a whole reveal about the development of ecclesiastical social and economic authority from ca. 370 to ca. 470. Therefore, each chapter represents a contextualized microhistory, which form a part of the overall story of how and why the various people of Gallaecia gradually chose to put the church and its clergy at the center of society.

The use of case studies from the late fourth through late fifth century also allows me to give agency to the various individuals who contributed to the development of the episcopate, including the specific members of the Gallaecian clergy, and the elite, middling, and non-elite people who lived and worked in the communities they served. As Michele Salzman recently has noted, the macro-historical approaches typically used to trace change and continuities in this period often focus on major events and historical developments, and thus overlook how the actual people from different social groups interacted with each other, reacted to specific circumstances, and developed responses to advance their own interests and positions.[28] To even more fully integrate the personal factors that shaped late Roman Gallaecian society, I have also drawn on the efforts of scholars such as Allen Jones and Cam Grey, who examine the strategies individuals from middling and lower-status groups used to maintain or improve their economic and social conditions.[29] Certainly, the wealthier elite families of Gallaecia contributed to the growth of ecclesiastical authority in the fourth and fifth centuries, and so their interest in ensuring that they had sufficient labor, were able to collect rents and taxes, and had the means to demonstrate their own power and status form an important component of my analysis. However, those who operated outside these elite circles, in rural and urban settings, also responded to changing circumstances and

27 Fortunately, as will be discussed below, the excellent work of archaeologists in Spain and Portugal in the last several decades, and the updated and more precise chronologies they have provided, support this type of contextualized assessment, which typically can be difficult with material data.

28 Salzman, *The Falls of Rome: Crises, Resilience, and Resurgence in Late Antiquity* (2021), 12–21.

29 Grey, *Constructing Communities in the Late Roman Countryside* (2011); Jones, *Social Mobility in Late Antique Gaul: Strategies and Opportunities for the Non-Elite* (2009).

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developed their own strategies for managing various social, economic, and subsistence risks, and achieving the best possible outcomes according to their specific interests. Assuming these non-elite individuals were part of complex communities of individuals and families with real and evolving social and economic needs that informed the decisions they made about with whom they wanted to cooperate—both from their own social groups and those that held more power—gives a fuller picture of the dynamics by which bishops became central to early medieval society.

The late Roman chronological focus also permits me to engage with and utilize the important work that has been done within studies of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages without being constrained by the particular historiographical questions and purposes of each approach. Periodization paradigms, particularly in premodern studies, that sought to emphasize the rediscovery of classical culture during the Renaissance contributed to problematic approaches to the Suevic Kingdom. "Barbarian Migrations," such as the Sueves' movement into the Iberian Peninsula, needed to be conquests that caused the end of antiquity so that the Middle Ages were distinct from subsequent developments. By the later nineteenth century, scholars such as Henri Pirenne began to challenge the assumption that groups such as the Sueves had ended Roman governmental, administrative, and economic institutions, and after World War II, Late Antiquity studies shifted the focus to continuity with an emphasis on religion and culture.[30] However, in both cases, the goal was to prove either rupture or continuity with the classical world to fit into larger arguments and thus the analysis of the evidence adhered to particular approaches—military, administrative, and economic, or religious, social, and cultural—rather than systematic studies of the Sueves themselves.

In the years since the publication of Peter Brown's *The World of Late Antiquity* in 1971, the scholarship on the period from the third through the eighth centuries has done much to redress previous interpretations that suggested the introduction of Christianity into the Roman Empire, particularly after Constantine's conversion, and then the establishment of "Germanic" successor kingdoms led to the decadence of classical culture.[31] Rather than viewing the period from the third through the eighth centuries

30 Halsall, "Barbarian Migrations and the Birth of Medieval Europe. From Unity to Diversity" (2018), 15.

31 This was, of course, largely in response to the influential ideas put forth in the eighteenth century by Edward Gibbon in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. For a concise modern critique of this work, including the context in which it was written and a brief overview of subsequent scholarship, see Wood, *The Transformation*, 1–41.

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as one of crisis, decline, and fall from a high point in civilization to a dark age, Late Antiquity studies emphasize that it was a distinctive period of cultural and religious transformation, but also continuity.[32] While art, architecture, education, the church and the clergy, and, to a certain extent, the social and legal institutions of the period, have been the subject of intensive and productive investigation, the economy is typically left out.[33] By contrast, scholars that take an Early Middle Ages approach often highlight the ways in which the post-Roman West represents a rupture with the imperial past, and view the general collapse of the institutions in primarily catastrophic terms.[34] These studies certainly trace economic changes and in this area they have made significant contributions. Yet, since their interest is the impact of the influx of Germanic groups into western Europe in the fifth century and later, they tend to focus on political and military history, and difficult-to-answer questions about ethnicity, avoiding issues pertaining to the church and society.[35] Moreover, since their chronological interest is the period that coincides with the fall of the Western Empire, they do not typically track developments that began in the later fourth and early fifth centuries.[36] By asking questions about the later fourth through later fifth

32 James, "The Rise and Function of the Concept 'Late Antiquity'" (2008), 21–28; Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome: And the End of Civilization* (2006), 4–7.

33 Halsall, "Barbarian Migrations and the Birth of Medieval Europe," 15. Halsall includes political, military and the history of social structures in his list of what is left out of studies of Late Antiquity. Edward James has pointed out that Late Antiquity studies also often have neglected developments in the West, where decline is more readily evident. James, "The Rise and Function," 25–31.

34 See for example, Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome*, and particularly 3–10. Here he directly addresses Late Antiquity approaches and why he is compelled to challenge their downplaying of the effects of the "invasions" of the "Germanic peoples." For contemporary responses to Ward-Perkins's ideas, which show the variety of reactions individual communities and different power holders throughout the Duero River basin had during the transition from Roman to "Barbarian" rule, see Castellanos, Martín Viso, eds., *De Roma a los Bárbaros: Poder Central y Horizontes Locales en la Cuenca del Duero* (2008).

35 Ethnicity will not be a focus of this study. For an overview of approaches to ethnicity, and why most have led to problematic conclusions, see Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 10–19, 35–45.

36 For how the chronological focus shapes the types of questions asked and thus the conclusions, see Martínez Jiménez, Sastre de Diego, Tejerizo García, 27–29. Of course, arguments for continuity with the Roman period have also become prevalent among those who study the Early Middle Ages. As Chris Wickham points out, examinations of isolated aspects of the political, social, and economic circumstances in the period of transition can be used to support theories of both radical change and continuity. While Wickham argues that post-Roman developments were largely dependent on differences that predated the successor kingdoms and were not the direct result of catastrophes caused by the initial arrival the Germanic groups, he emphasizes that regional divergences were the norm by the sixth century. Wickham acknowledges that

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century, or the late Roman period, I am not confined to historiographical debates that have inhibited each of these approaches to certain degrees.

My analysis aligns with newer readings of the textual and material evidence, which have led to more nuanced interpretations of the impact of the Sueves' arrival in Gallaecia, and away from seeing this development in catastrophic terms.[37] A component of the reassessment of the impact of the "barbarians" in the provinces has been increased attention to the so-called crisis of the third century and the economic, social, and administrative changes that took place within the empire in its aftermath. When Diocletian reorganized the empire in the late third century and created numerous additional provinces, he also increased the number of imperial courts and associated bureaucrats. Service within these new positions, through which one could gain senatorial rank, became another means to achieve elevated status and wealth.[38] Of course, it was still possible to serve as a member of the municipal elite and oversee the collection of taxes. As Peter Brown has shown, the second half of the fourth century can be characterized by a "fluid and fragmented" elite.[39] There were now multiple and overlapping ways to establish status at local and imperial levels, which were further complicated due to the *ad hoc* manner in which they developed.[40]

The significance of the Christianization of the empire and the degree to which imperial support, starting in the early fourth century, affected the position of the episcopate in society have also been central questions in the scholarship. After Constantine's conversion, bishops received certain privileges, such as tax exemptions, and gained increasing authority in local matters; for example, they had the power to free enslaved individuals or act as judges.[41] With these changes, service in the church offered another

variations existed within the Iberian Peninsula before the Visigoths settled there—though he does not devote much attention to the Sueves—but his categorization of these differences as inland and coastal (i.e., the Mediterranean coast) is insufficient. My research has made it clear that there were important sub-regional differences within Gallaecia, which affected political, social, economic, and clerical dynamics as early as the late fourth century. Wickham, 10–13, 225–226, 516, 586–597, 743–751, 829–831.

37 See, for example, Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain and its Cities* (2004).

38 Van Dam, "Bishops and Society," 345–346.

39 Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, especially 196–197. Here Brown argues that the villas of the fourth century were monuments used to demonstrate stability and wealth amid landowners engaged in fierce competition, based on newer and older sources of power. These villas will be discussed in detail in chapter 2.

40 Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 77–78.

41 Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (2000), 321–352; Rapp, 235–253; Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (1992), 77–100.

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avenue to establish local standing and imperial connections.[42] Bishops and clerics were now part of the social world of competition for favor within the imperial bureaucracy, local municipal governance, and the senatorial habitus of *otium et negotium*, or leisure time and business.

Much scholarly attention has also been given to the relationship between bishops and the erosion of the cities and municipal governments as the foundation of Roman society, centers of culture, administration, and tax collection. These assessments range from giving the episcopate a direct role in the decline of cities to asserting that the bishop's function evolved as the urban centers were weakened due to other factors.[43] A recurring argument holds that the changes instituted by Diocletian and Constantine caused a vacuum of leadership at the municipal level because positions within the imperial bureaucracy became preferable to the obligations—especially tax collection—associated with decurial service. Moreover, bishops were also given immunity from decurial service and the associated tax burdens.[44] Claudia Rapp offers an alternative to the long-held assumption that a decline in the *curiales* caused a deficit that the bishops filled. Instead, she asserts that they did not take on this old role, but rather created a new one based on their status derived from their ecclesiastical rank.[45] Others emphasize that clerical authority at the municipal level came about by a gradual process.[46] Also highlighted is the importance of the spread of Christianity among the networks of the senatorial aristocracy and the way this group used the episcopate to maintain influence at the local level.[47] With time, the language and ideology of aristocratic life transferred to bishoprics and the title came to the hold the same honor and dignity as a high office in the imperial administration.[48] Missing from most of these evaluations are the various and competing local, regional, and long-distance economic networks in which the cities participated, and the roles the clergy likely played in facilitating them. Bishops had also been

42 Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 100; Rapp, chs. 6–8.

43 J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, for example, argues that Roman cities never recovered after the third century and as the secular government weakened, the bishop's role evolved. Liebeschuetz, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (2001). See also Van Dam, "Bishops and Society," 344–345, 349. For a recent assessment of the different approaches to late Roman cities—catastrophist, transformation, world-historical—see Salzman, *The Falls of Rome*, 13–16.

44 Van Dam, "Bishops and Society," 345–346.

45 She uses the Theodosian and Justinian Codes to trace a shift in how bishops were viewed, namely from model Christians to model citizens. Rapp, 22 and ch. 9.

46 Rebillard, *Christians and their Many Identities*, 62.

47 Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire* (2002), 13–18; Jones, *Social Mobility*, 114.

48 Van Dam, "Bishops and Society," 346.

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granted imperial privileges that allowed them to conduct business on behalf of the church and the poor more easily, which included transporting goods, and selling them from retail spaces and workshops.[49]

New scholarly approaches to the late Roman economy have also informed my methodology for examining Gallaecia in the fourth and fifth century.[50] Particularly important for my analysis are Jairus Banaji's challenges to older conceptions of catastrophic decline and collapse with the fall of the Western Empire, or that the imperial bureaucracy preferred in-kind fiscal payments that more-or-less supported a natural economy, especially in the context of the so-called crisis of the third century.[51] Much of this previous scholarship engages with Henri Pirenne's influential thesis, which proposed that the united Roman economy did not collapse in the context of the influx of Germanic peoples and the initial establishment of their successor kingdoms, but due to the subsequent expansion of Islamic civilization.[52] Bryan Ward-Perkins, for example, continues to counter this thesis by insisting that the chaos of the early-fifth-century military crises caused drastic reductions in tax payments, which contributed to each region of the West being taken over, and eventually to the disruption and then collapse of economic activity.[53] Certainly, scholars such as Chris Wickham (among others), have also sought to nuance these arguments by looking at the complex processes by which the economy changed from the fifth through ninth centuries, with attention given to regional variation.[54] However, Wickham's interest in explaining medieval developments, and particularly the transition to a feudal mode of production, has led to an overemphasis on aristocratic tastes as the mechanism driving long-distance economic exchange, which serves to reduce the overall picture of the economy to decline among the elite and increases from the peasants.[55]

Banaji's emphasis on the gold in circulation starting in the third and fourth centuries, including as payments for the new bureaucratic class and

49 *CTheo*, 16.2.8,10, 40; 14.1–4; 15.1–2. This will be discussed more fully in chapter 3.

50 Of course, the work of A. H. M. Jones has provided a useful foundation on which subsequent studies, including my own, have been able to build. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey* (1964).

51 Jairus Banaji addresses and builds on the long-dominant views of scholars, such as Mazzarino and Mickwitz, but also offers a compelling new vision of the late antique economy. Banaji, *Exploring the Economy of Late Antiquity: Selected Essays* (2016), x–xvi, 53–54, 111–112.

52 Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (1955). See also Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 19–22.

53 Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome*, 43, 48–49. For Banaji's view of this argument and other catastrophic assessments of the Roman economy, see Banaji, xi–xii, 74–75, 86–87.

54 Wickham.

55 For Banaji's critiques of Wickham, see Banaji, 75, 86–87, 144–145.

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military service, has provided a useful starting point for imagining a dynamic economy that includes interactions among public and private sectors, based on in-kind payments, but also cash payments and exchanges.[56] This vision of a monetary economy, particularly from the time of Constantine, fits with the increasing archaeological evidence for economic complexity, including the potential for wage-earning artisans and laborers, and independent merchants.[57] Leslie Dossey's work on North Africa in this period also suggests that peasants, and independent artisans and laborers participated in this monetary economy, including those producing ceramics that were increasingly exported to Hispania from the fourth century.[58] These types of approaches have been important for my consideration of the factors that informed the strategies and interests of the various social groups within Gallaecia who ultimately chose the ecclesiastical leaders as their patrons. Equally significant is the economic status the churches themselves came to have, such as through cash donations, which contributed to monastic and episcopal participation in commercial ventures.[59] Indeed, there is increasing evidence for ecclesiastical involvement in production for export, particularly in the context of liturgical wine and objects with Christian iconography coming from the Eastern Mediterranean and the Holy Land, but also as consumers or the point of connection between producers and customers.[60] As will be discussed below and more fully in the chapters that follow, in the later fourth and fifth centuries, Gallaecians began to import goods from North Africa and then the Eastern Mediterranean, and since the products came from regions to which the clerical community traveled with increasing frequency, the bishops likely helped to facilitate this long-distance exchange.

By focusing on the transformation of a single Roman province and the development of clerical influence within it over the course of the fourth and fifth centuries, my project contributes to and expands on this scholarship. The integration of historical and archaeological sources allows me to place

56 Banaji, x–xiii, 52–59, 61–69, 105–106, 110–113, 120–125. See also Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 824–825, 833–834, 837, 840–841.

57 Banaji, 1–16, 61–62, 75–78, 84–85; Decker, *Tilling the Hateful Earth: Agricultural Production and Trade in the Late Antique East* (2009), 229–237.

58 Dossey, *Peasant and Empire in Christian North Africa* (2010), 84–97. See also Decker, 28–29.

59 Banaji, 111; Decker, 229–230; Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 827–828, 840–841, 843, 848, 895–896, 904, 907–908.

60 Dodd, *Roman and Late Antique Wine Production in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Comparative Archaeological Study at Antiochia ad Cragum (Turkey) and Delos (Greece)* (2020), 62–78, 87–91, 104–105, 122–141; Decker, 43, 48–54, 72, 137–138, 145–146, 207–211, 236–237.

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the bishops and clerics of Gallaecia within their economic, political, and social contexts. This reveals that their increasing role in society was the culmination of a process that started in the later fourth century when ecclesiastical roles were not clearly defined.[61] Each chapter that follows reveals the factors that contributed to the development of the episcopate, which was the result of much more than a vacuum of leadership caused by the absence of Roman officials and elites in the region after the establishment of the Suevic Kingdom in the fifth century. Moreover, even within Gallaecia, the specific contexts and circumstances of the urban and rural communities in each episcopal see varied, all of which led the people to give increasing social and economic authority to the bishops.

Approach to the Evidence

In the sections below, several important textual sources—the works of the fifth-century clerics Orosius of Braga and Hydatius of Aquae Flaviae—and my approach to them will be discussed in detail. Another significant source for this period is the record of the church councils held in Hispania during the period under investigation. Where possible, the Gonzalo Martínez Díez and Félix Rodríguez critical editions of the *Hispana* collection of these councils have been used.[62] However, some relevant conciliar decisions were not included within the *Hispana*, and in these cases I have translated the canons from the Latin provided in José Vives's *Concilios Visigóticos e Hispano-Romanos* and in Henry Chadwick's appendix of Priscillianist professions.[63] Like other scholars, my analysis of these sources assumes that

61 Kristina Sessa notes that the overlapping of the public and private spheres complicates the notion of the bishop as a "civic leader" in the ancient context. Sessa, *The Formation of Papal Authority in Late Antique Italy: Roman Bishops and the Domestic Sphere* (2012), 23–24.
62 Martínez Díez, Rodríguez, *La Colección Canónica Hispana,* vols IV–VI (1984–2002). This collection is considered to be the best critical edition of the *Hispana*. Ubric Rabaneda, *La Iglesia en la Hispania*, 17–18, note 48. For a discussion of the manuscript tradition of the *Hispana* and the early seventh-century compilation by Isidore of Seville, see Martínez Díez, *La Coleccíon Canónica Hispana: I. Estudio* (1966), 7–15, 25–200, 306–325, 387; Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (1976), 170–172.
63 Vives, *Concilios Visigóticos e Hispano-Romanos* (1963); Chadwick, 234–239. In particular, a trial of Gallaecian clerics who were accused of Priscillianism held after the First Council of Toledo, ca. 400, and the record of the First Council of Braga, ca. 561, were not included in the *Hispana* collection. Since there are discrepancies, additions, and deletions between the Latin and Vives's Spanish translations, which in some cases change the meaning, my analysis is based on my own translations of the Latin found in Martínez Díez and Rodríguez, Vives, and Chadwick. For why the trial after the First Council of Toledo and the record of the First Council of Braga were not

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although we often do not know more than the names of those who attended these councils, the decisions were developed through collaborative efforts and reflect actual issues affecting the specific clerics involved. Furthermore, while the results were presented in a unanimous and authoritative tone, the bishops and conciliar tradition emphasized the importance of debate in the process of reaching consensus.[64] For these reasons, the canons from these councils provide important insights into the dynamics within the clerical community of Hispania and Gallaecia. For the other legal, written, and documentary sources, I have also adhered to a critical source analysis approach, in which the genre, specific contexts, and intended purposes and audiences were taken into account and assessed for biases.[65] Where relevant, these factors are addressed in my presentation of the evidence in the chapters that follow.

As stated above, my goal has been to use the textual, archaeological, material, numismatic, and epigraphic evidence without privileging one particular source type. However, as a historian writing largely for other historians, it is prudent to explain more fully not only how I have read the archaeological material, but also why it is essential to a complete analysis of the period. While some aspects of the methodology fit with processualist theory, my approach to the archeological evidence coincides most closely with post-processualism.[66] This theoretical perspective assumes

included in the *Hispana* collection and the manuscript tradition for these conciliar decisions, see Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority, and the Priscillianist Controversy* (1995), 104–107; Chadwick, 170–181; Martínez Díez, *La Colección Canónica Hispana: I.*

64 Rachel Stocking argues that although there was a coherent vision of Christian order being maintained through religious, legal, and political consensus in conciliar decisions, the Visigothic Kingdom was plagued by rebellions, factionalism, and disobedience to both secular and religious legislation throughout the seventh century. In his book on Frankish church councils, Gregory Halfond also reminds us that church councils were meetings of individuals with personal agendas and biases. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589–633* (2000), especially 19–21; Halfond, *Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils, AD 511–768* (2010), 213. For the use of church councils as evidence for actual rather than hypothetical situations, see Ferreiro, "The See of Dumium/ Braga before and under Visigothic Rule" (2017), 107; Bailey, *The Religious Worlds of the Laity in Late Antique Gaul* (2016), 10–11; Norton, *Episcopal Elections 250–600: Hierarchy and Popular Will in Late Antiquity* (2007), 18–19.

65 Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (1988), ch. 1; Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans, A.D. 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (1980).

66 Michelle Hegmon uses the term "processual-plus" to describe the growing field of archaeologists, especially in North America, who rather than associating with one particular theory draw on an array of theoretical approaches, even those that in other contexts may seem incompatible. Hegmon proposes that this more diverse approach is preferable and adds to more dynamic dialogue about the subjects being studied. For Hegmon's proposal and her response

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that material culture is actively and meaningfully constructed and used by people in their social relationships.[67] Thus, material culture is the product of social relations and reflects these relations, while at the same time being an "active intervention" in their creation.[68] This is true of objects, such as jewelry and pottery, but also of buildings and settlement plans. However, in order to understand the meaning of material culture it needs to be examined within its context.[69] John Moreland argues that scholars engaging in historical archaeology must not only utilize both written and material evidence, but also see each as more than a passive reflection of the past. Moreover, scholars must acknowledge that each participated in social practice and therefore analyze both the written and material evidence in detail and in their historical contexts.[70] Furthermore, they must approach each evidence type critically and read them as text rather than mere sources of information.[71] The use of case studies has allowed me to examine the evidence critically and in detail within specific contexts and periods.

Since this project focuses on the nature of ecclesiastical leadership in the post-Constantine period, I have examined all of the available archaeological evidence associated with bishops, such as churches, episcopal palaces, and baptisteries.[72] To put bishops in their larger social and economic contexts, my analysis also includes finds from rural and urban settlement archaeology. My use of settlement archaeology to provide social and economic context models the work of several scholars. In her various studies of early medieval rural settlements, Helena Hamerow emphasizes the significant evidentiary value of settlement layout for understanding social relations. According to Hamerow, the spatial ordering of settlements reflects and regulates the social order.[73] For example, by analyzing the arrangement of features such

to criticisms of it, see Hegmon, "No More Theory Wars: A Response to Moss" (2005), 588–590; Hegmon, "Setting Theoretical Egos Aside: Issues and Theory in North American Archaeology" (2003), 213–217, 233–234.

67 Moreland, *Archaeology, Theory, and the Middle Ages*, 3; Halsall, "Archaeology and Historiography," 33.

68 Moreland, *Archaeology and Text* (2001), 81–82. For an overview of approaches to archaeological and material evidence, see Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 25–32.

69 Halsall, "Archaeology and Historiography," 33, 45; Moreland, *Archaeology and Text*, 82–84.

70 Moreland, *Archaeology and Text*, 96–97.

71 Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 4.

72 Miller, *The Bishop's Palace: Architecture and Authority in Medieval Italy* (2000), especially chs. 1–2; Chavarría Arnau, *Archeologia delle Chiese: Dalle Origini All'anno Mille* (2009).

73 Hamerow, *Early Medieval Settlements: The Archaeology of Rural Communities in North-West Europe, 400–900* (2002), 52–53; Hamerow, "Early Medieval Settlements in Northwest Europe, c. AD 400–900: The Social Aspects of Settlement Layout" (2009), 67.

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as the buildings, public spaces, commercials centers, and cemeteries of late Roman settlements, and how these things changed, we can gain insight into historical communities and the social and economic relations within them. Although in the past, scholars often concentrated on the monumental nature of these buildings, my emphasis is on the social groups that stimulated these dynamic processes. By incorporating those who built and served in these structures, I give much-needed attention to status groups often overlooked despite their role in shaping the social system.

We can also study individual buildings to highlight aspects of social and economic history. Kim Bowes, for example, analyzes the late Roman house as a "social artifact."[74] Her work is part of a larger historiographical trend that looks at spatial patterning and architectural features of rural villas and the urban *domus*, or house, to make conclusions about late antique society. Simon Ellis, for example, has emphasized the addition of large reception halls to late Roman houses, the use of apses and new layouts featuring complex, as well as restrictive circulation patterns. He suggests that these changes, which began to appear in the fourth century, reflect a shift in the concentration of wealth and power and a more personal and autocratic form of patronage, which was performed in the home.[75] Bowes, however, asserts that Ellis's influential assessment has been too widely applied, and argues that attention to chronology and social and cultural traditions in regard to late Roman houses suggests that these features are actually evidence of "hotspots of social competition" among newly appointed elites following the social and economic reforms of Diocletian and Constantine.[76]

Jean-Pierre Sodini also argues that archaeology can be used for information about late antique "social structures" and the members of different status groups.[77] Although the aristocracy is more readily detected from objects, and according to Sodini, especially from houses, non-elite groups can also be discerned.[78] Some aspects of the lives of members of the middle class, such as craftsmen and retailers, are visible in the material remains of the shops, factories, and workshops where they produced and sold their wares.[79] Craftsmen also participated in construction projects in both rural and urban settlements. Paying attention to these groups when examining shifts in urban and rural topography allows us to begin to incorporate

74 Bowes, *Houses and Society in the Later Roman Empire* (2010), 17.
75 Ellis, "The End of the Roman House" (1988), 565–576.
76 Bowes, *Houses and Society*, 17, 89. See 29–32 for an overview of Ellis's influence.
77 Sodini, "Archaeology and Late Antique Social Structures" (2003), 25–27.
78 Sodini, 30–38.
79 Sodini, 27, 42–44.

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them into our understanding of Gallaecian society in the fourth and fifth centuries.[80] Their inclusion is essential to building an image of the larger social and economic context of the ecclesiastical community in late antique Gallaecia. In my examination of changes to rural villas, for example, I consider not only what they meant for the elite and wealthy owners of these rural estates, but also for those who constructed and staffed them.

Viewing settlements and buildings in their specific contexts can be difficult. The manner in which they are excavated often means that they are presented in terms of their stratigraphical levels, which tends to reduce the spaces that were inhabited by human actors into mere phases of occupation. A useful theoretical alternative is John C. Barrett's approach to the transition from the more decentralized settlements of the British Bronze Age to the highly focused ones in the Iron Age. Barrett argues that monuments do not merely reflect certain social conditions; instead, their construction gradually transforms those conditions. People encounter a place having accumulated their own biographical experiences. The place has its own traditions and conventions and those that arrive contribute their own practices. Therefore, "each generation can be regarded as having to confront its own archaeology as the material remains of its past piled up before it."[81] The act of inhabiting a place is meaningful to the inhabitants according to their own experiences and desires, but becomes socially meaningful when their actions are set into a widely accepted frame of reference, such as community norms or those of the social system.[82] Using Barrett's approach as a theoretical framework allows us to do more than compare end results. It helps us to see how different people confronted their landscapes and then accommodated them, thus providing insight into how inhabiting created and transformed communities. Furthermore, it facilitates analysis of each phase of a building or settlement in its own particular context, which allows me to elucidate the specific circumstances affecting the individuals who form the basis of my case studies.

Accessing Archaeological Sources and Material Culture

Incorporating settlement archaeology into an assessment of specific Gallaecian communities at particular moments during the fourth and fifth

80 For how artifacts such as pottery reflect relationships among humans and material culture, and can be used to discern economic and mental attitudes, including toward the places and spaces in which they were produced and used, see Taxel, *Fragile Biography: The Life Cycle of Ceramics and Refuse Disposal Patterns in Late Antique and Early Medieval Palestine* (2018), viii, 1–2.

81 Barrett, "The Mythical Landscapes of the British Iron Age" (1999), 257.

82 Barrett, 259.

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centuries as proposed here is only possible due to recent shifts in excavation methodologies and research agendas. In the 1930s and 1940s, Spanish archaeology was greatly influenced by German theories and practices.[83] Therefore, many of the excavations and much of the scholarship from this period reflect a cultural-historical approach that emphasizes ethnicity and migration.[84] Thomas Glick suggests Franco willingly incorporated this "Germanisation of Spain" into his development of an ideology of "eternal Spain."[85] Of course, it eventually became prudent for the Francoist regime to distance itself from any association with Hitler, and to counter the efforts German scholars were making to label archaeological evidence of Germanic peoples in the region to justify their country's military expansion.[86] Thereafter, Spanish archaeological work emphasized what had been popular before such "philo-Germanic" studies, namely the assessment of monumental architecture and artistic styles, including establishing typologies of churches.[87] Consequently, they excavated monumental and church architecture to a much greater extent than other types of buildings and settlements.[88] While this art-historical approach has made valuable contributions to our understanding of these important structures, and has allowed for the development of typological chronologies based on styles, the emphasis on large impressive buildings and uncovering mosaics and other artistic forms meant excavators regularly destroyed other potentially informative components of the buildings. Likewise, in the past archaeologists often analyzed villas and other structures according to the known historical narrative, which resulted in many inaccurate assumptions about the chronology and meaning of the evidence.[89] For example, they typically read evidence of a fire or abandonment in the context of the invasions of

83 Although Spain never officially entered the Second World War, Franco supported Hitler and the Germans, who had been his allies during the Spanish Civil War. See Carr, *Spain, 1808–1975* (1982), 710–721.

84 Quirós Castillo, "Medieval Archaeology in Spain" (2009), 174–175.

85 Glick, *From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle: Social and Cultural Change in Medieval Spain* (1995), xv.

86 For example, the work of Ludwig Schmidt, Wilhelm Reinhart, and H. Zeiss. López Quiroga, "Los Suevos," 120–121.

87 Quirós Castillo, ed., *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Villages in Europe* (2009), 174–175; Fernández Mier, "La Génesis de la Aldea en las Provincias de Asturias y León" (2009), 149–160. For an overview of twentieth-century archaeological approaches to the late- and post-Roman Iberian Peninsula prior to the end of Franco's regime, see Martínez Jiménez, Sastre de Diego, Tejerizo García, 30–35.

88 Quirós Castillo, "Medieval Archaeology," 174–175.

89 Martínez Jiménez, Sastre de Diego, Tejerizo García, 23–25.

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the third or fifth century, without any other contextual proof.[90] Fortunately, new methodologies that analyze the material evidence independently of the historical record are now being applied. Since the 1990s, Spanish and Portuguese archaeologists have been using the Harris excavation methodology, which has contributed to more refined chronologies at new sites, and revisions of previous ones. These new, more precise dates have allowed me to build case studies in discrete time periods in the late fourth, and early, middle, and later fifth centuries, and assess the specific circumstances of the people living and working in particular places.

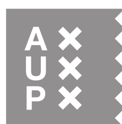
Another issue that previously made it challenging to apply material culture to studies of this period is that the archaeological findings within the Iberian Peninsula often remained unpublished or with only a very limited distribution. Moreover, while administrative changes in the post-Franco period led to new universities and research institutions being founded and therefore to an increase in archaeological data available, these institutions, like the governmental system, were regionally focused. Particularly in the early stages and within the newly established autonomous regions of Spain, political motivations often still drove research agendas, which meant much effort was made to emphasize local varieties rather than feeding into older narratives of a homogeneous, universal culture.[91] Fortunately, archaeologists in the peninsula now apply more recent theoretical perspectives and critical investigations within a variety of new paradigms; however, because much of the archaeological work still is managed at the regional level, many archaeologists and historians focus on one discrete area.[92] Even within the northwestern Iberian Peninsula, there are numerous regions, such as Galicia, Asturias, León, and Portugal, each with their own archaeological programs and archives. While this decentralized approach to the administration of archaeological sites has made it difficult for outsiders to gain access to the data and stymied synthetic and comparative studies, it did facilitate my efforts to collect all relevant data for each regionally based case study.

My project has also been supported by the tremendous increase in archaeological data for late antique and early medieval Spain and Portugal produced in the last thirty years. Modern development and public building projects, such as railroads and gas pipelines, has led to a surge in urban

90 Bowes, Kulikowski, ed. and trans., *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives* (2005), 9–11.

91 Martínez Jiménez, Sastre de Diego, Tejerizo García, 35–37.

92 Martínez Jiménez, Sastre de Diego, Tejerizo García, 37–40; Quirós Castillo, "Medieval Archaeology," 176.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and rural rescue or contract excavations, which has expanded greatly the available evidence of settlements for this period.[93] This has opened new areas of research and ways of assessing the period that are very useful for my study, including for questions about commerce, peasant societies and agricultural economies, the transformation of urban areas, and the role of the churches within local communities.[94] There has also been a great deal of interest and effort to make the archaeological data for the Iberian Peninsula more readily available. For instance, archaeologists have been publishing articles and monographs that synthesize findings, especially of specific aspects of settlement. Alexandra Chavarría Arnau, for example, has brought together and analyzed the available evidence for Spanish villas in the fifth through eighth centuries.[95] More recently, she has published a useful study of churches in the peninsula during the fifth through seventh centuries, which also includes valuable contextual information, such as assessments of the associated bishops and kings.[96] Both of these monographs make important contributions not only to our understanding of the peninsula, but also to late antique and early medieval society, the economy of the West more broadly, and developments within the church and ecclesiastical leadership.[97] Amsterdam University Press's Late Antique and Early Medieval Iberia series, of which this book is of course a part, has also helped to bring various regional investigations into single monographs, which are especially helpful for English-speakers. Particularly useful for my investigation is Javier Martínez Jiménez, Isaac Sastre de Diego, and Carlos Tejerizo García's book on the transformation of the Iberian Peninsula from the late Roman period to the end of the Early Middle Ages, which includes in-depth discussions

93 Martínez Jiménez, Sastre de Diego, Tejerizo García, 35–40. Bowes, Kulikowski, *Hispania in Late Antiquity*, 11–13; Quirós Castillo, "Early Medieval Villages in Spain in the Light of European Experience: New Approaches in Peasant Archaeology" (2009), 13–14, 19. Sánchez Pardo, "Poblamiento Rural Tardorromano y Altomedieval en Galicia (SS. V–X): Una Revisión Arqueológica" (2010), 287.

94 Martínez Jiménez, Sastre de Diego, Tejerizo García, 23–24, 35–37.

95 She includes a catalogue of the known villas in each province, including Gallaecia, with an overview of their phases of occupation and invaluable bibliographies. Chavarría Arnau, *El Final de las "Villae"*.

96 Chavarría Arnau, *A La Sombra de un Imperio: Iglesias, Obispos y Reyes en la Hispania Tardoantigua* (*Siglos V–VII*) (2018).

97 Similarly, Alexis Oepen published a catalogue with excavation histories, related textual references, and site overviews of rural churches—including villas that are thought to have been used for Christian worship—from late Roman and Visigothic Spain, including multiple examples in Gallaecia. Oepen, *Villa und Christlicher Kult auf der Iberischen Halbinsel in Spätantike Und Westgotenzeit* (2012).

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of cities and rural sites central to my case studies and how they fit within larger trends.[98]

The increase in the available and reliable archaeological evidence has also inspired the reevaluation of many older debates pertaining to Gallaecia. Scholars, for example, have reexamined the degree to which the province had been Romanized in order to more accurately measure the social, cultural and economic impact of the Sueves, Vandals, Alans, and Visigoths on the built environment of Gallaecia.[99] José Carlos Sánchez Pardo's research on rural settlements and churches in Galicia is particularly useful because he presents and analyzes the evidence from both art history and archaeology disciplines, which have usually remained separate.[100] Carmen Fernández Ochoa, Ángel Morillo Cerdán, and Jorge López Quiroga have done comparable work on the cities and secondary settlements in northwestern Spain.[101] López Quiroga has also edited a much-needed volume on the Suevic period, which brings together scholars working in various fields and regions. The short papers provide excellent overviews of the current archaeological data and interpretations for cities, secondary settlements, coastal and rural sites, along with ceramics and other material finds.[102] This volume reflects the trend for increasing peninsular-wide archaeological conferences, followed by publications of the papers. The archaeologists at the University of Minho in Braga, Portugal have also made great efforts to make the excellent archaeological work they have conducted over the last several decades widely available, such as through their digital repository, increasing publications bringing together the results for English-speaking audiences, and active participation in international conferences.[103] Overall, these types of syntheses have offered a foundation on which I have been able to build

98 Martínez Jiménez, Sastre de Diego, Tejerizo García.

99 See, for example, Fernández Ochoa, Morillo Cerdán, López Quiroga, "La Dinámica Urbana de las Ciudades de la Fachada Noratlántica y del Cuadrante Noroeste de Hispania durante el Bajo Imperio y la Antigüedad Tardía (siglos III–VII d.C.)" (2005). The authors argue that there was a continuity of urban habitation in Gallaecia until the sixth century. The previous centuries can be characterized as dynamic, but demonstrating continuity in the topography that does not indicate de-urbanization. Further, they suggest that the period between the end of the third and beginning of the fifth century is characterized by a municipal interest in the cities.

100 Sánchez Pardo, "Poblamiento Rural Tardorromano," 285–306; Sánchez Pardo, "Arqueología de las Iglesias Tardoantiguas en Galicia (ss. V–VIII): Una Valoración de Conjunto" (2012), 395–414.

101 Fernández Ochoa, Morillo Cerdán, López Quiroga, 95–118.

102 López Quiroga, ed., *In Tempore Sueborum el Tiempo de los Suevos en la Gallaecia (411–585): El Primer Reino Medieval de Occidente*: *Volumen de Estudios* (2018).

103 See, for example, Martínez Peñin, ed., *Braga and its Territory between the Fifth and the Fifteenth Centuries* (2015). For the digital repository, see https://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt.

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through research trips to the different regions' archaeological libraries and sites, and discussions with experts based in each area. Furthermore, the trend toward this type of synthesis demonstrates that a study, such as this one, which examines a variety of settlement types from throughout Gallaecia together, is an important next step for the scholarship.

Scholarship on Hispania and Gallaecia in the late Roman and Suevic Periods

In 1978, Abilio Barbero and Marcelo Vigil began to redress what they considered the essentializing arguments and presentation of evidence found in long-dominant works on the Visigoths and medieval Iberia, such as those by Américo Castro and Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz. Barbero and Vigil called for scientific investigations and for historians to go beyond the emphasis on Castille and lack of consideration of "peripheral" regions that had been the focus under Franco.[104] Of course, Barbero and Vigil sought to revisit the question of feudalism in medieval Spain, and thus their focus was on the Visigoth Kingdom and subsequent periods. However, since they traced the origins of these medieval developments from the late Roman period, their research continues to be significant for studies of the social and economic dynamics and structures of late antique Hispania. The work of Barbero and Vigil has proven to be foundational for modern studies, and many historians and archaeologists from the peninsula and beyond have built on their ideas, producing a number of useful directions and approaches. For example, Santiago Castellanos and Iñaki Martín Viso have offered a new analytical framework for understanding political power in the northwestern peninsula from the late Roman period through the establishment of Christian kingdoms in the region during the ninth and tenth centuries.[105] Their approach to power as an ongoing, complex, and dynamic dialogue between centralized and local nodes of influence and

104 Barbero, Vigil, 17–20. They astutely recognized the limits of these works for understanding the historical reality of post-Roman and medieval Spain, due to the historical-legal, philological, and cultural approaches, and the nationalistic nature of the debates, which of course extended beyond understanding the historical past, and instead focused on making arguments about contemporary Spanish identity and politics. While they recognized the value of the work and approaches of scholars such as Menéndez Pidal and Vicens Vives, Barbero and Vigil pointed out that they were still largely undergirded by traditional perspectives.
105 Castellanos, Martín Viso, "The Local Articulation of Central Power in the North of the Iberian Peninsula (500–1000)" (2005), 1–42.

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control has informed my analysis of similar relationships among the clergy in Gallaecia, their lay communities and shifting sources of secular authority.

Javier Arce also provided an important modern, post-Franco examination of Hispania, which is foundational for studies of the social and economic contexts of the late Roman period.[106] As Kim Bowes and Michael Kulikowski point out, Arce's 1982 book on Roman Spain from the time of Diocletian through 409 was a "turning point" from more insular and inward historiographical debates about the source of the modern Spanish character. Arce's incorporation of late antique studies and approaches used to examine other regions during the late and post-Roman periods, set the tone for new assessments, thus bringing the Iberian Peninsula into contemporary trends of scholarship.[107] By focusing primarily on the fourth century, Arce was able to thoroughly examine the available literary, legal, material, numismatic, and archaeological evidence, and provide conclusions about the political, administrative, and economic state of Hispania before the arrival of outside groups. This clearer understanding of the years leading up to 409 was significant for avoiding the essentializing arguments that less precise studies had typically produced and redressing claims about the impact that the Sueves and other newcomers to the peninsula had. Moreover, at the time, and to a certain degree to the present, this period of Spain typically has been left out of larger studies of the late Roman era.[108] Arce argued, and reasserts to a certain degree in his introduction to the second edition of the book, that the long fourth century, 284–409, was the final century of Roman Spain, not simply because the peninsula was taken over by outsiders, but because it had progressively declined, starting with the changes implemented by Diocletian, and was already in decay by 409.[109] While my analysis largely

106 Arce, *El Último Siglo de la España Romana, 284–409* (1982, 2009).

107 Bowes, Kulikowski, *Hispania in Late Antiquity*, 8–9. For example, in his chapter on cities and the countryside, Arce incorporated contemporary reevaluations of long-held views of the absolute decline of Roman cities in the fourth century. While the evidence available at the time he was writing did not permit claims that the opposite was actually true, Arce suggested a more measured approach, such as Peter Brown's view of transformation; so rather than interpreting the decrease in evidence for inscriptions merely as crisis and ruin, they might reflect changes in mentalities and interests. Arce, *El Último Siglo*, 111–113.

108 Arce, *El Último Siglo*, 21–24, 27–29.

109 In the 2009 edition, Arce acknowledges that there certainly still were political, economic, and cultural features that were "Roman" in the fifth century and beyond, but the continuity of such structures during the period of Spanish and "barbarian" "co-existence" did not contradict his central claim that Roman Spain ended in 409. Here Arce is responding to Michael Kulikowski's argument that Roman Spain ended in 461 when imperial administrative roles could no longer be carried out in the peninsula, and builds on Walter Goffart's theory that even if the intermingling

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counters this claim as it pertains to urban centers in Gallaecia through at least the mid-fifth century, this work and Arce's subsequent contributions are essential for our understanding of late antique Hispania.[110]

As the field has opened, scholars continue to dispel the image of Spain as exceptional and to incorporate the peninsula's history into broader discussions of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Michael Kulikowski's examination of late Roman cities in Spain demonstrates the value of using both archaeological and written evidence, and for English-speakers has brought the Iberian Peninsula into the larger historiographical debate about decline and continuity in Late Antiquity.[111] Jorge López Quiroga's study of southwestern Gallaecia from the fifth through tenth centuries is an excellent example of the ways scholars of the peninsula have made significant contributions to larger historiographical trends, while still addressing some older debates particular to the region.[112] López Quiroga emphasizes the importance of relying on the evidence and using all of the available sources, including written and archaeological, to develop historical theories rather than merely engaging in and repeating the points of polemical, political debates. Certainly, he uses the results of his detailed analysis of cities, along with secondary and rural settlements, including *castra*, to demonstrate that there is no evidence for depopulation then subsequent repopulation, and thus disprove this long-held theory.[113] However, López Quiroga also situates his investigation and conclusions within the Late Antiquity or Fall of Rome paradigm. This has served to bring Gallaecia into broader

of Romans and "barbarians" changed the way of life of both groups, this did not mean the disarticulation of Roman structures. Arce, *El Último Siglo*, 19–21.

110 Of course, as will become clear in the chapters that follow, my view is that not all Gallaecian cities experienced the same fate, and the chronology for when they lost their Roman features and associations also varied. For subsequent works by Arce, see, for example, Arce, *Bárbaros y Romanos en Hispania, 400–507 A.D.* (2017).

111 Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*; Kulikowski, "The Interdependence of Town and Country in Late Antique Spain" (2001), 147–161. In another example, Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo's 2009 edited volume of papers from the international conference "Archaeology of the Villages in the Early Middle Ages," which includes selections from Europe and Spain, seeks to encourage comparative studies and draw attention to the work being done in Spain within the field of early medieval villages. Quirós Castillo, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Villages.*

112 The monograph began as his doctoral thesis defended at the Universities of Paris–Sorbonne and Santiago de Compostela. López Quiroga, *El Final*, 11, 21–22. This excellent study of Gallaecia is unique in that it examines multiple regions. However, even this comprehensive study is limited to the southern area between the Miño and Duero Rivers. Its chronological focus also does not include the fourth century and extends to the tenth, which changes the questions López Quiroga asks.

113 This theory advocated by Sánchez-Albornoz will be discussed below.

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historiographical discussions, while also nuancing the dichotomy usually applied to the periodization, which he deems too simplistic for describing the complex and dynamic processes of the period. He proves that the fifth century did not represent a catastrophic rupture of Roman structures in southwestern Gallaecia, but there was also not direct continuity. Instead, the region experienced a slow process of change over multiple centuries and due to many political, social, and religious factors.[114]

Even though López Quiroga's emphasis is on administrative, political, and to a degree social structures, his study hints at the ongoing commercial significance of the Gallaecian coast; far from being peripheral or marginal, the region continued to be incorporated into trading networks that connected it to North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. López Quiroga's choice to make the Miño and Duero rivers the boundaries of his examination demonstrates the importance of not only roads, but also transport via water and coastal connections. He argues that when Diocletian created the province in the late third century, he sought to protect the coastal locations and the roads and rivers that were used to tie them to the interior, and which kept the region integrated with other areas of the empire. While not featured prominently in any of my case studies, Porto, as the site where the Duero empties into the Atlantic, was clearly an important port for merchants, but also within the development of the church. In fact, López Quiroga suggests it surpassed Braga after the middle of the fifth century.[115] Since his book was published, more evidence for commerce between the Atlantic coast of Gallaecia and Mediterranean sites has been discovered, most prominently through the port of Vigo, which has shaped the arguments of this book, and will be discussed more fully below and in chapter 3 (Figure 1.2).

Accepting that Gallaecia was similar to other Roman provinces has opened the way for scholars to measure the social, cultural, and economic impact of the Sueves, Vandals, Alans, and Visigoths on the built environment of Gallaecia, including its urban centers, and to incorporate the region into current historiographical trends about the relative continuity or collapse of imperial structures. Pablo C. Díaz's 2011 book provides a valuable fresh perspective that "restores" Suevic history.[116] He argues that the Sueves represented a political unity that was developed and recognized by outsiders, such as the Visigoths; he likewise avoids the more politically motivated

114 López Quiroga, *El Final*, 21–22, 126–132, 289–297. For *castra* in particular, see 21–22, 74, 79, 83, 87, 93, 154–155, 214–217, 259–263, 290.

115 López Quiroga, *El Final*, 29–30, 92–95, 131, 260–262, 289–291.

116 Díaz, *El Reino Suevo*, 33.

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perspectives found in the studies promoting a separate regional identity for modern Galicia. His detailed analysis of the political and administrative organization of the kingdom provides a nuanced assessment of the relationships the Suevic kings had with the local leaders of the region, including the bishops, and serves as a useful backdrop to my investigation of the various communities who lived within the kingdom as it developed during the fifth century.

The Gallaecian Church

Although typically northwestern Hispania is not fully integrated into assessments of the late antique world, two ecclesiastical figures from Gallaecia who are central to my project, Orosius and Hydatius, are well known to scholars of the period. They wrote historical accounts which are important not only for the information they offer about Gallaecia, but also because they are among the few extant written sources for the circumstances leading to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. However, their works often are read without proper attention to the contexts of the authors and the communities in which they participated. This has led to skewed views of what they wrote, Gallaecia, and because their works are applied broadly, the history of the empire in the fifth century.

Paulus Orosius was a presbyter from Braga in the late fourth and early fifth centuries (Figures 1.1, 1.2). Augustine commissioned him to write the *Seven Books of History against the Pagans* while the bishop of Hippo was working on Book Eleven of the *City of God*, ca. 417–418, both of which were intended to address pagan reactions to the sack of Rome in 410. Spanish scholars, such as Casimiro Torres Rodríguez, have made important contributions to our understanding of the available primary sources, historical developments, and biographical details of figures from late and post-Roman Gallaecia, including Orosius.[117] While Torres Rodríguez incorporates the region into contemporary scholarly trends applied to other parts of the Roman world to a certain degree, the continued relevance of the debates about national and regional identities specific to the Iberian Peninsula at the time he was writing is apparent in the types of arguments he makes. For example, Torres Rodríguez employs Orosius' work to elevate regional patriotism with his claim that the significance of the ancient writer was the role he played in praising his own homeland and showing modern readers the "independence"

117 Torres Rodríguez, *El Reino de los Suevos* (1977); Torres Rodríguez, Paulus Orosius, *Paulo Orosio, su Vida y sus Obras* (1985).

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and "valor" of the "Gallegan people."[118] Scholars who have sought to employ Orosius' work to understand fifth-century developments outside of Gallaecia have also been problematic, perhaps partially due to such efforts to use the priest to support views of an idiosyncratic regional character. Without these polemical constraints, a more thorough and critical assessment of Orosius, and of his writing, clerical community, and context, is possible.

Orosius' historical writing was intended to be a supplement to Augustine's book and show that the turmoil of their times was not unprecedented.[119] For this reason, much scholarship on Orosius has focused on comparisons between the two texts and has emphasized Orosius' shortcomings in relation to Augustine.[120] Nevertheless, in recent years there has been excellent work on his histories that serves as a corrective to the image of Orosius as a naïve "stray dog" to his mentor Augustine, thus promoting a counterargument to the assumption that his native Gallaecia was an exceptional backwater removed from Roman culture.[121] These recent assessments also provide valuable insight into the cultural milieu in which the priest participated. Miguel Ángel Rábade Navarro, for example, has analyzed the various historians and poets from whom Orosius borrowed to construct his "polemical" text. According to Navarro, Orosius accepted pagan authors as authoritative and therefore useful in his attempt to convince his non-Christian audience of his views.[122] Furthermore, Navarro situates Orosius among other Christian intellectuals who had to balance the use of the pagan cultural tradition without adhering to its ideology.[123]

Peter Van Nuffelen also places Orosius within his contemporary culture by arguing against those scholars who have seen him as exceptional due to his presumed intellectual ineptitude and naïve optimism, or because he wrote

118 "Orosius es el historiador antiguo y quizá de todos los tiempos, que más ha contribuido a enaltecer el valor y el amor a la independencia del pueblo gallego." Torres Rodríguez, *Paulo Orosio*, 77. Overall, his interpretations of Orosius' historical writing seek to reconcile the Bragan priest's universalist perspective with his "Españolismo." Orosius' degree of patriotism and love for España, and how this might contribute to how one understood the modern nation still were central questions in peninsular scholarship, and so Torres Rodríguez engages with the ideas of the scholars within these long-dominant debates, such as Menéndez Pidal and Sánchez Albornóz. See also 75–76.

119 Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*, 1. Preface, Fear, ed. and trans. (2010), 31–33.

120 Glen Chestnut, for example, calls Orosius' work "a very bad" history. Chestnut, "Eusebius, Augustine, Orosius, and the Later Patristic and Medieval Christian Historians" (1992), 697.

121 Van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (2012), 197.

122 Navarro, "Historiadores y Poetas Citados en las Historias de Orosio: Livio y Tácito, Virgilio y Lucano" (1991), 279.

123 Navarro, "Historidades y Poetas," 278.

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a theology of history. Instead, Van Nuffelen asserts that applying a literary approach to the histories reveals that Orosius used specific rhetorical tools and devices to convince his audience—which, according to Van Nuffelen, was educated but not necessarily pagan—to change their "rosy view of the classical past."[124] In this way, Van Nuffelen positions Orosius among other historians of Late Antiquity, such as Ammianus.[125] Moreover, Van Nuffelen convincingly makes the case that Orosius was educated in the "culture of rhetoric" and was writing for others with the same background.[126] Scholars such as Navarro and Van Nuffelen provide valuable insight into the cultural influences and likely educational opportunities available to Orosius and his peers, which can be used in constructing the ecclesiastical community of Gallaecia in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Furthermore, they demonstrate that Orosius and his secular and clerical colleagues in Gallaecia were significant participants in late Roman society and culture and are therefore crucial to our understanding of this period.

Another important member of the Gallaecian ecclesiastical community was Hydatius, the fifth-century bishop of Aquae Flaviae or modern-day Chaves, Portugal (Figure 1.2). Hydatius wrote a chronicle intended to be a continuation of those by Eusebius and Jerome, and which largely focused on the events of the peninsula and his own province of Gallaecia from the time of Theodosius I until 468. In some cases, Hydatius' chronicle is our only contemporary source for the events of the fifth century, thus historians interested in the late Roman Empire more broadly often use it to develop a military and political timeline for this important transitional period without fully considering the author and his own Gallaecian context.[127] Fortunately, we do have excellent studies on Hydatius, which include theories about his family's background and education, along with assessments of his chronicle's structure, potential source material, and fit within the context of the late Roman historical genre.[128] Concetta Molè's effort to analyze Hydatius' chronicle to elucidate the mechanisms by which bishops came to have more than religious authority in the Western Empire, with a particular emphasis

124 Van Nuffelen, *Orosius*, 1, 9–10, 16–18, 21, 120–122.

125 Van Nuffelen, *Orosius*, 13–14, 78–82.

126 Van Nuffelen, *Orosius*, 43–44, 111–116.

127 Díaz Martínez, Menéndez-Bueyes, "Gallaecia in Late Antiquity: The Suevic Kingdom and the Rise of Local Powers" (2015), 152.

128 See, for example, Candelas Colodrón, "O Bispo da Limia: Vida, Obra e Significación Histórica" (2014), 27–52; Burgess, "Hydatius a Late Roman Chronicler in Post-Roman Spain: an Historiographical Study and New Critical Edition of the Chronicle" (1988); Molè, *Uno Storico del V Secolo, il Vescovo Idazio* (1978).

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on their increasing political and administrative roles, provides useful details about Hydatius and his chronicle, and her attention to the bishop's social context within aristocratic circles forms a valuable foundation for my own analysis.[129] In his work on Roman Gallaecia, Alain Tranoy touches on lesser-known ecclesiastical figures and controversies within Hydatius' clerical community that are central to my case studies, and includes the urban, rural, and specifically Christian archaeological evidence available at the time he was writing.[130] Of course, excavations since then have transformed our view of the larger context in which the Gallaecian clergy operated; we can no longer assume, as Tranoy and Molè did, that the inhabitants of northwestern Hispania lived and worked in completely locally based communities uniquely shaped by the region's geography, and largely isolated from other parts of the Mediterranean.[131] By building on the new data, expanding the social context to include non-elite contributions, and including commercial and economic factors affecting his community, I am able to nuance this view of Hydatius, his see, and Gallaecia. Therefore, rather than understanding the complex processes by which episcopal authority increased primarily as a consequence of the absence of other capable secular leaders, we can begin to see this development through the lens of decisions and strategies made by a dynamic community comprised of people of diverse backgrounds and status groups.[132]

Scholars have also frequently emphasized Hydatius' seemingly overly pessimistic or catastrophic outlook, which until recently greatly influenced the way in which much of the material evidence from the region was understood.[133] For example, fires or signs of abandonment in villas were automatically connected to the fifth century based on the bishop's chronicle

129 Molè, 25–26.

130 For example, he provides brief summaries of the bishops involved in the trial after the First Council of Toledo in 400 and disputes among bishops during the Suevic period, as well as those who acted as ambassadors. Tranoy, *La Galice Romaine: Recherches Sur le Nord-Ouest de la Péninsule Ibérique dans l'antiquité* (1981), 425–430, 441–444. Tranoy also did extensive work with Roman inscriptions and a wrote a commentary and French translation of Hydatius' chronicle. Tranoy, *Hydace. Chronique.*[*Lat.-Fr.*] *Tom.1.2. Introd., Texte Critique, Traduction par Alain Tranoy* (1974).

131 Tranoy, *La Galice Romaine*, 21–37. For Molè's assumption that the bishop was from a peripheral region of the empire, isolated from imperial authorities, see Molè, 25–26.

132 To a certain extent, Molè does examine the economic context as it was understood at the time she was writing, such as with her consideration of elite, Christian landowners. Her chapter on the Bacaudae also includes discussions of lower-status groups. Her view of the Priscillian controversy in terms of social conflicts and rivalries also continues to be useful. See for example, Molè, 43–44, and chs. 3, 5.

133 Burgess, *The Chronicle of Hydatius*, 9–10.

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entries.[134] Richard Burgess counters the traditional view that Hydatius was pessimistic due to the barbarian devastation and weakness of the empire; he instead asserts that Hydatius thought the world was going to end in 482 and saw the chaos and ruin as a warning from God and evidence of this prophecy.[135] Although Burgess's corrective is accurate, his apocalyptic reading of Hydatius and some aspects of his translation that support it are problematic. Hydatius certainly cited portents and described many horrible disasters and acts. Yet such references, especially to natural phenomena, were not uncommon in ancient historical writing, and reflect efforts to record what would have been observed by many and thus could serve as a shared marker of time. Moreover, as I hope to demonstrate in chapter 6, a careful reading of his self-presentation reveals that the chronicler saw himself as part of a larger Roman cultural milieu that valued scholarship, orthodoxy, and diplomatic negotiations.[136] This perspective gives insight into the role bishops played in the fifth century as ambassadors and mediators for their communities.[137]

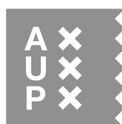
The more recent scholarship on both Orosius and Hydatius discussed above suggests these men from the Gallaecian ecclesiastical community did not represent exceptional characters on the fringes of the late Roman world, but were instead active participants in it. Building on the textual analysis done by scholars such as Navarro, Van Nuffelen, Molè, and Burgess, it is possible to move beyond using their historical writing merely as sources, and answer questions about clerical communities in the late fourth and fifth

134 Bowes, Kulikowski, *Hispania in Late Antiquity*, 9–11.

135 According to Burgess, Hydatius had read the apocryphal letter from Christ to Thomas, which revealed that the Final Judgment would come 450 years after Christ's Ascension. Furthermore, Burgess contends that these beliefs motivated Hydatius to write his chronicle both to glorify God and to increase his chances of a favorable outcome at the Judgment. Burgess, "Hydatius a Late Roman Chronicler," 155–193. Burgess attributes to Hydatius a marginal note referring to the letter to Thomas next to the eighteenth year of Tiberius' reign in one of the extant manuscripts. The note also claims that the letter was apocryphal, which Burgess contends was added at a later date. Burgess, *The Chronicle of Hydatius*, 9–10, 31–32.

136 To discern the larger cultural milieu in which Hydatius situated himself I have drawn on sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. Megan H. Williams's analysis of Jerome's writing also has been useful as a model for connecting Hydatius' presentation of himself to his understanding of the larger social and cultural *habitus* in which he hoped to prove he participated. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), 72-95; Williams, *The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship* (2006), 19-21.

137 Molè gives significant attention to Hydatius' role as a mediator and ambassador, which she suggests reflects his alliances with members of the aristocracy, and how such diplomatic functions contributed to the episcopate's increasing political and administrative authority. See, for example, 26–34, 69–72.



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centuries. This will contribute not only to our understanding of Gallaecia, but also facilitate more nuanced uses of their texts and arguments about the Roman world in the fifth century.

Several of the case studies that reveal clerical dynamics presented in the chapters that follow are possible due to conflicts and accusations related to Priscillianism. Priscillian was a lay, ascetic teacher before becoming the bishop of Ávila in 381 (Figure 1.2). Some ecclesiastical leaders in Hispania opposed Priscillian, which eventually led to his execution by the imperial usurper Magnus Maximus in 385. After his death, many of his followers went to Gallaecia.[138] Even as late as the seventh century, bishops within Hispania expressed concern about these alleged heretics in the northwestern region.[139] Priscillian and the movement associated with him has consistently attracted scholarly attention, and many of the earliest works attempted to adjudicate whether his teachings and theology were heretical or not.[140] That Priscillian and those accused of adhering to his teachings were in fact heretics often has been accepted uncritically.[141] In some cases, Spanish scholars have even argued that although it represented a heretical movement, the rise of Priscillianism should be celebrated because it supported the image of exceptional religious unity associated with an essential and unique Spanish character.[142]

The fact that the ancient sources indicate the individuals who had supported Priscillian went to Gallaecia after his execution has focused attention on the nature of Christianity in the region, particularly during the fifth through seventh centuries. Certainly, much of this scholarship, particularly by regional nationalists, purposely has cultivated the idea of Gallaecian exceptionalism.[143] The long-held, but now challenged view that Gallaecia

138 Severus, *Chronicorum Libri Duo*, II.51.1–5, *The Latin Library*, accessed July 5, 2023, http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/sulpiciusseveruschron2.html; Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 16, Burgess, 77. Priscillian became bishop in 381. Chadwick, 33–34, 126–129.

139 In a letter to Fructuosus of Braga, Braulio of Zaragossa warned the bishop to be on guard against Priscillianism. Braulio of Zaragoza, *Ep.* 44, "Letter to Fructuosus," Barlow trans. (1969), 102–103.

140 Andrés Olivares Guillem provides an excellent and thorough discussion of this historiography from the Middle Ages to the present. Olivares Guillem, *Prisciliano a Través del Tiempo: Historia de los Estudios sobre el Priscilianismo* (2004).

141 Alain Tranoy's ideas about Christianity in Gallaecia in the fourth and fifth centuries and his focus on Priscillianism serve as an example for numerous assumptions about the region that were typical in 1981, many of which have persisted to varying degrees. See, for example, Tranoy, *La Galice Romaine*.

142 Castillo Maldonado, "*Angelorum Participes*," 154–155.

143 In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the image of Priscillian as a Galician apostle and martyr was developed to cultivate a view of the region as idiosyncratic when compared to the

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was remote and disconnected from other areas of the empire, has been used to support the notion that this intellectual, ascetic movement was unique to the region, rather than part of larger trends among lay elite Christians at the time. Priscillian's emphasis on rigorous asceticism has also contributed to the idea that Christianity in Gallaecia developed in rural settings—and thus was idiosyncratic and outside the church hierarchy—and even that it had facilitated the return to Neolithic or indigenous practices and beliefs.[144] This is connected to arguments about the degree to which Gallaecia had been Romanized and whether or not cities had been established, and how these factors may have affected Christian doctrine and practice. For example, Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz suggests that in cities such as Braga, the Romanization process was slow and incomplete even by the end of the fourth century. He asserts that social, political, and economic issues meant that the traditional Roman urban functions were not fully established, which hindered Christianization and allowed for anti-social and rigorist ascetic movements, such as Priscillianism, to emerge.[145] According to Alain Tranoy, the arrival and settlement of the Sueves in Gallaecia meant that Priscillianism continued, a situation that he suggests the newcomers might have encouraged since the divisions it caused among the clerical community were advantageous to their rulers. While aspects of such scholars' work certainly are useful, these perspectives limit interpretations of clerical disputes to disagreements about Priscillianism even when no evidence directly ties the parties involved to specific doctrines or beliefs.[146] Moreover,

rest of the Iberian Peninsula. These arguments supported claims for both regional nationalism in Galicia and a unique Spanish character more generally. Olivares Guillem, *Prisciliano*, 172, 176–177, 215–216, 220, 234–235; D'Emilio, *Culture and Society*, 126–127.

144 Alain Tranoy, like others before and after him, argues that in the absence of major cities, Christianity in Gallaecia was primarily rural, which fostered the growth of Priscillianism in the later fourth and early fifth centuries. Tranoy, *La Galice Romaine*, 426–432. For a succinct assessment of various approaches to Priscillianism from the late nineteenth century to the early 1980s, including a rejection of the regional emphasis frequently found, see Blázquez, "Priscillian. Estado de la Cuestion" (1982), 47–51. For indigenous culture, see Vázquez Varela, Acuña Castroviejo, "Pervivencia de la Formas Culturales Indigenas" (1976), 77–84.

145 Díaz y Díaz, "La Cristianización en Galicia" (1976), 109–111. José Orlandis also attributes the growth of Priscillianism to regional particularism, but he emphasizes that the peninsula was fully Romanized by the beginning of the fifth century. He describes the movement as being similar to those of the Gnostics and Cathars, and suggests that it had become popular due to the asceticism of Priscillian and his disciples who the people favored over other members of the clergy. Orlandis, Ramos-Lissón, *Historia de los Concilios de la España Romana y Visigoda* (1986), 19–22.

146 For example, based on the archaeological evidence available at the time, Tranoy depicts Lugo as a remote city conducive to Priscillianism, and thus he assumes that its fifth-century bishop

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new evidence for the political, economic, and social vitality of cities such as Braga and Lugo through at least the middle of the fifth century, and for the regional and extra-peninsular commercial networks in which coastal and inland urban and rural inhabitants participated, counters many of their assumptions about the nature of Christianity in Gallaecia (Figure 1.2).

More recently, Óscar Núñez García and Milagros Cavada Nieto have examined Christianity in the region through the fourth century in an effort to establish a baseline for understanding the spread of the Priscillian movement.[147] Like other scholars, they measure the degree to which Gallaecia was Romanized and the effects the third century had on its political, social, and administrative organizations, and the spread of Christianity. They emphasize that indigenous religious and cultural practices continued, but from the third century locals increasingly chose to combine them with Roman pagan norms due to shared polytheistic beliefs, and in instances when doing so offered them benefits within imperial administrative, commercial, and military networks. Núñez García and Cavada Nieto suggest that Christianity spread slowly in Gallaecia, since in most cases the church hierarchy was not connected to city-based political and social structures, but the imperial shift toward the development of a rural landowning class meant that the elite began to bring Christianity to the "campesinos." Nevertheless, the authors also maintain that prior to the introduction of Priscillianism, Christianization in Gallaecia was limited. Yet the ascetic, moral, and pagan basis of the movement appealed to the people, which led to a dramatic increase in conversions, and thus the need to ordain numerous new bishops by the later fourth century.[148] While Núñez García and Cavada Nieto's overview of and survey of the scholarship on many of the lesser-known bishops and other issues central to my study are useful, some of their claims are based on assumptions that are not fully supported by evidence or that interpret the

Agrestius supported this heresy, even going so far as to say this may have driven him to align with the Sueves, making their conquest of the city in 460 easier. Tranoy, "Contexto Historico del Priscilianismo en Galicia en los Siglos IV y V" (1982), 77–80; Tranoy, *La Galice Romaine*, 443–444. Agrestius of Lugo will be discussed fully in chapter 6.

147 Núñez García, Cavada Nieto, 10–11.

148 Núñez García, Cavada Nieto. Chapter 1 examines the mixing of Roman and indigenous polytheism; chapter 2 focuses on the introduction of Christianity in Gallaecia; chapter 3 emphasizes the ways in which Romanization was related to continued paganism in the region; chapter 4 measures the degree to which the fourth-century shift to a "Christian Empire" impacted Gallaecia and makes suggestions for how the political organization was related to the church hierarchy and how these were connected to the influence of Priscillianism later; and, chapter 5 presents their overall conclusion that Christianity spread slowly, but was accelerated by the popular appeal of Priscillianism, which also is discussed at 149–153, 165–173.

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material culture for Christian and pagan practices (such as burial customs) in binary terms that more recent scholarship has challenged.[149]

Assumptions about Gallaecian exceptionalism and the persistence of indigenous structures and resistance to Roman ones have been nuanced by many scholars, and the growing consensus is that the region was not remote or backward when compared to other western provinces. My assessment of the clergy involved in accusations of Priscillianism builds on the scholarship that has focused on the ways Priscillian and his adherents were part of larger trends in a time of religious, social, economic, and political transition. For example, Henry Chadwick, Jacques Fontaine, and J. M. Blázquez have questioned the potential bias in many of the available written sources, and place the movement within the context of the general history of the Ancient Church and the development of asceticism within spiritual trends of Late Antiquity and the formation of monastic norms.[150] In other words, the issues central to the so-called Priscillian controversy were not unique to Gallaecia. Late Antiquity approaches to Gallaecian Christians have been able to prove that they were incorporated into larger movements of the church, such as the adoption of the cult of saints.[151] The increase in the available and reliable archaeological evidence has also permitted scholars to demonstrate that the region was Romanized and Christianized in processes that fit with other regions of the empire, particularly after the province was established in the later third century.[152]

149 Núñez García and Cavada Nieto certainly caution against seeing Christianity and paganism as opposites and often offer nuanced views of each, but this usually seems to be an effort to show that Gallaecian Christianity incorporated pagan and traditional customs and beliefs in order to explain why Priscillianism was popular there. For their discussion of the distinctions between pagan and Christian burial practices, see 174–181. As will be discussed in chapter 2, my analysis will follow the ideas Éric Rebillard and Bonnie Effros, who argue that various social and familiar factors rather than just religious associations dictated burial practices in this period. Rebillard, *The Care of the Dead in Late Antiquity* (2009), ix–x, 176–178, chs. 3 and 6. Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages* (2003); Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and the Afterlife in the Merovingian World* (2002).

150 See for example, Chadwick; Fontaine, *Culture et Spiritualité en Espagne du IVe au VIIe Siècle* (1986); Blázquez, "Priscillian."

151 Alberto Ferreiro counters the assumption that Galicia was a remote, backwater province, instead emphasizing that it was deeply Romanized, and continued to be incorporated into networks of the church even after the arrive of the "Germanic" groups in the fifth century. Ferreiro, "The Cult of Saints and Divine Patronage in Gallaecia before Santiago" (1996), 3–22.

152 Jorge López Quiroga argues, like in other provinces, capital cities such as Braga underwent a slow process of Romanization, which allowed for acculturation and symbiosis with local, indigenous social and administrative structures, some of which reemerged after the arrival of the Sueves in local contexts away from centers of control, such as the cities. López Quiroga, *El Final*, 21–22, 289–291, 75–76, 126–132.

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Particularly convincing are studies that look at the political and social reasons that motivated accusations of heresy in Hispania and in the Roman Empire more generally in the fourth and fifth centuries. For example, Victoria Escribano views the issue of Priscillianism as a struggle for authority within the Spanish Church, especially when a Spaniard, Theodosius, held imperial power.[153] In the 380s, Theodosius made Nicene Christianity the official religion of the empire, in effect ending decades of debate over how the Trinity should be understood. Escribano argues that Priscillian and his followers were anti-Arian rigorists who condemned bishops who had changed their views in order to retain the patronage of the reigning emperor. In her assessment, these ultra-Nicenes, who appear similar to Donatists, demanded that those who had adopted alternative creeds under Constantius II and Valens do the penance required of heretics. This response resulted in a bitter rivalry with each side accusing the other of being heretical.[154] Thus, according to Escribano, Spain like the rest of the empire was affected by changing imperial policy toward the fourth-century Trinitarian controversy, to which Priscillianism was linked. In short, Priscillianism does not represent a theological development particular to Spain and Gallaecia.

Even more important for my study are those scholars who have argued that theology and doctrinal issues were not central to the Priscillian conflict. Abilio Barbero contends that Priscillianism was a social and economic movement, and others have emphasized that it was largely a crisis of personal rivalries.[155] Raymond Van Dam, for example, views the Priscillian controversy within the context of communal dynamics, in that condemning heretics was a way for "people and communities to act in the face of the tensions and implicit rivalries that had been generated by the structural and ideological inadequacies of their own religious system."[156] In another example, Kim

153 Escribano, "Heresy and Orthodoxy in Fourth-Century Hispania: Arianism and Priscillianism" (2005), 121–150.

154 Escribano, 135–138.

155 Barbero, "El Priscilianismo: ¿Herejía o Movimiento Social?" (1963); J. M. Blázquez, "Priscillian," 47–48. Michael Kulikowski suggests that it was Priscillian's behavior and not his beliefs that upset his contemporaries. He argues that the accusations of sorcery and heresy that opponents used against him and his followers were "products of a burgeoning polemic, detected or invented only after the opposition to Priscillian had already arisen" and that the majority of the canons from the Council of Zaragoza served to "censure actions that derogate from the authority of bishops." Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 245. Virginia Burrus argues that both the Priscillianists' incorporation of women into leadership roles and the authority the heretic attributed to exceptional ascetics, which undermined the official authority of bishops and the clergy, were at the heart of the Priscillian controversy. Burrus, 5, 13–14.

156 Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (1985), 106.

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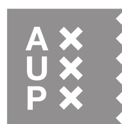
Bowes has analyzed Roman villas and rural churches to conclude that the so-called Priscillianists represented a powerful and semi-independent rural Christianity associated with the landowning aristocracy that posed a threat to the still growing episcopacy, and were thus accused of heresy.[157] Purificación Ubric Rabaneda's approach to doctrinal and religious disputes among the clergy and with lay elite Christians in the fifth century, including accusations of Priscillianism and Manicheanism, is also useful. She assesses these controversies in terms of opposing social factions and conflicts over ecclesiastical power and control, such as through various bishops' efforts to assert Metropolitan status at the provincial capitals of Lugo, Astorga, and Braga (Figure 1.2).[158] López Quiroga's interest in Christianization and use of settlement archaeology have also been helpful for my questions. While López Quiroga's focus is mainly on the formation of the parochial system and dioceses of the church after the mid-fifth century, my investigation builds on his thorough analysis of the secular and Christian archaeology in urban and rural locations, especially for Braga and Chaves, and his suggestion that Braga likely took on Metropolitan status from the time of the First Council of Toledo, ca. 397–400 CE.[159] My case study approach and economic and social framework has allowed me to nuance some of his claims, and incorporate Astorga and Lugo more fully into the discussion of clerical dynamics and conflicts over episcopal authority in the province. While López Quiroga argues that there were only two ecclesiastical districts in Gallaecia in the later fourth century and Astorga was under Lugo, my research suggests the former was more prominent than the latter at the turn of the fifth century.

Although Priscillian himself and his original opponents are not a central focus of this book, accusations of Priscillianism were consistently

157 Bowes, "...nec sedere in villam": Villa Churches, Rural Piety and the Priscillian Controversy" (2001), 323–348. Michael Kulikowski proposes a similar view. See *Late Roman Spain*, 248–249. It should be noted that villas have been used to assess Priscillianism since at least the late 1970s and 1980s, because church canons assumed to be about the movement censured those who met in private rural settings rather than under clerical leadership in churches. See, for example, Blanco Freijeiro, "La Villa Romana en Gallaecia y su Posible Relación con la Vita Communis del Priscilianismo" (1982), 57–70. Molè also emphasizes that opposition to Priscillianism was not just about theology and doctrine, but also due to the social threat it represented for the episcopate, and also places the movement within the larger context of asceticism, and the still nascent monastic community in Hispania. Molè, ch. 4. For her discussion on scholarship that reduced Priscillianism to a conflict between the urban sphere of the bishops and the elite in rural villa settings, see 107–110.

158 Ubric Rabaneda, *La Iglesia en la Hispania*, 128–129, 225.

159 See, for example, López Quiroga, *El Final*, 31–32, 47–49, 126–127, 155–157, 211–213, 264–269, 291–293.



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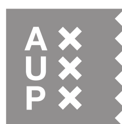
made among the clerical communities of Gallaecia in the period under investigation.[160] Interpretations that de-emphasize the exceptionalism of the controversy by placing it in its larger historical context and view it in terms of communal rivalries provide a useful starting point for the current study.[161] My analysis builds on the approaches defined by these scholars to show that although it was labeled as Priscillianism, political, social, and economic concerns had a role in the conflict that played out among Gallaecian clerics in the late fourth through late fifth century.

The Non-Elite of Late Roman and Suevic Gallaecia

My interest in non-elite contributions to the development of episcopal social and economic authority builds on a long tradition among scholars of the Iberian Peninsula. Abilio Barbero and Marcelo Vigil emphasize the transformation of the Roman economy and social structure starting in the second century, which like other scholars, they assume led to the expansion of larger agrarian properties outside the cities and free from municipal influence, and the transition from slave labor to a dependent peasantry on large *latifundia*.[162] In their efforts to establish the origins of the medieval dependent peasantry, they assess the diverse judicial groups who worked the land for the property owners, including enslaved individuals with *peculia*, freed persons and *coloni*, whose dependency relationships were supported by imperial legislation from the time of Constantine.[163] Building on the

160 It should be noted that in the tractates attributed to him, Priscillian made every effort to demonstrate the orthodoxy of his beliefs and align himself with the other clerics in Spain in condemning heresy. For example, he began his first tractate by acknowledging they had confessed and expressed opposition to heresy before, but he and his colleagues did not mind doing so again. He condemned other heresies and schismatics by name, but called for efforts to educate them to bring them back into the fold of the church. He also claimed that antagonisms within the clerical community were behind efforts to use religion as a way to slander opponents. Priscillian, *Tractate 1*, *Priscilliani Liber ad Damasum Episcopum*, 1–15, 28–50, 56–88, 346–354, 357–360, 370–419, 456–470, 560–565; *Tractate 2*, 81–103, Conti, ed. and trans. (2010), 32–37, 52–57, 60–61, 66–67, 72–75.
161 Recent approaches to other late antique religious debates and controversies also provide useful methodological models. In his study of the fifth-century Christological debates among Egyptian and Syrian clerics, Adam Schor demonstrates the value of looking beyond the theological basis of religious rivalries, since the participants were social actors who were members of patronage and friendship networks that fostered particular attitudes and cultural practices. According to Schor, the social relationships of the bishops shaped doctrinal debates significantly. Schor, *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (2011).
162 Barbero, Vigil, 21.
163 Barbero, Vigil, 21.



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work of scholars such as Diesner, Sánchez-Albornoz, and Bosl, Barbero and Vigil trace the presence of enslaved people, other dependents and private armies from the later Roman period to argue that even before the end of the fifth century, social and economic relations already had begun to take on feudalistic characteristics, with Visigothic kings unifying the nobility and their armed dependents with their own concerns.[164] However, they disagree with the "proto-feudalism" scholarship at the time they were writing, and its emphasis only on the military and political connections, since they contend that social and religious institutions also were important to the feudal structure.[165]

Barbero and Vigil trace how and when the roles and conception of the *dominus* were united with those of the *patronus*, so that economic and material dependencies of both were combined, leading to a new "feudal" construction with extra-economic elements wherein dependents were tied to the land and the *dominus-patronus*, who had personal obligations to offer them protection.[166] While elements of these relationships may have existed among landowners and those they enslaved in the Roman period, Barbero and Vigil assert that from an economic perspective the situation was different since enslaved persons were not tied to the means of production.[167]

164 Barbero, Vigil, 23–25.

165 For Barbero and Vigil, the Visigoths largely represented Roman political, economic, social, and legal continuity, and so landholding remained fundamental to social bonds and elite status, and thus was foundational to the formation of political power for the kings of the fifth and sixth centuries. Land gained through military and religious service united the dominant classes—including both lay and clerical patrons—to the kings via obligations of fidelity, which led to various social dependency relationships based on already established economic mechanisms, and new legal and ideological forms to support them. They trace these developments within legal and narrative sources, such as *Vitae*, to argue that while private armies existed since the late Roman period, under the Visigoths, dependents came to have military obligations to their patrons and the kings. Previously, such armies would have been made up of enslaved persons and free individuals choosing to serve for the social and economic opportunities it offered. In this sense, the land-based economic foundations of the Roman period expanded during the Visigothic Kingdom to include dependency relations which formalized required military service. Barbero, Vigil, 39–52, 105–121, 126–161.

166 They emphasize the distinction between the roles and relationships among *domini* and dependents, and the development of obligations of *patrocinio*. In their view, whereas the traditional Roman *domini* certainly had social and economic bonds with their dependents, such as between *coloni* and property owners, obligations of personal dependency and expectations that the *patronus* would offer protections for those tied to them developed over time. Barbero, Vigil, 21–23, 161–168.

167 Feudal peasants were bound to the land and their *domini-patroni* and could not be separated from the means of production, while those enslaved by Romans were treated as independent commodities, valued for their specific skills, but bought and sold freely. Barbero, Vigil, 21–23, 162.

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However, Barbero and Vigil also suggest that these processes had begun in the later Roman period, particularly in times of economic and political crises, starting perhaps in the second and third centuries. In these contexts, *coloni* chose to transfer property to the *domini*'s *latifundia*, to gain protections in *patrocinio* relationships. They interpret imperial legislation, such as under Constantine in the early fourth century, preventing fugitive *siervos* from seeking refuge with new patrons as mere ratifications of realities that had existed for some time. Diocletian's fiscal reforms relied on the union of individuals to the land; thus, for the tax system to work, such relationships had to be maintained.[168]

For Barbero and Vigil, the economic crises of the later empire meant that by the time the Sueves, Alans and Vandals arrived, there would have been very few free "peasants" in Hispania, since they all would have been absorbed into social and economic relationships with powerful, wealthy landowners, particularly if they were not connected to still economically viable urban centers. They certainly acknowledge that all cities did not suffer the same fate, but for the most part, their view fits with older ideas of urban decline in the late empire.[169] In contrast, my analysis builds on newer scholarship that emphasizes diversity among late Roman cities, continued economic, political and social vitality, and the possibility for independent non-elite contributions, including by merchants. In addition, Barbero and Vigil's argument primarily is intended to demonstrate that despite the idea that Medieval Spain was exceptional when compared to other western regions, similar feudal institutions did in fact develop within the peninsula even before the eighth-century Muslim conquests.[170] Of course, the value of arguments about when feudal relationships developed, and the degree to which they even existed at all, have been challenged in current scholarship about the medieval West, and certainly are not relevant to

168 In analyzing the changing terminology for dependents in these imperial and later royal laws, Barbero and Vigil assume that over the course of the later Roman and Visigothic periods there came to be no practical difference between the enslaved, those who were freed, and the *coloni*. Moreover, "*siervo*" came to be used to describe diverse dependent categories, and the slave society of Rome did indeed endure even after the economic crisis of the third century. Barbero, Vigil, 21–23, 161–166. They also suggest that the dependency relationships of the fourth century came to include private armies attached to property owners, which culminated with the political crises of the fifth century, and then developed during the Visigothic Kingdom. They assert that the leader-warrior dynamic within these dependency relationships had evolved slowly since the time of Julius Caesar. See 33–34, 44–52, 186–200.
169 Barbero, Vigil, 163, 168–169.
170 See, for example, Barbero, Vigil, 69–86, for their use of the records of church council meetings to show the development of feudal institutions during the Visigothic Kingdom.

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the questions and time period explored here.[171] Moreover, my interest is in attributing to non-elite individuals a more active role in the circumstances that affected them and the choices they made in response, and moving away from Marxist approaches that treat them as pawns in larger processes.[172] My case study methodology focusing on Gallaecia, which Barbero and Vigil did not emphasize, allows for a more nuanced view that shows subtle changes among lower-status groups. Unfortunately, while recent scholarship confirms those who were enslaved continued to be integral to late Roman social and economic systems and thus it will be assumed they were critical players in the developments examined, the available evidence for this period in Gallaecia does not permit me to fully investigate them as a separate group here.[173] However, the importance Barbero and Vigil place on preserving the mechanisms of agricultural production for imperial tax collection and what this meant for those working the land and the wealthy landowners are significant for understanding the social and economic contexts in which the Gallaecian clergy operated, particularly in the case studies explored for the later fourth century in chapters 2 to 4.

Barbero and Vigil's inclusion of the church in their study has also provided an important foundation for my investigation. Certainly, their focus is on the role ecclesiastical leaders with their churches and estates played in the development of a "feudal" socio-economic structure under the Visigoths, by giving such dependency relationships sacred significance, particularly as they related to the contributions kings made.[174] Yet their view that the bishops and the church also came to be *domini-patroni* with dependents tied to them and ecclesiastical lands, and their efforts to protect this patrimony, which increasingly included enslaved and freed persons, are critical for my efforts to elucidate the fourth- and-fifth-century processes that contributed to these later developments.[175] Here I also build on the excellent work more recent scholars have done to show the patronage roles the church and its bishops assumed in late antique society.[176]

171 See, Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (1994).

172 For a similar approach to understanding the laity in late antique Gaul, see Bailey, *The Religious Worlds*, 1–6.

173 See, for example, Sommar, *The Slaves of the Churches: A History* (2020); Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275–425* (2011).

174 Barbero, Vigil, 105–106, 167–186.

175 Barbero, Vigil, 28–33, 54–104, 167–170, 186–202.

176 For example, Cooper, Hillner, eds., *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300–900* (2007). Of course, Peter Brown's work on bishops and their care for the poor is foundational. Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (2002).

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The social and economic roles of non-elite populations have also been an important component of scholarship on Gallaecia in the fifth through tenth centuries. Although Barbero and Vigil incorporate archaeological evidence, the data available to assess the social and economic structures of the Iberian peninsula have increased dramatically since their ideas were first published in 1978, which have frequently been used to elucidate potential "peasant" societies in Gallaecia. For example, there has been a great deal of interest in recent scholarship of the region to understand the "genesis" of the medieval village by looking at settlement patterns during the long transition from the late Roman period to the formation of the Kingdom of Asturias in the eighth through tenth centuries. In fact, this debate represents a reassessment of the once-dominant theory advocated by Sánchez-Albornoz that areas of modern Galicia and the Duero Basin were depopulated in the eighth century as Christians migrated into the northern regions of the province and the Cantabrian Mountains in response to the invasions of 711, and then repopulated them starting in ninth century as part of the "Reconquista" (Figure 1.2).[177] Settlement archaeology has helped to debunk this theory, which had no evidentiary basis, by demonstrating that while changes occurred, there was a general continuity of occupation in southern Gallaecia and no substantial increase in the northern regions through the tenth century.[178] For example, numerous scholars of late and post-Roman Hispania use a landscape approach that assesses the rural settlement patterns in terms of scale change in order to see how networks and systems were modified and developed over long periods. These studies have been quite useful in identifying trends and in redressing theories of depopulation, as well as for emphasizing the role the peasantry had in shaping settlement patterns. Applying their observations of change on the macro scale to specific communities, such as those linked to cemeteries or in *castra*, makes it possible to show how individual settlements and communal dynamics may have contributed to these conditions.[179] In addition, these

177 All of these areas are within the territory of Gallaecia being studied here. See also Fernández Mier, "La Génesis de la Aldea," 151; Davies, "The Early Middle Ages and Spanish Identity" (2007), 70–71.

178 For a discussion of how this theory was developed, why it became "orthodox" and was used to support a national Spanish identity focused on Castile in opposition to peripheral nationalisms, and a convincing argument for why it should no longer be applied, see Martín Viso, Escalona, "The Life and Death," 21–51.

179 See, for example, Castellanos, "Tributa and Historiae: Scale and Power at a Turning Point in post-Roman Spain" (2011), 187–214; Fernández Mier, "Changing Scales of Local Power in the Early Medieval Iberian North-West" (2011), 89–111; Martín Viso, "Circuits of Power in a Fragmented Space: Gold Coinage in the Meseta del Duero (Sixth–Seventh Centuries)" (2011),

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studies demonstrate the importance of incorporating Gallaecia into larger debates about the relative continuity and collapse of Roman social and economic institutions, including the Pirenne thesis and Ward-Perkins's theory of collapse. However, since their emphasis is on proving the long-term occupancy of the region, the critical fourth and fifth centuries typically are not examined in detail.

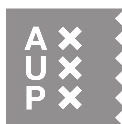
The Late-Roman Gallaecian Economy and Commercial Exchange

Arce's chapter on the economy and social structure in his 1982 book has been useful for laying out a guide for the variety of literary, legal, material, and archaeological sources that might be used to elucidate these contexts and commercial connections between the peninsula and other parts of the Roman world. Indeed, subsequent scholarship has built on this work, and archaeologists in particular have continued to add evidence for villas, coins, ceramic imports and local productions, and other industrial and artisanal activities. It is only due to this new archaeological work that Arce's conclusion that Hispania was already becoming isolated from the Mediterranean world and entering a "dark age" of self-sufficiency, as opposed to the economic and commercial prosperity that could be found elsewhere, can now be challenged. Yet, even in claiming that the peninsula's socio-economic system had begun to shift toward a "prefeudal" structure, with *domini* offering the dependents on their estates protection, Arce still gives a nuanced perspective and emphasizes that this was not a fully "natural" economy, particularly since coins continued to be used for exchange. Moreover, shifts in the types of wares that artisans made are interpreted not simply as proof of decline, but also of transformation, as well as evidence that they were seeking new models and techniques. It is worth noting that for Arce, it was the state's interventions from the time of Diocletian that had blocked efforts for private enterprise, commerce, and active business ventures.[180]

Material culture, including ceramic finds, serves as excellent evidence for tracing local, regional, and long-distance exchange networks. Continuing

205–252; Vigil-Escalera Guirado, Quirós Castillo, "Early Medieval Rural Societies in North-Western Spain: Archaeological Reflections of Fragmentation and Convergence" (2011), 33–60; Fernández Mier, "La Genesis de la Aldea," 149–160; Sánchez Pardo, "Arqueología de las Iglesias Tardoantiguas," 408.

180 Arce, *El Último Siglo*, ch. 5, and especially 162–166, 170–171. Arce also includes a chapter on the economy in his more recent book looking at Hispania in the next century. Arce, *Bárbaros y Romanos*, ch. 6.



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archaeological work throughout the Mediterranean Basin and within Hispania, along with improved typologies, have contributed greatly to our understanding of the Iberian Peninsula's economy in the late Roman period. Paul Reynolds's study of the movement of fine wares and vessels that carried goods such as oil and fish sauce within the peninsula, and to and from regions outside Hispania, provides an important overview of the trade networks in which Hispano-Romans participated during the second through eighth centuries.[181] Reynolds's attention to state-sponsored and private conveyance of goods, local variations in taste and demand, and changing political situations means his study still gives a nuanced view of the shifts and continuities before and after groups such as the Sueves came to Hispania, and in the case of the Vandals, how their eventual presence in North Africa may have contributed to the increased production of fine ceramics for export to sites along the western Iberian coast, and then inland to cities such as Braga. At the time he was writing, it already was clear that Vigo had a role as a port with connections to North Africa, Gaul, Britain, and the Eastern Mediterranean, but the full scale and importance of this port was not fully understood.[182] Significantly, Reynolds alludes to the possible ecclesiastical links for the goods moving among northwestern Hispania, southeastern Britain, Tunisia, and the Eastern Mediterranean.[183]

Damián Fernández's recent monograph on aristocrats in the fourth through seventh centuries fits within the scholarship that has shown the significance of the peninsula's western Atlantic coast.[184] He uses some settlement archaeology and finds of imported ceramics and goods such as wine, along with locally made wares, to trace commercial exchange within competing distribution networks, which included inland urban and rural locations. Here, Fernández's emphasis is on the strategies aristocrats developed in the fourth and fifth centuries, which he suggests were in part due to the changing and increasingly intrusive imperial taxation system, wherein the state wanted specific products, which he argues the elite also could choose to produce for commercial purposes.[185]

Without doubt, the most important recent contribution to our understanding of commerce and the late antique Gallaecian economy is Adolfo Fernández's study of the coastal settlement at Vigo.[186] His analysis of the

181 Reynolds, *Hispania and the Roman Mediterranean, AD 100–700: Ceramics and Trade* (2010).

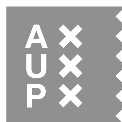
182 Reynolds, *Hispania*, 46–47, 57, ch. 3, and especially 91–92.

183 Reynolds, *Hispania*, 68–69.

184 Fernández, *Aristocrats and Statehood in Western Iberia, C. 300–600 C.E.* (2017).

185 Fernández, *Aristocrats and Statehood*, 109–119.

186 Fernández, *El Comercio Tardoantiguo*.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ceramic finds from twelve archaeological sites covering the fourth through seventh centuries has confirmed not only Gallaecia's connections within long-distance and regional exchange networks during Late Antiquity, but also the likely role Vigo came to have as a commercial emporium from the late fifth through seventh century. Building on the earlier work of scholars such as J. L. Naveiro, Fernández's investigation has helped to shift previous views about how the British Isles received Mediterranean products, widening the exclusive focus on Gallic rivers and the ports of Marseille and Narbonne so as to include the Atlantic and Cantabrian coasts of the Iberian Peninsula.[187] The emergence of Vigo as a commercial port and redistribution center starting in the second half of the fourth century adds significantly to the social and economic context of the bishops of Gallaecia, and will be an important part of the case study in chapter 3, but will also figure in those developed for chapters 4 to 6.

Overview of Chapters

Chapters 2 to 4 consist of three studies of specific Gallaecian bishops who were tried at the First Council of Toledo in 400 for their involvement in problematic ordinations. This trial provides insight into the dynamics of the clerical community in Gallaecia in the late fourth century, which scholars often gloss over because the bishops at Toledo also accused the Gallaecians of adhering to the teachings of Priscillian of Ávila. Analysis of the records of this meeting and the archaeology for each episcopal see reveals that the bishops represented congregations involved in various and conflicting imperial, commercial, and patronage networks, which in this period extended to Gaul, Britain, Italy, North Africa, and to a lesser extent the Eastern Mediterranean. Moreover, for these ecclesiastical leaders the differences between secular obligations and customs and those associated with the church were not clearly defined and often overlapped, which makes the social and economic context for the communities they served crucial for understanding the disagreements among bishops and clerics. Each case study demonstrates that in this period all cities were not the same, and in both the urban and rural environments the inhabitants of Gallaecia had

187 Fernández, *El Comercio Tardoantiguo*, 479–482. See, for example, Duggan, Bonifay, and Sánchez Pardo in Duggan, Jackson, Turner, eds., *Ceramics and Atlantic Connections: Late Roman and Early Medieval Imported Pottery on the Atlantic Seaboard: International Symposium, Newcastle University, March 26th – 27th 2014* (2020), especially 1–4, 11–23, 94.

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different political, economic, and social opportunities, which means the pastoral care congregations required from their bishops varied. The late fourth century was a transitional period for various reasons, including due to the development of new commercial possibilities and the emergence of robust merchant and artisan classes, at least some of whom operated within a cash economy. All of these factors contributed to the conflicts among the bishops and clerics—and their efforts to assert the authority of their episcopal sees within the province—more than actual concerns about Priscillian's teachings.

Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to the fifth-century clerics Orosius of Braga and Hydatius of Aquae Flaviae. Chapter 5 will show that as a presbyter from the provincial capital, Orosius participated in a circle of clerics devoted to developing Christian *paideia*, and for whom involvement in theological study and debate became a way not only to demonstrate one's piety, but also defined religious alliances that overlapped with larger social, cultural, imperial, and commercial networks, which connected Gallaecia to the Mediterranean Basin. Merchants and artisans continued to contribute significantly to the social and economic vibrancy of Braga, and had connections to the church, as clients of bishops, benefactors, and members of the clerical community. Chapter 6 will demonstrate that the line between the sacred and secular duties of clerics continued to be unclear with the bishop Hydatius, who saw himself as part of a larger cultural milieu that valued scholarship, orthodoxy, and diplomatic negotiations. Therefore, his role as an ambassador, captive, and negotiator with the Sueves in the later fifth century fits within a larger progression. Analysis of the various clerical alliances within Gallaecia during Hydatius' lifetime demonstrates that participation within extra-regional secular and ecclesiastical networks persisted as a marker of social standing, which compelled bishops to discredit those who challenged their authority, particularly as Metropolitan status continued to be a source of conflict. Accusations of heresy became a way to assert the prestige of one's own alliance and limit the influence of another's. The disagreements among the different clerical communities also served to prove to the various classes within their congregations—the elite, wealthy merchants, artisans, and dependents from lower-status groups—the value the ecclesiastical leaders possessed in supporting and advocating for not only their spiritual needs, but also their social and economic concerns.

When analyzed together, these case studies show that while bishops such as Hydatius of Aquae Flaviae did serve as protectors and negotiators on behalf of their communities in the later fifth century, the people's choice to turn to episcopal leaders in periods of chaos and change had its roots in

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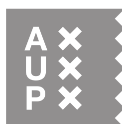
prior developments. In the later fourth century, sacred and secular identities and duties overlapped for bishops as they attempted to serve the needs of their congregations and their communities. Pastoral care included extending patronage much as it would have for the lay elite. The interwoven nature of the earthly and spiritual spheres caused conflict among the clerical community of Gallaecia and the development of various competing alliances. The different coalitions arose out of the diverse social and economic contexts of each episcopal see. Some cities and their suburban and rural hinterlands were thriving, actively participated in extra-peninsular commercial exchange, and enjoyed the benefits of having many secular elites and wealthy merchants, while others had limited access to markets outside of Hispania, fewer non-clerical leaders, and emerging artisan and lower-status workers who needed patrons. Over time and many significant periods of transition, the disputes and controversies that emerged due to these different factions and the methods members of the clerical communities used to define their orthodoxy and status contributed to the development of the image of bishops as capable leaders with connections in valuable larger secular, commercial, and ecclesiastical networks.



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