



# Archaeology in the eastern part of the Tarraconensis province in the times of the Visigothic kings

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## ABSTRACT

The presence of the Visigoths on the Iberian Peninsula went through certain crucial junctures in which the Tarraconensis province was the site of the manoeuvres of a people seeking a place to settle within the Roman Empire. In 418, they reached a pact (*foederatio*) which ushered in the period of the Kingdom of Toulouse, located in Aquitaine. Increasing pressure from the Franks led to the Battle of Vouillé in 507, which forced the Visigoths to retreat towards the Tarraconensis. Barcelona became the royal headquarters in the first half of the 6th century during the Ostrogoth protectorate, with Kings Gesalec, Amalaric and Theudis. We shall present a summary of the impact that the arrival of the Visigoths had on cities like Tarracona, Barchinona and Egara, along with the transformation of the habitat, walled villages and military fortifications, and the gradual abandonment of the Roman villas in light of recent historical-archaeological research.

**KEYWORDS:** Tarraconensis, Visigoths, Christian archaeology, Visigothic cities, hilltop settlements, fortifications.

## INTRODUCTION: GEOGRAPHIC AND CHRONOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

It is always somewhat artificial to delimit part of a broader territory, such as the Roman Tarraconensis province, which was a single unit when it was created. The east of the Tarraconensis corresponds to Catalonia today, the area we shall focus on in this article. However, in order to more broadly cover the history and archaeology of this territory between the end of the ancient world and the start of the Middle Ages, we must extend our sights to the rest of the Iberian Peninsula, the southern part of Gaul, northern Italy and the Mediterranean in general.

With regard to the time factor, it is equally difficult to establish precise coordinates for the “Visigothic period”, given that at first the Visigoths were part of the Roman army and acted in favour of different usurpers of the Empire in the early 5th century. At the end of the period, some Visigothic nobles survived several years after the Battle of Guadalete in 711, which marked the arrival of the Saracens and the beginning of the mediaeval period.

## HISTORIOGRAPHIC NOTES

Visigothism, and all historical studies referring to the Visigothic period in general, have been imbued with an array of political connotations since their inception in the Middle Ages. The main reason is that subsequent history has always viewed the Visigoths as a model of royal power, territorial unity and religious unification, especially with the Visigoths' conversion to Catholicism at Third Council of Toledo in 589. The Asturian kings proclaimed themselves their successors, and the Catholic Kings and Habsburg monarchs – especially Philip II, who was a devotee of Hermenegild as a martyr for the Catholic faith – held the Visigothic kings up as a model of theocratic royalty, as did the Bourbons. The historiography which fostered these values from the 13th to the 18th centuries is represented by figures like Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (*De rebus Hispaniae*, 18th century), Ambrosio de Morales, a historian in the court of Philip II, and Father Enrique Flórez (*España sagrada*, 18th century), while in the 19th century, the seminal work of Modesto Lafuente and José Amador de los Ríos was imbued with this discourse. A romantic nationalistic movement was germinating at that time, fertilised by the War of Independence against Napoleon, which sought to enshrine the Visigoths as the fathers of the “Spanish Nation”.<sup>1</sup> This movement also took root in 19th-century literature and painting; indeed, one

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of the most famous examples, Muñoz Degrain's *The Conversion of Reccared*, hangs in the Senate today.

However, if Visigothism in general and Visigothic archaeology specifically are remembered for anything, it is the way they were used as political weapons during fascism. In the early years of the Franco dictatorship (1939-1944), Visigothic archaeology was placed at the service of the Third Reich by Julio Martínez Santa Olalla, who was the director of the *Comisaría de Excavaciones Arqueológicas* (Office of Archaeological Excavations). His excavations of Visigothic necropolises, such as the one in Castiltierra (Segovia), sought to prove the kinship between the Visigoths and the Central European race and consequently the "purity" of the Spanish race. There is widespread acknowledgement of the SS's influence via the *Anhenerbe* and the visit organised by Martínez Santa Olalla so that the *Reichsführer* Heinrich Himmler could see the National Archaeology Museum of Madrid (MAN) to see the Visigothic bronzes, in addition to the aforementioned excavations in Castiltierra and Toledo as the former capital of the Visigothic kingdom. After the defeat of Nazism in 1945, during what we could consider the second part of the Franco regime, Visigothism shifted to emphasise territorial and religious unification, the convergence between the throne and the altar – as has been perennial in Spanish historiography – but this time to legitimise the power of Franco, "Caudillo por la gracia de Dios" (leader by the grace of God).<sup>2</sup> Thus, National Catholicism adopted many of the premises of the historical studies on the Visigothic kings, which were not always objective, and they did so to such an extent that they permeated these studies even after the end of the dictatorship.

Given this backdrop, it is easy to understand how the Germanic ethnic component was crucial in the early development of Visigothic archaeology and in historical studies. Thus, the Visigothic presence could only be detected by finding the characteristic belt buckles or brooches, primarily in the grave goods in burial sites. However, in recent years doubt has been cast even on these bronzes, which have long been the main items used to identify the Visigothic presence. In this sense, the reflection by Gisela Ripoll and Eduardo Carrero is quite interesting; they question whether the individuals in the burials in the necropolis of La Meseta – dated from the late 5th to the late 6th centuries (Castiltierra, Duratón, El Carpio de Tajo, etc.) – are truly Visigothic in origin. One of their most important objections is that these materials are not found in Gallia Narbonensis, and if they do appear it is from the time when it was a part of Septimania under the power of the Kingdom of Toledo.<sup>3</sup>

#### VISIGOTHIC ARCHAEOLOGY OR ARCHAEOLOGY FROM THE VISIGOTHIC PERIOD?

Given this scientifically and politically fraught historiographic context, it is unquestionably to Pere de Palol's

credit that he defended an "archaeology of the Visigothic period" which encompassed both Palaeo-Christian traditions – in the Mediterranean area – and the "particularities" of the barbarian peoples, especially the *visigothorum gentes*. From his chair at the Universidad de Valladolid in the 1950s, he promoted studies on "Spanish-Visigothic art", thus countering the stature that the Franco regime had given to the ethnic aspect of this historical period.<sup>4</sup> In 1969, Pere de Palol secured the first chair in Palaeo-Christian and Mediaeval Archaeology at the Universitat de Barcelona, from which he served as the teacher of generations of archaeologists. He also launched gatherings of experts from the Iberian Peninsula (Gatherings of Spanish Palaeo-Christian Archaeology, with six editions between 1967 and 2003) and catapulted Spanish research onto the international scene. Recognition of his contributions was confirmed when he was bestowed a Doctor honoris causa by the *Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Christiana* of Rome in 2000.<sup>5</sup>

To study the Tarraconensis in the late Roman and Visigothic periods, the last text overseen by P. de Palol – along with Antoni Pladevall – from the first volume of *Catalunya Romànica, Del Romà al Romànic* is still a seminal must-read.<sup>6</sup> Despite the fact that it has been around for 20 years, many of the contributions still remain valid today, while acknowledging the archaeological discoveries since then.

In the past 30 years, archaeology of the Visigothic period, now freed from the tensions between romanticism and Germanism, has been aligned with international studies on late antiquity, which also encompasses the Spanish-Roman and Visigothic worlds. Christian archaeology falls within this strain of research, as it studies the material features of buildings and elements of the liturgical furnishings of this period, as well as the transformation of cities and the evolution of the rural landscape and its inhabited nuclei.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE VISIGOTHS IN THE CITIES

Late ancient culture was eminently urban, thus continuing one of the most characteristic features of Roman civilisation. Far from the historiographic clichés which claimed that classical splendour had been engulfed by the catastrophes of barbarian invasions and the abandonment of cities and had fled to take refuge in the countryside because of the dire economic crisis starting in the 3rd century, cities did survive during the Visigothic period, even though they underwent major transformations.

Recently, archaeological knowledge of some of cities in the Tarraconensis during late antiquity and the Visigothic period has been enhanced. The most noteworthy cities are Tarraco, Barcino and Egara. A great deal of work remains to be done, especially if we consider the wealth of information provided by the written sources on the prominence of cities like Ilerda (Lleida), Gerunda (Giro-

na), Osona (Vic), Empuriae (Empúries) and Dertosa (Tortosa) during the Visigothic period, all of them episcopal sees. And they are joined by the cities in the Gallia Narbonensis, such as Narbonne, Carcassonne, Magalona and Elne (Iliberris), which were part of Visigothic Septimania and played a very important role until the end of the Visigothic reign with King Achila II (700-713). However, let us examine several of these cities in further detail.

### Tarraco, the capital of the Tarraconensis

Tarragona had been the Romans' gateway to the Iberian Peninsula and the first capital of their Citerior province, which was later named the *Tarraconensis*. Tarraco was extremely important in early Christianity. Some people even claim that Saint Paul stayed in the city to fulfil his punishment of exile.<sup>8</sup> However, if the city stands out for one thing in the origins of Christianity, it is the martyrdom of Saints Fructuosus, Augurius and Eulogius, victims of the persecution of Valerian in 259. The worship of its martyrs – whose acts of martyrdom are the oldest known in Hispania – had a crucial impact in the development of the Christian city and the gradual transformation of the Roman capital. A martyr worship centre was built – the largest one known in the *pars occidentis* of the Empire – consisting of two basilicas, the southern one containing the remains of the martyrs on the former land of the Tabacalera factory, excavated by M<sup>sgn</sup>. Serra i Vilarò, and the other, located further north, known as the basilica of Parc Central, which was excavated in the 1990s. Both basilicas have been dated from the 5th century, with the southern one perhaps built 30 years before the northern one.<sup>9</sup> A large necropolis was developed around them near the two main arteries leading south and inland.

This new neighbourhood in the city led the suburban area around the port to grow steadily until it reached the necropolis and the bridge over the *Tulcis* (Francolí) River. This area, which has recently been the subject of archaeological interventions, seems to have been quite vital until the late 7th century, most likely driven by trade.<sup>10</sup>

However, returning to the martyrial topography of Fructuosus, Augurius and Eulogius, we should also highlight the amphitheatre as the backdrop of the *passio*. The importance of this site was so engraved in the collective memory of the faithful residents that the integrity of the monument was maintained – and not despoiled like other Roman constructions in the city – as if it were a triumph of Christianity over the pagan barbarism of public executions. Archaeology has not revealed whether there is any kind of remembrance or trophy on the site where the martyrs were condemned to the punishment of *vivicomburium* (being burnt alive), although it can be guessed at from hymn VI of Prudentius' *Liber Peristephanon*. What archaeology has revealed is that a basilica was built in the arena of the amphitheatre in the late 6th or early 7th centuries, at the height of the Visigothic period, which has been the subject of several studies in recent years.<sup>11</sup>

One of the most jealously guarded questions harboured in Christian Tarraco is the Palaeo-Christian and Visigothic cathedral. Even though excavations and geophysical surveys have been conducted within the Gothic building in recent years, it has never been identified. However, there signs of a major remodelling of the provincial forum in the 6th century, even though it started to be dismantled in the 5th century. The location of the episcopal see in the upper part of the city, beneath or near the current Gothic cathedral, is still just speculative discourse at this point, yet the signs make it quite likely. One of them is the discovery of a privileged tomb dated from the 6th century, accompanied by a small liturgical vessel, which points to the buried person's identification as a member of the Church aristocracy.<sup>12</sup> The other is the identification of structures in the Collegi d'Arquitectes which seem to have been part of the episcopal complex.<sup>13</sup> According to the latest proposals, the Visigothic cathedral would have been located between the apse of the mediaeval cathedral and the main hall of the site of imperial worship.<sup>14</sup> However, this still remains pending.

The bishops of Tarraco served as metropolitans of the Tarraconensis province throughout the entire Visigothic



FIGURE 1. Map of the city of Tarragona in late antiquity and the expansion of the port district, according to J. M. Macias (ICAC).

period. They were in charge of calling the councils, even though we are only aware of the one held in the city in 516. For the remaining council gatherings, they chose a variety of sites within the province, although the metropolitan was always present.

Unlike Barcino, which played a prominent role in the political events in the Visigoths' penetration into the Tarraconensis – as we shall see below – Tarraco did not seem to be of particular interest to the Visigothic monarchs. The kings clearly preferred Barcino as more or less temporary headquarters, for reasons unknown. Some researchers stress the Roman-ness of the capital of the Tarraconensis, which remained faithful to the Empire to the very end and must have contained the bulk of the Hispano-Roman population and the military contingents faithful to Rome.<sup>15</sup>

The Christian city of Tarraco has been the subject of numerous historical-archaeological studies, including the Cathedral Steering Plan<sup>16</sup> and two doctoral theses, the one cited above by Andreu Muñoz Melgar,<sup>17</sup> and the one by Meritxell Pérez, which takes a more historical vantage point.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, in 2013 the *Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica* published the monograph entitled *Tarraco christiana civitas*, which was a sort of literature review of the knowledge of Tarragona in the Palaeo-Christian and Visigothic eras.<sup>19</sup> Finally, in November 2018, this city was the site of the VII *Reunió d'Arqueologia Cristiana Hispànica* as part of the 4th Tarraco Biennial, where many contributions from studies currently underway on Tarraco were discussed.<sup>20</sup>

### Barcino, imperial headquarters and royal seat

The city of Barcino became so prominent with the Visigoths that it is even believed to have rivalled Tarraco as the capital of the province. What we know from the written sources leaves no room for doubt: in the early 5th century, Barcelona was chosen as the imperial headquarters and royal seat before the arrival of the Visigoths.

One of the first political events that point to Barcino as the imperial headquarters is the one featuring Maximus the Usurper in the early 5th century. He was a Hispanic *libertus* who was proclaimed *augustus* in the Tarraconensis province with the assistance of General Gerontius, the usurper of Constantine III who had been governing Gaul since 407. Even though the historian Zosimus (*Historia nova*, VI.5 and IX.12) mentioned that Maximus' proclamation took place in Tarragona, the numismatic discoveries in archaeology sites within the city prove that Maximus chose Barcelona to mint the currencies that he issued.<sup>21</sup> The establishment of the mint in Barcino, with coins commemorating his proclamation as *augustus* between 410 and 411, leads us to posit that this usurper established the capital in Barcelona, not in Tarragona,<sup>22</sup> as Zosimus claimed.

Just four years later – in 415 – Barcino was once again the site of an episode with the involvement of the Visigoths for the first time, specifically King Athaulf and Galla

Placidia. The latter, the sister of Honorius, had been kidnapped by King Alaric I during the sacking of Rome in 410 with the intention of pressuring the emperor to grant them land in which to settle. When Alaric died, he was succeeded by Athaulf, who married the imperial princess in Narbonne, the city where they had fled after being beaten by General Constantine, who was faithful to Honorius; during this retreat southward, they stopped in Barcelona. Here, Athaulf not only watched as his plans to strengthen himself by marrying into the imperial family vanished, but they also lost a son, tellingly named Theodosius, who was murdered by a member of his army. Sigeric, who lasted no more than a week, was chosen in the same city and then succeeded by Wallia. The latter finally managed to sign the *foedus* with General Constantine, who provided them with land in Aquitaine where the Visigoths could settle, thus ushering in the Kingdom of Toulouse in 418.

The presence of the Visigoths in Barcino, with kings Athaulf, Sigeric and Wallia within a little over one year, is hardly tantamount to making it an intentionally chosen capital city. It was instead more a fleeting, isolated episode. The reason Athaulf decided to stop in Barcelona as he fled from Narbonne is still unknown. He could have chosen other urban nuclei like Empúries or Girona, which were much closer to the zone disputed with the troops of the *honoratii*. Some have proposed the appropriateness of a walled city like Barcelona as a place of resistance,<sup>23</sup> but Girona, which was closer, was also walled. Some also associate Athaulf's choice with the recent proclamation of Maximus the usurper in Barcelona. Within such a short time, there was nary a trace of his presence there. What does seem fairly clear is that after the Kingdom of Toulouse was created, the written sources cease mentioning the city as the site of important events in the Visigothic court.

Archaeologically, not much can be related to this first foray by the Visigoths in Barcino. However, we do know the location of the cathedral underneath the current location, from which a basilical hall and a first baptistry from the 4th century have been identified. The discovery was made by A. Duran i Sanpere in the course of the construction of a sewer network, and when he identified pavements of *opus signinum*, bases and columns and remains of chancels, he thought he had found the Christian basilica.<sup>24</sup> Years later, the baptistry was found during excavations (1968-1983) with the participation of Pere de Palol.<sup>25</sup> The conviction that this was the basilica of worship took root among experts, myself included,<sup>26</sup> until the re-excavation and interpretation undertaken by the Museu d'Història de la Ciutat de Barcelona under the oversight of Julia Beltrán de Heredia – with the assistance of Charles Bonnet – refuted this interpretation and suggested that the room was part of the bishop's architecture of power.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, the results of the archaeological investigations of the city's domestic architecture in the 4th and 5th centuries demonstrate that there were large *do-*

*mus* decorated with late mosaics and paintings, which indicate a very Roman lifestyle. No element has been found in these homes which leads us to posit the presence of Visigoths.<sup>28</sup> The grid of streets is also apparently conserved. The *domus* of *Sant Iu* became the embryo of the episcopal cluster: the 5th-century episcopal palace was built above it, although the archaeological information on it is not too clear given that a new episcopal palace which obscured it was built the following century. One of most interesting aspects of the palace is that its foundations use materials from the forum (inscriptions, bases with moulding and pedestals), which means that many of its buildings were most likely no longer in use in the early 5th century and had become quarries for new constructions. The reception hall of the episcopal nucleus also dates from the 5th century; it is paved with *opus signinum* and has a prominent place set aside for the bishop to preside over his audiences.<sup>29</sup>

If Barcino could be considered the capital of the Visigothic kings in any period, it was in the 6th century. Both the written texts and archaeology show this, and the historical-archaeological interpretation has developed considerably in the past 20 years, as we shall see below. However, first we shall analyse what the sources say about the events involving the Visigothic kings which transpired in the city of Barcelona.

In the early 6th century, after the Battle of Vouillé in 507, the Franks expelled the Visigoths from Aquitaine and forced them to move southeast. They set up their capital in Narbonne, and the kingdom was limited to the coastal regions. The pressure from the Merovingian Franks forced the Visigoths to move towards Hispania, and Barcelona played a very important role as a rear-guard city, as it had done in the 5th century with Athaulf, although this time more consistently. Alaric II died on the battlefield and was succeeded by his bastard son Gesalec, who usurped the throne from Amalaric, the legitimate heir to the crown and the grandson of the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great.<sup>30</sup> Gesalec made Barcino his royal headquarters, if we can believe the *Cronica Caesarugustana*, which states that the king himself killed Goiaric – who supported Amalaric – in the palace of Barcelona in 510.<sup>31</sup> Isidore of Seville offers another version of events: Gesalec took refuge in *Barchinona* after being defeated in Narbonne by the troops of the King of Burgundy, Gundobad. Theodoric deprived him of the throne and Gesalec fled towards Africa to seek the help of the Vandals; after that, he went to Aquitaine, and from there he returned to Hispania, heading to Barcelona. There, he was pursued by the Ostrogoths under the command of General Ibbas at the twelfth milestone until past the *Druantius* (Durance) River in Gaul, where he died in 511.<sup>32</sup>

The Ostrogoths took the initiative of protecting the young Amalaric, ushering in a period which in the Catalan historiography has been named the “Ostrogothic interregnum” (*intermedi ostrogot*, 507-526)<sup>33</sup> by R. D’Abadal – during which King Theodoric served as a re-

gent until his own death. In fact, this era was characterised by being one of the most permissive and prolific in terms of council meetings of the Catholic bishops from the Tarraconensis, which are dated by the reference to the year of the King Regent Theodoric or by Amalaric himself; they include the Council of Tarragona (516), the Council of Girona (517), the 2nd Council of Toledo (527), the Council of Lleida (546) and the Council of Valencia (549).<sup>34</sup>

This tolerance in the Ostrogothic period contrasts with the anti-Catholic attitude of King Amalaric, as reported by Gregory of Tours. Amalaric was proclaimed king of the Visigoths in 526, once his grandfather Theodoric had died, and in order to create stronger bonds with the Franks he married Clotilde, the daughter of King Clovis I, the first king of the Franks who converted to Catholicism. According to Gregory of Tours, the Arian king Amalaric mistreated his wife because of her Catholic devoutness and forced her to be re-baptised in the Arian faith, until the queen enlisted the help of her brother, the Frankish king, Childebert I. The Merovingian Franks invaded Narbonne, and Amalaric was forced to flee to Barcelona, where he died in 531, his throat slit by his own soldiers.<sup>35</sup>

He was succeeded by Theudis, an Ostrogothic general who had been at the helm for many years during the “Ostrogothic interregnum” (*intermedi ostrogot*) and was now proclaimed king of the Visigoths, independent from Ravenna (531-548). The historiography seems to suggest that he established his *sedes regia* in *Barchinona*, even though the written sources do not specify this. Via Isidore, we know that Theudis attacked the Franks from the Tarraconensis;<sup>36</sup> however, his move to Barcino is purely conjecture. Researchers like P. de la C. Díaz claim that King Theudis himself set up the capital of the kingdom in Toledo, at least in 546, when he enacted his famous law on trial costs.<sup>37</sup> If we accept this argument, Barcelona would have ceased being his royal see in the mid-6th century. Yet what must be accepted without question is that after these dates, the centre of Visigothic power shifted towards the more central regions of the Iberian Peninsula in order to make it possible to conquer more lands from the Swabians to the northwest and the Vandals to the south. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that 552 marked the start of the incursions by the Byzantines, who would occupy Cartagena and much of the east and southeast of the peninsula, and that to bolster themselves they would have to occupy strategic positions equidistant from both focal points of conflict.

What we can infer from the data from written sources is that Barcino played an extremely important role as the royal headquarters and site of the court between 510 and 546, most likely as a capital associated with the presence of the king, in the late Roman sense, just like the imperial sees for emperors’ more or less temporary sojourns. Once the court had been moved to Toledo, the government authority – the *comes* – and a group of Visigoths must have moved to the city and lived alongside the Hispanic Romans until the arrival of the Arabs.

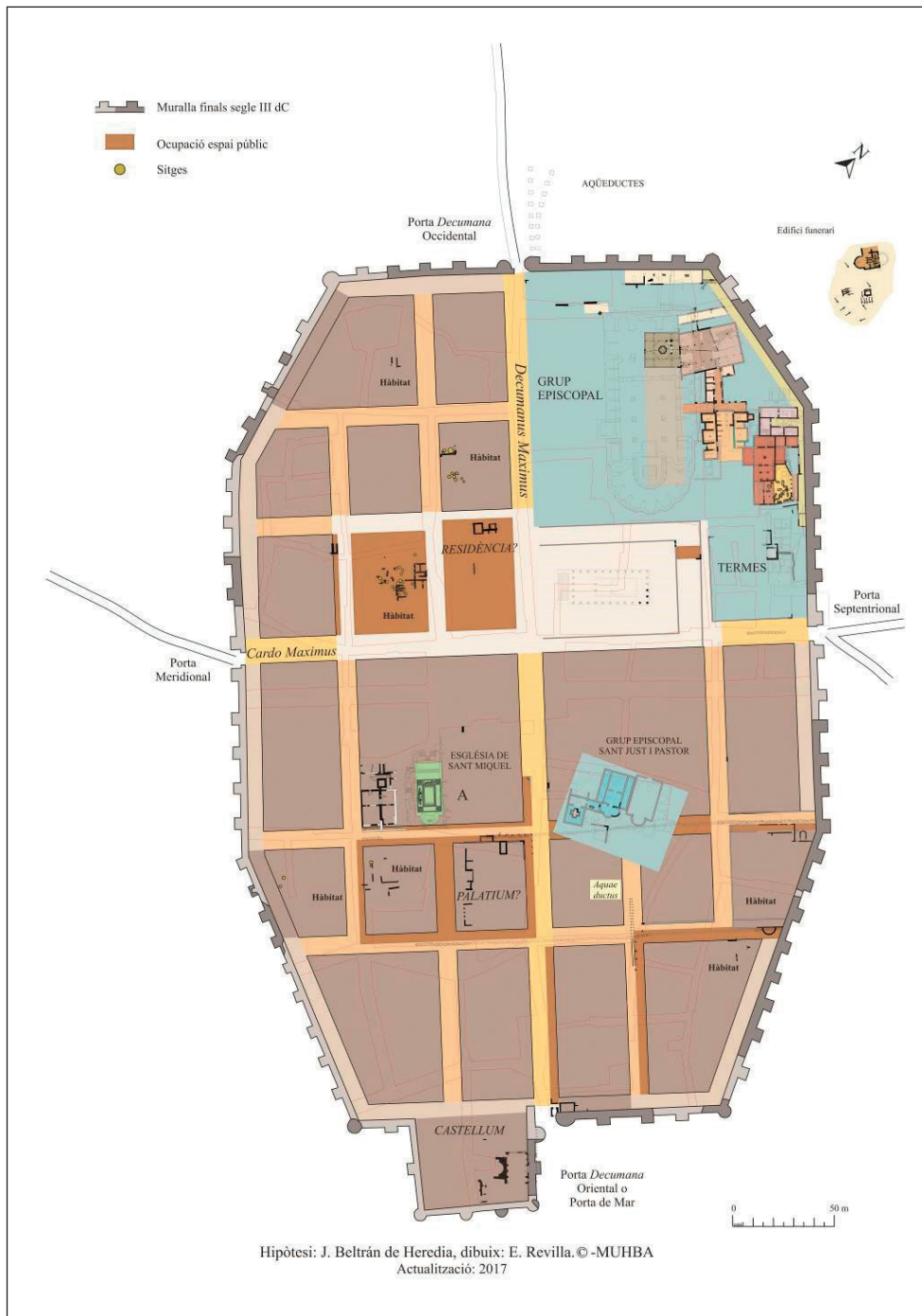


FIGURE 2. Barcino in the 6th century, according to J. Beltrán de Heredia.

The archaeological data reveal a fairly drastic change in the urban structure and household architecture in the 6th century. The large houses which had existed inside the wall in the 4th and 5th centuries disappeared, and instead much smaller and simpler housing units were built using all kinds of reused materials, even sculptural elements.<sup>38</sup> However, the road network and the land registry seem to have remained in place. This transformation may reveal a population change, which may be associated with the presence of Visigoths in the city.<sup>39</sup>

The suburban areas of the city also grew extensively. The *suburbium* included residential zones and a large belt of necropolises which ran from the northwest to the far

southern zone; however, it was not found between the south and southeast, most likely because this area was occupied by the coast and El Cagalell pond. The archaeomorphological analyses have enabled us to document a line of new roadways which connected the coastal mountains with the delta, and itineraries and routes heading inland were upgraded, seemingly because of the development of agricultural and livestock activities.<sup>40</sup>

One of the best-known aspects of the transformations made to Barcino in the 6th century is the evolution of its episcopal complex.

As mentioned above, the research project undertaken by MUHBA in the archaeological complex in Plaça del

Rei, directed by Julia Beltrán de Heredia with the assistance of Charles Bonnet, has borne fruit after 20 years of research. The archaeological interventions have revealed heavy monumentalisation of the first episcopal group from the 4th and 5th centuries, which fully transformed the topography of the city, given that it occupied almost one-fourth of it. The main basilica – which has not yet been excavated – is located under the current cathedral, but we know that it was connected to the baptistry, located at its feet, following the most common layout of liturgical spaces in Spanish churches.<sup>41</sup> The baptistry also underwent considerable monumentalisation at the time: the pool was covered with a dome, the interior was decorated with paintings that imitate cladding with *opus sectile* or marble panels,<sup>42</sup> plus an inscription which contains a formula from the baptismal liturgy<sup>43</sup> and ceiling paintings.<sup>44</sup> The initial nucleus was expanded with the construction of a cruciform church that had an associated cemetery (inside the walls), a new episcopal palace-fortress and several *balnea*, which – according to Beltrán de Heredia – must not have been for the bishop's private use but instead for the pilgrims and faithful of the city.<sup>45</sup>

In the same period and same neighbourhood, what has been identified as the palace of civil authority, the *comes civitatis*, was built next to the cruciform church and the wall. It has a “U” shape which opens onto an *interuallum* following the line of the wall and is connected to the ring road around it by stairs. Buckles from military belts were found in the excavations, which reveal the presence of a detachment, probably in relation to the residence of the *comes*.<sup>46</sup>

Beltrán de Heredia proposes a date for this monumentalisation of the church/government complex in the second half of the 6th century, specifically between 530 and 595 judging from the materials that appear in the archaeological sites (ceramics and coins) and the carbon-14 dating obtained from the mortar in the foundations.<sup>47</sup> It is clearly a chronological arc of 65 years, an overly long period at a time when the breakneck speed of events in the political history of the monarchy in relation to Barcelona had not yet happened. The capital had already been moved to Toledo by the second half of the 6th century; therefore, we should consider that the times of maximum civic activity in the episcopal complex must have been when the monarch had already left with his court for Toledo, yet he must have left a Visigothic military detachment and a primarily Arian community of faith.

However, we should bear in mind that it must not have been too long after the second half of the 6th century. If we think about the remodellings that date from this phase, this construction vitality cannot be related to the conversion of Reccared at the 3rd Council of Toledo in 589, as it has been traditionally, because it is too late. In contrast, a mid-century date seems more likely given that this is the time when the rivalry between the Arians and Catholics was the fiercest, which must have sparked a wave of con-

struction in cities among the Arian and Catholic episcopal groups.<sup>48</sup> This aspect, which had been pushed to the background by the research on Hispanic religious architecture – perhaps because of the lack of known differences between the liturgical functions of the spaces of worship in the two credos – has garnered special attention in recent years, especially around the excavations of the basilica of the Martyred Saints Justus and Pastor.

These archaeological interventions were directed by Julia Beltrán de Heredia and conducted between 2011 and 2014, thanks to an agreement between the parish and the Barcelona Town Hall. They brought to light the remains of a building of worship located south of the Roman forum: the tribolite apse of a basilica and the remains of the colonnade of the naves, a baptistry and a privileged tomb. The author interprets the complex as a second episcopal group and has developed a complex hypothesis which suggests situating the Catholic cathedral under the church of Saints Justus and Pastor, given that she claims that the episcopal complex in Plaça el Rei must have been occupied by the Arian bishop and associated with the buildings that represented the power of the Visigoths, the episcopal palace-fortress and palace of the *comes civitatis*. This bishopric of Saints Justus and Pastor must have retained its parish functions after the conversion to Catholicism of Reccared and the Gothic people, given that the Catholic bishop would have “recovered” the cathedral with its Palaeo-Christian tradition.<sup>49</sup>

Even though this proposal is quite intriguing,<sup>50</sup> it is nonetheless rather bold. The archaeological proof on which it rests is still fragmentary, and the first critical voices have emerged.<sup>51</sup> New archaeological interventions will be needed to further our knowledge of this building of worship.<sup>52</sup>

### Egara (Terrassa)

The site of the episcopal complex of Egara (Terrassa), which emerged over an originally Roman town, is closely connected to the Church see in Barcino. It is an episcopal cluster from the Palaeo-Christian and Visigothic era and one of the most thoroughly studied in recent years. The archaeological work done on this area between 1995 and 2005 enabled the different phases in the development of this complex from the 4th to the 9th century in the Carolingian era to be identified and described.<sup>53</sup>

The construction of the religious complex to serve as the church see is related to the actions of bishop Nundinarius from the Barcino see, who appointed Irenaeus as the bishop of Egara in 464. The see in Egara was then given land which had previously been owned by Barcelona, and it apparently split off from Barcelona, although it was not one of its suffragan dioceses. This appointment did not follow canonical rules, even though it had the backing of the community and the bishops in the province. Nundinarius broke the canonical rules by appointing Irenaeus as his successor in the Barcelona see in his will; this aberrant act in canonical law prompted the admonishment of



FIGURE 3. Aerial view of the episcopal complex of Egara (bishopric of Terrassa).

Pope Hilarius, and Irenaeus remained in Egara after Nundinarius' death.<sup>54</sup>

In the mid-5th century, dovetailing with its promotion to cathedral status, archaeological studies have managed to identify a phase in the construction of the pre-existing complex which totally changed the (pre-episcopal) interior design and even seems to have been left unfinished in some areas. The new project – under the oversight of Irenaeus – seems to have been a lengthy project that was not completed until the mid-6th century. It was comprised of three buildings of worship set on three terraces on a descending plane from the south, where the bishop's residential complex, the episcopal palace, was built. The second terrace held Santa Maria cathedral, which was reformed on top of previous buildings and had been dedicated to Christian worship since the 4th century, and next to it on the same level was a martyrial or funereal building, currently Sant Miquel church.<sup>55</sup> Sant Pere church, which archaeologists claim<sup>56</sup> served as a parish church, was built on the far north atop the third terrace; it had three naves and a trilobate apse. Future archaeological exploration will be needed to clarify its relationship with the other buildings, although it seems to share the same architectural programme.<sup>57</sup> The complex, which was surrounded by funerary corridors, had a central courtyard with a central well and was surrounded by an enclosure that delimited the episcopal compound.

The many years it took to build the complex in Egara, between the mid-5th century and the year 700, ensconces it fully within the Visigothic period. Worth noting is the spectacular nature of the complex, where entire buildings are conserved, such as Sant Miquel church, which dates from the mid-6th century. In fact, the last remodelling of the apse of Santa Maria – which also seems to correspond with the apse of Sant Pere – was identified based on the amphorae from North Africa dated from between 550 and 700 which were used to fill the vaults.<sup>58</sup>

The written sources reveal a vital scene in the Egara see, which participated in the council meetings of the Tarraconensis, as well as in the national councils held in Tole-

do. However, given its uniqueness, it is worth noting that a provincial council was held in Terrassa in 614.<sup>59</sup> It is totally exceptional for a council assembly to gather in a small see, so we believe that this tells us about some kind of inauguration of improvements to the see, which could also have repercussions when reinterpreting the archaeological and monumental structures.<sup>60</sup>

#### THE FORTIFICATIONS: *CASTR*A, *OPPIDUM* AND BORDERLANDS

Without a doubt, one of the most important facts that we know about Egara based on texts revolves around the figure of bishop Nebridius, because he placed the see on the map of strategic cities in the Visigothic kingdom in the first half of the 6th century. As we know from Isidore of Seville, Nebridius of Egara had three brothers who were also bishops: Elpidius of Huesca, Justus of Urgell and Justinian of Valencia.<sup>61</sup> Based on prosopographic studies, Josep Vilella reached the conclusion that they were only brothers via their mother, and given that Isidore only described Nebridius and Elpidius as *nobilissimi*, he posits that they were brothers of the same father with a higher social status than the father of Justus and Justinian, the two younger sons.<sup>62</sup>

All four brothers came from an aristocratic family from the Tarraconensis, but the sees they administered were so diverse and far-flung that we should discard an investiture related to roots in the land and the local elites.<sup>63</sup> All four exercised their episcopacy at a crucial time during the minority of Amalaric and the period immediately thereafter, when the Visigothic monarchs won independence from the oversight of the Ostrogoths. Unlike Egara, Huesca, Urgell and Valencia were outlying or peripheral cities within the area dominated by the Ostrogothic king and his generals, largely corresponding to the eastern part of the Tarraconensis. To the north, Huesca and Urgell were close to the zone controlled by the Franks on the other side of the Pyrenees; to the south, Valencia may



have been on the sidelines of Ostrogothic influence, but the transfer of Justinian in around 531 must have been a direct appointment by King Theudis to counter the pressure from the Byzantine troops who were arriving on the Balearic Islands in 534 and would end up occupying the eastern portion of the Peninsula in 552, turning Valencia into a border city.<sup>64</sup> In this way, Valencia would be used to project the authority of the new monarchs over the Iberian Peninsula, while it also sought to associate this city on the Turia River with the Ebro River Valley and the Tarraconensis, the centre of gravity of the Visigothic monarchy at that time.<sup>65</sup>

Research in recent years has extensively examined the fortifications in the northern part of the Tarraconensis, especially as different kinds of military settlements (*turres, oppida, castella*), as well as hill towns which were fortified on the initiative of the local powers. J. Avelino Gutiérrez González claims that they were the forerunners of the feudal fortifications, albeit analysed more from the perspective of the entire Iberian Peninsula.<sup>66</sup> Specifically with regard to the eastern zone of the Tarraconensis, the unpublished thesis by V. Luis Pérez García defended at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili in 2011 is worth noting, from which a very interesting article has been published.<sup>67</sup>

If we look northward, the Visigoths' struggle with the Franks led them to choose Barcino as their rear-guard site because it had easy connections to the sea and was located along Via Augusta, as discussed above. At the times of greatest upheaval in the Ostrogothic intervention, Girona consolidated its importance because of the control it exerted over Via Augusta, a roadway that linked the main cities at the time, namely Barcelona, Elne and Narbonne. Even later, Girona was midway along the road that connected the Peninsula with Septimania.<sup>68</sup>

In the Alt Empordà is the *castrum* of Puig Rom, a walled settlement located on a hill which overlooks the

Bay of Roses, a strategic location. It has a wall and quadrangular towers built using a technique quite similar to what is found in València la Vella, mentioned above. The site was excavated for the first time by Joaquim Folch i Torres in 1917, and 30 years later by Pere de Palol – between 1946 and 1947 – who was able to identify it as a *castrum* from the Visigothic era. However, Palol had remarked that the settlement may have not been exclusively military; instead, it might have been a hilltop defensive settlement above the neighbouring town of Roses, which had apparently been abandoned in the 7th century.<sup>69</sup> The excavation was recently resumed with a new project carried out between 2014 and 2017 by a team made up of researchers from the Universitat de Girona, the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica. They were able to clean and consolidate the sectors excavated by P. de Palol and open other points in the settlement and the wall. Even though the precise date of its founding has not been pinpointed, the latest discovery is that a remodelling was identified in one of the doors, which might reveal two phases of occupation.<sup>70</sup>

The fortifications of Les Cluses, which date from the Roman era but were still fully in use during the Visigothic period, are located in the mountain passes in the eastern Pyrenees. This pass is mentioned as a *castrum quod vocatur Clausuras* in the chronicle of Paulus' rebellion in Septimania in 673 during the reign of King Wamba.<sup>71</sup> Archaeologically, the *turris* of Panissars and the *clausurae* of Perthús or Portus are quite widely known, two *castella* which flank Via Augusta – Clusa Alta and Castell dels Moros – and control a narrow pass, which even has a gate in the middle of the Via Domitia in order to control the Pyrenees pass in this site.<sup>72</sup>

Another paradigmatic example is the *Castellum Frac-tum* in Sant Julià de Ramis, called thus in the documenta-

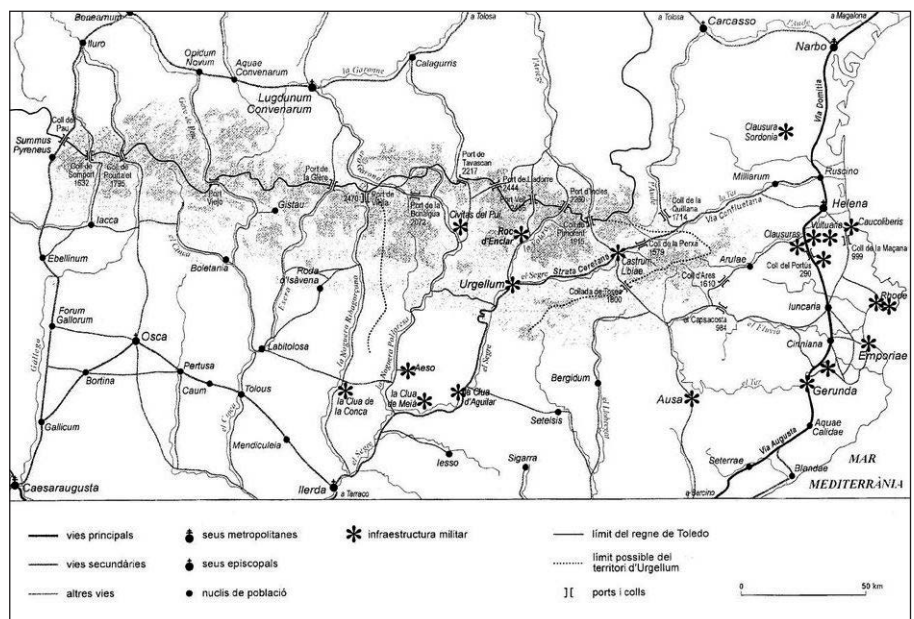


FIGURE 4. Map of the Pyrenees region of the Tarraconensis with the main cities and fortifications, according to L. Pérez García.

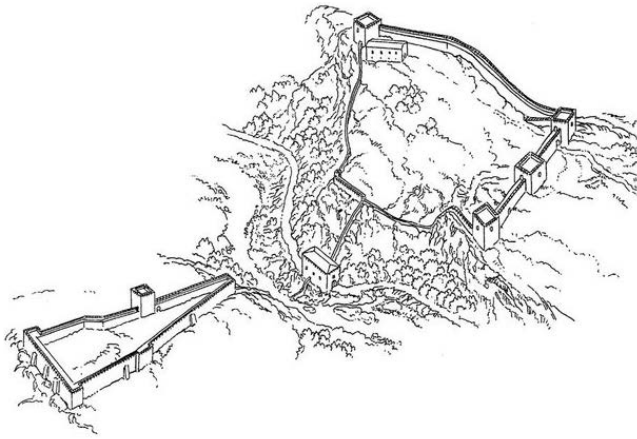


FIGURE 5. Les Cluses, according to J. M. Nolla (drawing by F. Riart).

tion from the 9th century. The site has been the subject of several systematic archaeological interventions which have managed to describe the presence of a fortification as early as the 9th century, which was built in two phases, its completion dating from the 8th to 9th centuries.<sup>73</sup> It consists in a quadrangular building surrounded by a wall with four towers, one on each corner; it is built of carefully squared ashlar held together with lime mortar. This fortification is associated with a hamlet made of perishable and very poor materials; furthermore, a church dedicated to the Doctors of the Church and a necropolis with tombs made of stone slabs were also identified. Obviously, this enclave was not exclusively military in purpose.<sup>74</sup>

Yet from a more strategic perspective of control over the roads, if we look westward, in the valleys of Andorra we can find the site of Sant Vicenç d'Enclar, a hilltop fortification which controlled the pass from north to south. This was a very important pass given that the other side of the peak in the Garonne valley was the way to Toulouse, which was in Frankish hands.<sup>75</sup> Based on the archaeological data, the date when El Roc d'Enclar was founded has been pinpointed at between the second half of the 4th century and the early 5th century, but it remained in full use during the Visigothic era, as proven by the discovery of metal items, primarily bronze, used for personal ornamentation as part of the military uniforms. Noteworthy among these pieces is a type of buckle quite similar to the ones found in the Visigothic necropolis of *Pampilona* from the 6th and 7th centuries, which is associated with the Swabians, who controlled this pass before the Visigoths did.

El Roc d'Enclar must have been part of a series of forts and watchtowers which served as a line of defence at the *clausurae* of the Pyrenees. The importance of the pass through the valleys of Andorra most likely determined its control from the city of Urgell, from which the military offensive against the Franks could be coordinated.<sup>76</sup> However, Urgell does not seem to have been founded to replace the older *Iulia Libica* (Llívia), as some authors claim;<sup>77</sup> instead, the archaeological remains reveal a re-occupation of certain sectors in old Llívia by the military corps defending

the Pyrenean passes, just as the neighbouring Urgell did. In fact, we are aware of a *Castrum Libiae* mentioned in the context of Duke Paulus' rebellion against Wamba in 673.

Urgell most likely attained higher status as border city than Llívia. Recent archaeological interventions around Santa Maria church in La Seu d'Urgell have brought to light several buildings made with materials that date from the 5th to 6th centuries.<sup>78</sup> This is when the bishopric of Urgell must have been founded – as well as its counterpart in Carcassonne – as cities on the Frankish-Visigothic border. We should recall that bishop Justus and his brothers occupied the episcopal sees in the lands bordering with the Franks (Elpidius of Huesca and Justus of Urgell) and with the Byzantines (Justinian of Valencia). It is likely that they were directly appointed by king Theudis, as discussed above.

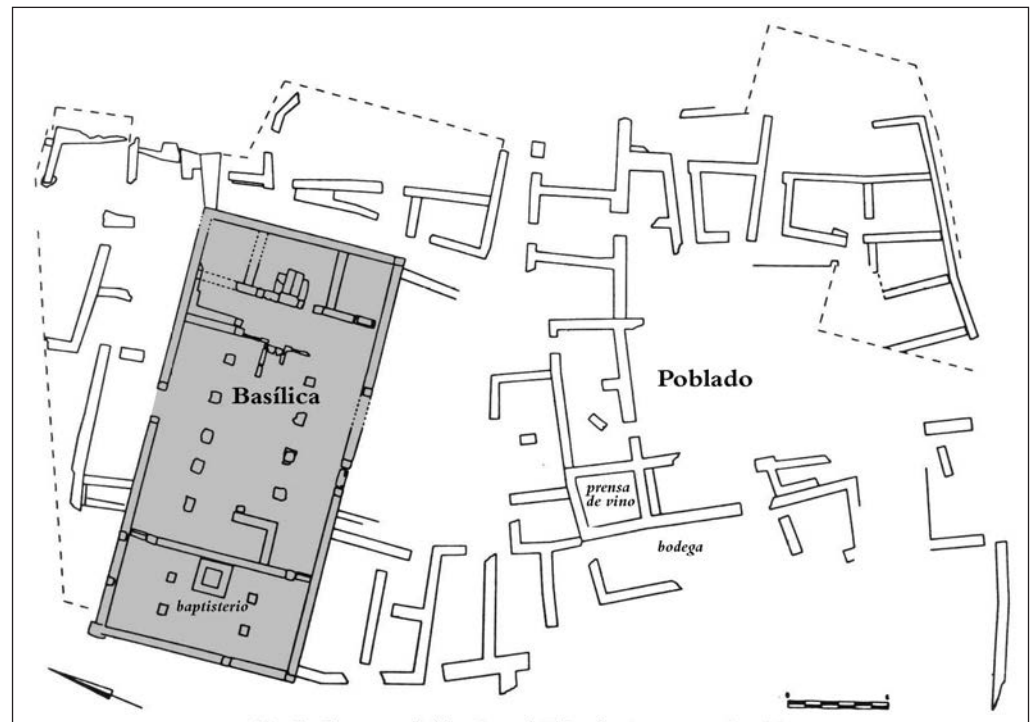
### THE HILLTOP SETTLEMENTS AND THE ABANDONMENT OF THE VILLAS

Archaeology is revealing quite clearly how in the 6th and 7th centuries, people converged in places that were easy to defend, in hilltop settlements or strategic enclaves on the banks of a river or by a roadway. As mentioned above, it goes without saying that many originally military nuclei ended up also becoming residential areas, perhaps to house the families of the officers or because of the increasingly frequent concentration of people who depended on local power in the proto-feudal sense.

One clear example of a hilltop settlement that emerged in this era is Santa Cecilia de Els Altimiris (Sant Esteve de la Sarga, Pallars Jussà).<sup>79</sup> This is a settlement located 900 metres above sea level on the peak of Montsec d'Ares; surrounded by forests, crop fields and livestock pastures, it was active between the 5th and 8th centuries. The difficulty reaching it was a natural defence in itself; furthermore, there is a narrow pass between two rocky masses which made it easy to watch over. A church and wool-working tools have also been identified, which reveal livestock husbandry. Homes measuring between 6 and 15 m<sup>2</sup> dug out from the rock and made with perishable materials such as trunks and branches have also been identified. Three large cisterns were also built that could hold up to 30,000 litres each. The excavators claim that this must have been a monastic nucleus associated with the hermetic movements common in this era.<sup>80</sup>

One of the most emblematic settlements in the Visigothic *Tarraconensis* is El Bovalar (Seròs, Segrià). This is a cluster of homes which were built in the shelter of a church with a baptistry at its feet, leading us to believe that it may have been a parish church. Its strategic location next to the Segre River gave it a river outlet and provided water for the crops, which the excavations have brought to light. The carpological (seed) analyses of grasses and fruit trees have revealed a rich, varied agricultural practice. An oil press and two cellars with wine bottles were also found, which are interpreted as being for

FIGURE 6. Visigothic settlement of El Bovalar (Seròs, Segrià, according to P. de Palol).



community use. The excavators say that they have only been able to describe one construction phase. The settlement came to an end by a fire, the ashes of which have yielded Visigothic *tremisis* from King Achila II (711-713), shortly before the arrival of the Saracens.<sup>81</sup>

This kind of settlement nuclei were the outcome of the end of the Roman villas, the vast majority of which were abandoned in the 5th and 6th centuries. The explanations for this phenomenon may include a major crisis, as well as the concentration of wealth in the hands of the increasingly wealthy. The urban parts were often abandoned, the thermal facilities were amortised and the mosaic pavements were no longer maintained, for example. In some cases, we can detect the occupancy of huts made of weaker materials, or even with the presence of tombs.

One exceptional case is Villa Fortunatus (Fraga, Huesca), which is quite close to Bovalar. The villa has different phases, with many of its rooms paved in rich mosaics, a reception room, thermal baths and more.<sup>82</sup> The villa was abandoned in the 5th century, but in the 6th century a basilica was built with a baptistry at its feet which took advantage of two of the finer rooms. It seems clear that the owners no longer lived there, and the tombs around the peristyle were placed in the shelter of the church.<sup>83</sup>

The era of the Visigothic kings is a fascinating time which still jealously harbours many secrets for future generations of researchers.

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- [27] C. BONNET and J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA. "Nouveau regard sur le groupe épiscopal de Barcelone". *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, no. 80 (2004), pp. 137-158. esp. 147 and 157. J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA. *La Barcelona visigoda: un puente entre dos mundos. La basílica dels Sants Màrtirs Just i Pastor: de la ciudad romana a la ciudad altomedieval* (Studia Archaeologiae Christianae 3). Facultat Antoni Gaudí d'Història, Arqueologia i arts cristianes – Ateu Universitari Sant Pacià, Barcelona 2019. Cf. too J. SALES. *Las construcciones cristianas de la Tarraconensis durante la Antigüedad Tardía. Topografía, arqueología e historia*. Publicacions de la Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona 2012, pp. 146-151.
- [28] J. M. GURT and C. GODOY. "Barcino, de sede imperial a urbs regia en época visigoda". *op. cit.*, pp. 430-434. A. PERICH. "Barcino entre los siglos IV y VI dC. Transformaciones y ascenso de una ciudad mediterránea". *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Series I. Prehistoria y Arqueología*, no. 7 (2014), pp. 61-96. esp. 70-77.
- [29] A. PERICH. "Barcino entre los siglos IV y VI dC.", p. 81. IDEM. *Arquitectura residencial urbana d'època tardoantiga a Hispania (segles IV-VIII dC)*, [doctoral thesis] URV-ICAC, Tarragona 2014, pp. 186-188. Dating this first palace in the 5th century has enabled us to move up the date of the abandonment of the forum to that time, during the same period as identified in other Roman cities like Tarraco. Since this palace was expanded in the 6th century, some researchers have posited that the forum might have been used until the 6th century, including myself and P. Banks: Cf. P. BANKS, "The Roman Inheritance and Topographical transitions in Early Medieval Barcelona", *op. cit.*, p. 615. Cf. too J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA and J. M. MACIAS. "Maneras de vivir, formas de construir: el hábitat en la Hispania visigoda". In *Abitare nel Mediterraneo antico. Atti del II Convegno Internazionale del Centro Interuniversitario di Studi sull'Edilizia abitativa tardoantica nel Mediterraneo (CISEM)* (Bologna 2-5 de marzo 2016), Bologna 2018, pp. 227-235.
- [30] It is worth noting that the succession of the monarchy was not hereditary, even though they unsuccessfully tried to perpetuate their family line. The lines of the Balts rivalling the Amali were more important to the *gentes gothorum* than consanguinity.
- [31] *Chronica Caesaraugustana, ad a. 510: Gesaleicus Goericum Barcinone in palatio interfecit...*, (ed. T. Mommsen, *Chronica minora*, vol I: [MGH auct.ant. vol. IX] Berlín 196, p. 223). This is the first time that the Visigothic palace is mentioned. J. Arce believes that *in palatio* does not necessarily mean the existence of a palace but instead might simply refer to the king's residence; he is convinced that the Visigothic kingdom had no capital until Leovigild, who established the capital in Toledo: J. ARCE. *Esperando a los árabes. Los visigodos en Hispania (507-711)*, Marcial Pons Historia, Madrid 2011, pp. 72-73.
- [32] Isidore of Seville, *Hist. Goth.* 38 (ed. Mommsen, *op. cit.* p. 282). Studies conducted by Philip Banks on this toponym lead him to propose the site *Duodecimo* at the twelfth milestone on the road to Barcelona on the side closer to the Llobregat River, in the township of Cornellà. Mediaeval documentation from the 11th century still conserves the same name for this place. P. J. BANKS. *The Topography of the City of Barcelona and its Urban Context in Eastern Catalonia from the Third to the Twelfth Centuries*, (doctoral thesis), University of Nottingham 1980, p. 201; IDEM. "The Roman Inheritance and Topographical Transitions in Early Medieval Barcelona". In: T. F. C. BLAGG, R. F. J. JONES and S. J. KEAY (eds.). *Papers in Iberian Archeology* (BAR International Series 193), Oxford 1984, pp. 600-634. esp. p. 605.
- [33] Often called the "minority of Amalaric" in the English-language historiography. R. D'ABADAL. *Dels visigots als catalans, I. La Hispània visigòtica i la Catalunya Carolíngia*. Edicions 62, Barcelona 1969.
- [34] J. VIVES, G. MARTÍNEZ and T. MARÍN. *Concilios visigóticos e hispanorromanos*, CSIC – Instituto Enrique Flórez, Madrid – Barcelona 1963, pp. 34 and 39 for the Tarraconensis councils and p. 42 for the 2nd Council of Toledo. Curiously, these latter two – the ones in Lleida and Valencia— date from the years of the reign of Theudoric, although the Ostrogothic king had died back in 526. The compiler of the *collectio hispana* most likely meant Theudis. Cf. J. VILELLA. "Los concilios eclesiásticos hispanos del periodo visigodo-arriano: análisis histórico-prosopográfico". *Medieval Prosopography*, no. 25 (2008), pp. 1-47.
- [35] Isidore of Seville offers two contradictory versions of this event. The first is this (Isidor, *Hist. Goth.* 38, ed. Mommsen, *op. cit.*, p. 283) and the second makes the forum of the city of Narbonne the site of Amalaric's murder (Isidore, *Hist. Goth.* 40, ed. Mommsen, *op. cit.*, p. 283). This contradiction in the location of the city where Amalaric was killed, either Barcelona or Nar-

bonne, is very important when identifying the existence of a Visigothic palace in the city. We shall return to this matter below.

- [36] Isidore of Seville, *Hist. Goth.* 43, (ed. Mommsen, *op. cit.*, p. 284)
- [37] P. de la C. DÍAZ MARTÍNEZ, Clelia MARTÍNEZ MAZA and F. J. SANZ HUESMA. *Hispania tardoantigua y visigoda*, Ediciones Istmo, Madrid 2007, p. 346. *Contra*: J. ARCE. *Esperando a los árabes*, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74, who points out that the fact that a law is signed in a city does not imply that the king lives there; in fact, the *Codex Theodosianus* often mentions the emperors signing laws in *Sirmium*, *Serdica* or *Mediolanum*, without this meaning that the king lived there or that these cities were the capitals.
- [38] Cf. J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA. "Arqueología y técnicas constructivas en Barcelona: nuevos datos para el horizonte tardoantiguo". *Quarhis*, no. 12 (2016), pp. 58-77. Also J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA and J. M. MACIAS. "Maneras de vivir, formas de construir, *op. cit.*
- [39] J. M. GURT and C. GODOY. *Barcino*, de sede imperial a urbs regia en época visigoda". *op. cit.*, pp. 450-451. Many of the streets have been raised and the sewer system has been lost in some places, but not all. Several repairs from the era have been detected, which seek to cut back the drains to reach the sewers: J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA and C. CARRERAS. "Barcino y la gestión de residuos urbanos". *La gestión de residuos urbanos en Hispania romana. Xavier Dupré, in memoriam*. Mérida 2011, pp. 233-254. A. PERICH. "Barcino entre los siglos IV y VI dC", *op. cit.*, p. 82-84. *Idem*. *Arquitectura residencial urbana d'època tardoantiga a Hispania*, *op. cit.* p. 188, who highlights the stark contrast between the poverty of the residential area and the richness of the episcopal compounds and rightly wonders where the Visigothic aristocracy lived.
- [40] In this sense, the palaeo-environmental studies by S. Riera are very interesting: S. RIERA, "Història de la vegetació al Pla de Barcelona en els darrers 9000 anys. Anàlisi pol·línica de l'antic Estany del Cagalell (DR-1)". *Revista Catalana de Geografia*, no. 13-5 (1990), pp. 57-68. Likewise, the studies in landscape archaeology by J. M. PALET. *Estudi territorial del Pla de Barcelona. Estructuració i evolució del territori entre l'època ibero-romana i altmedieval (segles II-I aC - X-XI dC)*. Centre d'Arqueologia de la Ciutat - Ajuntament de Barcelona, Barcelona 1997.
- [41] C. GODOY. *Arqueologia y liturgia*, 1995. *Eadem*. "A los pies del templo: espacios litúrgicos en contraposición al altar: una revisión". *Sacralidad y Arqueología. Homenaje al prof. Thilo Ulbert al cumplir 65 años*, Antig. Crist. XXI, Murcia 2004, pp. 473-489.
- [42] J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA and Ch. BONNET. "Nouvelles données sur le baptistère de Barcelona". In: *Atti del Convegno Internazionale XII: Albenga città episcopale. Tempi e dinamiche della cristianizzazione tra Liguria di ponente e Provenza* (2006). vol II. Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri, Genoa - Albenga 2007, pp. 771-820.
- [43] This is a renunciation of Satan which catechumens had to say, facing west, before receiving baptism. Cf. the epigraphic studies in IRC IV, *Inscriptions Romaines de Catalogne. Barcino* (G. FABRE, M. MAYER and I. RODÀ [eds.]). Paris 1997, no. 310. M. MAYER and I. RODÀ. "Visigodos y cristianos en Barcino. A propósito de la inscripción pintada del baptisterio". In: *Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archeologiae Christianae* (1994), Vatican City - Split 1998, pp. 511-522.
- [44] E. ALBIOL LÓPEZ. "Una pintura de sostre de l'Antiguitat tardana al baptisteri de Barcelona". *Quarhis*, no. 9 (2013), pp. 164-183.
- [45] J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA. "Barcelona, la topografía de un centro de poder visigodo: católicos y arrianos a través de la arqueología". *Territorio, topografía y arquitectura de poder durante la Antigüedad Tardía (Jornadas Spaniae uel Galliae, territorio, topografía y arquitectura de las sedes regiae visigodas Madrid, 2015)*. *MYTRA*, no. 1 (2018), pp. 79-125. esp. 88.
- [46] G. RIPOLL. "Objetos de indumentaria personal en Barcino (siglos IV-VII)". In J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA (ed.), *De Barcino a Barcinona (siglos I-VII). Los restos arqueológicos de la Plaza de Rey de Barcelona*, MHCB, Ajuntament de Barcelona, Barcelona 2001, pp. 214-219.
- [47] These dates were determined using the accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) technique, J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA. "Arquitectura y sistemas de construcción en Barcino durante la Antigüedad tardía. Materiales, técnicas y morteros: un fósil director en el yacimiento de la Plaza del Rey". *Quarhis*, no. 5 (2009), pp. 142-169. *Eadem*. *La Barcelona visigoda: un puente entre dos mundos. La basílica dels Sants Màrtirs Just i Pastor*, *op. cit.*, p. 129-130.
- [48] This is suggested by A. Chavarria generically for all of Hispania, but it seems particularly pertinent for Barcino. Cf. A. CHAVARRIA. *A la sombra de un Imperio. Iglesias, obispos y reyes en la Hispania tardoantigua (siglos V-VIII)*. Edipuglia, Bari 2018, p. 9.
- [49] J. Beltrán de Heredia has repeatedly insisted on this proposal in recent publications: J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA. "Barcino, de colonia romana a sede regia visigoda, Medina islámica i ciutat comtal: una urbs en transició". *Quarhis*, no. 9 (2013), pp. 16-118. *Eadem*. "Barcelona, la topografía de un centro de poder visigodo: católicos y arrianos a través de la arqueología", *op. cit.* And especially the publication of her doctoral thesis, *Eadem*, *La Barcelona visigoda: un puente entre dos mundos. La basílica dels Sants Màrtirs Just i Pastor*, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-162.
- [50] The need to identify a Catholic and an Arian cathedral had already been intuitively pointed out by P. Banks in the 1980s, who deduced it from texts. Furthermore, he noted that the main candidate was the church of Saint Justus and Pastor because of the presence of two Byzantine capitals from the 7th century conserved in the church. Cf. P. J. BANKS. *The Topography of the City of Barcelona and its Urban Context in Eastern Catalonia from the Third to the Twelfth Centuries*, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-207.
- [51] A. CHAVARRIA. *A la sombra de un Imperio*, pp. 72-73. However, she does not offer well-founded objectives of why she does not admit Beltrán de Heredia's hypothesis.

- [52] The presence of the baptistry is crucial and beyond doubt, although some experts question it. The identification of a water conduit comparable to a similar one found in the baptistry in the complex in Plaça del Rei is irrefutable proof. On the other hand, many recent studies of ceramic materials, such as the study by X. Aquilué, make it possible to identify a date in the early 6th century for the construction of the apse, which would make the episcopal complex of Saint Justus and Pastor older, and if Beltrán de Heredia's hypothesis is accepted, it would be contemporary to the presence of the first Visigothic contingents in the city during the time of King Gesalec. Cf. J. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA and X. AQUILUÉ, "Análisis de los contextos cerámicos de la Antigüedad Tardía de la Basílica dels Sants Màrtirs Just i Pastor de Barcelona". *Quarhis*, no. 14 (2018), pp. 78-94.
- [53] C. GARCÍA, A. MORO and F. TUSET. *La seu episcopal d'Ègara. Arqueologia d'un conjunt cristià del segle IV al IX*. (Documenta, 8). ICAC, Tarragona 2009.
- [54] J. VILELLA. "Los concilios eclesiásticos de la Tarraconensis durante el siglo V". *Florentia Iliberritana* no. 13 (2002), pp. 327-344; esp. 338-339. P. J. BANKS. *The Topography of the City of Barcelona and its Urban Context in Eastern Catalonia from the Third to the Twelfth Centuries*, op. cit., p. 202-203, wonders why Nundinarius chose Terrassa instead of *Baetulo*, *Iluro* or *Aquae Calidae*, for example.
- [55] One of the most important contributions to the archaeological excavation project in the series of churches in Terrassa was precisely being able to refute Puig i Cadafalch's proposal of interpreting Sant Miquel as a baptistry: J. PUIG I CADAFALECH. *La seu visigòtica d'Ègara*, Barcelona 1936. Based on his hypothesis, an octagonal baptismal pool was reconstructed in 1929-1931 following the Milanese models; this reconstruction was installed in the monument until this identification was disproven and it was disassembled. C. GARCÍA, A. MORO and F. TUSET. *La seu episcopal d'Ègara. Arqueologia d'un conjunt cristià del segle IV al IX*, op. cit., 19-20.
- [56] This purpose is quite ambiguous. It is obvious that the *raison d'être* of all churches was to look after parishioners' souls. This is why it makes more sense to talk about a purpose related to martyrdom. The comparison with the trilobate apse found in Saint Justus and Pastor in Barcelona is inevitable, which Beltrán de Heredia proposed as being for martyrial use, as mentioned above.
- [57] C. GARCÍA, A. MORO and F. TUSET. "La seu d'Ègara". In J. PUIG I CADAFALECH, A. DE FALGUERA and J. GODAY. *L'arquitectura cristiana preromànica a Catalunya. Edició facsimil i textos d'actualització*. (edited by J. GUITART, M. PAGÈS, I. RODÀ and J. M. SANS I TRAVÉ). Institut d'Estudis Catalans – Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya – Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya – Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica, Barcelona 2016, pp. 503-518.
- [58] Specifically, only one of these amphorae recovered during the restoration of the roof by the architect J. Ambrós in 1980 was analysed. The study by S. Keay identified it as Keay LXIa, oil containers from North Africa dated 550-700. C. GARCÍA, A. MORO and F. TUSET. *La seu episcopal d'Ègara*. op. cit., p. 180.
- [59] J. VIVES, G. MARTÍNEZ and T. MARÍN, *Concilios visigóticos e hispanorromanos*, op. cit., p. 162.
- [60] My gratitude to M. dels Sants Gros for bringing this to my attention.
- [61] Isidore of Seville, *De viris Illustribus*, 20. Cf. J. NIÑO. "Una familia episcopal en la España del siglo VI". *Compostellanum*, no. 44-1/2 (1999), pp. 55-66.
- [62] J. VILELLA. "Los concilios eclesiásticos hispanos del periodo visigodo-arriano: análisis histórico-prosopográfico", op. cit., p. 31, no. 4.
- [63] C. GASCÓN. "El bisbe Just i els orígens de la seu d'Urgell". *Urgellia*, no. 19 (2015-2018), pp. 411-437; esp. 419.
- [64] *Ibid.*, pp. 418-419. Carles Gascón also suggests that the worship of Saint Vincent was a common thread in the four cities that the four brothers governed: Huesca as the martyr's birthplace; Valencia as the site of his martyrdom, with the construction of an episcopal complex during the reign of Justinian, who devoutly worshipped Saint Vincent, to whom he left all his assets; Justus of Urgell wrote a sermon in honour of Saint Vincent; and finally, Sant Miquel in Egara may have initially been devoted to Saint Vincent, as proposed by J. Soler. J. SOLER. "Sant Vicenç d'Ègara. Una antiga advocació de Sant Miquel?". *Terme*, no. 30 (2015) p. 135. With regard to Valencia, cf. J. VIZCAÍNO. *La presencia bizantina en Hispania (siglos VI-VII): la documentación arqueológica*. Murcia 2009, pp. 74-75.
- [65] With regard to Valencia's role as a border city worth noting is the site of València la Vella (Riba-roja del Túria) located 15 km northwest of the city, measuring 4.8 hectares. Even though it has been known since the 14th century, it had hardly been excavated until recently. Since 2016, two systematic excavation campaigns have been carried out, the planimetry has been updated and georadar testing has been done, yielding the first results. It was a fortified *castellum* or *castrum* which was founded in around 550, whose final phase was in 700, dates provided by the numerous ceramic shards found. It is surrounded by a powerful wall 1.8 metres thick with square towers protruding. It is located on an elevated site on a cliff looking over the Túria River. In addition to its military role, its excavators suggest that given its size, it may have been a strategic Visigothic settlement. Cf. J. M. MACIAS, ALBERT V. RIBERA and M. ROSSELLÓ. "El asentamiento fortificado de València la Vella (Riba-roja del Túria, Valencia) un importante enclave de la frontera visigoda". *International Congress of Christian Archaeology (Utrecht – Nijmegen 2018, July 2018)*, at press.
- [66] Indispensable studies in this regard are J. Avelino GUTIÉRREZ GONZÁLEZ. "Fortificaciones visigodas y conquista islámica del norte hispano (c. 711)". In: L. A. GARCÍA MORENO and A. VIGIL-ESCALERA (coords.), *711. Arqueología e historia entre dos mundos*, vol I. *Zona Arqueológica*, no. 15, Alcalá de Henares 2011, pp. 335-352. *IDEM.* "Fortificaciones tardoantiguas y visigodas en el Norte

- Peninsular (ss. V-VIII)". In: *Las fortificaciones en la tar-doantigüedad. Élités y articulación del territorio (siglos V-VIII d.C.)*, La Ergástula, Madrid 2014, pp. 191-214.
- [67] V.-L. PÉREZ GARCIA. "Late Roman and Visigothic military fortifications in Conventus Tarraconensis (Hispania): The organization of border defence". *Aquila Legionis*, no. 15 (2012) 165-202.
- [68] C. BUENACASA and J. SALES. "Importància geopolítica d'una ciutat en època visigoda: Girona després de Vouillé (segles VI-VII)". *Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Gironins*, no. 42 (2001), pp. 59-75. Cf. too J. M. NOLLA. "Ciudades, torres y castella. La defensa de la Vía Augusta". In: *Las fortificaciones en la Tardoantigüedad. Élités y articulación del territorio (siglos V-VIII d.C.)*, La Ergástula, Madrid 2014, pp. 43-56. Cf. too J. M. NOLLA, J. BURCH, Ll. PALAHÍ, N. M. AMICH, E. CANAL, J. CASAS, P. Castanyer, J. SAGRERA, M. SUREDA, J. TREMOLEDA, D. VIVÓ, J. VIVO, A. COSTA, M. PRAT, J. SIMÓN and A. VARENNA. *Baix imperi i antiguitat tardana al sector nord-oriental de la província Tarraconensis. De l'adveniment de Dioclecià a la mort de Carlemany (284-814)*. Universitat de Girona, Girona 2016.
- [69] P. DE PALOL. *El castrum del Puig de les Muralles de Puig Rom (Roses, Alt Empordà)*. (Monographic series 22), Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya, Girona 2004, p. 105-107.
- [70] E. SUBIAS, A. M. PUIG, D. CODINA and J. I. FIZ. "El castrum visigòtic de Puig Rom revisitat". *Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Empordanesos*, no. 47 (2016), pp. 75-96.
- [71] Julià de Toledo, *Hist. Wambae regis*, 11.
- [72] G. CASTELLVÍ. "Clausurae (Les Cluses, P.-O.): forteresses-frontière du Bas-Empire romaine". In: A. ROUSSELLE (ed.). *Frontières terrestres, frontières célestes dans l'Antiquité*. Presses Universitaires de Perpignan 1995, pp. 81-117; esp. 81-104. It is quite interesting to note that some of the ashlar from the Trophy of Pompey in Panisars were reused to build Les Cluses, cf. G. CASTELLVÍ, J. M. NOLLA and I. RODÀ (dirs.), *Le trophée de Pompée dans les Pyrénées (71 av.J.C.)*, (Gallia Suppléments 58), Paris 2008, pp. 85-88.
- [73] J. BURCH, G. GARCIA, J. M. NOLLA, L. I. PALAHÍ, J. SAGRERA, M. SUREDA, D. VIVÓ and I. MIQUEL. *Excavacions arqueològiques a la Muntanya de Sant Julià de Ramis 2. El castellum*, Girona 2006, pp. 151-165.
- [74] Ibid. C. FOLCH IGLESIAS. "Fortificacions i assentaments en alçada a l'àmbit rural del nord-est de Catalunya durant l'Alta Edat Mitjana (segles VI-XI)". *Treballs d'Arqueologia*, no. 22 (2018), pp. 29-49; esp. 32-33.
- [75] X. LLOVERA. *Roc d'Enclar. Transformacions d'un espai dominant, segles IV-XIX*, Andorra la Vella 1997.
- [76] This is the proposal they uphold: C. YAÑEZ and J. M. BOSCH. "El Roc d'Enclar, entre la decadència de *Iulia Libica* i la puixança d'*Urgellum*. Una reflexió sobre els efectes territorials i urbanístics de l'*Strata Ceretana*". In: *XI Col·loqui Internacional d'Arqueologia de Puigcerdà*, Puigcerdà 1998, pp. 350-351.
- [77] O. OLESTI, J. GUÀRDIA and O. MERCADAL. "El fin del sueño urbano en *Iulia Libica* (Llívia, Cerdanya)". In: S. F. RAMALLO and A. QUEVEDO (eds.). *Las ciudades de la Tarraconense oriental entre los siglos II-IV dC*, Murcia 2014, pp. 64-69.
- [78] M. SANCHO. "Apunts per una arqueologia dels castells i fortificacions prefeudals a l'Alt Pirineu (Urgell, Pallars i Ribagorça), segles VI-X". *Treballs d'Arqueologia*, no. 22 (2018), pp. 5-28, esp. 14-15.
- [79] W. ALEGRÍA and I. HIDALGO. "Contextos ceràmics tar-doantics i medievals al Montsec (Prepirineu de Lleida). Els jaciments de Els Altimiris i Sant Martí de les Tombetes". In: *Cinquè Congrés d'Arqueologia Medieval i Moderna a Catalunya*. ACRAM, Barcelona 2015, pp. 1041-1056. M. SANCHO and W. ALEGRÍA. "Propuesta de contextualización del yacimiento tar-doantigo y alto-medieval de Els Altimiris (Prepirineo leridano) siglos V-IX". *Archeologia medievale*, no. 44 (2017), pp. 155-170.
- [80] W. ALEGRÍA, M. SANCHO and J. SALES. "The archeological Site of *Santa Cecilia de Els Altimiris* (Sant Esteve de la Sarga, Lleida) in the context of Pyrenean Christian archaeology", paper presented at the *17th International Congress of Christian Archaeology (Utrecht – Nijmegen 2018)*, at press.
- [81] The excavation was overseen by Pere de Palol. Cf. P. DE PALOL. *El Bovalar (Seròs, Segrià). Conjunt d'època paleocristiana i visigòtica*. Barcelona 1989. IDEM. "El jaciment del Bovalar". *Quaderns de Sala d'Arqueologia*, no. 2 (2002), pp. 107-116. Jordina Sales proposed interpreting the complex as a monastery based on the discovery of unusual pieces which were used to treat leather and manufacture parchment., Cf. J. SALES. *Las construcciones cristianas de la Tarraconense*, op. cit. pp. 299-300. However, as mentioned, this hypothesis does not work with the presence of the baptistry.
- [82] The different studies by Alexandra Chavarria are essential in studying the end of the villas, especially A. CHAVARRÍA. *El final de las villae en Hispania (siglos IV al VIII)*. Turhout 2007. EADEM. "Dopo la fine delle ville: le campagne ispaniche in epoca visigota". In: G. P. BROGIOLO, A. CHAVARRÍA and M. VALENTI (eds.), *Dopo la fine delle ville: Le campagne tra VI e IX secolo. 10 Seminario sul tardo antico e l'alto medioevo (Gavi 8-10 maggio 2004)*, Mantua 2005, pp. 263-285. Also interesting are the reflections by G. RIPOLL and J. ARCE, "The Transformation and End of Roman Villae in the West (Fourth-Seventh Centuries). Problems and Perspectives". In: G. P. BROGIOLO, N. GAUTHIER, N. CHRISTIE (éds.). *Towns and their Territories between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Leyden – Boston, 2000, pp. 63-114. Worth noting more recently, and more specifically in the northeast of the Tarraconensis, is: J. BURCH, P. CASTANYER, J. M. NOLLA, J. TREMOLEDA. "Formas de poblamiento y ocupación en el ámbito rural del nordeste catalán desde el bajo imperio romano hasta la época visigoda". In: *Uillae and Domain at the end of Antiquity and the Beginning of Middle Age. Studies on the Rural World in the Roman Period*, 8, Pau 2015, pp. 35-62.
- [83] To study the building used for worship, see: C. GODOY, *Arqueologia y liturgia*, op. cit., pp. 227-237.



**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Cristina Godoy Fernández holds a Bachelor's in geography and history (1984) and a doctorate in history (Christian and mediaeval archaeology, 1992) from the Universitat de Barcelona, and she earned the extraordinary prize for her Bachelor's and doctorate. A disciple of Pere de Palol, she used to teach at the Universitat de Barcelona (1991-2002). She is currently a professor of Christian archaeology in the Antoni Gaudí Faculty of History, Archaeology and Christian Arts (since 2014). She specialises in studying religious architecture and its liturgical functionality.