

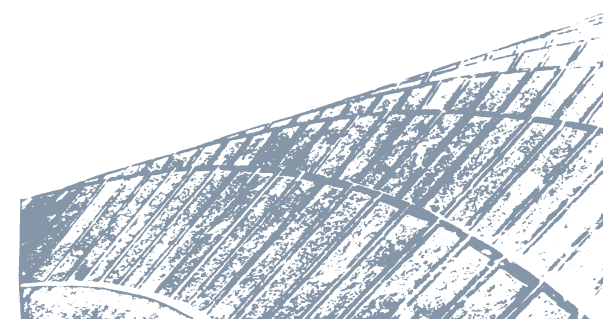


Braga and its territory between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries



Raquel Martínez Peñín (ed.)

67



Raquel Martínez Peñín (ed.)

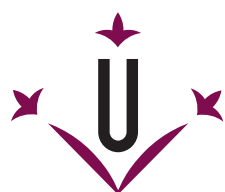
Braga and its territory between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries

67

espai / temps



Universidade do Minho
Unidade de Arqueologia



Universitat de Lleida

Urban changes in Braga in Late Antiquity: the area of the Roman Theater

*Manuela Martins¹, Jorge Ribeiro²,
Fernanda Magalhães³ and Raquel Martínez Peñín⁴*

Keywords: Braga; Late Antiquity; urban evolution; construction systems.

Abstract

This work intends to value the urban and constructive changes that occurred in the abandoned spaces of the Roman theater of *Bracara Augusta*, as well as in its surroundings as a contribution to establish the evolution of the city of Braga in Late Antiquity.

The theater was located to the west of the *forum* and was built at the beginning of the second century together with an attached public thermal building. Its construction is associated with an important urban renewal that reshaped the western sector of the city in a moment of great economic prosperity during which the city reached its maximum extension.

Following its abandonment in the fourth century part of the building was dismantled and it has been punctually reused in the V-VI centuries. Meanwhile, the excavations carried out in the surrounding areas of the theater facade revealed remains of new constructions with the same chronology, that occasionally reused its wall. The nature of those identified

1. Full Professor of the Department, Unit of Archaeology, Lab2Pt, University of Minho; Project PTDC/HIS-ARQ/121136/2010, funded by FCT.

2. FCT postdoctoral contract (SFRH/BPD/79511/2011), Unit of Archaeology, Lab2Pt, University of Minho.

3. Research Fellow (PTDC/HIS-ARQ/121136/2010), Unit Archaeology, Lab2Pt, UNiversity of Minho.

4. FCT postdoctoral contract (SFRH/BPD/78538/2011), Unit of Archaeology, Lab2Pt, University of Minho.

structures and its chronology show the importance of this area of the city to analyze the urban evolution of Braga during the Early Middle Ages.

1. Introduction

Archaeological research carried out in the city of Braga, since 1976, within the 'Project *Bracara Augusta*', makes it possible to know the features of the high-imperial Roman urban layout and architecture, as well as its evolution in the Low-Empire.⁵ Less well known is the city's evolution in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages, a time of profound changes, both in urban and building features, evidenced through archeology but still difficult to be jointly assessed.⁶ However, archeology documents that the large and flourishing city of the fourth century, with an intramural area of 40 hectares, was succeeded by an equally dynamic city during the fifth and sixth centuries that registers a nice rate of imports and an intense construction activity, either intra or extra walls⁷. Actually, the installing of the Suebi in the region, in the early fifth century, did not mean any collapse of the urban economic and civic life, which persists with the creation of new centralities and a gradual abandoning of the earlier Roman public spaces and buildings without any functionality in the new ideological background formalized by Christianity.

The archaeological record documents that during the V/VII centuries broad city sectors keep the organizational structure of the ancient Roman *urbs* with its orthogonal streets and square blocks, where in the earlier centuries rich *domus* had been installed, reaching its full opulence during the fourth century. In the following centuries a few of these *domus* might have kept its basic framework persisting occupied by the urban elites. However, archeology also documents processes of constructive change, associated either with the fragmentation of spaces, or with the organic growth of new ones, which mischaracterize the plans of the preceding houses, suggesting new possessors, but mainly new lifestyles in the urban space.

5. Manuela Martins, 'Bracara Augusta. Panorama e estado da questão sobre o seu urbanismo', in D. Dopico Caínzos, M. Villanueva Acuña and P. Rodríguez Álvarez (eds.) *Do Castro à Cidade. A romanização na Gallaecia e na Hispânia indoeuropea*, Diputación de Lugo, Lugo, (2009), pp. 181-211; Manuela Martins, Jorge Ribeiro, Fernanda Magalhães and Cristina Braga, 'Urbanismo e arquitetura de Bracara Augusta. Sociedade, economia e lazer', in M. C. Ribeiro and A. Melo (eds.) *Evolução da Paisagem Urbana: Economia e Sociedade*, CITCEM, Braga, (2012), pp. 29-67.

6. Luís Fontes, Manuela Martins, Maria do Carmo Ribeiro and Helena Carvalho, 'A cidade de Braga e o seu território nos séculos V-VII', in A. García, R. Izquierdo, L. Olmo and D. Peris (eds.) *Espacios Urbanos en el Occidente Mediterráneo (s. VI-VIII)*, Toletum Visigodo, Toledo, (2010), pp. 255-262; Manuela Martins and Maria Carmo Ribeiro, 'Em torno da Rua Verde. A evolução urbana de Braga na longa duração', in M. C. Ribeiro and A. Melo (eds.) *Evolução da Paisagem Urbana. Transformação morfológica dos Tecidos Históricos*, CITCEM, Braga, (2013), pp. 11-44.

7. Francisco Sande Lemos, José Manuel Freitas Leite and Armandino Cunha, 'A muralha romana (Baixo Império) de Bracara Augusta', in A. Rodríguez Colmenero and I. Rodá de Llanza (eds.) *Actas del Congreso Internacional Murallas de ciudades romanas en el Occidente del Imperio*. Lucus Augusti como paradigma, Lugo (2007), pp. 329-341.

Although this process is not completely clear in Braga, requiring further research, it is also documented in other cities of Hispania.⁸

The excavations carried out in the areas surrounding the Roman theater identified a set of structures dating back to Late Antiquity, which present entirely different characteristics from those known in other city sectors during the same period. They will be analyzed in this paper, which aims to address the evolution of the urban planning and construction processes occurring between the beginning of the fifth century and the seventh century in the area lying to the north-west of the Roman *forum*, occupied by public buildings after the second century. The disaffection and partial dismantling of the theatre during the fourth century and the abandoning of the public baths in the beginnings of the fifth century, have converted this monumental sector of the ancient Roman city into a peripheral area, where gradually new buildings of residential and artisanal nature have been settled, parasitizing the earlier Roman structures.

Thus, unlike what has happened in other sectors of the extensive low-imperial city, where the structure of the ancient Roman *urbs* has persisted, the area surrounding the theater will experience throughout Late Antiquity a different urban and constructive dynamics, whose dominating feature lies in its imminently organic nature. In fact, the rigid urban orthogonal layout dated from the foundational times had long been broken in this sector of the city with the construction of the theater and the attached public baths, which implied the destruction of two *decumani* and two *cardines*.⁹ Once these large public equipment's were disused they not only supplied plentiful raw materials for new buildings, as constituted themselves as support structures and containment to further constructions. At the same time, some of the spaces of the theater were reused with distinct functions. Therefore, we are faced with an area where new construction processes were rehearsed documenting the dynamics of the urban centers in Late Antiquity.

2. Braga in Late Antiquity

Between the end of the third and early fourth IV centuries *Bracara Augusta* became the capital of the new province of *Callaecia*, created by Diocletian, being equipped with a mighty wall, with turrets, which surrounds a perimeter of 2300 m and about 40 hect-

8. Miguel Alba Calzado, 'La vivienda en Emerita durante la Antigüedad Tardía: Propuesta de un modelo para Hispania', in *VI Reunión de Arqueología Cristiana Hispánica. Las ciudades tardoantiguas de Hispania: cristianización y topografía*, Barcelona, (2005), pp. 121-150; Michael Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain and its cities*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, (2004).

9. Manuela Martins, Ricardo Mar, Jorge Ribeiro and Fernanda Magalhães, 'A construção do teatro romano de Bracara Augusta', in M. C. Ribeiro and A. Melo (eds.) *História da Construção. Arquiteturas e técnicas Construtivas*, CITCEM, LAMOP, UAUM, Braga, (2013), pp. 41-76.

ares.¹⁰ During all the fourth century remodeling of large public and private buildings has been attested by the archaeological record, which also allows identifying an intensive urban economic activity.¹¹ The installing of the Suebi in the region, in the beginning of the fifth century, and the promotion of *Bracara* to capital of the Suebi Kingdom did not seem to disrupt the dynamics of the city, which remains occupied at its greatest extent with a wide persistence of workshops for local production of ceramics and glass, alongside with imports, which registers the continuity of the preceding Atlantic trade relations.¹²

As in other Hispanic urban centers the archeology documents during the fifth century continuity of the classical urban layout that will be progressively marked by the influence of Christianity, the main legitimating force of power in the western part of the Empire since the year 336. In fact, the Christianization of the cities and the increasing influential power of the bishops will ultimately conditioning the evolution of the urban topography that slowly begins to change from the end of the fourth century / beginning of the fifth. Also the decline of the political and entertaining role of the cities, in favor of its predominantly episcopal and fiscal role contribute to its topographic transformation, leading to the abandonment of the previous public spaces and buildings and the reconfiguring of new urban centralities.¹³

In Braga this process of change starts up in the fourth century, with the disaffection of the theater, being increased in the first half of the fifth century with the abandonment of several thermal complexes.¹⁴ Moreover, the construction of the first intramural Christian basilica in a peripheral area of the city, dated from the early fifth century, ultimately constrained the urban evolution of later centuries.¹⁵

The strengthening and consolidation of the *bracarensis* church alongside the 6th and 7th centuries, through the action of ‘Saint Martin of Dume’ and ‘S. Frutuoso’ are accompanied by a constructive outbreak of new religious centers, especially in the urban

10. Maria do Carmo Ribeiro, ‘Braga entre a época romana e a Idade Moderna. Uma A metodologia de análise para a leitura da evolução do espaço urbano’, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Minho, 2008); Manuela Martins and Luís Fontes, ‘*Bracara Augusta*. Balanço de 30 anos de investigação arqueológica na capital da Galécia romana’, *Bulletin de la Société archéologique champenoise, Mémoire*, 19, (2010), pp. 111-124 (p. 116).

11. Manuela Martins, Jorge Ribeiro, Fernanda Magalhães and Cristina Braga, ‘Urbanismo e arquitetura de *Bracara Augusta*’, M. C. Ribeiro and A. Melo (eds.) *Evolução da Paisagem Urbana: Economia e Sociedade*, CITCEM, Braga, (2012), pp. 57-61.

12. Rui Morais, *As ânforas da zona das Carvalheiras. Contribuição para o estudo das ânforas romanas de Bracara Augusta*, UAUM, BRAGA, (1999); Mário Cruz, ‘O vidro romano do Noroeste peninsular: um olhar a partir de *Bracara Augusta*’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Minho, 2009).

13. Josep Gurt Esparraguera and Isabel Sánchez Ramos, ‘Topografía cristiana en Hispania durante los siglos V y VI’, *Zona Arqueológica, nº11*, (2010), pp. 331-345.

14. Manuela Martins, *As termas romanas do Alto da Cividade. Um exemplo de arquitectura pública em Bracara Augusta*, UAUM/NARQ, Braga, (2005).

15. Luís Fontes, Francisco S. Lemos and Mário Cruz, ‘MaisVelho” que a Sé de Braga. Intervenção arqueológica na catedral bracarense: notícia preliminar’, *Cadernos de Arqueologia, Série II*, 14/15, (1997-98), pp. 137-164.

periphery, documenting the church evergetic practices and its increasing influence, not only within the city as in the territory.¹⁶

Braga has persisted as a major *civitas* in Hispanic Late Antiquity with expression in the constructive dynamics that will transform the configuration of the city by the disarticulation of its classic street grid, the progressive fragmenting of its blocks and a larger household compacting, which is a natural consequence of the new powers and general conditions of life.

From the fourth century onwards the disaffection of the classical spaces of power, as the *forum* and the major leisure architectures, such as *thermae* and *balnea* and spectacle buildings, will create intramural areas where new residential, artisanal and farming constructions were settled.¹⁷ In Braga this process is signaled in the surroundings of the Roman theater, where from the fifth century onwards we witnessed the appearance of new buildings with different functionalities and constructive techniques.



Figure 1. Map of Hispania in the fourth century.

16. Luís Fontes, 'Powers, Territories and Christian Architecture in Northwest Portugal: An approach to the landscape of Braga between 5th and 11th centuries', in M. Shapland and J. C. Sánchez Pardo (eds.) *Churches and Social Power in Early Medieval Europe*, Brepols, London, (in press).

17. Javier Arce Martínez, *Bárbaros y romanos en Hispania (400-507 A.D.)*, Marcial Pons, Madrid, (2005), p. 228; Michael Kulikowski, 'The urban landscape in Hispania in the fifth century', *Zona Arqueológica*, nº 11, (Alcalá de Henares: Museo Arqueológico Regional, 2010), pp. 311-318.

3. The Late Antiquity constructions in the theater area

The Roman theater of *Bracara Augusta* and the attached public baths occupied a privileged position within the city, standing nearby the ancient Roman monumental center to the west of the *forum*.¹⁸ The construction of the two buildings originated a first urban transformation of this sector of the city, as they implied the disaffection of two *decumani* and two *cardines* and the destruction of prior buildings.

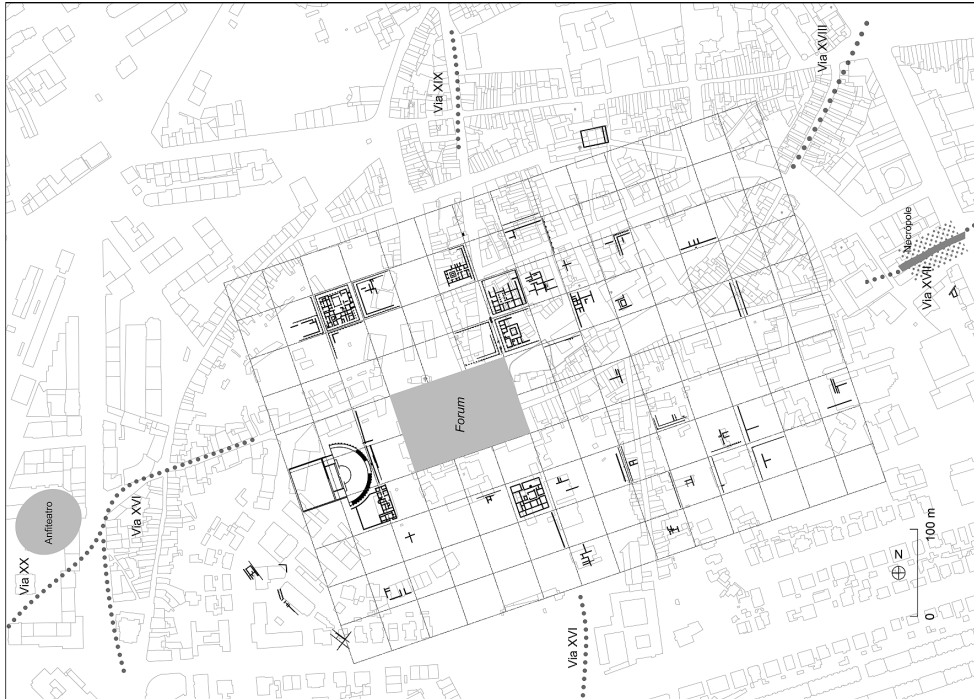


Figure 2. Urban layout of *Bracara Augusta* with the location of the theater.

The end of the life cycle of the theater as a spectacle building, on the fourth century and of the public baths, at the beginning of fifth century, determined the installation in the area of constructions, which we assume of domestic and artisanal nature. Up to now three built units with a Late Antique chronology have been identified. One is located in the north *parascaenium* of the theater and two others on the northern upper platform,

18. *Ibid.* 14, Martins, *As termas romanas do Alto da Cidade*, p. 67; *Ibid.* 9, Martins, Mar, Ribeiro and Magalhães, 'A construção do teatro romano de Bracara Augusta', p. 44.

along with the façade wall of the building. They were detected in 2006 and excavated again in the summer of 2012.

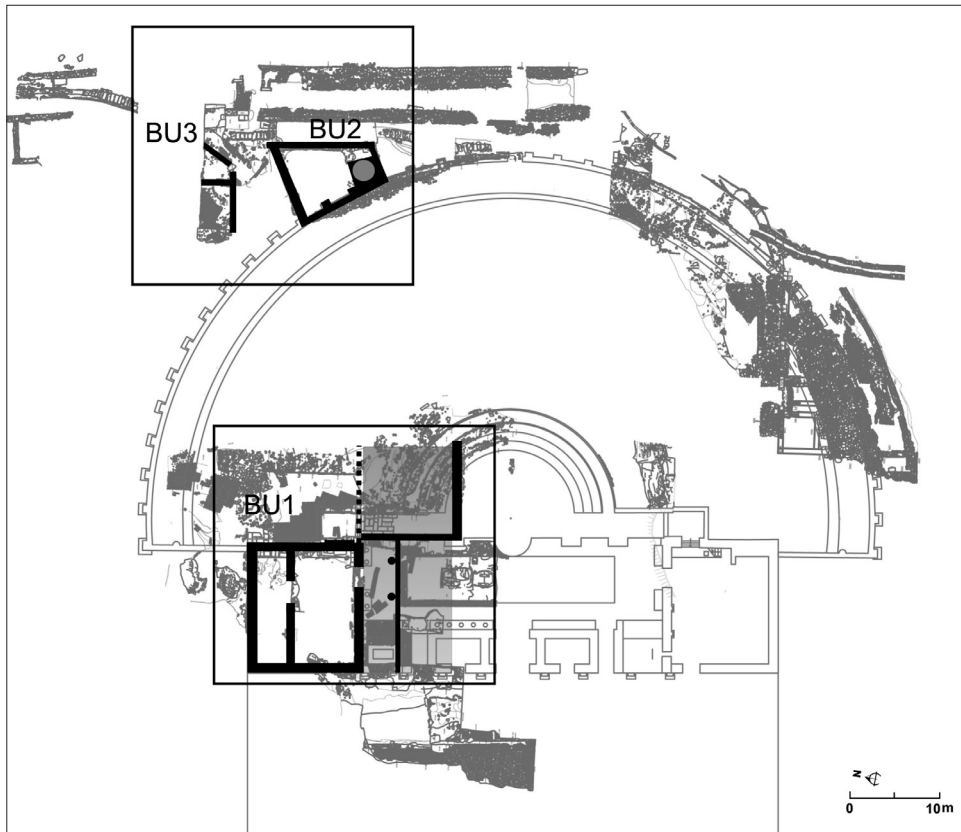


Figure 3. Plan of the theater with location of the built units of Late Antiquity.

3.1 The north *parascaenium* built unit (BU1)

The totality of the area corresponding to the north *parascaenium* of the theater was used to settle a new building that can be dated between the 5th and 6th centuries. It reused part of the walls of the theater, having been erected new ones that helped to formalize a new space. Among the new constructed walls we highlight one that closed the previous staircase, which ensured the passage between the *aditus* and the *parascaenium*. Conserved at a maximum height of 1.70 m the wall was built in an irregular masonry using granitic stones, revealing a width of 0.50 m. Equally closed was the space between the central ashlar, which defined the wings of the *parascaenium*, having been used part

of an arch recycled from the previous structure surmounted by a wall constructed with irregular masonry, clogged with mortar. The formalization of the new built unit also implied the dismantling of the row of ashlar that defined the southern wing of the *parascaenium*, which has allowed creating a larger compartment.

Thus, the new building would be organized into two spaces: one to the north (area 1), bounded to the south by the row of ashlars conserved and another to the south of the ashlars (area 2).

During the excavations other remains associated with this construction were observed. One of them is clearly related to the rising of the Roman pavement. For that purpose it was changed the last step of the staircase, which emerges formalized by two original stone blocks differently arranged. Close to this step were found two elements of hand millstones, integrated into a very compact earth soil.

In the area 1 various architectural elements assumed to be original of the *scaenae frons* were identified over the pavement, namely a large shaft with 0.66 m diameter and an attic column base, with a diameter of 0.44 m. This area also provided a large number of fragments of *dollia*.

Lying south of area 2 various fragments of shafts were found that should have integrated the support for the roof of a porch.



Figure 4.1 Detail of arch used to close the space between the ashlars in north *parascaenium*

The construction of this BU1 seems to articulate with the rubble of the *hyposcaenium*, perhaps to regularize the ground around the new building. Inside many architectural elements were found, including a corinthian capital and a column base. On the other hand, it is possible to associate with the BU1 occupation some of the remains detected in the *orchestra*, particularly a wall, which divided the

space. It is a structure of low consistency (UE1759) with a conserved length of about 7 m, integrating a large amount of recycled elements of the theater, particularly slabs of the *cavea* benches and other architectural elements. This wall ran perpendicular to the *scaena frons*, dividing through the orchestra, possibly acting as a retaining structure so as to raise the soil level.



Figure 4.2. Wall that closed the staircase between the *aditus* and the *parascaenium*.

The space occupied by the BU1 would thus be divided into two different areas, covering the entire space inside the previous *parascaenium*, with a probable porch settled over the area of the *proscenium*. We must emphasize the construction coinciding with the orientation of the orthogonal walls of the theater.

It is difficult to specify clearly the functionality of this new building, although the nature of the associated archaeological remains may point to a possible residential use,

by the quality of the materials found, by its monumentality, due to the use of the theater walls, but also by some aesthetic care resulting from the reuse of columns from the *scaena frons*.



Figure 5.1. Details of the built unit BU2.



Figure 5.2. Kiln.

3.2 Built units of northern upper platform (BU2 and BU3)

In the area adjacent to the theatre façade wall, in the northeastern quarter of the building and in an upper platform, two other constructions (BU2 and BU3) were identified, revealing technical and functional characteristics very different from BU1.

3.2.1 *The built unit 2 (BU2)*

The BU2 represents a construction with a trapezoidal form, which is attached to the theatre façade reused as the foundation of its western wall after it has been partly dismantled. So, unlike what is verified with the BU1, which held the prevailing axes of the theater *scaena*, inheriting its previous orthogonal layout, the BU2 fits in an organic way with pre-existing walls and on the terrain morphology.

With regard to the dimensions, this construction exhibits an area of roughly 67 m². The south wall measures 4.40 m, the north wall 9.20 m and the lateral ones, respectively, 10.30 m (eastern wall) and 9.80 m (western wall). The other walls have been raised from scratch.

The building was performed with low walls with about 0.60 m maximum height, offering a weak foundational consistency, resting on the ground and composed of irregular blocks of schist joined with a clay mortar. These stone basements would support walls constructed with wood and mortar, as was suggested by the thick coating of yellowish clay mortar that covered them in its entire length. This kind

of constructive technique resembles the one referenced by Agustín Azkárate in the occupation of the early city of Vitoria, based on the excavations conducted in the Cathedral. It is referred to as ‘direct façonnage’ and integrates a stony low basement, over which walls developed with superimposed layers of mortars covering a structure of wooden pillars implanted at regular intervals.¹⁹ Among the advantages of this construction system stands out the durability and consistency of the structures but also the reduction of humidity at the ground level.²⁰

Archaeological works in the BU2 allowed detecting traces of two distinct floors, with about 0.30 m thick, made of earth, rather compacted (UE699 and UE909).

The collapse levels of this construction revealed an insignificant quantity of fragments of *tegulae*, insufficient to suggest a tiled roof. Having regard of the very particular constructive characteristics of the building we believe that its coverage would consist of perishable materials certainly supported on a woody structure.

Access to the interior of BU2 was done from an area of circulation, about 2.5 m wide, located in the eastern side of the structure, being bordered by a granite wall (UE737).

In the lower south corner of the building was founded a kiln. The structure lays on a basement with a square plan, with walls of granite and schist, covering an area of about 2.5 m², which lies 1 m above the ground. The preserved remains match a circular base with about 2 m diameter made of inverted *tegulae* that cover a preparation made with granite elements somewhat of irregular shape and size. The kiln coverage was not preserved but should be made of bricks and it was coated with a clay mortar found on deposit (UE690) over the structure ballast, which incorporated a large number of fragments of bricks. The mouth of the kiln was located at the north side and was delimited by two stones disposed on high.

The presence of a kiln inside the building seems to point to its artisanal use. However, the absence of remains suggesting a precise handcraft function leads us to believe that the structure could also be used to bake bread.

19. Agustín Azkárate Garai-Olaun and José Solaun Bustinza, ‘Tipologías domésticas y técnicas constructivas en la primitiva Gasteiz (País Vasco) durante los siglos VIII al XII d.C.’, *Arqueología de la Arquitectura*, 9, (2012), 103-128 (p. 120).

20. *Ibid.* 14, Azkárate Garai-Olaun and Solaun Bustinza, ‘Tipologías domésticas y técnicas constructivas en la primitiva Gasteiz’, p. 121.



Figure 6. Details of BU3.

3.2.2 The built unit 3 (BU3)

The BU3 is only partially excavated. It is located north of the BU2 standing on a lower platform of about 2 m deep. Its characteristics are similar to those described to the BU2. The construction is defined by three low walls, which defines two different spaces. One of them is apparently quadrangular and contact with a more irregular one, resulting from its adaptation to the wall of the Roman aqueduct that crossed this space

The constructive features of the BU3 are similar to those mentioned for BU2. The low walls are about 0.45 m wide and were made with schist slabs. They were covered by a thick layer of clay mortar, which suggests that the walls would use the mortars for coating an internal structure of wood. The two floors identified were also of compacted earth (UE911 and 925) and defined different levels of circulation.

The functionality of the building is unknown, since the available data is fairly scarce. It could be a residential or artisanal space that future excavations will help to clarify.

4. The ceramics analysis

The study of materials associated with the BU 1, 2 and 3 allowed to identify a significant number of ceramic vessels that can be attributed to Late Antiquity, being possible to date with some accuracy on its occupation, as well as the abandonment thereof.

The materials that allow dating the late occupation of the BU1 consist mostly of locally produced ceramics that imitate imported vessels, particularly fine forms of Late Gallic (DSP)²¹ and Late Roman African Wares (ARSW).²² The presence of these imitations is not strange since the trade of pieces, mainly of African origin, notes a major recession, not only in Braga, but also in other peninsular territories (Barcelona, Tarragona, Zaragoza, Mérida, Córdoba, Vitoria).²³ However, there is a proliferation of local productions that copy the originals, phenomenon that begins to be very common throughout the Península, especially from the fifth century.²⁴

In case of the late sud gallica we must take into account that there are few examples of original types that are known in the city and its territory. Therefore, there is no doubt that the wares of this production have been imitated in Braga.

Thus, in the context of BU1, along with a number of residual ceramics (TSH, common roman, ‘*engobes vermelhos*’) appear imitations the Late Roman C made on local productions, traditionally known as ‘*cinzentas tardia*’ The most common form is the Hayes 8 bowl, whose original dates from the second half of the fifth century and sixth century (Figure 7.3).

Another of the most common types are the bowls that imitate the form of the Late Roman African Hayes form 73 (Figure 7.1), dating the originals from the 5th century, the dishes that copy the Hayes form 76 (Figure 7.5), manufactured between the second

21. Jacqueline Rigoir, ‘Les sigillées paléochrétiennes grises et orangées’, *Gallia*, XXVI, (1968), pp. 177-244; Yvens Rigoir, ‘Sondage au pied du rempart de Saint-Blaise’, *Documents d’archéologie méridionale*, n°4, (1981), pp. 351-355; Claude Raynaud, ‘DSP Dérivée de sigillée paléochétienne’, in M. Py (ed.) *Dictionnaire des Céramiques Antiques en Méditerranée nord-occidentale (VII^e ème s. av. N. è.- VII^e ème s. de n. è)*, Lattara 6, Lattes, (1993), pp. 410-418; Yvens Rigoir, ‘Héritages et innovations dans le décor des Dérivées-des-Sigillées Paléochrétiennes’, in *La Céramique Médiévale en Méditerranée. Actes du 6^e congrès*, Narration Éditions, Aix-en-Provence, (1997), pp. 27-33.

22. Jonh Hayes, *Late Roman Pottery. A catalogue of Roman Fine Wares*. British School at Rome, London, (1972); Encarnación Serrano, ‘Cerámicas Africanas’, in M. Roca and M^a. I. Fernández (coords.) *Introducción al estudio de la cerámica romana. Una breve guía de referencia*, Universidad de Málaga, Málaga, (2005), pp. 255-304.

23. Javier Aquilué, ‘Estado actual de la investigación de la *Terra Sigillata Africana* en la Península Ibérica en los siglos VI-VII’, in D. Bernal and A. Ribera (coords.) *Cerámicas hispanorromanas II. Producciones regionales*, Universidad de Cádiz, Cádiz, pp. 11-20.

24. Luis Carlos Juan, ‘Las cerámicas imitación de sigillata en el occidente de la Península Ibérica durante el siglo V d. C.’, in D. Bernal and A. Ribera (coords.) *Cerámicas hispanorromanas II. Producciones regionales*, Universidad de Cádiz, Cádiz, (2012), pp. 97-129.

and third half of the fifth century. On the other hand, we also identified original productions of ARSW, sleepers Hayes form 61B, elaborated between 420 and 450.

We also verified the presence of variants of other imported productions such as the Hayes 12/102 cups, manufactured between the third half of the fourth century and the end of the fifth century (Figure 7.2) and the imitations of Hayes form 97 that were manufactured between 490 and 550.

Pieces of ‘engobes vermelhos’ that imitate the ARSW were also identified,²⁵ being frequent in this manufacturing the imitations of dishes of Hayes form 61B, dated between 400 and 450.

Regarding the materials associated with the rubble from the *hyposcaenium* it should be noted that they possess a slightly anterior chronology regarding the ceramics found in the levels of BU1, corresponding to original sleepers of ARSW like the Hayes form 59a, produced in D1, dating from the year 320 to 420. The chronology of this type of pieces provides us with a *terminus post quem* for the disaffection for the theater and for the regularization of the *scaena* area necessary to its later use for other purposes, something that could probably have occurred in the first decades of the fifth century.

The contexts associated with the BU2 and BU3 show few fragments of the original ARSW, being abundant productions of ‘cinzenta *tardia*’ that imitate the DSP types such as the Rigoir 3B, 6B, 16 and 22 (Figure 8.3-5) manufactured throughout the fifth century.²⁶ Some of the late Gallic imitations, namely the form Rigoir 3B, which were produced in ‘engobes vermelhos’ were also identified (Figure 8.7).

We also individualized imitations of Late Hispanic Terra Sigillata (TSHT) in “cinzenta *tardia*” such as the Palol 9/11 bowls (Figure 8.8). To note that until now in Braga it was not known the TSHT imitations in this manufacturing, being however very common those of ‘engobes vermelho’. The samples in ‘cinzenta *tardia*’ can be dated back to the second and third half of the fifth century²⁷ and have associated ARSW imitations of the same manufacturing, like the case for the Hayes 73 cups, manufactured in the fifth century.

Were also documented several variants of Late Roman C Hayes 3 form produced between the fifth century and the end of sixth century (Figure 7.4) and imitations of ARSW pieces little commercialized in the peninsular territory, such as the feet of the

25. Manuela Delgado, ‘Notícia sobre cerâmica de engobe vermelho não vitrificável encontradas em Braga’. *Cadernos de Arqueologia*, Série II, 10-11, (1993), pp. 113-149; Manuela Delgado, Rui Morais and Jorge Ribeiro, *Guia das cerâmicas de produção local de Bracara Augusta*, CITCEM, Braga, (2009), pp. 54-55, fig. 163.

26. Yvens Rigoir, ‘DSP: Une vaisselle méridionale’, in M. Digne (ed.) *Terres de Durance: céramiques de l’Antiquité aux temps modernes*, (1995), pp. 27-40.

27. Pedro Palol and Javier Cortés, ‘La villa romana de La Olmeda, Pedrosa de la Vega (Palencia). Excavaciones de 1969 y 1970’, *Anuario Arqueológico Hispánico*, nº7, (1974).

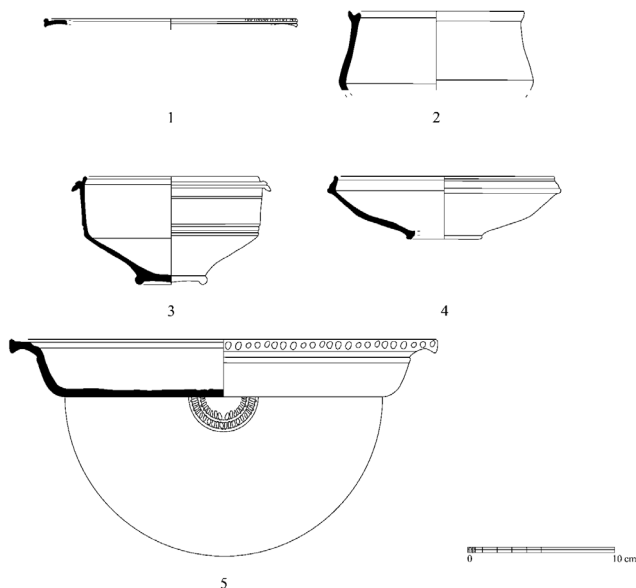


Figure 7. Ceramics from BU1 context.

170 Hayes bowls (Figure 8.2), whose originals are made between the second half of the fifth century and sixth century. These ceramics are associated with a large number of productions of common late gray, whose chronology covers the period between the fifth and the seventh centuries (Figure 8.1).

Finally, several fragments of walls of glazed pieces were characterized, established through the so far known parallels in the city, in the archaeological areas of Misericórdia, 'Afonso Henriques 42/56', 'Carvalheiras Leste', dating from the sixth and seventh centuries.²⁸

The Late Antiquity ceramics of the BU2 and BU3 reveal clear differences in terms of productions and chronology of those found in BU1. In this building unit it is predominant the presence of imitations of Late African pieces, datable from the fifth and sixth centuries, which may indicate an occupation from the early fifth century, chronology that is in accordance with the materials collected in the rubble of the *hyposcaenium*. On the other hand, it is possible to consider the end of the occupation of BU1 in the late sixth century.

Another characteristic of the material found in the BU1 is the absence of *common cinzenta* tardia ceramics, abundant in the contexts of the BU2 and BU3, where their presence may be associated with the probable artisanal use of those constructions.

28. Manuela Delgado, Rui Morais and Jorge Ribeiro, *Guia das cerâmicas de produção local de Bracara Augusta*, CITCEM, Braga, (2009), pp. 96-97.

Generically, we can say that we found clear similarities between the ceramic estate from the theater area and the ceramics studied, so far, in other contemporary contexts, both in the city²⁹ and on its territory, being the case of ‘Dume’ the best studied example.³⁰

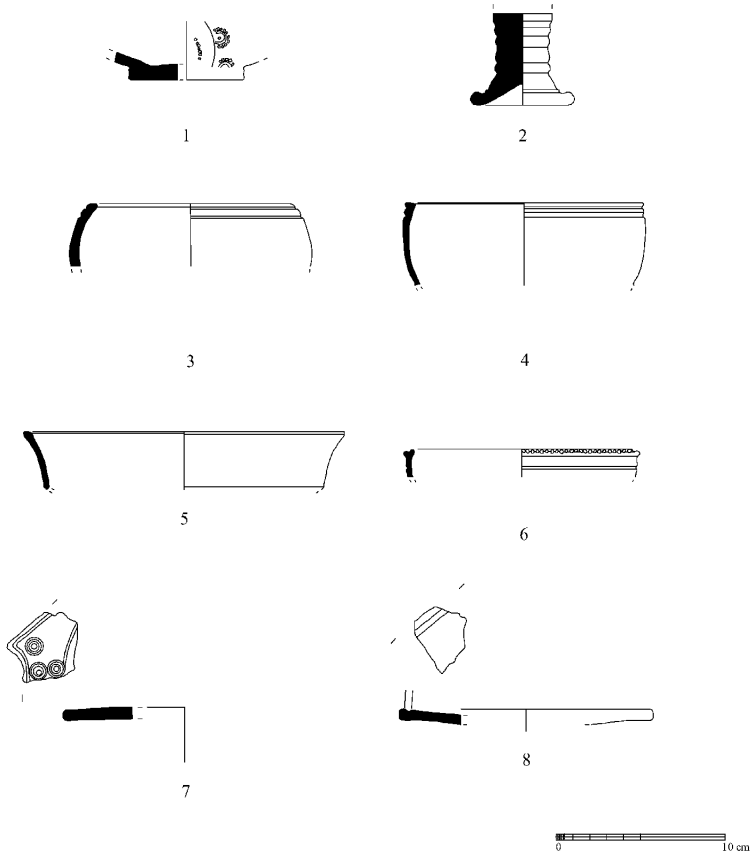


Figure 8. Ceramics from BU2 and BU3 contexts.

29. Alexandra Gaspar, ‘Contribuição para o estudo das Cerâmicas Cinzentas dos séculos V-VI d. C. de Braga’ (unpublished master thesis, University of Minho, 2000).

30. Alexandra Gaspar, ‘Cerâmicas cinzentas da antiguidade tardia e alto-medievais de Braga e Dume’, in L. Caballero, P. Mateos and M. Retuerce (eds.) *Cerâmicas tardorromanas y altomedievales en la Península Ibérica. Ruptura y continuidad*, CSIC, Madrid, (2003), pp. 455-481.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to offer an overview of the urban and constructive Late Antiquity evolution detected within the monumental area located west to the Roman *forum* of Braga after the disaffection of the major Roman public buildings.

We started the analysis with the characterization of the three built units discovered during the archaeological works, which reused some spaces from the Roman theater (BU1), or were constructed in the surroundings of the building (BU2 and 3), sometimes using some previous walls. We also presented the main features of the ceramics found within the three built contexts, which enable us to date its occupation and abandonment. The differences between the wares found in BU1 compared to the ones related with BU2 and 3 were emphasized, even though its meaning is for the moment hard to be completely valued.

Nevertheless, we may underline some issues concerning the available data, which can be related with the study of Braga urban evolution in Late Antiquity.

Firstly, and although the available data to characterize the occupation of the vast area lying western to the *forum* is presently reduced, we believe that this is a sector of the city that met an intensive occupation in Late Antiquity, before its total abandonment from the eighth century. Thus it is an important area for understanding the complex processes that characterized the evolution of the city during the Suebi and Visigoth domains (V-VII centuries).

Secondly, the type of occupation of the considered area seems rather different from the one known in the eastern side of the city in the same period, where the classic street grid and the overall shape of the blocks seems to persist during Late Antiquity. In the analyzed area the buildings developed organically, showing the use of new constructive techniques and materials from local sourcing. Some of them reused materials from previous buildings. Others show the use of schist footings, on which it would develop walls made of wood and clay mortars, being presumably roofed by perishable materials. Globally, the new constructions show an organic nature, adapting without constraint to preexisting structures and terrain features.

Another issue which arises from this paper relates with the constructive dynamic process of the city in Late Antiquity, which need further research. In Braga, as in other Hispanic cities this process seems to be the result from the spread of Christianity and the increasing power of bishops, but also from the important changes in the functions performed by cities. The bishop's power is represented in the construction of the episcopal complex, situated on the site where now stands the cathedral, but also by the new

basilicas that rise along the main roads that came from Braga.³¹ Archaeology testifies also a dynamic construction process, mainly linked with new residential and craft spaces, some of them overlapping ancient monumental spaces and leisure buildings. This situation reflects the continuity of the urban population and a new conception of the *civitates*, which become primary Episcopal centers.

31. Luís Fontes, 'Braga e o norte de Portugal em torno de 711', *Zona Arqueológica*, nº15, (2011), pp. 315-333.

The urban morphology of Braga between Late Antiquity and the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries

Maria do Carmo Ribeiro¹ and Luís Fontes²

Keywords: Braga, urban morphology, Late Antiquity, Middle Ages.

Abstract

This paper aims to approach the urban transformation processes occurring in the city of Braga between Late Antiquity and the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. Our approach is based upon the cross-referencing of documental, iconographic and cartographic data with data emerging from archaeological works conducted across the city throughout the last two decades.

Despite the scarcity in sources documenting the historical period under study, a similar circumstance registered in other western European cities, new and emerging archaeological data associated with a regressive analysis of available information for the forthcoming centuries —documents, maps, plans and illustrations, have been contributing towards an advance in the overall knowledge regarding the continuity and changing processes impacting upon the urban area of Braga.

Thereby, our goal is to develop a synthesis work describing the major evolutionary stages happening in Braga from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries and based upon an

1. Department of History, Unit of Archaeology, Lab2Pt, University of Minho; Project PTDC/HIS-ARQ/121136/2010, funded by FCT.

2. Unit of Archaeology, Lab2Pt, University of Minho.