

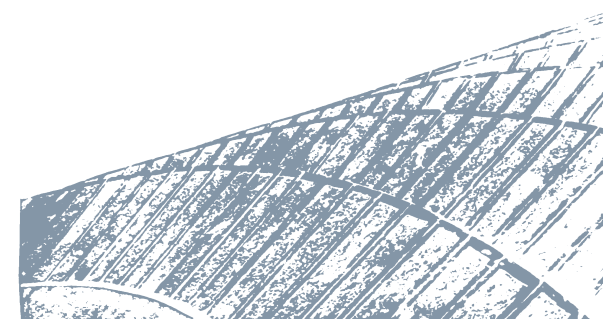


# Braga and its territory between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries



Raquel Martínez Peñín (ed.)

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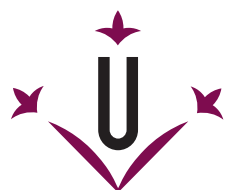
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# The urban morphology of Braga between Late Antiquity and the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries

*Maria do Carmo Ribeiro<sup>1</sup> and Luís Fontes<sup>2</sup>*

**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

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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.

integrated analysis of the architectonic markers, the morphology present in the urban setting, the existing Christian topography, the defensive system and the main road network.

## 1. Introduction

The urban evolution of Braga since its foundation at the end of the first century BC up to the present day has been held into a set of historical events, and the topographic expressions of these events have thoroughly improved the overall understanding of the major sequences in the city occupation, namely the key changes characterizing the roman, medieval, modern and contemporary urban plans.

The roman town has been receiving special attention. Based upon data provided by archaeology it is now possible to identify the city main urban and architectonic roman traits.<sup>3</sup> Recent archaeological excavation works have also been unveiling some of the urban transformations occurring in Late Antiquity.<sup>4</sup> Equally, the cross-referencing of data emerging from historical, iconographic and cartographic sources with the most recent archaeological data are behind the new synthesis works on the urban evolution of Braga from its foundation to the end of the Middle Ages.<sup>5</sup>

The major morphological changes occurring in the modern period and throughout the nineteenth century have been interpreted through important documental sources that are mainly iconographic and cartographic.<sup>6</sup> These archives have brought to light key urban features for each period, while improving the overall understanding regarding the urban changes registered in the medieval and contemporary towns.

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3. 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 romanización na Gallaecia e na Hispânia indoeuropea*, Diputación de Lugo, Lugo, (2009), pp. 181-211; Manuela Martins and Luís Fontes, 'Bracara Augusta. Balanço de 30 anos de investigação arqueológica na capital da Galécia romana', *Bulletin de la Societé archéologique champenoise*, n° 19, (2010), pp. 111-124.

4. 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; Luís Fontes, 'Braga e o norte de Portugal em torno a 711', *Zona Arqueológica*, nº15, (2011), pp. 313-334; Luís Fontes, 'O Norte de Portugal ente os séculos VIII e X: balanço e perspectivas de investigação', in *Asturias entre visigodos y mozárabes. Visigodos y omeyas VI* (Madrid: Anejos AEspA, LXIII, CSIC, 2012), pp. 443-474.

5. 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', 2 vols (doctoral thesis, University of Minho, 2008); Maria do Carmo Ribeiro, 'A evolução da paisagem urbana de Braga desde a época romana até à Idade Moderna. Síntese de resultados', *Forum*, 44-45 (2009/2010), pp. 179-201.

6. Miguel S. M. Bandeira, *O espaço urbano de Braga em meados do século XVIII*, Edições Afrontamento, Porto, (2000); Rui Maurício, *O mecenato de D. Diogo de Sousa, Arcebispo de Braga (1505-1532)*, 2 vols, Magno Edições, Lisboa, (2000); Miguel S. M. Bandeira, 'O Espaço Urbano de Braga – obras públicas, urbanismo e planeamento (1790-1974)', 3 vols (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Minho, 2002).

Despite the scarcity of archaeological and historical data, a thorough study regarding the urban changes occurred in Braga between Late Antiquity and the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries has been done research methodologies that addressed existing information gaps and cross-referenced different data sources, while simultaneously using progressive and regressive approaches.

New archaeological data emerging from several interventions conducted in the past 36 years in Braga and regressive analysis based upon data from available sources regarding the forthcoming centuries —written documents and cartography from the sixteenth century onwards, have been shedding some light on the urban continuity and changing processes occurring on the urban space between the fifth century and the fifteenth centuries, the latter being the period when the medieval urban plan of Braga urban plan was fully consolidated.<sup>7</sup>

This paper intends to be a further contribution towards the detailed analysis of the morphological evolution of the city between the fifth and fifteenth centuries, period in which profound morphological changes occurred in the urban fabric.

The present approach is structured around three major evolutionary stages taking place between the fifth and fifteenth centuries in the city of Braga. The first stage is related with the Suevic-Visigothic occupation (from the fifth to the eighth century), a period when the roman urban features were conserved. The second approaches the urban mutations originated between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, during which the city became a small fortified borough. Lastly, the third stage is linked with the profound alterations occurred throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This was the period when the city was widened and renewed and started to include the newly developed urban outskirts.

## 2. The morphological evolution of the city of Braga

As an *ex novo* foundation on a geographically central site within the *bracari* territory and linked with the others cities existing throughout the Empire through a well-structured road network, *Bracara Augusta* had an orthogonal planning that included uniform quarters developed around two main axes, one running NW/SE and the other one with a SW/NE orientation, occupying an area with approximately 29.85 hectares.<sup>8</sup>

As the capital of the *conventus bracaraugustanus*, the city housed infrastructures known to have existed in the most important roman urban centres of the time. It includ-

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7. Manuela Martins and Maria do 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/IEM, Braga, (2013), pp. 11-44.

8. *Ibid.* 7, Martins and Ribeiro, 'Em torno da Rua Verde', p. 20.

ed thermal complexes, a theatre, religious buildings and luxury housing developments, with the *forum* occupying one of the most prominent sites in the urban environment.<sup>9</sup>

The High Empire morphology of *Bracara Augusta* remained the same in the Low Empire and only a small group of urban regeneration programmes took place at the end of the third/beginning of the fourth centuries, when *Bracara Augusta* was promoted to the capital of *Callaecia*. At this time a sturdy wall was erected and displayed circular towers surrounding the urban area with approximately 40 hectares (Figure 1).<sup>10</sup>

Alongside the morphological implications inherent to the edification of a outstanding wall, which in turn led to the closing of certain streets and to the opening of doorways located on the main city axes, the privatization of public spaces impacted upon the city porticos and performed a key trait for this period. The generalization of Christianity generated a set of urban changes associated with the decommissioning of some entertainment structures, such as the theatre and the amphitheatre, and influenced the construction of the city first early Christian basilica, between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth centuries. This structure was located on the northeast side of the roman town and reused a previous roman building located on the same site where the medieval Cathedral was later established (Figure 2).<sup>11</sup>

We begin our approach to the evolution of the city between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries from this pre-existing framework.

### ***2.1 The occupation of the city throughout the Suevic-Visigothic period (from the fifth to the eighth centuries)***

The central and vital role attained by *Bracara* in the fourth century, when its status, proclaimed by the emperor Diocletian, was elevated to province capital of *Callaecia*, persisted throughout the fifth and sixth centuries when the city became the capital of

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9. Jorge Ribeiro, *Arquitetura romana em Bracara Augusta: uma análise das técnicas edilícias*, (doctoral thesis, University of Minho, 2010); 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. 29-68.

10. Francisco S. Lemos, José M. F. Leite and Luís Fontes, 'A muralha de *Bracara Augusta* e a cerca medieval de Braga', in I. Fernandes (ed.) *Mil Anos de Fortificações na Península Ibérica (500-1500)*, *Actas do Simpósio Internacional Sobre Castelos*, Edições Calibri, Palmela, (2001), pp. 121-132; Francisco S. Lemos, José M. F. Leite and Armandino Cunha, 'A muralha romana (Baixo Império) de *Bracara Augusta*', in A. Rodríguez Colmenero and I. Rodá de Llanza (eds.) *Murallas de ciudades romanas en el Occidente del Imperio. Lucus Augusti como paradigma*, *Actas del Congreso Internacional*, Diputación Provincial de Lugo, Lugo, (2007), pp. 329-341.

11. Luís Fontes, Francisco S. Lemos and Mário Cruz, "'Mais Velho" que a Sé de Braga. Intervenção arqueológica na catedral bracarense: notícia preliminar', *Cadernos de Arqueologia*, 14/15 (1997-98), série II, pp. 137-164.

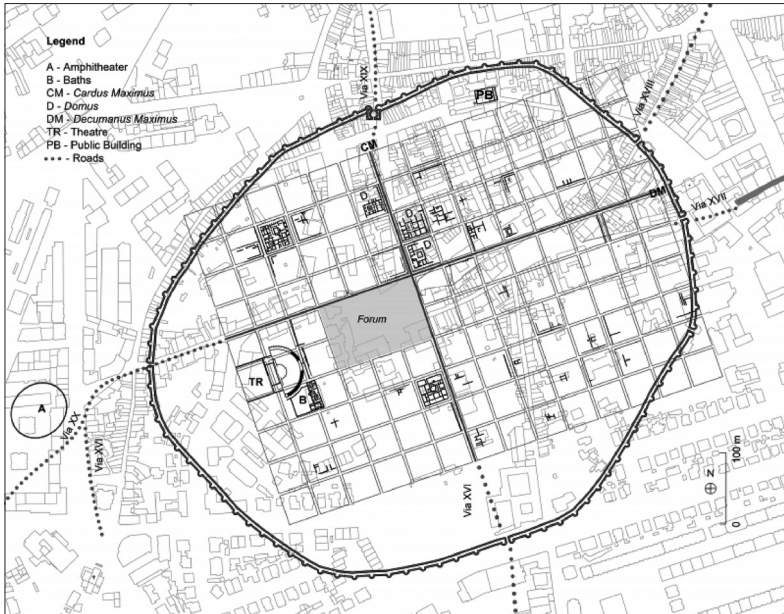


Figure 1. Urban plan of *Bracara Augusta* in the Low Empire.

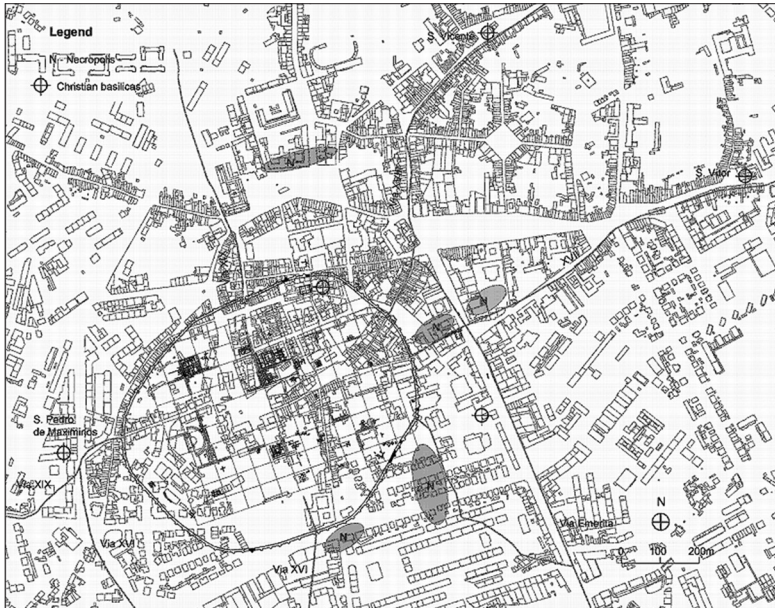


Figure 2. Urban plan of Braga and its relationship with the territory between fifth and eighth centuries.

the Suebi kingdom, in 411. Equally, the city became a central site for the peninsular northwest Christian cult practice (*Sedis Bracarenensis*).<sup>12</sup>

Archaeology proves that from the fifth/sixth centuries onwards Braga witnessed a group of urban renewals that changed the logic of the previous orthogonal layout still dominant in the fourth century. This shift was linked with significant changes occurred in the overall use of functional spaces, namely the streets and the main public infrastructures (Figure 3).

A clear trend in street changes included constructions in areas corresponding to the old major circuits, thus breaking their road functionality. This circumstance demanded the reorganization of the residential quarters layout that characterized the city up to the late fourth and mid-fifth centuries.<sup>13</sup>

Simultaneously, the main structures associated with leisure, especially the infrastructures located on the western part of the *forum*, were decommissioned from their original functionality and their spaces were reused by new constructions of varied functionalities. Particularly significant was the abandonment of a thermal buildings between the beginning/mid fifth century and of the theatre, which is believed to have stopped functioning still in the fourth century.<sup>14</sup> These sites were then occupied by domestic and artisanal constructions that broke the logic of the previous orthogonal layout and started to display very distinct construction techniques in relation to the architectural features known for the Low Empire period.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, the city witnessed significant changes in its private architectural constructions. Archaeological data documented the construction of new housing developments and the subdivision of housing units, which truly disarticulated the residential areas and the classic *domus* prototype. In fact, the latter typology disappeared from the urban environment in the fifth century.<sup>16</sup>

In the late sixth century, the loss of the city political relevance came with the end of the suebic domination and with its integration in the Visigothic kingdom, after the invasion and the looting of Braga by Leovigild, in 585.<sup>17</sup> These events caused further

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12. *Ibid.* 12, Fontes, 'Braga e o norte de Portugal em torno a 711', p. 316.

13. *Ibid.* 4, Fontes, Martins, Ribeiro and Carvalho, 'A cidade de Braga e o seu território nos séculos V-VII', p. 257.

14. Manuela Martins, *As termas romanas do Alto da Cidade. Um exemplo de arquitectura pública em Bracara Augusta*, Bracara Augusta. UAUM/NARQ, Braga, (2005); 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. Arquitecturas e técnicas Construtivas*, CITCEM, LAMOP, UAUM, Braga, (2013), pp. 41-74.

15. Jorge Ribeiro, Manuela Martins, Fernanda Magalhães and Raquel Martínez Peñín 'Construção tarde antiga de Braga' in *IV Colóquio da História da Construção. Perspetivas Atuais*, CITCEM, Braga, (in press).

16. *Ibid.* 7, Martins and Ribeiro, 'Em torno da Rua Verde', p. 25.

17. *Ibid.* 4, Fontes, 'Braga e o norte de Portugal em torno a 711', p. 316.

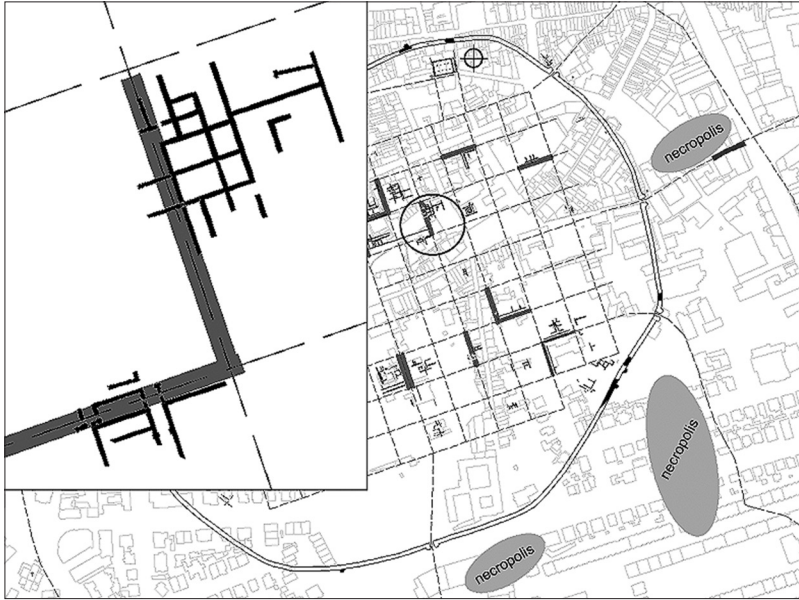


Figure 3. Disappearance of the original roman urbanism between fifth and eight centuries.

urban changes that have been registered by archaeology and mainly regard a progressive disarticulation of the regular urban shape and the changes in the residential architecture, with houses becoming smaller units.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, Braga kept its religious role as the ecclesiastic headquarter of *Callaecia*, a circumstance that ensured its continuity as an urban centre.

The referred group of urban alterations led to the disappearance of the original roman urbanism, giving place to a new urban reality, one that was strongly linked with Christianity and with the association of the religious to the political, administrative and economic powers.

The new urban reality concentrated on the northeast side of the roman city, around the first early Christian basilica that later became a new administrative and religious centre bounded to the city episcopal power. This status was only fully consolidated with the construction of the city Cathedral and the respective episcopal complex, in the eleventh century.<sup>19</sup>

18. *Ibid.* 7, Martins and Ribeiro, 'Em torno da Rua Verde', p. 25.

19. Luís Fontes, 'O Norte de Portugal ente os séculos VIII e X: balanço e perspectivas de investigação', in L. Caballero, P. Mateos and C. García de Castro (eds.) *Asturias entre visigodos y mozárabes. Visigodos y omeyas VI*, CSIC, Madrid, (2012), pp. 443-474.



In reality, archaeology documented an intense occupation on the northeast part of the old roman city between the fifth and eight centuries, alongside a progressive rarefaction and ruralisation of the remaining town areas, a trend accentuated throughout the forthcoming centuries.

Between the fifth and eight centuries the population dispersion towards peripheral areas of the old *urbs* also occurred, mainly in sites where new buildings of Christian cult were erected, thus functioning as population aggregator centres. New centres of Christian reference emerged and were associated with the construction of cemeterial basilicas over old roman necropolis located around the main roman itineraries linking Braga with the remaining territory. With regards to newly developed population centres emerging in the outskirts we highlight ‘S. Pedro de Maximinos’, ‘S. Vicente’ and ‘S. Vítor’, all located between 800 and 1200 meters from the Cathedral. These sites were associated with the martyrdom cult and originated from medieval parishes existing within the suburban area (Figure 2).<sup>20</sup>

Due to its relevance in the overall territorial reorganization, we also highlight the construction of two of the most important monasteries in the peninsular northwest and located in the outskirts of Braga —the ‘Dume’ monastery built in the sixth century under an initiative of ‘São Martinho’, and ‘São Salvador de Montélios’ monastery erected in the seventh century under an initiative of ‘São Frutuoso’, both bishops of Braga and ‘Dume’.<sup>21</sup>

Around 711, riots caused by the first Muslim incursions led the ecclesiastic authorities to abandon the city. However, from an archaeological point of view, the implication of the Muslim riots in the urban morphology still remains undetermined. Nevertheless, documental sources referred that Braga continued to be an urban and religious centre with a significant residential population. The main indicators of such trends regard documented initiatives of the bishop Odoário, in 750 and the meeting of a Royal Curia in Braga, an event attended by the king of Asturias, Afonso III.<sup>22</sup>

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20. *Ibid.* 4, Fontes, Martins, Ribeiro and Carvalho, ‘A cidade de Braga e o seu território nos séculos V-VII’, p. 258; *Ibid.* 5, Ribeiro, ‘Braga entre a época romana e a Idade Moderna’, pp. 319-320.

21. Luís Fontes, ‘O Período Suévico e Visigótico e o Papel da Igreja na Organização do Território’, in P. Periera (ed.) *Minho. Traços de Identidade*, Conselho Cultural da Universidade do Minho, Braga, (2009), pp. 272-295; Luís Fontes, ‘A igreja sueva de São Martinho de Dume, nos contextos da arquitectura cristã antiga de Braga e da Antiguidade Tardia do Noroeste de Portugal’, *Revista de História da Arte*, 7, (2009) pp. 162-181.

22. Avelino Jesus da Costa, *Liber Fidei Sanctae Bracaraensis Ecclesiae*, ed. crítica de, vol. I, Junta Distrital de Braga, Braga, (1965), pp. 33-51; *Ibid.* 19, Fontes, ‘O Norte de Portugal entre os séculos VIII e X’, pp. 443-474.

## 2.2 Urban changes occurred in the ninth-thirteenth centuries

The territorial reorganization process of the Braga's region was conducted in a systematic way and was supported by the Asturian and Leonese kings from the ninth and tenth centuries. It regenerated and determined new boundaries for the city, in 873 and confirmed its ownership to the metropolitan bishop Flaviano Recaredo, in 905-910.<sup>23</sup>

These circumstances enabled us to confirm the residential population in the city at this time and to make assumption over the urban space revitalization, mainly conducted through the establishment of a new defensive perimeter and the regeneration works operated in the primitive basilica (Figure 4).

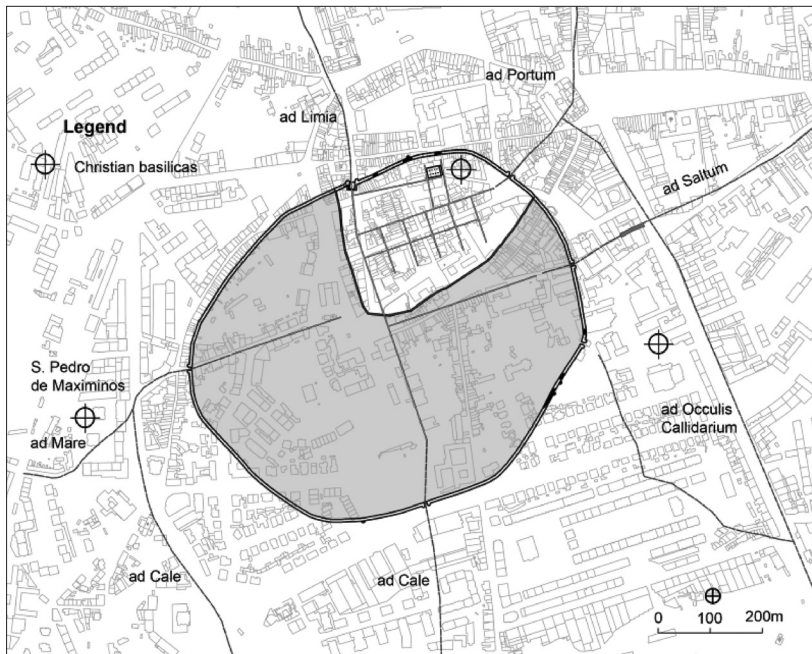


Figure 4. Urban plan of Braga in ninth-thirteenth centuries.

Archaeological data also confirmed that the northern part of the Low Empire roman wall was still in use at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and the construction of

23. *Ibid.* 22, Costa, *Liber Fidei*, pp. 33-38; *Ibid.* 19, Fontes, 'O Norte de Portugal entre os séculos VIII e X', pp. 443-474.

a new wall located on the southern part of the city is also admitted to have occurred between the later ninth and early tenth centuries.<sup>24</sup>

The new urban space was of a modest size, not surpassing 15 hectares. These new features were part of the second stage of the Braga evolution and relate to a site that was a mere small fortified borough.

The reuse of the northern part of the roman wall would include a doorway already existing in the previous defensive system as attested by archaeological excavations conducted, which identified a medieval pathway on this site.<sup>25</sup> This doorway enabled the articulation between one of the main inner-walled roman axes running W/SE with an old imperial road linking the city with the Cávado and Homem river valleys.<sup>26</sup>

The new wall segment constructed on the southern part left three quarters of the roman city out, corresponding to the areas where the wide public buildings were located, namely the forum, the theatre and the thermal complex.

The integration of the city within the reorganization process of the *bracarense* territory also instigated regeneration works to the primitive basilica, which had its rectangular shape fully consolidated in the ninth and tenth centuries. The basilica had an E/W orientation and included three naves and a doorway on its southern façade.<sup>27</sup>

However, it would end up being the responsibility of the ‘Bishop D. Pedro’ the construction of a new and wider temple to substitute the previous structure after the restoration of the Braga archdiocese, in 1071. This new temple followed on the model of the major Romanesque pilgrimage cathedrals.<sup>28</sup>

The same bishop, together with the first Portuguese king’s, was also responsible for a set of initiatives that contributed in a decisive manner towards the enlargement and the dignifying role of this urban centre. In fact, the ecclesiastic and political relevance that the city of Braga reached again in the eleventh century, especially with the consecration of the Cathedral in 1089 and with its status being elevated to ecclesiastic dominion, in 1112, would fully determined the new urban regeneration works.<sup>29</sup>

The new Cathedral exerted a flagship role in the overall organization of the urban centre. This central role was further reinforced by the edification of other religious buildings, such as the Episcopal School, and several further annexes allocated to the bishop,

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24. *Ibid.* 4, Fontes, ‘Braga e o norte de Portugal em torno a 711’, p. 317.

25. *Ibid.* 7, Martins and Ribeiro, ‘Em torno da Rua Verde’, p. 30.

26. *Ibid.* 19, Fontes, ‘O Norte de Portugal entre os séculos VIII e X’, pp. 443-474.

27. *Ibid.* 11, Fontes, Lemos and Cruz, ‘“Mais Velho” que a Sé de Braga’, pp. 137-164.

28. Manuel Real, ‘O projecto da catedral de Braga, nos finais do século XI, e as origens do românico português’, in Faculdade Teologia and Cabido de Braga (eds.) *Actas IX Centenário da Dedicção da Sé de Braga. Congresso Internacional*, vol. I, Faculdade Teologia/Cabido de Braga, Braga, pp. 435-511.

29. Avelino Jesus da Costa, *O Bispo D. Pedro e a Organização da Arquidiocese de Braga*, (2.<sup>a</sup> ed., refundida e ampliada), vol. I, Irmandade de S. Bento da Porta Aberta, Braga, (1997), pp. 213-223.

to the chapterhouse and to the administrative services.<sup>30</sup> The execution of buildings of this magnitude confirmed the existence of an urban centre able to control a considerable amount of human and material resources needed to perform them, independently of the reuse of old construction materials. In fact, archaeological interventions conducted outside the occupied perimeter of the earlier medieval city revealed that several walls from public and private roman buildings were looted events that may be connected with the need to obtain construction resources required for the new buildings.

Archaeological excavations documenting the urban structure and the constructive features of Braga between the ninth and thirteenth centuries are scarce. In general terms, these circumstances are related with the fact that the area corresponding to the old high medieval borough is part of the current city and it is only possible to excavate inside the quarters that evolved from the medieval morphology. However, the fact that there are no building constructions inside the quarters may indicate that their own organization was already processed in accordance with the typical Middle Ages land division. Constructions were structured alongside the pathways and included one-floor houses with standard backyards known to have existed in most medieval Portuguese towns.<sup>31</sup>

It is important to highlight that the Early Middle Ages city was located on the northeast part of the roman town of Braga. Thereby, the medieval urban plan was still shaped by the inherited morphology of the roman period. Part of the medieval defensive system reused the northern part of the Low Empire wall up to the beginning of the fourteenth century alongside several old routes.

The overlapping of the roman and medieval systems analysed in point 2.3 enabled us to put forward an interpretation regarding their formation and organization, and the morphology of the new quarters.

In general terms, the medieval street plan when compared to the roman urban layout had a smaller number of streets with an E/W orientation, with the number of roads running N/S being practically identical. Equally, the majority of roman streets changed their orientation and only one street kept the original roman layout. This event may be related with this particular street being articulated with the Low Empire wall doorway that was kept functioning throughout the Middle Ages period (Figure 4).<sup>32</sup>

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30. *Ibid.* 29, Costa, *O Bispo* D. Pedro, pp. 213-223.

31. Maria da Conceição F. Ferreira and Jane Grenville, 'Urban vernacular housing in medieval Northern Portugal and the usefulness of typologies', in B. Maslakovic and S. Rees Jones (eds.) *The Medieval Household in Christian Europe, c. 850-c. 1550, Managing Power, Wealth, and the Body*, Brepols Publishers, Turnhout, Belgium, (2003), pp. 359-389; Maria da Conceição F. Ferreira, 'A casa comum em Guimarães. Entre o público e o privado (finais do século XV)', in *Actas do III Congresso Histórico de Guimarães – D. Manuel e a sua época, vol. III - População e economia*, Câmara Municipal Guimarães, Guimarães, (2004), pp. 127-142; Sílvio Conde, 'Construções rústicas e urbanas do Médio Tejo nos séculos XV-XVI', in S. Conde (coord.) *Construir e habitar: a casa medieval*, CITCEM, Braga, (2011).

32. *Ibid.* 7, Martins and Ribeiro, 'Em torno da Rua Verde', p. 28-29.

The structuring of the medieval street network system seemed to be the result of a fragmentation process of the old roman quarters and the advance in construction of new circulation routes. This process has been archaeologically documented in several city sectors. It began in the fourth century, was increased throughout the Early Middle Ages and led to the progressive disappearance of the roman urban form.

Thus, the medieval street network system seemed to be the result of a reconfiguration of the urban space organization, with the opening of new circulation spaces distant from the old roman trajectories. Although the general orientation of the medieval circuits inherited the roman layout, the streets were no longer square angled. Equally, the medieval quarters structure that were generically rectangular, corresponded to the aggregation of the old roman quarters and resulted from the disappearance of the roman street running E/W (Figure 5).<sup>33</sup>

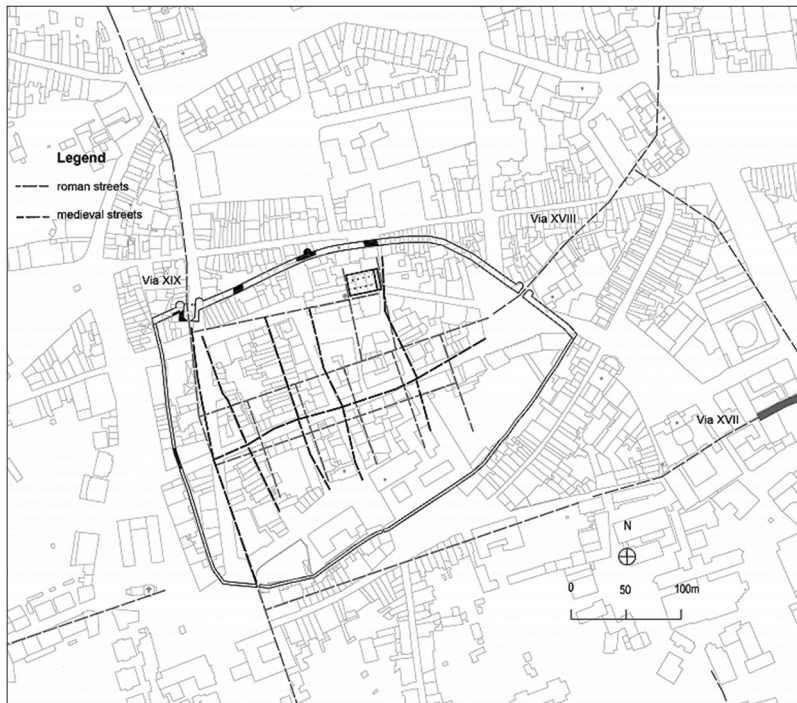


Figure 5. Reconfiguration of the urban space in ninth-thirteenth centuries.

33. *Ibid.* 7, Martins and Ribeiro, 'Em torno da Rua Verde', p. 30.

Between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries, the walled urban centre kept a rather small size and the Cathedral held a peripheral position in relation with the built environment, circumstances which profoundly changed throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

### *2.3 The transformations occurred throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries*

The general economical growth of the thirteenth century was also felt by the city of Braga, as the complexity associated with the street network system, the construction of new public buildings and the existence of a new wall seem to corroborate. The establishment of the new wall was finished in the fourteenth century and it doubled the urban area existing in the High Middle Ages as the city started to include the its suburban settings (Figure 6).

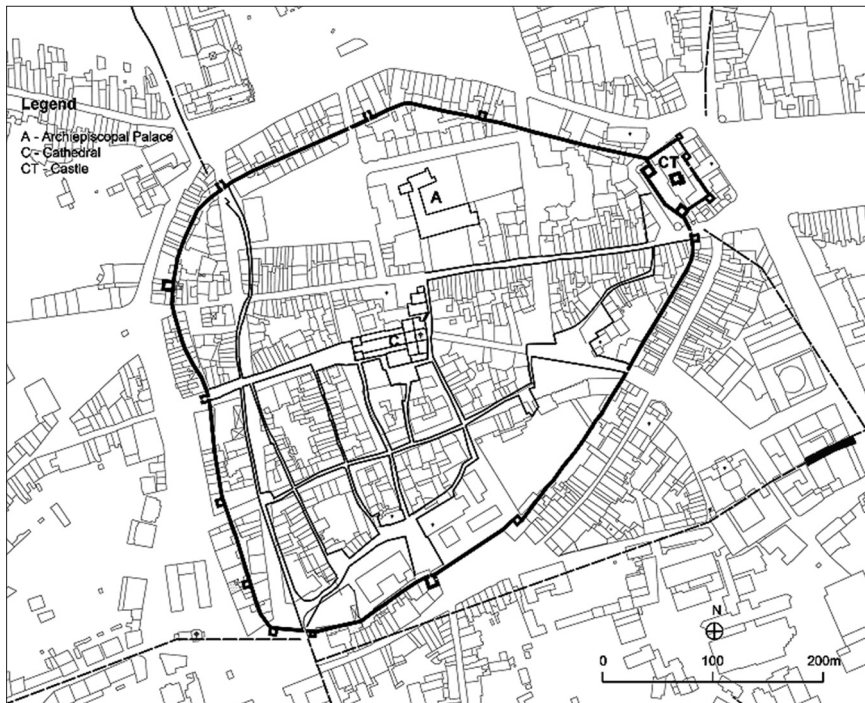


Figure 6. Urban plan of Braga in fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Archaeological sources contributed towards the understanding of the functionality of the high medieval defensive system located on the northern side, a structure in use since the Low Empire period and deactivated in the beginning of the fourteenth century. Similarly, written sources documented a northeast and northern growth of the city, a circumstance that was linked with the construction of a new archiepiscopal palace, a castle, new streets and new wall doorways.<sup>34</sup>

The political and religious relevance of Braga and its flourishing economic dynamism, a consequence of the development of trade largely powered by rural, agricultural, industrial and artisanal productions, originated the development of the suburbs, also a repercussion of the spatial limitation of the walled medieval town.<sup>35</sup>

The small urban walled area occupied by the early medieval city and concerns related with the town defensive led to the construction of a castle located on the northeast part of the urban centre, on a nearby site of an old imperial roman road, at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Equally, the construction of a new archiepiscopal palace erected outside the walled city started a new occupational stage of a wide non-urbanized area.<sup>36</sup>

The growth of the city outside the walled early medieval core became evident with countless references to the incorporation of new street circuits within the new defensive system built throughout the fourteenth century.

At the end of the fourteenth century, the establishment of the new defensive perimeter was decisive and a consequence of the military attacks to Braga by Henry, the Count of Trastámara, after the existing system not being effective in defending the city. The royal intervention on behalf of King Fernando was paramount in developing a new wall and providing it with a considerable number of doorways and towers (Figure 7).<sup>37</sup>

The restitution of the medieval wall perimeter and the fourteenth century castle plan was only possible to acknowledge with the cross-referencing of several types of data sources, namely material remains integrated in current constructions, fossilized marks in the urban landscape, ancient iconographic sources such as the Braunio's Map of 1594, the *Mappa de Braga Primas* of 1755 and the city plan by B. Garcez and M. Maciel from the nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

The precise limitation of the medieval wall, mainly in terms of its doorways, equally contributed towards a better understanding regarding the articulation between inner wa-

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34. *Ibid.* 5, Ribeiro, 'Braga entre a época romana e a Idade Moderna', pp. 392.

35. Maria do Carmo Ribeiro and Arnaldo Melo, 'A influência das actividades económicas na organização da cidade medieval portuguesa', in M. C. Ribeiro and A. Melo (eds.) *Evolução da Paisagem Urbana: Economia e Sociedade*, CITCEM, Braga, (2012), pp. 145-171.

36. José Marques, *Braga Medieval*, Ed. Livraria Cruz, Braga, (1983), pp. 46-47.

37. *Ibid.* 26, Marques, *Braga medieval*, pp. 47-48.

38. *Ibid.* 5, Ribeiro, 'Braga entre a época romana e a Idade Moderna', pp. 326-403.

lled streets and the road network system linking the city with the wider developing urban centres located around churches in the outskirts and nearby old roman necropolis.

Alongside the evolution of the urban space, the occupation of the land outside the wall occurred and was conditioned by the persistence use of old roman roads and by the existence of population centres emerging around old early Christian basilicas converted into churches.

The medieval street system streets have been well studied and included in documentation produced by the Church. From this group of sources we highlight the 1<sup>o</sup> *Livro do Tombo do Cabido* from the end of the fourteenth century. Although this source provided us with indirect information regarding the city urban features it strongly contributed towards a better understanding regarding the relationship between different urban areas, such as streets and squares, as it identified each area and their location within the urban plan. It referenced the most prominent spaces and constructions, such as wall doorways and wickets and areas linked with trading activities.

These documents equally provided us with data related with the land division and the different use of the streets soil, namely the areas allocated to the construction of houses, while identifying different types of residential areas, servants houses and public spaces. Despite the extreme difficulty in geo-referencing urban properties from written data sources, the cross-referencing of these sources with other data sources, namely cartographic material, enabled us to understand the medieval city morphology and be able to define the key traits of the road network system and of the low medieval city quarters (Figure 7).<sup>39</sup>

The urban plan from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries clearly reflected two types of morphological structure. In the area in which the city overlapped the roman plan and despite the occurred regeneration processes, the streets and the quarters stand out for their regularity. On the other hand, the areas resulting from the integration of old rural peripheral areas inside the wall account for rather sinuous roads and clearly reflected irregular quarters existing within the urban layout.

Generally, the medieval system streets lacked hierarchy and most of them had the same size. The quarters were narrow and stretched and the constructions were located near the streets and public spaces and included interior backyards.

The typical building construction was developed in order to occupy the vertical space and not the surface originating buildings with parallelepiped shapes that were internally subdivided in simple manners. Some had shops on the ground floor and residential units in the upper areas. In the beginning, most of the medieval houses only had one ground level with one door and one window but gradually they included more floors and increased in height and in the number of windows.<sup>40</sup>

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39. *Ibid.* 5, Ribeiro, 'Braga entre a época romana e a Idade Moderna', pp. 411-482.

40. *Ibid.* 5, Ribeiro, 'Braga entre a época romana e a Idade Moderna', pp. 498-500.



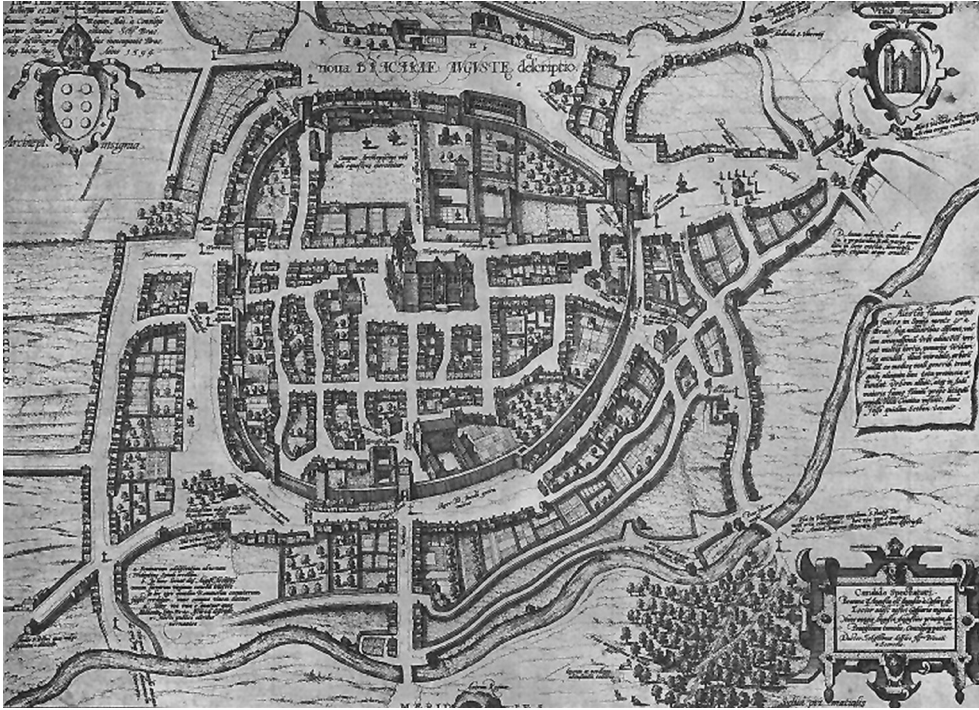


Figure 7. Braunio's Map (1594).

In the beginning of the sixteenth century the administration of the 'Archbishop D. Diogo de Sousa' changed the urban and architectonic traits of the medieval morphology and the overall city image with the introduction of Renaissance principles to the construction techniques.

### 3. Conclusions

The understanding of the transformations occurred in the urban plan of Braga has been possible due to the cross-referencing of data from different sources, with a particular emphasis towards archaeological data emerging from several excavations conducted in Braga and the particularity of written and iconographic sources. The surviving remains from the medieval structures integrating existing constructions and the fossilized marks in the landscape equally performed a privileged data source for our research.

The diverse historical stages and their topographic consequences changing the city between Late Antiquity and the end of the Middle Ages enabled us to consider Braga a prime example in the overall understanding of transformation phenomena occurring in historic cities of roman origin.

From the beginning Braga endured significant and several urban regeneration stages that shaped urban retraction and growth programmes developed in the same physical space throughout ten centuries.

The occupation period corresponding to the Suevic-Visigothic domain (from the fifth to the eight centuries) developed the city in the same physical space occupied by the roman town of *Bracara Augusta* and highlighted some of the urban roman features, despite the late construction of the Low Empire wall and the incorporation of a new Christian topography causing significant changes within the urban structure, namely in terms of decommissioning wide public roman buildings and the occupation of these spaces by artisanal constructions, fragmenting quarters and prompting building works over old streets.

Equally, there was a progressive ruralisation of the southern inner walled areas as opposed to the concentration of the population on the northeast part of the city around the new urban landmark —the primitive early Christian basilica. Simultaneously, the urban population relocated to the outskirts around new basilicas located nearby cemeteries erected on pre-existing necropolis alongside old imperial roads.

The city began an urban and political rehabilitation process in the ninth century and after the Muslim riots that lasted up to the thirteenth century it kept developing on its northeast side and around suburban sites.

The construction of a new wall substantially reduced the Low Empire wall perimeter and the urban and symbolic revitalization of the basilica located inside the wall, thus providing the city with a new topographic reality. The morphological changes conducted in this period seemed to be reduced to fragmentation processes occurred in the old roman quarters, the advance in construction over streets and the development of a new street system that although inherited the previous roman orientation started to present a rather sinuous layout.

The demographic and economic growth instigated the construction of a new defensive wall in the fourteenth century. It widened the previous urban perimeter and began including the suburbs from the north and northeast periphery, while introducing new morphological alterations to the medieval plan, namely a street system inside the wall and fully adapted to the existing defensive system and a renewed articulation between the urban centre and the emerging peripheral areas.

The urban growth started to occur outside the wall and included the pathways linking the city with its suburbs which in general corresponded to the old imperial roman roads.