INTRODUCTION

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The historiography of Spanish late antiquity

The present volume was conceived in large part to make known to an Anglophone audience the extent and quality of current work on Spanish late antiquity, not least by scholars working in Spain. For much of the twentieth century, Spanish scholarship went largely unread by scholars outside the Iberian peninsula: the best English book on Visigothic Spain was written in complete ignorance of the literature in Iberian languages.¹ One must concede that there were at the time good reasons for this state of affairs: Spanish scholarship has followed its own trajectory since the dawn of professional scholarship in the nineteenth century, but even more so since the upheavals of the Spanish Civil War and the four decades of Francoism that followed it. Isolated from the European mainstream and preoccupied with insular debates with little resonance beyond the political rivalries of Franco’s Spain, Iberian scholarship offered little to outsiders, certainly too little to repay tuition in modern languages which do not form a normal part of the postgraduate curriculum in Anglophone countries. Yet as a consequence of this long habit of indifference, the historiographical revolution that Spain, and to a lesser degree Portugal, underwent at the end of the 1970s, has been too little noticed in English-language literature.² The relatively large number of monographs and collective volumes which have appeared in English over the past decade are a testament to rising interest in post-Roman Hispania, but they concentrate overwhelmingly on the last phase of late antiquity in the seventh century, or deal with the more general problem

¹ Thompson (1969).
² It is worth noticing that, when they touch on the period ca. AD 200–650, the three most recent and widely-cited English language surveys of the topic—Richardson (1996) and Keay (1989) on Roman Spain, and Collins (1995) on the early Middle Ages—either rely upon, or dispute with, the communis opinio of the earlier 1970s, with very little attention to more recent peninsular scholarship.
of Visigothic, rather than Spanish, history. Yet the importance of recent Iberian scholarship—now witnessed by the parity of Spanish with English, German, French and Italian as an official language of *Antiquité Tardive* and the *Journal of Roman Archaeology*—is undeniable.

It is also, however, a very recent development indeed. From the end of the nineteenth century, the chief tasks of Spanish scholarship were inward-looking, the excavation and explication of the nature of *hispanidad*, Spanishness, and the writing of history so as to understand the Spanish present, what has been called the *actualización* of history to serve the present. Every modern culture of scholarship engages to some extent in such attempts to understand its own present, to explicate the lines that tie that present to the past: one need think only of German scholarship’s pre-war obsession with discovering a Germanic antiquity that would provide Germany with a past unmediated by the Classical world, a project still under way in contemporary studies of barbarian ethnicity. A Whig interpretation of English history, embodied in Macaulay and his intellectual successors, and famously castigated by Butterfield, remains the basis of almost all undergraduate and popular history writing in English, however reviled it may be by the academic historian. In France, such great *annalistes* as Braudel and Duby could end their careers not with *microhistoire* or the *longue-durée*, but with explorations of France and what the explication of its history signified.

All of which should be enough to suggest that the Spanish obsession with Spanishness is neither unique nor especially problematic. What is less usual, however, is the degree to which debates over *hispanidad* shaped the broader contours of Spanish historiography in the twentieth century. The explanation may lie in the fact that, in Spain, both the nature of the end point, and the route to its arrival were (and are) open to dispute, as they are not in Anglophone cultures of scholarship. Until very recently, to debate what it meant to be English was pointless, hence all that needed discussion was the route by which the English got to where they were; similarly, while American historians have always debated the meaning of being American, few have questioned that America itself is the logical culmination of his-

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3 See, for instance, the collective volumes of Ferreiro (1998) and Heather (1999), in which latter there is much of value, the monographs of Burrus (1995), Handley (2003), and Stocking (2000), and the editions of Burgess (1993) and Bradbury (1996).
tery. In the one case, the *telos* is self-evident, in the other, the teleology. But in Spanish scholarship, both *telos* and teleology have been subject to debate, and have consequently shaped the contours of historiographical discussion to a far greater degree than might otherwise have been the case.

It would be facile, not to mention foolhardy, to attempt to give reasons for this shape of Spanish scholarship. But one might point to nineteenth-century Spain’s ambivalent relationship to the Enlightenment and industrial modernity more generally, and to an intellectual environment dominated by a Catholic church steeped in the Counter-Reformation traditions of centuries past. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the influx into the peninsula of modern philological and historical techniques from northern and central Europe added point to debates about the Spanish past which were rooted in modern conflicts between liberals and conservatives. The Iberian past posed special problems in this respect: it was not, as in French scholarship of the period, a matter of pitting Romanist and Germanist interpretations of national identity against one another; rather, it was also necessary to explain the great complicating factors of Islam and Judaism. This inward-looking discourse about the meaning of *hispanidad* was already a feature of the interwar period, but it was greatly intensified by the victory of General Franco in the Civil War. Franco’s regime embraced and trumpeted an ideology in which *patria* and *catolicismo* were one, in which the basis of Spanish identity was—and always had been—a pure and orthodox Catholicism. In other words, the Franco regime turned what had once been a controverted historical argument into an article of faith about the foundations of the state: a particular version of the Spanish past had won, by the victor’s fiat.

This victory did not end the controversy, but it shifted some prominent voices into exile. In Spain itself, the attenuation of the debate was palpable, owing to the Catholic nationalism endorsed by the state. While much good scholarship was produced, it existed within the narrow parameters of acceptable study, and tended to encourage a strongly nationalist outlook that was only exacerbated by the post-war isolation of Spain and Portugal under Franco and Salazar.

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4 See Castillo in the present volume for a detailed survey of ecclesiastical influence on writing about Spanish Christianity.
Until the 1970s, Spanish scholars paid scant attention to scholarly developments elsewhere. This inattention was reciprocated, inasmuch as the process of sorting the threads of strong scholarship from the tangled mass of doctrinaire or retrograde product proved something few outsiders were willing to do. For much of the twentieth century, therefore, scholarship in the Iberian peninsula went its own way. The effects of that fact on the study of late antiquity were profound.

Because debates about *hispanidad* inevitably circled round the fixed point of Catholicism and its role in the Spanish character, the key period of scholarly interest had of necessity to be the Middle Ages, when that Spanish character was formed. If the *Reconquista* was, for better or for worse, the mould in which *hispanidad* was shaped, then it was equally necessary to understand the Arab conquest that made Reconquest inevitable. That, in turn, brought scholarship to the Visigoths—to Isidore as the idealist of Spanish unity and orthodoxy, and to the “baptism” of Spain at the third council of Toledo.\(^5\) From before the inception of full-blown *franquismo*, clerical scholars like Pérez de Urbel had identified the beginnings of Spain with III Toledo.\(^6\) Consciously or not, anti-Franco exiles like Sánchez Albornoz endorsed the same periodization, searching for the roots of the Spanish identity in the ninth-century Asturias, itself the imagined stronghold of the last Visigoths.\(^7\) Visigothic studies, then, were a vital part of the mainstream of Spanish scholarship. So much later history was seemingly explained by Visigothic precedent that it could hardly be otherwise.

For that reason, much of the best twentieth-century work on Iberian late antiquity is concentrated on the seventh-century Gothic kingdom. The work of scholars like Sánchez Albornoz on every aspect of Gothic society, of García Gallo on Gothic law, or of d’Abadal i Vinyals on Gothic institutions remains indispensable reading.\(^8\) Nor is it coincidental that precisely the work on this period

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\(^5\) This is the sound historiographical argument of Linehan (1993).

\(^6\) See, e.g., Pérez de Urbel (1933–1934); (1952).

\(^7\) The key ideological text is Sánchez Albornoz (1952), which exists in an unreliable English translation, but the full implications of the author’s outlook are best explored in the many and scattered volumes of his collected essays: Sánchez Albornoz (1965); (1967); (1971); (1972–1975).

\(^8\) For Sánchez Albornoz see previous note. García Gallo’s major works deal with the content and the ideology of Gothic law: (1936–1941); (1942–1943); (1974). For d’Abadal, see his collected essays: (1969); (1970).
was most widely diffused in foreign scholarship. Its preoccupations
fitted in with certain strands of institutional history that dominated
Anglophone approaches to Iberian history at mid-century, and it was
conducted at a level of rigor sufficient that its ideological basis could
be ignored.9 But it is significant to note what unites the work of the
three great scholars noted above with the constellation of lesser lights
that surrounded them: all their work is essentially forward-looking:
beyond the Gothic feudalism of Sánchez Albornoz lies the Reconquista;
beyond García Gallo’s *Leges Visigothorum* stands the *Fuero Juzgo*; beyond
d’Abadal’s Goths are the first Catalans, explicitly so in the title of
his collected essays, *Dels visigots als catalans*. Spanish late antiquity, for
most of the twentieth century, mattered only insofar as it laid the
foundations for the great struggles of the Spanish Middle Ages.

Church history, too, flowed in similar chronological channels.
Ecclesiastical and theological history was one of the few areas in
which Spanish professional scholarship developed as strongly and
eyear as did scholarship in northern Europe. For all its polemical
tendentiousness, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo’s *Historia de los heterodoxos
españoles*, written in 1880–1882, remains as valuable and learned a
document of nineteenth-century thought as does Mommsen’s *Römische
Geschichte*, if not his *Staatsrecht*.10 But the very title of Menéndez Pelayo’s
opus declares its argument, and though he was long dead when the
Spanish Civil War began, he became the intellectual hero of its vic-
tors. His catechetical identification of Spanish identity as Catholic
identity was also at the core of Francoism. Yet as Castillo Maldonado
argues in the present volume, church history could flourish safely in
the age of Franco and Salazar. Certainly, the most rigorous approach
to ancient texts in the Spanish scholarship of the period was to be
found among church historians rather than among ancient or medieval
historians at large. For all that rigor, however, there were very specific
avenues in which the exploration of Spain’s Christian past took place.
Much of the work of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s explicitly looked
to the Visigothic period for an affirmation of Spanish identity as
Catholic in the aftermath of Reccared’s conversion and the third
council of Toledo in 589. Because of the same focus on Spanish

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9 What remains the leading American textbook on the Spanish Middle Ages
preserves more or less intact the outlines of debate in the later 1950s: O’Callaghan
(1975), esp. 35–88.

10 Menéndez Pelayo (1880–1882).
orthodoxy, few Spanish works of any consequence on the indigenous heretic Priscillian exist from before the 1980s. But again, the greatest historiographical impact was chronological—sometimes explicitly, sometimes subconsciously, all agreed that Spanish history began in the year 589.

This complex of historiographical concerns, wrapped up as they were in issues of religious and national identity, meant a very real insulation of the study of Roman Spain from the mainstream of historical controversy: Roman Spain had no self-evident role to play in the story of a hispanidad that lurked in the contest between Christian and Muslim which began in 711 or, indeed, in 589. Barbero and Vigil, working from the implicit assumptions and goals of Sánchez Albornoz, were able to cordon off the whole pre-Visigothic history of Spain from the rest of peninsular history by insisting that the areas from which the Reconquista sprang had never been penetrated by Rome, by its Christianity, and by its institutions, so that when the Reconquista began, it brought with it an autochthonous culture, rather than the revival of a Visigothic, let alone a Roman, past.11

For much of the twentieth century, therefore, the study of Roman Spain escaped the main currents of contemporary Spanish scholarship. Indeed, the historiography of Hispano-Roman studies tended to operate within paradigms formed in the years immediately after the First World War, when the great theoretical edifices of Spengler and Toynbee were paralleled in Spain by the historical pessimism of Miguel de Unamuno. A similar historical pessimism permeated the work of Michael Rostovtzeff, whose path-breaking Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire has cast a long shadow on the historiography of late Roman Spain.12 Rostovtzeff, an exiled aristocrat and staunch anti-Bolshevik, saw in the Russian revolution the modern equivalent of the barbarization that had overtaken Rome, when the proletariat of the Roman army rose up and swamped its enlightened betters with a cruel, and effectively un-Roman, despotism. This interpretation of late antiquity rooted in class struggle was Rostovtzeff’s enduring legacy to Spanish historiography, an inter-

11 See Barbero and Vigil (1978), and perhaps most importantly the essays collected in Barbero and Vigil (1974).
12 Though usually cited from P.M. Fraser’s second edition (Rostovtzeff [1957]), it was the first edition of 1926 that had so far-reaching an effect.
interpretation that underlies many of the historiographical certainties about Roman Spain that held the field until the 1980s.

The basic conviction of twentieth-century scholarship on Roman Spain was that the third century represented a cataclysmic break with the past. Up until that point, Spain’s history could be recounted as a triumphal story of continuously advancing Romanization, whose peak came with the Spanish emperors Trajan and Hadrian and with an Antonine age of truly Gibbonian splendor. This was brought to a rapid end first by the general, Rostovtzeffian crisis of the third-century empire, then by the barbarian invasion of Spain attested in the reign of Gallienus. The relative merits of this interpretation are discussed in Kulikowski’s contribution to the present volume. What it meant in historiographical terms, however, was an almost total disjuncture between the study of Republican and early imperial Spain on the one hand, and post-Diocletianic Spain on the other.

The first two centuries of empire produced some of the finest work on Spanish antiquity, of which one may single out the work of Antonio García y Bellido amongst Spaniards and Géza Alföldy among foreign scholars. The years after 284 were, by contrast, largely ignored. When they were treated, it was usually in terms of a presumed class struggle, brought on by the oppressiveness of the Dominate and the social or spiritual disquiet that oppression produced. Within this arid analytical framework, the only substantive progress was made on specialized points of institutional history. At the other end of the period, the year 409, in which Vandals, Alans and Sueves invaded Spain, provided an absolute *terminus* for Hispano-Roman history, beyond which Roman historians did not venture. If anything, an unconsciously moralistic interpretation accepted the barbarian invasion as a fitting end for a century mired in exploitation and oppression. The years after 409, documented almost solely in the pages of the Gallaecian chronicler Hydatius, were treated as a post-Roman prelude to the Visigothic history that began in earnest with Reccared’s III Toledo. Indeed, all the many multi-volume histories of Spain produced between the 1950s and the 1980s place the break

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13 See any of the works of these scholars cited in the bibliography to this volume.
14 The work of Balil, technically accomplished and enormously useful to this day, is marred by this rigid interpretative framework: see, e.g., Balil (1959–1960); (1965); (1967); (1970).
between their ancient and medieval volumes in 409, and the hundred or so years on either side of that date are invariably among the least realized chapters in the series.\textsuperscript{15}

This sort of neglect of late antiquity is by no means unique to the annals of Spanish scholarship, and indeed it was precisely the appreciation of late antiquity as a discrete and interesting period in its own right that the revolutionary works of Peter Brown and others brought to the attention of the wider scholarly world in the later 1960s and 1970s. But the Spanish case, and the division between Spain’s antiquity and its Middle Ages, was undoubtedly more rigid and more extreme than in many other cultures of scholarship, where the later Roman empire or die Spätantike was a respectable, if minority, taste. The preoccupation of Spanish historical studies generally with the problem of a hispanidad rooted fixedly in the Reconquista and its supposed Visigothic antecedents on the one hand, and the consequent isolation of Hispano-Roman studies, with their own early imperial focus, on the other, meant that what we now think of as a late antique era spanning the later imperial and the Visigothic periods was virtually untouched, save by patristic scholars or those seeking to explain later Visigothic developments.

Change did eventually come, and the turning point in Iberian scholarship, as in modern Iberian history generally, was the death of General Franco in Spain and the almost contemporary Carnation Revolution in Portugal against the Salazar regime. By the end of the 1970s, a generation of scholars trained in the late sixties and early seventies and skeptical of the historical paradigms in which they had themselves been educated, began to challenge the old certainties of Spanish historiography. A series of articles by one of the contributors to the present volume, Javier Arce, systematically uncovered the false assumptions of traditional historiographical paradigms.\textsuperscript{16} His 1982 monograph on late Roman Spain is a watershed in the development of the study of Iberian late antiquity.\textsuperscript{17} When it appeared,

\textsuperscript{15} Most significantly the Historia Menéndez Pidal, published by Espasa-Calpe under the general editorship of the medievalist Ramón Menéndez Pidal in the 1940s and 1950s, and republished in an only partly improved second edition in the 1980s. But one may turn to such well-known series as the Gredos Historia de España and find precisely the same state of affairs.

\textsuperscript{16} See especially Arce (1978); (1981).

\textsuperscript{17} Arce (1982a).
it stood in a field of its own; now, dozens of good monographs on late antique topics appear in Spain and Portugal each year, in every one of the Iberian languages. In part, this has been a result of devolution in Spanish government and the division of the country into seventeen *autonomías*, a reform rooted in the 1978 constitution that did away with the centralized governance of the Franco period, and which was completed by 1983. The existence of the *autonomías* and the provinces within them has provided both the financial support for and the interest in local and regional history on a grand scale. In part, it also reflects the entry of Spain and Portugal into the European Union and the enthusiasm with which scholars in both countries have embraced the international scholarly discourse which European funding encourages and allows.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, much of this recent work has attempted to integrate Spanish late antiquity into the history of late antiquity as a whole. As importantly, this scholarship has succeeded in breaking down many of the fixed barriers of periodization, whether 284, 409, or 589. Both trends reflect the absorption of a vast body of international scholarship by the Spanish academy over a very short period of time. The historiographical revolution of the late 1970s and 1980s overturned the orthodoxies that preceded it. Now, Spanish historiography changes so rapidly that no new orthodoxy has appeared to replace the old certainties. The contributions to the present volume provide an introduction to the changes that have taken place in Spanish scholarship over the past two decades. They also point a way forward towards new avenues of research. Perhaps the most fruitful such route will lie in rigorous dialogue between history and archaeology, for if changes to the historiography of Spanish late antiquity have been momentous, changes to the peninsula’s late antique archaeology have been positively earthshaking.

*History and archaeology*

As with its early twentieth-century nationalist historiography, Hispania shared with much of Europe general practical and theoretical archaeological traditions: large-scale excavations were carried out to reveal structures, with little attention to stratigraphy or analysis of materials. Publications were limited to general articles which rarely included catalogues of finds or other details. That is, mid-twentieth-century
archaeology in Spain, as in so many places, was meant to produce architecture and art, not narrate histories or describe social structures. For church and villa archaeology, these projects nonetheless revealed the outlines of late Roman cultural production in ways that historians, obsessed with Visigothic Hispania, had neglected. The monument-centered methodology of the period consigned to the spoil heap evidence of other, equally important, aspects of late Roman life, such as the subdivision of living quarters, the privatization of public urban spaces and the spoliation of buildings, and resulted in their disappearance from the historical record. More positively, however, the cataloguing impulse of the period produced a series of highly valuable regional archaeological catalogues, such as Estacio da Veiga’s record of the antiquities of the Portuguese Algarve, or Pita Merce’s collection of site reports. Generally ecumenical as to the chronology, quality and historical import of the remains they catalogued, these careful records described previously excavated sites, as well as unexcavated remains and surface scatters. At the time they performed an invaluable archival function and to this day, even for monuments that have escaped the ravages of modern development, they often remain the only published studies.

The theoretical bases of Spain’s archaeology likewise differed little from other European archaeological traditions. That is to say, archaeology was largely text-driven and text-determined. One dug to verify histories described in texts, and archaeological materials were inserted into interpretative frameworks predetermined by textually-driven research agendas and textually-determined results. For late Roman archaeology, this propensity was intimately linked to the construction of chronologies: construction dates were tied to periods of historically-determined prosperity and destruction levels linked to historically-attested wars or crises. Interestingly, while these same general precepts were at work throughout the peninsula, the historical precepts and thus, the archaeological results based on them, varied from region to region.

In the northeast, any destruction levels were typically tied to the so-called Franco-Alamannic invasions of the third century, which exemplified the third-century crisis in Spain, and in keeping with the Rostovtzeffian vision of Hispania’s Roman history, were thought to

18 See Santos (1972); Pita Mercé (1951); (1953); (1954); (1958).
have ended the peninsula’s classical culture. Levels of destruction that could not plausibly be assigned to the third century were attributed to the troubles of the early fifth, which signaled the end of the empire and therefore provided a date for the end of occupation on the site in question. In other areas, the Suevic and Visigothic incursions were the wars of choice to explain destruction levels at villa or urban sites, for instance in the Duero valley or Extremadura/Alentejo. In Aragón and the northern Meseta, by contrast, the Bagaudae were blamed for signs of destruction or abandonment. Around these sorts of textually-predetermined “end dates” the rest of a site’s history could be arranged, so that the mosaic floors, fine marble and statuary that lay beneath the ashes and rubble of the chosen war necessarily described the period of prosperity that preceded the cataclysm. In the northeast and south the golden age was the second century of Spain’s favorite sons, Trajan and Hadrian. In the Meseta and the west, littered with the inescapable remains of great fourth-century villas, the age of Constantine was grudgingly allowed a place at the pinnacle of Romanitas.

Naturally, these narratives crafted from biased historical readings and reinforced by circular archaeological logic were often erroneous, and the resultant picture of late antiquity as a period of violent decline and conquest was perpetually reinforced. What distinguishes Spanish versions of this narrative from general accounts of the later empire elsewhere is its tenacity. Divorced from revisionist historical trends until the post-Franco period and relatively uninterested in historical study of the fourth through sixth centuries, Spanish scholarship not only preserved its histories of a catastrophic late antiquity, but because the umbilical link binding the historical to the material cultural record remained uncontemplated and unsevered, the data from those sites excavated and interpreted using earlier historical biases were never questioned. Even as Spanish and Portuguese scholarship began to shed its earlier historiographic baggage, its material record, dominated by those sites excavated between the 1940s and the 1970s, remained frozen in time, misdated and misinterpreted. The rest of Europe moved on, while the Spanish archaeological picture remained little changed, the result being that Hispania’s late antiquity began to look very different from that of the rest of the western Mediterranean. As the real origins of that difference, in historiographic fallacy, were unnoticed, Hispania’s seeming separation and isolation from the rest of the late Roman Mediterranean deepened.
In the last twenty years, much of this picture has changed radically. Modern archaeological method, including modern recording, the use of new technology, and most particularly, the adoption of open-air, non-trench archaeology, is as accomplished and widespread in Spain as anywhere in Europe. In the same way, archaeology’s dependence on text has largely been shattered and many of the important sites excavated early in the century and dated by textual association are being re-excavated and re-interpreted. The result has been an epistemological divorce between historically-attested violence and archaeological abandonment or destruction, which has placed Hispania’s material culture once more within a Mediterranean context. Accelerating interest in topography—economic and ecclesiastical, rural and urban—should soon allow us to analyze late antique social changes without appeal to simplistic paradigms of “decline and fall.” Advances in ceramic and numismatic studies have not only provided more reliable means of dating late antique stratigraphies, but have similarly described Hispania’s continued production and connectedness to Mediterranean trade networks.

At the same time, and perhaps more than in other areas of late antique Spanish archaeology, ceramic studies have documented those trends particular to Hispania, balancing an insistence on Mediterranean contact with an appropriate regard for the development of regional phenomena. However, while the rise of local and regional fine wares and trade networks in the fourth and fifth centuries is widely accepted, the particularity of Hispania’s other, more general cultural features has not seen equal attention. In the admirable effort to reverse Hispania’s image as an insular backwater, the peculiarities of its material culture have frequently been swept aside. The persistent, widespread richness of inland Spain’s fourth-century villa culture has no equivalent in Italy, while in Gaul only Aquitaine is comparable, and yet this important point of distinction remains undertheorized. The unusual health of Spain’s late antique cities, at least in the fourth century, also contrasts starkly with the generally grim models used to describe Italian urbanism. The contrast should be instructive on matters of regional economics and euergetism and requires comment. The next generation of Spanish scholarship will have the task of taking on board a total vision of Mediterranean

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19 For an overview, see Reynolds’ contribution to the present volume.
archaeology, not only to find Hispania’s place in that broader world, but now also to negotiate a space apart.

New editions, new approaches

The poverty of the written sources for late antique Hispania is often remarked, yet rarely explained. It may reflect widespread failures of preservation in the aftermath of the Arab conquest, and the subsequent failure of Spain to participate in the Carolingian renaissance that transmitted so much of Gaul’s late antique literature to posterity. Alternatively, it may reflect the relative weakness of Spain’s fourth- and fifth-century episcopate, which was in Gaul responsible for so large a part of the province’s literature. From the point of view of the historian trawling for evidence, neither explanation provides much comfort. The sources for Spanish late antiquity are likely to remain confined to the sparse corpus we now know and we can hardly expect another discovery as enlightening as the Divjak letters of Augustine.20

That collection, published in 1981, contains two letters from a lay theologian named Consentius, possibly identical with other Consentii known from the Augustinian corpus.21 One of these letters in particular has cast dramatic new light on Spanish history in the early fifth century. The letter, the eleventh in the new corpus, was written in 420 and deals with the events of the previous year. It purports to recount verbatim the tribulations of a Spanish monk called Fronto, whom Consentius has charged with rooting out heresy in the province of Tarraconensis. The subjects on which the letter sheds new light are numerous: it is important to late Roman history generally as a lengthy, first-person account of a court case, something otherwise unknown, and also for its illustration of developments in the colloquial Latin of the period; in the Spanish context, it illuminates the topography of Tarragona; the hierarchy and prosopography of the Tarraconensian church; the integration of barbarians into the provincial

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21 But the identification is not necessary: see Van Dam (1986). The two new letters are translated in Eno (1989), 81–108.
landscape; and the close family connections among secular and ecclesiastical elites. It also reveals a parallel between the policy of the patrician Constantius in Gaul, which deliberately incorporated the local Gallic elites into the administration of the province through the creation of the concilium Septem Provinciae and the employment of Gauls in Gallic administration, and his policy in Spain, suggested by the Spanish extraction of the comes Asterius, who is central to the narrative.22 Perhaps most important of all, the letter sheds new light on the second usurpation of Maximus in Gallaecia, an event hitherto known only from two barely comprehensible entries in chronicles, proving that Asterius’ chief task in Spain was the suppression of Maximus, rather than the barbarian campaign already known from Hydatius.23

This vast haul comes from one small piece of new evidence, and illustrates just how much such discoveries can bring to our understanding of Spanish history. Although the prospects of another such discovery seem limited, our understanding of the existing corpus of sources has been much refined in the past decades through improved editions of long-known texts. A full list of the Christian authors of Spanish late antiquity can be found in the Clavis Patrum Latinorum.24 As is so often the case in this period, much of what survives is theological: what was said about the well-studied Potamius of Lisbon by his ecclesiastical enemies is more interesting to the historian than are his own writings.25 Nonetheless, greater attention to the intellectual connections of Spain’s minor ecclesiastical writers, and to the transmission of their texts, a topic whose potential has thus far barely been touched, would perhaps help to overturn older views of Spanish exceptionalism and marginality to the Roman empire as a whole. Certainly such explorations would help make sense of the channels

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22 On Gaul, see Stroheker (1948) and Matthews (1975). Ep. 11*.4.3 shows that Asterius was a Spaniard and that his wife derived from a provincial family of substance; there is also the possibility of a connection with the later Asturius of Hyd. 117 and 120 (= PLRE 2: 174–75), and through him to the famous poet Flavius Merobaudes, on whom see Clover (1971) and Salvador (1998), 89–91. For the evidence Kulikowski (2000b); (2002).


24 See nos. 537–576; 1079c–1098; and, for the seventh-century, 1183–1301, though one author listed there at 368–570, the minor ascetic Bachiarius, was probably an Illyrian, not a Spaniard: Kulikowski (2004b).

25 For Potamius, see Montes Moreira (1969) and Conti (1998), which latter includes English translations of his works.
by which the peninsula was linked to the rest of the Roman and post-Roman world. For the most part, however, it is not the minor Spanish writers that have gained the greatest attention recently, but rather texts with greater socio-historical interest. Here, it is new editions of texts that have led the way.

The new edition of the *Vitas Patrum Emeritensium*, by A. Maya Sánchez, has established a reliable text in its two recensions and clarified the problems of the work's authorship.26 The *Vitas* are not only our best source for episcopal politics in the sixth-century peninsula, but also cast light on the local communal life of Mérida, the relationship between Arians and orthodox, and the difficulties which Gothic kings like Leovigild experienced in controlling even the most important cities of their kingdom. The close connection between Lusitania and the eastern provinces which emerges from the text of the lives is confirmed by the growing number of Greek inscriptions known from such cities as Mértola (ancient Myrtilis); and the accuracy of the technical details of the *Vitas* has been confirmed by the excavations at Santa Eulalia of Mérida.27 Similarly, if less spectacularly, the recent *Sources Chrétiennes* edition of Pacian of Barcelona improves upon its predecessors and opens up his hitherto obscure letters and writings on penitence and baptism as sources of social history in the coastal Tarraconensis of the later fourth century.28 The re-edition of Severus of Minorca’s letter on the conversion of the Jews—the authenticity of which was definitively proved by the new letters of Consentius discussed above—has fixed the date of Orosius’ arrival in Minorca firmly at the end of the year 416, while likewise offering a profoundly improved text.29

Even more than these advances in the study of Spanish theologians, it is the chronicle tradition that has profitted most from recent attention. The 1993 edition of Hydatius by R.W. Burgess completely eclipses the standard text of Mommsen, not to mention Tranoy’s

26 She has, most importantly, done away with the spurious attribution to a supposed deacon named Paul: Maya Sánchez (1992), xxxii–xli. In English, the old translation of Garvin (1946) remains superior to that of Fear (1997), 45–105.
27 For Mértola, see Torres and Macias (1993), with a chapter on epigraphy. Mateos (1999) treats the evidence of the *Vitas* extensively; see the contribution of Kulikowski in this volume.
highly eccentric *Sources Chrétienes* edition and the uncritical text of Campos often used in Spain.\(^{30}\) Cardelle de Hartmann’s new *Corpus Christianorum* edition of Victor of Tunnuna and John of Biclar shows in detail how those two texts, and their manuscript tradition, are related to each other.\(^{31}\) As importantly, the editor builds upon the arguments of Roger Collins, showing that the brief but important source that Mommsen called the *Chronicon Caesaraugustanae* is not a chronicle in its present form, nor ever was one.\(^{32}\) Rather, these marginal annotations to the texts of one lone manuscript of Victor and John are the traces of one or more lost *fasti* or *consularia*. For this reason, the editor re-titles them the *Consularia Caesaraugustana* and prints them beside the texts of Victor and John which they supplement or modify. The new edition of Isidore’s *Chronicle*, which untangles the complicated ramifications of its manuscript tradition, has yet to be absorbed into the academic literature, but will in time prove equally important.\(^{33}\)

The establishment of these firm texts has had many benefits, not least the suppression of simple errors of fact. Thus in Hydatius, the Vandal king Fredbal disappears as an interpolation, and possibly an invention. More important is the general trend among historians of late antiquity to treat extant literary sources as texts first and sources second.\(^{34}\) While this has produced important results with self-evidently literary works like those of Eusebius or Jordanes, it is chronicles that have benefited most from this new-found attention.\(^{35}\) Thus chronicles

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\(^{31}\) Cardelle de Hartmann (2002). To these, the new editions of the Gallic chronicles in Burgess (2001a); (2001b) are a useful complement. John is available in English in Wolf (1999), 57–75.

\(^{32}\) Collins (1994). Edited by Mommsen in MGH AA 11: 221–23 as a series of disembodied entries, the text now appears in Cardelle de Hartmann’s edition of Victor and John beside the entries of those authors which it annotates in the MS.

\(^{33}\) J.C. Martín (2003), 39*-242*. The recent three-volume Budé edition of Orosius, while buttressed by useful indices and notes, does not materially improve upon the standard text of Zangemeister (CSEL 7, 1882).

\(^{34}\) For this see Av. Cameron (1985); Goffart (1988); Maas (1991) on John Lydus; Whitby (1988) on Theophylact.

\(^{35}\) On Eusebius see especially Cameron and Hall (1999), with full bibliography; on Jordanes, Goffart (1988). Of the chronicles, see Favrod (1993) on Marius of Avenches; Placanica (1997) on Victor of Tunnuna; Croke (1995); (2002) on Marcellinus Comes; Jeffreys et al. (1986); (1990) on Malalas. Also the numerous articles collected in Croke and Emmett (1983); Holdsworth and Wiseman (1986); Clarke (1990).
are not merely repositories of data, but rather authorial products which can be studied as such.  

The new editions of Hydatius, Victor and John are attentive to the literary context in which chronicles are embedded, the texts with which they are transmitted and which they often continue: the first entry printed in the new Hydatius is actually the last entry of Jerome’s chronicle, a graphic representation of Hydatius’ own intention of continuing Jerome. The new editions of Victor and John follow each other organically and the annotations of the Zaragoza Consularia appear directly below the entries they modify and are numbered in the same sequence. These points are merely typographical, and yet they reflect an awareness of context which has far-ranging consequences for our understanding of how our sources functioned as complete texts.

In this respect, we have come the furthest in the case of Hydatius. He no longer appears, as he did to Courtois, Tranoy and E.A. Thompson, as a recorder of fact who was not very good at his job. Rather, he is an author of intentional complexity. He believed that an apocryphal letter of Christ to Thomas revealed that the world was going to end, soon and at a specified date: 27 May 482. Thus what he was chronicling was not just the events of the world around him, but rather the last days of the world itself. He was not, perhaps, a sophisticated theologian, and a millenarian belief is too common a trait in early Christian authors to warrant extended comment on Hydatius as a thinker. But this new understanding of the author’s perspective has allowed us to use Hydatius’ text as a source in a much more sophisticated way than previously. We can see, for instance, how tendentiously he creates a narrative of the fifth century, building up to the apocalyptic invasion of Spain by a Gothic army in imperial service. Hydatius believed the barbarians to be the clearest sign of impending eschatological catastrophe, with the result that he deliberately punctuates the annual record of events with more and more intense images of barbarian violence.

But he does so selectively, and distortingly. To make events conform to his beliefs, he suppresses a great deal, not just evidence for

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36 Muhlberger (1990) is the best full-scale study along these lines.
37 Courtois (1951); Tranoy (1974); and the series of four articles on “The End of Roman Spain” published by Thompson in Nottingham Medieval Studies and reprinted in Thompson (1982).
barbarian action in the service of the emperors. He fails to record the second usurpation of Maximus in order to magnify the threat of the barbarians. What is more, he deliberately patterns his description of Theoderic II’s campaign of 456 on another favorite millennial record, the sack of Jerusalem by Titus as recounted in the Latin Josephus, itself a text in need of a proper critical edition and study of its influence. There were no camels in fifth-century Gallaecia—there was the Josephan model of eschatological destruction. This new understanding of Hydatian complexity gives us a new Spanish fifth century. Histories of fifth-century Spain can no longer simply paraphrase Hydatius in modern language, as they did for so long. Rather, it becomes necessary to read Hydatius with as much regard for his silences as for his statements. When approaching him as a source, we must regularly accept the events he records while rejecting the way he would have us understand those events. \(^{41}\) An equally valuable examination of Victor of Tunnuna’s historical perspective, particularly of the theological outlook that guides his work, has appeared in a commentary, and the new edition of John ought to spur similar work.\(^{42}\)

At the frontier between traditional literary sources and the archaeological evidence lie epigraphy and numismatics. Both have seen significant advances in the past two decades. The epigraphic corpus of Hispania, though scattered, is a rich and increasingly full source for Spanish late antiquity. Vives’ old but excellent collection of late antique inscriptions contains little more than a third of those now known from the peninsula.\(^{43}\) Many new inscriptions have been published over the years in important local corpora, of which Géza Alföldy’s *Römischen Inschriften von Tarraco* remains the classic example.\(^{44}\) Now, newly discovered inscriptions, and revised readings of old ones, are regularly published in *Hispania Epigraphica* and the *Ficheiro Epigrafico*, and include many important texts not registered in the *Année*

\(^{39}\) Kulikowski (2000b).


\(^{41}\) See Kulikowski (2004a), 151–96.

\(^{42}\) See the commentary of Placanica (1997) on Victor.

\(^{43}\) Vives’ text is *ICERV* in the abbreviations list.

\(^{44}\) Alföldy (1975), but see such series as CILA, IRC, and IRG and monographs like ILPG and IRVT.
Epigraphique. The superb second edition of volume 2 of the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, currently in progress, will eventually be published in fourteen volumes. What this explosion in the epigraphic record can do for our understanding of the period has been demonstrated by the recent monograph of Mark Handley. Numismatics, as the contribution of López Sánchez to the present volume makes clear, can also have broad implications. Most of the revolutionary work on Spanish coinage in late antiquity has come at the far end of the period, on the Visigothic and Suevic coinages. However, the tenth volume of the Roman Imperial Coinage, which appeared in 1994, clarified many of the complexities of Spanish monetary finds from the fifth century, and the systematization of the barbarian coinages in the first volume of Medieval European Coinage has made the economic basis of the seventh century, if not that of the fifth or sixth, considerably less obscure.

New sites, old sites and paradigm shifts

As new editions and studies of the literary, epigraphic and numismatic evidence have reshaped the history of late antique Hispania, so, too, have a series of recent archaeological projects altered our vision of its economy and material culture, and again challenged scholars to contemplate the relationship between texts and artifacts. Significant in both respects is the discovery of two unusually wealthy and controversial sites, the palace of Cercadilla and the villa of Carranque.

Cercadilla, set some 600m outside the walls of ancient Córdoba, was discovered while constructing the city’s new train station, and after emergency excavation, partially destroyed. A series of detailed monographs on the architecture, stratigraphy and ceramic finds of the site have provided a partial palliative for this loss. The site was an unusually large residence, occupying some eight hectares, and its

45 On the new CIL 2 see Edmondson (1999).
46 Handley (2003).
47 Kent (1994); Grierson and Blackburn (1986).
48 The basic monographs are Hidalgo, Alarcón and Camino (1996); Hidalgo (1996); Moreno Almenara (1997).
various apartments, reception halls and baths radiated off a semi-
circular courtyard. The residence was well dated by deep stratigra-
phy in its cryptoportico to the final years of the third century. Its
extraordinary size, particularly the size of its main apsed reception
hall, already pointed to an extraordinary patron. Fragmentary epi-
graphic remains which seem to name Constantius and Galerius as
joint caesars, led its excavators to date the structure to the years
293–305 and thus to attribute its construction to the emperor Maxi-
mian. The emperor would presumably have built it during his brief
stay in Hispania prior to embarking on his North African campaigns
in 297, though the whole identification has been challenged.49

The second site, Carranque, was located near ancient Titulcia, on
the banks of the Guadarrama River.50 The site, as revealed by more
than fifteen years of excavation, consisted of a large villa, the agri-
cultural facilities of which have not been uncovered, watermills of
indeterminate and possibly medieval date, a temple or nymphaeum,
and most importantly, a large domed building preceded by an elab-
orate entrance portico. The wealth of the site is extraordinary,
although not wholly unprecedented in Spanish villas: the villa mosaics
are of high quality and include classical mythological scenes, while
the architectural and decorative marbles from the domed structure
include valuable imported stones. Again, two pieces of epigraphy, a
mosaic panel wishing happiness to one “Maternus” and marble
columns bearing the inscription DNT[H], expanded as Domini Nostri
Theodosii, have led the site’s excavator to identify the patron as
Maternus Cynegius, Theodosius I’s praetorian prefect of the East.
The excavator has labeled the domed structure a church, one of the
earliest in Hispania, an identification dependent both on the dis-
covery of some out-of-context Christian inscriptions, and the fervent
Christianity of the site’s supposed patron, Maternus Cynegius.

Carranque and Cercadilla are undoubtedly the two wealthiest,
most visually impressive late antique remains to have emerged from
Hispania in recent years, or indeed from the western Mediterranean
as a whole. Their value is more than aesthetic, however, for they
call into question the continued, and in Spain particularly contentious,
scholarly relationship between texts and archaeology: modern schol-

49 Arce (1997b).
50 Basic reports are Fernández-Galiano (1987); (1999); (2001).
arship that has worked so hard to broker a healthy divorce between narrative history and material remains finds itself called upon again to contemplate these relationships in the face of provocative texts from the sites themselves. Also at issue, although not openly stated, is the widely-accepted thesis of Javier Arce which sees late antique Hispania as a generally impoverished province that boasted no claims to imperial attention and thus to imperially-sponsored industries.\textsuperscript{51} The discovery within a relatively short period of two wealthy sites with possible imperial connections necessarily demands either a revision of the theory, the sites, or both. Arce’s recently published conference on the site of Centcelles, identified by earlier German archaeologists as the tomb of the emperor Constans, should be seen as part of the same debate.\textsuperscript{52}

Important advances in urban archaeology have provided similarly stimulating and provocative results. The model excavations in Mérida and the creation of a local journal to publish their findings have drawn an increasingly detailed picture of the diocesan capital. Particularly important are the excavations beneath the church of Santa Eulalia, which seem to have revealed the shrine praised by Prudentius, and work in the neighborhood of the Morería.\textsuperscript{53} The latter project has uncovered an insula abutting the city walls, including a moment of destruction in which parts of the insula were burned and at least some of its denizens killed. The ceramic evidence dates this moment to the first half of the fifth century and the excavators have tentatively ascribed this destruction, as well as destruction in the necropolis beneath Santa Eulalia, to the Suevic sack of 429 described by Hydatius. Again the problem of reconciling persuasive archaeological evidence to historical events rears its head, but is rather elegantly solved by the model of “spotty destruction.” In this interpretation, destructive activity in the city’s periphery motivates polemic descriptions of cataclysmic destruction, while the core of the city remains largely untouched and damaged areas like the Morería are quickly resettled and rebuilt. This model, which is so neatly illustrated in Mérida, finds a place for both textual images of cataclysm and convincing archaeological evidence to speak in distinctive voices.

\textsuperscript{51} This is the one of the fundamental assumptions of Arce (1982a).
\textsuperscript{52} Arce (2002b).
\textsuperscript{53} See, respectively Mateos (1999) and Alba Calzado (1997); (1998).
and is an important contribution to the history of violence and historico-archaeological theory.\textsuperscript{54}

As in Mérida, the local governments of Barcelona and Tarragona have also established urban archaeological projects that have similarly advanced our knowledge of both urban church history and economic evolution. Excavations beneath the cathedral church of Barcelona have revealed a large and complex series of sixth- and seventh-century remains, seemingly a cruciform church, and have called into question the function of the building traditionally identified as the fifth-century cathedral church.\textsuperscript{55} Similarly, emergency excavation in Tarragona has produced a new church, possibly of monastic function, and a villa perhaps associated with it.\textsuperscript{56} Both projects are noteworthy for the careful preservation of the remains beneath and within functioning modern buildings, a laudable achievement also notable at Mérida.

As important for the revision of traditional paradigms as the discovery and publication of new sites is the reconsideration of old ones. Advances in late antique ceramic studies have made re-excavation a particularly profitable enterprise, and a series of re-excavation projects has produced new dates and interpretations for some of the peninsula’s most important late antique monuments. Re-excavation and study by the Taller Escola d’Arqueologia (TED’A) of Tarragona and others in the Francoli basilica and the amphitheater church, both built as \textit{memoriae} to Saint Fructuosus and his deacons, have produced new dating evidence for both structures and reopened the debate surrounding their chronological and functional relationship.\textsuperscript{57}

In the same way, re-excavations at Portugal’s largest rural villa, Torre de Palma, have re-inserted rural agriculture into a monument hitherto primarily known for its mosaics, and showcased the use of new methods in re-excavation projects, in this case the use of rural ethnoarchaeology and a new method of dating lime mortar.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{54} For a different assessment of the evidence, see Kulikowski’s contribution to the present volume.
\textsuperscript{55} For an overview of the excavations, see Bonnet and Beltrán de Heredia Bercero (1999).
\textsuperscript{56} Mar et al. (1996).
\textsuperscript{57} TED’A (1990); del Amo (1979–1989).
\textsuperscript{58} Maloney and Hale (1996); Maloney and Ringbom (2000).
The archaeology of the economy has also seen radical change, particularly through the work of dedicated ceramics specialists. Wide-reaching monographs on late Roman fine-wares, transport amphora, and common wares have not only introduced increasing precision in chronological sequencing, but carefully elucidated the complex ties that bound Hispania to Mediterranean trade networks, and simultaneously fractured it into highly regional economies. Several recent projects on Spanish amphorae finds abroad, in Britain, at Monte Testaccio in Rome, and in the Levant, have described the decline of the Baetican olive industries in the late second century, the decreasing role of Hispania in Rome’s food supply, yet the tenacious continuity of smaller-scale exports, particularly of Lusitanian *garum*, into the sixth century.59 These studies, along with the few field surveys to have been conducted in the peninsula, have shifted the spotlight of economic change away from late antiquity and onto the second century, where, in comparison to the fourth- through sixth-century changes, more radical decline in settlement numbers and wine and oil exports may be found.

If any lacunae are to be noted in what is otherwise an extraordinarily fecund area of late antique study, it is the continued absence of detailed site reports, including material analyses, which could foster the careful synthetic studies that must be the field’s next goal. Up-to-date catalogues of the peninsula’s late Roman villas, churches, and cities should be as common as the increasingly expansive electronic amphorae databases, but such catalogues can only proceed from full excavation reports—and these do not yet exist in sufficient numbers. The slow development of large-scale field survey projects since the successful completion of the Tarragona and Guadalquivir surveys, has likewise prevented analysis of Hispania’s countryside comparable to those of Italy and Gaul.60 If Hispania’s villa chronology and topography, and rate of urban transformation differ from those in other provinces, the origins of such difference must be sought in economic forces that have their root in rural settlement.

59 Among many, Carreras Monfort (2000); Blázquez Martínez et al. (1999–); Lagóstena Barrios (2001); Reynolds (1995); Reynolds (2000).
Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Approaches

Each of the eleven contributions in this volume is a product of the radically changed face of scholarship on Roman and late antique Hispania. Representative of the best recent work on subjects ranging from rural economies to heresy, the contribution of each author, in its own way, presents a late Roman Hispania greatly changed from that imagined only two decades ago. The essays are grouped into four thematic sections, each of which begins with a summary of the essays included in it and their contribution to broader scholarly discourses.

While the methods employed in the essays naturally vary according to the subject and the interests of each author, the volume is bound together by a series of thematic and theoretical threads that run through each piece. The first and most obvious is a critical encounter with earlier historiographic paradigms. Each author was asked to frame his or her analysis around a reconsideration of earlier scholarship: Kulikowski challenges the widely-accepted view of fourth-century urban decline; Bowes and McLynn take up the alleged piety of the Theodosian family; Castillo and Escribano reconsider the uniqueness of Spanish Christianity; Fernández and Morillo, and Díaz and Menéndez-Bueyes challenge the notion of an isolated, insular Gallaecia, while Chavarria and Reynolds rethink received wisdom on the late Roman economy. In some cases, as with Castillo’s study of hagiography, the paradigm at issue stretches back to the disputes of the Enlightenment, while for others it is more recent work that attracts critical attention.

As described above, the study of late Roman Hispania is currently in flux and lacking any single governing orthodoxy. If as a body, however, these essays present any single alternative paradigm in place of earlier traditions it is an insistence that both texts and archaeology must find a place in any interpretation of late Roman Hispania. Many of the paradigms overturned in this volume were based on one or the other type of evidence to the exclusion of the other, a one-sidedness which resulted in the erroneous models of urban catastrophe, the homogeneity of Gallic and Spanish Christianities, or the notion of a northern Spanish limes. However, the proposed marriage between words and things must be a cautious and nuanced one, in which both text and material culture are interrogated on their own terms and are permitted to speak with their own distinctive,
and at times discordant, voices. As Kulikowski, Díaz and Menéndez-Bueyes, and Chavarría all discuss, textually-based decline or catastrophe narratives are not simply contradicted by archaeological data. Rather, the meaning of both categories of evidence are enriched by interaction with the other. Reynolds’ work provides a detailed picture of a world of trade and production almost wholly absent from the textual record, while Escribano unravels a heretical debate whose rich textual record consistently camouflages its identity through the manipulation of words. As a group, these contributions insist that a dialogue between text and artifact is the only means of fully grasping a complex and shifting late antique world, and that scholars from both sides of the historical/archaeological divide neglect their counterparts at their own peril.

These essays do not, however, simply seek to describe past errors, but rather point out new roads, many of them leading out of Hispania to the larger Mediterranean world. Díaz and Menéndez-Bueyes, and Fernández and Morillo have provided convincing evidence of a previously unknown annona route through Gallaecia and the north coast. Kulikowski has suggested its southern branch may have led through Mérida to Tingitania. The presence of such a supply route might answer major questions in the study of late antique geopolitics: was Mauritania Tingitana incorporated into the diocesis Hispaniarum for reasons relating to this route? Did the importance of this route determine Mérida’s elevation to diocesan capital? One might also note that the consistent and unusual wealth of Hispania’s rural material culture is matched in Europe only by the villas of Aquitaine. The eastern terminus of Hispania’s northern annona route was Bordeaux, and the villas of Aquitaine cluster in the river valleys south of Bordeaux like grapes on a vine. Can the thriving Spanish Gallic and Aquitanian elites be tied to an imperial gravy-train much as can their counterparts in Britain and Pannonia? If this is the case, what is the real nature of what we describe too generally as “late Roman villa culture?” The problem of the annona is also bound up with the problem of fourth-century Spanish urbanism: Kulikowski’s picture of urban health contrasts starkly with that of Italy, and yet it is the well-studied Italian cities that have set the agenda for studies of late antique urbanism. How applicable are these models outside Italy and why should Hispania offer such contrast? Finally, Escribano, McLynn, Castillo and Bowes have all unpacked the traditional image of Hispania as a land of particular sanctity and peculiar heresy. These findings
reveal the carefully constructed polemic surrounding ancient definitions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy and thus point the way towards new concepts of pro-Nicene politics, the nature of Arianism and the fragmentation of late antique Christian identities. Above all, these essays seek to re-situate Hispania within its Mediterranean milieu, a homecoming which not only illuminates the ties that bound the late Roman world to its westernmost province, but which will find that world itself changed and reinvigorated by Hispania’s presence.