Changing the dead: Transformations in medieval burial rituals in mainland Spain (c. 400 – 1000 CE)
Gijben, Milan

Citation

Gijben, M. (2024). *Changing the dead: Transformations in medieval burial rituals in mainland Spain (c. 400 – 1000 CE)*.

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Changing the dead: Transformations in medieval burial rituals in mainland Spain (c. 400 – 1000 CE)

Author: Milan Gijben

Course: Bachelor thesis, 1083VBTHEY

Supervisor: Dr. A.T. ten Harkel

Leiden University, Faculty of Archaeology

Leiden, 13-06-2024

Final version

Acknowledgements

I want to thank my supervisor Dr. A.T. ten Harkel for her support throughout this new and unfamiliar process of writing a thesis. This thesis would not have been possible without her help, and I am very grateful for her advice over these last few months.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Many aspects of the human past can be revealed by studying the remains of ancient burials and cemeteries. Traditions, ideas, values, and beliefs are the foundations of all burial aspects throughout time for individuals, communities, and societies alike. They reflect the beliefs and culture of the people and groups at the time, and the actions of people that came before them, which creates tradition and practice (Rebay-Salisbury, 2012, p. 15). However, it is common knowledge that the past is not stagnant. Society changes over time, causing all everything within it to also evolve, including burial practices. This idea of the changing nature of burial rituals has recently become a popular topic in funerary archaeology, especially in the last decade. (i.e. Brownlee, 2021; Rebay-Salisbury, 2012; Theuws, 2019). These studies try to describe, and most importantly, gain an understanding of why burial rituals actually change. Different variables and explanations have been related to this phenomenon, including the socio-political landscape of a specific area and period, as the overall political climate and social structure can heavily influence societies, cultures, and individual identities of the burier, thence impacting and changing burial rituals.

To further our understanding of the possible impact of the socio-political climate on burial rituals, this thesis will study burials found in mainland Spain between 400 and 1000 CE, which is also known as the early medieval period. This time in Europe is generally characterized by urban developments, religious transformations, and a continuously changing and complex social-political landscape (Wickham, 2005, pp. 16-55), which especially applies to the Iberian Peninsula as a whole. However, this area is relatively well understood giving these complex circumstances (i.e. Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 24, 42; Phillips & Phillips, 2010, pp. 47-61). The different large empires, kingdoms, provinces, and counties are all identified, and their culture and traditions are well understood in academia, as seen in *The Iberian Peninsula between 300 and 850: An archaeological perspective* (2017). This also the case for burial rituals, as most burial customs for each culture, religion, and political unit across the Iberian Peninsula have been recognized and well understood (i.e. Inskip, 2013; Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017; Phillips & Phillips, 2010).

However, this information is not easily accessible in current academia. Most research on burial and burial rituals are covered in individual case studies, such as a singular burial or site. These reports are a necessity, as it allows basic and general information to be discussed in detail. Yet, these individual reports scatter the information further, while not explaining any possible change or continuation for the related burial rituals and practices. Certain studies exist that have created an overview of burials and burial practices utilizing the socio-political landscape as an explanation (i.e. Álvarez-Busto & Pardo, 2021; Cuenca & Gárate, 2012; Sánchez Ramos, 2019). Nevertheless, these overviews either only apply

to a specific type of burial or a region within the wider landscape. *The Iberian Peninsula between 300 and 850: An archaeological perspective* does utilize a wide selection of burials throughout the book, displaying certain changes, and linking them together with the socio-political landscape, in terms of certain burial rituals and prevailing religions. Yet, the book is about the early medieval period in the Iberian Peninsula at large, resulting in a lack of detail and focus, as burials are used more often as an example, rather than the topic itself.

Thus, this thesis will add to our current understanding in two ways. First, this research creates a simple, yet extensive English overview for the entirety of mainland Spain, in the form of an open database. The database will start storing only a selection of burials and burial rituals, with the potential of expanding the database further. The purpose of the database will be visualising any change or continuation found within the selected burials, while also determining the effects of the complex socio-political landscape on the funerary landscape and burials practices during the early medieval period. This allows the information surrounding burial rituals of mainland Spain to become more accessible, and further improve our understanding of why burials and burial practices evolve.

Chapter 1.1: Aim of the research

To study the different kinds of burial rituals and the complex socio-political climate present during the early medieval period in mainland Spain, a research question was formulated that sums up the aims of this research, which reads as: *"To what extent can transformations in burial rituals be linked to broader socio-political change(s) in early medieval mainland Spain?"* I hypothesize that burial rituals changed dramatically, mainly due to several large socio-political changes, such as the spread of monotheistic religions (i.e. Christianity, Islam), and the Islamic invasion of 711. To study the changing burial rituals, I have formulated four sub-questions, each covering a separate feature of burials rituals. All four will be separately discussed and recorded into the database, allowing me to further understand the impacts of socio-political changes on burial rituals in mainland Spain. The four sub questions are as follows:

"What changes are there in the material culture in graves, especially grave goods, and if so, when did they occur?"

"What changes can we observe in the location of burials within the wider landscape, and if so, when did they occur?"

"What changes can we observe in body position, and if so, when did they occur?"

"Can we observe changes in grave furniture, i.e. the use of coffins, headstones, etc, and if so, when did they occur?"

Chapter 1.2: Reading guide

Chapter two briefly describes the chronological terminology used throughout the thesis, while also providing a historical overview, focussing on the socio-political landscape of early medieval Spain. Chapter three will introduce both the database and dataset, while also mentioning and explaining the materials and methods that were used to answer the research questions. The results of the literature study are given in chapter four, in which both the general burial practices and the aforementioned four funerary features are covered in detail. At last, a discussion and conclusion are given in chapter five and six.

Chapter 2: Background

In this chapter, I will discuss background information about mainland Spain between the 5th and 10th centuries. Medieval Spain is characterised by a very complex periodization and constantly changing socio-political climate. Literature and research covering this period of Spanish history utilizes a large variety of terminology all defined in different ways, which makes this period challenging to understand. Gaining a proper understanding of the changing burial landscape requires an understanding in both the complex chronology and socio-political climate. Chapter 2.1 will briefly cover the chronological terminology used throughout this thesis. Chapter 2.2 will go through the changing socio-political landscape throughout mainland Iberia. The entirety of mainland Iberia will be used for this particular chapter, as modern borders did not yet exist, and it is borderline impossible to discuss and visualise the history of Spain without Portugal. Therefore, the different kingdoms and cultures that existed in mainland Iberia during the early medieval period will be mentioned and briefly explored in chapter 2.2. Both chapters introduce the terminology that will be used throughout the thesis, which are all introduced and defined in *The Iberian Peninsula between 300 and 850: An archaeological perspective* (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017).

Chapter 2.1: Chronological terminology

Different chronological terminology will be used throughout the thesis depending on the time period and socio-political context. The main terms referring to the chronology will consist of the early medieval period (also known as the Early Middle Ages), late Roman period, and post-Roman period. The early medieval period refers to the period between the end of Roman power in the 5th century till the 10th or 11th century. The late Roman period refers to the period before the end of Roman rule in Iberia, being the 4th and 5th centuries. According to the authors (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017) the post-Roman period covers the 6th century and beyond. Roman influence was very prevalent throughout mainland Spain, even after the fall of the Roman empire. Traditions and material culture do not immediately disappear. However, the early medieval period starts around the same time as the post-Roman period, which could cause confusion within this thesis when these terms are both heavily utilized. To avoid this issue, the post-Roman period will only be mentioned when referring to the Roman empire and Roman culture shortly after the end of the Roman period in Spain, roughly covering the end of the 5th till the 6th century.

A popular term within early medieval Spanish academia is the Late Antiquity, a term coined by Peter Brown in his book *The world of Late Antiquity: AD 150-750* (1971). Late Antiquity refers to the period between 150 and 750. The term imposes the early medieval period, as instead of the continuity the Late Antiquity implies, the early medieval period implies a sudden shift in Europe, due to the fall of the

Roman empire, which started the beginning of a completely new period. Brown argues that Europe experienced little change after the fall of the Roman empire (Brown, 1971). Nonetheless, this thesis focuses on change in two ways, being the socio-political landscape and burial rituals throughout mainland Spain. Therefore, it will be referred to as the early medieval period throughout the thesis. To avoid confusion, Late Antiquity will only be used sparingly, and only in reference to certain burial sites.

Chapter 2.2: Historical overview

Starting at the year 400, the Roman empire had been in control of the Iberian Peninsula for over six centuries (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, p. 47). The process of Romanisation had spread across mainland Iberia, with many Roman traditions already being implemented in many elements of life. The economy, administration, urban planning, and material culture all utilized elements found across the Roman empire (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 67-69, 101-124). This was also the case for burial rituals, as Roman cemeteries and grave goods became the norm in Iberia, mainly within the urban contexts found across the Iberian coast (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 105-107). Roman trade and infrastructure were fully established, focussed along the Iberian coast, where many Roman and foreign trade goods entered the Iberian Peninsula (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 101-102; Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 411-412). However, mainland Iberia would experience a major change, as Christianity was spreading across Europe in the 4th and 5th centuries. Urban areas would slowly display this change, in the form of material culture and funerary areas, with the rural contexts slowly adapting Christianity over the course of the following centuries (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 125-127).

It was long believed that Roman control of Iberia ended between 409 and 411, as a result of the barbaric invasions of Gaul and Iberia (Kulikowski, 1998, pp. 1-2). In 409, The Sueves, together with the Vandals and the Alans, entered and raided the Iberian Peninsula, after which the land was divided between themselves in 411. In 415, the Goths entered the Iberian Peninsula, which would eventually become the foundations for the Visigothic kingdom (Kulikowski, 1998, pp. 1-2; Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, p. 141). However, Roman Iberia was already experiencing a decline, as many underlying political, administrative, and economic structures displayed signs of decline and change. This eventually resulted in the end of Roman Iberia in 461, as no Roman officials were chosen to exercise control and jurisdiction here. Therefore, the post-Roman period and the rise of Visigothic Iberia would officially begin in 461 (Kulikowski, 1998, pp. 4-5).

The post-Roman period in mainland Iberia is characterized by change and transformation, which consisted of several slow transitions over the course of several centuries. The late 5th and 6th centuries mostly entailed continuation of Roman traditions and (material) culture (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 168-170, 229-263). Roman towns and infrastructure were inhabited by the Sueves, Visigoths, and

eventually the Byzantines, who controlled a province in the southeast of mainland Iberia between 552 and 625 (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 27-29, 170), as seen in figure 1. These new kingdoms introduced new traditions, material culture, and architecture, but this was integrated into late Roman culture and systems, such as urban planning and administration (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 168-170, 229-263).

Figure 1: The socio-political landscape of mainland Iberia c. 560. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Milan Gijben.

The combination of the political fragmentation and adaptation and spread of Christianity would eventually lead to massive transformations during the early medieval period. Changes in urban development, material culture, and burial rituals would highlight the 6th and early 7th centuries in Iberia, as new constructions and urban planning would completely change the late Roman landscape Iberia possessed from the Roman period onwards (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 161-185). During this time, the Visigothic kingdom would become the strongest political force in mainland Iberia, as both the Suebi kingdom and Byzantine province would eventually be conquered by the Visigoths (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, p. 170). This resulted in Visigothic culture and Christianity spreading all across mainland Iberia, including isolated rural contexts (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 193-228).

The 8th century would prove to change the strong position of Christianity in Iberia forever. 711 is an important date in the history of the Iberian Peninsula, as it is known as the year of the Islamic invasion (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 29, 267-268). Most of the Visigothic kingdom was quickly defeated, and the Iberian Peninsula was almost entirely controlled by the Muslims (see figure 2). The Umayyad dynasty was established in 754, which started the Umayyad period (754-1031), in which the first great

Muslim dynasty of the Umayyads ruled the empire of caliphate (Britannica Academic; Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, p. 29). The Umayyads ruled Al-Andalus, the Muslim-ruled part of the Iberian Peninsula, in which they introduced Iberia to both Islam and Islamic culture. Islam rapidly spread through Al-Andalus, in which it became the main religion of the Iberian Peninsula in the 9th century (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, p. 291). Islamic architecture and material culture slowly replaced the long-lasting Visigothic culture Spain was known for during the post-Roman and early Middle Ages (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 269-285). An increase in tolerance and equality, regardless of believe, race, and gender was also a result of the Islam, which affected the continuation of several traditions throughout Al-Andalus (Phillips & Phillips, 2010, p. 67; Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 294-295).
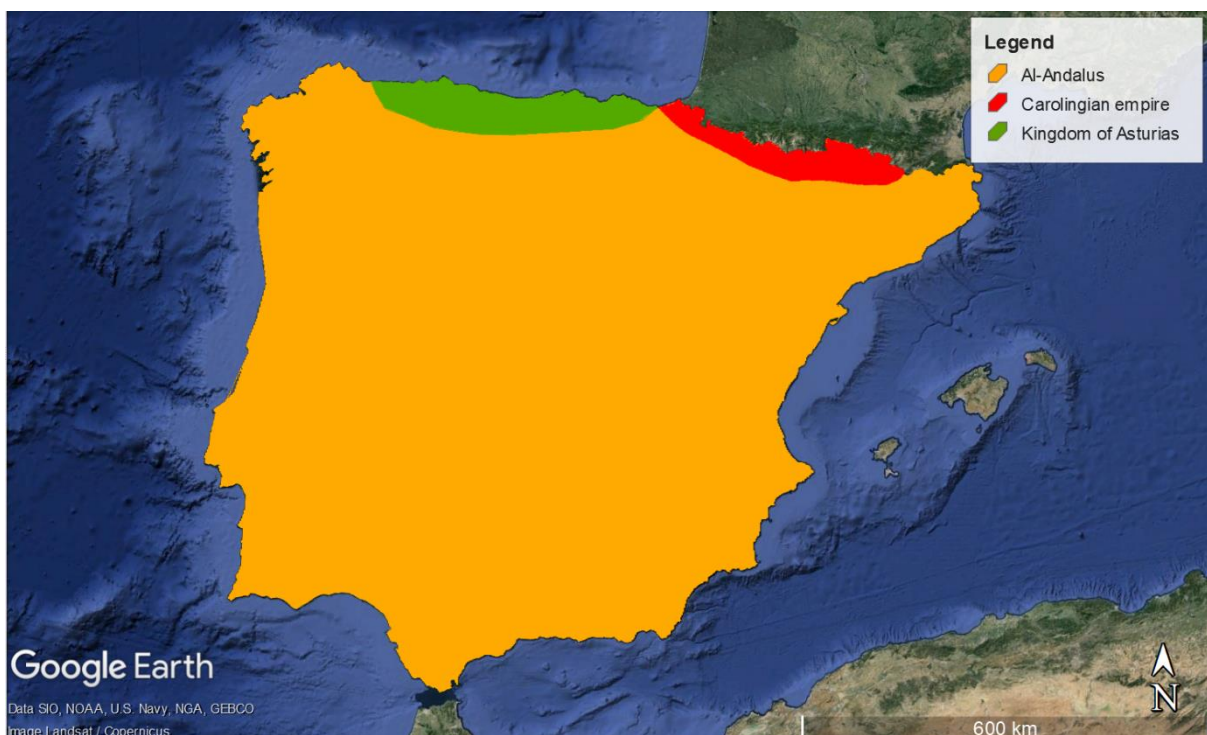
Figure 2: The socio-political landscape of mainland Iberia c. 720. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Milan Gijben.

Christian traditions and culture continued to exist throughout mainland Iberia, through a combination of acceptance by the Muslims and resilience. The latter occurred in the north, as Christian kingdoms remained in power of certain northern regions after the Islamic invasion of 711 (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 267, 285). The kingdom of Asturias, which consisted of some of the remains of the Visigothic kingdom, would display resistance against the Islamic invasion, in which a small territory in the north remained in the hand of the Christians (Phillips & Phillips, 2010, pp. 55-57). The Carolingian empire would add to this resistance, due to their counterattacks from beyond the Pyrenees, including the conquest of Barcelona of 801 (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 267, 289). These moments of resistance would begin the *Reconquista,* the conflict where the Christians would fight against the

Muslim invaders for 800 years, with the goal of reconquering Al-Andalus (Phillips & Phillips, 2010, p. 68; Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, p. 30).

The 10th century saw the continuation of the *Reconquista*, while also displaying sings of massive change occurring within the socio-political landscape of early medieval Iberia. The Iberian Peninsula was still divided into the Islamic south and the Christian north. The Umayyad dynasty, in the 10th century known as the caliphate of Córdoba, was still in control of Al-Andalus (Phillips & Phillips, 2010, pp. 53-54). The north was divided in several provinces and kingdoms, as seen in figure 3. This included the kingdom of León, previously the kingdom of Asturias, the county of Barcelona, the province of Navarra, and the province of Aragon. All were predominately Christian, and all were still fighting against the dominant Muslims (Phillips & Phillips, 2010, p. 61). The conflict would continue until the 15th century, in which the Christians would eventually reconquer the entirety of the Iberian Peninsula (Phillips & Phillips, 2010, pp. 111-112).
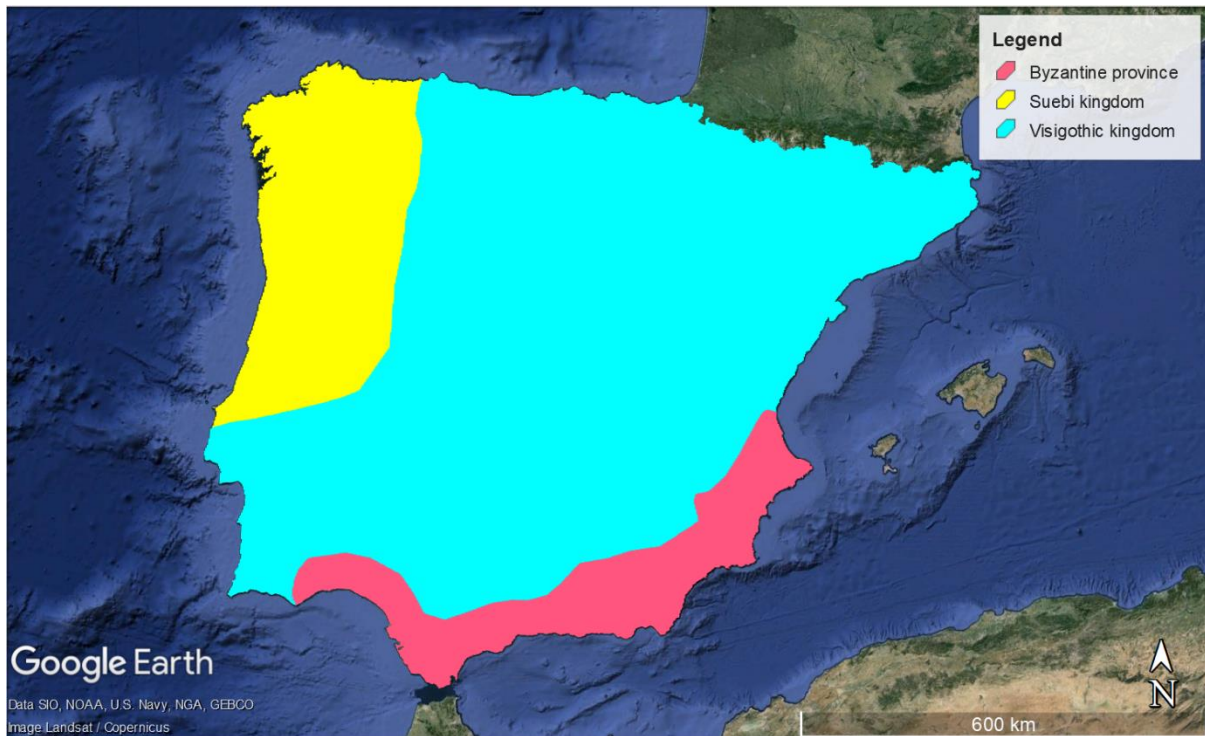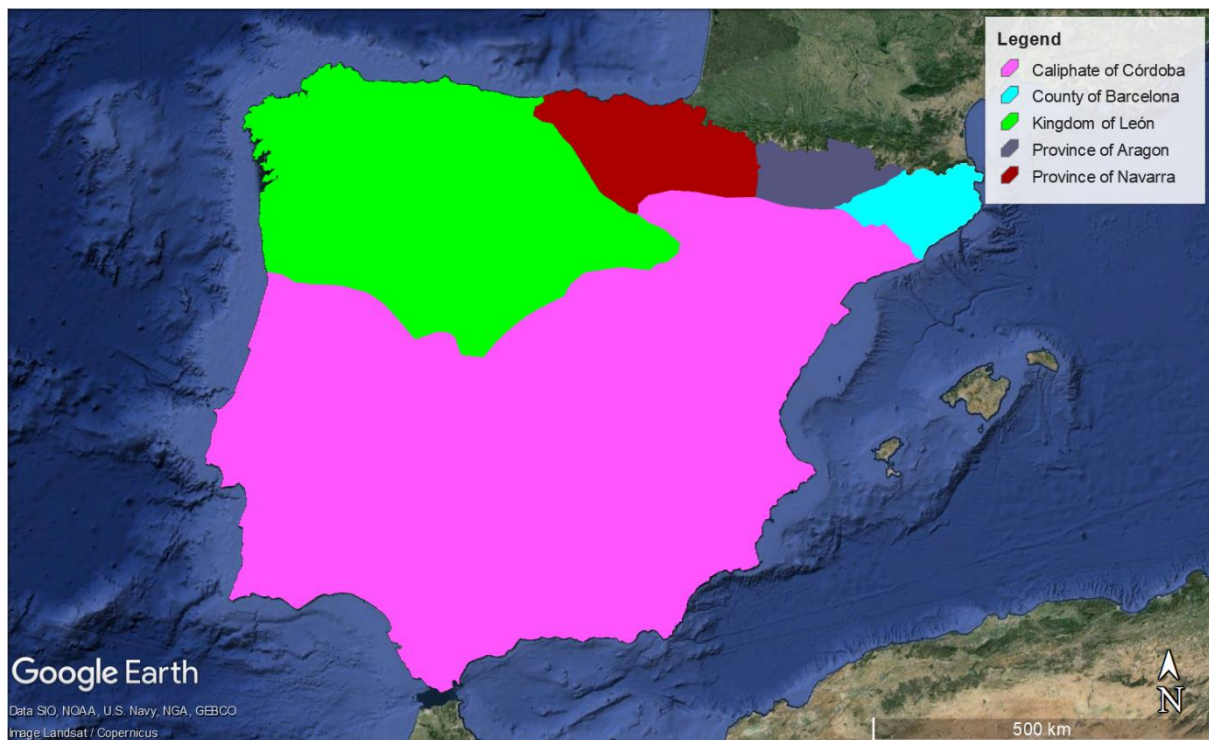

Figure 3: The socio-political landscape of mainland Iberia c. 1000. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Milan Gijben.

Chapter 3: Methodology

To display the transformations in burial rituals in early medieval Spain, several techniques need to be utilized to properly visualize and explain this changing landscape. A combination of a literature study and an Excel database are at the core of this thesis, which will be used to collect, visualize, and compare the funerary data. In this chapter, I will introduce the literature, programmes, and database I used in detail. Chapter 3.1 will discuss the kinds of literature used to gather both the cemeteries and background information surrounding early medieval Spain and burial rituals. Programmes, such as Google Earth and ChatGPT, mainly used for visualizing and translating purposes, will also be mentioned in Chapter 3.1. Lastly, the aforementioned database will be further explained in chapter 3.2. Chapter 3.3 will detail the dataset, which entails shortly introducing each of the 14 selected sites.

Chapter 3.1: Methods & materials

The literature study consisted of different kinds of academic sources, originating from different disciplines and sub-disciplines within archaeology. These sources include archaeological reports, osteoarchaeological studies, GIS research, and anthropological articles. These sources were used to select the cemeteries, while also supplying the necessary information about the socio-political landscape (see chapter 2.2) and burial rituals and practices. Original reports of the archaeological sites were always a priority, but secondary or further research did cover a lot of useful insights that proved beneficial for my research.

All data found in these sources were compiled into a database (see Appendix). The database allows me to visualise the burial and cemetery data, which in term allows me to identify and compare the four funerary aspects to each other, being the grave goods, body positions, locations, and grave furniture. The database will be made using Excel, as the final product will be less complex and easier to navigate through, compared to Access.

An important aspect of my research is gaining an understanding of the location of cemeteries and burials in the wider landscape. Therefore, maps have been made using Google Earth, with the main purpose being visualizing the locations of the cemeteries within mainland Spain. Other maps have been made, which will visualise the socio-political landscape throughout time. Four maps were made in total for this thesis. The first three have already been displayed in chapter 2.2, being the overview of the socio-political landscape in the Iberian Peninsula in c. 560, 720, and 1000. The last map is displayed in the next chapter, and it will visualise the location of the selected sites and cemeteries within mainland Spain.

A majority of the archaeological reports and studies were written in Spanish, especially original reports and site plans. As these sources include a lot of important information, I utilized ChatGPT for

translation purposes only. The reliability and biases of ChatGPT are yet to be fully understood, but current research advice to be aware of certain biases ChatGPT possesses (Tenzer et al., 2024, p. 4). Therefore, no conclusions or interpretations were made when using or by ChatGPT. If ChatGPT did not provide useful or correct information, I would ask the help of Spanish-speaking students or staff member from the faculty of Archaeology in Leiden, who could help me translate either parts or the entire text if they would agree to help me.

The results (see chapter 4) will be discussed through the help of a multitude of images and tables. Images will be exclusively sourced from academic articles and reports. The tables will be made by myself with the goal of helping to visualise and summarize the data in a simple and concrete manner.

Chapter 3.2: Database

The database consists of 14 archaeological sites, which amount to a total of 21 different cemeteries. (see Appendix 1). The cemeteries were selected based on three criteria primarily, being the location, dating, and type of burial. Both mainland Spain and the early medieval period need to be represented in their entirety, as this is the only way a valid answer can be formed to answer the research questions. In case of the type of burial, early medieval Spain contains many different types of burials and cemeteries. Many of these types should be represented to ensure I can say something about the totality of burial rituals in early medieval mainland Spain. This also means that a certain type should not be over- or underrepresented in the database.

The selected cemeteries are located throughout mainland Spain, as seen in figure 4. The cemeteries have all been dated between the 3rd and 12th centuries, with most being dated between the 5th and 10th centuries. Four different kinds of cemeteries can be found within the database. The terminology used within the literature discussing the cemetery will be the deciding factor for choosing the terminology used to describe the type of cemetery. The most common type of cemetery in the database is a necropolis, which is generally a more elaborate cemetery, in terms of monumental architecture and tombs, and is mostly found within urban environments. Other types of cemeteries include a maqbara (plural: maqâbir), which is an Islamic cemetery used to primarily bury Muslims. The difference between a necropolis and maqbara is the lack of monumental architecture, as maqbara are characteristically lacking elaborate tombs or decoration within the grounds of the cemetery. A cave cemetery will be defined as *several bodies found within the context of a cave*, and an intramural cemetery will be defined as *a cemetery build in a particular location, such as inside a church or within a city centre.* The choice of selecting different kinds of cemeteries was done for the purpose of gathering a wide arrange of data, which also allowed for comparing the different cemeteries and burial rituals to each other.

Figure 4: The 14 selected archaeological within mainland Spain. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Milan Gijben.

The first two sheets in the database, being the general information and cemetery sheets, contain the general information for both the archaeological sites and the cemeteries itself (see Appendix, table 1 & 2). The general information sheet focusses specifically on dating and general location of the archaeological sites, while the cemetery sheet focusses on all the general information surrounding the 21 different cemeteries, including type of cemetery, number of graves, single and collective graves, etc.

Most cemeteries within the database contain evidence that relate it to both a socio-political unit (kingdom or culture) and a religion within early medieval Spain (see Appendix, table 3 & 4). The socio-political units include Roman, Visigothic, Byzantine, Umayyad, Carolingian, Almohad, Galicia, and León, with the related religions being Polytheistic (Roman), Christianity, and Islam. If no socio-political unit or religion was mentioned in the literature, this will be displayed in the database using 'Unknown'.

The aforementioned funerary aspects of grave goods, location in the wider landscape, body position, and grave furniture are the focus of this thesis. Therefore, data about all four of these aspects have received their own sheet within the database, which contains all data for each individual site (see Appendix, table 5, 6, 7 & 8).

Grave goods and grave furniture are similarly visualized, mainly using yes or no questions to display the presence of different materials (i.e. ceramics, glass) or grave furniture (i.e tombstones, coffins). An extra column is added in the grave furniture sheet containing specifics and details for each individual

site, which is only filled in if extra information is deemed necessary. Location mainly consists of open questions discussing certain aspects of the location in the wider landscape. Body position is split into two different categories; Body position (how is the body placed/laid?) and body orientation (the cardinal direction of the body). The database displays the information for both categories in similar manner; 1) are the bodies in the cemetery laid in a standard, varied, or unknown body position and orientation, and 2) what is the most dominate position and orientation found within the cemeteries? This sheet also contains two columns for each category, displaying which variations are present, and detailing important extra information if deemed necessary.

Lastly, it is important to note that as time progresses, objects and sites change due to a variety of factors. Objects, human remains, and entire sites could be altered, moved, or even destroyed. The archaeological findings are therefore not a complete reflection of the past. If certain data is missing or was not mentioned in the literature, the term 'Unknown" will be used in the database.

Chapter 3.3: Dataset

Table 1 and figure 4 displays the selection of sites and cemeteries used for this thesis. This chapter will shortly introduce each site in order they appear in the database, which is based on the dating provided in the literature. The earliest sites will be discussed first, starting with the cemetery of O Areal.

O Areal, Vigo

Found at the coast of north-west Spain, the cemetery of O Areal in the harbour of Vigo is a singular necropolis, dated between the 4th and 7th century. It was originally built and used by the Romans, with evidence of Visigothic usage between the end of Roman influence in Spain until the 7th century (Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 393-394). The site contains a lot of international influence in both the city and necropolis, due to Vigo functioning as an important trade city during the Roman period (Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 411-412).

Cortijo Coracho, Lucena

Cortijo Coracho (South Spain) is an archaeological site close to the city of Lucena, which consists of a basilica and a necropolis, both being predominantly used between the 4th and 8th century. The site contains a slightly complex socio-political timeline, with evidence displaying occupation and influence from Romans, Visigoths, and Byzantines alike (Diéguez Ramírez, 2015, pp. 100-124; Inskip, 2013, pp. 127-128; Ortega Ruíz et al., 2023, pp. 49-50; Ortega Ruíz et al., 2024, pp. 2-3).

The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa

The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa, found in the province of Barcelona, consists of three churches that share one large necropolis throughout the complex (see figure 5). This necropolis has been dated between the 5th and 10th century, with it being linked to both the Visigothic and Carolingian kingdom. Throughout the complex there are over 500 graves, making it one of the largest cemeteries in the database (García Llinares et al., 2003, pp. 29-39; Jordana et al., 2010, pp. 670-672; Jordana et al., 2019, pp. 3751-3752).
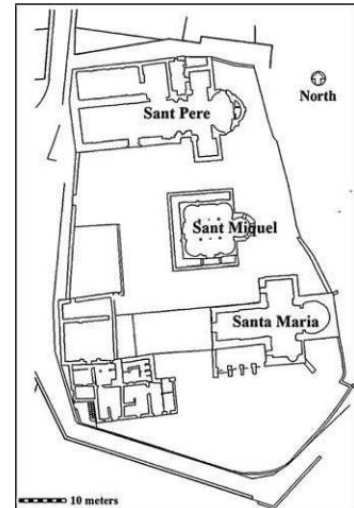
Figure 5: The current configuration of the Sant Pere Churches. Burials are located throughout the complex. The plan was made by Garcia et al. (2003). Jordana et al., 2010, p. 671, figure 1.

The necropolis of El Carpio del Tajo

The rural necropolis of El Carpio del Tajo is located 40 km near the city of Toledo, found around the middle of Spain. It consists of 285 graves, all dated between the 5th and 7th century. The site is mostly known for the large amount of rich grave goods, related to both Roman and Visigothic culture, which correlates with the general timeline of both Roman and Visigothic occupation (Ripoll, 1993, pp. 187-190; Sasse, 2000).

Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia

Excavations at Plaza de la Almoina in Valencia, a well-known city on the east coast of Spain dating back to the late Roman period, revealed the existence of two intramural cemeteries. These were built on top of each other, with the first one being a Roman cemetery, dated between 450 and 550, and the second cemetery being a predominately Visigothic cemetery, dated between the 6th and 7th century. Intramural cemeteries are rare during the late Roman period, as these were forbidden during the Roman rule in Spain. However, they became legal after the fall of the Roman empire, due to it being a common occurrence in within Christianity and Christian burials (Löx, 2017, pp. 142-151; Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, p. 163; Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, pp. 165-175).

The necropolis of Boadilla, Illescas

The necropolis of Boadilla, currently located in the city of Illescas, was a cemetery found 700 m away from the village of Alameda del Señorío, located between Madrid and Toledo. 181 graves were uncovered, which were dated between the 5th and 8th century. The burials have been mostly related to the Visigoths, with the graves dated around the 8th century having an unknown related socio-political unit or culture (Catalán Ramos & Rojas Rodríguez-Malo, 2009, pp. 224-227; García-Collado et al., 2018, p. 3767).

Las Penas, Mortera

The Las Penas cave in Mortera is located in Cantabria, a province found in the north of Spain known for the high amount of cave sites compared to the rest of Spain. The cave contained 13 individuals, all dated between the 7th and 8th centuries. Objects found in the cave have been related to the Visigothic kingdom, which is common among the other caves found in the Cantabria province (Arias et al., 2018, p. 143; Serna Gancedo et al., 2005, pp. 247-265).

Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén

The archaeological site of Marroquíes Bajos in Jaén, located in south Spain, contains a total of seven necropolises that have been included in this thesis. The first six have been dated between the 7th and 9th centuries, with evidence displaying a Visigothic influence throughout all six necropolises (Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, pp. 277-278). The seventh necropolis known as the transitional necropolis, has a separate entry in the database, as it has been dated between the 8th and 10th century and containing evidence relating the cemetery to both the Visigothic kingdom and the Umayyad dynasty (Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, pp. 278-280). Even though all cemeteries are located in the same site, the differences in dating and culture result in different results and burial rituals. Therefore, the decision was made to create two separate entries in the database for Marroquíes Bajos. Figure 6 displays the different necropolises, in which necropolises 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are registered as Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1) in the database, and necropolis 4 as Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2).
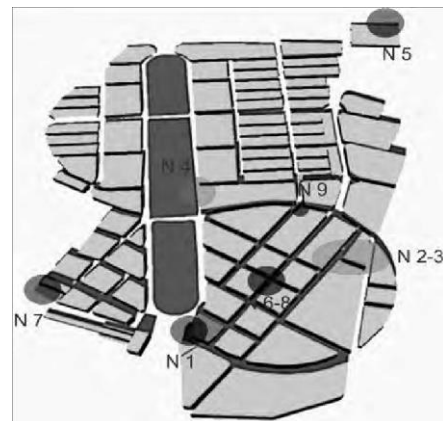
Figure 6: Site plan of the nine different necropolises found at Marroquíes Bajos. Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, p. 277, figure 2.

Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila

Las Coba is located in the mountainous area of Sierra de Ávila in central Iberia. As no excavations have taken place here yet, many aspects remain unknown. However, information discovered by intensive archaeological surveys and GIS revealed the existence of several clusters of tombs, adding up to a total of 81 individual tombs. The chronology of the site remains unclear, with only a ceramic grave good possessing a dating around the 7th century. The main hypothesis of the site is that the cemetery was used by multiple Christian communities between the 8th and 10th century (Barroca, 2021, pp. 28-30; Martín-Viso & Blanco-González, 2016, pp. 400-403). Therefore, Las Coba has been registered in the database as possessing a dating between the 7th and 10th century by combining the dating of the grave

good with the existing hypothesis. If new information is published that challenges the current chronology, the database will be changed accordingly.
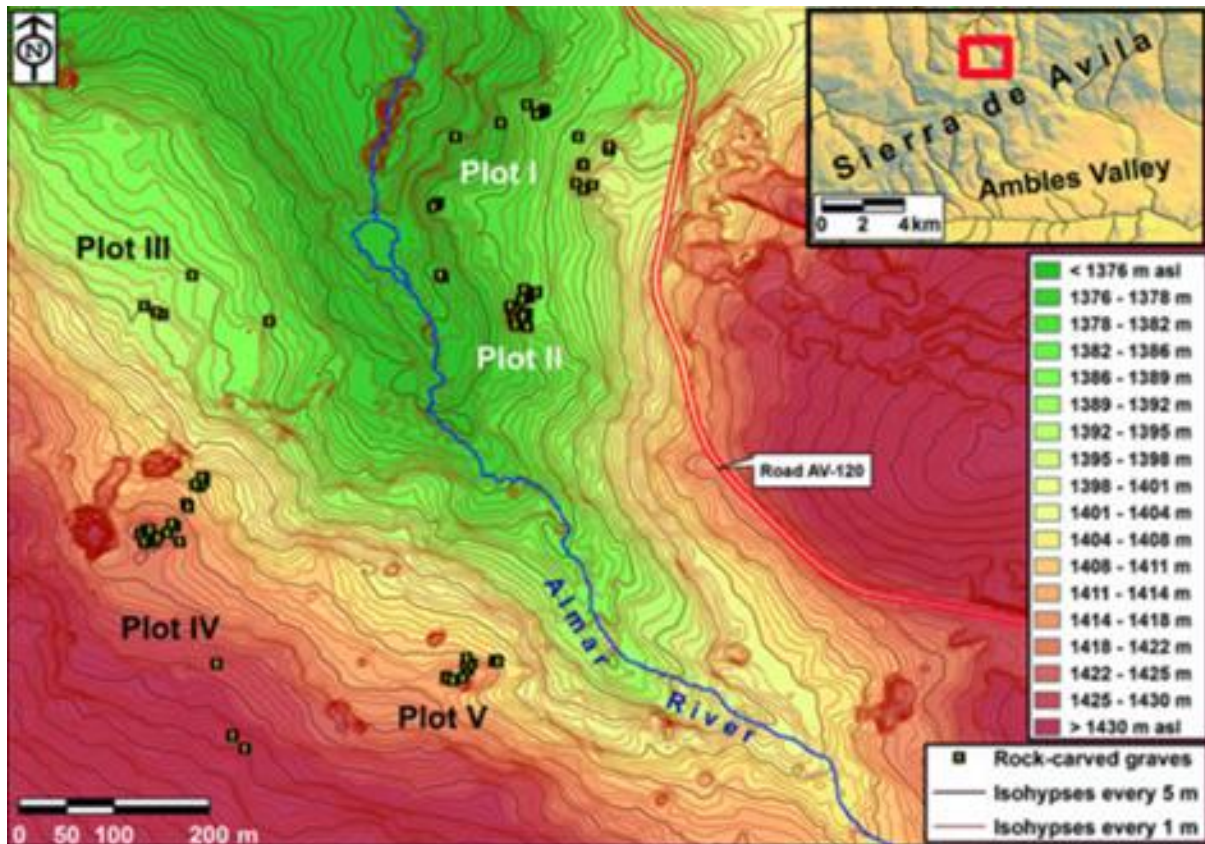
Figure 7: Site plan of Las Coba. Site consists of five clusters accounting for a total of 81 tombs. Martín-Viso & Blanco-González, 2016, p. 411, figure 7.

The Lower Gallery of La Garma

The Lower Gallery of La Garma, similarly to Las Penas, is a cave found in the province of Cantabria. Five individuals were discovered throughout different parts of the caves, which all have also been dated between the 7th and 8th century. Visigothic objects have been found surrounding the graves, similarly to what was discovered in Las Penas (Arias et al., 2018, pp. 133-143).

La Maqbara de Pamplona

La Maqbara de Pamplona is an Islamic cemetery located near the city of Pamplona in north-east Spain. It has been dated to the 8th century, with coincides with the rule of the Umayyad dynasty, and it possesses many characteristics most commonly found in Islamic cemeteries. However, certain findings have been made that go against the Islamic law, and these burial practices are not present at most other Maqâbir. These findings will be further discussed in upcoming chapters (De Miguel-Ibáñez, 2013, pp. 351-357; Muñoz et al., 2021, pp. 24-26).

La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante

Similarly to La Maqbara de Pamplona, La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises is a standard Islamic cemetery, found in the south-east of Spain. It has been dated between the 8th and 10th century. As seen in the previous maqbara, certain burial rituals and practices have been discovered that are in opposition to the Islamic law (Olcina Doménech et al., 2008, pp. 213-222)

El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija

The archaeological site of El Salon on Plaza de España in Écija is located in south Spain, and it is the largest cemetery within the database, with over 4500 graves having been discovered and registered up until this point. The cemetery has been dated between the 8th and 12th century, and similarly to the previous two cemeteries, certain findings have been made that are against the Islamic law for Islamic cemeteries (Inskip, 2013, pp. 121-124; Inskip, 2016, pp. 41-42).

Adro Vello, O Grove

Adro Vello is an archaeological site found in O Grove, Pontevedra, located in north-west Spain, containing both a Roman hillfort and Christian church. The total number of graves and individuals are unknown, due to previous research and collections being inaccessible, but information about the burial rituals gathered from previous excavations are accessible in the article by Mangas-Carrasco and colleagues (2022), in which they also uncovered and discussed 14 more individuals. These have been dated between the 10th and 12th centuries, which will display the burial rituals of the Christians from the Galicia and León kingdoms, which were in power during this period in Pontevedra. The period this site has been dated to is outside of the period I will be studying. However, this is done on purpose to illustrate the burial rituals that existed at the end of the studied period. Only artefacts and individuals with a dating between the 10th and early 11th century will be used for this particular site. (Carro Otero, 1971, 1989 & 1991, as cited in Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, pp. 474-475).

As all archaeological sites have been presented, the next chapter will move towards analysing and documenting all cemeteries and burial rituals itself, in terms of general burial rituals and the aforementioned four funerary aspects.

Site	Province	Region	Period	Type of cemetery	Number of cemeteries
O Areal, Vigo	Pontevedra	North-West Spain	4th-7th century	Necropolis	1
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	Córdoba	South Spain	5th-8th century	Necropolis	1
Church complex, Sant Pere de Terrassa	Barcelona	North-East Spain	5th-10th century	Necropolis	1
The necropolis of El Carpio de Tajo	Toledo	Middle Spain	Late 5th- late 6th century	Necropolis	1
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Valencia	East Spain	Late 5th-7th century	Intramural cemetery	2
The necropolis of Boadilla, Illescas	Madrid / Toledo	Middle Spain	Late 5th-early 8th century	Necropolis	1
Las Penas, Mortera	Cantabria	North Spain	7th-8th century	Cave cemetery	1
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	Jaén	South Spain	7th-9th century	Necropolis	6
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	Ávila	Middle Spain	7th-10th century	Necropolis	1
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Cantabria	North Spain	Late 7th- early 8th century	Cave cemetery	1
La Maqbara de Pamplona	Navarra	North-East Spain	8th century	Maqbara	1
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	Alicante	South-East Spain	8th-10th century	Maqbara	1
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	Sevilla	South Spain	8th-12th century	Maqbara	1
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Jaén	South Spain	Late 8th-early 10th century	Necropolis	1
Adro Vello, O Grove	Pontevedra	North-West Spain	10th-12th century	Necropolis	1

Table 1: Overview of the selected archaeological sites, including chronology and number of cemeteries.
Table: Milan Gijben

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, I will discuss the observations I identified within the dataset. Each sub-chapter will briefly cover a separate aspect of the database, in which each site will be mentioned, and their respective funerary aspects will be described. Further connections and interpretations made regarding the socio-political landscape will be made in the discussion chapter (see chapter 5). Chapter 4.1 will cover the general patterns found within the 15 entries of the database. Chapter 4.2 till chapter 4.5 will all describe the observations and patterns surrounding the four funerary aspects, being grave goods, location in the wider landscape, body position, and grave furniture, in that order.

Chapter 4.1: General observations

In this chapter, six general burial aspects and their patterns within the database will be discussed, which includes cremation and inhumation, burial typology, single and collective graves, skeletal manipulation, shrouds, or other forms of covering a body, and the reuse of burials. See Appendix 2 to see the total overview of all the information covered in this particular chapter.

Inhumation and cremation

Inhumation is the most common method of burial of the entire database, with every cemetery containing either only or predominantly inhumation graves. Cremation is present at three sites, being O Areal, Cortijo Coracho, and Plaza de la Almoina. These cremation graves have been related to the Roman empire, with all being dated around the 4th and 5th centuries (Acunã Piñeiro, 1995–96, as cited in Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 395-397; Diéguez, 2015, pp. 82-83, 97, as cited in Ortega Ruíz et al., 2023, p. 54; Löx, 2017, p. 144; Pérez Losada, 2002, as cited in Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 395-397). There are no cremation graves present within the dataset after the 5th century.

Burial typology

The burial typology varied a lot in the database, as seen in table 2. Five different categories were created, which depended on which burial types were present at the archaeological sites and how these burials were described in the literature. The most common type of burial would be used within the database to categorize the burial typology of a particular site. The five categories includes 1) earth-cut graves, being graves cut in the ground in a particular shape

Figure 8: Earth-cut graves found at Cortijo Coracho, Lucena. Photograph by Patrimonio Cultural Lucena. Ortega Ruíz et al., 2023, p. 49, figure 5.

(see figure 8), 2) simple pit burials, which are visually similar to earth-cut graves but are generally slightly deeper and are more often not shaped in a particular form, as seen in figure 9, 3) tombs, a

deliberately constructed enclosed burial space, 4) laid on the floor, which is used for cave burials only in the dataset, and 5) varied, which is used if there is no dominate burial typology or many types of burials were present at the site. As mentioned before, these terms are used depending on the dominate term used in the primary and secondary sources.

The database displays that more complex types of burials, in terms of construction (i.e. tombs), and variations in burial typology, are more common up until the late 7th and 8th century. Earth-cut graves and simple pit burials, which are generally easier to construct, become more common in the dataset after the 8th century, which

Figure 9: Simple pit burial found at La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante. Adapted from Olcina Doménech et al., 2008, p. 219, figure 7.

also applies to the decrease in varied burial typology. The only cemetery containing several different types of burials after the 8th century is the transition cemetery of Marroquíes Bajos (referred in the database as Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)) (Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, pp. 278-280).

Site	Period	Burial typology
O Areal, Vigo	4th-7th century	Varied
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	5th-7th century	Earth-cut graves
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	5th-10th century	Varied
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Late 5th- early 7th century	Tombs
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Late 5th-7th century	Tombs
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Late 5th-early 8th century	Simple pit burials
Las Penas, Mortera	7th-8th century	Laid on the floor
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	7th-9th century	Varied
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	7th-10th century	Tombs
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Late 7th- early 8th century	Laid on the floor
La Maqbara de Pamplona	8th century	Simple pit burials
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	8th-10th century	Simple pit burials
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	8th-12th century	Earth-cut graves
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Late 8th-early 10th century	Varied
Adro Vello, O Grove	10th-12th century	Earth-cut graves

Table 2: Overview of the burial typology within the dataset. Table: Milan Gijben

Single and collective graves

Single graves are the standard within the dataset, as single graves are present and outnumber collective graves in almost every cemetery. Collective graves are also common, but only between the 5th and 7th centuries. In these cemeteries there were certain graves that contained multiple individuals, but the majority mostly consisted of single graves, except in Plaza de la Almoina. This site displays a transformation, as it changed from the standard of single graves during the late Roman period, towards collective graves becoming the standard in the post-Roman period (Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, p. 181). Starting at the 7th and 8th century, collective graves are barely present in the

dataset, with the last cemetery containing these graves being La Maqbara de Pamplona, where they found 175 individuals in 170 graves, which means at least one collective grave was present. (Faro Carballa et al., 2007b, p. 109, as cited in De Miguel-Ibáñez, 2013, p. 356).

Skeletal manipulation

For this thesis, skeletal manipulation will be defined as the following: *The deliberate postmortem disarticulation or destruction of one or several bones in inhumation graves performed by humans.* Cremation graves are excluded, as this process does not entail the deliberate change to a particular part of the skeleton. Humans have to be the main cause for the skeletal manipulation, meaning only anthropogenic taphonomic processes will be considered, meaning skeletal manipulation is only considered if it is directly caused by humans (Ortega Ruíz et al., 2023, p. 53). With this explained,

Figure 10: Skeletal manipulation found in La Garma. Skull is destroyed and several bones are deliberately disarticulated. Arias et al., 2018, p. 138, figure 8.7.

there is no trend or pattern within the 14 archaeological sites surrounding any form of skeletal manipulation. Only four sites contain any evidence for postmortem anthropogenic taphonomy. The two rural cave sites, La Garma and Las Penas, both contain evidence for disarticulation of several bones and the deliberate destruction of the skulls and upper part of the torso (see figure 10), with Las Penas even containing evidence for deliberately burning the skulls (Arias et al., 2018, p. 139; Serna Gancedo et al., 2005, p. 247). The other two sites, the church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa and Plaza de la Almoina, contain multiple individuals possessing disarticulated bones, most likely due to deliberate human interference (Jordana et al., 2010, p. 684; Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, pp. 171-172, 182-183) As these sites are very different from each other, and exist at different moments throughout the early medieval period, the only observation that can be made is the lack of skeletal manipulation from the 8th century onwards as it is currently known.

Shrouds and clothes

A (burial) shroud is a cloth used with the sole purpose of covering a deceased individual. Clothes can also be used, but these are sometimes confused as being grave goods. Four of the 14 archaeological sites contain evidence for shrouds or clothes used to cover an individual. Shrouds were discovered at three sites, being Plaza de la Almoina (Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, pp. 166, 171, 183), and two of the four Islamic cemeteries, in this case being La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises (Olcina Doménech et al., 2008, pp. 217-222), and El Salon on Plaza de España (Inskip, 2013, pp. 124, 436). A slight increase in the use of shrouds can therefore be observed starting at the 8th century, as the Islamic

cemeteries are dated from the 8th century onwards. Clothes covering certain deceased individuals were found at only one site being La Garma (Arias et al., 2018, pp. 139, 143). Therefore, as clothes were only used once for this purpose, no pattern or trend has been observed within the dataset.

Reuse

Reuse of individual graves means evidence has been discovered that suggests a burial was reponed or used, while already being occupied by one or multiple individuals. This process is an often occurrence in the dataset, as 9 of the 14 archaeological sites contain evidence of reuse of certain graves. There is no real change of patterns of reused burials overtime, as it remains common from the late Roman period onwards. Only the two cave sites, both entries of Marroquíes Bajos, and La Maqbara de Pamplona display no evidence of reuse in any form. The necropolis of Boadilla contained the most reused graves, as 16 % of, the in total, 181 graves were reused (García-Collado et al., 2018, p. 3767). At certain sites single graves were reused without removing the previous deceased individuals, resulting in collective graves being created. This occurred in both Plaza de la Almoina and Adro Vello (Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, p. 488; Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, pp. 171-188). Archaeologists at Adro Vello discovered not only the reuse of the graveyard surface, but also signs of the surrounding structures being reused overtime (Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, p. 488).

Overall, these five general burial practices display a lot of variety and change between the late Roman and end of the early medieval period. These results and patterns will be further discussed in and interpreted in the discussion chapter (see chapter 5). The next chapter will uncover the different grave goods present in the dataset.

Chapter 4.2: Grave goods

Before I start to discuss the varied number of grave goods, it is important to briefly define what qualifies as a grave good, as the term is very ambiguous within archaeology (i.e. Cooper et al., 2020, pp. 135-138). For this thesis, materials that are found and associated with the buried individual will be qualified as grave goods. Exceptions arise when the literature explicitly denies or states otherwise. This material will then be excluded from the database for the purposes of this thesis.

The grave goods are categorized in two different ways within the database. First, the question 'Are grave goods present in the site' is registered with either yes or no. Secondly, the amount of grave goods is categorized into three groups, being none, some, or many grave goods. This depends on what is mentioned in the reports and articles, and the variation of the grave goods themselves. Table 3 displays both categories for each of the 15 database entries. Table 3 displays that 10 of the 15 database entries contain at least some grave goods, with the exceptions being both entries of Marroquíes Bajos, the

church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa, La Maqbara de Pamplona, and La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises (Castillo Armenteros, 2011, pp. 277-280; De Miguel-Ibáñez, 2013; pp. 351-352; Olcina Doménech, 2008, p. 217). I will focus on the archaeological sites that contain grave goods, by discussing the different kinds of grave goods and the overall assemblages found in certain burials.

Starting with the burials categorized as possessing some grave goods. These sites do not contain entire assemblages, as these grave goods are few and far between as single utilitarian items. This group consists of five cemeteries, which can be split into two different groups. The first group consists of two sites, being El Salon on Plaza de España and Adro Vello. All three sites contain burials with grave goods, but the amount is very limited, and generally more fragmented compared to the other sites in the dataset. For example, Adro Vello only contains organics, particularly seashells, and ceramic and metallic fragments (Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, pp. 474-475), and the maqbara at Plaza de España only contained some jewellery (Romos Sales, n.d., as cited in Inskip, 2013, p. 124). The other three sites are Cortijo Coracho, Las Coba, and La Garma, as all three sites contained more in both amount and variety, compared to the previous two sites. Some ceramic vessels, jewellery, coins, and lamps were discovered at Cortijo Coracho (Diéguez Ramírez, 2011, as cited in Inskip, 2013, p. 127), while ceramic vessels, jewellery, and beads were found at Las Coba (Barroca, 2021, pp. 28-31). La Garma is slightly different, as it does not contain any ceramics or jewellery in close proximity to the burials. However, similarly to Adro Vello, it does possess some organic material, charcoal in this instance, and a Visigothic lyre-shaped belt buckle (see figure 11), which was most likely part of the clothing of one of the individuals (Arias et al., 2018, p. 140).

Site	Period	Grave goods present?	Amount of grave goods
O Areal, Vigo	4th-7th century	Yes	Many
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	5th-7th century	Yes	Some
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	5th-10th century	No	None
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Late 5th- early 7th century	Yes	Many
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Late 5th-7th century	Yes	Many
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Late 5th-early 8th century	Yes	Many
Las Penas, Mortera	7th-8th century	Yes	Many
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	7th-9th century	No	None
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	7th-10th century	Yes	Some
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Late 7th- early 8th century	Yes	Some
La Maqbara de Pamplona	8th century	No	None
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	8th-10th century	No	None
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	8th-12th century	Yes	Some
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Late 8th-early 10th century	No	None
Adro Vello, O Grove	10th-12th century	Yes	Some

Table 3: Overview of the presence and amount of grave goods within the dataset. Table: Milan Gijben.

Five archaeological sites are categorized as possessing a high amount of grave goods. Starting with O Areal, the grave goods that have been discovered are very diverse in nature, due to the Roman harbour of Vigo, causing many foreign trade goods to enter Spain. These objects were traded, but also used and found in the funerary areas of Vigo. The items are mostly utilitarian glass and ceramic objects, including vessels, containers, beads, bottles, rings, etc., as seen in figure 12 (Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 403-404, 411-412). The necropolis of El Carpio de Tajo possesses a high amount of metal objects and jewellery, which includes coins, beads, belt buckles, brooches, fibulas, and necklaces, made from, among other things, bronze, silver, and copper. These items have been found in multiple different types and shapes, but these utilitarian assemblages all have either Roman or Visigothic origins, with some objects baring a cross symbol (Ripoll, 1993, pp. 23-27). Plaza de la Almoina contains an interesting change in the presence of grave goods. During the late Roman period there was an absence in grave goods, which transitions towards a large presence of grave goods in the collective graves during the post-Roman period. Ceramics, glass, clothing, and jewellery (i.e. silver rings), all have been found and labelled as graved goods (Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, pp. 162-168, 179-186). 49 individuals in Boadilla were accompanied by a diverse variety of grave goods. These grave goods include clothing items, such as fibulas, belt buckles, rings, and earrings, containers, being pottery bottles, and tools, which included knives, an arrowhead, a pair of tweezers, cosmetic brush, and some flint artefacts. This is cemetery contains one of the most elaborate assemblages, as weapons, tools, and clothing are all found with each other (Catalán Ramos & Rojas Rodríguez-Malo, 2009, pp. 226-233; García-Collado et al., 2018, p. 3767). Lastly, the only cave site that contains a large amount and

Figure 11: A Visigothic lyriform belt buckle found in Zone IV in La Garma. Arias et al., 2018, p. 140, figure 8.10.

Figure 12: Grave goods found in grave 10 from O Areal, Vigo. Top: Two ceramic vessels. Middle: Glass ring and beads. Bottom: Necklace made from glass beads. Source: Colección do Museo Municipal de Vigo ''Quinõnes de León''. Fotografiá: Nando Iglesias. Adapted from Valle Abad et al., 2020, p. 404, figure 9.

variety of grave goods, Las Penas possesses ceramic pots, organic material, being various carbonised cereal grains, belt-buckles, a battle axe, beads, wooden cauldrons, and tools, such as a fire striker and spindles. These grave goods are of similar nature compared to those found at La Garma, as many similar objects are found, and both share a Visigothic and Chrisitan origin (Serna et al., 2005, pp. 248-269, as cited in Arias et al., 2018, p. 143).

The assemblages of these cemeteries constitute towards utilitarian and full-clothing burials, in case of the burials with many grave goods. The cemeteries containing some grave goods are mostly utilitarian in nature, with some clothing accessories, indicating full clothing assemblage burials. More importantly, the overall presence in grave goods displays a clear transformation throughout the early medieval period, as almost every cemetery dated between the 4th and 8th century, do possess many grave goods. However, the amount of grave goods presents in cemeteries started to decline after the 7th and 8th century, with only a few burials containing less diverse and low value objects, and an increase in fragmented artefacts, indicating a clear change in both variety and presence.

As all grave goods have been presented, I will now turn my attention towards the location of the 14 archaeological sites and 21 cemeteries in the wider location within early medieval mainland Spain.

Chapter 4.3: Location

This chapter will focus on three geographical aspects, which could explain the location of one or several cemeteries within a particular site. First, I will shortly mention the general landscape of each site, followed up by discussing any architectural marker that is in close proximity to the site and/or cemetery, and I will end with mentioning which sites possess a pre-existing cemetery.

Table 4 displays the general landscape of each of the 15 database entries, based on two overlapping categories: 1) The landscape surrounding the cemetery, and 2) Is the site located in an urban or rural environment? In certain cases, particularly for the church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa, La Maqbara de Pamplona, and El Salon on Plaza de España, the primary landscape is registered as urban, meaning both categories contain the same result (De Miguel-Ibáñez, 2013, p. 351; Inskip, 2013, p. 121; Jordana et al., 2019, p. 3752) As for the other sites, the general landscape is different, with the remaining categories including coastal (four entries), agricultural (two entries), mountainous (four entries), and cave (two entries). As table 4 displays, the general landscape is very varied, with no particular pattern being visible throughout time. However, the urban and rural environments do display a pattern, with a higher number of urban environments being dated between the 4th and early 7th centuries, with an increase of rural environment being dated between the 7th and 8th centuries, after which the urban environments are more common again in the dataset between the 8th and 10th centuries.

Site	Period	Landscape	Urban or rural?
O Areal, Vigo	4th-7th century	Coastal	Urban
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	5th-7th century	Agricultural	Urban
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	5th-10th century	Urban	Urban
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Late 5th- early 7th century	Mountainous	Rural
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Late 5th-7th century	Coastal	Urban
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Late 5th-early 8th century	Agricultural	Rural
Las Penas, Mortera	7th-8th century	Cave	Rural
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	7th-9th century	Mountainous	Urban
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	7th-10th century	Mountainous	Rural
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Late 7th- early 8th century	Cave	Rural
La Maqbara de Pamplona	8th century	Urban	Urban
La Maqbara of Tossal de Manises, Alicante	8th-10th century	Coastal	Urban
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	8th-12th century	Urban	Urban
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Late 8th-early 10th century	Mountainous	Urban
Adro Vello, O Grove	10th-12th century	Coastal	Rural

Table 4: Overview of the different landscapes and environments within the dataset. Table: Milan Gijben.

Within seven of the in total 15 database entries, an architectural structure was found. These structures range from religious buildings, such as churches, to urban structures, such as residential buildings. Only architectural markers and structures specially mentioned in the primary or secondary sources will be used, and these structures need to be built or used when the cemetery itself was being used Those built after the cemetery was no longer in use, will not be registered in the database.

Out of the eight sites that do not contain any substantial architectural structure, five are found in rural areas, including at El Carpio de Tajo (Ripoll, 1993, pp. 7-8), Boadilla (García-Collado et al., p. 3767), Las Coba (Barroca, 2021, pp. 28-31), and both cave sites, being Las Penas (Serna Gancedo et al., 2005, p. 247) and La Garma (Arias et al., 2018, p. 133). The three urban areas that currently seem to lack any architectural structures are the six cemeteries of Marroquíes Bajos, La Maqbara de Pamplona, and La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises. These eight entries are dated throughout the early medieval period, but most of them are dated between the 7th and 8th century (Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, pp. 277-278; De Miguel-Ibáñez, 2013, pp. 351-352; Olcina Doménech et al., 2008, pp. 213-214). The only rural cemetery containing any architectural structure is Adro Vello, which was located around a Christian church, dated between the Late Antiquity and the 18th century, which has been found to be in use between the 10th and 12th century (Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, pp. 471-473).

Almost every site located in an urban area is located near an architectural structure or marker, starting with the western cemetery of O Areal, known for being located in the harbour of Vigo (Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 393-394). Cortijo Coracho is known for being based around a 4th century basilica (Ortega Ruíz et al., 2023, pp. 49-50), while the cemetery of Sant Pere de Terressa and Plaza de la Almoina are

both located in or around one or several churches. The Plaza de la Almoina site also contains a possible mausoleum that was built on top of the two intramural cemeteries, as seen in figure 13 (Jordana et al., 2019, p. 3752; Löx, 2017, pp. 147, 150-153; Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, pp. 175-179). A mosque is located around a kilometre away from El Salon on Plaza de España, which will be taken into account despite the distance (Inskip, 2013, pp. 124-125). Lastly, the transitional cemetery of Marroquíes Bajos is located near several residential houses and workhouses, that were built and used between the 9th and 10th centuries (Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, pp. 278-279). A noticeable pattern is displayed here, as all of these sites were in use either around the 5th till 7th century or the 8th till 10th century.

Lastly, five of the 14 archaeological sites contain a previously used cemetery. These sites are O Areal, Marroquíes Bajos, La Garma, La Maqbara de Pamplona, and La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises. All five sites have shown to contain evidence for earlier burials or cemeteries, dated between the Palaeolithic towards the Roman period (Arias et al., 2018, p. 133; Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, pp. 275-276; De Miguel-Ibáñez, 2013, pp. 351-355; Olcina Doménech et al., 2008, p. 213; Valle Abad et al., 2020, p. 395). I will not analyse these previous cemeteries any further, as that is currently not of importance, besides stating that this phenomenon mostly occurred after the 7th and 8th century.

Figure 13: The possible mausoleum above a destroyed peristyle house in Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia. Ribera i Lacomba 2009, fig. 14.

After covering the different geographical aspects of the 14 archaeological sites, I will now zoom into the buried individuals themselves, in terms of body position and body orientation.

Chapter 4.4: Body position & body orientation

The body positions of the deceased will be covered in two parts. First, the general body position found within each entry of the database, discussing which body position is most common at each site, and how much variety is present. Secondly, the body orientation will be structured in a similar fashion, with both the most common orientation and the different variations being mentioned for each entry of the database. It is important to note however, that no information about the body position could be retrieved for two sites, being Las Penas and Las Coba. Flooding moved all the bodies and bones post-mortem in the case of Las Penas, and no information has been published for Las Coba about the individual graves and individuals themselves. Therefore, these sites will not be discussed, and 'Unknown' was automatically entered within the database for each category.

Figure 14: Drawing of a standard Islamic grave from La Maqbara de Pamplona. Individual is in the right lateral decubitus position, and oriented to face Mecca. Adapted from De Miguel-Ibáñez, 2013, p. 352, figure 1.

Table 5 displays both the variation and dominate body position for each database entry. The variation of each site is categorized into three groups; 1) Standard, as no variations were discovered, 2) little variation, as there was a standard position present, but small alterations related to the arms and legs were found in certain graves, and lastly 3) varied, as many variations or no dominate body position was discovered throughout the site.

Two body positions stand out in the dataset, as being the most common. The supine position consists of laying on your back, and in most cases, facing the sky (see figure 15). Seven entries are registered with possessing a supine position as the most common body position, with the six cemeteries of Marroquíes Bajos and Adro Vello being the only entries that are not primarily dated between the 4th and 7th centuries (Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, pp. 277-278; Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, pp. 478, 489). The little variation found at O Areal, El Carpio de Tajo, and Plaza de la Almoina is almost exclusively about the positioning of the arms, as the arms are either extended or placed on the pelvis (Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, pp. 166, 171, 182-183; Ripoll, 1993, p. 21; Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 401-403). In O Areal, one individual was found to be in the prone position, but as this was the only case, it is unknown whether this was intentional or a mistake (Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 402-403). Three sites, being the three Islamic cemeteries of La Maqbara de Pamplona, La Maqbara of Tossal de Manises, and El Salon on Plaza de España contain predominately the right lateral decubitus position, laying on the right side of the body, as seen in figure 14 (De Miguel-Ibáñez, 2013, p. 351; Inskip, 2016, p. 42; Olcina Doménech, 2008, pp. 219-221). La Garma and the transitional cemetery of Marroquíes Bajos are the only two cemeteries that do not possess a dominate body position. The body position in La Garma depends on the location within the cave, as supine, right, and left lateral decubitus position
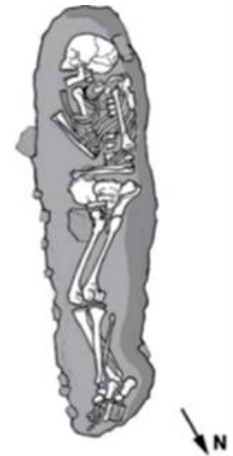
are all present in the cave (Arias et al., 2018, pp. 138-140, 143). The transitional nature of necropolis 4 in Marroquíes Bajos causes a changing body position to be present. The individuals dated to the first phase are buried in the supine position, with the right lateral decubitus position mostly occurring in the later phases of use, while both body positions are present in the middle phase (Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, pp. 278-279).

Site	Period	Standard or varied	Dominate body position
O Areal, Vigo	4th-7th century	Little variation	Supine position
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	5th-7th century	Standard	Supine position
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	5th-10th century	Standard	Supine position
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Late 5th- early 7th century	Little variation	Supine positon
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Late 5th-7th century	Little variation	Supine position
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Late 5th-early 8th century	Standard	Supine position
Las Penas, Mortera	7th-8th century	Unknown	Unknown
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	7th-9th century	Standard	Supine position
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	7th-10th century	Unknown	Unknown
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Late 7th- early 8th century	Varied	No dominate body position present
La Maqbara de Pamplona	8th century	Standard	Right lateral decubitus position
La Maqbara of Tossal de Manises, Alicante	8th-10th century	Standard	Right lateral decubitus position
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	8th-12th century	Standard	Right lateral decubitus position
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Late 8th-early 10th century	Varied	No dominate body position present
Adro Vello, O Grove	10th-12th century	Standard	Supine position

Table 5: Overview of the variations and dominate body position within the dataset. Table: Milan Gijben.

Body orientation is registered in two ways in the database. If, for example, a west-east orientation is registered, this implies the head is towards the west and the body towards the east. If only 'facing' is registered, this means only information regarding which way the face was oriented was present in the literature. Nevertheless, body orientation is similarly categorized as body position, as seen in table 6. Two body orientations are heavily present in the dataset as standard body positions in several cemeteries. This includes the west-east orientation, found predominately in Cortijo Coracho, El Carpio de Tajo, Plaza de la Almoina, Boadilla, and Adro Vello (García-Collado et al., 2018, p. 3767; Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, pp. 478, 489; Ortega Ruíz et al., 2023, p. 53; Ripoll, 1993, p. 21; Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, pp. 171, 183-184). The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa also possesses a dominant west-east orientation, while also having an around equal number of individuals being buried in a south-north orientation (see figure 15), as it depended on the axis of the closest church

how an individual was orientated (Jordana et al., 2010, p. 672). Facing east-southeast, towards Mecca (see figure 14), is the second most common body orientation in the dataset, as it can be found in La Maqbara de Pamplona and La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises (De Miguel-Ibáñez, 2013, p. 351; Olcina Doménech, 2008, pp. 219-221). The exact cardinal direction the individuals were facing at El Salon on Plaza de España is unknown, besides that almost everybody was facing Mecca (Inskip, 2013, p. 124; Inskip, 2016, p. 42). O Areal contains a variety of orientations, as east-west, southeast-north, and north-south orientations were all present, but most individuals are orientated northwest-southeast (Valle Abad et al., 2020, p. 401). Lastly, three entries in the database display no dominate body orientation, being La Garma and both entries of the Marroquíes Bajos site. The body orientation in La Garma also depends on the orientation of the cave, with individuals facing north, northeast, or south (Arias et al., 2018, pp. 138-140, 143). Orientations found within the six cemeteries of Marroquíes Bajos included northwest-southeast and east-west orientations, and the orientations found at the transitional cemetery evolved overtime from east-west to north-south and ending with a northeast-southwest orientation (Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, pp. 277-279).

Site	Period	Standard or varied	Dominate body orientation
O Areal, Vigo	4th-7th century	Varied	Northwest-southeast orientation
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	5th-7th century	Varied	East-west orientation
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	5th-10th century	Little variation	West-east or south-north orientation
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Late 5th- early 7th century	Standard	West-east orientation
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Late 5th-7th century	Standard	West-east orientation
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Late 5th-early 8th century	Standard	West-east orientation
Las Penas, Mortera	7th-8th century	Unknown	Unknown
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	7th-9th century	Varied	No dominate body orientation present
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	7th-10th century	Unknown	Unknown
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Late 7th- early 8th century	Varied	No dominate body orientation present
La Maqbara de Pamplona	8th century	Standard	Facing east-southeast
La Maqbara of Tossal de Manises, Alicante	8th-10th century	Standard	Facing east-southeast
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	8th-12th century	Standard	Unknown
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Late 8th-early 10th century	Varied	No dominate body orientation present
Adro Vello, O Grove	10th-12th century	Standard	West-east orientation

Table 6: Overview of the variations and dominate body orientations within the dataset. Table: Milan Gijben.

Figure 15: Different variations of supine body positions found in Sant Pere de Terrassa. Left: arms and legs are extended, south-north orientation. Middle: Limbs are extended and disarticulated, east-west orientation. Right: Legs are extended, hands are laid on the pelvis, east-west orientation. Jordana et al., 2019, pp. 3757, figure 2.

With the body position and body orientation of all 14 archaeological sites covered, I will start to cover the last part of the results, being the grave furniture, using the same structure seen in chapter 4.1.

Chapter 4.5: Grave furniture

Even though grave furniture is a common term within archaeology, the lack of any standard definition makes it unexpectedly complicated. For this particular thesis, grave furniture will be defined as *any kind of material associated with the grave itself or the act of burying an individual.* Grave goods are excluded using this definition, as grave goods are generally alongside the individual, and not the grave or the act of burying the individual. Almost every site contains some form of grave furniture, with only Las Penas and both entries of Marroquíes Bajos lacking or, in other words, no mention of grave furniture in their respective literature. Three specific kinds of grave furniture are registered in the database, with others being mentioned in the other forms of grave furniture column. Each section in this chapter discusses a different kind of grave furniture, which sites it was discovered in, and what materials it is made of.

Coffins

Coffins are the most common form of grave furniture in the entire dataset, as six of the 14 sites contain evidence for either wooden or stone coffins. Coffins mostly appear between the 4th and 7th century, with the exceptions being Adro Vello, where stone slab coffins were discovered (Carro Otero, 1971, p.

147, as cited in Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, p. 474), and El Salon on Plaza de España, where a small amount of evidence pointing towards the presence of coffins was discovered. This is surprising, as coffins are normally not permitted by Islamic law (Inskip, 2013, p. 124, 436). The church complex of Sant Pere de Terressa is the only other site where stone, tegulae, and mortar coffins were found, and these are only related towards the time of the Visightoic occupation of the site (García Llinares et al., 2003, pp. 31-33; Jordana et al., 2019, pp. 3752, 3760-3761). Nails and rotten wood were discovered in O Areal, Plaza de la Almoina, and Boadilla, which indicates the presence of wooden coffins (García-Collado et al., 2018, p. 3767; Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, p. 171; Valle Abad et al., 2020, p. 400). It could also indicate the presence of another wooden object used for funerary purposes, but the most likely theory remains the presence and use of wooden coffins.

Covers

For this thesis, covers are in reference to *any material, constructed or not, used to cover the grave in its entirety.* The database displays four sites that contain a cover. Plaza de la Almoina only contains stone covers, as seen in figure 16 (Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, pp. 169, 182-184), while O Areal contains covers made from stone, wood, and reused materials, in particular a millstone (Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 399-400). Covers made from slab and wood appear in La Maqbara de Pamplona

(De Miguel-Ibáñez, 2013, p. 356), and La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises contains the most variety in covers within the entire dataset. The site contains covers made from stones, reused elements, adobe (combination of earth and organic materials), wooden planks, and mounds (Olcina Doménech et al., 2008, p. 221).

Figure 16: Two Roman burials with stone covers on top. Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, p. 169, figure 4.

Tombstones

Tombstones are a common form of grave furniture all over the world, but only two sites in the dataset possessed any form or kind of tombstone. In Cortijo Coracho, archaeologists discovered several uncut, irregular rocks that functioned as tombstones (Ortega Ruíz et al., 2023, p. 50), and a guild tombstone, a flat inscribed stone standing or laid over a grave, was found in Adro Vello (Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, p. 475). No other tombstones or stones that could have functioned as tombstones were found within the dataset.

Other forms of grave furniture

The dataset contains a varied amount of grave furniture, as eight of the 14 sites possess a unique form of grave furniture. Stone decorations and structures are found within or surrounding multiple burials at several sites. O Areal, El Carpio de Tajo, and El Salon on Plaza de España all contain stone linings and decorations. Stone linings can be found in O Areal in multiple burials, as seen in figure 17 (Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 397-400). El Carpio de Tajo contains both stone and brick linings in the burials (Sasse, 2000), and El Salon on Plaza de España possesses stone, tile, and mudbricks, with the goal of avoiding grave disturbance (Inskip, 2013, pp. 124, 436). Certain graves at Adro Vello were surrounded by a few stones (Carro Otero, 1971, p. 147, as cited in Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, p. 474). while Boadilla had a variety of elaborate material surroundings the graves, including vertical stone slabs, stone walls, tegulae (flat tiles), or brick fragments (García-Collado et al., 2018, p. 3767). Similarly to Boadilla, the cemeteries of O Areal and Plaza de la Almoina, contained some complex form of grave furniture. Several wooden and stone containers were discovered in predominately cremation graves at O Areal (Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 399-400). The two intramural cemeteries in Plaza de la Almoina possessed slightly different grave furniture, with the first cemetery possessing decorative tegula and amphorae, and the second cemetery containing decorative ashlar and slabs, covered with layer of opus signinum (Ribera i Lacomba & Alapont Martín, 2006, pp. 165-173, 181-183). Lastly, two natural forms of grave furniture were discovered at La Garma and Las Coba. La Garma limestone blocks and pieces of broken of speleothem and stalagmites, which were deliberately moved towards the deceased individuals (Arias et al., 2018, pp. 139-140), and the graves found in Las Coba were deliberately located to surround naturally occurring granite outcrops (Martín-Viso & Blanco-González, 2016, p. 411).

All observations and patterns of the database have been presented, and next chapter will focus on attempting to understand and interpret these different patterns, using the socio-political landscape.

Figure 17: Sample of different stone linings found across O Areal, Vigo. Adapted from Valle Abad et al., 2020, p. 398, figure 4.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will focus on interpreting all the data that was presented in the previous chapter, with the purpose of answering the five research questions. All the data and patterns will be discussed and explained connecting several burial rituals to the aforementioned socio-political landscape (see chapter 2.2). Chapter 5.1 will cover these patterns by going through the early medieval period in chronological order, shortly presenting the burial rituals of every socio-political unit, culture, and religion found within the database (see Appendix, table 3 & 4), and comparing these to the burial practices explained in the previous chapter. Chapter 5.2 will discuss the reasons behind the transformations and continuations, in terms of the socio-political landscape and the influence it possesses on society, culture, and the burier. This will be achieved by combining existing academic research, the database, and my own knowledge and ideas about this topic.

Chapter 5.1: Burial rituals & the dataset

Starting in the late-Roman period, the dataset displays a lot of variation in burial practices. Different burial typologies, body orientations, and grave furniture are present during this time. Overarching practices include a variety of grave goods (i.e. ceramics vessels, beads), a standard supine body position, the presence of both cremation and collective graves, and the dominate presence of single inhumation graves. None of the cemeteries include any sign of skeletal manipulation or shrouds to cover the individuals.

In general, these practices coincide with Roman funeral rites found across the Roman empire. A supine north-south oriented body position and the presence of different grave goods are almost always present (Conde, 2011, p. 955; Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 105, 124), with cremation graves being the standard throughout the Roman empire, up until the end of the 3rd century, when inhumation graves became the most common form of burial (Noy, 2000, p. 30). However, differences in burial typology, type of grave goods, and grave furniture depend on differences between the individuals themselves, for example a monetary difference, which is the primary reason for both elaborate and simple graves to coexist during this period (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, p. 105). This is also observable in the dataset through the initial Roman cemeteries of O Areal and Cortijo Coracho. O Areal is generally more elaborate in burial typology and grave goods, while Cortijo Coracho is simpler, especially in burial typology, in this case being earth-cut graves (Ortega Ruíz et al., 2023, pp. 49-50; Valle Abad et al., 2020, pp. 395-400). This distinction points towards a difference in people, in terms of wealth and importance, being buried in each cemetery (see Toynbee, 1971, for a complete overview of Roman burial rituals).

It is also important to keep in mind that Roman burial rituals are not stagnant, as these have shown to evolve throughout the lifetime of the Roman empire and beyond. One such an evolution is the adaption of Christianity throughout the Roman empire. Roman burial rituals would continue as usual, as a grave goods, collective graves, and a supine body position were also present in Christian burials. However, burials would more often be located near or within churches or basilicas, and the north-south orientation found in Roman cemeteries would transition towards a standard west-east orientation (Grützner et al., 2013, pp. 199, 204; Ripoll, 1993, p. 21). Grave goods would also become less frequent, as valuable items and lamps would be replaced for personal items and clothing. New additions to grave furniture included coffins, stone linings, and mosaic decorations (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, p. 105; Sayer, 2013, p. 139). All of this is generally in line with the dataset; cemeteries start to be in or surround churches or basilicas, coffins and stone linings are utilized more often, and the east-west orientation would become the standard in early medieval mainland Spain.

The late 5th and 7th century would see the rise of classic Visigothic burial rituals, known for the large amount of varied grave goods, consisting of elaborate jewellery and metalwork, including objects such as belt buckles, fibulas, rings, and necklaces (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 139-141; see Ripoll, 1993 for examples of Visigothic grave goods). The other rites are mostly a continuation of Roman and Christian traditions and material culture, as single inhumation graves, a supine west-east oriented body position, grave furniture, and the location of cemeteries experienced little to no change within Visigothic burial practices. Lastly, reuse of burials and burial spaces was common in Visigothic cemeteries, as it was an ordinary occurrence during the post-Roman period (Berengeur, 1998, as cited in Inskip, 2013, p. 127).

The dataset displays this change from Christian and Roman burials, towards the rich, yet still Christian Visigothic burials. Single inhumation graves are still the most prevalent, with collective graves being present at almost all Visigothic sites. Grave goods, supine west-east oriented body position, reuse, and grave furniture are also all heavily present at these sites. In spite of this, a majority of Visigothic related sites are not found near or in Christian related architecture, such as churches or basilicas. Evidence for the use of shrouds in Visigothic cemeteries is lacking, while skeletal manipulation is increasingly more used during the Visigothic occupation of the Iberian Peninsula, which seems to mostly depends on the type of burial and the site itself if skeletal manipulation is present.

The Visigothic kingdom and their dominance on the Iberian Peninsula continues in the 7th and early 8th century, but in spite of this there is a noticeable difference in almost all funerary aspects within the

database, the major trend being a decrease in elaborate funerary rituals. Grave furniture and burial typology are generally less complex, as natural resources and objects are used more often, compared to the constructed tombs, coffins, and containers seen in cemeteries dated between the 4th and 7th centuries. For example, La Garma contains little grave furniture, besides limestone blocks and broken off pieces of speleothem and stalagmites, as seen in figure 18 (Arias et al., 2018, pp. 135-141). Grave goods surprisingly decline in both presence and variation during this time, with only a few Visigothic objects being found in a cemetery. Architectural structures or standardisation in body position and orientation is also very much lacking. Most of the burials that are either partially or fully dated between the 7th and 8th centuries are found in rural environments, found outside of

Figure 18: Artificial accumulation of stalagmites in La Garma. Found near one of the deceased individuals, possibly acted as grave furniture. Arias et al., 2018, p. 138, figure 8.5.

the large cities or towns. Mountainous and cave contexts are dominate within the dataset, and the database displays that these cemeteries and burials contain different or variations of standard burial rituals at the time. Regardless of this, all of these sites are still heavily related towards Visigothic culture, and contain important aspects of their burial practice, including grave goods, a dominantly supine body position, and the persistence of grave furniture in some of the cemeteries during this period.

The Islamic invasion of 711 would have a huge impact on the socio-political landscape of the Iberian Peninsula for the next few centuries. It introduced Iberia to Islamic culture and Islamic burial rituals, which would also reintroduce standard burial rituals to early medieval Spain (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 269-294). Equality is deemed very important in Islamic burial rituals, as Islamic law states that after death every person becomes equal to each other (Halevi, 2007, as cited in Inskip, 2013, p. 124). Therefore, all individuals are buried in the same way; bodies are buried individually on their right-side facing mecca (south-east), shrouded, limited grave furniture (i.e. mud bricks, tiles, and bricks), and without grave goods. (Inskip, 2013, p. 124; Insoll 1999, pp. 168-170, as cited in Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, p. 294). This standardisation characterises the maqâbir found across mainland Spain between the 8th and 15th century. This is also found across the dataset, as Islamic cemeteries contain limited amounts of grave goods and grave furniture, standardised body position and body orientation, and limited collective graves. However, not every cemetery contains every aspect of the Islamic law. Shrouds were not used in La Maqbara de Pamplona and the transition cemetery of Marroquíes Bajos. Disturbance, secondary disturbance, or reuse, which is strictly forbidden according to Islamic law

(Halevi, 2007, as cited in Inskip, 2013, p. 124), was found in La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises and El Salon in Plaza de España (Olcina Doménech et al., 2008, p. 219; Romo Sales, n.d., as cited in Inskip, 2013, p. 124). Both burial practices are rare to be present in a maqbara, making it even more unique that every maqbara in the database contains a irregularity, in terms of Islamic burial practice. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Christian burial rituals did not disappear after the Islamic invasion, as several Christian kingdoms and provinces remained in power in north Spain. There are not many Christian sites in the database dated between the 8th and 10th century, besides Adro Vello, but this particular site displays a continuation of mostly Christian burial practices, in terms of body position, grave furniture, and location. However, there is a lack of personal grave goods and collective graves at the site. (Mangas-Carrasco et al., 2022, pp. 471-475, 478), causing Adro Vello to show a changing Christian burial practice, compared to Christian practices found within burials dated between the 4th and 8th centuries.

As I have now compared the gathered data with the existing knowledge surrounding specific burial practices, I will move on to explaining and interpreting these transformations, continuations, and discrepancies, by focussing on the influence and impact of the socio-political landscape on the buriers of the past themselves.

Chapter 5.2: The socio-political landscape & society

As stated earlier, the socio-political landscape indirectly impacted burial rituals by influencing society, culture, and identities first. Therefore, it is important to understand these variables and their impact on burial practices, which will help answer the research questions in the next chapter. This chapter will explain the previously discussed patterns, by focussing on the people who bury the deceased and what influences their actions and practices, such as the ruling elites, the environment, and independence.

Several times throughout the early medieval period, elites, kingdoms, and empires have standardised certain burial practices throughout mainland Spain. This process is part of the larger top-down process exuded by the ones in power. This was most notable during the Roman-, Visigothic-, and Islamic periods of control, in which a combination of political and social standardisation and centralisation, across urban and rural areas alike, caused the population to adopt the imposed burial practices, creating either a partial or radical change in burial rituals. (see Álvarez-Busto & Sánchez-Pardo, 2021; Sánchez Ramos, 2019, for examples for these top-down processes in early medieval Spain). People started to conform more to standard burial practice, and people most often were buried in larger centralised cemeteries, as seen in El Carpio de Tajo and Boadilla (see figure 19). The partial change in

burial practice is mostly seen during the post-Roman period, in which the Roman and Visigothic populations started to mix together, slowly prompting a combination of burial rituals to become standardised across mainland Spain. This change was also strengthened by the increasingly important church, as it became a central place for burials and burial rituals (Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 218-224), mostly occurring in urban areas according to the database.

Figure 19: Site plan of Boadilla. Acted as a central funerary area for the rural village of Alameda del Señorío. Adapted from Catalán Ramos & Rojas Rodríguez-Malo, 2009, p. 225, figure 1.

The radical change in burial practices is noticeable during the Umayyad and Almohad dynasties, as the Islamic invasion almost entirely replaced the Christian and Visigothic burial rituals, as it transformed towards standard Islamic burial practices. Existing Christian necropolises were used and transformed in standard maqâbir. However, the data still points towards a form of population admixture or resilience towards the Muslim invaders, and respect towards other religions and cultures. First, the transitional cemetery of slowly changes burial rituals, with the phases dated right after the Islamic invasion possessing both Christian and Islamic burial rituals. This indicates a slow transition and admixture of Christian and Islamic populations, while also displaying the tolerance Muslims had towards other cultures and religions, as these groups could still practice their beliefs at the start of the reign of the Umayyad dynasty (Castillo Armenteros et al., 2011, pp. 277-279). Second, each Maqbara in the dataset contains certain burial practices that do not align with the Islamic law (i.e. secondary deposits, lack of shrouds). This could indicate a similar process as seen in the transition cemetery of Marroquíes Bajos, slowly mixing Christian and Islamic populations, thence creating a mixture of burial practices. It could also indicate signs of resilience from existing local Christian and Visigothic communities, by burying the deceased using certain aspects of Christian burial practices, such as not utilizing a shroud to cover the deceased. In short, the top-down processes in urban environments resulted in burial rituals slowly changing overtime, as a result of admixture of populations and small signs of resilience. Yet, urban environments are not the only place receptive towards change.

As previously explained, the 7th and 8th centuries in the dataset contain multiple rural sites, which utilize elements from Visigothic burial rituals, while also possessing site-specific irregularities. These discrepancies are the result of the surrounding environment and the existing practices and cultures of rural populations. The environment can have a large impact on burial rituals, as seen in La Garma, in which the body orientations of the deceased depend on the location within the cave itself (Arias et al.,
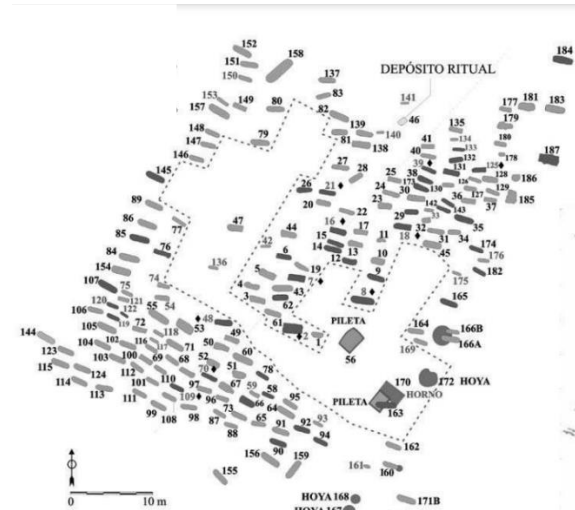
2018, pp. 138-140, 143) Nevertheless, the presence of Visigothic burial elements (i.e. Visigothic grave goods, supine body position) are an example of the existing top-down processes of the ruling elites. Christian and Visigothic elements are present at these sites to the extent the environment and local beliefs allow them to be. However, these sites are located in rural and secluded areas, such as mountains or caves, away from centralized burial areas (see figure 20). These secluded areas would allow individuals to practice their own rituals (i.e. manipulating skeletal remains, utilizing unique grave furniture), which were against the popular and standard burial rituals of the time. These rural burials are created by communities having to isolate themselves in order
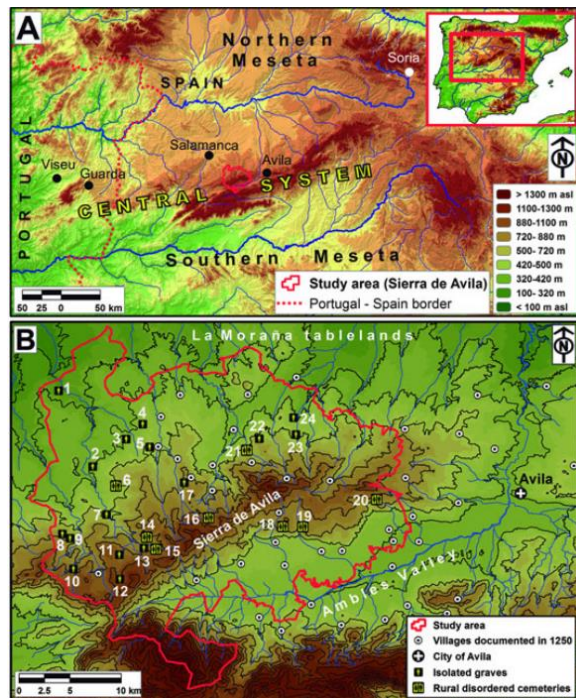
Figure 20: Example of a mountainous area within Iberia containing several funerary areas, including Las Coba. A: Central system. B: Sierra de Avilla. Martín-Viso & Blanco-González, 2016, p. 411, figure 7.

to avoid the top-down processes of the elites and kingdoms that were actively standardizing burial practices across mainland Spain (Arias et al., 2018, p. 149; Martínez Jiménez et al., 2017, pp. 224-225).

Lastly, I will shortly discuss Adro Vello, as the site is dated at the end of the early medieval period, while also acting as a good example for everything included in this chapter. First, Christian burial rituals continued after the Islamic invasion, as Christian kingdoms continued to exist in north Spain. But in spite of this, certain aspects of Christian burial practices found at Adro Vello, such as the lack of personal grave goods and collective graves are different compared to other Christian cemeteries found in the dataset. The top-down process continued, strengthening centralisation and standardisation, resulting in Christianity and Christian traditions being maintained in north Spain (Álvarez-Busto & Sánchez-Pardo, 2021, pp. 21-22). New Christian kingdoms and cultures would be formed around this time, which would inadvertently give rise to admixtures of populations, thence resulting in admixtures of burial rituals being formed. Second, Adro Vello is located in a rural and slightly isolated setting, which, as previously discussed, could indicate signs of resilience, in the form of buriers practicing their own beliefs and traditions. All of this resulted in Adro Vello containing a unique set of burial rituals, most likely caused by a multitude of factors, all tying back to the socio-political landscape of mainland Spain.

As, the data and patterns have been fully interpreted, I will move on to the final chapter, which consists of a brief summary, answering the research questions, and suggesting future research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research has analysed the transformation of burial rituals that occurred during the early medieval period in mainland Spain. The dataset, consisting of the 14 selected archaeological sites, displayed different levels of change for each of the four funerary aspects, which has been linked to the complex socio-political landscape. This final chapter will conclude my thesis, by answering the research questions. Chapter 6.1 will focus on the research itself, seeking issues and possible improvements for future research. Chapter 6.2 will summarize the results of this thesis, answer all the research questions, and give recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6.1: Issues & improvements

Research is never perfect. There will always be issues surrounding the methodology, interpretation, or research that could have different levels of impact on your study. Therefore, it is important to analyse your own research, and consider some points of improvements for your own, and similar studies performed in the future. This thesis in particular contains a couple 'faults' that need to be addressed, starting with the overrepresentation that is present within the database. The selection process was done with the goal of minimizing any over- or underrepresentation, in terms of location and dating. However, Visigothic and Christian related-sites are both overrepresented in the database, as nine of the 15 entries contain Visigothic-related evidence, and 12 of the 15 contain Christian-related evidence, which is by far the most compared to other socio-political units and religions. The overrepresentation did not negatively impact the thesis by a lot, but a more balanced selection would give more balanced results and strengthen the entire thesis.

Even though large parts of mainland Spain were represented, it remains a large research area. Many regions and provinces of Spain contain their own history and traditions, which could not be covered in this thesis. I was not able to cover large areas of mainland Spain, as I could not locate cemeteries containing the necessary funerary data during the desk-based research phase, while certain regions are represented by several archaeological sites (i.e. Cantabria, south Spain), meaning mainland Spain was not fairly represented in its entirety. For future research, the selection process needs to be done carefully, with every criterion being covered equally, to ensure the results are representative of your research area.

Lastly, the socio-political landscape of mainland Spain is very complex, but also not known to its entirety. The extent of certain kingdoms and provinces are not fully known or understand. Currently, there are only a few existing maps for each century, and all of them contain different borders and information, making it very difficult to know whether a specific region was occupied by which political unit. The socio-political overview maps I created were based on all publicly known maps, as I wanted

to be as correct and detailed as I could be, which was only possible by creating my own maps. However, it is important to understand that these maps are still not entirely accurate, as the information used to create these maps are most likely not fully correct and accurate. It is also impossible to fully cover the socio-political landscape of early medieval Spain in such a thesis. Local, regional, and even larger powers were not covered to the extent needed properly answer the research questions. Therefore, possible explanations or reasons behind certain transformations or connections were not discovered, which could have majorly influenced the results of this research.

Chapter 6.2: Conclusions & recommendations

The complex socio-political landscape impacted Spain and its populations in different ways. Not only did different kingdoms and provinces seize control within mainland Spain, inadvertently changing traditions and material culture for possible centuries, but the introduction of monotheistic religions, in this case referring to both Christianity and Islam, impacted the early medieval period immensely. The database points towards a strong correlational relationship between burial rituals found within mainland Spain and both parts that make up the socio-political climate. The burial practices in question continued or transformed as a result of people being influenced by the elites, kingdoms, and empires in power in three different ways. First, the effective top-down processes resulting in new burial rituals being introduced, standardized, and practiced throughout mainland Spain. Second, the admixture of populations, resulting in burial rituals combining into different burial practices, differentiating sites, cemeteries, and even burials from each other. Third, rural population trying to resist these processes by trying to practice once own unique beliefs and traditions in isolated or central burial areas alike.

These processes resulted in the constant transformation of both general burial practices and the four funerary aspects, as seen in the database (seen Appendix). These changes coincide with large socio-political changes, including the full adaption of Christianity in the Roman empire between the 4th and 5th century, the spread and rise of the Visigothic empire between the late 5th and 7th century, and the Islamic invasion of 711. This applies for the four funerary aspects, but also general burial practices, which changed according to the dominate ruler and religion at the time. However, the burier and environment also effect the burial practices, mostly seen in the rural burials of the 7th and 8th centuries.

This research was to its core a qualitative selection aimed to represent a broad variety of burial practices across the early medieval period. The goal was to display and improve the understanding change in burials rituals. An English database was therefore created, with the purpose of improving and adding burial sites and practices overtime, Future research could focus on improving this database, by adding more funerary aspects and burial practices, or adding all known early medieval burial sites of mainland Spain or the entirety of the Iberian Peninsula. This would not only be beneficial to our

understanding of burial rituals and changing burial practice, but it would also create a place where all information and knowledge surrounding early medieval Spanish burials would be stored in a simple, yet concrete overview. If this database proves to be successful, it could also be applied to other regions and countries of the world, to analyse the effects of socio-political landscapes to other kinds of burial rituals, which could be used to compare different regions to each other and gain a global understanding of different socio-political landscapes and their effect on the constantly changing burial rituals and practices around the world.

Abstract

This thesis analyses the role of the socio-political landscape for the constantly changing burial rituals of mainland Spain during the early medieval period. Mainland Spain contains a highly complex socio-political landscape, with different kingdoms, cultures, and religions entering and spreading across the urban and rural areas alike. The related burial practices of these socio-political units are all identified and well-known, but this information lacks accessibility and an overview. Therefore, a simple, yet extensive overview in the form of an open database was created for this research, with the goal of visualizing different transformations in burial rituals and practices. 14 unique archaeological sites were selected, resulting in 15 database entries. Besides general burial information and rituals, four common burial practices were used to display any change or continuation within the dataset, being grave goods, location within the wider landscape, body position, and grave furniture. I found that the dataset mostly coincides with the standard burial rituals of the related cultures and religions. Changes in the socio-political landscape, such as the introduction of monotheistic religions (i.e. Christianity, Islam), heavily coincide with large transformations in burial rituals. Almost every funerary aspect changes according to the standardized burial rituals forced upon by the elites in power, in the form of top-down processes. However, a multitude of exceptions, such as unique burial practices, were present in the dataset. These irregularities were most likely caused by either an admixture of populations, causing burials to combine into different separate burial practices, or rural populations resisting both top-down processes and the admixture of populations, by practicing local beliefs and traditions in mostly isolated burial areas. The effect of the environment on burial rituals is also an important factor, as certain unique burial practices were the sole result of the buriers adapting to specific environments. Thus, this thesis has shown the influence of the socio-political landscape on burial practices, resulting in change, continuation, and irregularities to occur, while also providing a database that can be expanded in the future by adding more sites and funerary aspects, which will increase in accessibility of this information to researchers and the public alike.

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Appendix: Database

Site	Province	Region	Period
O Areal, Vigo	Pontevedra	North-West Spain	4th-7th century
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	Córdoba	South Spain	5th-8th century
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	Barcelona	North-East Spain	5th-10th century
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Toledo	Middle Spain	Late 5th- early 7th century
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Valencia	East Spain	late 5th-7th century
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Madrid / Toledo	Middle Spain	Late 5th-early 8th century
Las Penas, Mortera	Cantabria	North Spain	7th-8th century
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	Jaén	South Spain	7th-9th century
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	Ávila	Middle Spain	7th-10th century
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Cantabria	North Spain	Late 7th- early 8th century
La Maqbara de Pamplona	Navarra	North-East Spain	8th century
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	Alicante	South-East Spain	8th-10th century
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	Sevilla	South Spain	8th-12th century
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Jaén	South Spain	Late 8th-early 10th century
Adro Vello, O Grove	Pontevedra	North-West Spain	10th-12th century

Appendix table 1: General information of the 14 archaeological sites.

Site	Type of cemetery	Number of cemeteries	Burial typology	Inhumation present?	Cremation present?	Number of graves	Number of individuals	Single graves present?	Collective graves present?	Evidence for skeletal manipulation?	Evidence for covering with shrouds/clothing?	Evidence for reuse?
O Areal, Vigo	Necropolis	1	Varied	Yes	Yes	75	Unknown	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	Necropolis	1	Earth-cut graves	Yes	Yes	276	397	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	Necropolis	1	Varied	Yes	No	>500	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Necropolis	1	Tombs	Yes	No	275	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	No	No	Yes
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Intramural cemetery	2	Tombs	Yes	Yes	>60	>60	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Necropolis	1	Simple pit burials	Yes	No	181	226	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Las Penas, Mortera	Cave cemetery	1	Laid on the floor	Yes	No	13	13	Yes	Unknown	Yes	No	No

Site	Type	No.	Burial form									
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	Necropolis	6	Varied	Yes	No	>77	>77	Yes	No	No	No	No
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	Necropolis	1	Tombs	Yes	No	81	Unknown	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Cave cemetery	1	Laid on the floor	Yes	No	5	5	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
La Maqbara de Pamplona	Maqbara	1	Simple pit burials	Yes	No	170	175	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	Maqbara	1	Simple pit burials	Yes	No	>108	>108	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	Maqbara	1	Earth-cut graves	Yes	No	4500	4500	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Necropolis	1	Varied	Yes	No	493	493	Yes	No	No	No	No
Adro Vello, O Grove	Necropolis	1	Earth-cut graves	Yes	No	Unknown	>14	Yes	No	No	No	Yes

Appendix table 2: General burial and cemetery data of the 14 archaeological sites.

Site	Period	300 - 400	400 - 500	500 - 600	600 - 700	700 - 800	800 - 900	900 - 1000	1000-1100	1100-1200
O Areal, Vigo	4th-7th century	Roman	Roman	Roman	Roman					
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	5th-7th century		Roman	Visigothic & Byzantine	Visigothic	Visigothic				
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	5th-10th century		Visigothic	Visigothic	Visigothic	Visigothic	Carolingian	Carolingian		
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Late 5th-early 7th century		Roman & Visigothic	Visigothic	Visigothic					
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Late 5th-7th century		Roman	Visigothic	Visigothic					
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Late 5th-early 8th century		Visigothic	Visigothic	Visigothic	Unknown				
Las Penas, Mortera	7th-8th century				Visigothic	Visigothic				
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	7th-9th century				Visigothic	Visigothic	Visigothic			
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	7th-10th century				Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown		
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Late 7th-early 8th century				Visigothic	Visigothic				

La Maqbara de Pamplona	8th century					Umayyad				
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	8th-10th century					Umayyad	Umayyad	Córdoba		
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	8th-12th century					Umayyad	Umayyad	Córdoba	Unknown	Almohad
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Late 8th-early 10th century					Visigothic	Umayyad	Córdoba		
Adro Vello, O Grove	10th-12th century							Galicia	León	León

Appendix table 3: Timeline of the different socio-political units and cultures of the 14 archaeological sites.

Site	Period	300 - 400	400 - 500	500 - 600	600 - 700	700 - 800	800 - 900	900 - 1000	1000-1100	1100-1200
O Areal, Vigo	4th-7th century	Polytheistic	Christian	Christian	Christian					
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	5th-7th century		Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian				
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	5th-10th century		Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian		
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Late 5th-eary 7th century		Christian	Christian						
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Late 5th-7th century		Christian	Christian	Christian					
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Late 5th-early 8th century		Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian				
Las Penas, Mortera	7th-8th century				Christian	Christian				
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	7th-9th century				Christian	Christian	Christian			
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	7th-10th century				Unknown	Christian	Christian	Christian		

Lower Gallery of La Garma	Late 7th-early 8th century				Christian	Christian				
La Maqbara de Pamplona	8th century					Islamic				
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	8th-10th century					Islamic	Islamic	Islamic		
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	8th-12th century					Islamic	Islamic	Islamic	Islamic	Islamic
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Late 8th-early 10th century				Christian	Islamic	Islamic			
Adro Vello, O Grove	10th-12th century							Christian	Christian	Christian

Appendix table 4: Timeline of religions of the 14 archaeological sites.

Site	Grave goods present?	Amount of grave goods	Ceramics present?	Glass present?	Organic material present?	Jewellery present?	Clothing present?	Coins present?	Other grave goods
O Areal, Vigo	Yes	Many	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Containers, glass beads and rings
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	Yes	Some	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Lamps
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	No	None	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Yes	Many	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Belt buckles, pendants, silver fibula
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Yes	Many	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Silver rings
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Yes	Many	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Containers, pair of tweezers, cosmetic brush, fibula, belt plate
Las Penas, Mortera	Yes	Many	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Belt-buckles, battle axe, wooden cauldrons, beads, fire striker.

Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	No	None	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	Yes	Some	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Ring, bead
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Yes	Some	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Lyre-shaped belt buckle, charcoal
La Maqbara de Pamplona	No	None	No	No	No	No	No	No	
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	No	None	No	No	No	No	No	No	
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	Yes	Some	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	No	None	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Adro Vello, O Grove	Yes	Some	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Metallic fragments, seashells organised as a bed

Appendix table 5: The grave good data of the 14 archaeological sites.

Site	Landscape	Urban or rural?	Architectural marker	Does the site contain a pre-existing cemetery?
O Areal, Vigo	Coastal	Urban	Harbour	Yes
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	Agricultural	Urban	Basilica	No
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	Urban	Urban	Churches (3)	No
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Mountainous	Rural	None	No
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Coastal	Urban	Church, mausoleum	No
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Agricultural	Rural	None	No
Las Penas, Mortera	Cave	Rural	None	No
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	Mountainous	Urban	None	Yes
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	Mountainous	Rural	None	No
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Cave	Rural	None	Yes
La Maqbara de Pamplona	Urban	Urban	None	Yes
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	Coastal	Urban	None	Yes
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	Urban	Urban	Mosque	No
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Mountainous	Urban	Residential houses, workhouses	Yes
Adro Vello, O Grove	Coastal	Rural	Church	No

Appendix table 6: Data relating to the location of the wider landscape of the 14 archaeological sites.

Site	Standard or varied body position	Dominate body position	Variations	Extra information	Standard or varied body orientation	Dominate body orientation	Variations	Extra information
O Areal, Vigo	Little variation	Supine position	Arms extended or on pelvis. One prone position present.		Varied	Northwest-southeast orientation	East-west, southeast-north, and north-south orientations were also present	
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	Standard	Supine position			Varied	East-west orientation	West-east and north-south orientations were also present	
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	Standard	Supine position		Arms and legs extended, feet together	Little variation	West-east or south-north orientation		Heading towards the axis of the religious buildings
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Little variation	Supine positon	Arms in various positons	Legs extended, feet together	Standard	West-east orientation		A typical Roman-Christian burial rather than the typical North-South Germanic orientation.
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Little variation	Supine position	Arms extended or on pelvis.	Legs extended	Standard	West-east orientation		

Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Standard	Supine position			Standard	West-east orientation		
Las Penas, Mortera	Unknown	Unknown		Bodies were moved post-mortem, due to flooding	Unknown	Unknown		Bodies were moved post-mortem, due to flooding
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	Standard	Supine position		Arms and legs extended	Varied	No dominate body orientation present	Northwest-southeast, east-west orientations	Orientation partially depended on the location towards the religious buildings
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	Unknown	Unknown			Unknown	Unknown		
Lower Gallery of La Garma	Varied	No dominate body position present	Supine position, right and left lateral decubitus position		Varied	No dominate body orientation present	Facing north, northeast, south	Body orientation depended on the orientation of the cave
La Maqbara de Pamplona	Standard	Right lateral decubitus position			Standard	Facing east-southeast		Facing Mecca
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	Standard	Right lateral decubitus position			Standard	Facing east-southeast		Facing Mecca
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	Standard	Right lateral decubitus position			Standard	Unknown		Facing Mecca

Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	Varied	No dominate body position present	Supine position, right lateral decubitus position		Varied	No dominate body orientation present	East-west, north-south, northeast-southwest orientations	Orientations changed overtime from Christian to Islamic orientations.
Adro Vello, O Grove	Standard	Supine position			Standard	West-east orientation		

Appendix table 7: The body position and body orientation data of the 14 archaeological sites.

Site	Grave furniture present?	Coffins present?	Covers present?	Tombstones present?	Other forms of grave furniture	Extra information
O Areal, Vigo	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Stone and wooden containers	Wooden coffins, stone and wooden covers
Cortijo Coracho, Lucena	Yes	No	No	Yes		Uncut, irregular rocks used as tombstones
The church complex of Sant Pere de Terrassa	Yes	Yes	No	No		Visigothic only, coffins built of tegulae, stone, or mortar
Necropolis El Carpio de Tajo	Yes	No	No	No	Stone linings in the burial	
Plaza de la Almoina, Valencia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Tegula and amphorae (Roman), ashlar and slabs, covered with layer of opus signinum (Visigothic)	Wooden coffins, stone covers
Necropolis Boadilla, Illescas	Yes	Yes	No	No	Vertical stone slabs, stone walls, tegulae (flat tiles), or brick fragments surrounding the burial	Wooden coffins
Las Penas, Mortera	No	No	No	No		
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (1)	No	No	No	No		
Las Coba, Sierra de Ávila	Yes	No	No	No	Granite outcrops	

Lower Gallery of La Garma	Yes	No	No	No	Limestone blocks and broken off pieces of speleothem and stalagmites	
La Maqbara de Pamplona	Yes	No	Yes	No		Slab and wooden covers
La Maqbara of the Tossal de Manises, Alicante	Yes	No	Yes	No		Covers made from stones, reused elements, adobe, wooden planks, or mounds
El Salon, Plaza de España, Écija	Yes	Yes	No	No	Stone linings, stones, tiles, and mud bricks in the burial	
Marroquíes Bajos, Jaén (2)	No	No	No	No		
Adro Vello, O Grove	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Stones surrounding the burial	Stone coffins, guild tombstone

Appendix table 8: The grave furniture data of the 14 archaeological sites.