

# Culture and Society in Medieval Galicia

*A Cultural Crossroads at the Edge of Europe*

*Edited and Translated by*

James D'Emilio



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

# Contents

Preface	IX
Acknowledgments	XXIV
List of Figures, Maps, and Tables	XXVI
Abbreviations	XXXII
List of Contributors	XXXVIII

## **PART 1: THE PARADOX OF GALICIA** *A Cultural Crossroads at the Edge of Europe*

- 1 The Paradox of Galicia  
*A Cultural Crossroads at the Edge of Europe* 3  
*James D'Emilio*

## **PART 2: THE SUEVIC KINGDOM** *Between Roman Gallaecia and Modern Myth*

- Introduction to Part 2 126
- 2 The Suevi in Gallaecia  
*An Introduction* 131  
*Michael Kulikowski*
  - 3 Gallaecia in Late Antiquity  
*The Suevic Kingdom and the Rise of Local Powers* 146  
*P. C. Díaz and Luis R. Menéndez-Bueyes*
  - 4 The Suevic Kingdom  
*Why Gallaecia?* 176  
*Fernando López Sánchez*
  - 5 The Church in the Suevic Kingdom (411–585 AD) 210  
*Purificación Ubric*

**PART 3: EARLY MEDIEVAL GALICIA***Tradition and Change*

Introduction to Part 3 246

- 6 The Aristocracy and the Monarchy in Northwest Iberia between the Eighth and the Eleventh Century 251

*Amancio Isla*

- 7 The Charter of Theodenandus

*Writing, Ecclesiastical Culture, and Monastic Reform in Tenth-Century Galicia* 281

*James D'Emilio*

- 8 From Galicia to the Rhône

*Legal Practice in Northern Spain around the Year 1000* 343

*Jeffrey A. Bowman*

**PART 4: GALICIA IN THE IBERIAN KINGDOMS***From Center to Periphery?*

Introduction to Part 4 362

- 9 The Making of Galicia in Feudal Spain (1065–1157) 367

*Ermelindo Portela*

- 10 Galicia and the Galicians in the Latin Chronicles of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries 400

*Emma Falque*

- 11 The Kingdom of Galicia and the Monarchy of Castile-León in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries 429

*Francisco Javier Pérez Rodríguez*

**PART 5: COMPOSTELA, GALICIA, AND EUROPE**  
*Galician Culture in the Age of the Pilgrimage*

- Introduction to Part 5 464
- 12 **St. James in Galicia (c. 500–1300)**  
*Rivalries in Heaven and on Earth* 477  
*Thomas Deswarte*
- 13 **Compostela**  
*A Cultural Center from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century* 512  
*Adeline Rucquoi*
- 14 **The Tomb of St. James**  
*Coming to Terms with History and Tradition* 543  
*John Williams †*
- 15 **The European Architecture of Church Reform in Galicia**  
*The Romanesque Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela* 573  
*Henrik Karge*
- 16 **The Topography of Images in Santiago Cathedral**  
*Monks, Pilgrims, Bishops, and the Road to Paradise* 631  
*Manuel Castiñeiras*
- 17 **Dreams of Kings and Buildings**  
*Visual and Literary Culture in Galicia (1157–1230)* 695  
*Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras*
- 18 **Cistercian Scriptoria in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries**  
*A Starting Point* 765  
*Ana Suárez González*
- 19 **A Convent for *La Sabia***  
*Violante of Aragón and the Clarisas of Allariz* 812  
*Melissa R. Katz*

**PART 6: LANGUAGE AND LITERARY CULTURE*****From Latin to Galician-Portuguese***

Introduction to Part 6 838

20 Galician Before 1250 843  
*Roger Wright*21 On the Music of Galician-Portuguese Secular Lyric  
*Sources, Genres, Performance* 862  
*William D. Paden*22 Making Poetry, Making Waves  
*The Galician-Portuguese Sea Lyric* 894  
*Amélia P. Hutchinson***PART 7: MODERN GALICIA AND THE MIDDLE AGES*****Castros, Castles, and the Camino de Santiago***

Introduction to Part 7 914

23 Castles vs. Castros  
*The Middle Ages in the Construction of Galician National  
Identity* 917  
*Ramón Villares***PART 8: EPILOGUE*****Future Directions***Epilogue: Future Directions in the Study of Medieval Galicia 949  
*James D'Emilio*

Index 963

## The Suevic Kingdom

*Between Roman Gallaecia and Modern Myth*

*James D'Emilio*

The dim epoch of the fifth- and sixth-century kingdom of the Sueves has loomed large in the Galician historical imagination. Left aside in international scholarship on the turbulent transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages, this first 'kingdom of Galicia' seems an unlikely rallying point for modern nationalists. Nonetheless, Suevic rule came to represent political independence and racial difference, and the obscure kings were decked in Romantic garb by the nineteenth-century historian and novelist, Benito Vicetto. They were soon joined in the Galician symbolic landscape by Priscillian, the fourth-century bishop accused of heresy and executed by imperial order. Whatever veneration the unfortunate prelate garnered from his Galician followers was eclipsed in modern times by his celebration as a martyr for a Galician identity that some discerned in incipient form in even the bald fifth-century chronicle of Bishop Hydatius of Chaves. Neither the dour chronicler's own hostility towards Sueves and heretics alike nor the precocious orthodoxy of the Suevic king Rechiar posed any obstacle to nationalist writers keen to assemble them all beneath the banner of Galician distinctiveness.

Searching for the roots of modern nations in the ruins of the Roman Empire was common enough in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. For Galicia, however, the supposed heterodoxy of its brand of early Christianity and the separateness of the Suevic kingdom relegated it to a periphery, and the nationalist agenda downplayed the ways in which Rome and Christianity anchored the Atlantic region in a wider world. The Sueves built upon that well-established Roman and Christian heritage to consolidate the territory's internal and external contours. In fact, Suevic rule and, more generally, the fifth and sixth centuries grow in significance when seen as stages in the configuration of a region more firmly attached to Roman and sub-Roman worlds than sometimes thought.

Rather than perpetuating nationalist myths or ethnic interpretations in pursuit of the elusive Sueves, these four articles amplify the context for the Suevic kingdom chronologically, geographically, and culturally. In so doing, they restore late antique Gallaecia to longer historical narratives and larger political and cultural communities. In different ways, the authors re-evaluate its place in the late Roman Empire and the impact of Rome within the

administratively and culturally linked lands of Atlantic Iberia. By showing how the legacy of Rome and of Christian conversion was consolidated under the Sueves, they lay the groundwork for understanding the well-articulated Christian infrastructure and social hierarchies of the densely settled region in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries. Still later, medieval Christians would evoke the Suevic period to legitimize ecclesiastical arrangements.

Michael Kulikowski opens with a critical review of the evidence, suggesting that the Sueves have carried far more weight in Galician history than the scant sources can bear. Outlining Hydatius's fifth-century narrative, Kulikowski resists common tendencies to 'complete' it with speculative inference. Though guardedly optimistic about archaeological finds, he rejects their use for claims about ethnicity, and questions whether they can illuminate "specifically Suevic history." Nor is there much that is "particularly Suevic" in the valuable ecclesiastical sources of the sixth century: the *Parrochiale Suevum*, the writings of Martin of Braga, and the councils of Braga. A growing corpus of Suevic coinage, however, does allow for some refinements of Suevic political history, demonstrating how the rulers cast their relationships with the Goths and imperial authorities. By setting the Suevic kingdom and recent scholarship within the sphere of ancient Roman history, Kulikowski reminds medievalists that the Sueves inherited a centuries-old territorial configuration shaped by Roman administration and the region's indigenous cultures. Their kingdom, he concludes, "represented one phase"—though not an inconsequential one—"in a phenomenon of regional difference, not its inception."

Kulikowski's scepticism opens the door to liberating the multifaceted history of late antique Gallaecia from a futile obsession with its barbarian overlords. The next three articles position the region within a wider Roman and sub-Roman world. Pablo C. Díaz and Luis R. Menéndez-Bueyes assign a "key role" to the Suevic kingdom—particularly the 'second' kingdom of the sixth century—in the territorial configuration of Galicia, and they cite both the *Parrochiale Suevum* and an extraordinary concentration of mints as evidence of the region's well-developed civil and religious organization at the local level. At the same time, they describe a longer process in which pre-Roman social and cultural practices, Roman administration, and the complex evolution of the characteristic settlements of the region—the *castro* or hillfort and the *villa*—were crucial. Here, a wealth of recent archaeological investigation and, to be sure, shifts in modern assessments of Roman rule have encouraged scholars to posit more fluid boundaries between the indigenous *cultura castrexa* and the Roman presence, to embrace a more flexible understanding of Romanization, and to disentangle the changing social, economic, military, religious, and symbolic uses of the castros over many centuries of occupation.

Fernando López Sánchez thrusts fifth-century Gallaecia into a broader geographic framework by charting the political, military, and economic networks that integrated it with the Roman Empire. Arguing for an alternative to the “minimalist vision of the fifth-century Suevic kingdom” and rejecting its alleged irrelevance, he wrests the Suevic realm from the shadow of the Goths and Vandals, and reintegrates the Northwest into the larger political strategies of the late Roman Empire and the barbarian kings. Using the iconography of coins and teasing a narrative from spare textual sources, he credits the Suevic kings with an ambitious and purposeful strategic vision in the political struggles of the fifth century, and he highlights the pivotal place of Gallaecia on maritime routes of economic exchange and military supply between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic frontiers of the empire.

Finally, Purificación Ubric Rabaneda explores the religious life of late antique Gallaecia. Far from transporting us to a dormant backwater, Ubric paints a surprisingly familiar picture of religious ferment in a western province during the crucial years when ecclesiastical institutions and social responsibilities crystallized around the episcopacy, councils and debates defined orthodox belief and correct practice, and churchmen sought accommodations with the sub-Roman kingdoms that replaced the Western Empire. Travel, correspondence, and shared devotions bound Galician prelates to their peers in Gaul, Italy, North Africa, and the East. Wide-ranging legislation, treatises and translations on morality and asceticism, and a growing network of dioceses and rural churches belie conventional views of the embrace of Priscillianism as evidence of deviance and entrenched resistance to Roman ways. On the contrary, the impassioned responses to the ‘heresy’ mirror controversies throughout the Christian empire as the doctrines and practices of medieval orthodoxy took shape.

By turning from an inward focus on the Suevic kingdom and Galician distinctiveness to Galicia’s longer historical trajectory in the Roman world and Christendom, these opening articles encourage readers to insert the region in their own visions of late antiquity, early Christianity, and the sub-Roman societies that ushered in the Middle Ages. The studies of castros and villae which Díaz and Menéndez Bueyes synthesize or the evidence for commerce and coinage which López Sánchez analyzes exemplify a mounting record of increasingly refined archaeological investigations. These are yielding promising new insights into settlement and trade that merit a place in wider debates on the relationships between Rome and indigenous societies, the dynamic culture of the Roman provinces, the persistence of the infrastructure of Roman rule, and the creation of the early medieval landscape. Here, recent studies by Fermín Pérez Losada, Jorge López Quiroga, Robert Portass, and José Carlos



Sánchez Pardo illustrate the advances taking place. The diverse texts that Ubric reviews enhance our understanding of Christianization throughout the sub-Roman world and the formation of the institutions, practices, and precepts of medieval Christianity. This interesting corpus invites more studies—like those of Virginia Burrus on the Priscillianist controversy, Maribel Dietz on ascetic travel, or the forthcoming volume on Hydatius's chronicle by Richard W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski—which demonstrate the relevance of this cultural and religious legacy to students of late antiquity and early Christianity.

Of course, it may simply be that European integration, globalization, and the weakening grip of the nation-state have altered contemporary perspectives on regional cultures. Surely, our vision of the past addresses concerns of our own times, just as that of our Romantic predecessors once did. As a result, late antique Gallaecia, today, represents not so much a first, thwarted experiment with political independence and territorial definition, but the foundation for a legacy of integration that would find expression in the continuing vitality of the Atlantic face of Europe, the medieval pilgrimage to Compostela, and the insistent pull of ties to Rome and the East.