THE LEGEND OF BISHOP ODOARIO AND THE EARLY MEDIEVAL CHURCH IN GALICIA*

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The noted French hispanist, Louis Barrau-Dihigo, introduced his treatise on the political history of the Asturian kingdom with an uncompromisingly bleak view of his subject:

The history of the Asturian kingdom is strictly national, and relevant only to the peninsula. Besides, it is—and will always be—most obscure and lacking in documents. Finally, it is—in its extreme poverty—most monotonous, offering hardly anything but a recitation of battles or revolts.1

Notwithstanding this dismal prospect, his work stretched to three hundred and sixty pages.

Writing the early medieval history of the Asturian and Leonese kingdoms is certainly a perilous venture.2 The prominence of Beato’s Commentary on the Apocalypse with its lavish and expressive illustrations might persuade a casual observer that millenarian fears concentrated attention on an imminent cataclysm. In fact, anxiety about the past pervades Asturian culture and politics, for, in this mountain fastness and its expanding territories, a past had to be recovered, acquired

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1 I am most grateful that fieldwork and archival research related to this project has been generously supported by the George A. and Eliza Gardner Howard Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Research Council and College of Arts and Sciences of the University of South Florida. I am also appreciative of the facilities provided by the Archivo Histórico Nacional, the Real Academia de la Historia, and the Casa de Velázquez in Madrid, and of the kind collaboration of D. Amador López Valcárcel, archivist of Lugo cathedral. Finally, I am deeply honored to pay tribute to John Williams who has shaped the study of Spanish medieval art, and brought a rare sense of fellowship to its study in the United States.


The Legend of Bishop Odoario

or invented, and so it was. The reputed discovery of the tomb of Saint James, the Roman reminiscences of the remarkable murals of Santullano, the restoration of the Gothic order, the fanciful genealogies of kings, and the quest of Alfonso III for an imperial crown are just some of the most noteworthy episodes in this eclectic effort to endow the new kingdom with legitimacy. The history that was re-created conferred a sense of place as well: the place of the Asturian kingdom in the Mediterranean community that Rome had forged, and in the new geography of Latin Christendom. In this way, the remote lands on the Atlantic fringe of Iberia became an unlikely crossroads of cultures: a meeting place and endpoint for the most diverse journeys, from the flight of Christian refugees to the arrival of relics, capitals, sarcophagi and other spolia, and the fabulous odysseys of the Arca Santa, the corpse of Saint James, and a cross brought by angels.

The documents concerning the eighth-century bishop Odoario of Lugo exemplify the problems that plague sources from this period. The core of his legend tells how he arrived from Africa with his household and followers, re-established the see of Lugo, and founded or occupied *uillae* and churches across a wide area of Galicia. This story and the surrounding controversies reflect competing efforts to restore—or invent—the past, from the chaotic aftermath of the Muslim conquest to the reorganization of the Leonese church in the late eleventh century. The tale of Odoario affirmed episcopal leadership in the repopulation and administration of Christian territories, and in the consolidation of a church with a strongly monastic heritage. In a changing hierarchy, it staked a claim for Lugo's pre-eminence before the ancient authority of Braga and the aspirations of Iria and Oviedo. By the twelfth century, the new political and ecclesiastical geography of Christian Iberia had put the see on the defensive, but the legacy of Odoario had left its mark on the landscape and ecclesiastical organization of the diocese of Lugo.

Four documents ascribed to the eighth century are directly associated with Odoario.3 Two testaments purport to record his gifts to the see, and the authors of the thirteenth-century cartulary of Lugo cathedral placed them at the head of the compilation.4 The shorter one chronicles Odoario's flight from Africa, his occupation of the abandoned city of Lugo, and his restoration of the see. It describes his settlement of seven followers in nearby *uillae*, the building and dedication of churches in three of them, and the cession of these properties to the see. A longer testament—only in the cartulary—lists at least eighty churches, one monastery, and thirty-eight *uillae* donated by Odoario to the see.5 The bishop plays a lesser role in two charters which tell of his followers' foundation of the nearby churches of Santiago de Meilán and Santa Comba.6

Other references to Odoario supplement these documents. Above the east door of the south transept of Lugo cathedral, a re-set verse

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4 The cartulary is called the *Tumbo Viejo* to distinguish it from the 18th-century *Tumbo Nuevo.* It is in the Archivo Histórico Nacional (henceforth AHN), Madrid, Cod.1043B. For discussion: L. Barrau-Dihigo, "Note sur le Tumbo Viejo de l'Eglise cathédrale de Lugo," *Revue Hispanique* 12 (1905): 591–602.

5 The shorter original is AHN, Clero, carp. 1325A, no. 1. A somewhat garbled version opens the *Tumbo Viejo,* doc. 1, fol. 1r. It is published in Manuel Ricco, *España Sagrada,* vol. 40 (Madrid, 1796), ap. xii, 364–67; Floriano, 1949, 62–66; Vázquez de Parga, 1950, 663–65.


inscription of uncertain date displays an acrostic of his name, and
a notice in a tenth-century martyrology from San Millán de la Cogolla
commemorates the death, in 786, of a bishop Odoario of Braga, the
metropolitan see which had held jurisdiction over Lugo. Two later
texts strengthen the association with Braga by citing Odoario’s ear-
erly settlement of various ullaes to substantiate the rights of that see—
exercised by the bishops of Lugo—over certain estates and their
inhabitants. One, the so-called charter of Torexario, is actually a set
of documents of 861 recognizing contested episcopal rights over the
ulla of Morela; the other describes an inquiry of 1025 which confirmed
the dependence of certain villagers near Braga on the bishops of
Braga-Lugo. Lastly, Odoario was linked with important churches in
the Ribeira Sacra, a district near the confluence of the Sil and Miño
rivers: ninth-century royal documents of questionable authenticity
credit him with foundations or restorations at Atán and A Peroxa,
and a more trustworthy episcopal charter of 954 alludes to his retire-
ment and death at Dionsondi (Dammonti).8

8 For the inscription: A. García Conde, “El acrístico de Odoario,” Boletín de la
Comisión Provincial de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos de Lugo 1 (1943): 101–9; Nicolás
Ares Vázquez, “Inscripciones lascivas medievales en verso,” Boletín de Museo Provincial de Lugo 2
(1984): 123–25. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz posited an 11th century date: Index scripturarum latinorum medii aevi hispanorum (Salamanca, 1958), 189. The obit was first published in Raco, España Segrada, vol. 46, 104. For a complete—and cor-
rected text—of the fragmentary martyrology: Baudouin de Guiffier, “Un abrigo his-
pánico del martyrologe hieronymien,” Anales Bollandianos 82 (1964): 5–56. For discus-
sion: David, 1974a, 133–34; L. Vázquez de Parga, “Los obispos de Lugo-

9 Charter of Torexario: Archivo de la Catedral de Lugo, pergamino suelos, no. 2,
published with discussion and an account of earlier editions in Vázquez de Parga,
1950, 647–49, 670–71; and in Florianó, 1949, 306–13 with a plate. The document of
1025 was published by Torquato de Sousa Soares, “Un testimonho sobre a
prestíria do bispo Odoario de Lugo no territorio Bracarens,” Revista Portuguesa de
Historia 1 (1941): 151–60; it is discussed in Vázquez de Parga, 1950, 649–53.

10 On the Ribeira Sacra: Jesús Ferro Couselo, “Monjies y eremitas en las riberas
del Miño y del Sil,” Bracara Augusta 21 (1967): 199–214. Odoario’s restoration or
foundation of several churches, including Santo Estevo de Atán—a monastery listed
in the long testament, is cited in a donation attributed to Alfonso II, but dated
871; it is also mentioned, with a reference to a later restoration by Alfonso III, in
The document of 871 exists as a pseudo-original (Archivo de la Catedral de Lugo,
lib. 10, no. 1), and a copy in the Tumbo Vigo, doc. 5, fols. 4r–5v. The earliest copy
of the inventory is of the late 11th or early 12th century (AHN, Clero, carp. 1325B,
no. 22); it was copied in the Tumbo Vigo, doc. 4, fols. 3v–4r. There is ample dis-
cussion of the purported gift of Alfonso II in Sánchez Albornoz, 1966, 29–31; the
most reliable guide to editions of both texts remains García Alvarez, 1963, 120–121,
141–42. Santo Enebio de Peroxa—also named in the long testament—is high-
lighted as a founder of Odoario in a controversial diploma of Alfonso III, dated
897 (“In Mellines aeclesiam Sancti Eneebii . . . quam Odoarius Lucensis episcopus
incoluit olm ueniens ab Africa”), see n. 101. The charter of 954 (AHN, Clero,
carp. 1325A, no. 7) was copied in the Tumbo Vigo, doc. 103, fols. 48v–49r; it is
published and analyzed in A. García Conde, “El Obispo Odoario: Datos de su
vida a la luz de un documento de 954,” Boletín de la Comisión Provincial de
Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos de Lugo 1 (1942): 25–29, 57–60. Vázquez de Parga accepts it as
original: 1950, 661–62.

11 Such local studies include: Ramón Salgado Tuimil, Odoario o Lugo en el siglo
VIII, 2 vols. (Lugo, 1923); José Ramón Oña López, Odoario el Africano: la colon-
zación de Galicia en el siglo VIII (La Coruña, 1966).

12 L. Barru-Díhigo, “Etude sur les actes des rois asturiens,” Revue Historique 46
(1919): 1–191; id., 1921.

13 Barru-Díhigo, 1919, 4–5. Seventeen “authentic” documents are from the reign
of Alfonso III, and only five of the nineteen exist as original documents. The uneven
distribution and the preponderance of later copies make it still more problematic
to generalize about the proper forms of royal diplomas. Carlos Baldrás has aptly
characterized this “hyper-critical” as “intellectual suicide”: “Debate Cuarto”, in
La época de la monarquía asturiana. Actas del simposio celebrado en Covadonga (8–10 de octubre de
2001) (Oviedo, 2003), 546.

14 Barru-Díhigo, 1919, 72–90, and, on related forgeries associated with Bishop
Pelayo of Oviedo, 47–55.

The rivalry between Lugo and Braga was explored in detail by Pierre David. He maintained that metropolitan status was never transferred to Lugo, although its bishops had exercised rights of the vacant see of Braga. In 861, the documents of Toresario, concerning rights of Braga, referred back to the times of bishop Odoario. Over the next two centuries, several texts linked both sees with individual bishops or titled them alternately as bishops of Lugo or Braga. In effect, the metropolitan of Braga resided in Lugo. For this reason, the description of Odoario as bishop of Braga in an obituary notice acquired special significance. Here was a kernel of evidence—seemingly independent of interested forgeries—that confirmed the historicity of the bishop and his association with Braga.

By the early twelfth century, Lugo had been restored and memory of the earlier arrangement had faded. The issues were further muddled by the pretensions of Oviedo, and David argued that Lugo fought a rear-guard action against its neighbor's encroachments. With aspirations to the metropolitanate frustrated, the Odoarian documents silenced the bishop's ties to Braga, while a forged diploma of Alfonso II alleged that Lugo had been provisionally granted the metropolitan authority of Braga in 832 in exchange for equally temporary concessions to Oviedo. Like Barru-Dihigo, David viewed this refashioning of the history of the diocese in the early twelfth century as a critical stage in the redefinition of the Odoarian documents, and he had little use for their elaborate narratives, territorial claims, or implicit usurpation of royal powers.

Vázquez de Parga stepped from the high stage of episcopal politics to the local arena in which the Odoarian documents upheld episcopal rights in squabbles with villagers. In doing this, he laid bare earlier uses of the bishop's story. Focusing on the foundation charters of Milan and Santa Comba, he related each to later texts concerning these sites and their settlers. While much of this local history must remain hopelessly obscure, he saw the recurrence of personal names in an authentic donation of 993 to Sta. Comba as proof of the concoction of the eighth-century document. For Milan, he traced litigation from the late tenth through the eleventh century, and concluded that earlier documents were fabricated to bolster subsequent claims. More broadly, both cases exemplified competing histories of episcopal and royal initiative in the repopulation of Galicia. For the bishop's testament, Vázquez de Parga contended himself with accenting their most dubious elements, but, paradoxically, his analysis of the other pieces validated aspects of Odoario's story. After all, litigants cited the bishop's work as early as the ninth century, and adversaries manipulated a well-established tale whose premises went unchallenged.

Other Spanish historians bristled at the "hyper-criticism" of Barra-Dihigo, for it struck the very foundations of the history of Christian Spain. They struggled mightily to salvage bits of historical truth from charters which the diplomat had branded as forgeries. In his edition of the documents of the Asturian kingdom, Floriano preferred the tortured hypothesis that Odoario—already bishop of Lugo—had been taken prisoner to Africa before escaping and returning to Spain. Such fictions warned of the pitfalls of this enterprise, but Claudio established behind the walls of Lugo, he was the metropolitan of Galicia, that is to say, the bishop of Braga." David, 1947a, 136 (translation mine).

Vázquez de Parga, 1950. Although he accepted David's argument that the bishops of Lugo held the title of bishop of Braga, he noted the absence of evidence for their actual use of metropolitan authority, and he posited a different reconstruction of the series of bishops and their chronology: idem, 1957.

21 Vázquez de Parga, 1950, 641-44, 654-55; he published the charter of 993 (AUN, Clero, cap. 1325A no. 15): 671-74.


23 David had also distinguished these two traditions in the Odoarian story: 1947a, 169-83.

24 Floriano, 1949, 44-45.
Sánchez Albornoz gallantly championed Odoario’s tale. Wisely conceding the forgery or interpolation of the documents in their present form, he contended nonetheless that they preserved the memory of the bishop’s arrival and resettlement of the diocese.

Sánchez Albornoz enlisted the Odoarian documents, like others of the Asturian kingdom, to support his overarching theory of the depopulation and subsequent resettlement of large areas north of the Duero, and to affirm the essential continuity between the Asturian and Visigothic kingdoms. The story of Odoario served both ends. It depicted a desolate wasteland as the backdrop for Odoario’s wanderings, and described the mechanisms of colonization and resettlement. Like the Alfonsine chronicles, Odoario’s testament lent the Asturian monarch a royal Gothic lineage, and, for Sánchez Albornoz, these documents were replete with language reflecting the laws and institutions of Visigothic society.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Abilio Barbero and Marcelo Vigil repudiated Sánchez Albornoz’s vision of the Asturian kingdom and the consequent notion of a Reconquest, and probed, instead, the roots of Asturian society in the scarcely Romanized tribes of the Cantabrian mountains. Their revisionism guided a generation of Spanish historians, and their interest in indigenous elements of Asturian society and culture made it easy to set aside the Odoarian documents and consign his story to the realm of legend. More generally, many Spanish medieval historians embraced Marxist models and the Annales school, and treated ecclesiastical institutions primarily as powerful landlords overseeing the organization of rural society in an emerging feudal system. The religious life of the church mattered less to these historians, and the potential contribution of the Odoarian documents in this area was largely ignored.

A century of criticism has taken its toll, and, today, Spanish historians of diverse viewpoints hasten to dismiss the documents and distance themselves from a more credulous past. Not surprisingly, the legend of Odoario has proved most durable in Galicia, sustained by local historians and an insistence on the particularity of a region whose early medieval history has been too easily subsumed by that of the Asturian kingdom. Mónica Rodríguez Lovelle and Jorge López Quiroga have cited these documents—perhaps uncritically—to complement archaeological investigations of settlement patterns in early medieval Galicia, and their extensive work brings a vital body of evidence into the debate. Carlos Balian offers the most judicious assessment. He defends Odoario’s African origins and episcopal status, and successfully integrates the story of the immigrants and their settlement around Lugo into a fuller account of the structuring of the territory and society of early medieval Galicia. At the same time, he endorses the diplomatic criticisms of the documents themselves as forgeries serving the diverse interests of the see, and he reserves particular disdain for the long testament and its litany of the see’s possessions.

Recent studies of writing, orality, and memory recommend a more nuanced view of forgery and medieval reconstructions of the past.

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29 The comments of Juan Gil Fernández are most expressive, “...con objeto de aunar con gloria imaginaria la catedral de Lugo se forjó asimismo la torre superchería de los documentos de Odoario,” 1983, 72. The most thorough of recent critiques is Ida Leiseg, 1992, 34–61.


31 See n. 3.

Forged documents harbor significant truths, and authentic ones peddle many falsehoods. In this respect, contemporary historians have cautiously rehabilitated the Odoarian texts, and mined them for insights into the ecclesiastical culture of eighth- and ninth-century Galicia. Fernando López Alcsina and Richard Fletcher, for example, have accepted the dedication of the church of Meían as evidence for the cult of Saint James in Galicia, before the celebrated discovery of his remains at Compostela. For his part, Peter Linehan has situated the Odoarian "memoirs" in the contested field of historical reconstruction and the constitution of church and monarchy in the ninth-century Asturian kingdom.

Parting from the premise that the Odoarian documents are false, historians have delighted in spotlighting anachronisms and implausibilities. I propose to examine elements that exhibit more verisimilitude than is traditionally admitted. Without denying the ample evidence for later interpolations, I will delve into the earliest layers of the documentary tradition for the Odoarian story, and demonstrate that it was taking shape by the early ninth century. The principal claims of the narrative are plausible and consistent with other contemporary sources. Finally, the much-maligned list of churches in the long testament can be stripped of evident interpolations, yielding valuable testimony to settlement patterns and ecclesiastical organization within the diocese of Lugo, long before the conflicts with rival sees in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. At their core, the Odoarian documents offer glimpses of earlier struggles for episcopal authority in the monastic church of ninth- and tenth-century Galicia.

The short testament of Odoario is an appropriate place to begin, for it gives the fullest account of his own story. The pseudo-original, written in a Visigothic cursive, has been dated on palaeographic grounds as no earlier than the late tenth century. Its own date, impossibly, is 700 in the Spanish Era (662 C.E.), but the roman numeral (DCC) argues for the copying of only the legible parts of an earlier source, a practice known in local cartularies. In fact, the garbled text of the preamble and narrative is hardly explicable except as a conscientious attempt to reproduce a poorly understood—or barely legible—original. Other commonly cited anachronisms are interpolations that do not affect the narrative. Canons, for example, surface only in the clause stipulating the future possession of the bequest, the part most apt for improvement by later clerics framing the gift of an eighth-century prelate in the context of familiar institutions and practices.

Critics have keenly seized upon such anachronisms, while overlooking features that harken back to earlier times. The invocation, for instance, focuses on the two natures of Jesus. Following the creed of the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople, it first affirms that Jesus was "born of the substance of the Father" ("qui uere de Patris substantia natus"). It continues, however, by differentiating his divine and human natures in relation to time: he was born of the substance of the Father before time ("de Patris substantia natus ... ante omnia secula"), while he was begotten of the Virgin Mary near the end of time ("in finem seculorum de omnium ... virgine Maria seculo genitus"). In this respect, it echoes the formulations of the Visigothic councils themselves, most notably that of the Second Council of

35 Vázquez de Parga, 1950, 641, 663. Floriano suggested the 12th century without explanation, 1949, 65.
36 In the early 13th-century cartulary of Samos, the testament (1125) of Abbot Pedro Froihaz includes many transactions dated 1100 (MC), i.e., 1062 C.E., before the beginning of his abbacy in 1100: El Tombo de San Julian de Samos (siglos VIII-XII), ed. Manuel Lucas Alvarez (Santiago de Compostela, 1986), 157-64.
37 Fletcher, for example, characterized the narrative as a "very corrupt text" and, in places, "well-nigh incomprehensible in its references to time": 63. The copy in the Tombo Visgo renders the surviving pseudo-original so poorly, that it, too, hints at the existence of another parchment in the Visigothic script.
38 If the thirty clerical signatories belong to a genuine documentary tradition, they might well have been understood as a cathedral chapter by a later scribe.
39 The formulational formulas ("... dominum Iesum Christum filium Dei de Patre natum unigenitum, hoc est de substantia Patris... natum non factum homounyon... Patrim hoc est eiusdem substantiae cum Patre...") and Constantinople ("... dominum Iesu propiuin filium Dei unigenitum, ex Patre natum ante omniam secula... natum non factum, homounyon Patrim hoc est eiusdem cum Patre substantiaw...") were incorporated into the Acts of the 3rd Council of Toledo when Arianism was condemned: Concilii Visigoth et Hispano-Romanorum, ed. José Vives (Madrid, 1963), 113.
Seville (619), where the prelates’ lengthy explication answered a Syrian heretic’s alleged denial of the two natures of Jesus.40

Such theological reflection is by no means foreign to the invocations and preamble of early medieval documents of the Asturian and Leonese realms. Among the more plentiful documents of the tenth century, clerical charters are especially expansive in their exposition of these issues, and, of course, those of Saint Rosendo are in a class by themselves as expressions of faith and devotion. Most of these, however, invoke the Trinity, and recite Trinitarian beliefs.41 Invocations of the Savior typically emphasize his unity with the Father and place in the Trinity.42 When the two natures of Jesus are more

40 The formulation at the 3rd Council of Toledo (“ante saecula quidem ex patre natum secundum duummatem, in nouissimis uesto diebus eundem . . . ex Maria virgine Dei generatrix natum secundum humantatem . . .”) was the basis of a more elaborate statement at the 2nd Council of Seville (“condemnator dominum nostrum Jesum Christum intemperalist ex Patre Deum natum, temporaliter ex utero gloriosas uirginis Mariae hominum edidit, et ob hoc in una substanti persona duas natu

41 Examples in episcopal charters include a donation of 969 by Bishop Teodisio of Simancas to Sahagún, and one of 987 by Bishop Pelayo Rodríguez of Iria to Celanova: Colección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún (siglos IX y X), ed. José María Mínguez Fernández (León, 1976), 298–99; Colección diplomática del monasterio de Celanova (842–1230), vol. 2 (943–988), eds. Emilio Sáez and Carlos Sáez (Alcalá de Henares, 2000), 183–85. The short formula of 11th-century Leonese bishops are typical: “Sub Deiis auxilio cliens demque fultus preside et Trinitatis anmuus induissi, Pater uidentelc ingeniius, Filius scilicet genius, Spiritus uero Sanctus nec genius nec ingeniius, quia nec generatur nec generatur ut ex ambobus procedant.” 42 Sub impec

43 E.g., a nun’s gift to a Galician monastery in 985, “ . . . Ihesum Christum, quam ipsius Filii Dei personam in duas naturas inseparabiles permanentem, unam quam ex Deo patrem est genitus, altera quam ex Maria uirginem generatus, utrique ergo ei generato plenam, utrique perfectum, auctil ergo ille minus ex deo incipit habens, nihili imperfectum ex humanitatem ebbens sed plenus Dei plenus quem homo absque omni peccato in singularitate persone unus est Christus, unus idemque Dei omnis filius. Ipse uirit mortiens, ipse plenus moritur uirtu quern morietur mortem uicit . . . .” Colección diplomática . . . de Celanova, vol. 2, 206–9.


been of the lineage of King Recared and his brother, Hermengild. After hearing of these things, Odoario’s band joined many others who were led to Lugo. This colorful tale has drawn more attention than the invocation: Odoario’s African origins have been doubted, and scholars have discerned the imprint of the late ninth-century chronicles in the mention of Pelayo, Alfonso I, and the latter’s supposed Visigothic ancestors.

At its core, the story of Christians fleeing Muslim rule is not unusual in the eighth century, and there are specific signs of their settlement near Lugo. A document of 902, allegedly written at the court of Alfonso III, recalls the occupation of a uilda and the endowment of the church of Calvor in the time of King Fruela (757–68) by settlers who left Muslim Spain. The charter is known from a copy in the early thirteenth-century cartulary of the nearby monastery of Samos, and it is broadly consistent with another of 785 entered separately in the same cartulary. For Samos itself, a Visigothic foundation, a royal charter of 922 describes its restoration under King Fruela by Argerico and Sara, and their followers; incidental references in independent documents lend credence to that account, even if the diploma is problematic. In the 840s and 850s, clerics from the south populated Samos again.

The Alfonsin chronicles complement such charters. It is said that Alfonso I led Christians to his territories following raids to the south, while his son, Fruela, repopulated Galicia to the Miño river; in the ninth century, Ordoño I is credited with restoring cities and colonizing them with Christians from the south. The chronicles also record the obscure saga of Mahamud who rebelled against the enir of Cordoba, fled Mérida, and was received by Alfonso II. He and his followers settled near Samos, and he ultimately led an uprising against his benefactor.

Place names confirm the early arrival of settlers from Coimbra and Toledo, and coincide with patterns of settlement adumbrated in Odoario’s long testament and the documents of Samos. A village of Cumbraos (Colimbranos) is cited as early as 803 in a private charter too modest to arouse suspicion. The toponym recurs twice near...
Lugo, and once in the district of Taboada, near two localities named Toldao and several churches listed in the long testament. Near Samos, a charter of 849 records a cleric’s dedication of the church of Santiago de Toldao, and its consecration by the Mozarabic bishop, Fatal, who had recently restored Samos. It is one of three parishes named Toldao near Samos, hinting at a role for the early communities at Samos and Calvor in attracting Moors and directing their settlement of the district.

Odoario’s journey is not implausible in eighth-century Galicia. What is odd is the repeated claim, regularly dismissed by scholars, that he arrived from Africa. Little use is made of this, and, in 1025, Odoario was said to have come “de partibus Spaniae.” In this context, the notice of the death of bishop Odoario of Braga in a fragmentary martyrology of the tenth century from San Millán de la Cogolla takes on special interest. This version of the Hieronymian martyrlogy incorporates feasts from the Mozarabic calendar, but certain entries hint at an African derivation: obscure martyrs were displaced to Africa, and several unknown bishops are commemorated. Could this calendar descend from an African one that Odoario

**También del Monasterio de Soledad de los Muertos, ed. Pilar Lacortales de G. de Valdeavellano (Madrid, 1976), vol. 1, 106-7, 110-11.**

Near Lugo, there is a locality named Cumbraos in the parish of Santalla de Cuña, and, in 993 a place named Columbarios bordered an estate in Sta. Comba, a villa prominent in the Odoarian documents: Vázquez de Parga, 1930, 672. In Taboada, the hillfort and settlement of Cumbraos in the parish of Mato face the village of Toldao in the parish of Taboada as Breces; another locality named Tellôdo lies five kilometers away in the parish of San Xulián do Campo, one of several nearby churches named in the long testament: Elias Valiña Sampedro et al., *Inventario artístico de Lugo y su provincia*, 6 vols. (Madrid, 1975-83), vol. 4, 106. The parish of San Martín de Cumbraos is about twelve kilometers to the north.

*El Tiempo de los Samos*, 280–81, Baltiñas Pérez noted that the cleric’s Greek name, Andreas, likely points to his family’s origins in southern Spain: (1992), 167.

**Ibid., 166–67.** The others are San Salvador (Triacastela) and San Vicente (Lancara). It is mentioned in the Sta. Comba document as well. The settlers of Meilán are described as coming from Africa, though Odoario is not mentioned, and the text credits Alfonso I with initiating the settlement.

See n. 9.

The calendar extends from July 23 to October 31: de Gaiffier, 1964a.

For the Mozarabic feasts: ibid., 33-34. Entries for John the Baptist (Sept. 24) and St. Faustus and other martyrs of Córdoba (Oct. 13) were adapted or clarified, and Iberian saints, like St. Vincent of Avila and his sisters (Oct. 28) were added: ibid., 21, 25-27. The martyrs of July 28 are placed “in Africa” instead of in Laodicea; “in Africa” was added to entries for July 31, Aug. 27, and Oct. 2: ibid., 8, 10, 14, 23. The unusual name of the unknown St. Pasivus (Sept. 8) is attributed to his African origin.

The evidence is tenuous, to be sure, and the manifold ties between Visigothic Spain and north Africa certainly afforded diverse avenues for African texts to reach the peninsula. At the same time, that history of exchanges makes Odoario’s journey more credible, and the legislation of Caliph Omar II in 717 which hastened the emigration of north African Christians provides a plausible terminus post quem. Odoario’s African past proved largely inconsequential, and it is hard to find a motive for its invention: this, itself, as Sánchez Albornoz finally concludes, argues that the best explanation of the strength of the tradition is that it was true.

By contrast, the references to Pelayo and Alfonso I, and the claim that the latter was a scion of the Visigothic kings tie the short testament to the late ninth-century Asturian chronicles. The Chronicle of Alfonso III magnifies Pelayo’s victory at Covadonga, and the Oviedo (Ad Sebastianum) version affirms the descent of Alfonso I from the Visigothic kings, Leovigild and Reccared. The chronicles, however, built upon diverse traditions, developed over more than a century.

in north African inscriptions: ibid., 16-17. For the bishop: “deposito Eraci episcopi” (July 30), “Savius episcopo ordinato” (Sept. 21), and “Johannis episcopi” (Oct. 26): ibid., 9, 21, 22, 30.


Fletcher, 63. Sánchez Albornoz, 1966, 32-36.

Sánchez Albornoz, 1966, 33-37. Baltiñas Pérez defends this as well: 1998, 46-47. Over half of the forty-two Galician churches dedicated to the African martyr, Cyprian, are in the diocese of Lugo, but the date of their foundation is uncertain. The saint was also important in the Mozarabic liturgy, and the coincidence of his feast with the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14) led to some shifts in dedications.


For a survey of literary sources used in the Chronicles, and a critical view of different hypotheses about earlier oral or written accounts of Pelayo, Covadonga and the reign of Alfonso II: Bonaz, 1987, 120-129.
The inflation of the skirmish at Covadonga to epic proportions and the embellishment of the narrative with dramatic dialogue had likely begun in oral accounts. As early as 812, the foundation charter of San Salvador de Oviedo, issued by King Alfonso II, celebrated Pelayo's victory and moralized on the fall of the Visigothic kingdom. That might not seem a propitious start for appropriating the Visigothic past, but the late ninth-century Chronicle of Albeida famously credited Alfonso II with restoring the Gothic order in Oviedo.

Recently, archaeologists and historians have re-evaluated the Roman presence in the Asturias, stressing the region's integration into the Roman and Visigothic worlds. As a result, some historians have put more faith in the alleged connections between the earliest Asturian rulers and the Gothic aristocracy. By the ninth century, Mozarabic refugees certainly encouraged this neo-Gothic ideology at the Asturian court, and the names of Christian aristocrats and prelates throughout the peninsula evince a widespread desire to assert links with the Visigothic kings.

This broader context counsels caution before simply tagging Odorario's narrative as a derivative of the Alfonsinne chronicles. The chronicles themselves are maddeningly terse, their textual transmission tortuous, and their origins obscure. Linguistic and ideological differences between the two versions of the Chronicle of Alfonso III—and their silence about an event as momentous as the discovery of the tomb of Saint James—betray their biases and limitations, and warn against privileging them as sources for contemporary texts.

Odorario's short testament includes material quite foreign to the chronicles: the echoes of the Adoptionist controversy, the African origins of the bishop, and the very narrative of episcopal protagonism in the resettlement of Lugo. Even where the texts converge, telling differences remain. In its description of the ancestors of Alfonso I, the testament replaces Leovigild, the Arian conqueror of the Suevi, with his rebellious son, Hermengild, whose conversion to Catholicism anticipated that of his brother, Reccared. Though condemned as a rebel by early Iberian writers like John of Bical and Isidoro, Hermengild was celebrated as a martyr by Pope Gregory the Great. In northwest Iberia, Valerius of Bierzo echoed that view in the late seventh century, and it found its way into one manuscript of the Chronicle of Albeida. The names of prelates and aristocrats suggest a re-assessment of the unfortunate prince's reputation: under Alfonso III, the bishop of Oviedo and the king's major-domo bore the name, and bishops of that name later governed Iria and Lugo.

The Legend of Bishop Odorario

64 JAMES D'EMILIO

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62 M.C. Díaz and Díaz highlighted this apparent contradiction: "La historiografía hispánica hasta el año 1000," in De Isidro al siglo xii: ocho estudios sobre la vida literaria peninsular (Barcelona, 1976), 221. The passage is: "omneque Gotorum ordinem, sicuti Toledo fuerat, tarn in ecclesia quam palatium in Ouateo cuncta statuit," Albeida, c. 9, in Crónicas Asturianas, 174. Few phrases have generated such vast bibliography. For a recent discussion: Armando Beza Márquez, Orígenes hispánicos del Reino de Asturias (Oviedo, 2000), 435–44. British and American writers have argued that the neo-Gothic ideology of the chronicles colored the account of Alfonso II; Jerryn D. Dodds, Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain (University Park, Pa., 1989), 30–31, 38, 77–81; R. Collins, "Doubts and Certainties on the Churches of Early Medieval Spain," In God and Man in Medieval Spain, eds. D.W. Lomax and D. MacKenzie (Warmister, 1989), 1–18; Linehan, 85–93.
66 See the observations of Linehan, 76–81.
67 Linehan charts the apparent "rehabilitation" of Hermengild, 1–3, 104–5.
68 Linehan, 72, 104.
69 Bishop Hermengild of Iria (c. 924–51) and Bishop Hermengild of Lugo (c. 950–85): see the tables in Manuel Carriero Tejedo, "Sertena obispos de Galicia, de 711 a 1073 (anteriores a la reforma gregoriana)," Estudios Mondonienses 18 (2002): 977–1012.
The substitution of Hermenegild in the Odoarian testament implies more loyalty to orthodoxy than genealogical logic, but its specific aim is unknown. The purpose of citing Pelayo and Alfonso I is clearer, for Odoario's early arrival trumped claims of two potential rivals of the see: the monasteries of Samos and Calvor. Each had been restored under King Fruela, and Samos had close ties to his son, Alfonso II. Such communities were part of a wider effort to revive the monastic church of seventh-century Galicia with its monastic federations and the peculiar institution of the episcopus sub regula. In the middle of the ninth century, a Mozarabic bishop, Fatal, served as abbot of Samos and consecrated churches, and King Ordoño I enjoined Abbot Ofilan to hold synods and oversee the clergy of the surrounding area. What's more, the monastery governed a widely dispersed patrimony that sustained a diversified economy and supported scattered congregations of monks in regions like the Bierzo and the Ribera Sacra where the legacy of Saint Fructuoso was strong. Elsewhere in Galicia, the transference of the monastic see of Dumio to Mondofíedo—the former site of the Celtic bishopric of Breofonia, and the parochial responsibilities of the monks of Anteal-tares in Compostela provide additional signs of the reconstitution of a monastic church.

These glimpses of a monastic revival contrast with the obscurity shrouding the bishops of Lugo in the ninth century. Even the status of the city is uncertain, and it is telling that Odoario reportedly retired and died at the monastery of Diomondi. A document of 861 names only two successors: Adulfu and Gladila. Bishop Adulfu had witnessed the endowment of San Salvador de Oviedo in 812, but his see was not mentioned. Significantly, his only other recorded act was the consecration of the churches of a monastic congregation of the Ribera Sacra. For his part, Gladila was an Asturian monk and abbot, named bishop of Braga by King Ramiro I. Controversy surrounds the shadowy figures of Frollán and Flaián who may well have never existed.

Lugo only comes into clear view under Bishop Reeccared (c. 893–924) whose name links him with the neo-Gothic movement at the court of Alfonso III. From the reign of Alfonso III through the first half of the tenth century, the Galician church was transformed. With royal support, Bishop Sisando of Iria (880–920) renovated the shrine of Saint James at Compostela, consecrated a new basilica in 899, and consolidated the territories of the diocese. Across Galicia and northern Portugal, sees and monasteries were restored. These
reforms culminated in the work of Saint Rosendo as abbot of Celanova and bishop of Dumio/Mondoñedo, and they find parallels in the contemporary monastic revival in the neighboring diocese of Astorga. Important royal privileges have been attributed to the episcopalty of Reccared, but the re-establishment of the monastic see of Dumio in neighboring Mondoñedo, and the restoration of numerous monasteries threatened the emerging status of the see. In 927, no bishop of Lugo appears among the five bishops and six abbots who ratified the restoration of the monastery of Loio at an assembly presided over by King Alfonso IV and Sancho Ordóñez. One abbot was Berila of Samos, and there is patent evidence of rivalry between his house and the bishops of Lugo. Shortly after its restoration in 922, the monks complained of the depredations of bishop Ero (c. 928–42) who stole the collection of privileges which, significantly, they had recovered from Oviedo. Later, Samos maintained close ties with the strongly monastic see of Astorga, a counterpart to Lugo. Abbot Novidio became bishop of Astorga (c. 963–67), and, in 1030, Bishop Pedro of Astorga dedicated a Galician monastery founded by Abbot Diego of Samos.

The efforts of the dioecese of Lugo to assert its prerogatives in the tenth century provide a plausible context for encouraging the memory of Odario, enhancing his story with mention of the first Asturian rulers and the Visigothic past, and embellishing documents whose oldest elements echo the Adoptionist controversy. Even in the tenth century, however, the short testament would have been quite modest. The properties are trifling: just seven estates—only three with churches—within seven kilometers of the cathedral. By the thirteenth century, it opened the cartulary as a relic of a nearly forgotten past.

Its detractors have not reflected enough on what is not said. It is silent about Lugo’s contests with other sees and makes no demarcation of boundaries, the contentious matters that most often prompted episcopal scribes to rewrite their history in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. Nor is there any reference to Lugo’s claims to metropolitan status. In short, this text ignores issues of pressing interest to forgers of the central Middle Ages, while preserving material of little use to them.

The compilers of the cartulary may have felt the short testament less than satisfactory, for it is followed by a second, more generous gift only found in the cartulary. This text—the long testament—dispenses with the narrative, but its one hundred and twenty churches and aediles dwarf the short testament. The properties range over as many as forty-two named districts covering much of the medieval diocese of Lugo and spilling into neighboring ones. The size of the list and its appearance only in the cartulary have earned it the most sceptical response of all of the Odarian documents. It is best understood in relation to a longer list of episcopal holdings in a privilege purportedly issued by Alfonso III in 897, but widely regarded as spurious.

Barrau-Dihigo had noted the similarities between these lists, and, referring to the royal diploma, had conceded that these were doubtless possessions of Lugo cathedral in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, but not in the ninth. Overwhelmed by the endless tally of obscure localities, he could only ask—rhetorically—how one could possibly determine when these “innumerable” estates and churches were acquired. Efforts to answer this have largely sought to discredit

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52 El Tombo . . . de Samos, 125–28 (f. 8r, egressus est dominus Eras episcopus de sa ciutat et uenis in Samanos . . . et leuauit ex inipto cartario . . .).
54 Litigation concerning the villagers of Meillán took place in the mid-11th century (see n. 29). There is no surviving evidence of disputes over Bocamans, and, in

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60 For the identification of sites: García Concepción, 1950, 90–94.
61 The pseudo-originale is in the Archivo de la Catedral de Lugo, lib. 10, no. 2. It was copied into the Tumbo Veo (doc. 57, fols. 28v–30v), and published in Floriano, 1951, 226–37. Floriano omits two churches named only in the pseudo-originale (“in terra de Asma . . . ecclesiæ Sanctæ Maria de Morecæ . . . ecclesiæ Sanctæ Mæréitæ de Tomali . . .”) and two named in both versions (“in terra de Porto Marini ecclesiæ Sanctæ Marie de Quartapeca. In Recelli ecclesiæ Sancti Petri . . .”). All quotations from the long testament or the diploma of Alfonso III are taken directly from the documents; I have capitalized placenames and titulaires for clarity.
62 Barrau-Dihigo, 1919, 87.
the lists. For David, the anachronistic appearance of Saint Pelagius (Paião), a child martyr of the early tenth century, as titular of two churches sentenced the Odoarian list. Others have merely seconded Vázquez de Parga who scorned the “monotonous list of churches and villae that fills five pages of España Sagrada.” In fact, neither list had much relevance in the thirteenth century, and, purged of accretions, both look back to the Galician church of the late ninth and tenth centuries.

In the long testament, fifty-five named properties are described as churches, twenty-nine as villae, and one as a monastery. Twenty-five more are identifiable as churches by their toponyms. Nine churches are appended to villae, at least seven have villae as appurtenances, and some churches and villae are indistinguishable. Additional information is seldom provided: boundaries are traced for two villae and the church of Amaudi, and some properties are specifically said to have been settled by Odoario or his family and followers.

Within the list, properties are clustered in districts that are ordered geographically in two principal parts. The first includes the southern part of the medieval diocese of Lugo and a few sites to the south and west. It begins with twenty-three churches and villae east of the Miño river, from Lemos to the Sarria river and the district of Páramo. It ends with thirty-one churches and villae scattered to the west of the Miño, from Sotomaior and Santo Eusebio near Ourense, to Xián and Gulfar in the north, and westwards, through the districts of Ventosa and Deza, to the churches of Marrozos and Carballal, near Compostela. The second section lies further north. It begins near

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103 David, 1947a, 147; id., “Le Sanctoral Hispanique et les patrons d’eglises entre le Minho et le Mondego do IX° au XI° siècle,” in *Rueder historiques* . . . (1947), 244–51.


105 E.g., “villa de Ageredui cum ecclesia Sancti Iuliani”; “Sancto Petro de Lincora cum villae”; “villa . . . uel ecclesia quos vocant Sancta Eolalia uel alia Sancta Christiana.”

106 “Ecclesia Sancte Marie de Vermes quam fundamentavit Alaricus et sua progenie que fuit nostre familia”; “ecclesia Sancti Ioannis de Mera quos pruduit germanus meus Ermiarius de escaldio, et contestauit a me indignus.”


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Lugo with eighteen churches in an arc swinging south of the city from east to west, and stretching west to Fontemucuberta. Along a wider arc from west to northwest of Lugo, it adds sixteen churches and villae from the Ulla river to the districts of Gaioso and Montenegro in the medieval diocese of Monadoñedo. Finally, it reaches the northern coast and names fourteen churches and villae in the medieval dioceses of Monadoñedo and Compostela.

With over a hundred churches, four monasteries, and almost fifty villae or casta, the charter of Alfonso III expands the Odoarian list and restructures it in ways that show that neither is simply derived from the other. This list has three main sections. First, it traces the boundaries of the cathedral’s reserve, and names ten churches and three villae within it. Seven of the churches and one villa were in Odoario’s testament. The second part includes fifty-four named churches, twenty-two villae or casta, and three monasteries. Of these, thirty-four churches, nine villae or casta, and two monasteries were in the testament, but the royal diploma integrates districts from its two parts into one itinerary, roughly bounded by the reserve of Lugo on the north and the Sil river on the south. The geographic sequence is more consistent: it goes northwards on the west side of the Miño, and descends southwards on the east side. The third section begins to the north of Lugo, enters the medieval diocese of Monadoñedo, and, like the Odoarian list, continues along the northern coast. It ends by turning inland to the western part of the medieval diocese of Lugo and the neighboring territories of Compostela. Twenty-six of its thirty-nine churches or monasteries were in the testament, but only seven of the twenty-one villae had appeared there.

The long testament of Odoario and the privilege of Alfonso III may be compared with an episcopal testament of 998 and twelfth-century lists of diocesan properties and rights. Such comparison

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108 There is also an unspecified group of “twelve churches, villae and estates” between Castroveder (“ecclesias Sancti Iacobi de Villarino”) and Trañuste (“ecclesias Sancti Ioannis de Terlis”).

109 Sta. Maria de Amaudi was simply named as a church in the testament.

110 Bishop Pelayo’s testament (980) (Tambu Vigo, doc. 102, fols. 47r–48v) and a division of properties between the bishop and canons (1120) (ibid., doc. 104, fols. 49r–50r) were published in Risco, *Españat Sagrada*, vol. 40, ap. xxiv, 607–10; vol. 41, ap. ii, 295–301. A mid-12th-century inventory of the chapter’s properties (Tambu Vigo, doc. 109, fols. 31r–34r) was published in A. García Comol, “Inventario des bienes de la mesa canonical de Lugo,” *Boletín de la Comisión Provincial de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos de Lugo* 9 (1976): 307–20. A list of properties lost to the chapter
exposes some interpolations, but also highlights the contrast between the selective enumeration in the earlier lists and the denser network of diverse properties in later ones. The bequest of Bishop Pelayo, for example, includes two properties named in the privilege of Alfonso III: “ecclesia de Sancto Martino de Rouora” (San Martín de Guíjar) and the “uilla Sismandi” in Fernadeiros. Other entries, however, show sites in the earlier lists attracting later acquisitions. In the twelfth-century inventories, one recognizes numerous properties listed in the long testament or diploma of Alfonso III, but only in a few cases is there evidence of disputes that might have motivated twelfth-century clerics to forge or alter earlier titles.

The most suspicious part of the long testament lies near the end where it names seventeen churches and three villas, far to the north and west of Lugo. This section most closely matches the diploma of Alfonso III. Although the order differs, all twenty properties are repeated, and the royal diploma only adds three churches and one villa within the group. Most of these latter fell within the neighboring diocese of Monforte, and a late twelfth-century document records the complaint of Lugo that Monforte had violently seized numerous properties including eight of these churches and others listed only in the royal diploma. Lugo may have held estates in these districts, but the dedications of these churches betray the interpolation. Five of six dedications to Saint James in the long testament appear here, a sign of the later growth of the apostle’s cult. In a more evident anachronism, the section includes one of the two dedications to Saint Pelagius (Paio). Titular saints offer important insights into the lists. The other two dedications to Saint James and Saint Paio also lie in contested areas or enclaves within neighboring dioceses, and, thus, might represent later insertions. The overall diversity of dedications, however, resembles that of the sixty-five churches ceded to the bishop of Iria by Tractino, probably in 868 according to López Aisina’s analysis. The ranking in these lists is similar to that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with Mary, Peter, and John among the most common dedications. Together, though, the most popular dedications have a smaller share in the early lists. In addition, these lists already account for an important proportion of churches with less common dedications in the diocese of Lugo: two each for Saints George and Tarsus in the list of Alfonso III, one each for Saints Cecilia and Leocadia, the patron of Visigothic Toledo, and the only Galician dedication to Saint Eusebius. Most important, Saint Eulalia, patron of Iria and an prominent saint in the Visigothic church, tops the lists in the

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114 Santiago de Goiriz was also contested: though listed as a possession of Lugo in papal bulls of 1161 and 1185, it lay within the diocese of Monforte: Amador López Valcárcel and Antonio García Conde, Episcopologia Lusitana (Lugo, 1991), 194–95, 220–21.
115 Santiago de Boente and San Paio de Paradela lie along the boundaries of the dioceses of Lugo and Compostela, near the enclave of Melide, held by Monforte.
116 The document of Tractino was published by Antonio López Ferreiro, Historia de la Santa A.M. Iglesia de Santiago de Compostela 11 vols. (Santiago de Compostela, 1898–1911), vol. 2, ap. 2, pp. 6–8. For its analysis: López Aisina, 1988, 136–67, 311–13. Without the 17 churches in the interpolation identified above, the 64 dedications in the long testament are: Mary (12); Eulalia (8); John (7); Peter and Julian (5 each); Mammus (4); Felix and Stephen (3 each); Marina (2); Andrew; Cecilia; Christina; Christopher; Colomba; Cosmas; Eusebius; James; Lawrence; Leocadia; Martin; Mary Magdalen; Pelagius; Romanus; and the Savior (1 each). The two dedications to Mariana appear as Mary, but these churches (Fonteuhiba and Monte Lappio) are documented elsewhere as dedicated to Marina. Without the 23 churches in the interpolation (n. 112), the 79 titles in the diploma of Alfonso III are: Eulalia (10); Mary (9); John (7); Peter and Marina (6 each); Felix, James, Julian, and Michael (4 each); Martin, the Savior, and Stephen (3 each); George, Mammus, and Tarsus (2 each); Cecilia, Christina, Christopher, Colomba, Cosmas, Eusebius, Lawrence, Leocadia, Mary Magdalen, Pelagius, Romanus (1 each). In the document of Tractino, the 52 named titles are: Eulalia (10); Vincent (6); Mary and Peter (5 each); Martin (4); John, Saturninus, and Tarsus (3 each); James (2); Christina, Christopher, Cosmas (and Damián); Felix, Julian, Lawrence, Mammus, Romanus, Stephen, Talaia, and Thomas (1 each).
privilege of Alfonso III and the document of Tractino, and stands second in the long testament. 117

Archaeological evidence, place-names, the size of parishes, and the later fate of several churches also lend credence to an early date for the core of each list. At least six churches in the long testament retain significant architectural remains plausibly dated before 1000 (Fig. 1). 118 In other instances, early medieval capitals or window screens are found in parishes adjacent to named sites, or in districts that are well-represented in the lists. 119 In the modern municipality of Taboada, for example, both lists include a cluster of six churches, and the nearby churches of San Miguel de Vilela and San Salvador da Insua house pre-Romanesque pieces. 120 Notable, too, are the stone screens in windows at San Cristovo de Noveldía and San Xoán do Alto; though the first is generally assigned to the twelfth century, and the second is modern, their unusual use points to local pre-Romanesque antecedents. 121 Systematic excavation or comprehensive

117 On St. Eulalia: Carmen García Rodríguez, El culto de los santos en la España romana y visigoda (Madrid, 1966), 284–293. Her popularity in Visigothic times and in the 8th and 9th centuries is still reflected in her share of dedications—nearly 6%—in the northern Galician dioceses of Iria, Mondoñedo and Lugo, relative to the smaller numbers—under 2%—in the diocese of Astorga where resettlement was more intense after the 10th century: M.C. Diaz y Diaz, "Origenes Cristianos en Lugo," in Actas del Coloquio Internaciona sobre el Barroco en Lugo (Lugo, 1977), 247–48.

118 These include window screens, arches or headstones at Añón, Eire (Manuel Nuñez, Arquitectura prerrománica (La Coruña, 1978), 118–19, 125, 127, and Seteventos; capitals from Mougán, Santalla de Esperante (María Elena Varela Arias, "Iglesias románicas de la provincia de Lugo; papeletas arquitectónicas," Boletín de Museo Provincial de Lugo 2 (1984): 185–87), and Seteventos; and fragments of inscriptions from Santo Eusebio da Perosa (J. Sobrera Salgado, Método de recoger inscripciones, Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, ms. 9/401, f. 31, 34; Juan-Carlos Rivas Fernández, Antigüedad del episcopado auricense (Ourense, 2003), 38).

119 These include several pieces from San Xoán da Penha and an eighth-century inscription from San Cristovo de Chamoso (Narciso Peinado, "Epigrafe lucense: cinco interesantes inscripciones," Boletín de la Comisión Provincial de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos de Lugo 7 (1964): 254–55), both near Sta. Comba; an acanthus capital in the hermitage of San Isidoro (Valía Sampredo et al., vol. 3, p. 73, lam. 28), near San Xoán do Campo and San Mamede de Ribas de Miño; a capital at Toirán, near San Xoán de Trasáste; and the arched window at Soutornille (Nuñez, 1978, 123–25), near the churches of Chamoso and Bolaño named in the privilege of Alfonso III. For additional examples, including burial sites, near Lugo: Lovele and Quiroga, 2000, 62–73.

120 Valía Sampredo et al., vol. 3, 305; vol. 6, 412.

121 For numerous examples of such pre-Romanesque screens in Galicia: Juan Carlos Rivas Fernández, "Algunas consideraciones sobre el prerrománico gallego y sus arcos de herradura geminados," Boletín Arqueológico 1 (1971): 61–126; for Noveldía: Ramón Yañez de Perriñán, La arquitectura románica en Lugo, vol. 1, Parroquias al oeste

surveying would surely recover more pieces like the headstone of a window re-used in the Romanesque doorway at Seteventos (Fig. 2). 122 Such finds are particularly significant, given that many early medieval churches were built of wood (Fig. 3) or rubble masonry. 123

In Odoario's testament, twenty-five of eighty-one churches are designated only by titular and district, a sign of an early date before the number of local churches demanded the addition of toponyms. 124 The "villa in Humano (Mao) vel ecclesia . . . sancta Eulalia", for example, is the modern parish of San Xulián de Santalla de Barcos. By 1075, "de Bardanos" had been added, and, by 1261, the dedication to Saint Julian had displaced Saint Eulalia. 125 A few churches, like Santiago de Entramasaugas, changed toponyms. The diploma of Alfonso III lists it as "Sancti Iacobii de Senari qui dictur Interm basaquas". The locality of "Senar" (Scar) remains in the parish, but the church was designated only as Entramasaugas by 1094. 126 Some churches eventually disappeared. San Pedro de Carvias is in both lists and in early royal privileges concerning the monastery of Atán. 127 It was among the numerous properties assigned to the cathedral chapter by the bishop in 1120, and it was included in the mid-twelfth century inventory of capitular estates. 128 In the inventory, it was described as a settlement or foundation (presura) of "domna Corviasa". This marks of an etymology newly invented to explain the obscure origins of a once prominent site. Soon after, "Curuciga" in Sauliianos (Saviñano) was numbered among estates lost to the chapter. 129 The spelling is unusual and the normally descriptive list provides only the name, suggesting that it was barely remembered, despite its former importance. 130

del Millo (La Coruña, 1983), 68–74; for Alto: Valía Sampredo et al., vol. 1, 39–40. The buttressed chancel at Alto could be of pre-Romanesque origin.

122 D'Elmoio, 47–51.

123 For the royal privileges, see n. 10.


125 AHN, Clero, cap. 1326C, no. 3.

126 It corresponds with the locality of Corveix in the parish of Sta. Mariña de
By contrast, the churches of Amandi, Lamela, Noviella, Santalla de Bolaño, Santalla do Alto and Santalla do Rei became seats of archipresbyterates. Their later status plausibly rests upon their early foundation and ancient authority. In other cases, the unusual size of parishes signals their importance. In the diploma of Alfonso III, the monastery of Saint George in “villa de Goldremir” corresponds with the modern parish of San Xurxo de Augas Santas. Its size, more than seventeen square kilometers, dwarfs that of nearby parishes.

While the core of each list outlines an early medieval network of churches, some changes and additions in the diploma of Alfonso III reflect the foundation or restoration of churches during his reign. Thus, Santalla de “Ribacaue”—on the Cabe river—became Santalla “de rege”, the name that has endured. The cases of Lamela and Estraxiz are more instructive: for each, the royal privilege adds a church to the *villa* in Odoario’s testament. At Sta. Mariña de Lamela, a huge decorated headstone of a window (Fig. 4) was recently uncovered in a staircase at the west end. Its resemblance to those in the Asturian churches of Alfonso III suggests that construction was roughly contemporary with its appearance in the list of churches. For Estraxiz (Fig. 5), a document of 930 describes how villagers placed

Rosende (Savallao). It is the site of a Celtic castro: Valiña Sampredo et al., vol. 5, 427-28. There was still a hermitage of San Pedro in the parish in 1702: Relación de la oveja pasional realizada por el Obispo de Lugo, Don Lucas Busto de la Torre... entre... 1700 y 1703, Archivo de la Catedral de Lugo, ms., f. 129r.


132 The testament of Odoario includes the “villa Lamela” “in ualle Ferraria”. The royal diploma includes Sta. Mariña de Lamela among four churches “in terra de Ferraria”; none are in the testament: D’Emilio, 46-48. I examined the newly discovered headstone in 1998; the monolithic piece is nearly ninety centimeters across. One may compare Asturian examples from Santiago de Gobiende, San Salvador de Príesca, San Andrés de Bedriñana, and San Salvador de Valdedios: César García de Castro Valdés, *Arqueología Cristiana de la Alta Edad Media en Asturias* (Oviedo, 1995), 252-60, figs. 170, 185, 229-37, pp. 660, 663, 674-76.

133 El *Tumbo de... Somos*, 339-40. The acanthus pilaster capital in the sacristy is likely a remnant of the ninth- or early tenth-century church.

134 See n. 51, 57, 82. After a local agreement involving abbot Ofión in 878 (*El Tumbo de... Somos*, 305), no abbot is mentioned until the restoration of 922. A reference to Somos in the 902 foundation charter of Calvor is very likely an interpolation, and another reference in 909 conflates the monastery with its nearby subject houses of San Cristobo and San Xoán de Louzara, another sign of the crisis at Somos: *Ibid.*, 119-22, 430-31.

135 The association of “Ranilli” with Renche is clear from a series of documents beginning in 1003: *El Tumbo de... Somos*, 154, 254, 430. A marginal note of the seventeenth or eighteenth century in the cartulary (Archivo de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Clero, lib. 1173, doc. 244, f. 86v) plausibly identifies the church of Santiago in “villa... Ponzeciani” named in an earlier undated document with Renche as well.

landscape. The farflung network of properties might seem anachronistic, but it resembles the distribution of estates of early medieval monasteries like Samos. Scattered holdings, linked by ancient roads and bridges, anchored the religious life of the countryside, and supported a diversified economy, ensuring the provision of salt, fish, wine, and iron. 130

Historians have been too eager to dismiss the story of Odoario and the documents associated with him. It is certainly true that the reorganization of the Iberian church in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries spurred clerics to rewrite the history of their dioceses, launching a century of litigation over boundaries and jurisdictions. Nonetheless, several elements of the Odoarian documents, much of the bishop’s story, and most of the churches in the testament had little relevance to conflicts about diocesan boundaries and metropolitan status. Instead, they give us a fleeting glimpse of an earlier age, when Galician bishops struggled to assert their place in the monastic church of ninth- and tenth-century Galicia.

It may never be possible to unravel the history of these documents, separate their successive layers, and trace the steps by which deeds and events were fashioned into narratives, altered and embellished, and given written form in charters. They do, however, provide insights into the early medieval church of Galicia and the conflicts that surrounded its restoration. If the diverse evidence of toponymy, saints’ cults, archaeological remains, and the landscape itself is patiently applied to such texts, they may yet yield a fuller picture of a formative period in the history of the Iberian church that made a permanent mark upon the ecclesiastical organization of the central Middle Ages.


Fig. 1. Esperante, Santullal (Sancta Eoalía Alta), north capital of chancel arch (photo: author).
Fig. 2. Sevillasos, San Pedro, window headstone reused in left jamb of west portal (photo: author).

Fig. 3. Fátima, San Xoán, inscribed wooden lintel, south doorway of chancel (photo: author).