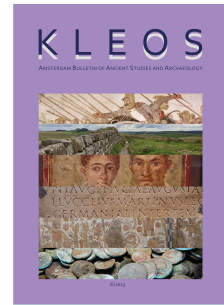




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Social and Religious Differences in the Rural Village of Gózquez (San Martín de la Vega, Madrid, Spain)

Silvia Berrica

ABSTRACT

This article examines the social and religious differences shift of Visigothic Spain through the case study of Gózquez. The site is a village built at the end of the 6th century during the period of territorial reorganisation by the local aristocracy. Nonetheless, during the 8th century there was a progressive Islamisation, which led to new ceramic forms and a change in the funeral rite. In Gózquez and its archaeological materiality, it is possible to reflect on the wider social dynamics and show the succession of changes between the Visigothic and Islamic periods.

INTRODUCTION

In the past, the studies focusing on rural settlements in the region of Madrid have been neglected within the mosaic of early medieval landscapes. Until recently, archaeologists were attentive to studying cemeteries with little attention given to the nearby Early Medieval settlements. In this context, the outcome of the study of the village of Gózquez with a simple typological study of the materials, is not enough to determine the diachronic changes in this site. Therefore, stratigraphic study is essential to capturing the differences between the 6th and 8th centuries.¹ This article aims to present a social study of the Early Medieval Period through the specific case of Gózquez, analysing the two most significant spaces of the town together: the domestic area and the cemetery.

This paper will argue that the analysis of archaeological materiality can determine the social differences in the territory and, therefore, explore the hierarchical structure of the Early Medieval society.² Contextualised cemeteries, together with the study of the town, can determine the social aspect. Reflecting on the hierarchy of Early Medieval society is possible with the

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► [Profile page](#)

¹ Gutiérrez Lloret 2007; Amorós Ruiz 2015; Berrica 2020.

² Azkarate Garai-Olaun/García Camino 2012; Francovich/Hodges 2003; Olmo Enciso 2015; Sánchez Pardo 2014.

quantitative analysis (*how many tombs have grave goods*) and qualitative (*what kind of grave goods*) of the tombs. The diachronic study of the habitat zone helps to determine the presence and quantity of prestige elements. However, when the tombs no longer present grave goods, a social change from the 7th century onwards, can other ways be found to understand the hierarchy within the village? For example, can the combined analysis of architectural features and burial rituals help us in this type of analysis? To answer these questions, I will examine the historical background of the site at the time of the Early Medieval period, and how archaeology has traditionally handled its materials. It will be then illustrated how the examination of the materiality linked to both the domestic and funerary areas allow a better understanding of the socio-cultural structure of Gózquez. Through the methodological study that is proposed in this article I want to highlight the complexity and hierarchy of the rural areas of the Iberian central peninsula.³

THE HISTORICAL-ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Cemeteries excavated as isolated sites without reference to nearby settlements have drawn particular attention in studies on rural areas of the last century. Funerary studies in the 20th century considered the early Medieval cemeteries as belonging to Germanic groups who reached the Iberian Peninsula. It was considered by various historians and archaeologists as a privileged place for the settlement of the Visigoths, since it was located near the capital, Toledo.⁴ Germanic grave goods were classified as the identifiers of new Germanic reality based on this study, which focused on grave goods found in tombs that broke with Roman funerary traditions.⁵

The German '*Ethnische Deutung*' line of research influenced previous studies.⁶ However, Pere de Palol's school in the 1960s broke with the theories of a Germanic imprint. He focused on the investigation of continuity between the Roman and Visigothic periods, coming to formulate the term Hispano-Visigothic.⁷ This school influenced the new generation. In the 1980s, Gisela Ripoll maintained a Hispano-Visigothic cultural approach presenting the Toreutics to date archaeological contexts through Visigothic fibulae.⁸

3 Berrica 2023.

4 Martínez Santa Olalla 1934; 1946; Morin de Pablos 2006; López Quiroga/Benito Díaz 2008; Barroso Cabrera 2018.

5 Martínez Santa Olalla 1934; 1946.

6 Morin de Pablos 2006; López Quiroga/Benito Díaz 2008; Barroso Cabrera 2018.

7 Palol 1966; 1986.

8 Ripoll López 1987; 1991.

Lauro Olmo Enciso has also taken a position against the ethnic interpretation with which the archaeological remains of this period are examined, underlining the importance of differentiating between the 'Visigoth' and the 'Visigothic period'.⁹ Other researchers such as Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo and Alfonso Vigil-Escalera Guirado have taken a position against this theme, moving away from a culturalist interpretation of the Visigothic period. However, Vigil-Escalera uses the method of Toréutica to date the end of Gózquez site, where the lyriform fibula found, according to their interpretation, it determines the end of the village in 750 AD, as he expresses in his article.¹⁰

On this topic, Sonia Gutiérrez Lloret has exposed how lyriform fibulae has been found in later stratigraphy, into the 9th century and that using these fibulae for dating can lead to errors of chronological interpretation.¹¹ This assumption is corroborated by the archaeological excavations at Gózquez, where lyriform fibulae were found in stratigraphic levels dating to the 8th and 9th centuries (examples: Cancho del Confesionario, La Cabilda, Dehesa de Navalvillar, Placer de Ver) (see figure 1).

Throughout the 6th century, a new type of landscape emerged that affected both urban and rural areas.¹² In this new landscape, the 'villager model' presented an independent reality, where the peasant had direct control over agricultural production: this would have been the consequence of the loss of power by the ruling elites and the aristocracy.¹³ Nevertheless, historical sources show how the aristocracy, bishops and military elites dealt with tax collection by exercising power over the region.¹⁴ In addition, written texts make it possible to classify the social differences between peasants: wage labourers, medium landowners, village chiefs, free peasants and slaves.¹⁵ In the process of rearticulating the rural landscape, the hilltops for regional taxation, control of local productive areas, and articulating centres that captured and distributed imported products and goods are all important elements to consider.¹⁶

With this analysis on the domestic and funerary spaces

9 Olmo Enciso 1991; 2002; 2008; 2012.

10 "Para el cierre de la secuencia se cuenta con otras dataciones radiocarbónicas C14 y los paralelos y relación con materiales datados en la primera y segunda mitad del siglo VIII de dentro y fuera de la región. Los contextos de la última fase (Periodo III) proporcionan además una serie de materiales cerámicos y un broche de cinturón liriforme característicos de algunos ajuares de tumbas tardovisigodas, datables a partir de mediados del siglo VII" (Vigil-Escalera 2013, 175).

11 Gutiérrez Lloret 2007, 304–305.

12 Olmo Enciso et al. 2019.

13 Vigil-Escalera 2007; Quirós Castillo 2010;

14 Vives 1967; Wickham 2008.

15 McCormick 2003; Wickham 2008; Harper 2019.

16 Castellanos 2018; Martín Viso 2015; Olmo Enciso 2018.

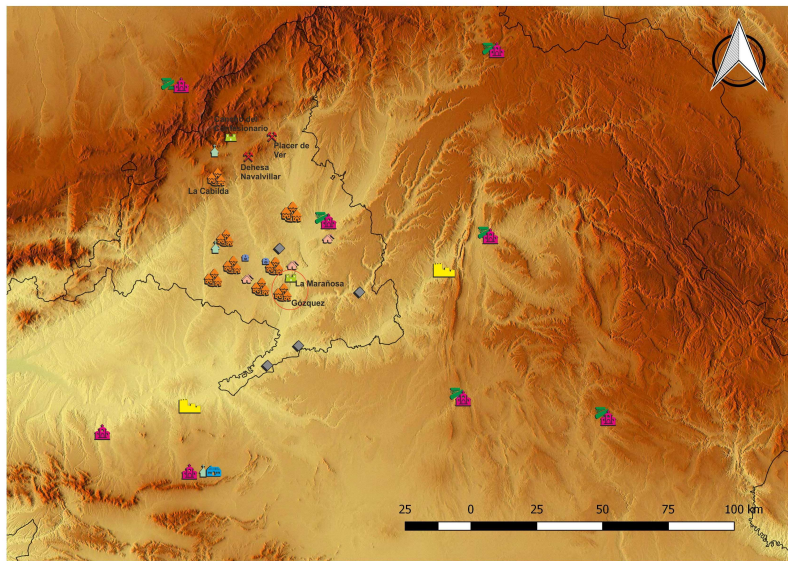


Figure 1.
Buckle in domestic stratigraphic: a) Placer de Ver; b) Dehesa de Navalvillar; c) Cancho del Confesionario; d) La Cabilda. (Created by author).

of Gózquez, this paper will contribute to the debate on the articulation of the rural landscape of the Early Medieval Period, explaining that these villages had external contacts with centres of greater prestige that controlled the territory and that within the settlement, it is possible to detect different social categories tied to agricultural, livestock and artisan work. Differentiating settlements is possible through materiality classification and the type of architecture. This includes a diverse range of building types, crafts of different forms as well as agricultural activities (large, medium, and small scale). Of particular importance are regional import objects; peculiar objects (numbered ceramics, blackboards, ballpoint pen); local and imported ceramics and valuables such as bronze, silver or gold.

The process of Islamisation from 711 AD, beginning with the arrival of the Muslim in the Iberian Peninsula, drove new changes among which technology, potteries, and a new funerary ritual are important. Nevertheless, the study of Islamic cemeteries in the countryside of the peninsular centre has been minimal.¹⁷ In some cases, Islamic tombs have not been published or are simply assimilated as rituals of the Visigothic period without examining the changes that take place during the 8th century (see figure 2). Gózquez acts as a good example for the regional diversity that illustrates the social complexity of the period, determining how these large villages were related to the power centres of the local

¹⁷ Vigil-Escalera Guirado 2004; 2009.



Map Legend

-  City Visigoth Period
-  Roman City
-  Monastery
-  Hilltop
-  Aristocratic Palace
-  Rural Church
-  Mining Village
-  Primary Village
-  Secondary Village
-  Farm
-  cemetery

aristocrats.¹⁸

DATA: GÓZQUEZ DE ARRIBA

The town of Góznquez is in the municipality of Santa María de la Vega, south of Madrid (Spain). It sits in a small valley about 3 km away from the Jarama River (see figure 3). The necropolis sits on a terrace facing northeast. Near Góznquez there is a hill on which is located the Höhensiedlung of La Marañosa (5th–7th centuries). Marañosa is a hilltop with a defensive wall where local and imported materials have been found.¹⁹ These products indicate that this centre was inhabited until the 7th century. Around Marañosa (see figure 4), there are several villages, among which is Góznquez.

The study that has been developed of the territory of the Central Plateau has allowed us to detect different rural social realities that not only indicate peasant spaces but also local and regional power. The hierarchy proposed has not been pre-established through a historiographic study but is the result of an investigation and of the archaeological materiality found in each settlement that allowed the differentiation between these settlements. Therefore, these results are due to location, architecture, urbanism, artisan activities, agricultural work, regional imports, the local ceramics imported as well as metals and weapons.

Some settlements built on high and plateau hills, presenting a wall or a defensive system of a natural and anthropic type can be

Figure 2.

Map of the sites named in the article (created by author).

¹⁸ Berrica 2023.

¹⁹ I thank Javier Martínez, PhD candidate of Complutense University, for the unpublished information on the site on which he is working.

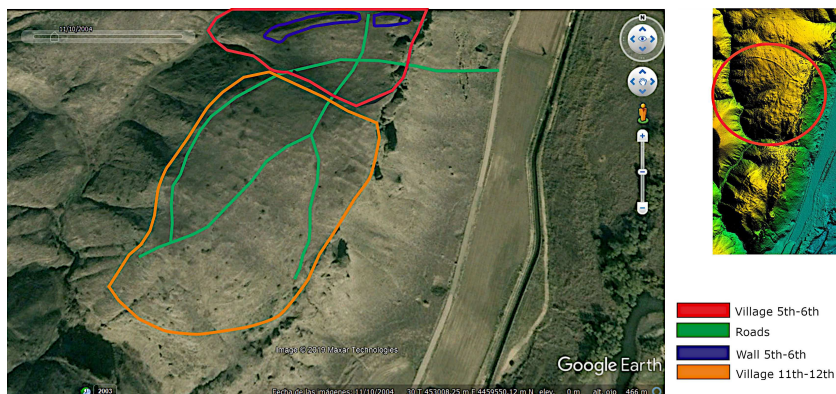


Figure 3.
View from La Marañosa towards the Gózquez area
(created by author).

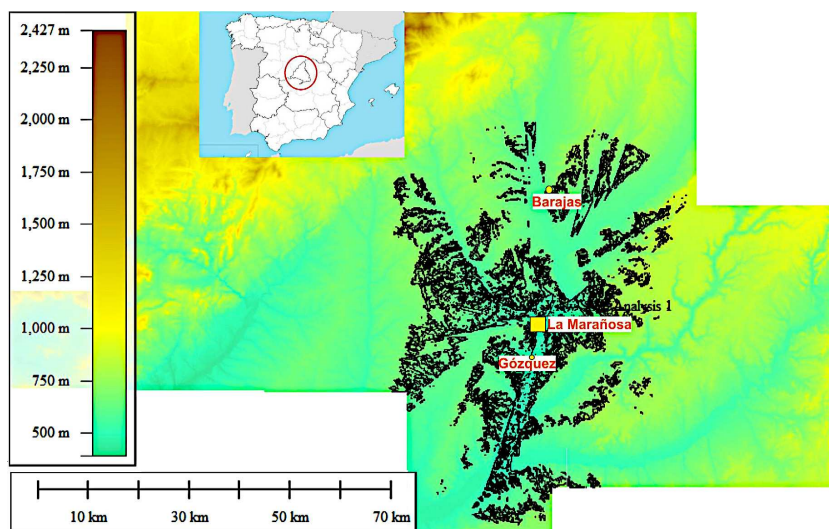


Figure 4.
La Marañosa Visibility Basin, Global Mapper
(created by author).

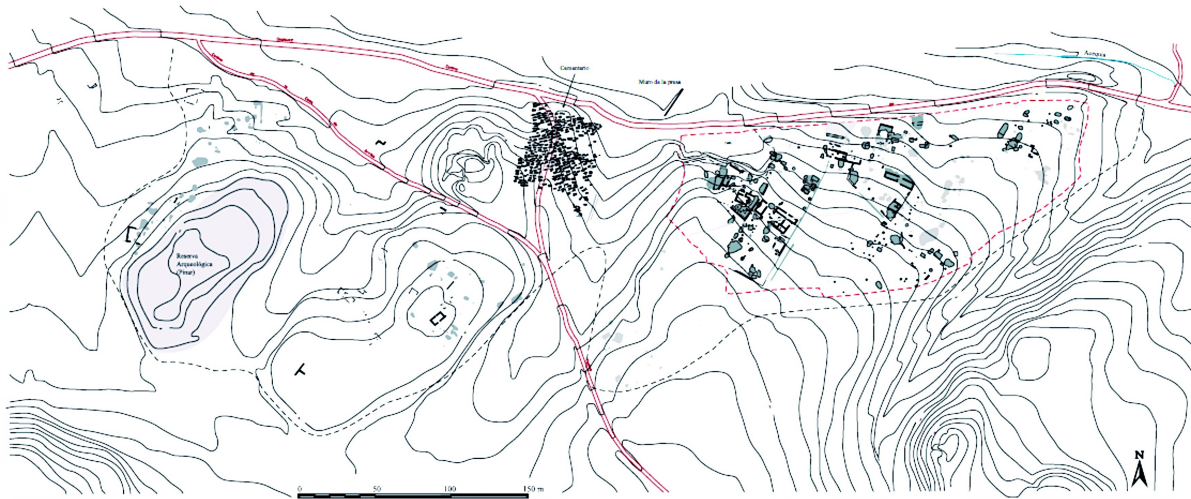
classified as hilltop sites.²⁰ In some cases, they are tax collection and toll payment areas. In the internal structure of these settlement craft activities such as specialized pottery and metallurgical work are present. In the northern part of the Central Plateau, Cancho del Confesionario, La Cabrera, Dehesa de la Oliva, La Marañosa and Fuente de la Mora, among others, were settlements that met these requirements.²¹ The methodology used for this type of study examined the archaeological memories and the materials deposited in the Regional Archaeological Museum of Alcalá de Henares (Madrid). Stratigraphy specifies the phases of the buildings and the cemetery; in this way, it establishes a relative chronology based on the stratigraphic study. Each of the materials (2100 artefacts between ceramic, glass, and metal) have been analysed, photographed, and drawn.

THE DOMESTIC ZONE

The excavation of Gózquez, starting in 1998, represents a total

²⁰ Berrica 2023.

²¹ Berrica 2022c.



EXCAVACIONES ARQUEOLÓGICAS EN EL YACIMIENTO DE ÉPOCA VISIGODA DE GÓZQUEZ DE ARRIBA (SAN MARTÍN DE LA VEGA, MADRID)
 PLANO 1. PLANIMETRÍA GENERAL DEL ASENTAMIENTO (YACIMIENTOS 050 -POBLADO- Y 091 -CEMENTERIO-)

ÁREA, Sociedad Cooperativa Octubre, 2000

excavation of 10 hectares (see figure 5).²² This archaeological complex was a novel discovery because, for the first time, a Visigothic Period cemetery with its settlement was found.²³ During the excavation it became clear that the settlement was a new foundation. Fifteen stone buildings have been excavated and the remainder are fondos de cabañas and barns, built with perishable materials.²⁴

The village's architecture is characterised by the 15-building built with stone plinth interlocked with plaster. In the countryside of the early Middle Ages, its housing structures were generally built with local materials.²⁵ These buildings have undergone a series of renovations and expansions over the course of two centuries. Huts built with perishable materials and 76 granaries for storing grain were also found. In building-15 there are two rooms, E-7/8, one with a tall mill supported by stones and the other room which seems to be of a later phase, since the walls lean against those of the previous phase. In this second room (building 8), numerous metal fragments (2601 g) were found, including slag and semi-finished products (see figure 6). Inside is what could be a quadrangular furnace for smelting iron. In the architectural complex E-15/6, there was an oil press (see figure 7); the use of this building for oil production was further corroborated with palynological studies and the remains of European *Olea* were found. The town alternated housing plots with agricultural fields, forming pre-established rectangular areas where cereal crops were

Figure 5.
Gózquez (after Contreras Martínez/Fernández Ugalde 2006, 518; Vigil-Escalera Guirado, 2013, 158).

22 Vigil-Escalera 2013.

23 Contreras Martínez/Fernández Ugalde 2006.

24 Hamerow 2002, 31; Vigil-Escalera 2000.

25 Berrica 2023.

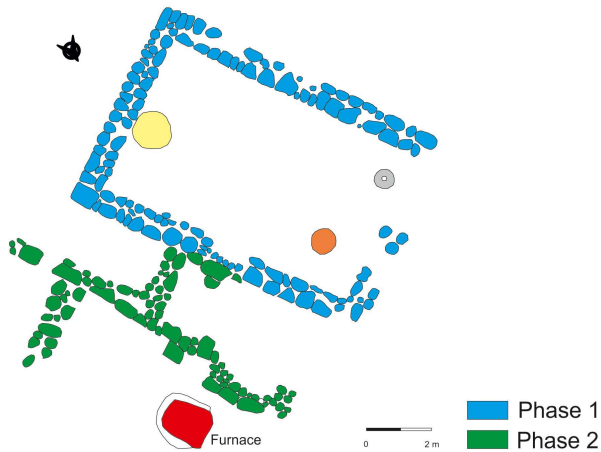


Figure 6.
Building E-7/8. (Drawing by author after Vigil-Escalera Guirado Excavation Report 1997-1999, 126).

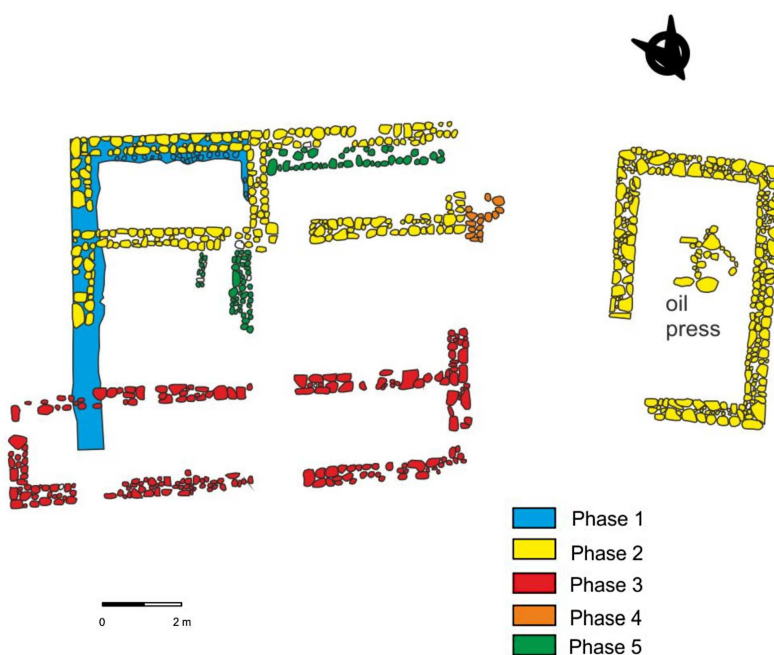


Figure 7.
Building E-15/6. (Drawing by author after Excavation Report by Vigil-Escalera Guirado 1997-1999).

grown.²⁶

Human remains have been found in the storage pit 5831, repurposed as a garbage dump. Five bodies of infants were found in the first stratigraphic layer (see figure 8), thrown into the silo without a ritual; the children were between seven and nine years old. It is found in storage pit (silo) 6640, where in the second stratigraphic stratum there are five individuals with an age between six and 20 years. A layer of stone and plaster was found on top of human remains in both silos. Graves were also sealed with stone slabs (figure 9).

²⁶ Análisis Palinológicos en Yacimientos Arqueológicos de La Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid (Barajas y San Martín De La Vega) José Antonio López Sáez Laboratorio de Arqueobotánica, Departamento de Prehistoria, Instituto de Historia, CSIC, Madrid, Memoria inédita del Encadenado (Vigil-Escalera, 2004). See also Vigil-Escalera 2009.

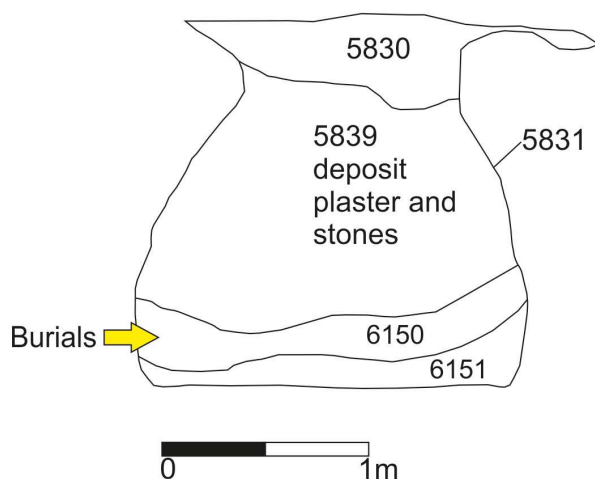


Figure 8.
Storage pit 5831 (drawing by author after Excavation Report by Vigil Escalera Guirado 1997-1999, p. 275).

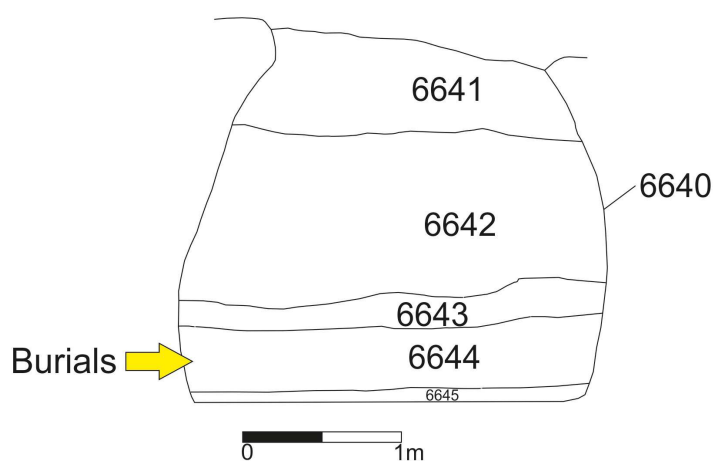


Figure 9.
Storage pit 6640 (drawing by author after Vigil-Escalera Guirado Excavation Report 1997-1999, 301).

THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE DOMESTIC AREA

Gózquez ceramics are mainly locally manufactured. Most of the finds are coarse wares. Where we find a great variety of pots, large, long-mouth kettles, and pans, the ceramics are primarily without (70%) any decoration. Where decoration was noted, it is primarily incised waves and at the end of the 8th century, in the stratigraphy of the domestic sphere, the painted ceramics of the Islamic Period began to appear. Among the ceramics of Islamic Period, there was finger-painted black and red ceramic of highly purified light and porous paste (end of the 8th century). The Gózquez paste has little mica, unlike other areas in the centre of the peninsula, such as the village of Barajas, with which we will compare part of the ceramics found (see figure 10).²⁷

Undoubtedly, one of the determining factors in the study of the economy of Gózquez has been the study of unpublished amphorae. So far, there are different amphora fragments on the site: two

²⁷ Berrica 2022a; Berrica 2022b.

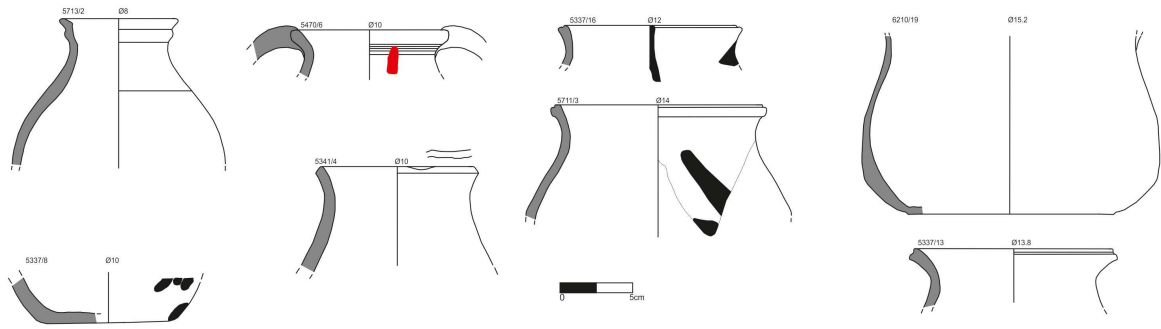


Figure 10.
Gózquez potteries 8th-9th AD (drawn and created by author).



Figure 11.
A fragment of an imported Spathion (on the left) and a regional one (on the right) found in Gózquez (created by author).

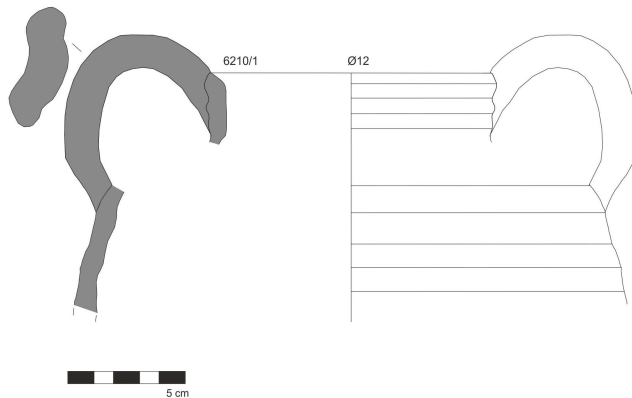


Figure 12.
Imported globular amphora found in Gózquez (created by author).

Spatheion amphorae and one Spatheion amphora fired in an alternate setting with a polished bar finish the etched decoration (see figure 11). In addition, a globular amphora made on a lathe with two handles and traces of bitumen on edge (see figure 12). All these amphoras have been found in *fondos de cabaña*.

*THE CEMETERY AREA*²⁸

The Gózquez cemetery (6th-8th centuries) is located north of the town (see figure 13).²⁹ In total, 369 tombs have been found, of which 247 have been excavated. For the study of the cemetery area, the same methodology has been chosen as for the domestic space. The excavation files have been studied, which offers the possibility of a stratigraphic record and the relative chronology. The tombs have been divided according to their different typology. A quantitative and qualitative analysis was established for the tombs with grave goods to identify the richest tombs of the others.

In this section, presenting the most interesting tombs (5 monumental tombs, 14 plaster slabs and 85 with funerary objects), which gave particularities of note. The remaining, are common, rectangular-shaped tombs excavated in the ground (126 graves), most of which do not have any defining characteristics.

Only 85 of the 247 excavated tombs were found to have funerary objects, dating between the second half of 6th and the beginning of the 7th centuries (see appendix 1). These tombs with grave goods contained bodies deposited in a supine position with an East-West orientation. Part of the study contained a quantitative analysis of the different types of tombs based on the funerary goods belonging to the second half of the 6th century and present here a table with the number of the tomb and the different objects found in each one (see appendix 2). Some tombs contain objects of different types, such as rectangular bronze buckles decorated with glass or shells, smaller buckles, rings, necklaces with glass or amber ornaments, and, in two cases, coins (see figure 14). There were only twelve tombs with large numbers of objects (numbers of tombs: 14, 33, 38, 97, 112, 123, 133, 136, 143, 148, 157, 173). We have considered these the richest tombs because they had at least five objects and, in the majority, were bronze. These belongings include bronze rings, rectangular belt plates with elaborate incised goldsmith decorations and decorated with mother-of-pearl and glass. Bronze earrings, bronze, or iron fibulae with elaborate incised or hollow decoration, bells, bronze coins, necklaces of glass

²⁸ Many thanks to Miguel Contreras for allowing me to study the excavation of the Gózquez necropolis and for his constant help/Contreras Martínez 1999.

²⁹ Contreras Martínez/Fernández Ugalde 2006.

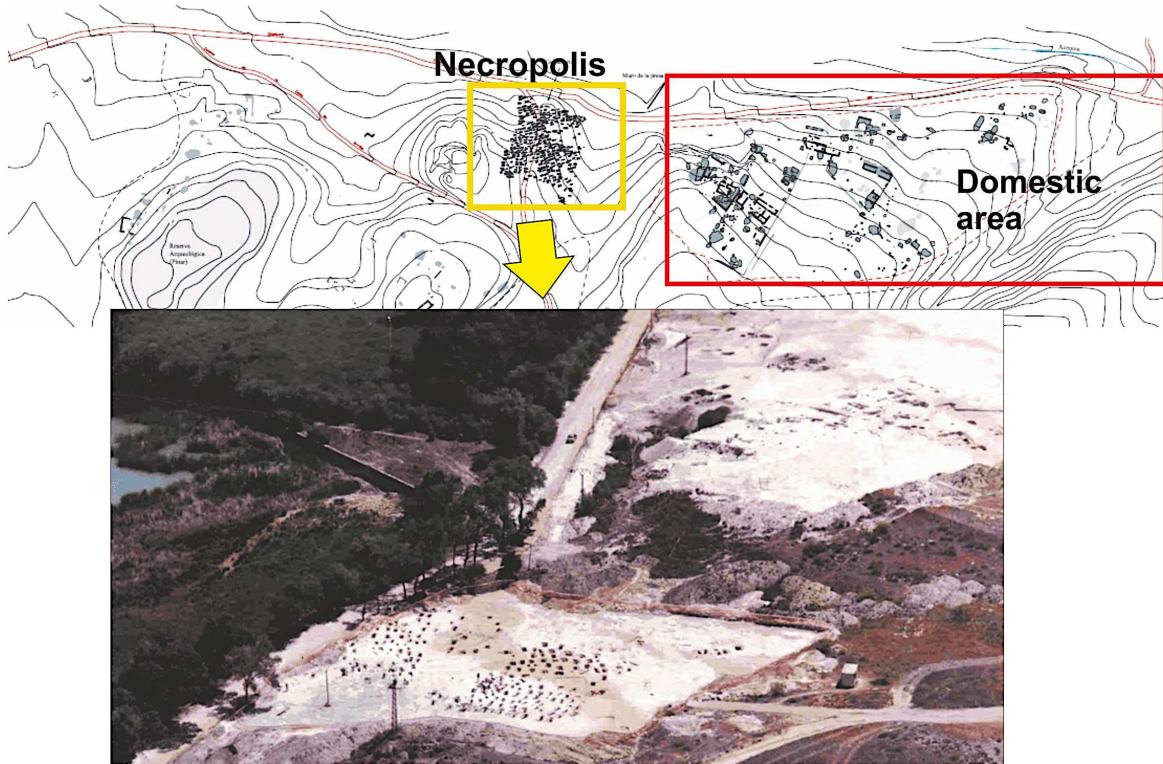


Figure 13.
Aerial photograph Gózquez cemetery (adapted from Excavation Report by Contreras Martínez, 1998 y Vigil-Escalera Guirado, 2013, 158).

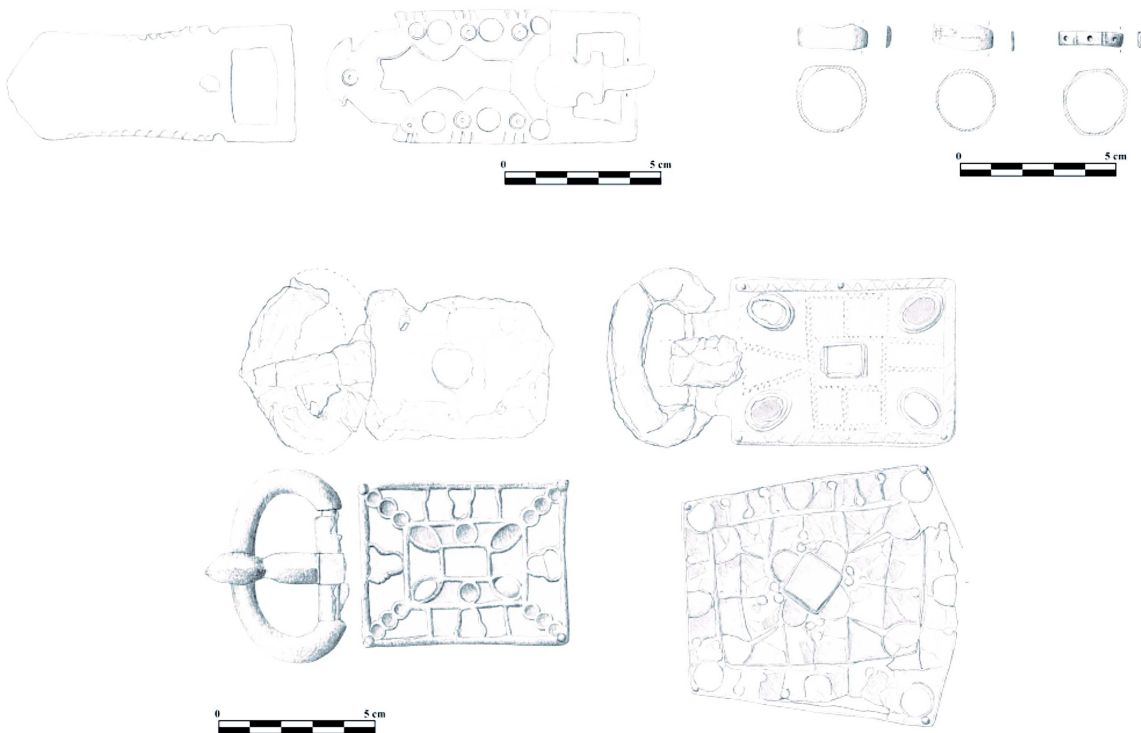
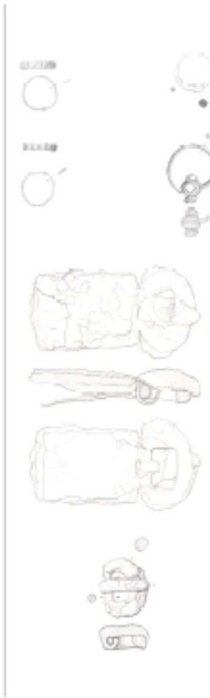
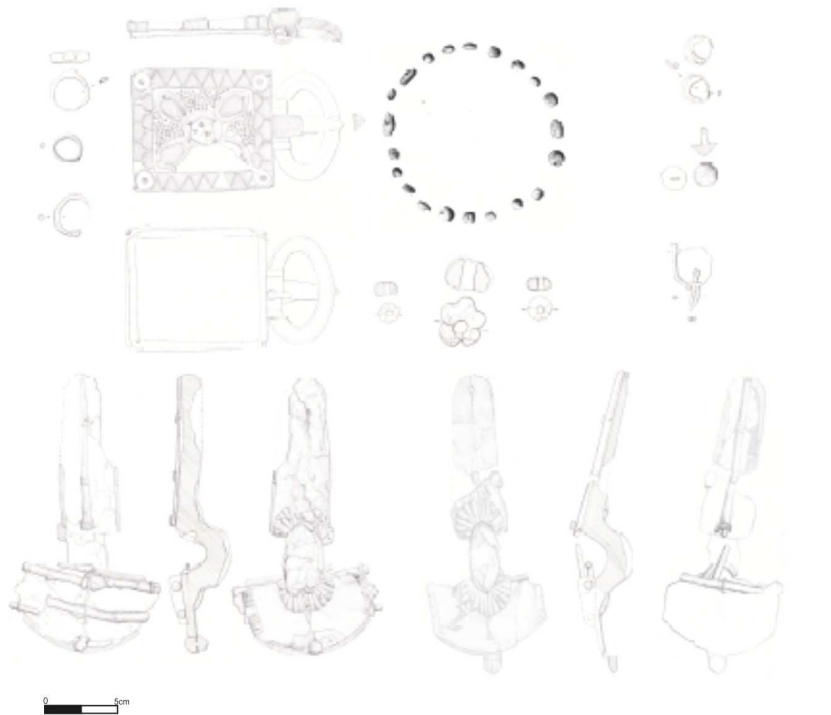


Figure 14.
Some grave findings (adapted from Contreras Martínez/Fernández Ugalde 2006, 527, 528, 530).



beads and amber have been recovered. The most characteristic elements of these tombs were scutiform bronze sconces to hold tablecloths (see figure 15). A second group contains objects of more simple materials, such as bronze or iron.

Finally, a third group consists of tombs that only contained a few iron objects. To this third group belong 19 tombs in which only one object was found. These objects can vary in quality and number. There are two tombs in which only a glass necklace bead has been found. In three, we have an iron knife, two bronze bracelets, in other three glass paste necklaces, in one bronze earring and a bronze or iron belt buckle in most (see appendix 3).

Passing from the quantitative analysis of the funerary assemblages to the qualitative analysis of the architecture, it should be highlighted that, like all tombs in this phase, they are built with plaster slabs and a rectangular. Only in the case of tomb 49 are the slabs that close the tomb made of ceramic tiles.

We also found ten tombs that had been covered with slabs but without items. In a rural world where wooden or adobe architecture was predominant, it was probably a great effort to invest in sourcing carved plaster slabs. Consequently, it is more than probable that the burials without grave goods but with plaster slabs and more elaborate characteristics are from a later phase (7th–8th centuries) (see figure 16).

The tombs are of different types, ranging from simple rectangular pits (see figure 17a) to those with a simple lateral chamber (see figure 17b) or a lateral chamber with a double burial

Figure 15.

The funerary assemblage of two individuals, a man and a woman, deposited in grave 112, the richest tomb of Gózquez (adapted from Excavation Report by Contreras Martínez, 1998).

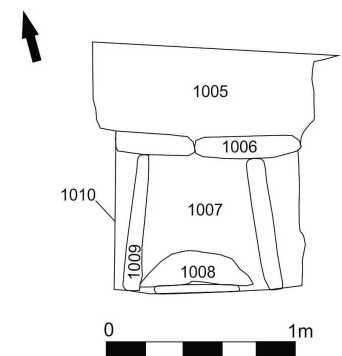


Figure 16.

Tomb with a plaster slab (adapted from Contreras Martínez/Fernández Ugalde 2006,527,528,530).

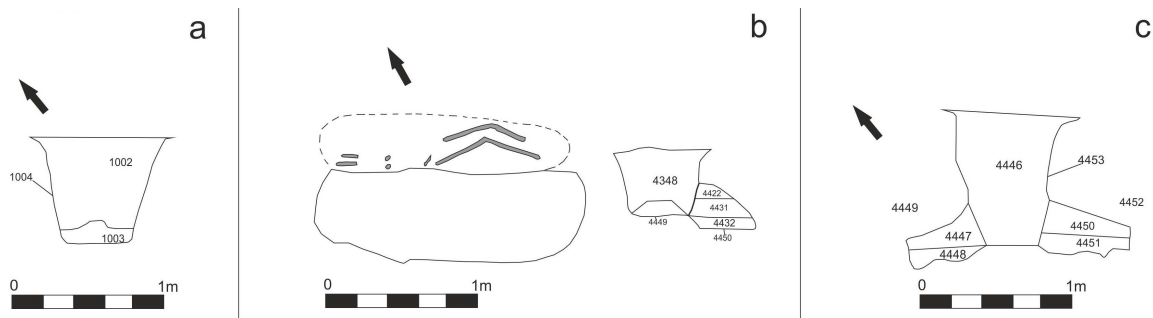


Figure 17.
Three types of simple tombs in Gózquez (drawing by author after Excavation Report by Contreras Martinez 1998).

(see figure 17c). In some cases, the graves had been used more than once. For example, tomb 136 was used up to 5 times, and seven bodies were buried there, including six adults and one child. As grave goods are found only in the first three burials and not in the last two, it is more than likely that this tomb was used throughout generations at a time of transition between the 6th and 7th centuries (see figure 18). Of the 247 graves, only 82 had wooden coffins.

We found six infant graves with the infant placed between two tiles (tomb 56, 43, 68, 82,95, 127) (see figure 19).

Approximately ten tombs, including numbers 4 and 113, have vertically placed plaster slabs like a hypogeum, permanently enclosed with horizontally placed plasterboard (see figure 20).

Tombs 54, 76, 103, 215 are very particular because they have large stone structures that rise above the tomb and have lost the monument piece. The structure of tomb 54 is built with stones bound with clay mortar. Tiles were also found on top of the collapse debris. The whole structure is supported by two gypsum plates positioned to the sides which allowed central access to the tomb. The body was covered with a thick layer of brown earth. The pit was rectangular with an E-W orientation (see figure 21). Inside the tomb, neither the coffin nor any funerary goods were found. It is probably one of the tombs from a period later than the 6th and beginning of the 7th century where we still find funerary objects. From the 7th century onwards, the graves found in the Iberian Peninsula increasingly lose their grave goods.³⁰ Constructions in the southern part of the cemetery are located at the point of best visibility from the town.

Four tombs have been found that break with the scheme described so far (89, 91,116, 216). These are three graves dug in the ground with the body in lateral decubitus with bent legs. The tombs are narrow, and in two cases (91 and 116), the graves have an antechamber and a side chamber. In these two cases, the bodies face north. In tomb 116, the head has not been found. In 91, the

³⁰ Azkarate Garai-Olaun 2007, 147.

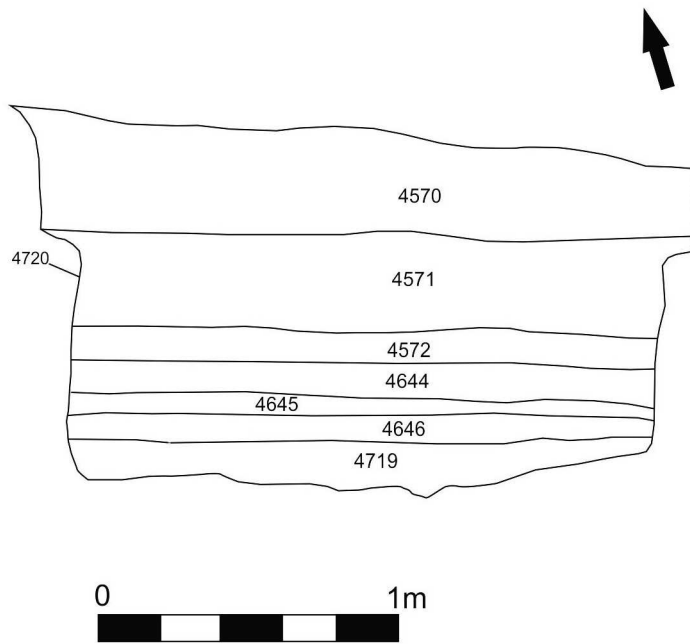


Figure 18.
 Example of Multiple Tomb in Gózquez, T. 136 (drawing by author after Excavation Report by Contreras Martinez 1998).

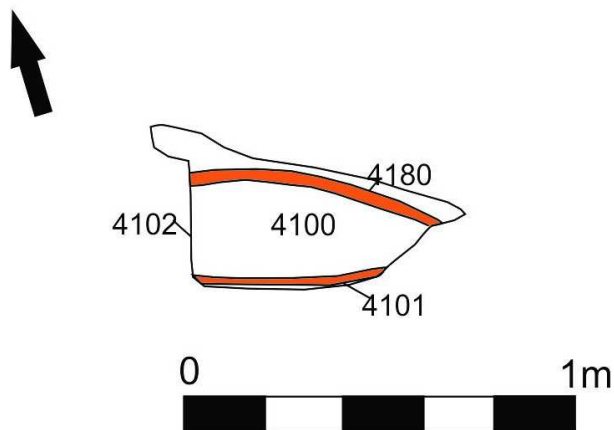


Figure 19.
 Example of a Children's Grave in Gózquez (drawing by author after Excavation Report by Contreras Martinez 1998).



Figure 20.
 Example of a tomb covered with slabs in Gózquez (after Excavation Report by Contreras Martinez 1998).

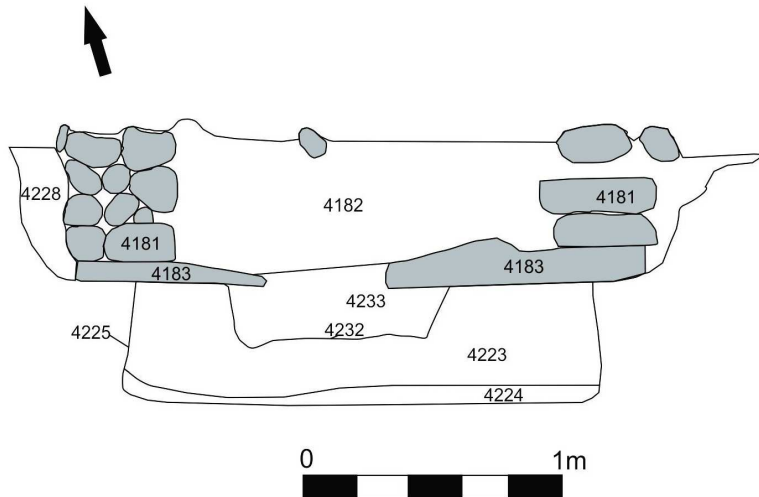


Figure 21.
Monumental tomb (drawing by author after Excavation Report by Contreras Martinez 1998).



Figure 22.
Lateral type tombs in Gózquez (created by author after Excavation Report by Contreras Martinez 1998).

head is tilted south. Finally, tombs 8g and 216 are located on the south side, a series of stones attached to the body to preserve the lateral position (see figure 22).

DISCUSSION

With this work I intend to describe the rural inhabitants. This work aims to better understand the social nuances found within the village and the social contacts at the regional level that peasants may have with local elites who resided in the hilltop and the rural aristocracy.

SOCIAL RE-EVALUATION

With the end of the Roman organisation, the rural landscape changes completely between the end of the 5th and 6th centuries. In this period, outside the urban area, a whole new social reality developed, showing that the Early Medieval landscape was very

complex. Monasteries, rural churches, aristocratic palaces, hilltops, villages of different sizes and types and farms, demonstrate the social variety of this period in the rural environment.³¹

Although the disintegration of the Roman Empire was a clear break with the large-scale state organisation, there is no reason to believe that the entire hierarchical system of intermediate administrations between the state and the peasants was interrupted, as the Councils or the *De Fisco* seem to show.³² From the 5th and 6th centuries, it can be argued that the elite groups in rural society began to manifest through the construction of defended hilltop sites similar to *Höhensiedlungen*.³³

The hilltops were more than likely serving as administrative centres that locally controlled neighbouring villages. In addition to being centres of political administration, they were also tax collection and distributors of products.³⁴ These are characterised by walls and craft activities.³⁵ In some cases, churches have been recovered within them.³⁶ In many cases, imported pottery, valuables and gold coins were found, as well as pizarras, stones on which income from products and taxes were noted. Therefore, these hilltops have been interpreted as the result of an elite initiative to exercise power in rural areas.³⁷

Through the study presented we can demonstrate that Góñez, according to the proposed hierarchy, is a 'Primary Village'.³⁸ With this term I considered a 'Primary Village', those of significant dimension with between 20 and 50 structures. They often present different types of architecture (complex buildings with stone plinths and huts built with perishable materials), which are factors that underline the social complexity within the village. Inside there are different agricultural activities of regional distribution, while specialised artisan activities, such as metallurgy, are linked to the village's needs, as is the manufacture of local ceramics and imported items. Many contacts at the regional level (purchase of ingots, acquisition of hand mills from the mountain areas, regional amphorae, sale of products, addition of wood from the mountain areas) are present whilst they act as centres with the presence of social complexity, primarily elite individuals or groups living within the village.

31 Olmo Enciso et al. 2019; Diarte Blasco 2018; Chavarría 2021.

32 Wickham 2008; Vives 1967; Castellanos 2018.

33 Berrica 2023; Olmo Enciso 2018; Olmo Enciso et al. 2018.

34 Berrica 2022c, Berrica, in press.

35 Berrica and Schibille, in press; Martín Viso et al. 2020

36 Quirós Castillo et al. 2021.

37 Wickham 2008; Martín Viso 2014; Olmo Enciso 2015; Castellanos 2018.

38 Berrica 2023.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INDICATORS IN THE DOMESTIC AREA

The evidence for this new approach comes through the study of the archaeological materiality of an excavation. Agricultural, livestock (what types of animals) or artisan activities (primary or secondary work), the number of silos found, how many buildings in stone plinths and the materiality all indicate a relationship with hilltop and urban areas.

In the village lived people who were dedicated to a specific activity; blacksmiths, bakers or the oil process were not activities that could be improvised but required specialisation, as demonstrated in Building 7/8, with its sophisticated mill. These mills, of which only the upper part remains, shows that we are faced with a specialisation of the trade.³⁹ A similar mill in the Dehesa de Navalvillar has been recovered next to a bread oven.⁴⁰ This is more characteristic if we count that in the site, only two mills have been found in situ: in building E7 (7th–8th centuries) and in sunken-featured building 6580, associated with the first phase of the site (6th–7th centuries). An oven was associated with the sunken-featured building. This suggests the presence of two specialised bakeries of different phases in the deposit, indicating control and potential sale of this product. Because the other mills (four fragments) have been dumped in storage pits or reused in wall sockets in later constructions, it is difficult to reconstruct a wider distribution. All these hand mill fragments were made of granite, a material found in the Sierra de Guadarrama area in the north, about 70 km from the site. Therefore, it is probable that a controlled trade existed at a regional level for the production and distribution of these mills.

The probable metal workshop found in building 8 is a secondary type of ironwork workshop that catered to the village's needs. These workshops generally work with remelted metal; however, the metal at the time of recycling loses much bulk. Therefore, iron must be repeatedly added through the return of semi-finished material such as ingots. Ingot production has been found in the Dehesa de Navalvillar, where there are complete cycle workshops, metal reduction, bar or bread ingots and specialised material.⁴¹ In both the Dehesa de Navalvillar and La Cabilda, a bakery was found next to a metal workshop, so this idea of forming a kind of specialised spatial zone with workshops seems very common in these larger villages.⁴²

Of particular interest are the amphorae found. They show that

39 Berrica and Schibille, in press.

40 Berrica 2022c.

41 Berrica 2021.

42 Berrica 2022b.

the site acted as a 'Primary Village' with regional contacts. Two are whitish paste, similar to those found in Recópolis. Recópolis, an important Royal seat, located in the centre of the Iberian Peninsula, is the destination for much of the amphorae trade in the 7th and 8th centuries, with goods arriving from North Africa and travelling by land from port cities such as Valencia or Tarraco.⁴³ The reducing and alternating paste of the amphora does not appear to have a typical North African paste.⁴⁴ Instead, this type of amphorae is probably a regional production.⁴⁵ This amphora is the only one found; therefore, hypotheses are still being considered since, at the moment, I do not know of any artisan production centre of this type. However, the idea that these productions were urban or high-status centres, which were the largest recipients of imports, cannot be rejected.

The globular amphora is already from a later period, the 8th century. Although the idea that amphora imports ended in the 6th – 7th century has been considered many times, stratigraphy gives other types of results.⁴⁶ The globular amphorae, typical of the Eastern Mediterranean, continued to travel also during the Islamic Period.⁴⁷ At the moment, it is difficult to establish the manufacturing origin of these amphoras. However, future petrographic analyses will help us to understand better regional and international trade, in addition to the redistribution and reuse of amphorae that were still in good condition.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INDICATORS IN THE NECROPOLIS

The cemetery is a space established when the settlement was founded; it seems to determine distribution dynamics. The graves do not have any apparent systematisation; however, they seem organised in groups.

For the tombs with grave goods from the first phase, it is not only essential to determine which graves had grave goods but which were the ones with the most amounts. Twelve tombs present more grave goods than the others, where the objects were almost exclusively in bronze. In Early Medieval society the quantity and quality of products found in tombs or in domestic environments can help us to establish which families were the richest.⁴⁸ One of the determining factors of goldsmith objects is that no specialised workshop has been found in rural areas, while

43 Bonifay/ Bernal Casasola 2008; Olmo Enciso et al. 2020.

44 Bonifay 2004.

45 Thank you so much to M. Bonifay for helping me in the study of this amphorae.

46 For what concerns the analysis of the pottery, see Bernal Casasola 2010; regarding the stratigraphic studies, see Bonifay/ Bernal Casasola 2008.

47 Molinari 2018.

48 Wickham 2008; Olmo Enciso 2015; Castellanos 2018.

they have been found in urban areas.⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, these objects can be considered a luxury, the symbol of regional exchanges between elites and rural areas.⁵⁰

In the first half of the 7th century, there is a marked decrease in grave goods across the Iberian Peninsula.⁵¹ This phenomenon manifests itself in other areas of Europe as well.⁵² However, we cannot reject the idea that monumental tombs, located in the most visible area of the cemetery, could be a new standard of distinction.

Islamic law forbade mixed burials between Muslims and Christians.⁵³ Nevertheless in rural areas, in the 8th century, it is easy to find tombs of different creeds inside cemeteries.⁵⁴ However, early Islamic tombs in rural areas show uniformity in mixed cemeteries. Consequently, in the countryside, family relationships and local traditions appear to be the strongest at first. Initially, the graves seem to be addressed to only a few people; in the case of Gózquez, we find these graves in 4 different points, which could be considered as four different family groups.

The fact that there are few tombs with overt Islamic conversion is because initially only the elite who lived within the village converted to the new creed. Nonetheless, mixed cemeteries would demonstrate that within rural areas, family and local ties were more important than the religious rules imposed by the new Islamic state.⁵⁵ This is simply a theory emerging from a more exhaustive study of rural areas with cemeteries that present early Islamic burials; however, the Islamic ritual, devoid of grave good and monumentality, is more challenging to interpret.⁵⁶ Moreover, the fact that in Gózquez, it is difficult to establish the majority of sex for the bodies due to the poor preservation of the bones makes part of the analysis difficult.

CONCLUSION

This paper brings a new perspective by framing the settlement in a broader study, which includes other types of dynamics: economic, commercial, and social ones.

The analysis of the archaeological material found in the site allows the understanding of the relationships within the town and outside of it, determining the degree of interaction with the

49 Olmo Enciso 2006.

50 Brownlee 2021; Azkarate Garai-Olaun/García Camino 2012.

51 Azkarate Garai-Olaun 2007.

52 Brownlee 2021.

53 Casal 2021.

54 Berrica 2023.

55 Berrica 2023.

56 Petersen 2013.

hilltops and urban centres. It is believed that the archaeological materiality found in the site can help us to consider Gózquez as a primary village, where we see a discreet social hierarchy with contacts with local elites (La Marañosa) and regional zones (areas of the Sierra de Guadarrama and cities like Recópolis).

The tombs with the richest grave goods from the 6th century reveal that there were wealthy people in the village, which indicates a social differentiation compared to the unfurnished tombs.

It has been argued that the lack of grave goods in the tombs since the early 7th century is a notable change in early medieval society. However, the position of the tombs (where they are located within the cemetery) or the materials with which they are built can assist in determining hierarchical differentiation. The differentiation can be clearly seen inside the town, such as the extension of buildings into stone plinths, the specialisation of some of these buildings (oil processing, bakery, and metallurgical work), indicating that inside the village there were different trades. With the arrival of the Arabs, graves with Islamic rituals gradually appeared. This reveals an early cultural and social change within the settlement. Could it be that the first conversions to Islam were only those of wealthy people from the village, as seen by the conversions to Christianity?

In conclusion, I believe that only with a careful study of the materiality and stratigraphic research is it possible to recognise the diachronic changes of the site and the social and religious transformations of those who live in the area. Therefore, I want to underline that in Gózquez, it cannot be denied that there were within the village different hierarchical groups demonstrating elite and different artisans, in addition to the peasants. Indeed, among the inhabitants of rural areas it is increasingly evident that there were different degrees of social distinction in the Early Middle Ages.

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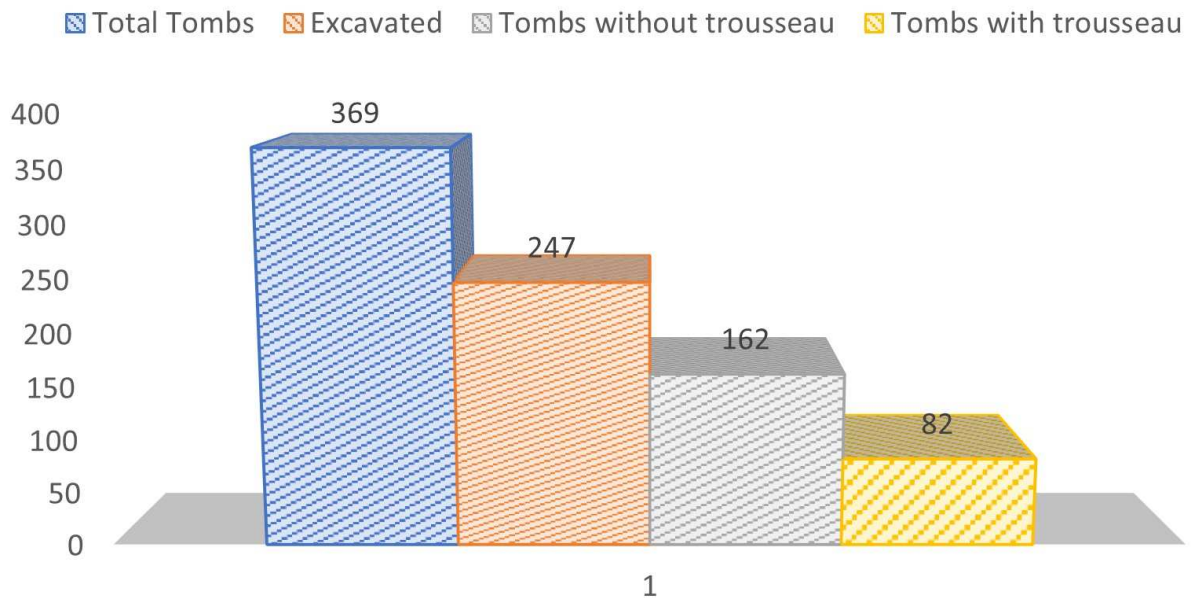
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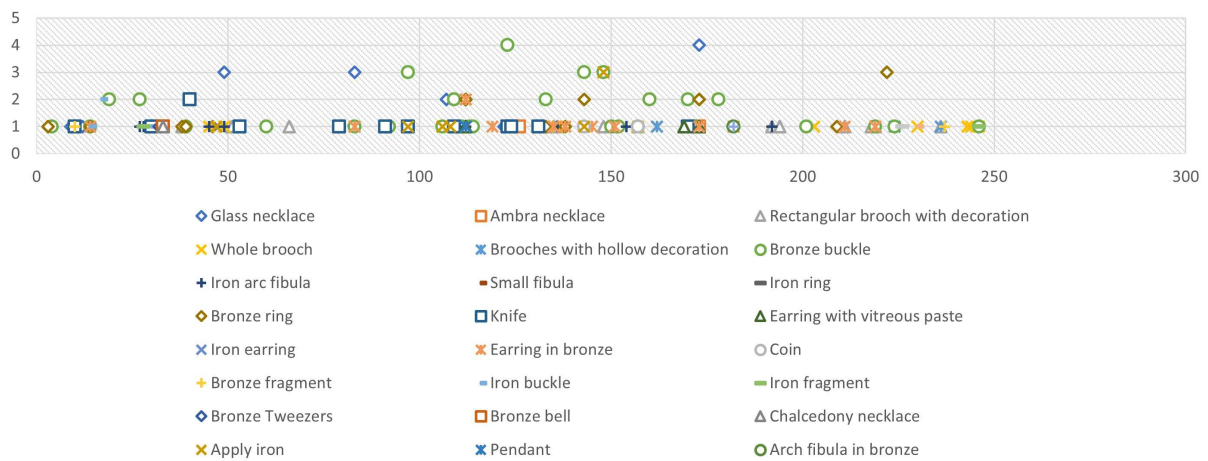
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APPENDIX 1: TOMB ANALYSIS STUDY (CREATED BY AUTHOR)



APPENDIX 2: ANALYSIS OF THE GRAVE GOODS OF THE 85 TOMBS (CREATED BY AUTHOR).



APPENDIX 3: THE TOMBS THAT POSSESS A SINGLE OBJECT (CREATED BY AUTHOR).

Grave	Single object
3	Bronze ring
4	Bronze buckle
9	Glass beads
12	Glass bead
46	Glass bead
49	Glass beads
51	Bronze rectangular buckle
53	Iron knife
60	Bronze buckle
66	Iron buckle
107	Glass bead
111	Bronze buckle
113	Bronze buckle
114	Bronze buckle
119	Bronze earring
122	Glass bead
126	Amber bead
131	Iron knife
132	Bronze rectangular buckle