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Contents

Comments on Muslim, Jewish and Christian Burial Practices in Medieval Toledo (Spain)

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Burial of the dead is a very material reflection on one's own existence. Religious considerations aside, the funerary world has more to do with social, kin, and religious contexts than with the deceased himself/herself. Because of this, burial practices are quite diverse across space and time. Historical texts are essential sources of knowledge about the medieval funerary context; however, only archaeology provides details regarding burial practice and belief. This article analyses Muslim, Christian and Jewish burial rituals and introduces a new field study based on the main results of different excavations, some of them published during the last decade, with the ultimate goal of understanding the funerary world of medieval Toledo. The expulsion of Jews and Muslims at the end of the 15th century by the Catholic Monarchs and their policy of eradicating the memory of their presence in Spain makes difficult our efforts to recover these cultures and their material remains. Until the 12th century, Christians, Jews and Muslims were buried outside the city walls; however, after the taking of Toledo by Alphonse 6th, Christians started using the parish churches and other religious buildings inside the city as burial grounds.

Introduction

The year 711 marks the beginning of a lengthy period of Muslim domination of the Iberian Peninsula, as well as of the so-called Spanish Reconquista. Al-Andalus became part of the Umayyad caliphate, with its cultural and political centre in Syria and its capital in Damascus. The arrival of Umayyad prince ʿAbd al-Raḥmān in 756 and his settling in Cordoba signalled the beginning of the Independent Emirate. This emirate would disappear at the beginning of the 11th century with the consolidation of the Taifa kingdoms. Nevertheless, the Islamic presence in the Iberian Peninsula would not come to an end until the end of the 15th century, with the taking of Granada.

Toledo was the first large Islamic city to fall into the hands of a Christian Kingdom. Its conquest by Alfonso 6th in 1085 marked the beginning of a new period charac-

terised by the cohabitation of Jews, Muslims and Christians. The importance of the philosophical and scientific work inherited from the Islamic period meant the arrival of people from all over Europe whom, together with French, Castillian, Mozarab, Arab, and Jewish clergymen, turned Toledo into a cosmopolitan city. This cohabitation of the "three cultures" was never perfect and was always conditioned by historical events; this period came to end with the fall of Granada in 1492 to the Catholic Monarchs.

The city of Toledo, which was now the capital of a Christian Kingdom, maintained its oriental appearance. This Islamicizing style further developed from the middle of the 12th century with the building of the first large Mudéjar monuments, inspired by Islamic art, which were the Christian response to the process of acculturation that began some years earlier.

During the first two centuries following the Muslim conquest there are, with the odd exception, hardly any records of severe confrontation between Jews, Muslims and Christians. However, the most dramatic events (sacking, killings, etc), which affected the Iberian Jews, took place in the 14th century (Ríos de la Llave 2007). The decline of the Toledo Jewish quarter, which was most heavily impacted by these conflicts, was aggravated in the following century with the violence towards the growing numbers of converts (Izquierdo Benito 1993).

Identifying historical events from the funerary record is an almost impossible task in cities such as Toledo, which have been the object of large urban transformations. Nevertheless, this paper aims to showcase some of the burial rituals that formed part of the city's daily life.

Figure 1.   Location of sites mentioned in the text.

During the Roman and medieval eras, Toledo´s northern plateau was a vast burial ground. However, the limited knowledge of both archaeological and written sources has long made it impossible to locate the various cemeteries in that area. This is particularly true for Jewish and Muslim burials, the locations of which were eclipsed by the Catholic monarchs' policy of political and religious consolidation of the newly unified state: efforts were made to eliminate every physical trace of these two religious communities. Recent publications on medieval necropolis, however, have provided new information not only about their location but also about the ritual differences among the burial patterns of the three religious groups (Figure 1).

In Toledo, the identification and analysis of the burial grounds of the three religious groups are further hampered by the vast concentration of extra-mural cemeteries: the religious and social diversity of medieval Spain creates a complex burial patterning, which is difficult to untangle. A classification by religious attribution or by period of all the numerous archaeological remains—those which have been discovered in this city thus far and the many more that are discovered every day—is even more complicated. Furthermore, given the scarcity of available published information dealing with archaeological research on this topic, the prospects are less than encouraging. Until recently, the few published works that focused on the medieval cemeteries of Toledo have always taken for granted the how, who and when, citing the scant documentary sources and previous archaeological investigations, which focused on urban monuments, rather than on the material evidence of burial practice (Ruiz Taboada 2013).

Burial in medieval Toledo was geographically patterned by the city's unique topography. Toledo stands on a crag surrounded by the river Tagus; only the northern face is spared. This flank is fortified and offers access to the riverside. Five historical entrances to the city lie in this area: a westernmost entrance, leading in via the Alcántara Bridge, the Vado Gate (close to the fords or *vados*), the Antigua Bisagra Gate, the Cambrón Gate, that provides access to the Jewish neighbourhood or Madina al-Yahud and the easternmost entrance, through the San Martín Bridge (Figure 2).

Burial outside the walls and close to the main accesses and gateways became widespread during the Roman period, all tombs being henceforth gathered in the same area for over two thousand years. Currently, the cemeteries found have been identified by their association with nearby monuments or landmarks (De Juan 2011). We will use these identifications to present them and their diachronic sequence in this text. Most of the burial grounds of the northern plain are concentrated in the area known as Vega Baja (northwest area), between the churches of Santa Leocadia de Afuera and San Eugenio. Specifically, human remains have been documented around the former Roman circus, to the north; in front of the city gates and along the main roads to Vado, Bisagra and the Cambrón Gates and the Cerro de la Horca (Figute 2).

Traditionally, the burial areas of each religious community have been linked to specific locations outside the city walls: Muslim tombs were distributed around the Roman circus, Christian ones between Santa Leocadia de Afuera and San Eugenio, and Jewish ones around the Cerro de la Horca (De Juan García 1987, 2011). Recent discoveries during the last decade call for a remapping of these necropolis, broadening
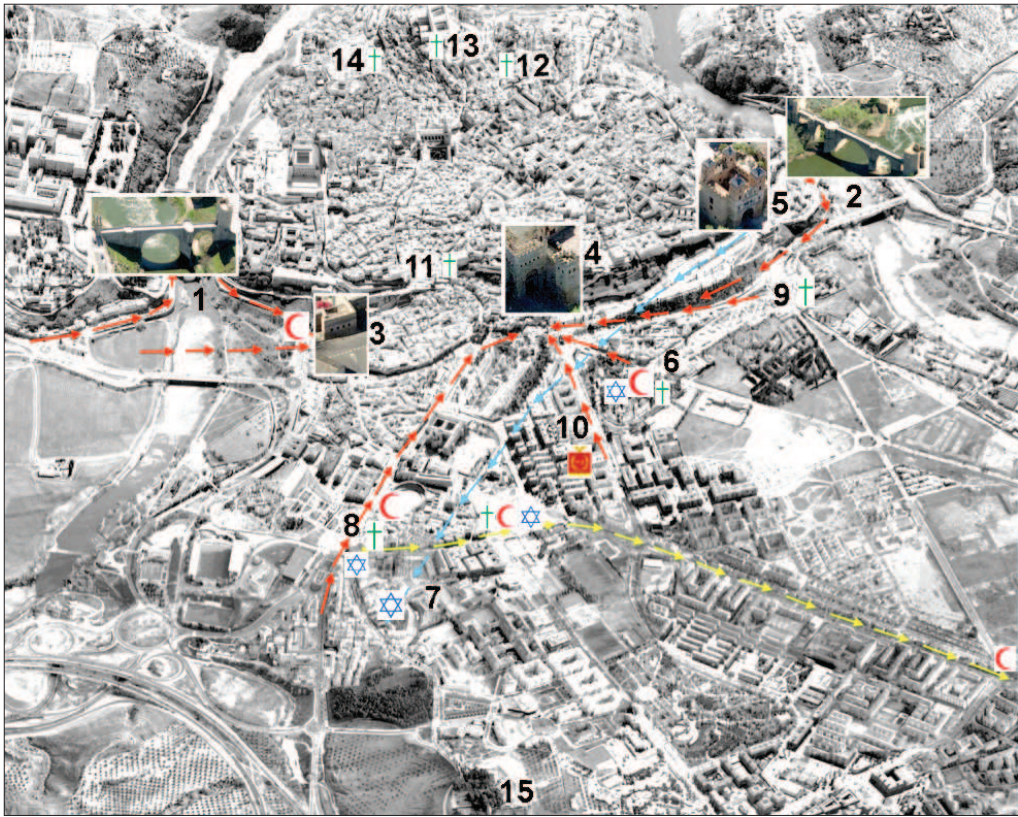
Figure 2. Location of cemeteries and places analysed in the text: 1. San Martín Bridge; 2. Alcántara Bridge; 3. Vado Gate; 4. Antigua Bisagra Gate; 5. Cambrón Gate; 6. Roman circus; 7. Cerro de la Horca; 8. San Eugenio; 9. Santa Leocadia de Afuera; 10. Reconquista Street; 11. Cristo de la Luz Church; 12. San Bartolomé; 13. San Andrés; 14. San Lorenzo; 15. Modern cemetery.

their area of influence, as new Visigothic and Muslim tombs have been found nearby the Vado Gate, San Eugenio, Cerro de la Horca, Reconquista Street and West Vega Baja (Ruiz Taboada 2013).

Very little archaeological evidence related to medieval Muslim burial practice remains visible today; the location of cemeteries from this period is known from written sources, and there are several gravestones with inscriptions stored in museums which help to reconstruct the lives of the deceased. The Jewish panorama is similar; despite the growth in Toledo of the Jewish community during the 12th and 13th centuries, little archaeological or historical evidence of it remains today. In contrast, there is an ample variety of historical, archaeological and artistic evidence for Christian burials.

Christian extramural burial grounds gave way to the foundation of the parish church cemeteries, which become common ground after Toledo's takeover pact signed by Christian Alphonse 6th and the Taifa kings in year 1085. These cemeteries will be key to understand the building of new churches on the former location of mosques within the city boundaries, as will be described later.
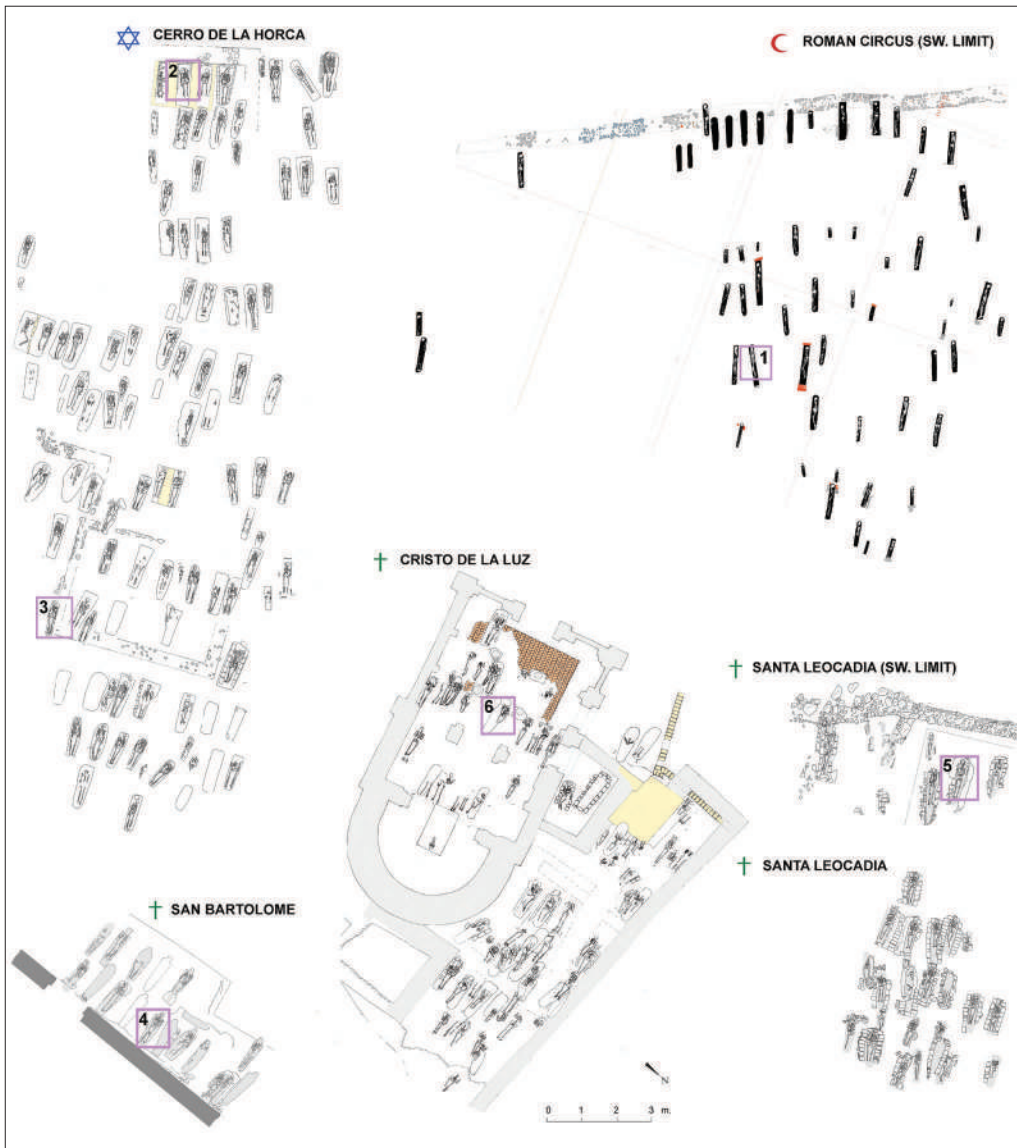
Figure 3.   Plan of the cemeteries included in the text (see also Figure 5).

This article analyses the possible location of medieval cemeteries outside Toledo and associated Christian, Jewish and Muslim burial practice from the 8th to the 15th centuries. The results of some recent excavations in different sites all over the city will be cited, combined with documentary sources. In relation to Jewish burials, the results of excavations at Cerro de la Horca will be analysed. The southwestern limit of the Roman circus cemetery will be examined for its information on Muslim practice. Finally, the main results of the excavations of three church graveyards—one outside the city walls, Santa Leocadia de Afuera and two inside, Cristo de la Luz and San Bartolomé—will be considered (Figure 3).

Muslim ritual

The archaeological analysis of Muslim burial patterns in Toledo poses the same challenges as that of its Jewish counterpart. The difference is that this community ruled the city for almost four centuries (711–1085 AD), and it remained a fundamental population from 1085 until 1492 during Christian rule. As a result, it would not only enforce its traditions during those first centuries but also have an influence on the economy, science, and architecture of medieval Christian Toledo.

In the last few years, an increase in the number of archaeological explorations of medieval Muslim cemeteries is giving us a deeper understanding of such matters as location, burial rituals, internal tomb distribution and body arrangement. They have been pivotal in developing a methodology that can be applied to identifying these spaces in a contemporary urban context. Such research complements the archaeological information gathered throughout the 20th century in various scientific venues, with Torres Balbás (1957) being one of the pioneers in research on medieval Muslim funerary ritual. Examples of this are the publication of cemeteries in Seville (López Ruiz 2009), Córdoba (Casal 2003), Alicante (Olcina Doménech *et al.* 2008), Jaén (Serrano Peña and Castillo Armenteros 2000), Lorca (Ponce García 2002), Pamplona (Miguel Ibáñez 2012), Zaragoza (Galve Izquierdo 1995), Ávila (Moreda Blanco et al. 2008) and Toledo (De Juan García 1987). These excavations complement the information gleaned from legal treatises and historical sources that makes specific reference to Muslim burial. Such texts describe practices that can be identified in an archaeological context (Fierro 1991; Khomeini 1991).

Muslim funerary traditions focused on the belief that the soul leaves the body at the moment of death, requiring burial within the following 24 hours. There are several written sources that provide us with information on how to bury the body. The specific rites vary over time and depend on the nature of social and political authority within the community; we note in this regard the impact of Mālikī traditionalist rituals. In this rite, the body is oriented in right lateral decubitus position, with the lower extremities slightly flexed, the arms gathered in front of them over the pubic region and the face looking East. On the other hand, in other practices the body is placed in a frontal, supine decubitus position with the head facing East. In Toledo, the majority of burials that have been identified until today follow the traditionalist ritual, with the body in right lateral decubitus position (Figure 5).

Muslim burial practice in al-Andalus developed in two distinctive phases. The first corresponded to the time of conquest between the 8th and the 9th centuries, and the second can be dated between the 9th and the whole of the 10th century, during which time this practice came to compete with that of local traditions associated with Late Roman Christianity (Chavet Lozoya *et al.* 2006, 2). In what concerns tomb typology,

Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mughīrah ibn Bardizbah al- Juʿfī al-Bukhārī (9th century) described three archetypes: the simple pit, a simple pit with small side cave, and a simple pit divided into two levels. In the latter, the individual is laid down and covered with slabs, tiles and other elements reaching the walls, thus separating the remains from the burial pit; afterwards, the pit is filled up with soil and demarcated by two stones, one at the head and one at the feet (Chavet

Lozoya *et al.* 2006, 152). According to the same historians, the burial pit usually has a depth of between 80 to 100 cm and of 45 cm for children. This depth, according to Mālikī law, stops the tombs from being dug into by scavengers (Fierro 2000, 177). Similarly, these pits used to be very narrow in order to avoid a post-depositional alteration of the body. That way, their displacement following the loss of anatomical connection was prevented, sometimes with the help of small stones or pottery shards used as wedges (León Muñoz 2012, 43).

Once the body was introduced in the pit, the latter was sealed twice, once underground and once on the surface. For the underground sealing various materials were used, including adobe or fired bricks, wooden planks, tiles and stones (Fierro 2000, 178). The difference in sealing methods was a matter of personal choice, reflecting aesthetical preference or economic or functional needs, and it is not possible to establish a chronology based on them (Serrano Peña and Castillo Armenteros 2000, 101).

Muslim cemeteries ceased to be a part of Spain's historical landscape centuries ago, due both to the purposeful destruction of funerary markers by the Catholic Monarchs, who were anxious to eradicate any funerary remains of non-Christian communities, and to urban development. Some texts, however, recall the existence of these spaces outside city walls; such is the case of the maqbara of San Nicolás de Ávila, attested by 17th century chronicles (Ruiz Entrecanales 1998; Moreda Blanco and Serrano Noriega 2008, 210). In other instances, such as the abandoned town of Vascos (Navalmoralejo, Toledo), it is still possible to see these spaces unaltered. In this cemetery, the ground-level demarcation of the tombs, consisting of long granite blocks of varying height, still remains (Izquierdo Benito 1992).

Toledo is not different from the rest of al-Andalus. Muslims were usually buried outside the city limits, near the main roads and city gates (*maqābir*). While intramural family (*rawda/riyad*) or scattered burials may be found one day—such burial grounds are textually attested - as we have noted, extramural examples have been identified. The most important and best known archaeologically is that of the Roman circus. The latest excavations in one sector, carried out in 2013, have uncovered its full extent, thanks to the discovery of the southwest limit: the 34.62 m long and between 0.70 and 0.79 m wide masonry boundary wall of the necropolis has been preserved. The phasing of this wall reflects the general history of the cemetery's development. During the final period of use, for example, the physical growth of the cemetery resulted in the construction of new graves breaking through the wall; multiple repairs to the wall previous to this were required as a consequence of flood damage. With an approximate surface of 8 ha, the cemetery borders the Tajo meadows to the west, separated from them by a wall of which a length of 80 m has been excavated (Figure 3). Though not common, such walls have been documented at least in another *maqbarah* of the Iberian Peninsula: the Ronda de Poniente in Córdoba (in the Eastern closure of the cemetery, NE–SW direction) (Casal *et al.* 2006, 281).

This cemetery is located near one of the main access ways into the city, the old *via sacra* of Roman *Toletum.* It is also associated with a spring, occupying one of the main fertile areas of the Tajo meadow; nevertheless, its agricultural exploitation is rather limited given that it is a high-risk flood area. The decision to place funerary areas next

to a water course does not appear to have been a random act, but was, rather, related to functional matters (space availability), purification rituals, and eschatological beliefs characteristic of Islam (Casal *et al.* 2006; Robles Fernández *et al.* 1993). In Toledo, the silt level of the graves is related to a possible lake area that must have occupied part of this sector of the low meadow. This lake, or flood area, which probably has its origin in a meadow documented to the north of the site, must have progressively filled up with sediments until it was completely blocked off. The date for this is estimated in the first millennium AD. The age of this silting is dated by radiocarbon in 556–642 AD while the Muslim tombs range from 664–770 to 863–984 calibrated AD. The graves are excavated in dark dun silt. In addition, despite the fact that the necropolis has a similar horizontal stratigraphy to that identified in other areas of Toledo, its history of use from a site of active burial to abandonment has been archaeologically documented. During excavation 60 burials were found, of which 52 were excavated, and various funerary structures were identified (Table I). A surface demarcation of tombs has not been found; however, different types of tomb covers have been identified. Amongst them, stone slabs, curved tiles (*imbrices)* or small rough stones and brick and wood fragments.

The deceased were laid in pits dug into the silt left behind by local flooding, in right lateral decubitus position with their hands over the pelvic region or in front of it, legs slightly flexed, feet together, and facing East. Judging from the position of the bones, the individuals were, with the odd exception, buried in a shroud. In one of these tombs a pin related to the use of this shroud has been found.

Despite the fact that there is still much research to be done, the archaeological contextualization of the boundary and the characteristics of the Roman circus necropolis have allowed for an improvement in the knowledge of this ritual in the city of Toledo. Unfortunately, to have a general picture of this cemetery and the rest of the Muslim graveyards, we will have to wait until the backlog of results from several excavations is published.

Jewish ritual

Archaeologically reconstructing the symbols and memory of the Jewish presence in Spain is a difficult task, due in part to the policy of the Catholic monarchs' imposing Christian practices after the expulsion of Jews in 1492. Recent excavations of Jewish cemeteries in Lucena (Botella Ortega and Casanovas Miró 2011), Valladolid (Morera Blanco and Serrano Noriega 2009), Tárrega (Colet *et al.* 2011), Toledo (Ruiz Taboada 2013), and Ávila (Cabrera González *et al.* 2013) are building on our knowledge of this community's burial rites, the foundations of which have been laid as the result of archaeological excavations of the last decades across the whole of Spain (Casanovas Miró 2003).

The 107 graves discovered during the archaeological excavations carried out in 2008, covering three hundred square metres at Cerro de la Horca, date to the 12th to the 15th centuries, although we know from written sources that Jews had been living in Toledo since Roman times (Izquierdo Benito 1993).

Attempts to locate this cemetery have been stymied by the scarcity of textual references to its exact position and the lack of *in situ* archaeological remains that could be associated with Jewish ritual. We know from written sources how important the com-

munity and its quarters were, as well as the name of the hill where the cemetery was placed: the Cerro de la Horca. We also know the moment when the Catholic Monarchs authorised the sale of all the gravestones within the cemetery (Gómez Menor 1971). Some of them are still preserved in the Sefardic Museum, at 9 Plata Street, and in the Madre de Dios Convent. We are also fortunate enough to have a transcription of the inscriptions on some of these graves, made by an anonymous copyist in the 16th century, a traveller who recorded 76 gravestones from the cemetery (León Tello 1984).

In contrast, the archaeological record is scarcer; the lack of inscriptions within the tombs and any material directly related to Jewish culture has prevented us from confidently connecting them with that community. The excavations in 2008 and 2009 of the upper central sector of the Cerro de la Horca cemetery have helped fill in the gaps in the archaeological record related to this funerary tradition. To these a significant number of excavations in the neighbourhood must be added, most of them unpublished, which complete the complex funerary background of this part of the city. Some of them have yielded information not only about the geographical boundaries, but also about the contamination process that the Cerro de la Horca has suffered throughout the past centuries (Ruiz Taboada 2013).

The hill of Cerro de la Horca is located far away from the medieval city boundaries, and contained no buildings until the expansion of the contemporary city in the mid-20th century. It has natural borders, with difficult access to the north and a gentle slope to the southwest, ranged by an old road to the east that connects the Madrid road to the north with the Cordoba road to the west. The choice of location sought isolation from the vast burial ground located outside the city walls and also from the Muslim cemetery located in the Madrid road.

The cemetery discovered at Cerro de la Horca, dated by numismatic between 12th and 13th centuries, finds no parallel in those of the surrounding areas (Ruiz Taboada 2009). It is distinguished not only by its location but also in its burial patterns and internal distribution of the tombs. The study of these graves gives us information about particular aspects of the rite and customs of the Jewish community in Toledo. The corpses must have been transported a considerable distance from the Jewish quarters to reach the Cerro de la Horca (1200 meters), a linear distance that could be significant if we compare it to those in Avila (465 m.) (Cabrera González *et al.* 2013, 313) or in Lucena (1000 m.) (Botella Ortega and Casanovas Miro 2009) or Tárraga (900 m.) (Colet *et al.* 2011). The funerary parade would have arrived at the cemetery to find the pit already excavated; the location was not random, determined instead by family or economic factors. The pits varied in depth, although they were usually quite deep (Ruiz Taboada 2011). The inhumation process was similar in all burials; the individual was placed inside the pit in his wooden coffin. The body was wrapped in a shroud, probably knotted at the head and feet. Inside the casket, the body was placed in an upright position (Figure 5). In the majority of the graves, the coffin was then sealed with a brick dome-like structure known as *lucillo* ("sepulchre" in medieval Romance language). This kind of structure is defined as a brick half-barrelled vault used as a subterranean enclosure for the tomb (Table 1).

In spite of its apparent complexity, the assembly of these structures was not very

time consuming; construction of the brick domes could be completed over one morning. The building process was always the same - a wooden arch served as a backbone to the bricks; imprints of such arches have been identified stratigraphically. This arch would have allowed, after the completion of the *lucillo*, the blocking of the pit with soil without the former collapsing. However, some of the excavated tombs revealed broken or dismantled domes, probably due to the poor manufacture of the wooden arches or the low building quality of some of these structures.

The pit, with the *lucillo*, was then sealed with purified soil obtained from prior digging. The tomb was externally demarcated by a headstone bearing the name and family name of the deceased (Figure 4). Such headstones were likely used only for people of high family rank or social status. As has been mentioned, contemporary texts attest to the sale of these headstones for quarry during the Catholic Monarchs reign, a fact that has prevented their recovery from funerary contexts.

The necropolis at Cerro de la Horca is spatially arranged in rows and closed structures of a funerary character (Figure 3). Eight rows have been identified in 300 m². The only common characteristic in these alignments is that each tomb is isolated from the rest – the intrusion of the space belonging to neighbouring tombs is avoided, and all prior burials are zealously respected (Ruiz Taboada 2009, 2011).

Besides this peculiar arrangement of the funerary space, the grouping of some of the tombs around closed architectonic spaces is also noteworthy. These spaces, of which three have survived, have a characteristic internal order according to the burials they contain. Keeping a similar linear arrangement as that found in the rest of the necropolis, the fact that the tombs of better quality are found near the southwest boundaries of the enclosure is striking.

Although in most cases we encounter pits designed to hold one individual, there are also pits that accommodated two or even three individuals. The most frequent associations are as follows: individual tombs, double tombs, triple tombs, adult (mother) and child, empty tombs, and pits containing bones in apparent secondary context.
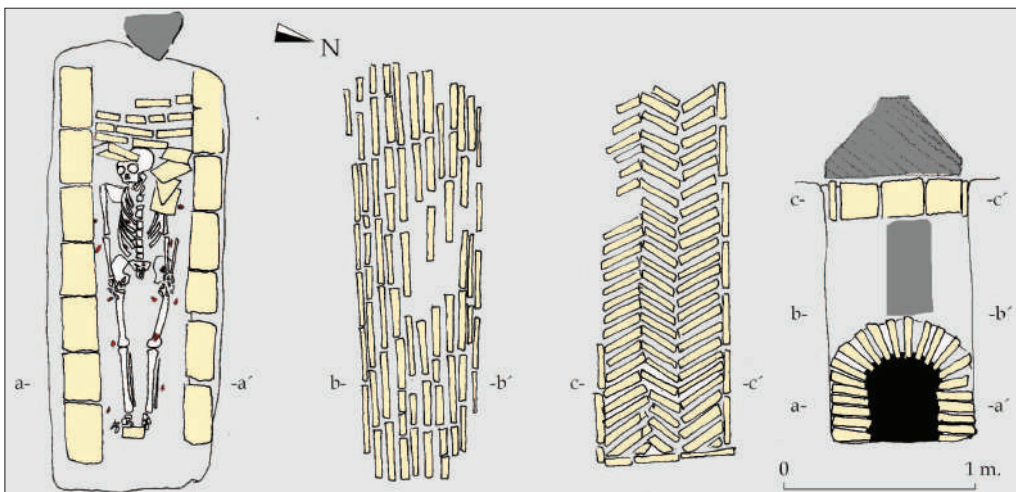

Figure 4.   Building levels and architecture of a Jewish burial located in the Cerro de la Horca.

Individual tombs are predominant. As in almost all documented tombs of this kind, the pits are of considerable depth, with the body inside a coffin. The head rests on a clay cushion; there are no grave goods. The building system of these tombs is simple; pit, coffin and a soil filling. In more complex instances, the coffin is sealed with a brick dome before filling up the rest of the pit with soil (Ruiz Taboada 2011). The brick dome is never intended to stand out, but rather serves as a separation between the fossa's soil and the coffin, functioning much like a sarcophagus.

Although orientation should not be used as the sole source for the study of the burial pattern of any community, be it medieval, modern or contemporary, the irregularity of the tomb orientations is striking (Ruiz Taboada 2013). As a general rule, individuals are orientated west-south and east-north, but it is not unusual to find tombs orientated south-north or west-east. In other tombs, there is a slight shift in the orientation angle to one or other cardinal point, depending on the space the tomb occupies and its relation to nearby tombs. The only common characteristic for all tombs is the layout of the body. The head is always facing the sky (although due to the loss of anatomical connection with the neck, it was not unusual to find it facing Southwest or Northwest), and rests on a small cushion; all that remains of the latter is a clay imprint with traces of black or green colouring. The body is placed in supine decubitus position; the upper extremities are never found flexed over the chest, with a few exceptions, but rather usually rest by the sides, over the pelvis or with a hand placed on top of the other. The feet lay parallel, or one over the other.

The last decades of the cemetery were also impacted by the increasing riots against the Jews and the overpopulation of graves; as a consequence during 14th and 15th centuries, the original boundaries might have expanded into domestic areas, losing the isolation that characterized the cemetery for centuries. Several such boundary areas, recently excavated, have been documented, one belonging to an earlier Muslim cemetery (Rodríguez Fernández and Rosado Tejerizo 2013), and others to the Christian graveyard near the San Eugenio Church and the limits of the Jewish cemetery (Requejo López and Maqueda García-Morales 2010).

Christian ritual

As noted above, the outskirts of the cities have always been the preferred location for burials since the Roman period. This custom continued through Late Antiquity and until the medieval era, when Muslims, Jews and Christians were all buried in the outskirts of urban areas.

One notable development in Christian burials is the shift to new cemeteries located in churches inside towns. Although this shift began during the Reconquista period, it is a consequence of long-term changes in Christian theology and resulting transformations of burial ritual. What would later be the official rite during the medieval era was first shaped in different Visigothic councils. During this process, the struggle of the individual to achieve eternal life was emphasized, and with it a closer spatial association of burials to sacred places. This process started in the 6th century and culminated with the clustering of graves in churches during the Late Middle Ages (Ruiz Taboada 2013, 15).

Thus, from the 11th century a diversification of the funerary space between inner

and outer city spaces occurred, which would last until the end of the 19th century. On the one hand, the cemeteries outside city walls continued, even with the opening of new areas and an adaptation of those funerary spaces to new requirements. On the other hand, the use of parish cemeteries inside the city started to become generalized as a sign of a new religious sentiment. At the end of the 15th century, 21 parishes are documented with their respective cemeteries in Toledo. To these we must add burials in the remaining intra-urban churches, convents and hospitals. The heart of Toledo slowly transformed into the preferred burial area of its inhabitants. The occupation of these cemeteries throughout the Late Middle Ages gave way to a progressive invasion of the interior of the churches, which would reach its peak between the 15th and 16th centuries. Over time, the areas closest to the altar became coveted burial places, reflecting a belief that the closer a burial was to the altar, the closer the deceased would be to God, and that a mass was more valuable when read in an exclusive altar (Martínez Gil 1984, 83). Churches became crowded with the dead, while at the same time from the 17th century the external cemeteries were slowly being abandoned, henceforth only used by people with limited resources.

Within this context, the popularity of side chapels, which started to proliferate with Baroque and Gothic art, can be understood as a way to alleviate the large demand for private sacred spaces. The church went from being a mere recipient of souls to being an instrument to measure social prestige. In time, the cemeteries within parish compounds would be assimilated as public spaces in a city characterized by its small streets and the lack of public gathering areas. These places acted as places of congregation for the city residents, who gathered in them for more than just honouring the deceased (Martínez Gil 1993, 451). Most of them disappeared over the course of the 19th century, giving way to squares, or their space was reused for new buildings. The reason behind their disappearance was a concern for public health and hygiene problems, which originated in a series of plagues and epidemics that had been devastating Toledo since the 18th century. In that century, the suitability of urban cemeteries in Old Europe started being questioned. Previously, in 1527, following the Wittenberg plague, Luther had defended the idea of Roman-style cemeteries, far away from cities (Martínez Gil 1993, 453). In Spain, Charles 4th commissioned a study about the convenience of burying the deceased within towns. This resulted in the first ban on burying people within urban space, aside from those who owned tombs inside (Royal Decree from the 3rd April 1787). This first ban hardly ever had an effect, but cholera and other epidemics forced its implementation throughout the 1830s. Even though this happened progressively, the end of intra-urban burials coincided with the inauguration in 1836 of the general cemetery. This cemetery was the first of the modern era (1836-1893), located on the grounds of the old teaching school, todays Instituto de Enseñanzas Medias (Institute of Secondary Education). In 1893 it would be replaced for the one still used today, north of Cerro de la Horca.

The most relevant Christian medieval cemetery outside Toledo's city walls is located in the present day Cristo de la Vega Church, also known as Basílica de Santa Leocadia or Santa Leocadia de Afuera. This basilica is related to the former Visigothic basilica, where many Visigothic Councils took place. The basilica, according to Porres Martín

Cleto (2003, 1141), was built during Sisebut's reign and consecrated in 618, along with the royal palace buildings. The 4th (633), 5th (636) and 6th (638) and 7th (694) councils were celebrated there. The basilica was refurbished several times throughout the 7th century, and no original parts have been preserved aside from the archaeological remains found underground (Porres Martín Cleto 2003).

The closest archaeological remains are located within the basilica itself. A new area of the necropolis dating from Roman times (3rd century AD) has recently been discovered which was still in use during the late Roman-Visigothic period, from the 4th to the 6th centuries. A more recent phase of the burial ground belongs to the Islamic (10th century) as well as Christian medieval necropoli (late 11th century); this burial tradition continued in recent times with the construction of the Misericordia and Canónigos cemeteries (García Sánchez de Pedro 1996, 157).

An excavation in 2006 uncovered the southern end of the cemetery of Cristo de la Vega (Ruiz Taboada 2013): a masonry wall which not only demarcated the church´s burial space to the south, as was the case in the Roman circus necropolis, but also served as a defense against potential river flooding. This discovery, only the second of its kind in Toledo, has thrown light on Christian burial processes during the Reconquista, namely the ritual behind and the typology of the burials. The comparison of these rituals with both Jewish and Muslim ones found at the Cerro de la Horca and Roman circus necropoli has highlighted important differences, essential for their contextualization. A wall marks the southernmost end of the cemetery; the excavation of this area has revealed 34 burials contemporary with the construction of the Mudéjar church and the centuries that followed (Table 1). The typology of graves falls into three main groups: brick anthropomorphic cysts, brick demarcated anthropomorphic tombs, and pits without any kind of demarcation. Each one of these tombs contain the remains of a single individual, placed in supine decubitus position with the head looking straight up. The upper extremities are generally flexed over the chest (Figure 5). All tombs are arranged with an east-west orientation. This is also documented for the burials of children, which present the same body arrangement. In addition, the systematic destruction of old tombs to build new ones has been recorded, a fact repeated across the medieval Christian Toledo.

This burial pattern is also found not only in the cemetery of San Eugenio, the second of the Christian burial grounds outside the city walls, but in parish church cemeteries inside the old city after the 12th century. There is little archaeological documentation regarding these cemeteries, but they seem to have been located within church grounds. Among the scarcely published cases the excavations of the Mudéjar cloister of the San Andrés church (12th century), in which a great number of anthropomorphic cysts and pit burials were uncovered, must be highlighted (Delgado and Masa 1987); similarly, the burials discovered by Delgado (1987) at San Lorenzo are worth mentioning. These burials, as was the case in San Andrés, displayed different typologies, the anthropomorphic cysts and the simple pit excavated in the ground being the predominant types. Furthermore, recent excavations carried out at both Cristo de La Luz and San Bartolomé Churches in 2006–2009 (Ruiz Taboada 2013) have uncovered and contextualized the whole surface dedicated to burial ground belonging to a

church within city walls. The tombs are of three forms: simple pits, brick-demarcated pits, and brick-demarcated anthropomorphic cists (Table 1). These cemeteries are dated between the 12th and the 15th century, and are thus contemporary to the rest of churches and parishes founded in the city after the Reconquista.

The excavations inside the church and in the churchyard of Cristo de la Luz have yielded information about the evolution of burial patterns from the beginning of the Christian Middle Ages to the present. The churchyard cemetery originally dates to the Reconquista period, when the church was transferred to the Order of the Hospital of Saint John, under the dedication of the Holy Cross, and continued to be used throughout the Late Middle Ages. The burials inside the church demonstrate a spatial shift, through their association with the construction of a side chapel attached to the left nave towards the end of the 16th century, as well as a hydraulic complex over part of the external cemetery´s surface.

Whilst the external cemetery occupies a surface of 100m^2 and has its origins in the Reconquista era, with a continued use throughout the Late Middle Ages, the church interior (130 m^2) was occupied during the transition to the Modern Era. The archaeological excavation allowed for the recording of 102 tombs in anatomical position (Ruiz Taboada 2013).

As was the norm for Christian practice in the period, the bodies are usually orientated towards the apse or front of the cemetery's church. The head faces the church's entrance, and the body is parallel to the nave. The face is usually fitted so that the head does not face east when it becomes disarticulated, an attempt to avoid any similarity to the Muslim rite. The bodies are place in supine decubitus position, with the lower extremities flexed over the chest (Figure 5). The pits that host these burials are usually shallow. Because of the lack of space, these pits disrupted or destroyed older tombs, and it was general practice to remove the skeletal remains from older tombs and reuse the graves (Ruiz Taboada 2013). The symbolism involved in this placement is twofold: on the one hand, it focuses on the idea of Jesus´s return from heaven in a cloud coming from the east. Thus, this way, the person leaving the grave during resurrection would first face Him; on the other, it is reminiscent of the setting of the sun as a metaphor of death.

A second example of Christian burial practice inside urban areas can be found in the San Bartolomé parish. The uncovering in 2009 of the west façade of this church hidden behind a house, together with the excavation of the cemetery under the street and the square associated with it, has brought to light certain aspects hitherto unknown, both about the original church and about its funerary context. The cemetery, located just below the western façade, has three occupational phases: 12th, 14th and 15th–17th centuries, where 27 tombs have been documented. The first phase corresponds with the building of the first apse in the first half of the 12th century. This first phase of the cemetery is one of the most interesting ones in Toledo, not only because it is the oldest one discovered to date, but also because it has been preserved with hardly any alterations to it. 16 tombs cut into the rock have been documented for a 65 m^2 surface (Table I). This bedrock necropolis is located under the pavement of the medieval street, as well as that of the small square giving access to the church; the latter has now been

demolish and its materials were reused for house construction in the 18th century.

Burials are arranged in two rows, with the same tomb orientation as the apse (east-west), the head to the west, with the exception of one, which has a south-north orientation. This arrangement was made in order to destroy existing tombs. Tombs were excavated directly into the bedrock and are covered with stone slabs. This type of cover is very common in central Iberia during the first centuries of the Reconquista, and it is associated to the oldest cemetery phases from that period (Ferrero Ros and García-Soto Mateos 2007; Morales Hernández 1991; Zamora Canellada 1979). Individuals were placed without a coffin inside the pits. No personal adornment or burial goods have been documented for this period. There is an intentional anthropomorphic shaping of the rock to fit the head, which faces the sky (Figure 5). In two of these tombs, a cover of granite slabs has been preserved. The building types are varied: anthropomorphic pit excavated into the rock, with unplastered walls; anthropomorphic pit excavated into the rock, with plastered walls; pit excavated into the rock over which an anthropomorphic shape is made with brickwork bound with limestone and the walls plastered; anthropomorphic pit over Muslim-era wall, with walls plastered.

The remaining phases of cemetery use would continue the former burial tradition. Space saturation forced the destruction of older tombs in order to make room for other individuals. As it has been seen, the destruction of tombs as a response to spatial constraints would be a characteristic of Christian burials in this type of necropolis.

Figure 5.   Characterization of Medieval burials of the three major religions in Toledo. 1. Roman circus; 2, 3. Cerro de la Horca; 4. San Bartolomé; 5. Santa Leocadia de Afuera; 6. Cristo de la Luz.

Conclusion

It is notably difficult to establish burial patterns for changing societies like those of the medieval Toledo: concurring factors could have influenced funerary customs. For example, the acculturation processes of local societies after the Islamic conquest of al-Andalus are unknown; neither do we know the manner in which these cities were re-Christianized after the Reconquista. In addition, the cultural survival of minorities during these transitions, such as Mwallad, Mozarabs, Mudejar and even the converts of each religion, makes it difficult to identify their respective burial practices, even more so when most tombs lack goods or an epigraphic *corpus.* To these groups, the large number of foreigners and settlers who contributed to demographic growth during the medieval era in various areas, and brought with them own vernacular burial practices must be added. The differences in practice are not limited to cult, but also to a formal change that affects adornment, body arrangement, type of pit and the location of cemeteries.

These changes occur within an ideological framework which, in the case of the Muslim burial ritual, responds to the need to differentiate Islam from the other religions within the same area, to avoid the belief that "quien imita a los otros se convierte en uno de ellos" (Fierro 1992, 471) ("he who imitates others turns into one of them"). Something similar occurred in Christian practice during the period of Muslim sovereignty, as Christians sought to distinguish their tombs from those of Muslims, at a time when it was not easy to distinguish them by their external appearance alone (Echevarría Arsuaga 2009, 45).

These external signs are reflected in medieval Muslim burials. The introduction of the new rite brought a change in orientation and arrangement of the bodies. This orientation, based on the Qur'an, has its origins in the *Hajj*, when in 623 the Prophet ceased trying to convert Jews and Christians to Islam, taking the *Kaaba* in Mecca as a reference. Prior to that, the body was oriented to the *qibla* in Jerusalem. On the other hand, Christians maintained the supine decubitus position with the face looking straight to the sky; for this they also used anthropomorphic tombs, whose upper parts prevented the head from achieving undesired orientations after loss of anatomical connection (Ruiz Taboada 2013, 24). Lastly, Jewish burials are significantly different from the others given that, independent of the corpse's position, the rite also gave much importance to tomb depth, the internal arrangement of the necropoli, the choice of cemetery space and the underground graves' seal. For instance, there is no *lucillo* associated with either Muslim or Christian burial. Between the 12th and 15th centuries in Toledo, a new technique for covering the coffins was developed which was different from that used previously in Christian and Muslim cemeteries. The introduction of a new type of architecture means a revolution of burial techniques in relation uniquely with Jewish ritual. As we have already seen, the *lucillo* can be used as a means of identifying Jewish-related burials in contexts that were hitherto considered as doubtful. Such peculiar architecture, in the Jewish cemetery at Seville (Santana Falcón 2006), and the ritual that accompanies it has been contextualized and dated in an archaeological context in Toledo. The abandonment of this funerary practice dates back to the 15th century, and its minor continuation might be related to the conversion of Jews (Table 1).

SITE	Stone slab cover	Curved tile cover	Wood cover	Lucillo	Rock-carved anthropo-morphic pit	Brick-lined anthropo-morphic pit	Simple Pit	Ossuary	Total no. of graves
R. Circus (8th-11th c.)	5	5	12	–	–	–	30	–	**52**
C. Horca (12th-13th c.)	–	–	–	55	–	–	52	–	**107**
S. Leocadia (12th-14th c.)	–	–	–	–	–	19	15	–	**34**
S. Bartolomé (12th-14th c.)	–	–	–	–	14	2	10	1	**27**
C. de la Luz (12th-19th c.)	–	–	–	–	–	22	74	6	**102**

Table 1.   Chronology and proportion of different types of underground architecture preserved in the graves of the cemeteries mentioned in the text. Muslim, Roman Circus; Jewish, Cerro de la Horca; Christian, Santa Leocadia, San Bartolomé and Cristo de la Luz.

Table 1 summarizes some of the formal variations that characterise the funerary architecture of Toledo's different religious communities. Whilst the excavation of a burial pit is common to all of them, neither the pit depth nor the underground sealing of the bodies are. In fact, the presence of *lucillo* is only documented in the Jewish cemetery, while anthropomorphic structures are only related to Christian burials. In addition, in the Roman Circus Muslim cemetery a type of underground sealing is found which is not documented in any of the other cases.

Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that this is only a small representation of Toledo's funerary ensemble. Consequently, it is possible that some of the architectural elements here described might be shared by the other religions. Only by analysing the totality of the cemeteries will we be able to establish similarities or differences between them.

The countless cemeteries located inside and outside the walls of Toledo are the last traces of our medieval ancestors. The scarce knowledge we have regarding the funerary world in Toledo is due to the vast quantity of human remains scattered both inside and outside the city, and to the lack of specialized publications on them. Whilst the interior cemeteries respond to a specific moment and underwent a linear development until their complete ban in the 19th century, the funeral use of the extramural space is complex. The management of these cemeteries requires the creation of a directive to regulate the interventions that should be performed in the area. This directive must define the area of influence of each necropolis. In a similar way, a protocol must be set to prevent any misunderstandings with the Jewish, Christian or Muslim communities during the exhumation process of human remains. The Historical Heritage Law of Castilla La Mancha (4/2013) is opening the way to the implementation of rules to protect these cemeteries. Article 27 of this law requires

the owner or developer of any building site to submit, together with the construction license request, an archaeological study that establishes the historical value of the zone and the necessary steps that must be taken to protect it. The enforcement of this law, and the initiative of the Plan Especial del Conjunto Histórico de Toledo (Toledo´s Historical Quarter Special Plan) has encouraged what is known as heritage preventive management or urban archaeology. During the last two decades, and under the influence of this law, the investigation of Toledo's urban development has experienced an increase in the number of archaeological studies linked to building works. Despite everything, the main challenge for site management faces has been modern urban growth, together with the scarce number of publications this type of salvage excavation generates.

   The burial practices of medieval Toledo are the reflection of particular political, social and religious conditions. Prior to this research, it was difficult to differentiate the three religions archaeologically, and even more so the ethnic groups associated with them. At present, not only are the burial places of the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities of medieval Toledo beginning to be distinguished, but also the funerary rites that characterizes each one of them. Although the fact of death is common to all of them, each religion tries to be different from the other, not just by means of a specific funerary architecture, but also with the preparation and arrangement of the body within the tomb and the choice of burial location. Even so, the tombs, regardless of the religion with which they are associated, will share many characteristics: only the analysis of the archaeological context will be able to give us the definite clue for their religious attribution.

Acknowledgement

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