

LEAVING THE PAST BEHIND, ADAPTING TO THE FUTURE:  
TRANSITIONAL AND POLYGRAPHIC VISIGOTHIC-CAROLINE  
MINUSCULE SCRIBES\*

*DEJANDO EL PASADO ATRÁS, ADAPTÁNDOSE AL FUTURO:  
ESCRIBAS DE TRANSICIÓN Y ESCRIBAS POLIGRÁFICOS  
VISIGÓTICA-CAROLINA*

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*Abstract:* This article is concerned with the scribes who, in the early decades of the 9<sup>th</sup> century in the east of the Iberian Peninsula and of the 12<sup>th</sup> century in the north and north-west, came under a greater or lesser degree of diplomatic pressure to change their graphic model from Visigothic script to Caroline minuscule. We will briefly discuss when and why each production centre, whether of long-standing or of new creation, adopted the new writing system that had come to dominate in Europe and how that change was implemented and perceived by their contemporaries. Special attention will be paid to scribes and copyists who reveal themselves to have been at the interface between the two cultural contexts by considering those very few extant examples of polygraphism in Latin writing in Iberia.

*Keywords:* Visigothic script; Caroline minuscule; Mozarabic rite; Roman rite; polygraphism.

*Resumen:* El presente capítulo versa sobre los escribas que, en las primeras décadas del siglo IX en el noreste de la península Ibérica y del siglo XII en el norte y noroeste, fueron más o menos diplomáticamente empujados hacia el cambio de sus modelos gráficos pasando de la escritura visigótica a la carolina. Trataremos brevemente sobre cuándo y por qué cada centro de producción, tradicional o de nueva creación, adoptó el nuevo sistema de escritura dominante en Europa y cómo ese cambio fue implementado y percibido por sus contemporáneos. Atención especial se prestará a los escribas y copistas que se muestran entre dos contextos culturales diferentes mediante el análisis de los pocos ejemplos conservados de poligrafismo en escritura latina en Iberia.

*Palabras clave:* escritura visigótica; escritura carolina; rito mozárabe; rito romano; poligrafismo.

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1. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Statuerunt etiam ut scriptores de caetero gallicam litteram scriberent et paermitterent toletanam in officiis ecclesiasticis ut nulla esset diuisio inter ministros ecclesiae Dei<sup>2</sup>.

The late eleventh century was for the Iberian Peninsula a period of drastic cultural transformation articulated through two specific interrelated aspects: the change of liturgy, from the Visigothic tradition to the Roman rite, and the change of writing systems, from Visigothic script to Caroline minuscule. Church reform for the sake of unity and fluid communication within Christian Europe, encouraged in Iberia in the synods of Burgos (1080) and León (1090), was the aim behind the replacement of both traditional symbols. But, regardless of how strong we may consider the Hispanic Church's commitment to the reform in that specific moment, written evidence suggests that both modifications were part of a complex process which proceeded at its own pace in each institution and in each area.

Analysis of the extant manuscript sources attests to a progressive process of acculturation developing throughout the Iberian Peninsula from the early Middle Ages. Codices copied on Iberian soil reflect external influence from beyond the Pyrenees in their architecture, script, illumination program, and in the texts they transmit long before the late eleventh century. Likewise, liturgical books produced outside were requested by the powerful and circulated across the Iberian Peninsula according to the pious interests of bishops and abbots. It remains challenging, nonetheless, to tackle the chronology of the acceptance of the new rite through these codices for there is still much work to be done to place them in context, many of them lacking a reliable colophon indicating a production centre and a date.

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations used: ACA = Barcelona, Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó; ACBurgos = Burgos, Archivo de la Catedral; ACCórdoba = Córdoba, Archivo de la Catedral; ACCovarrubias = Covarrubias, Archivo de la Colegiata; ACL León = León, Archivo de la Catedral; ACLleida = Lleida, Arxiu Capítular; ACLogroño = Logroño, Archivo de la Catedral (Seminario Diocesano); ACLugo = Lugo, Arquivo da Catedral; ACO = Oviedo, Archivo de la Catedral; ACTuy = Tuy, Arquivo da Catedral; ACValladolid = Valladolid, Archivo de la Catedral; ACVic = Vic, Arxiu Capítular; AHN = Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional; AHN Clero SR = Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, sección clero secular-regular; AHPL León = León, Archivo Histórico Provincial; AHUS = Santiago de Compostela, Arquivo Histórico Universitario; ASIL = León, Archivo de San Isidoro; AUCoimbra = Coimbra, Arquivo Universitario; BC = Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya; BCToledo = Toledo, Biblioteca Capítular; BN = Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional; BL = London, British Library; BnF = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France; BPOporto = Oporto, Biblioteca Pública Municipal; BUsal = Salamanca, Biblioteca Universitaria; Escorial = El Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio; Silos = Silos, Archivo del Monasterio; TT = Lisboa, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo; Vat = Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

<sup>2</sup> Falque 2003, p. 305.

Directly linked to codices of the new rite was the acceptance of Caroline minuscule for liturgical purposes, as stated—arguably—in the accords enacted at the Synod of León, which, for the same reason, is also difficult to pin down. But then again, writing was not limited to codices. The substitution of writing systems, even if only initially intended for ecclesiastical texts, implied a drastic change in the professional career of peninsular scribes who also wrote and copied legal texts. They were requested to attain proficiency in a new script they were indubitably aware of but that was not their own and had never been used in the peninsula. It is, thus, in legal texts that we can find reliable data with which to contemplate the effect of the reform on the change of script, if not the change of liturgy, since they reflect the everyday use of writing by production centres, each providing a specific date.

In the pages that follow, after a brief summary regarding the state-of-the-art on the topic, this chapter analyses the extant written evidence to review the effective transition from Visigothic script to Caroline minuscule, building on the evidence gathered to gauge how scribes adapted to the switch from a more practical point of view. It goes without saying that, in drafting these pages, I am deeply indebted to the work of others.

## 2. ON THE CONCEPT OF CHANGE: STATE-OF-THE-ART AND TERMINOLOGY

The change of graphic systems from Visigothic script to Caroline minuscule has received the attention of many scholars concerned about the implications of such a modification in writing not only for manuscript production but also for society more broadly. Departing from the thirteenth century-chronicles summarizing the accords enacted at the synods of León and Burgos considered necessary for reorganising the liturgy on Iberian soil<sup>3</sup>, research has approached the subject from two different perspectives which have not necessarily been linked. On the one hand, and as a direct result of the main aim of both ecclesiastical councils, researchers have studied the introduction of the Roman liturgy in the peninsular Christian kingdoms, which was meant to eradicate the Mozarabic or Visigothic liturgy<sup>4</sup> for the sake of unity in all Christendom<sup>5</sup>. Likewise, bearing in mind the political interests of the elites that were behind the liturgical reorientation, broad

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<sup>3</sup> Rubio 2006.

<sup>4</sup> For an open debate on its terminology, see Ferro 2018.

<sup>5</sup> For an updated state-of-the-art, see Castro 2016. See also Deswarte 2015 –not considered in the previous reference.

historical approaches came into play<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, the requirements of such an innovation opened the path to the study of the educational reform that was a prerequisite for the application of the new liturgy, for ecclesiastics needed to be able to communicate effectively with their European peers and to understand the new liturgy, meaning they were requested to improve their Latin and master the script, Caroline minuscule, in which the texts with the new liturgy were written. Major studies in this regard are devoted to the monastic and cathedral chapter reform from a historical point of view<sup>7</sup>, while a few focus on Latin from a philological perspective<sup>8</sup>. Also, as will be seen in the following pages, historians of written culture have noted the decreasing use of Visigothic script and Visigothic script texts in peninsular manuscript production in favour of the new pan-European Caroline minuscule script and Caroline minuscule codices<sup>9</sup>. In this sense, the historiography has provided a specific statement to discuss since at the Synod of León of 1090 it was stated –according to the thirteenth century-view of Lucas de Tuy, since no coeval proceedings have been preserved– all scribes were to adjust to the new script, at least for liturgical texts. Specialists in writing have thus re-examined the sources to verify whether the last testimonies of Visigothic predate 1090 as commanded by the clerical assembly, which, as we will see, they did not so. It remains to be fully examined why Lucas de Tuy stated otherwise<sup>10</sup>.

clerus et populus tocius Hispanie turbabatur, eo quod Gallicanum officium suscipere a legato et principe cogebantur, et statuto die rege, primate, legato, cleri et populi maxima multitudine congregatis, fuit diucius altercatum, clero, milicia et populo firmiter resistentibus ne officium mutaretur (Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *Historia de rebvs Hispaniae*)<sup>11</sup>.

Significantly though, very few are the scholars who have focused their attention on understanding what happened to the people who lived through the changes of both liturgy and script<sup>12</sup>. Even bearing in mind that such an approach might cross the boundaries of academic research due to the considerable level of speculation involved, recent advances in

<sup>6</sup> Besides the references alluded to in Castro 2016, see also Portela 2017.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Fletcher 1984, chap. 7, app. D; Rucquoi 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Wright 1982, pp. 211, 222-223; Alturo 1993.

<sup>9</sup> For a global approach, see Camino 2008, pp. 122-134. Also, on diplomatic changes see Ostolaza 1990, p. 161; Herrero, Fernández 2012a, pp. 93-98.

<sup>10</sup> On this debate, see Camino 2008, pp. 126-127.

<sup>11</sup> Fernández 1987, p. 208.

<sup>12</sup> On the former, Barton 2004, pp. 179-180; Harris 2014; Castro 2020. On the latter, Castro 2019.

the palaeographic method –now the field expanded to Medieval Written Communication<sup>13</sup>–, sustained by the historical consideration of the extant testimonies and reinforced by studies on art and linguistics –which still need further exploration<sup>14</sup>–, allow us to reconsider the topic. In the following lines, and leaving aside the question of how ecclesiastics perceived the liturgical reform, we shall focus on how late eleventh-century scribes experienced the change from a script and writing system that had been practiced in Iberia since at least the eighth century to another which was also ancient but not linked to their tradition.

Since we are to refer to scribes using different writing systems depending on the broad historical context that marked their lives, there is also a specific graphic terminology that needs to be revised. Visigothic script and Caroline minuscule were the products of the evolution which any handwritten script goes through over centuries of use. The genetic origin of both systems lies in the scripts used in the Roman imperial period. Some aspects, particularly the minuscule alphabets and their idiosyncrasies (including ligatures and abbreviation system) evolved, while others, significantly the uppercase alphabets, remained more or less unaltered. The hands of many medieval scribes show capitals that perpetuated the traditional Roman model (Uncial and Capital scripts). This peculiarity should not be perceived, from our point of view, as a polygraphic characteristic when these scripts are used as display script only –it would be a different matter were they used for the main text– since, even though from our perspective such testimonies combine and are proof of different models, from the point of view of the scribes who used them, they belonged to one and the same graphic model, their own. In the following pages, the term polygraphism will therefore be applied not to this mixing of uppercase Roman letters and lowercase medieval ones, but to the scribes' consciousness of using two different and consistent graphic models, those of Visigothic script and Caroline minuscule<sup>15</sup>. A polygraphic scribe is, consequently, a scribe who we know –for there are extant testimonies– mastered both. This graphic occurrence allows us to define two more terms: hybridisation, when a hand shows a mixing of at least two different graphic models; and multigraphism, referring to different writing systems being used at the same time in a specific chronological timeframe and in the same geographical area. Visigothic-Caroline polygraphism indicates a period of strong hybridisation and of

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<sup>13</sup> See Mostert 1999, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> On art, see the chapter by Ana de Oliveira Dias in this volume.

<sup>15</sup> On this debate, see Stokes 2017. Petrucci 1979 as starting point. Polygraphism is therefore here understood as a synonym of Petrucci's (2005) digraphism.

multigraphism which, in Iberia, also included other systems and languages<sup>16</sup> and that bears witness abroad as well<sup>17</sup>.

### 3. AND THE CHANGE BEGAN

According to the Synods, in the late eleventh century, professional Visigothic script scribes, who were by that time mainly if not all ecclesiastics, were advised by kings, the Pope and his legates, and compelled by cultural pressure, to adapt to the changing times and adopt, together with the new liturgy for the Office, the writing system that was predominant in Europe. Caroline minuscule was a script to be imported, learnt, taught, and expected to be employed thereafter. It was not, however, something new. The circulation of texts across political frontiers during the Middle Ages is a constant we are yet to fully map, but about which we already have significant examples on Iberian soil<sup>18</sup>. Codices copied in Caroline minuscule had circulated from one institution to another since the early period of its use and, as a consequence, their influence can be seen in extant peninsular manuscript products. Whether that influence was conscious or not is another matter. Likewise, bearing in mind that the peninsula was far from being a homogeneous group of realms, even if one focuses on the Christian part only, it could be said that Caroline minuscule influence was well within the reach of Visigothic script scribes for north-eastern Iberia was under Carolingian orbit in their lifetime. Caroline minuscule (and Roman) liturgical texts, on Carolingian topics, also spread across the northern Peninsula from this area. The consequence of this –it could be argued– purposeful imposition, directly from Europe or from within Iberia, was soon evident throughout the Peninsula, leaving behind Visigothic script together with the Mozarabic rite. In the following lines we will discuss the process in some detail<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Both “relative multigraphism” –Visigothic script(s)-Caroline minuscule (Latin)–, and “absolute multigraphism” –Latin-Arabic-Hebrew-Greek. Cf. Cavallo 1990; Petrucci 2005. Polygraphic Latin-Arabic-Hebrew-Greek scribes are beyond the scope of this study. There were indeed cases in Iberia (Zimmermann 1990; D’Ottone 2015), though the current state of their study prevents comparative or global peninsular studies at this stage.

<sup>17</sup> Polygraphism Uncial-Caroline minuscule (Petrucci 1995, pp. 81-85), Beneventan-Caroline minuscule (Newton 1991, p. 127), Anglo-Saxon minuscule-Caroline minuscule (Álvarez 2007).

<sup>18</sup> Díaz y Díaz 1969; Mattoso 1988, p. 148.

<sup>19</sup> Following the aim of this special issue, these are brief notes on the general chronological context of the graphic change. A detailed study of each area/centre (historical mixed with graphical) allowing for more contrasted and solid conclusions has not yet been completed.

### 3.1. Septimania and the north-eastern Iberian Peninsula

Septimania and the see of Narbonne, in southern France, where Visigothic script was the main writing system until the arrival of the Muslims, were the first territories to adopt the Roman rite and the new script<sup>20</sup>. The few extant charters and some twenty codices dated to around the late eighth-early ninth century from this area reveal that the influence of Caroline minuscule was present in Visigothic script hands from the first decade of the ninth century<sup>21</sup>, growing stronger from the second quarter of that century, with the first charter written in the new script dated 820<sup>22</sup>. The transition from one script to the other thus occurred in one generation, as attested by the palaeographic characteristics of the Visigothic script used by those more experienced scribes who copied or amended the main text of the extant codices that were being copied at that time. Although each hand shows its own specific graphic features, there are certain traits that recur more frequently and can thus be considered characteristic of the transitional period in this area. For instance, the younger scribes writing in the first decades of the ninth century seldom used a stroke with a dot to indicate an abbreviation, or a sign similar to an *s* –which was replaced by a semicolon– for the endings *-us* (mostly after *b*) and *-ue* (after *q*). They also began to replace common Visigothic abbreviations with their continental equivalent, progressively using the possessives *noster/uester* with theme in *r* instead of in *s*, *au* instead of *aum* for *autem*, and *qm* instead of *qnm* for *quoniam*. The abbreviated form of *per* called “continental”<sup>23</sup>, a letter *p* with a horizontal line cutting the descender, was the most common and the first new abbreviation used, followed by the syncopated endings of *-(t)er* and *-(t)ur* and some contractions by suprascript

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<sup>20</sup> Collins 1995; Barton 2004. On Septimanian Visigothic script, see Alturo 1994 (with a list of extant codices on pp. 40-41); Mundó 1956.

<sup>21</sup> Two codices, examples of this early transition are BnF, nouv. acq. lat. 12254 (Millares 1999, n.º 252) and BnF, nouv. acq. lat. 609 (Millares 1999, n.º 239), copied in Visigothic script with Caroline minuscule influence. In Septimania, Visigothic script not only shows the influence of Caroline minuscule but also that of other coeval writing systems, such as Insular (BnF, nouv. acq. lat. 536, dated to the ninth century; see Mundó, Alturo 1998, p. 132).

<sup>22</sup> Carcassone, Archives dép. Aude, H. 23 n.º 1. Also from the early ninth century are two extant codices from an undetermined Pyrenean area, copied in Caroline minuscule with Visigothic script influence: BnF, nouv. acq. lat. 4668 (Millares 1999, n.º 247); BnF, nouv. acq. lat. 9575 (Millares 1999, n.º 250).

<sup>23</sup> The so-called “continental” *per* and “continental” form of the possessives *noster/uester* with theme in *r* were used as a continuation of the Late Antique Roman system. Their use faded around the ninth century, to be recovered once again in this transitional period. Therefore, it is not unusual to find these abbreviations in early Visigothic script manuscripts as an archaism and not necessarily as a sign of modernism (see Mundó 1983).



letter<sup>24</sup>. Regarding the morphology of the alphabet, the Caroline minuscule form of the letter *a* –particularly when used in the middle of a word– was the first employed in Visigothic script manuscripts of this area, in addition to the Caroline *t* without bow and closed *g*, together with the increasing use of the tall ligatures *s+t* and *c+t*. As will be mentioned in other areas and as a logical consequence of periods of graphic transition, at the same time as Septimanian Visigothic script hands show Caroline minuscule traits, manuscripts copied in the latter script attest influence from the former –hybridisation– both in the alphabet (use of open *a*, tall *I*, and open *e*) and the abbreviation system (for example, in the signs used to mark the ending *-um* and the syllable *que*), and also in orthography (use of non-etymological *h*, confusion of *t* for *d* and of *q* for *c*)<sup>25</sup>.

In the peninsular area that would become Catalonia, the change of writing systems also took place in the ninth century, as a consequence of the close geographical and political connections with the Carolingian Empire<sup>26</sup>. In the late eighth century, once the Carolingians had regained Septimania forcing the Muslims to draw back, Charlemagne established the Frankish protectorate known as the Spanish March as a defensive barrier south of the Pyrenees. As Septimania, this newly reorganised territory divided into counties, was immediately thereafter under Frankish direct political, civil, and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The reclaimed territories were attached ecclesiastically to Narbonne's metropolitan see, therefore adopting in the early ninth century the Roman liturgy and new monastic and canonical rules, first in cathedral schools and eventually also in parish centres. The fluid codex trade across the Pyrenees through this Carolingian area of the peninsula, which had stopped because of political instability, now reopened and grew. Moreover, it must also be considered the graphic and cultural impact of charters written in Caroline minuscule in the Frankish kingdom, arriving in the Spanish March under Frankish political control.

The direct cultural influence of Carolingian written production on Iberian soil led to the gradual incorporation of Caroline minuscule graphic elements by scribes trained in Visigothic script and to a progressive substitution of graphic systems. A transitional Visigothic script is attested in the eastern counties and dioceses already in the second half of the ninth

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<sup>24</sup> On the introduction of abbreviations by suprascript letter, see the chapter by Francisco Molina de la Torre in this volume.

<sup>25</sup> Alturo 1992 (fn. 5).

<sup>26</sup> On the transition from Visigothic to Caroline minuscule in Catalonia, see Alturo 1991a, 1991b (with a list of manuscripts in Visigothic script and in Caroline minuscule written in that area in the ninth century); Mundó, Alturo 1998, 1990; Mundó 1956.



century<sup>27</sup>, particularly around 870-880, from which decade there are already examples written in Caroline minuscule<sup>28</sup>. The scribes from this area's transitional period show the same type of graphic influence as those working in Septimania, adding some new features: a sign similar to a semicircle after *m* and *t* to represent the ending *-us*, and a Tironian *nota* for *con* similar to a reversed letter *c* at the beginning of a word.

The last extant charters written in Visigothic script in the main cultural centres of the Catalan counties date from *ca.* 900<sup>29</sup>. There are, however, later graphic testimonies written in rural areas by scribes who received their graphic training in monastic and parish schools where the innovation had not yet been fully introduced, purposefully or not. As would happen in some Leonese and Castilian centres, the prestige some institutions had achieved as production centres of Visigothic script and custodians of the cultural tradition associated to it, hindered the acceptance of the new writing system, with scribes reluctant to change. In consequence, the initial resistance to both the new rite and the new script in the western dioceses of the territory, particularly at Urgell, offers a remarkable contrast with the eastern dioceses' greater openness to innovation<sup>30</sup>. The persistence of Visigothic script exemplified by these scribes is attested in early Caroline minuscule charters as well. The transition was slower in Catalonia than in Septimania, influence between scripts dating from the tenth and even the eleventh century<sup>31</sup>. The incorporation of some graphic characteristics of the Visigothic alphabet and orthography can be seen in the early manuscripts written in Caroline minuscule, at least in the first centuries of the transition, indicative of a resolute effort by the scribes who were used to reading and copying texts in Visigothic to write in the new script. In contrast, even in the eleventh century in the regions where Caroline minuscule was predominant, some scribes who were trained to write the new script voluntarily included in their hand certain elements of the traditional writing system with which they were still familiar, though in such cases they were more likely aiming to give distinction and personality to their texts<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Caroline minuscule influence is already seen in the early years of the ninth century (a "Visigótica mixta", *ca.* 830, is only attested in this geographical area). See Alturo 1991b; Mundó, Alturo 1998, p. 128.

<sup>28</sup> The first charter preserved dates from 881 (ACVic, calaix 9, *episc.* I, *perg.* 1bis). Some of the first codices copied in Caroline minuscule include: ACA, *fragm.* 157, *ca.* 870-880 (Alturo 1997); BC, *ms.* 2541, IV (*fragm.*), *ca.* 890 (Alturo 1995).

<sup>29</sup> See *fn.* 26.

<sup>30</sup> Alturo 2010, p. 194.

<sup>31</sup> See Mundó, Alturo 1990.

<sup>32</sup> Alturo 2010, p. 198.

In the kingdoms of Navarre and Aragon, external liturgical and graphical influence was given a determined royal impulse amid the late eleventh century-expansion of the Gregorian Reform. Leaving aside pious interests, Sancho III of Navarre sought to integrate the reform in his realm as a tool to align himself with possible European benefactors against the imperial advances of León-Castile. To that effect, he made a direct request to Cluny to oversee the reform, sending monks to be trained in the Frankish abbey and integrating them on their return into the monastery of San Juan de la Peña, which adopted the Roman rite in 1071, as did the rest of Aragon soon after. When the kingdom of Navarre was absorbed by Aragon in 1076, the liturgical reorientation was extended through the integration of both kingdoms' churches. Close contact between Navarre-Aragon and Europe had had an effect on manuscript testimonies long before that date though. In charters, Caroline minuscule influence is attested in the alphabet (incorporation of closed *a* and *t*, upright ligatures *c+t* and *s+t*) and the abbreviation system (superscript letters and a sign similar to a semicircle to mark the ending *-us*) already in the mid-eleventh century<sup>33</sup>. The first manuscripts written in Caroline minuscule in the easternmost area of Navarre-Aragon, Ribargorza, also attest to an earlier influence from the neighbouring Catalan counties and Pyrenean *scriptoria*, since codices were already being copied there in the new script in the late ninth century<sup>34</sup>. It should also be noted that, by this time, Visigothic cursive script was no longer in use in this area, most likely because of the influence of minuscule hands, which were abundant<sup>35</sup>. The prevalence of Visigothic script in Navarre, though, identifies this kingdom as an archaising area as the last example written in Visigothic (minuscule) script dates to 1162<sup>36</sup>. The coexistence of both writing systems and their mutual graphic influence throughout the centuries is well attested in these territories as it was in north-western Iberia.

Regardless of political and cultural pressures, and even within the Spanish March, as well as charters were still being written in Visigothic script in the late ninth century, albeit mostly in secondary centres isolated from the main cultural and trade routes, references to liturgical books preserving the Hispanic rite can still be found in the tenth and eleventh centuries, as some rituals point to their use in combination with the new Office<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Usón 1940-1941, p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Millares 1983, p. 153. See also Canellas 1991, p. 484 (ACLeida, MS. 16-Roda de Isábena?).

<sup>35</sup> Ubieto 1957, p. 422.

<sup>36</sup> Usón 1940-1941, p. 25; Millares 1983, p. 178 (AHN Clero SR, carp. 715, n.º 1).

<sup>37</sup> Díaz y Díaz 1969, p. 240; Reynolds 2009.

### 3.2. Northern and north-western Iberian Peninsula

In northern Iberia, too, without diminishing cultural pressure and the arrival of Carolingian and Caroline minuscule codices that indubitably circulated in the peninsula particularly along the Way of St James, the liturgical and graphical transformation was in the hands of the king. Alfonso VI of León-Castile could be described as the main player of eleventh-century peninsular politics. Contested by Pope Gregory VII on his imperial aim “over all Spains” and as moral guardian of Christian Iberia, Alfonso strategically approached Cluny, far more tolerant than the Pope, and not Rome, to manage the reform, thereafter spread by the diligent monks. Leaving aside politics, however, in considering the chronology and graphic characteristics of the transition from Visigothic script to Caroline minuscule in the kingdom of León-Castile, the latter should not be considered a unified whole. Besides being anachronistic, this view would be biased since within the kingdom there were many different cultural entities, sees, and monasteries with their own history, political interests, and graphical evolution. Each production centre reacted in a particular way to the introduction of both the new liturgical rite and the new script, and it is thus impossible to reduce all the peculiarities the scribes were taught in these areas and show in their hands to just one chronological summary of degrees of external influence. It is useful, however, to organise the analysis of the sources by areas, sees, and/or specific major centres that had, in the eleventh century at least, their own cultural prestige.

Thus, in those areas that correspond to the modern regions of Castile and León, according to the surviving sources, the French graphic influence began in the mid-eleventh century, albeit manifested in only a few features<sup>38</sup> –not predominantly in the alphabet as in the north-eastern sources, but in the abbreviation system. It was not until the end of that century that, possibly as a result of the increasing abundance of texts containing the new rite, the overwhelming incorporation of Caroline elements, above all abbreviations by suprascript letter, allows a differentiation of a transitional Visigothic minuscule script. The introduction of Caroline minuscule in epigraphic script was slower, not attested until the early twelfth century, and with Visigothic script vestiges until almost the end of that period<sup>39</sup>. Already before the end of the eleventh century, although more frequently from the second decade of the twelfth, scribes were writing and copying texts in Caroline minuscule; the earliest preserved charter is dated to 1092 and was written at or nearby Santa

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<sup>38</sup> Ruiz 2008; Ostolaza 1990, p. 161.

<sup>39</sup> García 2008, p. 77.

María of Valladolid<sup>40</sup>. The change of writing systems seems to have been relatively quick in this area since the last charters in Visigothic script date from around 1120-1135, which suggests that the full substitution of graphic models was the result of a generational change of scribes.

These general conclusions can nevertheless vary slightly depending on the centre. For example, among the extant manuscript sources from the cathedral, see, and political capital of the medieval Leonese-Castilian kingdom, León, 1118 is the date of the last preserved charter written in Visigothic script<sup>41</sup>. Caroline minuscule influence is shown in the mid-eleventh century Leonese sources with the incorporation of Caroline *a* and *t* into the Visigothic alphabet and abbreviations by suprascript letter like *p<sup>ro</sup>*, *t<sup>ibi</sup>*, or *q<sup>uo</sup>m<sup>odo</sup>*, and a semicircle to mark the ending *-us*<sup>42</sup>. The period of strongest exogenous influence is, however, 1090-1100, after which date, the 1118 charter excepted, no extant text was written in Visigothic script. The first charter in Caroline minuscule dates from 1100<sup>43</sup>, though it still bears some Visigothic influence. Between 1100 and 1118 the new foreign script completely replaced Visigothic.

A slightly different chronology can be seen in the monastery of Sahagún, the prime cultural centre of the kingdom possessed of extremely skilled scribes for the whole medieval period, where external, especially Cluniac, influence was particularly intense. Visigothic minuscule was used in Sahagún until at least 1123<sup>44</sup>. The influence of Caroline minuscule is attested earlier than in León, in 1029, and was especially strong between 1090 and 1109<sup>45</sup>. The first charter in Caroline minuscule still bearing Visigothic script influence was written in 1104<sup>46</sup>; the first without that influence was produced in 1120. The transition between writing systems seems to have been complete

<sup>40</sup> Ruiz 2008, p. 115 (ACValladolid, leg. 25, num. 1, f. 1206).

<sup>41</sup> Ruiz 2008, p. 104 (ACLeón, num. 317).

<sup>42</sup> From the mid-eleventh century, written in an undetermined Leonese centre in Visigothic script with Caroline minuscule features: BUsal, ms. 2668 (Díaz y Díaz 1983, pp. 349-350; Millares 1999, n.º 280). Dated to the second half of the eleventh century, Leonese area: AH-PLeón, frag. II (Díaz y Díaz 1983, p. 395; Millares 1999, n.º 92); AHPLeón, fragm. III (Díaz y Díaz 1983, p. 395; Millares 1999, n.º 93); and AHPLeón, fragm. IV (Díaz y Díaz 1983, p. 395; Millares 1999, n.º 94).

<sup>43</sup> Ruiz 2008, p. 105 (ref. ACLeón, num. 282).

<sup>44</sup> Herrero 1991, vol. IV, n.º 1247.

<sup>45</sup> Herrero 2000, pp. 33-37. See also Fernández 2002, pp. 127-128. From the early eleventh century, written in Visigothic script with Caroline minuscule features: BN, Mss/1872 (Millares 1999, n.º 157). Copied in Sahagún ca. 1110, with the same graphic influence: AHN, cód. 928B, *Liber testamentorum sancti Facundi-Becerro gótico de Sahagún* (Millares 1999, n.º 124). Compare this chronology with that of the monastery of Silos: Castro 2020.

<sup>46</sup> Herrero 1988, vol. III, n.º 1119 (AHN Clero SR, carp. 891, n.º 22).

prior to 1125<sup>47</sup>. Visigothic script was thus preserved in Sahagún for a little longer than in León, which may be explained by the prominence of the *scriptorium*, either because its scribes were many and of varied age, leading to progressive change as the older scribes retired, or because they were reluctant to abandon the graphic system they had mastered and which had made them famous in peninsular written production.

To the north of León-Castile, in the area that corresponds to modern Cantabria, the extant testimonies reveal that the process of graphic change followed the same pace as the Castilian centres, not the Leonese ones<sup>48</sup>, even though the transition lasted a little longer. Thus, there are still examples of charters written in Visigothic minuscule script in the first decades of the twelfth century, the last one dating to 1136 and produced in Santillana del Mar<sup>49</sup>. Regarding Asturias<sup>50</sup>, the analysis of the sources preserved in the archive of the monastery of San Vicente de Oviedo gives a starting date for the introduction of new graphic features (abbreviation system) in the late eleventh century, around 1080. The first charter written in Caroline minuscule dates to 1116<sup>51</sup>, the first in pure Caroline around mid-century, while the last example of Visigothic script dates to 1166<sup>52</sup>.

In Portugal<sup>53</sup>, which was first a county partitioned from León-Castile as a gift for Alfonso VI's daughter Teresa and her husband, Henry of Burgundy, and soon after a kingdom under Afonso Enriquez, Visigothic script endured until 1172, the last examples (in charters) being produced in the monastery of Pedroso<sup>54</sup>. A transitional period, however, had already begun in the mid-eleventh century<sup>55</sup>, external influence spreading from north to south as territory was progressively recovered from the Muslims, with examples written in Caroline minuscule dating to 1108 (Coimbra)<sup>56</sup>. The exogenous graphic

<sup>47</sup> Herrero 2000, p. 36; Shailor 1985, p. 44. On the graphic characteristics shown in the first charters written in Caroline minuscule, see Herrero 2000, pp. 36-37.

<sup>48</sup> Blasco 1988, pp. 77, 97-98.

<sup>49</sup> See Blasco 1994-1995, fn. 19 (although Blasco 1988, pp. 117-118 lists Santillana, Archivo Diocesano, n.º 9 as the last Visigothic script example, dated 1112).

<sup>50</sup> Calleja 2008.

<sup>51</sup> Floriano 1968, n.º CLV, pp. 252-253 (AHN Clero SR, carp. 1595, n.º 256).

<sup>52</sup> Floriano 1968, n.º CCLXXXIX, pp. 456-457 (AHN Clero SR, carp. 1595, n.º 298).

<sup>53</sup> Santos 1994, pp. 128-141; 2000-2001, pp. 105-108; 2007; Marques 2006-2007.

<sup>54</sup> Santos 1994, p. 128 (TT, Pedroso, m. 4, doc. 3b). The latest codices written in transitional Visigothic script, dated to around the mid-twelfth century: BPOporto, ms. 23 (13-8-3) (Díaz y Díaz 1983, pp. 338-340); BPOporto, ms. 800 (Díaz y Díaz 1983, pp. 340-342).

<sup>55</sup> Seen mostly in charters (Pendorada, 1054) but also in codices: AUCoimbra, IV-3ª S-Gv. 44 (22) (Díaz y Díaz 1983, p. 369; Millares 1999, n.º 35).

<sup>56</sup> Santos 1994, p. 167. The transition from Caroline minuscule to Gothic script(s) was much faster than that of Visigothic to Caroline, since proto-Gothic script was already used in Portugal in 1111 and Gothic in 1123.

influence is seen in Visigothic minuscule script mostly in the abbreviation system, although it is also visible in the alphabet with closed *a*, *g*, and *t*. This transitional minuscule script was contemporaneous with cursive (until 1101) and minuscule (until 1123).

Galicia, in the far west of the peninsula, presents a graphic evolution similar to that seen in the easternmost territories. Alfonso VI, *artifex* of the process, did not have the same authority over territorial politics in outlying Galicia as he had in the central part of his kingdom. In Galicia, noblemen and bishops, supported by privileges granted by Alfonso's predecessors, had much to say in the process<sup>57</sup>. Albeit formally under the rule of the king and his delegate, Raymond of Burgundy, the Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela was the one effectively in charge of implementing the reform, and he did so as long as the Pope's requirements were in line with his. As a consequence, although it seems that the new liturgy was accepted more or less at the same time as in the other parts of the kingdom –if spreading from cathedral centres instead of from monastic institutions– the graphic innovation was, for lack of a better word, peculiar<sup>58</sup>.

It is useful to divide Galicia into two areas, the dioceses of Lugo and of Santiago de Compostela. The former can be described as the traditional one, in line with the global politics and reform process of León-Castile, whereas the latter was a newly reformed see and soon to be archdiocese under a bishop as skilled and ambitious as Alfonso, Xelmírez. In Lugo, the influence of Caroline minuscule in Visigothic script hands is attested from 1091, the first charter in Caroline minuscule dating to 1113<sup>59</sup> and the last in a transitional Visigothic minuscule hand dating to 1196<sup>60</sup>. The coexistence of graphic systems extended for some 80 years, the transition needing more than a hundred to be completed. In Santiago, the influence of Caroline minuscule is first attested in 1050, while the first charter in Caroline minuscule is dated to 1110<sup>61</sup> and the last in a transitional Visigothic dated to 1199 –with a rural charter written in Visigothic script in 1234<sup>62</sup>. The coexistence of graphic systems extended for some 80 years here too, the transition taking almost a hundred and fifty. The chronology of the graphic change, albeit significant for the duration of the process in a centre as international as Santiago already

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<sup>57</sup> On the historical context, see Castro 2016, pp. 217-242.

<sup>58</sup> On Galician Visigothic script, see Castro 2012.

<sup>59</sup> AHN Clero SR, carp. 1325C, n.º 4.

<sup>60</sup> AHN Clero SR, carp. 1197, n.º 1. Castro 2012, pp. 393-395.

<sup>61</sup> AHUS, Pergaminos Blanco Cicerón, n.º 11.

<sup>62</sup> Martínez 1913. Charter written at the monastery of Almerzo (Visigothic minuscule with strong Caroline influence), now lost.

was in the early Middle Ages, hides something truly significant from a graphic point of view. On the one hand, while the elite were promoting the reform, Bishop Xelmírez wrote in Visigothic cursive and not in Caroline minuscule despite his central role in promoting its introduction<sup>63</sup>, and Alfonso VI's notaries continued to use Visigothic script too<sup>64</sup>. On the other hand, the graphic influence was most intense in Visigothic cursive, being the preferred script –not Visigothic minuscule, as in all the other centres with the exception of Sahagún. Both peculiarities highlight the personal character that Visigothic script had in Galicia and, it could be suggested, the weight that was given to a graphic model as a representative of tradition used as a card to play when trying to make the most of the cultural standing of a centre.

As can be seen, in the central territories of the kingdom of León-Castile, the transition to the new European writing system can be dated to around 1030-1050. The graphic influence was thus attested before both the change of the rite and the intention to unify the scripts for liturgical texts. Caroline minuscule was introduced first, however, for the purpose of copying books, as suggested by the extant late eleventh-early twelfth-century codices<sup>65</sup>. Subsequently, the graphic influence became evident in charters. The first ones written in the foreign graphic model are dated to between 1110 and 1120 depending on the area, while the latest examples of charters written in Visigothic script date from 1166 (Asturias), 1172 (Portugal), and 1199/1234 (Galicia).

### 3.3. Mozarabic Iberia

In the Mozarabic areas, the evolution of Visigothic script was uneven and depended on the production centre, its cultural prominence and openness to external European influence<sup>66</sup>. As these centres were incorporated into the Christian kingdoms, they came into contact with both the new liturgy and the new script as well. However, it must be noted that the changes here would not have been as heavily imposed by cultural pressure as in the north, for Alfonso VI aimed for a smooth integration, so that in the main centres at least the

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<sup>63</sup> See Castro 2019.

<sup>64</sup> Ruiz 2008.

<sup>65</sup> The first codex copied in Caroline minuscule dates from 1105 (BCToledo, ms. 14-3, see Reinhardt, González 1990, pp. 302-303, n.º 163) although its copyist, Pedro, could have been a foreigner (see Vezin 2003, p. 218; Herrero 2000, p. 38).

<sup>66</sup> On the graphic characteristics of the Mozarabic Visigothic script and its extant manuscript sources, see Camino 2012; Díaz y Díaz 1995. On its cultural context, see Aillet 2010, especially 7, 136.



new script, when not hindered by a conscious effort to preserve the Hispanic tradition<sup>67</sup>, would have been adopted at the same pace as in other Leonese-Castilian areas. A clear tendency to archaism can be seen in Toledo, where Visigothic script was in use until the thirteenth or even fourteenth century<sup>68</sup>, and the Mozarabic rite was a sign of cultural identity, but where charters written in Visigothic script are already rare in the early twelfth century. In contrast, the transition from Visigothic to Caroline in the main southern cultural centres, such as Cordoba, was already underway in the tenth century<sup>69</sup>, and in the eastern Mozarabic regions, a Visigothic minuscule in transition to Caroline minuscule can be identified from the mid-eleventh century, thus matching the chronology seen in the northern centres.

A different graphic evolution of Visigothic script resulted from its use by Christian communities under Islamic political control outside of the Iberian Peninsula. After their exile to North Africa by the Almoravids for betraying the *dhimma* pact by offering Alfonso I of Aragon help in attacking the area around Granada, scribes continued to use the only system they knew for writing and copying Latin texts, which would progressively evolve into a very distinctive script, as can be seen in manuscript examples from as far as the Sinai Peninsula dated to the twelfth century<sup>70</sup>.

#### 4. THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGE

The understanding that the switching of writing systems was a requirement of the times imposed upon eleventh-century Visigothic script scribes begs the question of how that change was accomplished from a practical point of view and how it was perceived by the scribes themselves and their contemporaries<sup>71</sup>. The first question raised leads us to consider polygraphism as a characteristic of early and high medieval Iberian literate communities, while the second requires a broad historical consideration of the

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<sup>67</sup> It is also relevant to highlight the tendency to archaism in these Mozarabic communities, seen through codicological analysis of the manuscripts they produced. See Rodríguez 2011, p. 101.

<sup>68</sup> BN, Mss/10110 (Tol. 35.2), *Misticus* copied in the parish of Santas Justa y Rufina, near Toledo, by Fernando Juárez, is the latest codex in Visigothic script preserved. See Millares 1999, n.º 173; Martínez 2008, p. 11.

<sup>69</sup> BCToledo, 14.23 (Millares 1999, n.º 315). A *De arithmetica* of Boethius (ACA, Rivipulensis 168) was copied in Córdoba in Caroline minuscule around the mid-eleventh century (Millares 1999, n.º 8).

<sup>70</sup> Vezin 2012, p. 37.

<sup>71</sup> On this approach, see Castro 2019.

sources and their context. In order to provide valuable evidence, it is essential to ponder Visigothic script and its scribes as a cultural characteristic of Iberian manuscript production since the early Middle Ages. The proposed method is thus to analyse the whole community of Visigothic script scribes through the centuries, from the seventh to the eleventh, to address the topic of how, if so, they managed to write in different scripts. Having discussed the eventuality of polygraphic scribes, and giving at least some consideration to how they and their community must have perceived differences among graphic systems, one should address the correspondence between the type of document written and the type of script in which it was written, together with the place and period in which the manuscript was produced<sup>72</sup>.

#### 4.1. Visigothic cursive and Visigothic minuscule

Long before the effective introduction of Caroline minuscule in the Iberian Peninsula, Visigothic script scribes were not unaccustomed to reading and working with different writing systems. Besides being familiar with the exemplars copied in Uncial and Half-Uncial Latin scripts held in the archives of the main cultural centres, some scribes must have also been used to handling manuscripts in Arabic and Hebrew, at least in north-eastern, central, and southern centres but not only. Regardless of the level of the centre, moreover, Visigothic script scribes were also well acquainted with Visigothic script itself, denomination which hides, hidden as typological variants, two different writing systems: Visigothic cursive and Visigothic minuscule.

Although sharing a name and some graphic features, Visigothic cursive and Visigothic minuscule are in fact two different models with their own origins, characteristics, and evolution<sup>73</sup>. The former is the typological variant which evolved out of the cursive script used for practical purposes during the period of the Visigothic kingdom. It is characterised by an upright *a* and closed *g*, and the G-clef-like sign for the endings *-us* and *-um*. The genetic origin of the latter is in the calligraphic execution of the Roman semi-cursive minuscule, used for copying books from at least the sixth century. In contrast to the cursive form, the minuscule alphabet shows an open *a* and *g*, and a sign similar to the letter *s*

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<sup>72</sup> A detailed study on polygraphism, with a newly developed methodology, is being tested within the ERC-StG project “The Secret Life of Writing: People, Script and Ideas in the Iberian Peninsula” (2020-2025) (grant agreement n.º 850604), Universidad de Salamanca. PI: Ainoa Castro Correa. I wish to thank the reviewers of this chapter for their insightful comments and suggestions on this first approach.

<sup>73</sup> On Visigothic script, see, in addition to the previous notes, Alturo 2016.

for the endings *-us* and *-um*. The cursive, due to the link it created between the Middle Ages and the Late Roman Visigothic and Merovingian chanceries, was the preferred script for legal texts, whereas the minuscule, most likely because of its similarity to the Roman book-hand scripts, was that preferred for copying codices and was also present in charters, particularly from the eleventh century on. As mentioned above, Visigothic minuscule was the typology in which Caroline graphic influence was more intense –except in Galicia– most likely because of the similarity between the two minuscule models.

Even though Visigothic cursive and minuscule scripts were similar and almost coeval in their use throughout Iberia, research has shown that there were very few scribes who displayed skill in both –this does not mean there were not trained in both types, only that there are no extant testimonies to confirm it<sup>74</sup>–, even bearing in mind that many sources cannot be attributed to an identified scribe for lack of a signature with a name and that not everything produced has survived. There are many hands in which some features of one model are found in the other, which has been seen as proof of their lack of skill in both systems<sup>75</sup>. But, reviewing published collections of charters from the main manuscript production centres across Iberia and after direct consultation of all extant sources from the north-west<sup>76</sup>, we know of only eight cases of truly polygraphic Visigothic scripts scribes: working in Castile in the mid-late tenth century, there were Florencio de Valeránica<sup>77</sup> and Vigila de Albelda<sup>78</sup>; working in León (Sahagún) in the late eleventh and early twelfth century, Romano II (allegedly)<sup>79</sup>, Munio

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<sup>74</sup> We could also argue whether master calligraphers of codices who used a minuscule script should or could have also mastered cursive for daily writing (I would like to thank Prof David Ganz for bringing this to my attention).

<sup>75</sup> Deswarte 2013. From our perspective, this statement should be reconsidered. Although it could be argued whether Caroline minuscule scribes who showed some Visigothic script traits in their hands (or the other way around) were also polygraphic, we prefer to relegate these occurrences to examples of graphic contamination (hybridisation; see Castro 2019). There is no evidence this mixing of elements came from their expertise in both writing systems.

<sup>76</sup> See previous notes for the specific references.

<sup>77</sup> Codices: Silos, fragm. 19; BN, mss 80; ACCórdoba, ms. 1; ASIL, ms. 2. See Millares 1999 for further information. Charters: BL, Add. Ch. 71356; ACBurgos, vol. 69, I parte, f. 85r and 87r; ACCovarrubias, leg. I, no. 4. See Escalona, Velázquez, Juárez 2012; García 2004.

<sup>78</sup> Codices: Escorial, d.I.2 (“Código Albeldense o Vigilano”) copied by Vigila, Sarracino and García; AHN, cód. 1007B (+ AHN, cód. 1006B) copied by Vigila and Eximino (available online: [http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas/servlets/Control\\_servlet?accion=3&txt\\_id\\_desc\\_ud=2609411&fromagenda=N](http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas/servlets/Control_servlet?accion=3&txt_id_desc_ud=2609411&fromagenda=N) [accessed: 23/01/2020]). See Millares 1999 for further information. Charters: ACLogroño, perg. 1ter and perg. 2. See Fernández 2000; Fernández, Herrero 2003.

<sup>79</sup> Codex: BN, ms. 112, copied together with Munio Díaz (available online: <http://bdh.bne.es/bnearch/detalle/bdh0000120579> [accessed: 23/01/2020]). See Millares 1999 for further information. Charters: AHN Clero SR, carp. 890, n.º 6; carp. 885, n.º 23 and n.º 24; carp. 886, n.º 6 and n.º 10. See Ostolaza 1990.

Díaz<sup>80</sup>, and Pedro II<sup>81</sup>; and working in Galicia also in the late eleventh and early twelfth century, Pedro<sup>82</sup>, Rodrigo<sup>83</sup>, and Arias Peláez<sup>84</sup>.

These scribes learnt to write one graphic model –the script used in their signature being taken by scholarship as indicative of the one they learnt first (see the example of Arias Peláez)– and then continued their training, adding the other to their professional portfolio. The process of learning a new script –first simple pen-strokes, then the alphabet, syllables, abbreviations, words, and sentences, most likely mnemonic verses which used the complete alphabet– must have been faster for they already knew the basics of written production. Nevertheless, in view of the scarcity of examples of digraphism or polygraphism recorded, the evidence seems to suggest that scribes tended to learn one graphic model and kept to it. It could be discussed why. Polygraphic Visigothic script scribes might have had a particular affinity for writing, a calligraphic ability, or perhaps they were answering a need in their context. It seems to have been their choice.

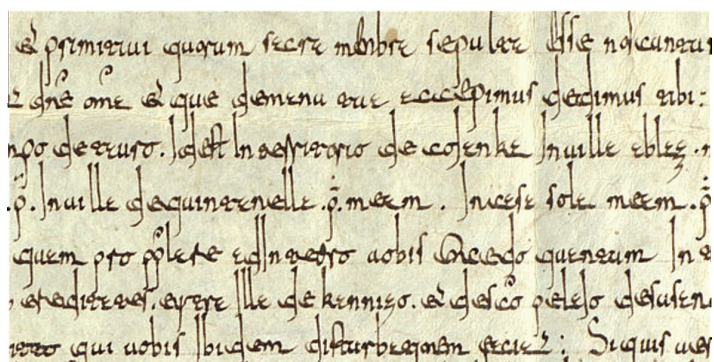


Fig. 1. © Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte. AHN Clero SR, carp. 892, n.º 8. Dated 1106. Visigothic cursive. Munio Díaz.

<sup>80</sup> Codices: AHN, cód. 989 (“Liber testamentorum Sancti Facundi”) (available online: [http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas/servlets/ControlServlet?accion=3&txt\\_id\\_desc\\_ud=2610133&fromagenda=N](http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas/servlets/ControlServlet?accion=3&txt_id_desc_ud=2610133&fromagenda=N) [accessed: 23/01/2020]); BN, ms. 112, copied together with Romano II (available online: <http://bdh.bne.es/bnsearch/detalle/bdh0000120579> [accessed: 23/01/2020]). See Millares 1999 for further information. Charters: AHN Clero SR, carp. 890, n.º 18, 20; carp. 891, n.º 2, 5, 11, 21; carp. 892, n.º 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 21; carp. 893, n.º 1, 2, 13. See Herrero 1988; 1991; Fernández, Herrero 1995; Herrero, Fernández 2012a.

<sup>81</sup> AHN Clero SR, carp. 890, n.º 13; carp. 892, n.º 3, 4, 13; carp. 895, n.º 16. Ostolaza 1990; Herrero, Fernández 2012a. While it could certainly be possible, I do not find enough graphic evidence to unreservedly agree with Deswarte 2013 as for another scribe, Arias, being polygraphic minuscule-cursive. A further study of this hand would be welcomed.

<sup>82</sup> ACTuy, 1/2; AHN Clero SR, carp. 1239, n.º 13; carp. 1240, n.º 1. Castro 2012, 2019.

<sup>83</sup> AHN Clero SR, carp. 1325D, n.º 1; ACLugo, 46. Castro 2012, 2019.

<sup>84</sup> AHUS, Pinarío, 49. Castro 2012, 2019.

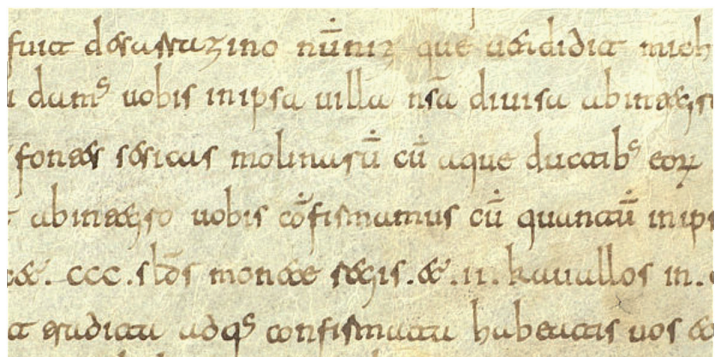


Fig. 2. © Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte. AHN Clero SR, carp. 892, n.º 10.  
Dated 1106. Visigothic minuscule. Munio Díaz.

The eight polygraphic scribes provide remarkable evidence on the question of how polygraphism, or indeed each of the graphic models available, was perceived by scribes on the one hand and, on the other, by the grantors and addressees of the documents they crafted and by the readers of the codices commissioned to them.

First, it must be noted that the difference between the general use of Visigothic cursive and Visigothic minuscule noted by scholarship is proved by these testimonies. Indeed, when scribes copied codices, they favoured minuscule, whereas for charters the choice was cursive. Florencio de Valeránica copied codices in Visigothic minuscule and wrote charters in Visigothic cursive (*elongata* variant) with only one exception –a donation by a nobleman produced in minuscule<sup>85</sup>. Vigila de Albelda followed the same rule. Both scribes worked in the same period (around the year 1000) in the same area (Castile). In the second half of the eleventh century though, this tendency changed as a consequence of political change –the Navarrese dynasty ascended the Leonese-Castilian throne<sup>86</sup>– most likely in combination with an intensification of written production and the fading of the perceived link between the cursive type and the Late Antique chanceries. The use of Visigothic minuscule for charters expanded but, still, the evidence seems to suggest –taking Romano II (1080-1090) as an example, who also copied codices in minuscule– that, when it was possible to choose, Visigothic cursive

<sup>85</sup> BL, Add. Ch. 71356. From our perspective, we could argue whether this is an original as Escalona, Velázquez, Juárez 2012 suggested.

<sup>86</sup> Fernando I was the son of Sancho III and, as already mentioned, Visigothic cursive script was no longer the favourite model in Navarre (Herrero, Fernández 2012b, p. 57).



was often the preferred script. Munio (1102-1115) and Pedro II (1108-1130), linked to the monastery of Sahagún, show a change in this tendency; they continued to use minuscule to copy codices (only extant for Munio) but used both cursive and minuscule for their charters (figs. 1, 2). Only charters are preserved for Pedro (1061-1074), Rodrigo (1124-1144), and Arias Peláez (1153), who all used both cursive and minuscule in Galician institutions. Thus, the correspondence between script and product crafted, be it a codex or a charter, seems to have been evident for scribes before the turn of the twelfth century, as it could be suggested would have been for their readers and recipients.

Second, by analysing the correspondence between the type of script and the grantor/addressee of the charter written in each case, further significant data emerge. Here we have the examples of Pedro II, Munio Díaz, and the three Galician scribes, all writing charters in both Visigothic cursive and minuscule. Pedro II crafted two charters in minuscule and three in cursive, with no distinction as to the subject or grantor/addressee of the documents; Munio produced eight in minuscule and twelve in cursive, also without distinction. This lack of differentiation could mean that, at least on a practical level, the two scripts were indistinguishable, or that the quite frantic scribal activity at Sahagún around the turn of the century, with a proliferation of scribes and manuscripts, left open the question of the type of script. The Galician examples show a different context. Evidence seems to suggest that the scribes preferred Visigothic minuscule for writing texts for more traditional institutions or when a more formal appearance was required for a charter, whereas the cursive variant was the type used for private charters, the external aesthetic aspect of the script thus being fundamental in its choice as would be the case in later centuries. Pedro wrote a private document in cursive and two charters in minuscule –a royal charter granted to the Cathedral of Tuy, and the testament of a noblemen providing a donation to the monastery of Samos. Significantly, though, Rodrigo and Arias Peláez used both scripts with no consideration of the content of the text. It could be suggested that by this time, the mid-twelfth century, Visigothic script was in itself fading and the differences between graphic models could have been less clear than before, or that Galician institutions went through a frantic period of intense production like Sahagún experienced with a little delay.

These are only a few notes discussing very scarce evidence. It might be useful to reflect on the type of script used for writing or copying charters from the mid-eleventh century onwards, particularly in institutions which did not have a polygraphic scribe, linking scripts to topics (geographic influence), grantors/addressees (status), and the potential interests of each centre from a global perspective.

## 4.2. Visigothic script and Caroline minuscule

As mentioned above, broadly speaking, Caroline minuscule became the most common graphic model in north-eastern Iberia in the ninth century and around the late eleventh-early twelfth century in the north. And, while polygraphic Visigothic script scribes seem to have been scarce, those skilled in both Visigothic and Caroline minuscule were even scarcer. Looking over the main published references editing manuscript sources between the early ninth and the mid-twelfth century, there are only four scribes/copyists who might have been –more likely– polygraphic Visigothic-Caroline amanuenses and a fifth that evidence clearly shows it was:

– The first is an unnamed scribe who worked in Aragon in the twelfth century copying ff. 62r-69v of codex Vat, pal. Lat. 869 in Caroline minuscule. It has been proposed by scholarship that he added, most likely without making a conscious choice, four verses in Visigothic script in f. 66r, the system in which he was first trained<sup>87</sup>.

– The second follows the same pattern; another unnamed scribe who copied the Roman Breviary BL Add. 30849 in Caroline minuscule in the late eleventh or early twelfth century –manuscript that must have arrived to the monastery of Silos soon thereafter–, with some verses in Visigothic script (ff. 97r, 82r), a graphic system which shows itself through his hand even in its cursive form (see the characteristic sign for *-us* on f. 78v)<sup>88</sup>.

– The third is Pelayo, *kanonicus*, who copied in the early twelfth century most of the codex *Liber Testamentorum Ecclesiae Ovetensis* (hand B) in a purposefully calligraphic Visigothic script (a mixed version of minuscule and cursive forms –*litterae ellongatae*)<sup>89</sup>, with an addition in Caroline minuscule in f. 109, and seems also to have written charters in Visigothic cursive and in Caroline minuscule<sup>90</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> Mundó 1956, p. 177; Mundó, Alturo 1998, p. 131. This codex is available online: [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Pal.lat.869](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pal.lat.869) [accessed: 23/01/2020]. The relation between this copyist and those of Vat, Ott. Lat. 1210, in Visigothic minuscule and Caroline minuscule (available online: [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Ott.lat.1210](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Ott.lat.1210) [accessed: 23/01/2020]), remains to be explored since both codices seem to be part of the same (see Camino 2008, p. 134, fn. 61; Millares 1999, n.º 277).

<sup>88</sup> This codex “follows the Mozarabic rite but was copied in Caroline minuscule, betraying an appreciation of embedded cultural conventions and perhaps a sign of reactionism against the liturgical change” (see Castro 2020). See also Walker 1998; Vezin 2003, pp. 217-218; Vivancos 2015, pp. 339-341 (“Il est évident que nous avons affaire à un copiste habitué à écrire en minuscule wisigothique, mais obligé d’imiter l’écriture caroline du modèle qu’il copiait», p. 340).

<sup>89</sup> Sanz 1995, pp. 103-106.

<sup>90</sup> Sanz 1995, pp. 110, 138. ACO, serie A, carp. 2, n.º 14 –Visigothic cursive–; ACO, serie B, carp. 3, n.º 3 –Caroline minuscule–; AHN Clero SR, carp. 1595, n.º 8 –Visigothic



– The fourth is an unnamed scribe who, in the early twelfth century (*ca.* 1125-1130), added to the Cartulary of Santa María del Puerto (Cantabria), in the blank space, several documents using Caroline minuscule, but, in f. 23v, included a text which begins in Visigothic minuscule to end, from line 6 on, in Caroline minuscule<sup>91</sup>.

– The fifth scribe is Martín, who worked for the monastery of Sahagún between 1110 and 1116, a period in which he wrote six charters using alternately Visigothic minuscule and Caroline minuscule regardless of the content or the grantor/addressee of the document<sup>92</sup> (figs. 3, 4).

Significantly, it is worth mentioning in relation to the subject a charter written in Visigothic minuscule (transitional) dated 1155 (fig. 5), which contains at the foot a Caroline-Visigothic conversion table with both alphabets and some ligatures, to ease consultation for readers unused to Visigothic script<sup>93</sup>. This is not, moreover, the only case<sup>94</sup>.

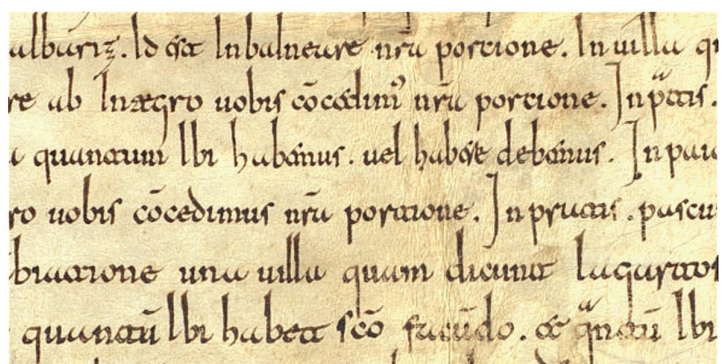


Fig. 3. © Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte. AHN Clero SR, carp. 892, n.º 11. Dated 1106. Visigothic minuscule. Martín.

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cursive. He seems to have also been the illuminator of the codex (see Sanz 1995, pp. 142-143).

<sup>91</sup> Blasco 1994-1995, p. 218; 1986, p. 133 and lam. 7. AHN, cód., L.1001 (available online: <http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/description/2610146> [accessed: 01/02/2020]).

<sup>92</sup> Visigothic minuscule: AHN Clero SR, carp. 890, n.º 5; carp. 892, n.º 12, 22. Caroline minuscule: AHN Clero SR, carp. 891, n.º 22; carp. 893, n.º 11, 15. See Herrero 1991; Ruiz 2004; 2007, pp. 304-307; 2008, p. 106; Herrero, Fernández 2012a, p. 107.

<sup>93</sup> Wright 1982, p. 235.

<sup>94</sup> See Martín 2007, p. 520 (ASIL, n.º 125 –also a mid-twelfth century copy and from the same *scriptorium*).

Sed quia ex guerra que est inter me & regē  
cū faciendi. Ista tamen ratione seruata. ut  
ipse in ipsis monetariis omnē iustitiā si m  
portione in tribus partibus diuidatur. Vna  
damnū monasteria scī faciendi per occasionē  
leria. & omīs inquietudinis molestia. Har  
nant. hominēq; delimo tē formaunt. qd̄ con  
uit de mā broqueue. seu de qua libe gente ut'

Fig. 4. © Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte. AHN Clero SR, carp. 893, n.º 15. Dated 1116. Caroline minuscule. Martín.

178.5  
Comet manrich. Comet ofozul. Comet Raimur.  
Comet Pitar. Comet abrego. Comet Sacer gartse. Comet Suarimenedi.  
Comet Paurus. Comet Duran. Comet ar.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	v	x	y	z
et	te	no																				
ar	ar	aq																				

Fig. 5. ASIL, n.º 298 © Museo San Isidoro de León (author: F. Ruiz Tomé).

These examples of polygraphic Visigothic script-Caroline minuscule scribes raise the question of why only these cases are supported by evidence. On the one hand, one could argue that learning a completely new writing system, not a long-established model as in the cases of Visigothic cursive and minuscule, would have been a particularly tiresome task for scribes of advanced age and, therefore, only scribes at the beginning of their career were likely to have accepted the challenge. However, one could debate whether Caroline minuscule was a difficult script to master –it has been proposed that it was not particularly more difficult than Visigothic script(s)<sup>95</sup>– and, were that the

<sup>95</sup> Ganz 1995, pp. 797-798.

case, surely more examples of such practice should have been preserved; not all neophytes surrounded by Visigothic script would write their first charter in Caroline minuscule. It could simply be, however, that we have not yet been able to attribute a given manuscript in Visigothic script to the same hand as another in Caroline minuscule. For example, there could be two more or less coeval charters from the same institution signed by a *Pelagius*, each in a different script. Without a surname or a distinctive and similarly executed signature, we are not likely to make the connection or be sure about it<sup>96</sup>. On the other hand, it should be noted, even as a theory, that the scribes identified Visigothic script as part of their tradition and were therefore reluctant to learn another –and one taught by foreigners at that, either French (Cluniac) or Catalan. In most cases, the first charter in Caroline minuscule drawn up in a given institution was produced by a foreigner. The change from Visigothic to Caroline minuscule was radical, and the new graphic model was linked to another, non-peninsular, culture. Not only scribes, but also the grantors and addresses of charters, readers and commissioners of codices, must have perceived the change as equally drastic. If scribes chose to continue using Visigothic script, they could then have associated the newest manuscripts in Caroline minuscule with a change of thought in line with the current trend and backed up by specific interests of the elites, most likely political. There is no direct indication of this, but there is a parallel with the acceptance of the new Roman liturgy, a case for which there is evidence of resistance as well as of deliberate adherence.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS: OUR PERCEPTION OF (THEIR) GRAPHIC CHANGE

Handwriting, calligraphy, graphic communication or however you care to describe the recording of thoughts on paper is not just a matter of making black marks on a white sheet, not just a matter of learning a new code instead of the old one. To write we use our whole selves, our minds and our bodies. Our mark is a personal one, indicative of our character, our training and our culture. That is where the interesting part of changing writing systems begins to surface. In acquiring a second writing system you may be acquiring another cultural philosophy; you certainly are acquiring another set of physical movement and maybe with it a different way of thinking altogether<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> That is the case of Pelayo of Oviedo, with a very distinctive signature (see AHN Clero SR, carp. 1595, n.º 8; Millares 1983, vol. II, n.º 147); see also Sanz 1995, p. 111 and fig. 3 (p. 113). The lack of distinctive sign-like signatures is a constant registered for Galicia around the change of graphic models (Castro 2012, pp. 777-791), as happened with the Chi-Rho (Castro 2015).

<sup>97</sup> Sassoon 1995, p. 7.

Although today a change of typography is commonly devoid of meaning, it could be argued that it was not necessarily so in centuries past. The evidence allows us to revise two clear moments of graphic change during the early and high medieval period in the Iberian Peninsula: from Roman to medieval and from medieval-Visigothic to medieval-Caroline scripts. The former is difficult to study due to the scarcity of written material; the latter, from our point of view, has been studied methodically and quantitatively but much qualitative information remains to be uncovered. Polygraphism or digraphism, and knowing to which sources, why, and by whom was it applied, offers a clear means to ponder the work of scribes, their context, and their ideas in relation to writing and to the written word that remains virtually unexplored. This chapter has discussed the topic of Visigothic cursive-Visigothic minuscule and Visigothic script(s)-Caroline minuscule polygraphism in context. It is up to us to ponder the scarcity of examples of polygraphic scribes for both cases.

The earliest examples of Visigothic cursive-Visigothic minuscule polygraphism, those of Florencio de Valeránica and Vigila de Albelda, suggest that there was a clear difference in consciousness within literate communities between copyists of codices and writers of charters. Those scribes sufficiently skilled in Visigothic minuscule script were commissioned to copy codices, showing a clear difference in status between scribes in this regard, being those we see in codices archetypes of the higher rank of a medieval scribe within their group. As the centuries passed, this differentiation seems to have faded for, although the most skilled scribes continued to have responsibility for copying codices, ability and not the script seems to have been the sole criterion judged. A general change in the consideration of which script should be used for charters is attested from the mid-late eleventh century. This could be because of the proliferation of written production, or rather because the scripts were no longer associated with a specific cultural background. More research on the sources produced in this period would indubitably provide more data; let us just note that a considerable number of Visigothic script codices have yet to be placed in context<sup>98</sup>.

The Visigothic script(s)-Caroline minuscule examples, also scarce, are proof of a different kind of multigraphism for they are linked to a clear, conscious, and it could be argued even forced, cultural change in which Visigothic script simply no longer fit –not because it was difficult to read, for the minuscule model was predominant, but because it differed from the ecclesiastic norm. The fact that some Iberian-trained scribes continued to use Visigothic while others learnt only the new script, and others still smartly

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<sup>98</sup> Millares 1999.

mastered both, is imbued with a tremendous cultural and political burden were the personality of each scribe as well as of the institution in which he was trained and integrated is mirrored. To understand this process, we must proceed scribe by scribe, institution by institution, gathering data and assessing the information they provide. When masters of the new script arrived in the peninsula, they surely brought books with them; these codices need likewise to be listed and properly contextualised.

But in order to approach the whole picture, we must find a way of comparing graphic samples in different graphic models (and languages) to see whether they could belong to the same hand<sup>99</sup>, and we ought to compare the phenomenon of polygraphism at the European level. For now, though, we must focus on collecting examples and trying to make the most of them.

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<sup>99</sup> On the discussion, see Stokes 2017.



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