The Old Hispanic Office: Evidence and Silence

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The office was the foundation of medieval Christian liturgical practice, in addition to the mass. The sequences of chants, readings and prayers practised in community at Christian institutions throughout the medieval East and West cycled through each day, week and year, marking time with their recurring rhythms. Choirs of monks, nuns or secular clerics sang the day and night services in an almost continuous address of praise and prayer, glorifying God and the saints while beseeching divine aid in this world and in the next. Lay people could participate in parts of the office too, drawn into the ritual life of the church, with its prescribed sights, sounds, smells, objects and movements. The office comprised a complex web of sung, intoned and spoken texts that echoed those performed at the mass, infusing each day with a unique character. The office includes many elements and across the different liturgical rites of Christendom there was great diversity in the office genres, their organisation and their repertories. There were local saints and local traditions of venerating them, and other moments in the Christian calendar were also celebrated in astonishing variety, something that is increasingly being acknowledged.

The office explored in this book was celebrated in Iberia between at least the seventh and eleventh centuries, although vestiges of the rite remained after that time, and an early modern version of the rite is still celebrated at present in some institutions. This rite, although Nicene and Roman Catholic, remained independent of Rome when much of Western Europe adopted the Roman rite in the eighth century; it retained currency right through to the Council of Burgos in 1080, when it was largely suppressed (on which, more later). This rite is often compared with the Gallican and Ambrosian rites, and was also infused with Byzantine features.

1 For exemplary studies of the Divine office as celebrated in the Middle Ages, see Fassler and Baltzer, eds., The Divine Office; Billett, Divine Office.
2 See, for example, Gittos, ‘History of rites’.
3 The Neo-Mozarabic rite (the Old Hispanic rite as reimagined in the early modern period) is still practised in a chapel in Toledo Cathedral. For this rite, see Ivorra Robla, Liturgia hispano-mozárabe.
4 On the connection between Old Hispanic and Gallican/Milanese traditions, see, for example, Levy, ‘Old-Hispanic chant’; idem, ‘Toledo’. On the connection with the Byzantine tradition,
Liturgical manuscripts dating from the early eighth to the fourteenth century bear witness to the diverse elements and overarching structures of the Old Hispanic office. These manuscripts build on the picture provided by the extensive legislation and theoretical writing about liturgical practice that were the legacy of the Visigothic period, when a series of active bishops set out basic rules for a common practice throughout the peninsula. The ideal of liturgical uniformity that is often discussed with respect to the aims of the Visigothic prelates nevertheless glosses over a long history in which diversity inevitably emerged. It is to help make sense of this rich and varied tradition in its context that we offer this first chapter as a historical survey of the Old Hispanic office.

The evidence suggests that the Old Hispanic office continued to be practised in Iberian monasteries and churches over the five hundred years that separated the Visigothic conversion to Nicene Christianity at the end of the sixth century from the so-called Gregorian reform at the end of the eleventh. That evidence is not evenly distributed, however, and points to punctuated moments of composition and revision. The sources are also fragmented and of varying types. We have no surviving liturgical manuscripts that can be dated securely before the eighth century, although Visigothic pizarras (slates) containing the Creed and psalms are tantalising if enigmatic witnesses to liturgical practice as much as they are to lay and clerical literacy. The main body of early evidence is narrative, prescriptive or theoretical: a few chronicles and biographies, the proceedings of church councils, and theological commentaries. Each genre should be taken with some degree of caution; conciliar legislation in particular was, first, often regional, and, second, idealised in so far as it prescribed practice, often repeatedly, which in itself suggests limited compliance. The later evidence – largely tenth- and eleventh-century – comes mainly in the form of liturgical manuscripts, with only limited conciliar and narrative witnesses. This historical overview places the sources at the centre of the discussion, following them where they lead in untangling the evolving nature of the Old Hispanic office.


5 For a measured discussion of the problem of liturgical uniformity, see Lester, ‘Word as Lived’, 159–60.

6 This chapter does not aim to trace the evolution of the office in dialogue with other liturgical traditions, as was already done artfully by Bradshaw, Daily Prayer.

7 Velázquez Soriano, Las pizarras visigodas; Ruiz Asencio, ‘Pizarra Visigoda’.

8 Noted by Bradshaw, Daily Prayer, 115. See also McConnell, ‘Baptism’. 
Pre-Visigothic and Early Visigothic Evidence: 
Diversity of Practice

Already in the fifth century, a number of hymns for Iberian martyrs written 
by the poet Prudentius suggest that some form of regular liturgical com-
memoration was in place. Its shape – and the place of the hymns within it – 
is nevertheless unknown. Early Iberian church councils – such as those 
held in Elvira in c.300 and a hundred years later in Zaragoza (380) and 
Toledo (400) – have general injunctions about lay church attendance and 
the prohibition of private practice (including the singing of antiphons) 
without the presence of a cleric, but have nothing further to say concerning 
the office. When the peninsula fell under Visigothic rule following the 
early fifth-century conquest, diversity of practice was most certainly the 
rule up to the late sixth century. At least two official forms of Christian 
practice were in place, one Nicene, representing that of the native Hispano-
Roman population, and one Arian, corresponding to (most of) the 
Visigothic aristocracy. We know little about the form of the Arian office, 
although Arian churches must have practised the rite in cities such as 
Mérida into the late sixth century. The Suevic kingdom in the northwest 
followed yet another tradition between its conversion from Arianism c.550 
and its conquest by the Visigothic king Leovigild in 585: the usage of Rome. 
The instructions sent by Pope Vigilius to the bishop Profuturus of Braga on 
how to follow Roman practice concern only baptism and the mass, how-
ever, and we have no evidence about what a Roman model may have meant 
for celebration of the office in this period. Whether an Eastern form of 
the office was celebrated in the area of the peninsula under Byzantine rule 
(a strip along the southern coast) into the early seventh century is probably 
only ever going to be a matter for speculation, although some Greek 
features can be identified in the Old Hispanic rite.

As for the Nicene rite practised by the majority of the population, a 
series of sixth-century councils provide glimpses of the office as celebrated 
in various provinces of the Visigothic kingdom. There were six of these 
provinces: the province of Cartaginense, whose metropolitan diocese was

9 Germán Prado, Textos inéditos, 20–1.
10 Elvira, Can. 21, Colección canónica, IV, 249; Zaragoza I, Cans. 2, 3, Colección canónica, IV, 
293–4; Toledo I, Can. 9, Colección canónica, IV, 332.
11 There are exceptions to this distribution, for example John of Biclar and Masona of Mérida, two 
Nicene Goths.
14 See Janeras, ‘Elements orientals’.
Toledo; Tarraconense (Tarragona); Bética (Seville); Lusitania (Mérida); Galicia (Braga); and Narbonense (Narbonne). The records of provincial councils held in some of these centres refer to the services held at the beginning and end of the day: matutinum (morning) and vespers (evening). The council of Agde (province of Narbonense) in 506 prescribed morning and evening services composed of psalms (‘hymni’), antiphons followed by collects, capitella de psalmis (or ‘preces’), and, at the end of vespers, a blessing said by the bishop. In prescribing general uniformity in the office at the provincial level, the council for Tarraconensis held in Gerona in 517 also prescribed the Lord’s Prayer (pater noster) at each of the two services. The previous year in Tarragona, prescription was made for deacons to alternate every week with priests in carrying out the morning and evening offices. At the subsequent provincial council, this time held in Barcelona in 540, it was further stipulated that Psalm 50 should be sung before the canticle – a feature of matutinum preserved in later liturgical sources – and that blessings should be read out at matutinum as well as at vespers. At the First Council of Braga in 561, what was then still the Suevic kingdom prescribed a common usage in vespers and matutinum, which included a blanket ban on all non-biblical hymns. These are perhaps the most office-specific regulations appearing in the earlier provincial Visigothic councils. They reflect concern mostly with fixing aspects of the services of matutinum and vespers at provincial level, although some of the solutions may have been shared across the peninsula.

The Visigothic ‘Golden Age’: Search for Uniformity

An important phase of liturgical development with particular consequences for the Old Hispanic office took place in the late sixth and seventh centuries. Most evidence of activity follows the Third Council of Toledo in 589, when the official conversion of King Reccared and the Visigothic aristocracy from Arianism marked a decisive change in the religious and

15 Agde, Can. 30, Colección canónica, IV, 133. On this canon, particularly what it reflects in terms of the relationship and evolution of cathedral and monastic office traditions, see Bradshaw, Daily Prayer, 116–20.
16 Gerona, Can. 10, Colección canónica, IV, 289.
17 Tarragona, Can. 7, Colección canónica, IV, 275.
18 Barcelona, Can. 1, 2, Vives, Concilios Visigóticos, 53.
19 Braga I, Can. 1 and 12, Vives, Concilios Visigóticos, 71, 73.
political landscape of the Visigothic kingdom.\textsuperscript{20} In addition to denoting the religious unification of the kingdom, this moment also signalled the beginning of a period of heightened cultural and legislative activity, which scholars have cast as an intellectual golden age.\textsuperscript{21} We have of course seen that the office was already being celebrated in some form before the end of the sixth century. The prolific written production and pastoral interests of the church leaders from the Third Toledo Council onwards nevertheless suggests the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Old Hispanic office, a time of new composition and significant revision.

One of our first indications for the contribution of Visigothic bishops to the Old Hispanic office is found in the lives of prominent church leaders. \textit{De viris illustribus}, originally written by Jerome, was supplemented with biographies of Iberian bishops first by Isidore, bishop of Seville, and then further by Ildefonsus and Julian, bishops of Toledo.\textsuperscript{22} Several of these ‘illustrious men’ are said to have composed chants and prayers for the office and mass, including Leander and Isidore of Seville, Ildefonsus, Felix, Eugenius II and Julian of Toledo, Justus of Urgell, John of Zaragoza and Conancio of Palencia; Julian is credited not only with composing and correcting hymns but also with a major work of revision that involved compiling most of the prayers recited in the office.\textsuperscript{23} The hagiographical nature of \textit{De viris illustribus} must be taken into account, but the claim that these seventh-century clerics were active scholars, writers and legislators does make it likely that they exercised an important role in at least overseeing, and perhaps also personally contributing to, the development of the Old Hispanic liturgy.

We can gain important insights into the performance of the office during the Visigothic period from an especially significant source: Isidore of Seville’s \textit{De Ecclesiasticis Officiis}. Composed for his brother, the bishop Fulgentius, Isidore’s exposition of the liturgy is written in the same style as his encyclopedic \textit{Etymologies}, but with a more pointed focus on the rites and personnel of the Iberian church; it is the earliest known liturgical commentary, and it went on to exert a notable influence on future examples of the genre. Isidore included short chapters on the services of terce, sext, none, vespers, compline, vigils and matutinum, as well as entries on individual

\textsuperscript{20} For discussion of this council and its consequences, see especially \textit{Concilio III de Toledo. XIV Centenario}, 589–1989.


\textsuperscript{22} \textit{El ‘De Viris Illustribus’}, 31 and 37; Ildefonsus of Toledo, \textit{De viris illustribus}, in CCSL 114A.

\textsuperscript{23} The attribution to Julian was made by Felix of Toledo (c.693–4), on which see Díaz y Díaz, ‘La fecha’, 242. See also (inter alia) Pinell, \textit{Liturgia hispánica}, 46; Page, \textit{Christian West}, 239–40.
feast days, providing information about the history of these services, their roots in the Old Testament and their symbolic connection to the Gospel narrative. For example, on matutinum he says: ‘Concerning the antiquity and authority of matins [i.e. “matutinum”], David the prophet is the same witness, saying “I meditate on you in the watches of the night, Lord…” . . . Consequently, it was being prayed at dawn so that the resurrection of Christ might be celebrated.’ But for all that De Ecclesiasticis Officiis fills in many gaps in our understanding of the office, it leaves certain questions open; we gain no further knowledge of how the texts were organised in each individual service; we remain ignorant as to whether (and, if so, what) readings may be included in the office; nor does it clarify whether or how the liturgy differed between secular churches and monasteries.

In the Visigothic period, the substantial extant body of legislation is perhaps our most instructive source for the office, attesting to the close involvement of the sixth- and seventh-century bishops in shaping liturgical practice. The council from which we learn most is the Fourth Council of Toledo. Held in 633 and presided over by Isidore of Seville, this council included one especially important injunction among its proceedings:

> After the confession of the true faith which is proclaimed in the holy Church of God, let all bishops who are joined in the unity of the catholic faith do nothing divergent or dissonant with respect to the sacraments of the church, lest such diversity be seen by the unlearned and carnal as the error of schism, and great variety should be as a scandal to the churches. Let us therefore keep one and the same way of preaching and singing in all Hispania and Gaul: one and the same way of celebrating the mass, one way of singing the evening and early morning services [vespertinis matutinisque officiis], that no diversity of practice should exist in the churches and kingdom among us who are joined by the faith. And so according to the ancient canons that were decreed, may the custom of singing and ministering be maintained the same way in each and every province.

The canon sets out the ambitious task of unifying the celebration of both office and mass in the entire Visigothic kingdom, irrespective of province.

24 Isidore, De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, CCSL 113, 23–7 (book 1, chapters 18–23).
25 Isidore, De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, CCSL 113, 47 (book 1, chapter 23).
26 On office readings as reflected in later liturgical manuscripts, see Chapter 4, pp. 130–2.
27 The legislation is discussed in Arocena, Cánones litúrgicos; Lester, ‘Word as Lived’; Gros i Pujol, ‘Liturgia y legislación conciliar’.
29 On the question of liturgical uniformity, see Arocena, Cánones litúrgicos, 41–7; González Ruiz, ‘La obra de unificación’; Stocking, Bishops, Councils and Consensus, 156–60; Gros, ‘Les Wisigoths’.
It is essential to remember the legacy of Arianism and regional fragmentation as a possible impulse for decisions of this nature; fear of schism erupting between the different areas of the recently unified and Catholic Visigothic kingdom seems to have been an underlying concern motivating Isidore and his fellow bishops. The council certainly aimed to establish certain ground rules for a uniform performance of the office – and set out how to achieve this too. Priests ordained for rural churches were to receive from their metropolitan bishops a book of ritual (‘libellum officiale’) that likely contained office texts in addition to ones for the mass; these books were subject to metropolitan episcopal approval. Certain other decrees seem to have been intended as correctives or confirmations of earlier canons; for example, that non-biblical hymns should be permitted, reversing the rule made at the First Council of Braga, that the doxology set out at the Third Council of Toledo should be sung after the psalms and that the daily office – be it cloistered or public (on which, see more later) – should include the Lord’s Prayer (pater noster), as articulated at the Council of Gerona. New rules were also put forward; for example, that responsories could be followed either by the doxology or a repetition of the responsory verse, according to whether the occasion was deemed happy or mournful.

Given the subjective nature of this last decree, we can conclude that clerics retained a certain licence in determining the specific detail of office celebration. The fact that some thirty years later, at the Eleventh Council of Toledo (675), the somewhat less ambitious decree was made that churches follow the practice not of the entire kingdom but merely of their corresponding metropolitan church, nevertheless illustrates how we must interpret the rhetoric of liturgical uniformity with some caution. As Isidore explains in De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, ‘the serious and prudent Christian’ should follow his church, ‘for that which is neither against the faith nor against good morals can be followed indifferently and is to be preserved for the sake of the fellowship of those among whom it is observed, lest schisms be generated by

30 On these as motivating forces, see Lester, ’Word as Lived’ and Stocking, Bishops, Councils and Consensus.
31 Toledo IV, Can. 26, Colección canónica, V, 216. The decree speaks of priests’ knowledge of the officium, which they are supposed to demonstrate to bishops at particular times.
32 Toledo IV, Can. 13, Colección canónica, V, 201–3.
33 Toledo IV, Can. 15, Colección canónica, V, 204–5.
34 aut in publico aut in privato officio... Toledo IV, Can. 10, Colección canónica, V, 196–9.
35 Toledo IV, Can. 16, Colección canónica, V, 205. On responsories and glorias, see Chapter 4, pp. 114–17.
initiating differing practices in that church’. Such a system would then ensure that the leaders of the Iberian churches, with a certain freedom but also based on their extensive learning, would transmit an orthodox message through the liturgy to those practising and participating in it. Certainly, by the end of the seventh century, there was an elaborate and well-established office practice preserved in the Verona Orational (on which, see later), whose liturgical texts and assignments retained a remarkable degree of currency for hundreds of years. However, our general impression from the council records is that the Visigothic bishops were not concerned with establishing a canonical set of liturgical chants and texts. Instead, they tried to ensure that all ecclesiastical establishments held to certain basic lines and that these lines were set out by the metropolitan churches. There has been considerable insistence on the importance of religious education in Iberia as a defence against heresy and unorthodoxy (note the importance of preventing ‘schism’ in the preceding citation); the office can be seen as part of a wider movement seeking to communicate proper belief to religious communities and through them to the wider population.

The Cloistered vs Public Office

The injunction issued at the Eleventh Council of Toledo about provincial adherence to the metropolitan’s precedent, directed on the one hand to priests and on the other to abbots, brings us to the important distinction between different forms of celebrating the office. First, when considering monastic practice, we must remember that the Benedictine rule never exerted the same influence on early medieval Iberia as it did elsewhere in the areas under Frankish cultural influence – even allowing for recent revisions that have questioned how widely it was adopted in areas across western Europe. South of the Pyrenees, inspired by North African and

37 Knoebel, De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, 65 (chapter 44 (43)).
38 Brou, ‘L’Antiphonaire wisigotique’.
39 Isidore includes the celebration of Easter, Ascension and Pentecost as the basic practices to be observed worldwide. Everything else is left somewhat to the discretion of the provincial bishops. Isidore, De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, CCSL 113 , 48–9 (book 1, chapter 44 (43)).
40 The pedagogical nature of the Old Hispanic liturgy – specifically aimed at clerics – was noted especially by Díaz y Díaz, ‘Liturgical aspects’. On education in Iberia more widely, see Fontaine, Isidore; Dell’Elicine, En el principio, 73–104; idem, ‘Discurso’; Kurt, ‘Lay piety’. See, most recently, Maloy, Songs of Sacrifice, chapters 2 and 3.
41 The first monastic rule was allegedly brought by the bishop Donatus from North Africa, according to Ildelfonsus of Toledo. The Benedictine rule as well as the rules of Cassian,
Eastern traditions, various local rules seem to have had greater impact in shaping monastic life, three of which survive from the seventh century: the rule of Isidore, the rule of Fructuosus and the so-called ‘Common Rule’. The extent to which these rules were actually followed is unknown. We are not even certain whether a rule such as Isidore’s was intended for a single monastery or a network of institutions, and discrepancies between the different rules point to the possibility for considerable institutional variation.

Isidore was far less concerned with the office in monasteries than he was with ensuring proper discipline and management; in this he differs significantly from Benedict. When describing the role of monks, elsewhere, he mentions only that they ‘gather by night and by day with swift haste to the prayer of the solemn hours’. A single short chapter in Isidore’s rule concerns the office, with brief descriptions of terce, sext, none, vespers and compline, to which he adds daily services of vigils (nocturnos) and matutinum. Each service had a prescribed number of psalms, together with hymns, canticles, responsories and prayers, though the precise repertory used on particular days is not specified, unlike in Benedict’s rule.

Fructuosus provided for even more services, but again without detailing their contents to any great degree. His rule mentions prime, terce, sext, none, duodecima (the twelfth hour), vespers and compline, between which there were to be additional hours of three psalms each because the time ‘must not be spent in idleness by the monks’. The monks gathered during the night, up to five separate times, to sing up to fifty-five psalms, with more on Saturdays and Sundays. In a chapter on the duties of abbots, the

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Pachomius and Caesarius of Arles were also known. See Diaz, ‘Monasticism and liturgy’. That the Benedictine office was not generally implemented following the Carolingian reforms is argued by Billett, *Divine Office*, 52–77, although the Rule was widely accepted; cf. de Jong, ‘Carolingian monasticism’.

These were studied by Allies, ‘Monastic rules’. For an early introduction to the emphasis and contents of these rules, see Porter, ‘Early Spanish monasticism’ (1932). On the transmission of the rules, see Díaz y Díaz, ‘Las reglas monásticas’.


Even in this, Isidore’s rule was considered not especially strict, according to Braulio of Zaragoza: ‘Regulae librum unum quem pro patriae usu et invalidorum animis decentissime temperavit’. As cited in Díaz y Díaz, ‘Aspectos’, 35.

Isidore, *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, CCSL 113, 88 (book 2, chapter 16 (15)).

On this nomenclature, see Chapter 5, n. 2. The Iberian Rules are not included in Bradshaw’s otherwise very useful discussion of the monastic office in the West, in *Daily Prayer*, 124–49.


Common Rule mentions their observation of prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, midnight (medium noctis) and cockcrow (post nocturnos), and urges that they ‘need not be hesitant to pray at their own special hours, that is, the second, fourth, fifth, seventh, eighth, tenth and eleventh’. This supports the idea articulated in Fructuosus’s rule that the ‘in-between’ hours were intended to be said privately and were considered apart from the regular hours celebrated communally.

The extensive office set out in the Visigothic rules may not have been followed in cathedrals. This is suggested at the First Council of Braga (561), where one single and common order is decreed for all churches in terms of matutinum and vespers, but the customs of monasteries are not to be mixed with the ‘ecclesiastical rule’ (ecclesiastica regula) – this could mean the rules pertaining to discipline (each type of institution should follow different rules regulating behaviour), or could refer to the programme of services (each type of institution should follow a different ordo, one of which probably includes the extra monastic services). The mid-seventh-century Lives of the Fathers of Mérida mentions only matutinum and vespers, although occasionally also vigils, taking place in certain churches of Mérida. The night office seems to have been celebrated even in rural churches; Valerius of Bierzo tells us as much when criticising the errant priest Justo for being too drunk to sing the hymns at night with the other clerics (‘psallentibus hymnis Dei ducentibus noctes’), something he says was done at other mountain chapels by as few as one or two priests. The services of matutinum and vespers were shared between all ecclesiastical institutions. Matutinum and vespers are called ‘public offices’ (publicia officia) in canon 3 of the Council of Mérida, which specifies that all religious establishments should follow the practice of their corresponding metropolitan church with respect to these services; canon 3 of the Eleventh

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50 ‘Gallicinium’; this is referred to in Sal as ‘post nocturnis ad galli cantum’, but is more usually referred to as ‘post nocturnos’, or ‘after nocturns’. For Sal and other manuscript sigla, see table in ‘Manuscript Sigla’, pp. xviii–xxix.
51 Common Rule, chapter 10, in The Fathers of the Church, 190–1.
52 The tendency to multiply the number of offices, particularly in the Hispanic and Gallican traditions, was noted by Bradshaw, Daily Prayer, 126.
53 It appears that cathedral chapters as independent entities developed largely thanks to the eleventh-century reforms. On this, see Reglero de la Fuente, ‘Los obispos’, especially 258–84.
54 ‘Placuit omnibus communi consensu ut unus atque idem psallendi ordo in matutinis vel vespertinis officiis teneatur et non diverse ac private neque monasteriorum consuetudines cum ecclesiastica regula sint permixtae.’ Braga I, Can. 1, Concilios Visigóticos, 71.
55 Fear, Lives, 46, 69 and 102.
56 Valerius of Bierzo, Ordo Querimoniae, 14, 16, and Replicatio Sermonum, 10, 18, 21 in Valerio del Bierzo, 266–7, 290–1, 300–4.
Council of Toledo (675) establishes the same condition.\textsuperscript{57} If found guilty of not doing so, an abbot was to be sent to the metropolitan church for six months to learn the appropriate way of performing the offices (‘necessarium officiorum doctrinam studiose addiscat’).

The preceding rules confirm a unique feature of the Old Hispanic liturgy from early on in its development: the ‘public’ or ‘cathedral’ services (\textit{ordo cathedralis}) of matutinum, vespers and the mass were performed in the same way in all secular and monastic churches until the suppression of the liturgy after the Council of Burgos.\textsuperscript{58} This ‘public’ liturgy, which could be attended by anyone, included terce, sext and none on official fasting days (e.g. during Lent),\textsuperscript{59} and vigils on particular feast days.\textsuperscript{60} Monastic communities celebrated further services in community (\textit{ordo monachis peculiaris}), which we refer to as the ‘cloistered’ liturgy.\textsuperscript{61} Previous scholars have followed the medieval sources in referring to these two types of Old Hispanic liturgy as ‘cathedral’ and ‘monastic’.\textsuperscript{62} We prefer to avoid this terminology because it has different connotations in the (much more familiar) Roman rite. In the Roman rite, ‘monastic’ liturgy comprises the liturgical materials practised in monasteries, and ‘secular’ or ‘cathedral’ liturgy comprises the liturgical materials practised in secular cathedrals and other secular churches; the office liturgies are significantly different in the two contexts.\textsuperscript{63} In Old Hispanic practice, by contrast, the ‘public’ and ‘cloistered’ liturgy seem to have been distinguished by which categories of Christian were envisioned as attending them.\textsuperscript{64} We have therefore chosen to follow the


\textsuperscript{58} These were also highly properised, unlike what Caesarius of Arles describes for the equivalent monastic hours as celebrated in the sixth century. Cf. Bradshaw, \textit{Daily Prayer}, 130–1.

\textsuperscript{59} On these three services, see Chapter 5, pp. 159–77.

\textsuperscript{60} Such vigils fall outside the scope of the present book, but would reward future study.

\textsuperscript{61} ‘A monacus ergo catedral[is] ordo quod est matutini et vespertini sibe completi officium extra hunc orarum ordine suo est exsolbe[n]du[m]. Inde demiq[ue] instituta duodeci[m] diurnarum et duodeci noctu[m] ordinum suarum officium sollicte est exolbendu[m] monacis’, in S7, liber horarum prologue (quotation from ff. 31v–32r).


\textsuperscript{63} These different liturgical shapes are introduced in Harper, \textit{Forms and Orders}.

\textsuperscript{64} We do not know the extent to which what we now call ‘secular’ (i.e. non-monastic) institutions performed the same services as monastic houses. Indeed, it is hard to pin down which forms of clerical organisation were followed in some Iberian institutions (particularly cathedrals). On the possibility that the night office was sung in cathedrals, see Bradshaw, \textit{Daily Prayer}, 122–3.
terminology found in the councils, referring to the ‘public’ liturgy, at which all were theoretically welcome and which was shared across all institutions, and ‘cloistered’ liturgy, practised only by those in monastic communities.

**Office Practitioners**

Just as our knowledge about the distinction between monastic and secular institutions in the Visigothic period is limited, we similarly know little about the individuals who would have been celebrating the liturgy in them. At monasteries, we can imagine that all the monks (and nuns, in female or double houses) were expected to participate in the choir for the regular hours, apart from those they might recite in their cells.\(^{65}\) The monks are always treated as one body in the rules, without distinctions between them (e.g. choir monks vs *conversi*), and Fructuosus prescribes penance for any monk who tries to sneak into the choir after the first psalm has been sung during day services and after three psalms during night services.\(^{66}\) Isidore’s rule specifies that the duties of the sacristan include giving the sign for the night services, and those of the *hebdomadarius* include giving the sign for the day services.\(^{67}\) We do not know whether the latter acted like the *hebdomadarii* and cantors in later medieval sources, taking an active part in intoning chants, noting chant incipits and taking charge of liturgical manuscripts.\(^{68}\) As for how monks learned to perform the office, very little is said about their training, which must nevertheless have been an important process given the variety of backgrounds from which they came: from Jewish children taken away from their families, to entire families of converts, to criminals, all of whom are mentioned in the legislation or the surviving monastic rules.\(^{69}\) The hermit saint Aemilian (d. 573) is said to have hardly known even the eighth psalm by heart, although given the levels of learning of many contemporary monks-turned-bishops, we might consider him an exception.\(^{70}\)

We do know of child oblates (boys and girls), who were meant to come

\(^{65}\) Nuns singing the office in double houses are mentioned in the Common Rule. *Common Rule*, chapter 15, in *The Fathers of the Church*, 199.


\(^{67}\) Isidore, *Rule*, chapter 21. *PL* 83, col. 0891B.

\(^{68}\) Bugyis, Fassler and Kraebel, eds., *Medieval Cantors*.

\(^{69}\) The simplicity of the language of Isidore’s rule suggests to Neil Allies that it was intended to be understood by diverse audiences of monks. Allies, ‘Sermo Plebeius’.

under the tutelage of respected and trustworthy monks, according to the Common Rule.\footnote{Common Rule, chapter 6, in The Fathers of the Church, 186. Further indication of oblates is found in Can. 49 of Toledo IV where oblates are forbidden from returning to the world. Colección canónica, V, 229–30. An interpolation in Isidore’s rule pre-750 includes the same ordinance. See Díaz y Díaz, ‘Aspectos’, 32–3. In Can. 6 of Toledo X (656), oblates are allowed to decide to leave at age 10 but not after. Colección canónica, V, 530–2.} Their education would presumably have included performing the liturgy.\footnote{On Visigothic liturgical education, see Maloy, Songs of Sacrifice, chapters 2 and 3.}

There is similarly only indirect information about training for the office in secular churches.\footnote{Paul Freedman argues for Catalonia that cathedral chapters were formed only after the Carolingian reforms, notably the establishment of the rule of Aix-la-Chapelle in 816; he points to Toledo IV as a possible source for such organisation, but I have been unable to locate anything in this direction in the legislation. Freedman, ‘L’influence wisigothique’, 77.} Such institutions certainly housed schools where training in singing may have taken place. Already in the Second Council of Toledo in 527, the parents of children destined for ecclesiastical office – both secular and monastic – were urged to place them in the ‘domus ecclesiae’ under the supervision of the bishop until they were eighteen.\footnote{Toledo II, Can. 1, Colección canónica, IV, 347–9.} The Fourth Council of Toledo includes a further decree that adolescent clerics be kept together under the supervision of an older cleric entrusted with their education; those boys who rebelled were threatened with being shipped off to a monastery.\footnote{Toledo IV, Can. 24, Colección canónica, V, 214–15.} There is reference in the Lives of the Fathers of Mérida to a group of boys staying at the church of Eulalia in Mérida and to boys studying their letters in schoolrooms.\footnote{Fear, Lives, 46, 53.} It is possible the boys learned to sing there, eventually becoming part of the choir responsible for performing the liturgy, as in Rome’s schola cantorum.\footnote{On the Roman schola, see Dyer, ‘Boy singers’; Page, Christian West, especially chapter 12.} An account in the Lives of the Fathers of Mérida describes how the Greek-speaking boy Fidel was ‘trained by day and night in the temple of the Lord so that within a few years he knew perfectly all the offices of the church and the entire corpus of divine scripture’.\footnote{Fear, Lives, 63.}

Additional sources attribute specific roles to different orders of cleric: deacons were largely responsible for singing; a ‘psalmist’ was chosen by the priest to carry out the solo parts of chants; priests were charged with saying prayers; lectors were trained in rhetoric as well as reading; the praecentor was to begin the singing and the succentor was to answer him, presumably in a responsorial context.\footnote{Isidore, De Ecclesiasticis Officiciis, CCSL 113, 70–2 (book 2, chapters 11–12); Isidore, Etymologies, 147.} Deacons were permitted to perform the office
according to the provincial council of Tarragona, as long as they alternated every week with priests. Local priests do not seem to have been always well versed in liturgical practice, as indicated by an injunction at the Eighth Council of Toledo that they should at least know the psalter, canticles and hymns, suggesting that this was not always the case. Although lay congregations would likely not have participated in most of the office, there are indications that they could be present at the public services. In the Lives of the Fathers of Mérida, a lay man is said to get up at night and attend the entire service in the church until cockcrow.82

The Verona Orational: A Unique Visigothic Liturgical Manuscript

So far the Visigothic sources discussed tell us much about the shape of the Old Hispanic office as composed, practised and revised during the sixth and seventh centuries. However, one manuscript produced around the fall of the Visigothic kingdom provides us with actual texts for the office: OV. Now referred to as the Verona Orational, because of its current presence in Verona, this early eighth-century book may have been smuggled out of the peninsula by monks or clerics fleeing the Arab-Berber forces; it is thought to have been copied at Tarragona, c.700, and certainly before 734. Díaz y Díaz went so far as to credit Julian of Toledo with compiling – in 682/3 – the original version on which this manuscript was based.83 OV contains two types of prayers: prayers (completuria, benedictiones) recited at the end of the services of vespers and matutinum, and prayers rubricated as ‘orations’ (orationes) used within matutinum, each of which followed an antiphon or responsory, many of whose incipits are added in the margins.84 As will be explained in Chapters 4 and 5, each of these orations explained the meaning of its related chant text and its relevance for the day in question. They are all witness to a highly properised repertory, with most prayers used uniquely on one particular day. In bearing witness to the

80 Tarragona, Can. 7, Vives, Concilios Visigóticos, 36.
81 Toledo VIII, Can. 8, Colección canónica, V, 424. On this question see Davies, ‘Local priests’.
82 Fear, Lives, 69. Lay participation in the regular liturgy was not noted in Hillgarth, Popular Religion.
83 Díaz y Díaz, ‘La fecha’. A longer process of compilation, starting before the seventh century, was proposed by Pedro Róvalo, ‘Temporal y santoral’.
84 We use ‘oration’ to refer to the prayers rubricated as such; we use ‘prayer’ as a general description for all prayers within the Old Hispanic liturgy, whatever their rubric.
chants and prayers of the public office services as celebrated during the Visigothic period, OV is the earliest surviving liturgical book for the celebration of the office in the West. The existence of another orational (BL52), dated before the late ninth or early tenth century, but containing a very similar repertory, suggests that the office as found in OV was the basis of practice for centuries to come.

The Office in Al-Andalus

The consistency of the office prayers over a span of several centuries points to continuity of liturgical practice after the Arab-Berber conquest of 711. Although the degree to which the conquest was a violent event has been hotly debated in recent years, it appears safe to conclude on the basis of the surviving manuscripts that the celebration of the office did not suffer much change. As far as we know, the majority Christian population in the conquered area – what came to be known as Al-Andalus – continued to practise their rite as before. This should not come as a surprise, since the peninsula’s Islamic rulers did not much interfere with the religious practice of their dhimmi populations of Christians and Jews – apart from limiting the construction of churches in certain times and places and banning, in theory, the pealing of bells. Those churches and monasteries already standing seem to have held regular services. The celebration of martyr saints at the Cordoban suburban monastery of Tábanos was done in the 850s to the accompaniment of hymns. The tenth-century Calendar of Córdoba attests to a (potentially) stational liturgy that involved a number of local institutions. The accusations against Elipandus (717–c.808), bishop of Toledo, for his allegedly heretical position on the Incarnation – referred to as Adoptionism – give us further insight into the continuation of liturgical practice in what was perhaps still considered the centre of Christian Iberia, if no longer the capital of Al-Andalus. Much to the consternation of his Carolingian opponents, Elipandus supported his arguments by appealing to Old Hispanic liturgical texts, tarring these with the brush of heresy. Apart from these isolated references, however, Al-Andalus did not leave

85 The earliest office book for the Franco-Roman rite is the Compiègne Antiphoner (c.870), on which see Jacobsson, ‘The Antiphoner’.
86 *The Eulogius Corpus*, 283–4.
87 *Le calendrier de Cordoue*.
88 On which, see Cavadini, *Last Christology*.
89 Cavadini, *Last Christology*, 37–8, and Rivera Recio, ‘La controversia’. 
much in the way of sources for the Old Hispanic office. Barring one or two evangeliaries, no liturgical manuscripts survive from this area, and Arabisation may have had an impact on religious practice.90

The Office in the Northern Christian Kingdoms

North of Al-Andalus, in the Christian kingdoms that grew out of the mountainous region relatively untouched by the Muslim incursions, the dramatically altered political landscape seems likewise not to have interrupted the rhythms of the Christian church. A series of new kingdoms formed, progressively expanding the territory under Christian control: the kingdom of Asturias, based in Oviedo, which became the kingdom of León in the early tenth century, came to encompass Galicia and the important duchy of Castile. To the east was the kingdom of Navarre or Pamplona, founded according to legend in the early ninth century, and which came to include La Rioja, although this last region remained contested between the two kingdoms.91 For most of the population on the ground, there was likely little alteration in habits of worship under different monarchs. One does not have to subscribe to the (now debunked) theory of the depopulation of the Duero valley in the eighth century (and its repopulation in the ninth) to imagine that demographic patterns fluctuated, with the growth of new political and religious centres (e.g. Oviedo, León, Santiago de Compostela, Nájera).92 In the monasteries and churches of these areas, unique types of monastic life emerged, including ones based on pacts established between abbots and monks (so-called ‘pactualism’); other monasteries were based around family units that adopted a monastic lifestyle.93 It may have been the very isolation of such institutions that facilitated the preservation of the Old Hispanic rite. The sweeping liturgical reforms undertaken by the

90 Aillet, Les Mozarabes; Roisse, ‘Célébrait-on les offices liturgiques’; Casiday, “The sweetest music”.
91 This arrangement changed significantly over the centuries, with areas changing hands as leaders fought each other, intermarried and took each other’s lands. See, as an introduction, Collins, Caliphs and Kings, and Reilly, Contest.
92 Escalona and Viso, ‘Life and death’.
93 On pactual monasticism, see Bishko, Spanish and Portuguese Monastic History; García de Cortázar and Teja Casuso, Monjes y monasterios hispanos. Household monasteries seem to have existed in the seventh century already, given the injunction against them in the Common Rule. The Fathers of the Church, 178 (chapter 1). Their ongoing existence is discussed by Linage Conde, ‘El Monacato Visigótico’, 242; Davies, Acts of Giving, 46–7, 107–8, 177; and Diaz, ‘Monasticism and liturgy’, 185–6.
Carolingians north of the Pyrenees certainly had limited impact beyond Catalonia.\textsuperscript{94} Even despite the open resistance to Elipandus and to the religious authority of Toledo, the Franco-Roman rite did not displace indigenous practice.\textsuperscript{95} Thomas Deswarte has additionally argued for a mutual disinterest between Iberia and Rome in this period that prevented changes to the liturgy imposed from outside the peninsula.\textsuperscript{96}

The different contexts in which religious practice was carried out in the northern and southern parts of the peninsula has convinced some scholars that different traditions evolved in each region, the vestiges of which we see in manuscripts designated as ‘Tradition A’ (northern, including the eighth-century OV) and ‘Tradition B’ (southern, preserved in much later manuscripts, from the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries); these largely share the same basic structure, but differ in the choice of chants and readings. Even if this binary geographical theory is correct (on which, see more later), we should nevertheless not imagine that the two areas were separated by an unbridgeable divide. Accounts of movement across the frontier, of monks and clerics periodically migrating northwards, of diplomatic missions southwards and of the exchange of books across the frontier point to the likelihood for ongoing mutual influence in the celebration of the office.\textsuperscript{97}

A number of tenth-century manuscripts seem to confirm that, in the northern kingdoms, the office did not change dramatically from its Visigothic shape. Perhaps the most important source is the tenth-century antiphoner now at the Cathedral of León (L8). This spectacular illuminated manuscript contains office and mass chants for the entire liturgical year, all richly notated with unpitched neumes. The close correspondence between this manuscript and the repertory found in OV is powerful evidence of the continuity of the rite. This is not to say that there was no regional variation, for manuscripts from this period display diversity in both the choice of texts and the melodic language that perhaps reflect shifting political frameworks.\textsuperscript{98} A series of prologues attached to the front of L8, which may date

\textsuperscript{94} On Catalonia, see, for example, Chandler, \textit{Carolingian Catalonia}.

\textsuperscript{95} For a discussion of the continuity of the northern kingdoms with the Visigothic kingdom, see Deswarte, \textit{De la destruction}, 47–50. The rivalry between the northern clerics and Elipandus and his followers is described in ibid., 91–5.

\textsuperscript{96} Deswarte, \textit{Une Chrétienté romaine}.


\textsuperscript{98} On regional melodic dialects, see Randel, \textit{Responsorial Psalm Tones}, and Hornby and Maloy, ‘Melodic dialects’.
from the time the manuscript was copied, shows awareness of how unique the Old Hispanic rite was. Not only do these texts describe the distinctive ways in which chants were sung according to the Iberian tradition, they explicitly defend this tradition against attack – perhaps in the wake of the Adoptionist controversy, or in the face of criticism from growing numbers of Cluniac monks making their way into the peninsula.\footnote{This interpretation of the prologues (Díaz y Díaz, ‘Some incidental notes’) is contested by Deswarte in forthcoming work. We thank Thomas Deswarte for sharing this work with us before publication. On the inconsistent descriptions of chant structures in the prologues, see Randel, ‘Responsorial psalmody’.
} In general, the comprehensive nature of L8’s repertory, together with its richly developed and highly nuanced musical notation, makes its value to the study of the Old Hispanic liturgy and to the history of musical writing more generally hard to overestimate, which explains why its notational features, melodies, liturgical organisation and repertory feature so prominently in the case studies that follow.\footnote{See the recent collection of articles, based almost exclusively on this codex: El canto mozárabe.}

Most manuscripts containing the Old Hispanic liturgy date from the tenth and eleventh centuries and were produced in the northern Christian kingdoms. These centuries provide the clearest picture yet of Old Hispanic liturgical structures, and are therefore discussed in much more detail in the chapters to come. The rise of a number of large monasteries with active scriptoria – for example, Albelda, San Millán de la Cogolla, Abellar and Valeránica – no doubt led to increased production of liturgical manuscripts.\footnote{These have been surveyed extensively by Díaz y Díaz, Códices visigóticos de la monarquía leonesa; idem, Libros y librerías.} A period of clerical and monastic reform in the eleventh century, particularly under Cluniac influence, has paradoxically left us with the first witnesses to the Old Hispanic monastic ordo; it seems that while monasteries may have increasingly begun to adopt the Benedictine rule, they nevertheless carried on practising the rite – including the office – according to its Old Hispanic form.\footnote{Díaz y Díaz, ‘Aspectos’, especially 52–4. At the Council of Cuyanzo (1055), monasteries were forced to choose between following the rule of Benedict or Isidore, although this did not mean also the Benedictine office. See Reglero de la Fuente, ‘Los obispos’, 270.} Several manuscripts of monastic services and a number of psalters reveal a sequence of daytime and nighttime services reminiscent of the tradition outlined in Fructuosus’s rule and the Common Rule.\footnote{The day services are found in S7, transcribed by Férotin, LMS, col. 760–82. The night services are found in BL51, Sant and Sal.} It is possible that these services were performed communally in the
choir, although their sheer number suggests that the minor ones continued to be said by monks in private.

A further ongoing distinction between the cloistered liturgy in the Old Hispanic tradition and the one prescribed in the Benedictine rule is found in the cycle of psalmody. The Benedictine rule prescribes particular psalms for each of the hours in a fixed pattern, leading to the completion of the psalter over the course of a week. By contrast, Iberian monasteries seem to have used a highly repetitive series of day services in which the same psalms were sung every day, and the cycle of variable psalmody was concentrated in the night services; thirty psalms were sung per night in psalter order, and more on Sundays and feast days. At the Council of Compostela (1056), it was decreed that a minimum of fifty psalms should be said a day, and that prime, terce, sext, vespers, compline, medium noctis, nocturnos and matutinum should be performed daily, by secular clerics as well as by monks.

Although probably not celebrating all the above hours, local priests seem to have been relatively well equipped to carry out the office. The eleventh-century Liber ordinum sacerdotal (S3), intended for a priest, includes several days’ worth of ordinary ferial matutinum and vespers services, as well as commons of saints and votive rituals for rogation, the sick and the dead. Wendy Davies has noted the presence of additional liturgical books at rural churches, including antiphoners, psalters and books of prayers – all of which contained chants and texts for the office interspersed with those of the mass, another peculiarity of the Iberian liturgical evidence that will be highlighted in Chapter 3.

The Old Hispanic office may have gained additional authority from royal support. Starting predominantly with Alfonso II (d. 842), members of the royal family founded and patronised churches and monastic houses, established cathedrals in their capitals (e.g. at Oviedo, León and Nájera), sought relics to fill their foundations and furnished them with books. Kings and queens exercised a central role in the election of bishops and rearranged dioceses to suit their purposes. They also called a number of important church councils – for example, those held at Coyanza in


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1055 and Compostela the year after – with the express purpose of imposing ecclesiastical and liturgical reform. By the eleventh century, kings and queens, such as Fernando I and Sancha of León, were also signing their names in the León antiphoner and commissioning their own liturgical books. Lucy Pick has argued that such commissions reveal the personal participation of the monarchs in monastic practice, since they are supposed to have followed the night services as a form of penance. A desire to root their authority in the Visigothic past is an equally compelling reason for Iberian monarchs in the tenth and eleventh centuries to foster the Old Hispanic liturgy as one of the great cultural achievements associated with the Visigothic period.

It was another monarch – Alfonso VI (d. 1109) – who brought about the end of the Old Hispanic rite at the end of the eleventh century. Eager to realise his dream of leading a Hispanic Imperium by uniting all the northern kingdoms and taking parts of the Muslim-ruled south – notably Toledo in 1085 – Alfonso struck a deal with the reforming pope Gregory VII to abolish the Old Hispanic rite in his kingdom, which was confirmed at the Council of Burgos in 1080. We do not have to take literally later accounts of a violent resistance to the rite’s abolition, of ordeals imposed on books of the Old Hispanic and Roman traditions to decide supernaturally which should overcome or of jousts to decide which rite should have primacy in order to think that the process was protracted and elicited a variety of responses from different institutions. At the royal foundation of Sahagún, under the Cluniac abbot Robert, some attempt was made to reconcile celebration of the old rite with new Cluniac management. This effort at compromise was nevertheless quashed by Hugh, abbot of Cluny, and Gregory VII who had lamented that Robert ‘dared to rebel against the authority of St. Peter and lead back into error a hundred thousand persons who had begun to find the way of truth through our exertions’. Silos seems to have relatively rapidly made the transition to the new rite, as a

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number of liturgical manuscripts attest. It is at San Millan de la Cogolla where we find open opposition to the change of rite voiced in a number of sources. One of these, an addition to a tenth-century manuscript that includes legislative material alongside Isidore’s *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, sermons and *De viris illustribus* (Esc D-I-1), claims the Old Hispanic liturgy was sanctioned by apostolic authority in the ancient past and by Pope Alexander II (d. 1073) himself. Precisely this late eleventh-century period saw production of a number of surviving Old Hispanic liturgical manuscripts – for example, the unusual psalter in BL51, which intersperses antiphons and orations among the psalms; these appear to have been intended for performance of the cloistered night services, themselves included at the end of the manuscript. Such survivals could suggest that despite the lack of written narratives expressing regret over the loss of the rite, monks may have wished to retain at least a memory of it, collecting representative books of the tradition and producing others to fill any gaps.

Toledo provides a curious epilogue to the life of the Old Hispanic office in the centuries following its abolishment throughout much of Iberia. A major concession seems to have been made to a select number of establishments in the city to continue practising the indigenous Old Hispanic liturgy. Scholars traditionally viewed this as a consequence of the city’s conquest by Alfonso VI in 1085: a means to placate native Mozarabs (Arabic-speaking Christians) in Toledo or a means to attract Christians in order to repopulate a city depleted of its Muslim citizens. Recent work has nevertheless proposed that a series of parishes were only later established, starting in the twelfth century, to accommodate Mozarabs fleeing the Almoravids and Almohads. Toledo Cathedral continued to practise the ‘Mozarabic’ (i.e. Old Hispanic) rite until 1095, and manuscripts associated with six parish churches in Toledo from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries also preserve the rite. Scholars have observed that

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116 These were studied especially by Walker, *Views of Transition*.
119 On this repertory, see Hornby and Ihnat, ‘Continuous psalmody’.
120 On the Silos library in this period, which included examples of the main types of liturgical books covering the entire liturgical year, see Boylan, ‘Manuscript Illumination’.
121 González Ruiz, ‘La persistencia’.

the extant manuscripts from this later period attest to both liturgical traditions, A and B. Anscari Mundó argued that the Old Hispanic rite proper to Toledo was maintained at the church of Saint Eulalia; this is ‘Tradition A’, preserved in all of the extant manuscripts pre-dating the 1080 suppression of the Old Hispanic liturgy.\textsuperscript{124} Manuscripts associated with the parish church of Saints Justa and Rufina represent a different tradition (‘Tradition B’), which some scholars have argued was brought to Toledo by bishops from the southern area of Al-Andalus.\textsuperscript{125} Tradition B is preserved only in two manuscripts and one fragment, all from the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries (T5, BN10, and Tm25–1). They include only Lent and a few saints’ feasts. For this reason, our description of the Old Hispanic office is mostly based on Tradition A manuscripts, but we nonetheless indicate how this liturgy was recorded in the Tradition B manuscripts, noting the similarities and differences between these traditions.

Conclusion

This general historical introduction to the Old Hispanic office has served to place it within a wider narrative of developments in Iberia. It does not pretend to be an exhaustive survey of the evolution of the office, catching each surviving reference in every area and period. Rather it has sought to tell the story of the office as a whole over the span of its celebration in the Middle Ages, through the sources available. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, these sources are patchy: an uneven collection of different genres, from the narrative to the properly liturgical. Our resulting picture is therefore by necessity skewed towards particular times and places. We know significantly more about the rationale behind certain office forms in the Visigothic period, a time of composition and revision, but less about the specific order and selection of chants and prayers. About Al-Andalus we know next to nothing and can only imagine a certain degree of continuity thanks largely to later sources that may reflect Andalusi practice (such as those from the Toledan Mozarabic churches). The northern kingdoms in the tenth and eleventh centuries have transmitted the bulk of liturgical witnesses, attesting both to a significant degree of stability – in the shape of

\textsuperscript{124} On these manuscripts, see Mundó, ‘La datación’, who dated them much later than previous scholars, to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
\textsuperscript{125} For a bibliographic summary, see Hornby and Maloy, Music and Meaning, 303–14.
the office and also in some of the choices of texts used within it – but also to
diversity, particularly in the musical language. We are nevertheless con-
vinced of the usefulness of describing this office as ‘Old Hispanic’, implying
that it represented one single tradition. Like a language spoken with
different dialects and accents, the Old Hispanic office’s forms and order
would likely have been largely recognisable to anyone experienced in one of
its iterations. The office’s distinctive character, so different in some ways to
what was celebrated in much of Western Europe in the early Middle Ages,
is reflective of the unique position in which much of Iberia remained
during this period. Although it was never cut off from the rest of
Western Europe, Iberia nevertheless developed and maintained its own
traditions of religious practice and the Old Hispanic office is one example
of this independent trajectory.