

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURES OF ROMANIA

DACIAN AND  
ROMAN ROOTS



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# ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURES OF ROMANIA

DACIAN AND ROMAN  
ROOTS





Diplomatic relations between Spain and Romania were established on 23 June 1881, when the Kingdom of Spain opened a legation in Bucharest with Juan Pedro de Aladro as chargé d'affaires. This rapprochement was a reflection of the two countries' growing mutual interest and the excellent personal relationship between their sovereigns, King Alfonso XII and King Carol I.

In the 140 years that have passed since then, the two nations have experienced different historical and political vicissitudes, but in the 21st century their paths converged once again as members of the European Union and key NATO allies, sharing common interests and values and holding similar views on many European and international issues.

Today, on the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, Spain and Romania are united by strong political, economic, social and cultural ties. In addition to shared membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, our excellent bilateral relations have a solid basis in the important activity of Spanish companies in Romania and the presence of a substantial Romanian community living in Spain. This community has made a valuable contribution to the Spanish economy, and its members are a shining example of adaptation and success thanks to their hard work and willingness to become a part of Spanish society, and also thanks to the warm welcome they have received from the Spanish people as a whole.

We therefore have many reasons to celebrate this anniversary. Despite the distance between our two countries, located on the eastern and western edges of the EU, Spain and Romania are close and, since antiquity, have been linked by historical and cultural affinities, including our shared Latin roots and legendary figures like Emperor Trajan, named as a hero in the Romanian national anthem and born near Hispalis, modern-day Seville. Yet today, on this momentous occasion, we also have a wonderful opportunity to strengthen those fundamentally historical bonds and expand our bilateral relations on multiple fronts, including the arts, by facilitating greater rapport and cooperation between Spanish and Romanian cultural and academic institutions.

In this spirit and against this backdrop, we are proud to present the exhibition *Archaeological Treasures from Romania: Dacian and Roman Roots*, a product of the joint efforts of the Muzeul Național de Istorie a României in Romania and the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Spain. This show is a stellar opportunity to discover the arts, ideas and social traits of the different civilisations that occupied what is now Romania over the centuries.

This magnificent exhibition, the largest of Romanian archaeology ever held in a foreign country, has been made possible by the cooperation of the Embassy of Romania in Spain and the contribution of Spain's Museo Arqueológico Nacional, which offers an ideal setting in which to present this remarkable display of Romanian culture to the public.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Felipe VI', enclosed within a rectangular border.

FELIPE VI  
KING OF SPAIN



ROMÂNIA



PRESEDINTELE  
ROMÂNIEI

It is with great satisfaction that I join His Majesty Philip VI of Spain in inaugurating *Archaeological Treasures from Romania: Dacian and Roman Roots*, the largest exhibition of Romanian archaeology ever held outside our borders, to which we have given our fullest support as a token of the excellent relations between Romania and Spain.

As visitors to the exhibition will discover, the 140 years of diplomatic relations between our countries are only a small part of the heritage of values and historical experiences that we share. Our valuable political relations at the highest level—proven once again today—as well as our traditional diplomatic interactions and relationships between individuals, communities and institutions have excellent prospects for the future, and both nations work daily to strengthen our ties of economic, cultural and educational cooperation. The reciprocal understanding of our peoples and our shared Latin roots presents wonderful opportunities, and interpersonal exchanges and contacts are reinforced by the existence of a large Romanian community in Spain, as well as by the presence of Spanish investors in Romania.

In this context, forty Romanian museums, coordinated by the National Museum of Romanian History and generously hosted by the National Archeological Museum in Madrid, are now offering Spanish audiences a chance to admire a cultural treasure of exceptional importance and significance to both our nations and to our common future in the European Union.

Hundreds of artefacts illustrate the dawn of European culture and civilisation, specific local details and an ancient world that was far more interconnected than we might think. This exhibition shows that, for thousands of years, from the birth of civilisation on our continent to the shaping of our national identity, our history has been defined by the intertwining and mutual influence of civilisations that came into contact with the inhabitants of the Carpathian-Danubian-Black Sea region. We Romanians have been shaped by profound transformations, creative upheavals and constant adaptation to new challenges, giving rise to, among other things, a remarkable culture that has tremendously enriched our world heritage.

In this symphony, the Romanian and Spanish nations met early on, and today they continue to walk side by side as members of the European Union, steadily increasing their wealth of shared experiences and achievements. I trust that the results we achieve will be an accurate reflection of the valuable legacy we have inherited from our ancestors and live up to the expectations of our respective peoples.

**KLAUS WERNER IOHANNIS**  
PRESIDENT OF ROMANIA

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# The image of Dacia, Getae and Dacians in Hispanic historical literature (seventh–twenty-first century)

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## 1. A case of historical confusion, identification and appropriation: Background

The prevailing image of the Getae and Dacians in the final centuries of antiquity was that of barbarians praised in literary sources for their heroism, nobility and moral virtues. However, due to a confusion with the Scythians, they were also negatively perceived as “true barbarians”: hirsute (*hirsuti*), wearers of animal skins (*pelliti*), unshorn (*intonsi*), etc. The tradition of Geto-Dacian heroism that had begun with Herodotus’s writings in the fifth century BC would endure long after the Roman conquest of Dacia. As explained in previous chapters, we know that the literature of the classical period conveyed the idea that the Dacians were related to the Getae or perhaps were even the same people but with minor differences, including their name. However, the Dacians ceased to figure prominently in classical sources after the conquest of Dacia. The literature of Hispania was no exception, and some authors

of Hispanic origin, like Lucan, Seneca, Martial and Pomponius Mela, recorded certain facts or impressions about Dacians and Getae.

In a process whose origins can be traced back to the fourth century AD, the ancient Getae were identified with the Goths. This was primarily due to the contrived phonetic similarity of the two names, *Gothi* and *Getae*, but also to geographical and historical factors, as we have seen: these two peoples had nothing in common other than the fact that they were barbarians who had occupied, albeit at different times, the lands north of the Lower Danube and the Carpathians, which in centuries past had been Getae and Dacian territory. However, in late antiquity the term *Getae* began to be used as a poetic name for the Goths, a custom that endured for many centuries, while historians regarded it as the ancient name of the Goths.

In the early fifth century, the Hispanic priest and historian Paulus Orosius, who had fled to Africa to escape the advancing barbarians, was undoubtedly the one who paved the way for the identification of Getae with Goths in Hispania and the inclusion of Getae and Dacian figures and history, not in the history of the Roman Empire as classical sources had done up to that point, but in the history of the Goths and later of the Spaniards. In his *History against the Pagans*, Orosius referred to “Dacia, where Gothia is also found” (I, 2, 53: *Dacia ubi et Gothia*) and mentioned “the people who were once called the Getae and are now called the Goths” (I, 16, 2: *modo autem Getae illi qui et nunc Gothi*). One of the most curious aspects of Orosius’s work is that he refers to the Dacian king Decebalus as Diurpanus [Diurpaneus], a different Dacian monarch mentioned in other sources, which became the common name for Decebalus in all subsequent Hispanic chronicles. Orosius’s work was highly influential in the Iberian Peninsula, as his identification of Getae with Goths was directly taken up by Isidore of Seville.

By the sixth century, the idea that the Goths were the Getae had been fully accepted. The terms Getae and Gothi were used in a broad sense that seems to be a generic name with geographical connotations, identifying the Goths as the largest and most important of the invading barbarian nations, as well as the oldest by virtue of their association with the Getae. Consequently, the other barbarian peoples were considered branches of this main Germanic nation, the Getae/Goths. For this reason, other Germanic peoples who were never in Scythia or Dacia were also regarded as Getae offshoots, especially if they had some sort of connection to the Goths. This process was particularly fuelled by the work of later authors such as Cassiodorus, Jordanes and, on the Iberian Peninsula, Isidore of Seville. Up to this point, we can say that

identification was a result of geographical coincidence, phonetic proximity, imperial interests, the legend of the noble, heroic Getae later transferred to the Goths, and a simple error passed from one author to the next over time, a kind of fashion that reinforced the identification of Getae with Goths by giving it poetic, erudite and even pedantic value. However, in Cassiodorus, Jordanes and Isidore of Seville, who continued this established tradition, the identification took on a different quality: its poetic value was confirmed, but the aim of evoking the distant and more or less mythical origins of the Goths by appropriating Dacian and Getae history was to legitimise the Goths socially and politically.

## 2. The seventh century and Isidore of Seville: Getae and Dacians in the *Historia Gothorum* and the *Etymologiae*

In Hispania, we can say that Isidore was the bridge between antiquity and the Middle Ages on the cultural level, although he saw scholarship as a tool for rounding out the education of clergymen. In contrast to his efforts to preserve Roman language and culture in his *Etymologies*, Isidore took a completely different attitude to politics, and his historical work reveals his determination to destroy that Roman world, which posed a double threat to the newly established Visigothic nation on the peninsula: a politico-military threat, with Justinian’s attempt to reconquer Hispania for the Byzantine Empire; and an ideological, and perhaps even more dangerous, threat, the myth of Rome, which still endured on the Iberian Peninsula. To counter this second threat, in his *History of the Goths* Isidore tried to replace it with the myth of the Goths which, as we are seeing, was in turn inspired by ancient myths about the Getae, Dacians and Scythians.

Orosius's exaltation of the Goths was not sufficient, for Isidore's purposes, to create a mythology that would legitimise their power or present a cohesive image of an *ethnos gothicum* that could blossom into a *natio gothica*; he had to utterly destroy the Roman ideal. Unlike Cassiodorus, who may have sought reconciliation in the Ostrogothic Italy of Theodoric, Isidore felt that in Hispania it was necessary to glorify the Goths while simultaneously demolishing Rome, and this is the method he applied to his historical work in order to create a kind of Visigothic "nationalism". The association of Goths and Scythians, via their identification with the Getae, was traditional and widely accepted at the time, and although Orosius was not the first to use it as a poetic device, he had established it as historical fact. We find this idea in Cassiodorus and Jordanes, but Isidore took it directly from Orosius rather than these historians, as he was not familiar with their work, and gave it an etymological basis. The identification with the Getae and the Scythians made the Goths even older than Rome itself, thereby proving their superiority and respectability and legitimising their existence as a kingdom with a prestigious place in the annals of history:

"The Goths are thought to have been named after Magog, the son of Japheth, because of the similarity of the last syllable. The ancients called them Getae rather than Goths" (*Etym.* 9. 2.89).

"The Goths are descended from Magog, the son of Japhet, and are shown to have sprung from the same origin as the Scythians, from whom they do not differ greatly in name. For when one letter is altered and another is removed, the Getae are almost named like the Scythians" (*Hist. Goth. recap.*, 66).

Thus, once again, the term acquired the authority of time-honoured usage. As Isidore's work passed into the Middle Ages, scholars who resorted to the use of

glossaries, dictionaries or etymologies were able to read that the Goths were the same as the Getae and the Scythians, thereby perpetuating the tradition begun in late antiquity. As for the Dacians, Isidore of Seville clearly established their affinity with the Goths in a curious chronological reversal. As Isidore claimed they came from the Goths, the identity of the Dacians was also appropriated to secure a classical precedent:

"The Dacians were offshoots of the Goths, and people think they were called Dacians (*Dacus*) as if the word were *Dagus*, because they were 'begotten from the stock of the Goths'" (*Etym.* 9. 2.90).

In the conclusion to his *History of the Goths*, which contains intermingled references to Getae and Goths, Isidore praised their strength and military ability in a long passage, after reiterating their connection to Gog-Magog, but cast in a positive light: a link to biblical history which, together with their antiquity, would bolster their legitimacy. The Seville historian elevated their characteristic warriors and bravery to new heights of glory (*Hist. Goth.*, 66–70).

Outside the Iberian Peninsula, Jordanes's writings largely represented a Gothic historical tradition, but Isidore of Seville's work was primarily a Hispanic historical tradition, initiated by Orosius, relating to the Goths. When Jordanes's work became known on the peninsula around the 13th century, it was used as a source, alongside Isidore's texts, for the development of peninsular Gothicism, the appropriation of the identity and past of the Goths in the late Middle Ages and early modern era and, consequently, the persistent identification of Getae with Goths and the appropriation of the ancient history of the Getae and Dacians in the history of Spain. By this time, what was being appropriated was no longer the history and identity of the Getae and Dacians

but that of the Goths. However, as the earlier identifications endured, the unwitting appropriation of the identity and history of the ancient Getae and Dacians would continue, along with a deliberate appropriation of the identity and history of the Goths in certain European nations, including Spain.

### 3. Getae, Dacians and Goths in medieval Iberia

The death of Isidore of Seville marked the end of the cycle of Hispanic culture that still had a direct relationship with ancient culture and literature. The word “Dacia” meant nothing to the new writers, who were not acquainted with ancient texts, and the names “Getae” or “Getan” were no longer always equated with “Goth” or “Gothic”. However, we do find the proper name *Geta* among the peninsular Goths, which apparently gave the bearer an air of distinction and nobility; a case in point is the bishop of Elepla, one of the signatories at the Councils of Toledo, in the early eighth century.

Isidore was elevated to the status of *auctoritas* in the transmission of culture, and although it encouraged the study of sources in the seventh century, his etymological work eventually replaced much of the earlier technical knowledge. The Islamic invasion in the eighth century created an unstable situation that was reflected in literature, but at Toledo the Mozarabs preserved Isidore’s historical texts. Others were kept in the Catalan Pyrenees and from there made their way to France and other European countries. However, the following century witnessed a remarkable cultural and artistic expansion that facilitated a better knowledge of Isidore’s work in the three places that maintained the great cultural traditions of the Visigothic period: Al-Andalus (most notably Seville and Córdoba), the Catalan counties

and Asturias-Galicia. Literary output in the 10<sup>th</sup> century was quite limited, but in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century new Benedictine trends came to the peninsula and ultimately stamped out what remained of Visigothic monastic life. Isidore became an authority quoted by and accessible to scholars, part of a larger cultural background; at the same time, when his remains were moved to León, he became a widely venerated figure in the context of a generalised glorification of Visigothic values. One century later, the number of Isidore’s works listed among the preferences of peninsular readers had diminished, perhaps because of a waning interest in the codices once Visigothic script was abandoned in favour of Carolingian minuscule. At the dawn of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the royal chanceries of Castile and Aragon stopped using Latin and switched to Romance languages. Isidore’s manuscripts could still be found in the great libraries of the Iberian Peninsula and some other parts of Europe. His legacy endured on the peninsula thanks to the work of Lucas de Tuy and Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, who were also responsible for the reception of Jordanes’s *Getica* and, with it, additional details about the history of the Getae and Dacians, likewise associated with the Goths in the work of this sixth-century historian of the Eastern Roman Empire.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Jordanes’s work was remarkably influential on the Iberian Peninsula, as its kings sought to legitimise their authority by claiming Visigothic “ancestors” and were determined to appropriate the history of the Goths. The Isidoran tradition also persisted in this century, when chroniclers turned to new sources imported from Europe, although Isidore’s theory of Getae etymology and the identification of Getae with Goths had practically been forgotten up to that point.

Lucas de Tuy represented the continuation of the tradition begun by Isidore of Seville. His most



important historical work was the *Chronicon Mundi*, written roughly between 1230 and 1238. In the first part we find an entire paragraph on Trajan, even longer than that composed by the Seville historian. And the second book contains an unabridged version of Isidore's *History of the Goths*, repeating certain aspects of the Getae-Goth connection for which Isidore had provided an etymological basis.

Lucas de Tuy's *Chronicon Mundi* is practically contemporary with *Historia de rebus Hispaniæ sive Historia gothica* by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, Archbishop of Toledo, which describes the history of the peninsula up to the year 1243. Jiménez de Rada drew considerably on Isidore of Seville, but he also relied heavily on Jordanes's *Getica*, from which he copied entire passages about the Goths' mythical past. His *Historia* was one of the main sources for the work of Alfonso X, also known as the Wise. It had a tremendous impact on the conception of peninsular historical writing, and in the 13<sup>th</sup> century it was translated into several vernacular peninsular languages, significantly influencing the idea of a unitary history of Spain that remained dominant until the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Jiménez de Rada composed his work at the behest of King Ferdinand III, who required a history of the Iberian Peninsula from the most distant past to his own time, although it may have been the archbishop who pointed out the flaws of Tuys's *Chronicon Mundi* to the monarch and the need for a complete, Hispanic history of the peninsula. King Ferdinand III was interested in the past of his land, the antiquities of Spain, not only in searching for a national identity and legitimising his dynastic claims, and Isidore's legacy was deemed insufficient for this purpose. Once Jiménez de Rada had proved the utility and necessity of writing, he highlighted the exemplary nature of the history of monarchs, in whom he identified four main virtues: wisdom, courage, liberality and justice.

The topics addressed in his work are, as he himself stated (*De reb. Hisp., Præfatio*), the antiquities of Spain, the peoples who invaded it, the origins of the Spanish monarchs and their great deeds. To this end, Jiménez de Rada defended the Gothic origins not only of the reigning dynasty but also of the high Spanish nobility, with an obviously legitimising purpose sought for and by all of them. The high Castilian-Leonese nobility, or at least the part of it with which the Toledo scholar was best acquainted, were keenly interested in the history of the Goths at the time, believing it would serve to bolster their own legitimacy.

The novelty of Jiménez de Rada's *Historia de rebus Hispaniæ*, used as a source and model by later historians even in his own century, is also apparent in his decision to round out the historical narrative with chapters devoting to elucidating ancestry and origins, in which he drew on various sources and traditions that are not always identified and occasionally even resorted to legends and myths. Some of these elements had already appeared in the work of Orosius, Isidore of Seville or Lucas de Tuy, but until the publication of the Toledo bishop's volume, those myths and legends had never been compiled in a single work or added to a history of Spain in the form of a chapter on origins.

One of the myths in his chapter on the origins of the Hispanic people, where he compiles the legends about the Goths having originated in Scandza and Scythia, is that of the wisdom of the Goths, which took on a moral meaning that was repeated by subsequent historians and writers in connection with the aforementioned virtues of the Castilian-Leonese kings. His account mentions Deceneus, high priest of the Getae in the days of King Burebista, who is portrayed by Jiménez de Rada as a model of wisdom and good governance for the new Hispanic rulers,

heirs to the Gothic tradition that had been passed on by Isidore and revived in the 13th century. But his Gothic myth also includes Zalmoxis, the Getae deity mentioned by Herodotus, as well as certain Dacian traditions, all taken from Jordanes, who had mixed up the history of the Goths with that of the Getae and Dacians in his *Getica*. Drawing on his knowledge of Jordanes's work and the independent Hispanic tradition represented by Isidore of Seville, Jiménez de Rada inserted Getae and Dacian myths and history—previously appropriated for the Goths—in the history of the Hispanic people. For instance, he states that in the time of Sylla (sic), one Dicineus (sic) taught the Visigoths:

“All philosophy, physics, theoretical and practical disciplines, logic, the arrangement of the twelve signs, the movement of the planets, the waxing and waning of the moon, the course of the sun, astrology and astronomy, the natural sciences” (*De reb. Hisp.*, 1. 10 and 1. 13).

Some of this knowledge that Jiménez de Rada attributes to the Goths, and which we know Jordanes had taken from ancient references to Deceneus and the Getae and Dacian peoples of the first century BC (*Getica* XI, 67 and 69–73), tally with the Toledo historian's desire to publicise science and the manual arts and disciplines that must have particularly interested him. In fact, Chapter XV of his work, about the wise men of the Goths and their counsellors, is merely an excursus on Deceneus, situating him in a place of honour alongside Zeuta and Zalmoxis (whom he calls Zalmoxes) among the “philosophers” of the Goths.

Of course, Jiménez de Rada made no distinction between Goths and Getae. Isidore's etymological theory of the association between Getae and Goths is also reflected in his work, albeit with certain modifications

made after comparing this information with Jordanes's account. In Jiménez de Rada, the Gothic myth about the origins of the people who would be considered the “founders” of Spain were projected onto the history and reality of the Iberian people, a myth that included the identity and past appropriated from the Getae and Dacians of antiquity.

One of the most noteworthy vernacular translations of Jiménez de Rada's *Historia de rebus Hispaniae* is the *Estoria de los Godos*, written approximately between 1253 and 1270. However, it is not an exact translation but a history of Spain based on the Toledo scholar's work, with certain variations that betray the interest of the author—and obviously of the person who commissioned it, almost certainly Pedro Fernández de Azagra, Lord of Albarracín—in the history of Aragon and King James I, known as James the Conqueror. In it we find the same passage about the three wise men of the Goths, borrowed from Jiménez de Rada: “They had Zeuta the philosopher, later Diceneo, and later Zalmoxen who was very wise” (XI: *De los reyes godos de Chephe*).

However, the pinnacle of this 13th-century historiographical series was the *Estoria de España*—also known as *Primera Crónica General de España* after Menéndez Pidal's 1906 edition—written after 1260 at the behest of King Alfonso the Wise, who was actively involved in its composition. This was the first extensive history of Spain written in a Romance language, ranging from its biblical and legendary origins to the recent history of the Kingdom of Castile under Ferdinand III.

Alfonso's magnum opus is divided into four parts: the first tells the history of Rome, since the medieval kings of European nations saw themselves as heirs of the Roman Empire; the second part narrates the history of the barbarian kings, including



the Goths, the direct ancestors of the monarchs of the Iberian Peninsula; the third is a history of the Kingdom of Asturias; and the fourth tells the history of the kingdoms of Leon and Castile. Yet, as was customary in chronicles of that time, the author went back to the remotest history found in the Bible and continued with myths and legends mixed with Greek sources and ancient history. A wide variety of works were used to compile this history, but chief among them were the two great Latin chronicles mentioned above, which constituted the most complete accounts of the history of Spain in the 13<sup>th</sup> century: the *Chronicon Mundi* by Lucas de Tuy and the *Historia de rebus Hispaniae* by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada.

Resorting to Gothicism was inevitable, because of the political arguments for dynastic identity and those supporting the idea of “reconquest”, and also because Hispanic historiographic tradition since Isidore had shaped an image of the past that could not be relinquished at that moment in time, as this would have meant questioning the collective identity that authorities were trying to give Spaniards, portraying them as the settlers of a national entity whose origins were also sought in the medieval Hispanic nation. In reading the history of the Goths in the *Estoria de España*, it seems that for Alfonso X—promoter of Spanish culture and practitioner of every science and art, from music and literature to astronomy and astrology—the figure of Deceneus, whom he called Diçeneo or Dicineo, was not merely that of wise counsellor to Burebista (recorded as Boruista) but a model for the monarch himself, who listed Deceneus’s achievements, repeating Jiménez de Rada, who in turn had followed Jordanes’s account:

“So Boruista reigned among the Goths, and beside him in Gothia was one they called Dicineo [...] And he changed among them the customs they had

that were not so good; and this Dicineo taught the Goths almost all philosophy and physics, and theory and practice, and logic, and the arrangement of the twelve signs, and the courses of the planets, and the waxing and waning of the moon and the course of the sun, and astrology, and astronomy, and the natural sciences [...] And he dissuaded them from their former fierceness in the manner of wild beasts, and taught them to be meek and philosophical. And of these Dicineo chose the most noble and most learned, and made them priests and bishops, and told them to learn theology and called them *pileatos* after the Latin *pileus*, the name of the gentleman’s cap; and the learned tell us that this was because of the mitres with which they covered their heads, as gentlemen cover theirs with hats” (Ch. 388: *Dell assentamiento de Sciçia et de cuemo se matouo en ella la hueste de los Godos*).

In addition to Deceneus and Burebista, Zalmoxis also appears in Alfonso’s chronicle, saying of him that “the histories tell he was wonderfully wise in philosophy” (Ch. 393: *De los sabios de los godos et de los sos consejeros*). Through the Goths, the greatest names in the ancient history of the Getae and Dacians, like Deceneus, Burebista and Zalmoxis, were seamlessly integrated in the history of the Spaniards by recounting the legendary origins of the Visigothic people, always with an exemplary and legitimising purpose.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the Hispanic kings, especially in the Kingdom of Leon and the Kingdom of Castile, were portrayed as descendants of the Visigothic monarchs at three key junctures, relying heavily on Gothicism as a political argument: at the time of their intervention in the lands of the Astures and Gallaeci in the ninth century; during the 13<sup>th</sup>-century process of constructing coherent narratives around Ferdinand III and Alfonso X in Leon and Castile, as we have just seen; and in the

revival of this idea, after a hiatus, in 15<sup>th</sup>-century historiography.

In 1454, after the death of John II—father of Henry IV and the future Isabella I, the Catholic Queen—the Bishop of Burgos, Alonso (or Alfonso) de Cartagena, referred to the Gothic heritage of the dead monarch, tracing his lineage back to Athalaric and even further through the mythical genealogies of the Goths, a fantastic fabrication that confirmed the unification of the peninsula's various kingdoms as the historical destiny of its monarchs. The aim of merging national genealogies into a single legendary national bloodline was twofold: to legitimise the rulers' power, and to justify the social pre-eminence and prestige desired by a specific group. Imaginary genealogies had been fabricated since late antiquity by appropriating even older identities and histories, and over the centuries they gave rise to a specific historiographic production dedicated to remaking lineages that could be traced back to antiquity. Gothicism was predicated on the existence of a principle that legitimised the authority of the Visigothic kings, as the only barbarian people to whom the Roman Empire had officially transferred power with the 418 treaty between Wallia and the Eastern and Western Roman emperors. According to the long line of descent traced by Alonso de Cartagena, that power had been passed down from Athaulf to the Trastámara sovereigns. However, it was the Bishop of Burgos who, in his historical work *Rerum in Hispania gestarum Chronicon. Anacephalaeosis*, explained that the Goths came to Spain from Dacia—which to him meant Denmark (*Dania*), owing to another medieval geographic confusion between the Dacians (*Daci*) and the Danish (*Dani*)—and that therefore the Spanish monarchs were descended from the Dacian and Getae princes of old.

The last great demonstration of peninsular Gothicism in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, before the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, was the *Compendiosa historia hispánica*, the first printed history of Spain, completed in Rome in 1470 by Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo. This history of Spain begins with the typical humanistic practice of providing a detailed geographical description of the country, but it also has the medieval characteristics of the traditional exaltation of Spain and Gothicism, as it lists events that occurred from the Visigothic invasion to the early years of the reign of Henry IV of Castile. In this case, it is interesting to note how the book portrays Spaniards as an ethnic group with clearly defined moral virtues, the same virtues the Goths had allegedly possessed. Those moral virtues had previously been presented as an example for medieval Castilian royalty to follow by Jiménez de Rada, who borrowed them from Jordanes, who, in turn, as I have already mentioned several times, had taken them from ancient references to the Getae and Dacians and attributed them to the Goths.

#### 4. Getae and Goths in the Spanish monarchy from the Catholic Monarchs to the first Bourbons

During the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, the Gothicist trend that had dominated the peninsula in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries was joined by other arguments used to legitimise and extol the crown. The identification of Getae with Goths and the persistence, appropriation and spread of this idea thanks to Gothicism found a new outlet for expression in monarchic symbolism and heraldry, closely bound up with the legitimising genealogical constructs that had served as a model in the early modern era.

From the moment the House of Habsburg ascended to the Spanish throne, they continued to exploit the myth of the monarchs' Gothic heritage. The Spanish humanist Luis Vives (1492–1540) provided evidence that Getae and Goths were still linked in the minds of Spaniards at this time. In his introduction to Augustine of Hippo's *De Civitate Dei*, he wrote, "It has been proven that the Goths were called Getae by the ancient scholars." He also mentioned King Burebista, referring to him as the Gothic king "Boerebista", as the name appeared in the Latin edition of Strabo.

The translations of Jiménez de Rada's chronicles ensured that his work had a relevant place in the Spanish Gothicism of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century. Its influence is apparent in the *Libro de las grandezas y cosas memorables de España* by mathematician and cosmographer Pedro de Medina (1493–1567), who in his quest for the Spaniards' most ancient ancestors went all the way back, as earlier chroniclers had done, to Tubal, Noah's grandson, and King Geryon, and later devoted a chapter to the origins of the Goths. In it, he quoted the Toledo scholar regarding the equivalence of Scythia, Gepidia and Dacia, and the fourth king of the Goths, Salmoxen (again, the Getae god Zalmoxis mentioned by Herodotus): "The fourth king was called Salmoxen. He was a great philosopher. And he taught his people good customs and proverbs, courtesy and good breeding".

A good example of the rise of Gothicism in the days of Philip II is the *Historia de los reyes godos que vinieron de la Scythia de Europa contra el Imperio Romano, y a España, con sucesion dellos hasta los catolicos reyes Don Fernando y Doña Isabel*, written by Julián del Castillo between 1579 and 1582 and dedicated to the monarch. In this work, typical and representative of Spanish Gothicism in the latter

half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, we also find appropriations from Getae and Dacian history, as Julián del Castillo's primary source was once again the Toledo archbishop Jiménez de Rada, whom he quoted. For example, he copied the passage previously borrowed by Pedro de Molina regarding Zalmoxis as the fourth king of the Goths, but this time calling him "Salmagem": "a great philosopher, who taught them letters and customs." He also brought back the high priest of the Goths, the Geto-Dacian Deceneus, under the name Darpaneus, mistaking him for another Dacian personality, and went on to list his priestly duties, which Jiménez de Rada had taken from Jordanes. Diurpaneus or Dorpaneus was mentioned as a Gothic king in Jordanes's *Getica* (XIII, 76–77), although he was actually a Dacian king. Jordanes included the wars fought between Dacians and Romans among the glorious deeds of the Goths.

At the dawn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the historical work of Spanish Jesuit Juan de Mariana constituted a prominent response to the historical interests of Spaniards, a work so influential that another general history of Spain would not be written until well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, the most important thing about Mariana's *Historia General de España*, published in 1601, is that it reinforced a tradition and a version of historical facts which, having long been regarded as true histories, ended up becoming a veritable foundation myth, the core of which proved very difficult to discredit or even criticise, as those who did so were labelled "inventors of fables" and "novelty seekers". In two prior mentions of the origins of the Goth, Mariana again identified them with the Getae, although he did cast some doubt on the claim by saying that some believed they were the same:

"The Getae or Goths (which some consider to be the same) destroyed the provinces of Moesia and Thrace. Decius fought against them".

“Some thought and said that the Goths were the same as the Getae, which in Pliny and Herodotus we find situated not far from the banks and mouths where the Danube flows into the sea”.

In 1646 the writer and diplomat Diego de Saavedra Fajardo published his *Corona Gothica, Castellana y Austriaca*, a historical-political statement presented in his capacity as ambassador plenipotentiary of Philip IV at the treaty negotiations in Münster. Using the Gothic heritage of the Spanish monarchy as a legitimising argument, Saavedra Fajardo opened his work by stating that the Goths and Getae were not the same people: “the diverse nation of the Getae.” His affirmation could not be clearer, in contrast to Mariana’s ambiguity, and yet the Spanish diplomat soon contradicted himself by quoting the Scandinavian Johannes Magnus verbatim when he listed the achievements of King “Boroista” (Burebista) and “Diceneo” (Deceneus), “his counsellor, a great philosopher versed in the schools of the Greeks and Egyptians”. And he tied it all in, as Johannes Magnus had done, with the Goths’ belief in the immortality of the soul and their custom of shooting arrows during a storm to assist the gods. Thus, although he denied the identification, the habit of ascribing the past of the Getae to the Goths was so ingrained that Saavedra Fajardo did not think twice about citing names and episodes of Getae history, like those related to the belief in the immortal soul and the Getae rituals recorded by Herodotus. Consequently, bows and arrows were once again associated with the Goths, weapons believed to be typical of this people, along with other traits such as courage, wisdom or spirituality. But these characteristics that defined the image of the Goths in literary sources had actually been taken from classical references to the Getae, appropriating their identity, defining traits, prominent personalities and history.

The House of Bourbon, which succeeded the House of Habsburg on the Spanish throne after the War of the Spanish Succession in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, had a high regard—as their predecessors did—for valour as a symbol of national unity and the prestige that the myth of Gothic descent conferred upon royalty. The Gothicist interests of the organic intellectuals linked to those in power at the time are clearly reflected in the historical work of certain scholars shortly after Philip V created the Royal Academy of History in 1738.

Ignacio de Luzán Claramunt de Suelves y Gurrea (1702–1754), a supernumerary fellow of the Royal Academy of History since 1742, strongly influenced by the Italian Enlightenment and always close to the court, wrote a dissertation on the origins and primitive homeland of the Goths (*Disertación sobre el origen y patria primitiva de los godos*) in 1746 that was posthumously published in the first volume of the academy’s annals in 1796. In it, he constantly and even excessively—given the number of repetitions—alluded to the equivalence of Goths and Getae, mentioned on 20 of the 42 pages in his study. Naturally, I cannot repeat them all here, but some are quite interesting because Luzán defends this equivalence to the hilt, with a host of facts and quotes, paradoxically doing the exact opposite of the academy’s stated objective in its founding by-laws, “to debunk fables”. However, we know this history was quite beneficial in relation to Gothicism and that the myth of Gothic ancestry was also valued by the Bourbons:

“In the most remote past, the enslaved Goths or Getae were so vilified that their name became synonymous with servants, which in Greece, and especially in comedies, were commonly called Getae. Yet after several centuries, when the Goths were established on their new thrones and respected for their power, there

was no one who did not wish to have some Gothic or Lombard blood in his family to become illustrious”.

“Roman history [he wrote] clearly teaches us that the Goths who ruled our Spain were the Getae who dwelt on both banks of the Danube [...] which flows into the Euxine Pontus, or Black Sea [...] and so Roman historians considered Gothic and Getic one and the same, the ‘e’ of the latter becoming an ‘o’, although we cannot say exactly when this change occurred. See Ælius Spartianus in the life of Caracalla”.

“It is true that some modern scholars, as I have said, while sharing Jordanes’s belief that the Goths originated in Scandia, distinguish them from the Getae, regarding them as two very different nations. However, in this the common opinion of the most learned authors, not only Swedes but also in other countries, is that the Goths and the Getae were the same nation and had the same origins”.

“I trust there can no longer be any doubt about the opinion of Jordanes, that the Getae were the same as the Goths, and that both originated in Scandia. Herodotus says of the Getae that they were the bravest of the Thracians, and Procopius says of the Goths that they were the bravest of the barbarians. It is clear that both authors are of the same mind, and that Getae and Goths are one and the same”.

As for me, I trust there can no longer be any doubt about the surprisingly strong presence of the identification of Getae with Goths in mid-18th century Spain, illustrated by the intense Gothicism sentiment that pervades Luzán’s entire work, as all the modern authors he cites—Spaniards, Dutch, Germanic, Prussian, Swedish, etc.—belonged to the Gothicism trends that existed in different parts of Europe. In reading his dissertation, if we overlook the discursive

tone and the endless references to the ancient and modern sources he used, one cannot help but wonder if scholarship had actually made any progress since Jordanes or even further back in time, because the central idea—the appropriation of Getae identity and history by and/or for the Goths—remained exactly the same. And Luzán, as the organic intellectual he was, close to power in court circles, once again relied on the antiquity of the Goths to reinforce the myth of the Gothic origins of the new Bourbon monarchs in Spain.

Like Ignacio de Luzán, another fellow or, better said, censor of the Royal Academy of History, Martín de Ulloa y de la Torre-Guiral, published a study around 1762 on the origin and homeland of the Goths, contesting the claim that they hailed from Scandia (Scandinavia) as Luzán had argued, but again insisting, perhaps even more vehemently, that Goths and Getae were the same people. In defending his theory that the Getae/Goths originated in Scythia rather than Scandinavia, the equivalence of the two nations is mentioned on 57 of the paper’s 84 pages, although I will only furnish one quote here:

“To proceed with proper clarity in our researches, we shall divide them into several articles. In Article I we shall prove that Goths and Getae were one nation, to which both names were applied interchangeably [...] and that Getae and Dacians were one nation. In Article IV we shall treat of the times in which the Getae were known by this name on the banks of the Danube. In Article V, whether the Getae were a Scythian or Thracian nation, and we shall attempt to prove they were Scythians [...] In Article X it is proved that, if the Getae were Thracians, they could not have come from Scandia. In Article XI we shall examine the narrative of the journey of the Goths from Scandia, and set out the difficulties that make this entirely implausible.

And in Article XII we shall examine the grounds on which some attempt to prove that the Goths migrated from Scandia to Scythia, and show it is more likely that the Getae migrated from Scythia to Scandia. If these articles are more extensive than the matter seems to require, we beg the reader's indulgence for this prolixity as the product of an earnest desire to know the origins of certain peoples who founded our monarchy".

We could hardly hope for a clearer statement from the transmitting agent of this appropriation on the goal of such studies and of the monarchy as the recipient of the Goths' appropriated identity and past, and with it the ongoing appropriation of the identity and past of the Getae and Dacians—even though Ulloa denied its existence, as he believed Getae and Goths were one and the same.

In his conclusion, Martín de Ulloa mentioned other modern Spanish scholars who, like him, identified the Getae with the Goths and believed they originated in Scythia, such as Juan de Ferreras, the marquis of Mondéjar, Andrés González de Barcia, José Pellicer and Martín Fernández de Enciso. There is nothing more worth adding to what I have already said about Ignacio de Luzán's study, as both papers were written in the same context of 18th-century Gothicism in Spain by organic intellectuals close to the monarchy, an institution eager to continue legitimising its claim to power based on its supposedly ancient and glorious Gothic roots.

What I find incredible is the fact that this situation existed in Spain a little more than two centuries ago, a situation in which Gothicism and the identification of Getae with Goths enjoyed a popularity practically unprecedented since these ideas were first mooted in late antiquity.

## 5. Dacia, Dacians and Getae in the historical literature of contemporary Spain

When it seemed this trend had reached its apex and the appropriations of Goths and Getae would inevitably be carried over into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the contemporary era arrived—which in Spain began not with the French Revolution but with the Peninsular War and the ratification of the 1812 Constitution of Cádiz—and suddenly, without warning, the appropriation of the Gothic identity and history for the monarchy suddenly ceased to be the defining feature of Spanish Gothicism. Up until this point, the myth of Gothic heritage had been used to legitimise and glorify the monarchy, the institution that had united the different medieval kingdoms and later established an absolutist state. After the dawn of the contemporary era, marked by the demise of the *Ancien Régime* and the triumph of the liberal revolution during the reign of Ferdinand VII, Gothicism was used as a historical point of reference for the new, centralist, unified state that would be constructed by the liberal bourgeoisie in the days of Isabella II. Previously, the emphasis had been on the Gothic blood of monarchs; from this moment, it would be placed on the alleged unification of the Visigothic state.

Historians of this new era were interested in the fundamental role that the Visigoths played in consolidating the Catholic faith and establishing the nation's laws and monarchy. The great antiquity of the Goths became inconsequential because it was no longer used to defend and authenticate the age and legitimacy of the monarchy, whose rulers were officially known as Gothic Kings until the Constitution of 1812.

Moreover, as it was no longer important to underscore the oldest origins and most relevant characteristics that could be applied to royalty, hitherto the main beneficiary of those appropriations, the Goths ceased to be identified with the Getae, who had given the Goths their legendary antiquity and some of their principal traits, applied particularly to monarchs by appropriating figures from Getae and Dacian history like Zalmoxis, Burebista or Deceneus. And so the presence of Getae and Dacians in the history of Spain came to an end.

While they did not disappear altogether from Spanish historical literature, they were only mentioned in the context of other subjects: not the history of Spain, but the history of the Roman Empire and—reversing the situation—the history of ancient Dacia itself and of the Dacian and Getae peoples.

The most common case, especially throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was that of various Spanish historians of antiquity in general or the Roman Empire in particular who wrote about Dacia and its pre-Roman peoples as part of a larger history focused on its conquest and conversion into a provincial territory. Hispania had suffered the same fate, but for these historians Dacia was not, unlike Hispania, a central theme of study. For these reasons, and because the Roman emperor who conquered Dacia, Trajan, was

born in Hispania—as was Hadrian, his successor—the Dacian Wars have been the preferred subject of Spanish scholarship.

However, the arrival of the 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed a new development: Spanish historians specialised in the history of pre-Roman and Roman Dacia, in the Dacians and the Getae, who published various studies that have joined the corpus of literature on the ancient—and not so ancient, in some cases—history of Romania and even become prominent works in their specific fields, such as my own book *Los cultos orientales en la Dacia romana. Formas de difusión integración y control social e ideológico* (2010), and *Bellum Dacicum. Geopolítica, estrategia y conflicto en el Danubio bajo Domiciano y Trajano (85–106 d.C.)* by David Soria Molina (2016), which may appear to be just another study of Domitian and Trajan's Dacian Wars but is actually, in its longest part, a profound geopolitical analysis of the pre-Roman peoples in and around Dacia. And, of course, I must also mention my *Apropiaciones de la Antigüedad. De getas, godos, Reyes Católicos, yugos y flechas* (2015), a complex historiographical survey of all the identifications and appropriations of Getae and Dacian history from antiquity to the present day in different areas of Europe and, as I have attempted to summarise in these very brief lines, in Spanish historical literature.



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