

The Christianization of Spain: A Case apart?

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The Christianization of the late antique world is usually seen as a unifying factor in the history of Europe. The advent of Christianity resulted in a certain degree of cultural and religious uniformity, but we should, although, not overlook the plurality of ways in which this process took place.

In this paper, I dealt with the case of late antique Spain. Until recently, Spanish scholars tended to emphasize the particularism of the Peninsula, postulating a vision of a unique local type of Christianity. During the last decades, the Christianization of Spain is thought to have taken place basically the same way as elsewhere.

I focused on two phenomena that may be considered as Hispanic characteristics: the early and quick spread of the Christianity, and the large villa complexes on the countryside, which might reflect the opposition of the power of the landed elite to the power of the bishops. As for the spread of Christianity, I think that we can reasonably say that the Christianization of Spain seems to have followed patterns that can be observed in other provinces. As to the second point of “uniqueness” of Spanish Christianity, I agree with Kim Bowes on that it might be a special phenomenon, but to define how particular it was, we would need to make further comparisons with other Western provinces, which also had large numbers of complex villa structures.

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