Early Medieval Spain
Unity in Diversity, 400–1000

NEW STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL HISTORY

General Editor: Maurice Keen

Published

Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Spain:*

Unity in Diversity, 400–1000 (Second Edition)

Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonisation from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229–1492*

Alan Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries*

Michael Haren, *Medieval Thought:*

The Western Intellectual Tradition from Antiquity to the Thirteenth Century (Second Edition)

Edward James, *The Origins of France:*

From Clovis to the Capetians, 500–1000

Angus McKay, *Spain in the Middle Ages:*

From Frontier to Empire, 1000–1500

David Potter, *A History of France, 1460–1560: The Emergence of a Nation State*

Michael Richter, *Medieval Ireland:*

The Enduring Tradition

Forthcoming

Jeremy Johns, *Early Medieval Sicily: Continuity and Change from the Vandals to Frederick II, 450–1250*

Mark Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025*

Early Medieval Spain

Unity in Diversity, 400–1000

Second Edition

ROGER COLLINS

New Studies in Medieval History

MAURICE KEEN

© Roger Collins 1983, 1995

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HE.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

First edition 1983

Reprinted 1988, 1991

Second edition 1995

Published by

MACMILLAN PRESS LTD

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS

and London

Companies and representatives
throughout the world

ISBN 978-0-333-64171-2

ISBN 978-1-349-24135-4 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-24135-4

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
04	03	02	01	00	99	98	97	96	95

Series Standing Order (New Studies in Medieval History)

If you would like to receive future titles in this series as they are published, you can make use of our standing order facility. To place a standing order please contact your bookseller or, in case of difficulty, write to us at the address below with your name and address and the name of the series. Please state with which title you wish to begin your standing order. (If you live outside the UK we may not have the rights for your area, in which case we will forward your order to the publisher concerned.)

Standing Order Service, Macmillan Distribution Ltd,
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 2XS, England

Contents

<i>List of Maps</i>	vii
<i>Preface to the First Edition</i>	ix
<i>Preface to the Second Edition</i>	xi
<i>Chronological Table</i>	xiii
<i>Maps</i>	xix
INTRODUCTION	
The Roman Achievement	1
1 THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW ORDER	11
The Roman Twilight	11
A False Start: The Kingdom of the Sueves	19
New Law and Old	24
2 THE IMPOSITION OF UNITY	32
Divisions and Defeats	32
Leovigild	41
3 A CHURCH TRIUMPHANT	58
4 THE SEVENTH-CENTURY KINGDOM	87
Local Society in Town and Countryside	87
The Rulers of the People	107
Outsiders and the Law	128
5 THE ARAB CONQUEST	144
The New Masters	144
Conquest and Society	151
Society and Government	169
6 THE Umayyad Regime	181
The Government of a Divided Society	181
The Land of Three Religions	198
7 THE CHRISTIAN REALMS	222
The Asturias and León	222
The Kingdom of Pamplona and the County of Aragón	246
The Frankish March in Catalonia	250

<i>Bibliographies</i>	266
A. <i>Works in English</i>	266
B. <i>Works in Other Languages</i>	272
<i>References</i>	283
<i>Lists of Rulers</i>	298
<i>Genealogical Tables</i>	303
<i>Index</i>	305

List of Maps

1	The Roman Provinces of Spain <i>c.</i> AD400	xix
2	Bishoprics of the Visigothic Kingdom <i>c.</i> AD600	xx
3	Al-Andalus and the Christian States in the Tenth Century	xxi
4	Castille, the Upper Ebro and the Kingdom of Pamplona in the Tenth Century	xxii
5	The Frankish Marches in Catalonia <i>c.</i> AD900	xxiii

Preface to the First Edition

SPANISH history is not easy, and so it has perhaps been less popular outside of the Iberian peninsula than it deserves to be. For the medieval centuries the complications of a period unfamiliar, and inevitably alien in many aspects of its people's life and thought, are multiplied in Spain by the simultaneous existence of three, or occasionally more, Christian states, each with its own distinct history, culture and institutions, not to mention the one or more Muslim powers that dominated the south. In addition, the inescapable importance of the contributions of the Jewish and Basque communities only adds to the bewildering richness and complexity of the racial and cultural mix. However, neither the historian nor the inquiring general reader should be daunted by such a challenge, and indeed, it may be hoped that if they venture but a little way, they may be swept into sharing some of the enthusiasm of the small but devoted band of committed 'Hispanists'.

It has too long been assumed, and this again has been an excuse for neglect, that Spain, its history and culture, have been isolated from the mainstream of European development; that the peninsula has remained an exotic backwater, giving little, and little influenced by events beyond the Pyrenees. Yet in a world in which both Spain and Portugal have become members of the institutionalised European community, and in which their own creations, the states of Latin America, will come to play an increasingly prominent role, such an attitude is not only unjustified but also unwise. Nor, as will be seen, is it any more true of the Early Middle Ages, in which the study of the history of the peninsula leads us from the banks of the Danube to the deserts of Arabia. It may also be hoped that some consideration of the earlier history of Spain, of the continuities forced upon its peoples and their rulers by their past and by the geography of the land in which they live, will help in understanding the problems and aspirations of their modern successors.

A book on so limited a scale as this cannot hope to give a full and detailed treatment of all the subjects that need to be covered in the Early Medieval centuries of Spanish history. Selection is inescapable, and has to be essentially personal. My choice of topics and themes for extended treatment is in large measure a reflection of my own interests, though I have also been influenced by the prior existence of

reasonable accounts in English of uncontroversial subjects, few as these have been, and to which reference is made in the first section of the Bibliography. However, despite the necessary limitations of this book in terms of size and in the providing of references, I hope to have avoided mere repetition of the conventional and received wisdom on the topics discussed. Even when space prevents the full elaboration of the alternative interpretations that I would seek to advance, I have preferred to give them, if only in outline, rather than to repeat more established views in which I have no confidence. Those already familiar with the subject may find the results unconventional, but possibly also challenging, either to approval or to disagreement. My own first interest in early Spanish history was aroused when, in another context, I read an article on one aspect of it, which so intrigued and also enraged me that I set to work to find out more, and have never stopped since. To its author, from whose many other writings I have gained much, both in provocation and in enlightenment, I remain forever grateful.

It was Denis Bethell who first suggested to me that I might write this book, and I greatly benefited from his advice and encouragement in the slow course of its composition. As editor and friend his untimely death was a sudden and terrible loss for all who knew him. I am most grateful to Maurice Keen, his successor in this series, for invaluable help in the final stages of preparation, and I should like to thank Sarah Mahaffy of the publishers, not least for her patience in waiting for the more than a little overdue completion of this work. However little this book may be a tribute to their skills, I should like to record my great debt to my teachers and mentors, Michael Wallace-Hadrill, Peter Brown and John Prestwich. From the correction of the numerous errors of spelling and punctuation to the discussion and clarifying of my ideas, this book has been aided and improved by my wife. The same could be said of its author.

Preface to the Second Edition

THE twelve years that have passed since the first publication of this book have seen many developments in the study of Early Medieval Spanish history, both in Spain itself and more widely in Europe and the U.S.A. As part of the political and cultural changes that have affected the country since the end of the Franco period, there have been sweeping changes in the direction and in the methodologies of historical studies in Spain throughout the 1980s. A recognition that some of the questions being asked of the history of these centuries were too tied up with a set of ideological conflicts dating back to the late nineteenth century has proved liberating. Thus, the Visigothic kingdom is no longer condemned as 'decadent', and interest has veered sharply away from seeking moral explanations for such major and complex events as the Arab conquest of 711. In turn, however, new agendas have been adopted, in some cases being taken over uncritically from what are perceived to be the interests and objectives of other western European schools of historical study. Thus, the hunt for the causes of the 'decadence' of the Visigothic kingdom has given way to an equally pointless pursuit of the development of what is called 'protofeudalism'.

More generally, too, the change in the political climate has had a direct effect on what may be called historical fashion. The study of the Visigothic period, which seemed to be enjoying a vogue in the late 1970s and early 1980s has now gone into the doldrums, with relatively little new work being done on it. In part this must reflect a turning away from concern with a period in which the creation of a centralised and relatively authoritarian state, with a unitary ideology and rigid views on intellectual orthodoxy, forms the mainstay of historical inquiry. The Visigothic period's loss, however, has been the gain of the centuries that follow. The eighth to eleventh centuries have benefited from this change in fashion largely because their history can, and indeed must, be seen in terms of separate regional development. This coincides nicely with the contemporary pressure for increased provincial and regional autonomy. In some cases the study of a region's history in this period, carried out in its own major universities, will now be published in that region's own distinctive language or dialect. Even the history of the Arab-ruled south can serve modern ideological purposes, as evidenced by a graffito such as

'iAndalucia, califato independiente!' on the walls of Córdoba. Such tendencies have made this period a particularly lively and exciting one in recent years, with works (not always easy for the outsider to track down) pouring out from regional academic presses. As in the case of the Visigothic period, this has been accompanied by a sense of the inadequacy of previous purely Hispanic historical agendas and methodologies, and in consequence by a turning outward for new aims and ways of study. Again, this has not always been uncritical: a wholesale adoption of the outward forms and jargon of French structuralist regional theses, à la Duby, Toubert, Guichard, etc. has not always been beneficial. Thin generalisation and lack of source criticism can vitiate the best of intentions. Where there has been genuine unalloyed progress, though, is in the field of medieval archaeology. The regular congresses and the publication of substantial reports by Spanish, French and German archaeologists working in the peninsula mark a series of real advances in the study of the material culture of many of the areas and periods covered in this book.

Some reflection of all of these developments will be found here. Changes and corrections have been incorporated throughout the book, and the central Chapter 5, on the Arab conquest and its effects, has been almost entirely rewritten and enlarged, to take account of recent research. Not the least important of the changes that have taken place over the last twelve years has been the publication of new and improved editions of many of the major texts relating to this period. The notes have therefore also been revised throughout, to refer to these new editions wherever possible and generally to incorporate reference to other significant recent work. A completely new bibliography replaces that in the previous edition, to provide signposts towards some of the new work mentioned above. So much has been done over the last decade that a comprehensive bibliographical essay would now be beyond the scope of this book.

Chronological Table

376	Admission of the Visigoths into the Roman Empire by Valens
378	Visigothic revolt – Battle of Adrianople – accession of Theodosius I, from Spain
381	Death of Visigothic 'Judge' Athanaric – treaty made with Emperor Theodosius I
395	Death of Theodosius – Alaric becomes king of the Visigoths
406	Vandals, Sueves and Alans cross the Rhine; ravaging in Gaul 406–409 – army revolt in Britain
407	Elevation of Constantine III in Britain; leads troops into Gaul and becomes master of Spain in 408
408	Visigoths invade Italy
409	Vandals, Sueves and Alans cross Pyrenees
410	Visigothic sack of Rome – revolt of army in Spain against Constantine III
411	Vandals, Sueves and Alans established in Spain as federates by rebel emperor Maximus – fall of Constantine III – Visigoths move into Gaul
415	Visigoths control Barcelona
417	Visigoths campaigning in Spain for the emperor against the Vandals and Alans
418	Visigoths withdraw to southern Aquitaine – established there by treaty with the Empire, with their capital at Toulouse
418–429	Hasding Vandals dominant power in Iberian peninsula
422	Vandal defeat of Roman forces in southern Spain
429	Vandals invade Africa – establish kingdom there (429–533)
430–456	Suevic domination of the peninsula, except for Tarraconensis – Mérida becomes their capital
456	Visigoths under Theoderic II invade Spain – defeat and death of Suevic king Rechiarius – fragmented Suevic kingdom driven back into the north-west of the peninsula

466–484	Reign of Visigothic king Euric: completes conquest of Roman Spain
494, 497	Records of Visigothic settlement in Spain
506	Issue of the <i>Breviary</i> of Alaric – Council of Agde
507	Battle of Vouillé: loss of most of the Visigothic realm in Gaul to the Franks
511	Renewed Frankish attacks – Visigothic kingdom comes under Ostrogothic rule until 526
527	II Toledo
531	Frankish attack on Visigothic <i>Septimania</i> – overthrow of King Amalaric as a result
Mid-sixth century	Period of weakness of royal authority and many revolts, e.g. local autonomy of Córdoba 550–572
551	Revolt of Athanagild against Agila leads to Byzantine intervention and their occupation of Cartagena and the south-east coast
561	I Braga – Suevic kingdom Catholic, partly due to work of Bishop Martin of Braga
567–590	Covered by Chronicle of John of Biclar, Bishop of Gerona
569–586	Reign of Leovigild: restoration of Visigothic royal power and unification of the peninsula, issue of law code, introduction of new regal styles, new coinage
569–572	Campaigns against the Byzantines, recovery of Córdoba
573–579	Campaigns against northern tribes and local rulers, foundation of Reccopolis
579–583	Revolt of Hermenigild
580	Arian Synod of Toledo – accentuation of religious conflict between Arians and Catholics
585	Suevic kingdom extinguished by Leovigild
587	Conversion of Reccared to Catholicism, under influence of Bishop Leander of Seville
589	III Toledo – formal conversion of the Visigothic kingdom
589–90	Suppression of Arian revolts – defeat of Frankish attack
599/600–636	Isidore Bishop of Seville
610	Synod of Toledo – Toledo recognised as metropolitan see of Carthaginiensis

612–620	Reign of Sisebut: campaigns against the Basques and against the Byzantines, attempt to impose conversion of the Jews
624	Final expulsion of the Byzantines
631	Usurpation of Sisenand with support of Frankish king Dagobert I
633	IV Toledo
654	Issue of the law code <i>Forum Iudicum</i> – Basque ravaging in Ebro valley
672/3	Revolt of Paul in Narbonne against Wamba
680–690	Julian Bishop of Toledo
680	Deposition of Wamba – Reign of Ervig: reissue of <i>Forum Iudicum</i> , with increased legislation directed against the Jews
694	XVII Toledo: enslavement of all Jews in the kingdom, other than in Narbonensis
711	Arab invasion – defeat of King Roderic
711–720	Survival of Visigothic kingdom in the north-east of the peninsula and in Septimania
718 or 722	Battle of Covadonga – establishment of independent Christian realm in the Asturias
720	Arab conquest of Barcelona and Narbonne
721	Arab expedition into Frankish Gaul – death of the governor As-Samh in battle at Toulouse
729	Suppression of revolt by Berber leader Munnus in Cerdanya, allied to Duke Eudo of Aquitaine
732/3	Arab invasion of Aquitaine – defeat of the Aquitanians on the Garonne – defeat and death of the governor ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Ghāfiqī at battle of Poitiers
739–757	Reign of Alfonso I in the Asturias
c. 740	Berber revolts in North Africa and in Spain – arrival of Syrian forces in Spain leads to civil war (741–742)
742–6/7	Continuing internal conflicts lead to the dictatorship of Yūsuf al-Fihri (747–756)
750	Overthrow of the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus by the Abbāsids – one of the former dynasty, ‘Abd al-Rahmān, takes refuge in Africa

756	'Abd al-Raḥmān crosses to Spain and, with the aid of the opponents of Yūsuf, defeats him and establishes an independent state, the Umayyad Amirate
759	Frankish conquest of Narbonne – use of their own law guaranteed to its Gothic inhabitants
763 and 777	Failure of Abbasid inspired revolts against 'Abd al-Raḥmān I
776	Beatus of Liébana produced his <i>Commentary on the Apocalypse</i>
778	Charlemagne's expedition into the Ebro valley – forced to withdraw from Zaragoza, his rearguard is destroyed by the Basques in the pass of Roncesvalles
791–842	Reign of Alfonso II in the Asturias: establishment of Oviedo as its capital, revival of Visigothic traditions in art and government, building of first church at Santiago de Compostela, contacts with the Frankish court
790s	Adoptionist controversy
801	Frankish conquest of Barcelona – beginning of the 'Spanish march'
803	Revolt of the Banu Qasī in Tudela – suppressed
806	Frankish conquest of Pamplona
c. 808/10	Frankish failure to take Tortosa and hold Tarragona limits the extension of the new march
819	Revolt against Frankish rule suppressed in Pamplona
824	Renewed revolt leads to the destruction of a Frankish army at the second Battle of Roncesvalles and the establishment of an independent kingdom in Pamplona
827	Barcelona held by Bernard of Septimania against Gothic rebels with Umayyad assistance
839	Council of Córdoba
844	First Viking raid on Spain – defeated by Ramiro I, but went on to sack Seville
c. 847–862	Ascendancy of Mūsa ibn Mūsa of the Banu Qasī in the upper Ebro; 'the third king of Spain'

848–849	Seizure of Barcelona by William, son of Bernard of Septimania (executed in 844) – suppressed by the forces of Charles the Bald
851–859	The martyr movement in Córdoba
859	Execution of Eulogius, titular Metropolitan of Toledo, its chief apologist – second Viking raid on coasts of Andalusia – they captured and ransomed King García of Pamplona – Defeat of Mūsā ibn Mūsā at Albelda by Ordoño I of the Asturias
866–910	Reign of Alfonso III in the Asturias: beginning of Christian repopulation of the Duero valley and of Castille
878	Establishment of Wifred I ‘the Hairy’ as Count of Barcelona, which office becomes hereditary in his family
880–917	Ascendancy of <i>muwallad</i> rebel Omar ibn Hafsun, centred upon Bobastro
886–912	Reigns of Al-Mundhir and ‘Abd-Allah in Córdoba: growing violence in the south between Arabs and indigenous converts to Islam (<i>muwallads</i>), many revolts and effectively independent states created in Mérida and other regions
912–961	Reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III: restoration of the authority of Córdoba, suppression of revolts and the greater imposition of authority over the Christian realms in the north of the peninsula
917–927	Elimination of the sons of Ibn Hafsun
929–931	Suppression of revolt of the <i>muwallad</i> ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jilliḳi at Bádajoz
929	‘Abd al-Raḥmān III took the title of caliph
931–970	Fernán González Count of Castille
939	Battle of Simancas
Mid-tenth century	Umayyad Spain at its apogee: a centre of learning, especially under the caliph Al-Ḥakam II, with its rulers extending their power to North Africa, frequent diplomatic exchanges with Byzantium and Ottonian Germany
959	Sancho I the Fat of León restored to his kingdom by the caliph

966, 971	Minor Viking raids
c. 980–1002	Ascendancy of Al-Manṣūr in Córdoba
985	Barcelona sacked by Al-Manṣūr
988	León, Zamora and Sahagún sacked by Al-Manṣūr
997	Santiago sacked by Al-Manṣūr
998	Al-Manṣūr's son 'Abd al-Mālik established as his deputy in Fez
1002–1008	On death of Al-Manṣūr, 'Abd al-Mālik succeeded to his power, but on his death, possibly poisoned by his half-brother 'Sanchuelo', the dictatorial power of this dynasty of Viziers collapsed
1009–1031	Almost continuous civil war around Córdoba between rival Umayyads and Hammūdids
1010	The Catalan expedition to Córdoba
1031	Extinction of the Umayyad dynasty and suppression of the caliphate
1035	Death of Sancho 'the Great' of Pamplona-Navarre – creation of a new kingdom of Aragon
1037	Battle of Támara – unification of Castille and León under Fernando I

Maps

1 The Roman Provinces of Spain c. AD400

2 Bishops of the Visigothic Kingdom c. AD600

3 Al-Andalus and the Christian States in the Tenth Century

4 Castille, the Upper Ebro and the Kingdom of Pamplona in the Tenth Century

5 The Frankish Marches in Catalonia c. AD900

For Judith
and in Memory of Denis Bethell