1. The Arab Conquests: Opening or Closure

The global impact of the Islamic conquests has been an issue of historical debate since Henri Pirenne formulated the problem a half-century ago. In Pirenne's view, the conquest of the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, of Spain, and of strategic islands had shut off the mainsprings of the movement of world trade which had flourished during the late Roman times, with the result that western Europe felt an intensification of ruralization and was impelled to return to a closed, moneyless, "natural" economic system. The conquests, then, set in motion a chain of events that was, centuries later, to result in the shifting of the balance of power in Europe from the Mediterranean region northward.

In fact, the Islamic conquest had more nearly the opposite effect than that posited by Pirenne: it opened the Mediterranean, previously a Roman lake, and, by connecting it with the Indian Ocean, converted it into a route of world trade. Initially, there was no dislocation of the international economic system and, in the 690's when 'Abd al-Malik tried an economic blockade against the Byzantine Empire, only a limited and partial closure was achieved: only the eastern Mediterranean was affected, and although the flow of certain items, such as papyrus, was interdicted, other products, such as spices, traveled as before. When Byzantine power reasserted itself, between 752 and 827, it was the Byzantines who closed off trade, not the Arabs. During this period there was indeed a retreat from the Mediterranean, but a double retreat: the Franks to Germany, the Arabs to Iraq. Spain, it appears, was minimally affected by this situation, owing to a tacit alliance of the Umayyad Emirate with the Byzantine Empire in mutual opposition to the Franks.

The result of Byzantine-Arab confrontation was to throw the former into a situation of economic dependence on western Europe for the raw materials it could no longer obtain from the East and to make the West a market for Byzantine goods. This was a reversal of the economic balance of Roman times, when the West had been dependent on the East. By the tenth century, when the Muslims had taken control of strategically important islands (Crete, Sicily, the Balearics) Islam effectively controlled the Mediterranean, which did not constitute a barrier to trade, but rather a medium whereby all bordering states could participate in a world economy, fertilized by healthy injections of Sudanese gold.

Western Europe, the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic world formed an interdependent economic system, the dynamics of which can be seen in the flow of gold from the Islamic world to western Europe (in exchange for raw materials) and then to the Byzantine East (for luxury items and spices). More than trade underlay this relationship. The ratio in value between silver and gold throughout the middle ages differed in each of the three sectors, and gold tended to move from regions where it was less highly valued to those where it was worth more; the flow of silver followed the opposite route. The
result of this movement was to encourage the development of monetary systems of exchange, whether based on a gold or silver standard, and, together with specific trade relationships, explains the prevalence of silver in early medieval Europe, of gold in Byzantium, and of a bimetallic system in the Islamic Empire. Nor was this system entirely closed, because of trading relations with the Far East.

In the eleventh century, a cycle of invasions disrupted the world economy of the high middle ages (although, once again, the Iberian peninsula was minimally affected at this time, inasmuch as the Almoravids who conquered al-Andalus also controlled the Sudanese gold routes). If the argument for economic closure falls, what can be said of the political and cultural repercussions of the Islamic onslaught?

As Pirenne’s views came under scrutiny, it became increasingly clear that the issue of the opening or closure of the Mediterranean world transcended economic issues and revealed the interdependence of economic factors with broader socio-political and cultural issues. Although it is now clear that there was no economic closure, the two halves of the Mediterranean world were no longer united by a common heritage, and in this sense -- that of mutual perceptions -- the conquest did erect a barrier which, although permeable to many kinds of cultural elements, perseveres to this day. The sense of a shared community, the particular stamp of the Roman Imperium, was gone forever.

Indeed medieval people tended to think of culture and religion as coextensive or coterminus categories, and therefore of a unified Christianitas in opposition to Islam. In reaction to the Islamic conquests, impinging upon the European heartland from two directions, there emerged the notion of Europe as a geographical entity which was also the seat of Christianity, a criterion amply justified by the coterminality of the religious and political bounds of the Islamic Empire. Thus the notion that appears in the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain of the common cause of cristianos (taking precedence over regional ethnic denominations) against moros was part of a generalized phenomenon.

Therefore, although we intend to study the internal development of Islamic and Christian societies in Spain and their interrelationships, we will not lose track of their embeddedness in a larger system of cultural and economic exchanges. Rather, we will be concerned with the ways in which the larger system impinged upon the two societies, from the changes in the human landscape directly resultant from the emplacement of the peninsula in that wider world to more subtle structural and perceptual repercussions.

2. Diffusion, Transport, Movement

The Muslims inherited the Roman Empire, not only its territory but its peoples. The importance of this fact has been obscured by the vast cultural changes which formerly Roman territories underwent. By unifying the area again, the Muslims created a medium through which technologies and ideas could be easily diffused from one end of the Empire to the other. Diffusion is one of the crucial ingredients of innovation, whether technological or cultural, and its particular contours will be outlined below. But the persisting influence of the Roman world on the Islamic Empire has generally not been emphasized. To be sure, many of the physical structures of the classical age survived more or less intact. Towards these the Arabs had an ambivalent attitude: on the one hand, reverence for the ancients (al-'uwal), especially for their mastery of technologies unknown to nomadic peoples; on the other, the plundering of Roman ruins for the'ir materials without regard to the origin or aesthetic worth of the structure.

But more than this survival of Rome as a kind of vague memory, there was a persistence of local custom regulating, in particular, the agricultural year and the utilization of resources (particularly water) which eventually entered the corpus of Islamic law. Al-Mâwardî, a Shâfi‘i jurisprudent in the Andalusi tradition, noted the special place in Islamic law of irrigation canals dug by the ancients, and
there is good reason to assume also the direct borrowing of Roman water-allocation principals by the Muslims. Roman law, which may be regarded as a compendium of customary Mediterranean usages, has never been compared systematically with Islamic law, generally assumed to have had radically different and highly idiosyncratic roots.

The movement of diffusion created by Islamic expansion in the high middle ages was, in general outline, from China and India in the East, radiating by land through central Asia, by sea to southern Arabia and the eastern Mediterranean, and then westward to North Africa and Europe. The East-to-West movement is constant; the Islamic world is its focal point; and, throughout, Persia appears to have been an extremely active hearth of cultural innovation in a wide variety of areas -- trade, technology, science, the revival of pharmaceutical interests, art, literary themes, music, agricultural technology and culinary tastes. The central place of Persia in this movement seems explicable in terms of the high level of economic development of the Sasanid Empire relative to the Arabs during the epoch of conquest.

The Persian economic system (based on dynamic urban centers supported by intensive irrigation agriculture, which permitted the maintenance of a large population) provided the model utilized by the Arabs in the economic development of the conquered areas. Persia's economic domination in the East helps to explain the diffusion of specifically Persian techniques, artistic themes, and ideas to the West in early Islamic times. The process of diffusion has, of course, both spatial and cultural dimensions. There are barriers which hinder, and mechanisms which promote, the diffusion of specific elements which may be geographical or cultural (or a combination of both). Furthermore, these mechanisms, of whatever nature, act in very selective ways, depending on what is being diffused. Needham points out, for example, that the barriers, cultural or geographical, that blocked the transmission of Chinese science through Central Asia and into the Islamic Middle East had no such effect on technical ideas, whose transmission continued uninterruptedly from East to West over a millennium.

The view thus far presented, that the high middle ages were characterized more by openness than by closure follows from Fernand Braudel's notion of networks, techniques, and media of communications as constituting an infrastructure upon which exchanges, whether economic or cultural, take place. This infrastructure was composed of a mixture of land and maritime communications, with characteristic links between them.

The crux of the problem of land transportation in Spain during this period, and generally throughout all the lands of the former Roman Empire, was the extent to which Roman roads survived. To the extent that they did, they formed a ready-made grid for the movement of travelers, commercial traffic, and, we will note in the case of the conquest of Spain by the Muslims, armies. But in fact, in East and West alike, Roman roads tended to decay, for different reasons. In the West, the fractionation of jurisdiction typically associated with a feudalized society made it difficult to organize large-scale road-building or maintenance projects. Alfonso the Wise stated, as a general rule, that citizens of towns were under the obligation to maintain "the pavements of the great highways and of the other roads which are public," a generalization that reflects the widespread custom that towns had the right to demand that its citizens spend a specified time in corvée work on roads and bridges. Stretches of Roman roads in good condition tended, if they passed through seignorial domains, to be maintained at the expense of privatization, symbolized by the collecting of tolls by the lords concerned. In places where Roman roads were abandoned and no new roads built, a road became a footpath, and the very concept faded in an abstraction: "more an abstract right of passage than an actual strip of land." Travelers would follow a road if there was one, or, if not, would strike out across untracked land. The increasing development of sheepways (cañadas) provided an increasingly viable alternative grid for the traveler on foot.
In certain areas, maintenance and continued use of Roman roads were reinforced by economic stimuli. Trade between the Mediterranean coast of Spain, the Ebro Valley, and trans-Pyrenean Europe took place along the Roman system; when the pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James in Galicia created, through the demands of travelers and commerce, the need for a passable land route, Roman roads were used where possible, neolithic routes were revived, and if these did not fulfill the requirements of secure and efficient communication, the routes were changed if the public authority was strong enough to mobilize the necessary resources, as when Sancho the Great of Navarre changed a section of the road to Santiago in the early eleventh century to make it safer. Population centers not on Roman roads were, as if by definition, isolated. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when commerce revived, it acquired orientations generally dictated by the surviving Roman roads and bridges, as for example in the case of Salamanca, where traffic from the south moved along [24] the Roman road from Cáceres, across the Tormes over the Roman bridge, into the town, and out again along the Roman highway to Zamora.\(^{(11)}\)

As population increased and settlement became denser, the documents of seignorial domains began to mention new roads (via nova), needed to organize such holdings more efficiently. But that many of these roads must have been no more than footpaths seems evident.\(^{(12)}\)

Conditions did not favor the use of wheeled vehicles in either West or East. Chivalric values tended to exalt the horse and to disdain the use of wheeled vehicles. Even so, the ill state of repair of most roads made passage for such vehicles difficult, if not impossible. A revealing Castilian document of 972 gives license to the monks of Cardena to drive "a cart through whatever place it might go; if there is no direct route, we give license to go through woodlands, through cultivated fields, through vineyards, and to cut across boundaries in order to traverse the way with cart, horse, or pack mules."\(^{(13)}\) This is a striking commentary on the difficulty of transportation and communication under conditions where a cart could better be driven through someone's vineyard than along the established way -- the more so in view of the sensitivity of medieval landlords to the sanctity of property boundaries.

In the Islamic world, wheeled vehicles disappeared completely, and all long-distance land travel was aboard camels, horses, donkeys. The disappearance of the cart in the East, antedating by several centuries the age of Arab expansion, was associated with a technological innovation, the rigid North Arabian camel saddle, more secure than its predecessor, which made the camel a more effective military animal, and with a social phenomenon which this innovation reinforced: the ascendancy of nomads over settled societies. "In schematic summary," Richard Bulliet reasons, "the North Arabian saddle made possible new weaponry, which made possible a shift in the balance of military power in the desert, which made possible the seizure of control of the caravan trade by camel breeders, which made possible the social and economic integration of camel-breeding tribes into settled Middle Eastern society which made possible the replacement of the wheel by the pack camel."\(^{(14)}\) In fact, there is evidence to show that even before the Islamic Empire was established, transport was more economical by camel than by cart, by a factor of twenty percent, and the subsequent change in the socio-military balance of power, in favor of nomadism, simply accentuated the camel's superiority and hastened the demise of wheeled vehicles throughout the Empire. A [25] further technical improvement, the development of a pre-hump camel saddle by North African Berbers, also encouraged the commercial use of this animal, a movement which developed into the great trans-Saharan caravans of the high middle ages, to the detriment of the cart. The ascendancy of the camel should not obscure the role of the horse, for the Arab tribesman was as obsessed with the horse as was the European knight. Camel-breeding was minimally practiced in al-Andalus, whose warriors used horses: the huge stables maintained by the Caliph at Madina al-Zahrā' are an apt symbol. But horse-breeding, Bulliet points out, must be sustained by a higher degree of the nomads' integration with settled society than is needed to support a camel-based communication system: the needs of the horse for grain, and iron for bits and shoes require an urban-based economy.
Visigothic economic decline and disregard for roads doubtless led, in Bulliet's view, to a substantial decline in the use of carts before 711, in favor of pack mules, which continued to dominate land transport after the conquest. Muslims in Spain, then, did not use carts for overland transportation, although medieval Arab chronicles report an apparent anomaly: "Pseudo-Ibn Qutaiba" wrote that Mûsa ibn Nusayr had thirty carts made in Algeciras in which he loaded booty to be taken to the East, and al-Maqqarî also states that wheeled vehicles were used for transporting the booty. [15] If true, indigenous craftsmen would have constructed the carts because the technique had by then been lost among both Arabs and Berbers.

Merchants and other people traveling overland in the Islamic world rode donkeys or mules. If the journey was part by sea and part by land, a saddle was taken along and a donkey hired when the overland portion of the trip began. [16]

Travel in the middle ages was characterized both by its slowness, which had the effect of retarding all economic processes, and by its uncertainty. Distances, especially in maritime travel, were thought of in days, rather than in miles (by the common man; geographers reckoned in miles) and the time it took to traverse the same two points varied widely. The distance one could cover overland, riding an animal, ranged from 30 to 50 kilometers a day, the lower figure more realistically approaching the mean, in all probability. In the tenth century it took one week to travel from Algeciras to Córdoba. [17]

How permeable was the political frontier between Christian and [26] Islamic territory? The Islamic world, as we will observe, was a free trade area where one's place of origin was no bar to travel. Crossing a religious frontier, as in Spain, presented problems of a different nature. G. Menéndez Pidal takes the description in the Poem of the Cid of Doña Jimena's journey from the monastery of Cardeña in Castile, into Islamic territory at Medinaceli, through the domain of Abengalbón, to reach The Cid in Valencia, as indicative of the permeability of the political frontier. On this trip she was accompanied by armed knights who were known to the Muslim lords of the domains traversed. Clearly there was a selective factor in travel: it was easier for some people to cross the frontier than for others. In 1143 a French monk in Zaragoza wished to travel to Valencia but demurred, for fear of Muslims. He was advised that if he wanted to go to Valencia he had better go first to Santiago and join up with some merchants who would jointly pay for a safe-conduct. The entire journey was estimated at five weeks. In peacetime, one could conclude that the frontier was quite easily breached, especially in the interests of commerce. [18]

In overseas trade, land travel was conjoined with sea travel to form patterns with distinct seasonal rhythms. A crucial link to the East were the land caravans -- called mawsim, "season," because they departed at set times (late May, most typically, for the summer caravan) --traversing Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia (which was for most of the period the entrepôt between Andalus and eastern commerce), finally arriving in Egypt after a journey of two or three months. Caravans were of particular importance in the winter, when the sea was generally closed to shipping, and in the summer, when the rhythm of trade and travel picked up, to fill in between the more or less regular sailings of organized trading expeditions. Ships sailed in convoys, setting out in the spring and returning in the fall; the convoy from al-Andalus usually arrived in Egypt in late August or early September. [19] Merchants, in particular, preferred sea to overland travel: it was faster, surer, and less hazardous. This was true even when the distance involved was short. A man wanting to travel from Libya to Tunisia around 1140 was advised to accomplish this mission by taking a boat first to Seville and then proceeding to his destination. [20]

By the early twelfth century, a direct shipping route from Egypt to al-Andalus had been established -- between Seville and Alexandria, or Almería and Alexandria, the latter voyage taking sixty-five days, approximately, in the 1130's. A sailing from Tripoli to Seville took about eight [27] days with a favorable wind. From an eastern Spanish port, a Muslim pilgrim could gain Medina in as little as
twenty-five days, but many Andalusi pilgrims took up to a year to effect the trip.\(^{(21)}\)
The extreme mobility possible within the Mediterranean world gave it an undeniably cosmopolitan tone. A mid-eleventh-century letter records that its bearer, a Jew from Khurâsân (eastern Persia), had been extended the recommendation of the Gaon of Jerusalem, upon the advice of friends in Seville. In such an atmosphere, commuting back and forth between al-Andalus and the East was not in the least out of the ordinary. A Persian merchant would accompany his textile goods to al-Andalus; another Jewish merchant, from Badajoz, traded in Jerusalem and Syria. Political boundaries were no hindrance to travel, and discriminatory treatment of foreign travelers or merchants was held to be scandalous. For this reason, at the base of which was a notion of law that was personal and not territorial (persons were judged according to the laws of their religious community), S. D. Goitein characterizes the Islamic world of the eleventh and twelfth centuries as a free trade area, a kind of medieval common market. This communications network, shared by Christians and Jews as well as Muslims, was the palpable expression of the notion that there was "blessing in movement" (fi'l-harakabaraka), a value which had repercussions well beyond the strict domain of commerce\(^{(22)}\). The conquest that brought most of the Iberian peninsula into this world did not thereby exclude the Christian kingdoms. As Maurice Lombard suggested, the two points at either end of a given trade route ought not to be viewed as termini, but rather as foci of secondary diffusion, whence goods and ideas carried along those routes are further diffused \(^{(23)}\). While not minimizing the rural nature of Christian Spanish society in the high middle ages, one must also note that the contacts between the two sectors of the peninsula were conditioned by the inclusion of al-Andalus within this great network of open commercial and cultural communication.

### 3. The Collapse of the Visigothic State and the Islamic Conquest

The Visigothic state which the Muslims found such an easy victim was an ethnically stratified society, with a fragmented political structure, a depressed and unbalanced rural economy, and a town life which was rudimentary at best. These Goths (who also called themselves Thervings, or \[^{28}\] "People of the Woods") were a herding people who, entering the peninsula in the early sixth century, tended to settle in areas ecologically suited to their traditional economic pursuits. Thus the greatest concentration of Visigoths settled in a triangle traced by Palencia, Toledo, and Calatayud, with the densest settlement in the present province of Segovia, the Campi Goticl, or present-day Tierra de Campos. About 200,000 Goths ruled an indigenous population of about eight million Hispano-Romans as a military elite. The ethnic cleavage between German-speaking rulers and Latin-speaking subjects was heightened by religious difference; the Goths were Arian Christians who denied the divinity of Christ, while the Hispano-Roman majority was Catholic.

The separation of the two groups was supported institutionally by a dual administrative and legal system: each province had a Roman governor, who administered Roman law to the Hispano-Roman population, and Gothic officials (duke or \textit{dux} at the provincial level, count, \textit{comes civitatis}, at the town level), who dealt with infractions committed by Visigoths, according to German customary law, and who had some jurisdiction over Romans as well. There were invidious legal distinctions; intermarriage between Goths and Romans was forbidden until 652, when Recceswinth reformed the kingdom's administrative and legal system by abolishing Roman law and, with it, the dual system of justice. But this move, in the view of E. A. Thompson, rather than promoting the fusion of the two groups, served only to heighten ethnic tensions. By abolishing Roman law, the king had deprived the Hispano-Romans of their co-equal legal status and relegated them to second-class citizenship. Thompson's view controverts the generally accepted opinion that Recceswinth's reforms consolidated the moves toward fusion set in motion by the conversion of the Goths to Catholicism under Reccared a half century or so before.\(^{(24)}\) In terms of the dynamics of this kind of a stratified social system, with an elite minority
ruling a majority of a different ethnic group, Thompson's version is doubtless correct. The Goths, having converted, for political reasons, to the majority religion, reacted to the competition afforded by the Catholic elite and feared being engulfed by the sheer numbers of Hispano-Romans. Having done away with one of the deepest cleavages between the groups by conversion, they had to sharpen lines of socio-economic differentiation, and this could not be accomplished while the Romans retained the legal safeguards of a separate administrative system. Once that system was abolished, the Romans had to play according to rules set by the Gothic elite, who had the military and economic power (a system tending toward a "feudal" model). Thus, paradoxically, the religious and legal merger of the two peoples proved only fictive; the intense stratification of the society along ethnic lines was reinforced rather than diminished, to the point where distinctions between Romans and Goths persisted even after the Islamic conquest. At the same time, the political structure of Visigothic society manifested distinct disintegrative tendencies, as the dukes tended to make their provinces increasingly autonomous units which they were able to control tightly by granting land to their own vassals in return for loyalty and military service.

Little is known of the agrarian economy of Visigothic times, except that an economic division of labor further distinguished the two peoples: the Goths were herders (their law code, the *Forum Iudicum* -- *Fuero Juzgo* in Castilian - contains specifications regulating herds dating from the sixth or seventh centuries) and the Romans stereotyped them as crude and ignorant, the last people to learn writing, much in the same way as Arabs were later to portray the Berbers, another herding people. The Hispano-Romans followed the general pattern of Mediterranean agriculture: cereal grains (wheat and barley), grapes, and vegetables grown in irrigated fields in the Ebro Valley and the Eastern littoral. What is clear is that the entire economy was in a state of profound disarray and agriculture was ruined as result of a series of natural disasters beginning in the seventh century. Perhaps we can accept at the root of this string of bad harvests, famine, and plague Ignacio Olagüe's theory of a general climatic shift in the western Mediterranean world, beginning in the third century A.D. which had the result of making the climate drier and hotter and which reached crisis proportions in the high middle ages, forcing a greater dependence on irrigation agriculture in North Africa and Spain. Medieval chronicles noted famine and plague in the reign of Erwig (680-686), when half the population was said to have perished. Plagues of locusts were reported. There can be no doubt that the constant political turmoil of late-seventh- and early-eighth-century Spain take on more poignant meaning if set against a background of worsening harvests, prolonged drought, famine, and depopulation. Moreover, it makes more intelligible the shift in the balance of peninsular agriculture, away from dry-farming and herding, towards an increased reliance on irrigated crops, during the Islamic period. Islamic society in Spain was able to adjust to an arid ecology by directing the flow of economic resources into the technological adjustments required to increase irrigated acreage, whereas the Visigoths understood only a herding, forest ecology and could not adjust to any other.

If the agrarian economy was in decay, the same can be said of the urban economy and of commerce. Visigothic trade was largely in the hands of Jews, who formed a numerous minority, and foreigners. When economic recession set in, Jews were blamed and a regressive cycle of restrictive anti-Jewish legislation could only have led to more disruptions of trade. The barbarian invasions were further responsible for the physical ruin of much of the urban plant built by the Romans. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that when the Muslim invaders arrived in 711 many Hispano-Roman cities were already largely buried in subsoil. In such conditions, it is not surprising that Roman municipal institutions failed to survive the Visigothic domination.

The economic regressiveness of Visigothic Spain is well illustrated by the failure of the Goths to carry on the vast mining enterprise begun by the Romans, who removed from Iberian pits a wide variety of
metals, including silver, gold, iron, lead, copper, tin, and cinnabar, from which mercury is made. The relative insignificance of mining in Visigothic Spain is attested to by the winnowing of the full account given by Pliny to the meager details supplied by Isidore of Seville, who omits any mention, for example, of iron deposits in Cantabria. The most important Roman mines have lost their Latin names, generally yielding to Arabic ones -- as in Almadén and Aljustrel -- probably an indication of their quiescence during the Visigothic period and their revival by the Muslims. The Goths may have allowed their nomadic foraging instinct to direct their utilization of metal resources. In some areas mined by the Romans they probably scavenged for residual products of abandoned shafts that remained unworked, and metal for new coinage seems largely to have been provided by booty captured from enemies or from older coins fleeced from taxpayers.\( \text{(30)} \)

Thus the failure of the Visigothic state, seen in its unbalanced economy, as well as in its disjointed and incohesive social organization, was also reflected in its technological atony, which was at the core of the elite's inability to adapt to any ecology other than that with which it was originally familiar: the men of the woods never strayed too far from there. They were unable to build on the Roman base. In 483 the duke Salla repaired \[31\] the Roman bridge at Mérida; yet in 711 the Arabs found the bridge at Córdoba in ruins, just as Mûsa ibn Nusayr was said to have found the Roman-built irrigation systems in disuse. \( \text{(31)} \)

Receptiveness to technological innovation and intellectual creativity in general are linked, the former more clearly than the latter, to general economic conditions. Thus Antonio Ubieto cites the Etymologies, the encyclopedic work of Isidore of Seville, written in the early seventh century, as a typical expression of the state of culture in a depressed economy. Although Ubieto's generalization that encyclopedias are written in moments of cultural stagnation may be overdrawn, his characterization seems a valid enough observation on the Etymologies. When referring to mining, Isidore seems scarcely to understand the technologies involved. \( \text{(32)} \)

However reduced its straits and confined its visions, Visigothic culture was not, for that, totally isolated. It is tempting to see the Islamic conquest as the act which placed Iberia back into the mainstream of "world" civilization -- in Toynbee's fanciful and hyperbolic characterization, a re-trieval of the peninsula, once Punic in his view, for "Syriac society." But, as Jocelyn Hillgarth notes, Visigothic Spain had succeeded North Africa as the seat of ancient and Christian letters and in Isidore's time had many cultural and artistic links with the Byzantine East, as well as with the pre-feudal societies of Merovingian France, Ireland, and Britain. \( \text{(33)} \)

The immediate result of the Islamic conquest, however, was to intensify greatly the relations of the peninsula with the lands encompassed in the Islamic Empire and to reduce, but by no means terminate, relations with lands to the north -- or perhaps, more accurately, such relations with Christian Europe were channeled selectively. Direct commercial contacts never ceased; intellectual and artistic contacts were achieved by more subtle and circuitous means.

The conquest of 711, staged in Morocco and carried out mainly by Berber horse cavalry under Arab command, is, for a phenomenon of such transcendence, poorly understood. Its most salient actors, half-legendary, half-real, conquered nearly the entire peninsula and subjugated its massive population in a matter of five years and without much resistance. The old legend has it that the last Visigothic king, Roderick, had forced the daughter of Count Julian, Byzantine governor of Ceuta, a casus belli which led to Julian's asking for Muslim help in coming to the aid of Roderick's domestic enemies. It was relatively common, of course, for medieval people to explain social and political phenomena whose motives \( \text{(32)} \) were incomprehensible to them by imputing events to the personal quirks of one leader or another. In any case, according to Arabic and Christian sources alike, after a small reconnoitering expedition led by Tarîf in the summer of 710, a party of 7,000 Berbers under the command of Târiq ibn
Ziyād landed near Gibraltar (Jabal Târiq, "Târiq's mountain") on or about April 28, 711. Târiq then occupied the area around Algeciras, sent a request for 5,000 additional troops to the governor of Islamic North Africa, Mûsa ibn Nusayr, and proceeded along the Roman road towards Seville. Meanwhile Roderick, away in the north fighting Basque rebels, hastened southward, gathering a host of "100,000" men. The two armies did battle on the banks of the Guadalete between July 19 and 23, resulting in an Islamic victory and the rout of the Visigothic army, capped by the death of Roderick.\(^{(24)}\)

Most of the elements of this story are unbelievable. In the past century the Dutch Islamist, R. Dozy, who believed these accounts to be as legendary as the *Thousand and One Nights*, noted that many of the elements in early reports of the conquest of Spain (written by writers living in Egypt) simply repeated old traditions having nothing to do with the Iberian peninsula. Later embellishments were added by Christian chroniclers, drawing upon Biblical traditions decidedly apocalyptic in character.\(^{(35)}\)

Julian was more likely a Goth than a Byzantine governor of Ceuta, bearing a generic name, *comes julianus*, the count of Julia Traducta (the Roman name for Tarifa). Tarîf, it seems clear, was an eponymous name concocted to explain the origin of the town of Tarifa. Târlq, too, seems to have been an eponymous figure whose name simply meant "chief," according to Joaquin Vallvé.\(^{(36)}\)

Nor does Vallvé accept the view that the crucial battle took place on the banks of the Guadalete, but places the site farther south, near the port of entry, near Gibraltar on the banks of the Guadarranque, a name which perhaps means Roderick's River (Wad al-Rinq).\(^{(37)}\) Why did "Târiq" wait for three months in order to march northward to meet the Gothic army? His forces must have numbered substantial horse cavalry to have defeated an army many times larger. If we take the accepted number of troops and boats given by Arabic sources, it is clear that a force of 10,000 to 15,000 men could not have crossed the straits in less than three months.\(^{(38)}\)

The conquest of Spain appears to have been a walk-through. After the first decisive battle, few more challenges of any serious dimension arose. The Muslim columns followed the Roman roads, obtaining the surrenders of key towns, and in many cases leaving Jewish garrisons behind. In most cases, the Muslims demanded full submission to their authority, although in some cases pacts were made with Visigothic lords, guaranteeing them substantial autonomy. Such was the case of the arrangement made with Theodomir in the Murcian district (later called by the Arabs Tudmir, after its former leader), whose early administration therefore probably continued a pattern of local autonomy prominent in late Visigothic times.

4. The Curve of Conversion

The easy conquest of the peninsula is generally assumed by historians to have been followed by a rapid Islamization of the indigenous population, although the evidence for such an assertion is wholly inferential. It must be assumed that the process of conversion to Islam was guided by the same mechanisms that were operative in other societies newly conquered by the Arabs. Based on a study of naming patterns among converts to Islam, Richard Bulliet has described a general process of conversion which he believes to have been the norm in all medieval Islamic societies conquered by the Arabs.\(^{(39)}\)

The essence of Bulliet's hypothesis, based upon common notions of innovation diffusion, is that the rate of conversion to Islam is logarithmic, and may be illustrated graphically by a logistic curve. That is, few adopt the innovation at first, but, as more do, the probability of others following suit increases. In the case of conversion to Islam, the greater the number of Muslims, the greater the probability of contact between Muslims and non-Muslims, and hence of the conversion of the latter. This is a selfgenerating process and the rate of conversion increases without the necessity of any specific social or political policies, or of *any* factor extrinsic to the process.
It follows from this analysis that in Umayyad times Islam was a "smallscale affair" characterized by the rule of vast non-Muslim populations by a tiny Arab elite for whose social and political needs traditional Arab tribal structure was sufficient. Arabs, and therefore Islam itself, was first concentrated in the towns, and the early chronicles reflect this urban Arab milieu.

At the moment when the logistic curve begins to rise precipitously, there begins an explosive period of conversion during which most of the previously unconverted population turns Muslim. When the conversion process is completed, Bulliet reckons that eighty percent of the original indigenous population converted, with the remaining twenty percent still unconverted, with the status of protected religious minorities.

A number of distinctive social phenomena are associated with this process (although the emergence and sequencing of such phenomena differed from society to society). In the first place, the kind of social movements that attracted converts differed in style and content, depending on whether the converts were a minority or a majority. Millenarian revolutionary movements which attracted converts under the Arab state declined in appeal as the density of the convert population increased and as "old" converts entered the power structure. During the explosive period of conversion, when the composition of society was changing rapidly, abrupt political and social changes occurred within a matter of decades. When the great mass of indigenous people had become Muslim, the kind of society that emerged was radically different from that of the Arab state of the past. Society had become distinctively Muslim, with institutions that reflected the social needs of a majority Muslim population. This was a more self-assured society, able to assert its independence within the Islamic world. Nevertheless, social distinctions arose between "old" and "new" converts, the former typically associating themselves with orthodox religious positions, the latter with movements such as Ash'arism and Sufism.

Bulliet's description of the conversion process, while admittedly a hypothesis, provides a compelling framework for analyzing the dynamics of social, political, and cultural change in the emergent Islamic societies of the middle ages and, at the same time, offers a standard by which to assess such developments in any one Islamic society in comparative perspective.

In the following section, and throughout the book where appropriate, I will attempt to show how Bulliet's hypothesis sharpens and clarifies a number of episodes and phenomena of Andalusi history which are thus far poorly understood. The logistic curve for al-Andalus is reproduced, from Bulliet's data, in Figure 1. The rate of conversion is slow until the tenth century (less than one-quarter of the eventual total number of converts had been converted); the explosive period coincides closely with the reign of 'Abd al-Rahmdn III (912-961); the process is completed (eighty percent converted) by around 1100. The curve, moreover, makes possible a reasonable estimate of the religious distribution of the population. Assuming that there were seven million Hispano-Romans in the peninsula in 711 and that the numbers of this segment of the population remained level through the eleventh century (with population growth balancing out Christian migration to the north), then by 912 there would have been approximately 2.8 million indigenous Muslims (muwalladûn) plus Arabs and Berbers. At this point Christians still vastly outnumbered Muslims. By 1100, however, the number of indigenous Muslims would have risen to a majority of 5.6 million.

5. The Arab State from Province to Caliphate

The history of Islamic Spain through the tenth century may be conveniently divided into two phases: (1) a period of adjustment extending from around 715, when a governor (wâlî) was appointed and the newly captured territory began to be organized as a province of the Umayyad caliphate of Damascus, until the mid-ninth century, at which time the governmental apparatus was reorganized to bring it into line with a society that had grown vastly more complex since the inception of Arab rule; and (2) a period of consolidation, marked by the growing power and wealth of al-Andalus, culminating in the
establishment of the caliphate of Córdoba by 'Abd al-Rahmân III, and terminating with the dissolution of the governmental system in the decade 1000-1010. The reign of the emir 'Abd al-Rahmân II (822-852) was a critical epoch of transition, when it was recognized that a higher level of socio-economic organization, the consequence of the rapid pace of urbanization and a change in the scale of the economy, called for a more complex and sophisticated administrative response on the part of the rulers. This apparent lack of fit between Umayyad models and a socio-economic structure that had changed radically from the time of the state's inception called forth a wide-ranging change in values and a broadening of cultural horizons, without, however, altering the basic social structure of an Arab elite ruling a mass of unconverted Christians.

As was true on other frontiers of the Islamic empire, expansion continued until brought to a halt by a combination of enemy resistance, the overextension of supply lines, and the steady attrition of fighting forces as units were assigned to garrison duty in newly captured towns. It is also true that the resistance met by the Islamic columns in southern France was the result not only of a military organization superior to that which they had faced in Spain, but also of a lack of the kind of popular support or at least indifference that facilitated the rapid conquest of the peninsula. Ibn Khaldûn understood this process well when he remarked that there is a relationship between the extent of land a dynasty can occupy and the numbers of people who support it. (40)

Muslim troops had gained the eastern Pyrenees within the first decade of Islamic rule in the peninsula, when Barcelona, Gerona, and Narbonne had been captured. In 719 a Muslim column struck out in the direction of Toulouse. The threat was kept alive until 732, when, in October, Charles Martel defeated an Islamic host under the wali 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Ghâfiqî near Poitiers, a battle often said to have marked a turning point in European history, but which, in the context of the times, was probably just another border skirmish. Indeed, the Muslims held on in southern France until Pepin the Short recaptured Narbonne in 751.

The effect of all this activity in the Frankish sector detracted the attention of the walis from a difficult situation in northwest Spain. The mountains of Galicia had been thinly settled by Berber tribesmen -- whether by traditional predilection or by design of the Arab leadership, Berbers [37] throughout the peninsula tended to be settled in the mountains, while the lowland, much of it irrigated, was held by the Arabs and worked by Neo-Muslim or Christian tenants. In 740 these Berbers had joined with others settled on the lower slopes of the Cantabrian mountains and in the Sierra de Guadarrama, in a general rebellion against the walis, probably linked to North African Khârijism, an egalitarian movement opposed to Arab domination of the Islamic state. It is likely that Khârijite ideology merely supplied a rallying cry for disaffection born of the more homely suffering caused by the failure of pastures to support the herds. The Berbers were quelled by a newly arrived force of 7,000 Syrian Arabs under Balj ibn Bishr in the autumn of 741. Balj not only defeated the Berber dissidents but took control of the state himself, initiating a new round of tribal infighting amongst northern (Qaysî) and southern (Kalbî or Yemeni) Arabs. Yemenis outnumbered Qaysîs in the new province, but when a strong pro-Qaysî wali emerged in the figure of Yûsuf al-Fihîrî (ruled 747-756), they tried to forge alliances with Berbers in the hope of unseating their mutual enemy.

The tribal, ethnic, and social conflicts in al-Andalus during this period (which will be analyzed in later chapters) were characteristic of a process of adjustment in which the diverse groups thrown together by the circumstances of the conquest were not so much trying to destroy a state, but rather to create one, through a process of mutual accommodation and adjustment, increasingly mediated and, to an extent, manipulated by the Arab elites who composed the central government.

In 750 a disastrous drought (which Olagüe sees as the final phase of a climatic pulsation that began around 680) (41) causing famine in extensive areas of the peninsula, but particularly the central and
northwestern regions, induced the Berbers of Galicia to return to their North African homeland. At this point Galicia was annexed to the kingdom of Asturias, and the Muslims did not make any serious attempt to settle the lands north of the Duero River.

During the early years of Islamic domination, the Muslims were able, in most of the peninsula, to consolidate their rule rapidly, even though the historical commentary tends to dwell upon the constant tribal fighting among Arabs. At one point, the Caliph 'Umar II was said to have written to the wali al-Samh (719-721), suggesting that the Muslims abandon Spain because of their tenuous numerical position there. Al-Samh replied that in fact Islam was widespread and that Muslims formed a large part [38] of the population, an obviously anachronistic account in view of the minimal possibilities for native exposure to Muslims at this early date.

By the time the Syrian junds under Balj's command were ready to settle down in the 740's, there had already arisen a distinction between Arab newcomers and the veterans of early campaigns. These latter, particularly those who had arrived before 716, were referred to as baladiyyûn or ahl al-balad ("people of the country," equivalent to "natives").[42] The social and legal status of these baladiyyûn is significant, for they had already ceased to receive the military pension ('atâ') and were paying the normal tithe ('ushr) paid by all Muslims. This transit, from soldier to settler, is the best indication that permanent settlement had replaced military occupation as the goal of the conquerors. In contrast, Balj's troops continued to receive the pension. This early phase of consolidation was capped by the seizure of power in 756 by 'Abd al-Rahmân I (called al-Dâkhîl, "The Immigrant"), an Umayyad prince who had fled the 'Abbâsid revolution in the East, seeking refuge in the North African homeland of his mother, a Nafza Berber. The Umayyads had many supporters in al-Andalus, notably among the troops of Balj, who had been settled in the south and east of the country. These were Yemeni Arabs, embittered under the rule of Yûsuf al-Fihrî, and they were easily persuaded to join ranks behind the new leader, as emir of a restored Umayyad state, independent of the Caliphate.

'Abd al-Rahmân I's policy was to stabilize the regime, first, by attracting masses of Umayyad supporters from Syria to Córdoba, where they soon constituted a new elite, and, second, by dealing severely with dissidence at home. In the 760's he faced two uprisings by Yemeni Arabs, the first one under ostensible 'Abbâsid patronage, and a more serious challenge from the Miknâsa Berber Shakya, who harassed Umayyad columns from mountain strongholds between 768-776.[43] Dissidence in Zaragoza became involved with international politics when the Muslim governor there plotted against 'Abd al-Rahmân along with an 'Abbâsid envoy, finally calling upon Charlemagne for help. The Frankish king besieged Zaragoza in 778 when the governor's subjects refused to open the city to him and retired in failure when news of a rebellion in Saxony reached him. As the Frankish army returned to France, Basque guerrillas fell upon its rear guard at the pass of Roncesvalles, providing the kernel for the much embellished Song of Roland. The failure of Charlemagne's campaign doubtless took a psychological [39] toll on the Christians, for it is only after 778 that we hear of Hispani -- Christian refugees from al-Andalus -- fleeing northward to seek asylum in Frankish lands.

Under 'Abd al-Rahmân's son Hishâm I (788-796), who undertook summer campaigns against the kingdom of Asturias, and his grandson al-Hakam I (796-822), the work of pacification continued. Al-Hakam I's reign was troubled by dissidence on the part of the Neo-Muslim majority. One pocket of resistance in Toledo was wiped out in 797 when the Umayyads engineered a banquet of Neo-Muslim dignitaries, whose severed heads landed in the moat ("Day of the Ditch"). Another rebellion in which Neo-Muslims participated, along with Christian elements, was the Revolt of Suburb, referring to an artisan district of Córdoba where a plot to dethrone the emir was concocted by fanatical religious leaders in 805. Al-Hakam finally unleashed his troops in the Suburb, which he had razed. Those who were not killed were exiled from the city-- as many as 20,000 people. Most left the
country, one group establishing the "Andalusi" quarter of Fez and another sailing east and establishing itself on the isle of Crete.

Al-Hakam left his son 'Abd al-Rahmân II a pacified but disgruntled kingdom. Because of the general calm at home, the emir was able to mount attacks against Alfonso II of Asturias and against the Franks as well, although he had to face a major Berber and Neo-Muslim revolt in the Mérida region in 828. During the reign of 'Abd al-Rahmân II (822-852), al-Andalus emerged as one of a number of centers of independent power, as the 'Abbâsid state began to disintegrate. 'Abd al-Rahmân II's reign also coincided with the breaking of Byzantine naval power in 827. Although it is probable that direct trade with the East had never ceased, due to a tacit alliance between the Byzantines and the Umayyad emirs against the Franks, the opening of the eastern Mediterranean at this time set in motion a great commercial movement which was to spur the growth of al-Andalus into a wealthy state and to promote the rapid development of its major towns, particularly Córdoba and Seville.

The administrative apparatus of the garrison state which, following Umayyad practices, stressed a decentralized form of political control whereby substantial authority was vested in the town governors, was inadequate to meet the needs of a wealthier, more complex society. Thus it happened that at the moment of greatest tension with the 'Abbâsid state, 'Abd al-Rahmân II initiated an administrative overhaul designed to [40] organize the country's institutions and economy along 'Abbâsid lines. This led centralizing political power by concentrating it in the person of the emir, ruling through a tightly controlled hierarchical central bureaucracy, in which the treasury was the key bureau and, at the same time, by joining political with economic control (expressed in the establishment of state monopolies and in the control of urban markets).

Toward the end of this reign and continuing into that of his son Muhammad I (852-886), the government had to deal with an outbreak of voluntary martyrdoms among the Christians (Mozarabs) of Córdoba. On the whole, this difficult situation was handled with restraint, although the execution of the Christian leadership was a factor that influenced many Mozarabs to emigrate to the Asturo-Leonese kingdom. Muhammad's reign, except for an initial challenge by the perpetually rebellious Toledans (in 854, with participation of an Asturian force sent by Ordoño I) was peaceable, characterized, perhaps, by the consolidation and extension of the bureaucratic norms introduced by his father.

The reign of 'Abd Allâh (888-912, following the two-year reign of al-Mundhir) witnessed what is usually described as anarchy, the near dissolution of the polity under a series of repeated and sustained rebellions. The most serious of the thirty or so that the emir had to deal with was that of the Neo-Muslim 'Umar ibn Hafsûn, who first raised the standard of revolt in 879 in the mountains of Ronda. Ibn Hafsûn was a popular hero who built his support on Neo-Muslim resentment of the Cordoban Arab elite and transformed it into a huge territorial enclave stretching from Murcia to Algeciras in the south, and, on the north, from Ecija to Ubeda. Ibn Hafsûn and his sons held out for nearly fifty years. (The social basis of this and contemporaneous revolts will be analyzed in Chapter 5.) In this period the ethnic focus of rebellion had passed from the Berbers to the Neo-Muslims, whose protest must be placed within the context of the curve of conversion. If the explosive phase had begun in the last quarter of the ninth century (somewhat earlier than Bulliet's projection), the great numbers of recent converts might explain ibn Hafsûn's power. More likely, the fitna of the ninth century was the last protest of old converts whose social situation would change radically and suddenly with the appearance of masses of new converts.

The tenth century witnessed the height of Andalusi fame, power, and wealth under three strong rulers, the first of whom was 'Abd al-Allâhs grandson, 'Abd al-Rahmân III, called al-Nâsir ("The Victorious"). He [41] immediately embarked upon a campaign of pacification, spending the early part of his reign wearing down ibn Hafsûn and other rebels. By the 920's internal conditions had stabilized to the point where he was able to bring pressure upon the Christian kingdoms, sacking Pamplona and inflicting
heavy losses on the Basque troops of Sancho Garcés of Navarre in 924. At the same time, he began a
gvigorous offensive and defensive campaign against the Fatimids, whose navy controlled the
Mediterranean. He had strengthened his coastal defenses and interdicted the possible flow of troops or
materiel directed from North African ports towards ibn Hafsûn's rebels, and in 927 and 931 took the
North African strongholds of Melilla and Ceuta, respectively, to serve as advanced posts against the
Fatimids.

To underline this opposition to Fatimid power and to strengthen further his internal position, 'Abd al-
Rahmân adopted the title of Caliph in 929, a decision dictated by power politics but based in the
family's conviction that Umayyads had a stronger right to the caliphal dignity than either 'Abbâsids or
Fatimids. The fact that at the same time al-Andalus was in the process of becoming a society with a
Muslim majority lent social substance to this decision.

The Caliph now became a grand and distant figure, and, after ruling a quarter of a century, he began to
build a palace-city, Madînat al-Zahrâ', outside of Córdoba. He ruled through a hierarchy of slaves and
began to import Berber mercenaries to bolster Umayyad military efforts on the northern frontier. 'Abd
al-Rahmân died at the height of his power and was succeeded by another strong caliph, the scholarly al-
Hakam II (961-976).

Al-Hakam continued to press the Christian kingdoms with constant raids, keeping his militia strong and
dynamic through the continued importation of Berber soldiers, and in the early 970's received
continuous embassies from the king of Navarre, the regent of León, and the counts of Castile, Galicia,
and Barcelona, who came to render homage and tribute before the dazzling strength of the greatest
power in Europe.

His death induced a dynastic crisis, leaving the country under the rule of a boy, Hishâm II, but in the
actual power of the hâjib (chamberlain), Muhammad ibn Abî 'Amir, known as al-Mansûr (the terror-
inspiring Almanzor of the Christian chronicles). Al-Mansûr had worked his way up through the state
bureaucracy, gaining tremendous popularity among the masses of Córdoaba during his tenure as Prefect
of the City, when he [42] brought urban crime to a standstill. As hâjib he continued to scourge Christian
territory, his raids culminating in the sack of Santiago de Cornpostela in 997, when he razed the
cathedral and carried off its bells to Córdoba. When he died while returning from his last campaign in
1002 he seemingly left the state in a strong position. But his military strength was gained at the expense
doing the ethnic balance of power upon which the state's political foundations rested. He
professionalized the army by detribalizing it (forcing Arabs into mixed units without regard to tribe or
place of origin) and by injecting into it large numbers of newly recruited Berber regulars. The coming
apart of this structure (discussed in Chapter 6) was prefigured in the changing ethnic and religious
balance of power.

Taking the period as a whole, we have seen al-Andalus evolve from a garrison state built on a delicate
balance of tribal and ethnic factions, united in a highly decentralized administrative system, an apt
instrument for managing this kind of plural society with deep cultural and social cleavages.
Centralization and unification became possible in the ninth century, when the burgeoning economies of
the great southern cities gave the emir the financial power to underwrite a tighter system of
administrative and economic control. It then became possible to narrow some of the cleavages, which
brought new tensions. The political success of the Caliphate seems to have been based, first, on its
economic success, and, second, on creating a climate for the fusing of Neo-Muslim and Arab elements.
With the emergence of a mass Muslim society, its usefulness was at an end.

6. The Christian North to A.D. 1000

During the same period the pace of change in the Christian zones was much slower, obeying different
socio-economic imperatives. Fragmented, rural, disorganized in the eighth century, by the end of the
tenth the Christian kingdoms had consolidated themselves into distinctive political entities, in which forms of social and agrarian life had evolved which provided the basis for the later expansion and development of those states.

But in A.D. 1000, we are still dealing with a static agrarian society, practically without cities, and dependent in a number of ways on the Islamic economic system. In the eighth century it is possible to distinguish broadly between three zones, differing from one another in social organization and culture. In [43] the west was Galicia, where continuity of settlement had been unbroken from late Roman times and where elements of Roman social organization (a noble elite and servile peasantry) survived. In the center, a continuous mountain belt, from the Cantabrian system in the west to the Pyrenees, was populated by Cantabrian and Basque mountaineers, who also represented an ancient tradition, one of hostility to the power centers of the peninsula. In the extreme east was the future Catalonia, an area only lightly garrisoned by the Muslims and which in the early ninth century came into the orbit of Carolingian political power and social organization.

Before the famine of 750, with Berbers occupying the mountains of southern Galicia, the Muslims' northern line of defense in the central zone followed a line extending eastward from Saldaña in the present province of Palencia, to Amaya, Miranda de Ebro (Burgos province), and Cenicero. This line, on the southern slopes of the Cantabrian range, was basically that which the Visigoths had fortified against the Vascones and, farther west, the Cantabri (called Astures from the sixth century on). These mountain folk practiced a relatively primitive, unspecialized herding economy and had resisted Romanization and urbanization in late Imperial times. (The intensity of Romanization was strongest in Galicia, and diminished moving eastward: the Cantabri were more Romanized than the Basques of the western and central Pyrenees, who began to speak Romance and become Christian only in the sixth and seventh centuries.)

The resistance offered by these mountaineers to Roman culture is one of the most striking phenomena of late imperial Hispania. During the barbarian invasions, Salvian wrote, the majority of the Hispani sided with the Barbarians, "not wishing to be Roman." The Visigoths in turn were unable to reduce the territory or its inhabitants to submission. The social structure of these mountainous areas was quite distinct from the rest of the country captured by the Muslims. There were few large estates, a majority of freemen, and scant class differentiation, in contradistinction to the sharply stratified social structure of the Visigothic kingdom. These free men had ample motive to defend their freedom against a new invader.

It is tempting to see, in the early eighth century, a generalized phenomenon of the filling up of abandoned Visigothic niches in central and northwestern regions of one herding people by another. The flight of Visigoths to the mountains would have reinforced and introduced greater organization into the herding economies there. The early armed struggles [44] between Gothic remnants and Muslim garrisons may have been related to competition between the two groups over pastures that were greatly diminished owing to prolonged drought. (Herders were not the only refugees to flee the Muslims, of course; dry-farmers from the central meseta also fled northward and influenced the agrarian regimes there.)

Thus, in analyzing the origins of the "Reconquest," one must depart, not from the revival of the Visigothic tradition, fomented by the Gothic elite of the Asturian kingdom, but rather from the continuing, traditional stance of fierce independence of the mountain peoples towards whoever was in control in the south. Indeed the very notion of a re-conquest involves from a historiographical perspective a number of anachronisms and anomalies. The notion which subsequently became enshrined in Christian ideology, particularly as a concomitant of emerging ethnic differentiation among Christian groups that they, as successors of the Goths, were re-conquering al-Andalus, involves a
cultural misapprehension: namely, that those who lost Spain and those who gained it later were identical in culture.

The medieval legend of the origins of the "Reconquest," interwoven with Neo-Gothic strains, places the birth of the movement of resistance at Covadonga, where in 722 a small group of Christians under Pelayo, a Gothic noble, defeated a Muslim column. The richly embroidered account of this skirmish, as it appears in the Chronicle of Alfonso III, reports the death of 25,000 Muslim soldiers, their ranks broken by divine intervention, which caused their missiles to fly back against them. The account given by Arabic chronicles is scarcely more accurate, describing Pelayo's band "thirty wild donkeys" but nevertheless takes note that Pelayo was the ancestor of the Banû Alfonso, traditional enemies of al-Andalus.

Indeed, Pelayo's grandson Alfonso I (739-757) had carved out a small principality in the mountains of Asturias, with its capital in Oviedo, and he began the first tentative steps towards expansion into areas abandoned during the drought of 748-753 by Berbers, or those which had not been completely abandoned but only thinly garrisoned. Later Arabic sources state that the Muslims might have been conquered at this point, had not the Christians also been preoccupied with staving off hunger. Moreover, the last walis, as noted above, were more interested in the northeastern sector, which held the promise of booty from Frankish towns of the Midi, than they were in the poverty-stricken northwest.

In the middle part of the century the Duero Valley became more or less totally depopulated and came to constitute a no-man's land between the Asturian kingdom and al-Andalus. Around 756, the last year of Alfonso I's reign and the first of that of 'Abd al-Rahmân I, the Christian line (including the buffer zone) followed the course of the Duero from its mouth to Osma and then turned northward, extending into the Basque country. The Islamic frontier (about which more will be said in Chapter 2), representing the line up to which permanent settlement was encouraged, ran from somewhat north of Coimbra in the west, through Coria, Talavera, and Toledo, then swinging north to encompass Guadalajara, Tudela, and Pamplona. The Chronicle of Alfonso III, a twelfth-century document, reports that Alfonso I captured thirty towns (including Lugo, Astorga, Zamora, Avila, and Segovia) from the Muslims and then withdrew, taking back Christian inhabitants of those places along with him to Asturias, leaving a "desert" (yermo) behind him.

It is probable that the drought more than the king was responsible for the depopulation of the Duero Valley, where in any case at least scattered nuclei of herding folk must have remained. Nevertheless, there was a movement of population northward which lent demographic weight to Alfonso I's nascent kingdom and provided new nuclei of settlement which acted to diffuse Christianity among the Basques.

A more organized effort at expansion southward was begun in the reign of Alfonso II (791-842), during which time the mountain people began to move down onto the plain to begin small agrarian settlements in what were to become León and Castile, the first stage of which (ca. 800835) involved the settlement of the headwaters of the Ebro River (Miranda de Ebro, Mena Valley). Under Ordoño I (850-866) the focus shifts westward; the King was said to have directed the settlement of the deserted towns of León, Astorga, Tuy, and Amaya with people fleeing al-Andalus. Farther to the east, settlers moved across the Ebro and fortified a line extending from Amaya to Oca.

Under Alfonso III (866-911) the pace of settlement had to be slowed down somewhat, for want of sufficient density of population in the newly settled areas to permit further expansion. Both Alfonso II and Alfonso III attempted to recreate the image of the Visigothic monarchy, by reestablishing the ecclesiastic structure of Visigothic times and by attempting to model their rudimentary royal
administration after the more highly developed Gothic model.

In Castile, the line of settlement advanced to the river Arlanza in 870 [46], and to the Arlanzón in the 890's, reaching the Duero in the early tenth century. Here the effort rested during the apogee of Islamic power.

Several points should be made about the progress of expansion in the northwest up to 1000. First, the rate of settlement was determined largely by population density; the Duero line was reached in Portugal fifty years before it was in Castile, because Galicia had a surplus population of settlers, ready to move southward to colonize new lands. Castile, on the other hand, was chronically underpopulated. Second, the expansion of the Christians did not involve the capture of a single town from the Muslims (the only land actually captured during this period was the Upper Rioja in the 920's) . By the end of the century the entire region had but one town worthy of the name, León, with a population of only a few thousand.

Farther east, Sancho Garcés I of Navarre (905-925) was able to capture Pamplona and fortify a long line of forts in the foothills of the Pyrenees, after the decline of the powerful Banû Qasî clan made such an advance possible. But no further advances were registered during the tenth century, as 'Abd al-Rahmân III was able to turn the Navarrese back in a series of campaigns in the 920's.

In the eastern Pyrenees a number of mountain counties had taken shape under Frankish patronage (Sobrarbe, Ribagorza, Pallars). The Franks had pushed the Muslims out of Barcelona in 801 and stabilized the frontier somewhat to the south. The future Catalonia remained within the Frankish orbit until the Carolingian collapse of the mid-ninth century made it possible for the southern counts to establish independent hereditary dynasties. In the 870's Guifred the Hairy, a descendant of the Gothic count Borrell of Ausona, had established his family's control over the counties of Barcelona, Gerona, and the mountain territories of Urgell, Cerdaña, and Conflent. In a movement analogous to the settlement of the Duero Valley, the plain of Vich was settled, beginning under Guifred's direction in the closing years of the ninth century and continuing into the middle of the tenth. By A.D. 1000 the pale of settlement had extended south of Barcelona into the Panadés and west to Segarra.

7. The Eleventh-Century Reversal: Causes and Consequences

The eleventh century, the most critical and significant of the Spanish middle ages, witnessed a change of sign in the peninsular balance of power. After the death of al-Mansûr, the Caliphate of Córdoba, still the strongest power in Europe, collapsed in ruins in a matter of years. After a period of struggle and shifting power relations (the fitna or anarchy of 1008-1031) the unitary Islamic state was replaced by a shifting constellation of two dozen or so small states, ruled by the so-called Party Kings (mulûk al-tawâ’if). [50]

The Christian countries were then able to take quick advantage of the fragmentation of Islamic power, by first establishing their suzerainty over the Party Kings by exacting tribute and then by renewing the conquest of Islamic territory. In the central and eastern regions the movement began in 1045, when García de Nájera, king of Navarre, captured Calahorra, starting a penetration of the Ebro Valley, and ended with the capture of Tortosa (1148) and Lérida (1149) by the count of Barcelona, Ramón Berenguer. In the west, significant advances were made by Alfonso VI of Castile, beginning with the seizure of Coria in 1079 and culminating in the capture of Toledo, the first major Islamic town to fall, in 1085. Here the Castilians were halted by the Almoravid invasion, but movement on the western coast continued, culminating in the capture of Santarem and Lisbon by Alfonso Henriques of Portugal in 1147.

The TaIFA kings found themselves forced, in desperation, to call for help from the major power in the Magrib, the Almoravids, Berber camel nomads of the Sanhâja confederation who had extended their control over most of what is now Morocco during the 1080's. After the fall of Toledo, al-Mu'tamid of
Seville in concert with other Taifa rulers invited Yûsuf ibn Tâshufin to cross the straits and save them from the Christian peril. In the late summer of 1086 the Almoravids met Alfonso VI's army at Sagrajas, near Badajoz, and inflicted a stunning defeat upon the Christians. Yûsuf returned to North Africa, but when the Andalusis were unable to follow up on their victory, he returned in force, determined to remove from power the elites that had been unable to mobilize Islamic forces. Between 1090 and 1102, when Valencia, which Rodrigo Diaz "El Cid" had ruled as an autonomous principality, was captured, the Almoravids established control of all al-Andalus, converting it into a province of their Magribi empire.

The Almoravids were able to stabilize the situation for only two decades, their decline becoming evident when Alfonso I of Aragon captured Zaragoza, in the heartland of the middle Ebro Valley in 1118. Increasing pressure by Aragon and Alfonso VII of Castile exacerbated the disaffection of the Andalusi masses with their Berber overlords, leading to a series of popular rebellions in 1144-1145 which ended Almoravid rule in Spain. Now, however, the Muslims were as fragmented as before, regional centers coalescing into a new constellation of seventeen Taifas. The cycle then repeated itself as the disarray of these kingdoms invited a new round of Christian victories (sieges of Córdoba and Almería, 1146-1147) which in turn led to the invasion of a new Berber dynasty, the Almohads, in 1171. Once again there was a great Muslim victory, when Abû Yûsuf Ya'qûb defeated Alfonso VIII of Castile in Alarcos, on the Córdoba-Toledo road in July 1195, and once again the battle wrought no change in the balance of power. Instead, the Christians were incited to regroup, to combine their forces, and finally to defeat the Almohads decisively at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212), near Bailén in northern Andalusia, the same spot where Scipio had defeated the Carthaginians more than a millennium before.

The stage was now set for the final stage of the conquest. In the west, Alfonso IX of León conquered Badajoz in 1230, and Portuguese victories in the lower Guadiana basin and the Algarve followed. Under Ferdinand III the Castilians occupied the heartland of al-Andalus, taking Córdoba in 1236, Jaén in 1246, and Seville in 1248. In the east, James I of Aragón had captured the Balearic Islands in 1229 and Valencia in 1238. Rights to the conquest of Murcia had been the subject of three distinct negotiations between the crowns of Castile and Aragón (Pacts of Tudilén, 1157; Cazola, 1179; and Almizra, 1244). Pursuant to treaty arrangements, Ferdinand's son Alfonso, the future Alfonso X, garrisoned Murcia in 1243, completing the submission of Lorca, Mula, and Cartagena the following year. After a rebellion in 1264, Alfonso had to call upon his father-in-law James I of Aragón to subdue the territory a second time. The result was that the kingdom of Murcia, although remaining within the Crown of Castile, was to become culturally hybrid.

Our analysis of Andalusi and Spanish Christian society ends when the organization of the conquered territories by the Christians is completed and patterns of adjustment between conquerors and conquered have been established. At this point, in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, we can say that the situations and processes that lent tonality to Iberian history in the high middle ages were completed and, although confrontation with the Muslims of Granada continued until 1492 and substantial numbers of Muslims remained behind to continue interacting with Christians, the dynamics of Spanish society of the later middle ages were the result of quite different social phenomena.

Yet many of the elements which came to characterize that Spanish society followed directly from the reversal of the eleventh century. In the first place, the economic system of the Islamic imperium was severely disrupted by nomadic invasions. Tunisia, for example, which had been the major entrepôt for Andalusi trade with the East was effectively cut off by the Hilâlî invasions. Iberian merchants now traded directly with Egypt, enduring increasing competition from Genoan and Pisan traders, who were the direct beneficiaries of the Tunisians' loss of intermediary status. But eastern trade routes had also been disrupted by Mongol and Turkish warriors, and the fragile economy of the Islamic world,
dependent upon a complex system of long-distance trade routes for the supply of raw materials and
gold which underwrote the urban affluence of the Islamic high middle ages, was broken, initiating a
long period of decline.\(^{(51)}\)

The Berber invasions had paradoxical results. They made communication between Islamic Spain and
the East more difficult and tended to draw al-Andalus in its waning years into a Magribi orbit.
Heightened intolerance, the result of increasing Christian pressure on a now fully Islamized society,
intensified the cultural isolation of al-Andalus (note the movement of Jews to the Islamic east or the
Christian north, the practical disappearance of Christian minorities, and the rise of popular religious
expressions with xenophobic overtones). Muslim intolerance was matched by the hardening of
Christian attitudes,\(^{(52)}\) as the movement of conquest gained force. Curiously, the general economic
dislocation did not much affect the Iberian countries, as both Berber dynasties retained control of the
Sudanese gold routes. The Almoravids and Almohads coined gold pieces of high value, which were
copied by the Christians (e.g., the gold \textit{morabetinos} of Alfonso VIII). In essence, this gold, when paid
in tribute or captured in booty (the entire Almohad treasury was said to have been captured at Las
Navas) fueled the Christian military effort.

At the same time as al-Andalus was moving into a markedly Moroccan cultural orbit, French influences
made themselves felt in the Christian kingdoms. During the eleventh century the towns along the
pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela became foci for the concentration and radiation of
elements of French culture. As the Cluniac reform spread to [50] Christian Spain and the ecclesiastical
hierarchy became permeated by French clerics, the cultural shift became obvious. Visigothic writing
was replaced by the French style, inducing a break in traditional cultural links with the Visigothic-
Mozarabic cultural tradition, as the codices written in the old hand became increasingly difficult to
read. Two of the prime outward symbols of French influence were the substitution of the Mozarabic
liturgy by the Roman rite and the diffusion of Romanesque art and architecture.\(^{(53)}\)

The eleventh century also witnessed an economic turn-around in the Christian kingdoms. Urbanization,
fueled by Sudanese gold and the international trading currents flowing along the road to Santiago, as
well as by the opening of the western Mediterranean to Christian shipping, was in evidence
everywhere, and with it the diffusion of commercial methods and craft techniques by the settling of
foreigners (Andalusi Jews and Frenchmen -- \textit{francos}). The French also were agents of the diffusion of
feudal institutions and styles that had hitherto been underdeveloped in Spain. In part, this movement of
feudalization was encouraged by the growing mastery of iron techniques and subsequent improvements
in the quality of Spanish arms and tack.\(^{(54)}\) The popular cavalries of the early phases of the frontier
warfare tended in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to cede in importance to more professionalized
units (the military orders).

We have seen, in this rapid overview of the chronology of events in Spain from the eighth through the
thirteenth centuries, that neither of the societies discussed developed in isolation, either from each other
or from the larger world system or regional subsystems in which they found themselves embedded. The
specific contours produced by these molding influences are the subject of the analytical chapters that
follow.

Notes for Chapter 1

1. This section is based upon Philip Grierson, "Commerce in the Dark Ages: A Critique of the
Evidence," \textit{Transactions of the Royal Historical Society}, 5th series, 9 (1959), 123-140; Denys Hay,
Power and Trade in the Mediterranean}, A.D. 500-1100 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951);
Lombard, Espaces et réseaux du haut moyen âge; and Andrew M. Watson, "Back to Gold and Silver," The Economic History Review, 2nd series, 20 (1967), 1-34.


3. One of the few to stress the Roman heritage is Harold Livermore, The Origins of Spain and Portugal (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), p. 302, where he describes the Islamic Empire, in its early stages at least, as a neo-Roman system.


11. Jacinto Bosch Vilá, Historia de Albarracín y su sierra, Martin Almagro, ed. Vol. 11, Albarracín musulmana (Teruel: Instituto de Estudios Turolenses, 1959), p. 21 (see also ibid., p. 34, on the replacement of roads by rivers as arteries of communication where no Roman roads survived); Manuel González Garcia, Salamanca: La repoblación y la ciudad en la baia edad media (Salamanca: Centro de Estudios Salmantinos, 1973), p. 58; for Roman roads and bridges in a rural valley near León, see Justiniano Rodríguez Fernández, El monasterio de Ardón (León: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1964), p. 177; on the use of Roman roads by both Muslims and Christians, see Sánchez-Albornoz, Estampas de la vida en León hace mil años, 3rd ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1934), p. 100 n. 88; p. 130 n. 4.

13. G. Menéndez Pidal, *Los caminos en la historia de España*, p. 41: "karro per que locum que sivit ambulare, si non abuerit kerrera directa, licentiam damus pergat per defesas per terras laboratas, per vineas, et limites frangere per via discurrente ad karro vel ad equs et mulas cargatas ambulare."

14. Richard W. Bulliet, *The Camel and the Wheel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 110. Bulliet makes no reference to climatic change; but if, as seems to have been the case especially in North Africa, the climate was becoming more arid from the third through the seventh century, such a shift would have reinforced the competitive edge of the camel over the cart in transport.


18. G. Menéndez Pidal, *Los caminos en la historia de España*, p. 46 (citing *Poema de mio Cid*, verses 1448-1609); Luis Vázquez de Parga, José M. Lacarra and Juan Uría Riu, *Las per-egrinaciones a Santiago de Compostela*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1948-49), I: 61. The issue of the permeability of the frontier is also discussed in Chapter 2, section 6, below.


37. Vallvé, "Algunos problemas de la invasión musulmana," p. 367. The basis for Vallvé's critique, that the Arab chroniclers took place names of Cádiz Bay from classical sources and applied them mistakenly to the Bay of Algeciras, is convincing and must be better answered than by Sánchez-Albornoz's hysterical reply, cited in n.36, above.

38. See Olagüe, *Revolución islámica en occidente*, pp. 22-25: 10,000 war horses would have consumed 400,000 liters of water daily. If the number is reasonably accurate, it would have made sense to let the enemy advance rather than attempt a ride to Seville in mid-July.

39. The material on the curve of conversion comes from conversations with Richard W. Bulliet and from his book *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History*, which I read in manuscript with his generous permission. For his method of analysis, see his chapter
"Conversion to Islam and the Emergence of a Muslim Society in Iran," in A. Atmore and N. Levitz, eds., Conversion to Islam: A Comparative Study of Islamization (in press). Bulliet’s conversion curves are based on statistical analysis of names of Islamic jurisprudents compiled in biographical dictionaries, or tabaqât. He first derives a "curve of Muslim names," based on the tendency of converts to Islam to adopt for their children names readily identifiable as Muslim, drawn from a restricted list of such names (Muhammad, Ahmad, 'Ali, al-Hasan, al-Husain). Results from this sample can be checked against a smaller sample of ancestors with non-Muslim, non-Arab names (e.g., an Andalusi faqih of the tenth century with a grandfather or great-grandfather named Lûb -- Lope). This sample yields a "curve of actual conversion," and there is a two-generation offset (about seventy-five years) between the two curves. Figures 1 and 7 show curves of actual conversion. Bulliet's sample for al-Andalus is too small to be statistically significant; yet it corresponds precisely to curves for other Islamic societies (Figure 7). In geographical diffusion literature, the logistic curve is the normal curve of innovation adoption; see Gould, Spatial Diffusion, pp. 19-21.

40. Muqaddimah, I: 327.
42. Makki, Aportaciones orientales, p. 53 (al-Samh's letter) and 41 (baladiyyûn); veterans were also called al-’arab al-aqdamûn -- "Old Arabs."
43. Ibid., pp. 170-172, listing five pro-‘Abbâsid uprisings between 755 and 781.
44. A. Barbero and M. Vigil, Sobre los orígenes sociales de la reconquista (Barcelona:Ariel, 1974), p. 82.
45. Ibid., p. 48 n. 72: ut nolint esse Romani. Diaz y Diaz, "Metales y mineria," p.267, notes that Isidore omitted Cantabria from his account of mineral resources, perhaps because he did not consider that region part of Hispania.
48. José Angel Garcia de Cortázar, La época medieval (Historia de España Alfaguara, 11) (Madrid: Alianza, 1973), p. 130. Note that the conversion of the Basques, once thrown into contact with an intrusive Christian population, would also follow a logistic curve.
50. The social dynamics of this breakdown and realignment of forces is discussed in Chapter 4 and the changing pattern of political organization in Chapter 6.
52. The symmetry is noted by Juan Verner, Los musulmanes españoles (Barcelona: Sayma, 1961), p. 59.
53. See the discussion of stylistic influences in Chapter 9. For summaries of eleventh-century changes, see J. M. Lacarra, "La repoblación de las ciudades en el camino de Santiago: Su trascendencia social, cultural y económica," in Vázquez de Parga et al., Peregrinaciones a Santiago, I: 465; and Ubieto, Ciclos económicos, p. 123.
54. García de Cortázar, Epoca medieval, p. 159.