

Perceptions of the Visigoths in the Iberian Peninsula

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Perceptions of the Visigoths in the Iberian Peninsula

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This thesis carries forward the current body of scholarship surrounding medieval perceptions of the Visigothic past by taking a wider consideration of both written and material sources and arguing that the political, religious, and genealogical relevance of the Visigoths is uniquely enduring and pervasive—their story has been continuously invoked and reworked in the Iberian Peninsula in every century, from the Kingdom’s Catholic conversion to the present. The Visigothic tradition remains exceptional when compared to the historiographical impact of similar figures in neighboring territories, and its mythical and hyperbolic components are laid bare when supplemented by a growing body of archaeological data. The Visigoths remained historiographically relevant and admirable in the Iberian Peninsula for the better part of thirteen centuries, and they offer a means through which we can come to understand scholarly and popular appeals to the distant past in medieval and modern conversations of religious, political, and ethnic identity.

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INTRODUCTION

The Visigoths, early medieval Catholic monarchs of the Iberian Peninsula, never truly left the imaginations of the clerics, kings, and scholars who were curious about writing and interpreting their past. The significance of these formerly-barbarian figures loomed in the historiographical consciousness for well over a millennium, and an analysis of enduring perceptions of their political, religious, and ancestral significance can shed light on modern invocations of the past and the popular mythologizing of historical figures that is still common in the twenty-first century. In examining the uniquely enduring and pervasive historiographical myth of the Visigoths, tracing descriptions of these figures from their ancient obscurity to their importance in the medieval and modern periods can be crucial in understanding the problems inherent in modern political and religious appeals to nostalgia and an idealized past.

This topic of perceptions of the Visigoths after the fall of their kingdom has formerly been addressed, most heavily in the 1990s by Peter Linehan, Roger Collins and Kenneth Wolf, and recently in 2012 by Jocelyn Hillgarth in his *The Visigoths in History and Legend*. These four scholars, among many others, have provided firm shoulders to stand on in exploring historiographical perceptions of the Visigoths, especially, and almost exclusively, with regards to the Latin sources. This thesis will put these scholars in deeper conversation with the Arabic chronicles and the Arabists who study them, as well as other Spanish and Anglophone scholars and archaeologists, to provide a more widely framed investigation of primary and secondary

literature from both bodies of sources than has been offered in previous scholarship on this subject.

This thesis seeks to expand this ongoing conversation in Visigothic historiography in several ways. First, for the bulk of what follows, I will provide a reinterpretation of the Latin and Arabic sources that describe the Visigoths, bringing in a wider consideration of archaeological data and recent secondary scholarship. Second, I will offer a comparative analysis of Visigothic historiography with that of the Ostrogoths, Franks and Lombards, a study which can only be partial here but could be a fruitful line of inquiry in the future. Finally, I will provide a consideration of the modern religious significance of the Visigoths by examining the case example of Córdoba's *Mezquita* and its disputed archaeology.

In sum, I will carry forward the current body of scholarship surrounding medieval perceptions of the Visigothic past by taking a wider consideration of both written and material sources and arguing that the political, religious, and genealogical relevance of the Visigoths is uniquely enduring and pervasive—their story has been continuously invoked and reworked in the Iberian Peninsula in every century, from the Kingdom's Catholic conversion to the present. The Visigothic tradition remains exceptional when held up against the historiographical impact of similar figures in neighboring territories, and its mythical and hyperbolic components are laid bare when supplemented by a growing body of archaeological data. The Visigoths remained historiographically relevant and admirable in the Iberian Peninsula for the better part of thirteen centuries, and they offer a means through which we can come to understand scholarly and popular appeals to the distant past in medieval and modern conversations of religious, political, and ethnic identity.

CHAPTER 1

Contemporary Perceptions of the Visigoths: Kings, Bishop-Chroniclers, and Jews

In this chapter I will introduce the Visigoths historically before exploring two central components in their historiographical legacy: how they came to be celebrated as Catholic rulers, and how they came to represent the idea of a religiously homogeneous kingdom. The Visigoths were, at first, a thorn in the side of the Roman Empire and its fragmentary remains in Iberia. They adapted and gained territory quickly, borrowing heavily from the Romans not only in the land they settled, but in their language, law, and regal culture. They ruled portions of central and southern Europe as an identifiable political group as early as the fourth century CE, and they maintained their power until 711, with a vast domain that stretched in some periods from southern France to Ceuta in North Africa. The Visigoths are commonly remembered as the first rulers to unite the Iberian Peninsula under a single monarchy, and for this and their conversion to Catholicism, they were identified positively as ancestral figures by both the Church and future Spanish monarchies in Asturias, León and Castile. The largest element contributing to the longevity of the Visigoths in Spanish historiographical memory is the approval they received from the Church and Spanish clergy, expressed in the works of bishops like Isidore of Seville and John of Biclaro, who I will discuss below. I will argue that the perception of the Visigoths as model Spanish Christian kings rests on the works of chroniclers who celebrated them in the century before their fall from power. Without the writings of clerical authors of the Visigothic

period, these Christian monarchs would not have received such an enduring and fervently celebrated reputation.

I. The History of the Visigoths at Adrianople, Rome, Toulouse and Toledo

The Visigoths first enter the written record as a barbarian tribe on the far side of the Danube. They were evangelized in part by the Arian bishop Ulfila (d. 381–383) who is traditionally credited with translating the Gothic Bible, in which he famously left out the Book of Kings for fear of inciting them to greater violence than they were already known to be capable of.¹ The Goths crossed the Danube in 376 CE while Emperor Valens (r. 364–378) was occupied in battle with the Persian Empire in the east. In 378 they defeated and killed Valens at the Battle of Adrianople, a pivotal moment for the Goths.² They lived within the western Roman Empire under their own laws after making a peace treaty with Emperor Theodosius I (379–95) in 382.³

¹ Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012): 258.

For more on Ulfila, see: Carla Falluomini, *The Gothic Version of the Gospels and Pauline Epistles: Cultural Background, Transmission and Character*, v. 46 (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2015): 4 and 86-91; and Jamie Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2012): 26.

² Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 27–8.

Adrianople is west of Edirne in modern Turkey. The battle was on August 9th, 378. At this time the Goths had been settled north-west of the Black Sea but were displaced by the Huns. Valens was charged with facing them in battle as he was the eastern Roman Emperor at the time and had his armies stationed near the Euphrates. Valens' body was never found after the battle. See: Roger S. O. Tomlin, s.v. "Adrianople, battle of," *The Oxford Companion to Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³ Isidore of Seville writes:

In the third year of the emperor Theodosius the Spaniard, Athanaric arranged a treaty of friendship with Theodosius and headed for Constantinople. There, fifteen days after he had been honourably received by Theodosius, he died. With their king dead, the Goths, considering the friendliness of the emperor Theodosius, negotiated a treaty and placed themselves under Roman dominion.

[Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1990): 87.]

Alaric (395–411) led the Goths into revolt after the death of Theodosius, and in 410 they took control of Rome, Alaric marrying the sister of the reigning Emperor Honorius (395–423), who he took captive when entering the city. It was a traumatic episode that shocked the West and would leave a lasting impression in the writings of monumental Church figures like Saint Augustine. Rome symbolized the heart of civilization—the “Church Father” Jerome (d. 420) wrote, “If Rome can perish what can be safe?”, while Pelagius, a British theologian, wrote from personal experience of the city’s capture: “Rome, the mistress of the world, shivered, crushed with fear, at the sound of blaring trumpets and the howling of the Goths...Slave and noble were one. The same spectre of death stalked before us all.”⁴ The capture of the western capital of the Roman Empire was a decisive blow politically and a symbol of impending collapse to the population, but to the Goths it was a practical move and a bargaining chip to be used along their path to a large expanse of fertile and only loosely-held lands in southern Europe.

King Theoderic I (418–451) ended hostilities and agreed in 418 to settle his people in Gaul, enjoying autonomy and freedom within the empire in exchange for the valuable military support of his people. At first they served the Romans loyally in fighting against the Alans, Vandals and Sueves in Hispania, but taking advantage of the weakness of the empire in the fifth century, the Visigoths expanded their territories in Gaul and Hispania at the expense of both barbarians and their patrons, the Romans.⁵ After 410, all Roman troops had been withdrawn from Hispania, leaving an open door for any group that might be able to offer or project political

⁴ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity, Volume I: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (New York: HarperOne, 2010): (Jerome) 233–239, (Pelagius) 248–250.

Translations and details on Augustine in Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1967), 287–8.

⁵ Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 38.

stability to the local population.⁶ Working towards this aim, Alaric II (484–507) issued the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*, an adaptation of Roman laws, and in 506 they began convoking church councils in Agde, a town in southern France.⁷ This was one of many adaptations of Roman tradition implemented by the Visigoths, but the establishment of ecumenical councils was a particularly wise choice, as it would soon become an institution for which these monarchs and their kingdom would long be remembered and praised.

At the Battle of Vouillé in 507, the Visigoths were defeated by Clovis and the Franks and pushed into Hispania with only a few holdings remaining in southern Gaul.⁸ Their defeat ushered in a period of rule and protection by the Ostrogoths, the eastern branch of what was originally their common Gothic ethnic and linguistic group. This reunited kingdom was based in Ravenna and would last until Theodoric's death in 526, when he was succeeded in Spain by Amalaric (526–531), the son of Alaric II, and then Theudis (531–548) and Theudisclus (548–9), who were both removed from power by assassins.⁹ Basques, Cantabrians and Sueves impeded further Visigothic expansion in the north of the peninsula and the campaigns of the Emperor Justinian (527–65), and the Visigothic rebel-king Athanagild (551–67) who invited him to the peninsula, complicated the situation in the south.¹⁰ King Leovigild (569–86) continued to expand against

⁶ Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain: 409–711* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 26–7.

⁷ Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 29–32.

Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, 33 and 225.

⁸ See: Hans-Henning Kortüm, s.v. "Clovis I," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Medieval Warfare and Military Technology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer, eds. *The Battle of Vouillé, 507 CE: Where France Began* (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, Inc., 2012).

⁹ Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, 41–2; and Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1996): 236 and 276–9.

¹⁰ Wilken, *The First Thousand Years*, 246–56; and Oliver Nicholson, s.v. "Athanagild." *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Justinian I was not particular in his interests in the Iberian Peninsula, he was simultaneously working to regain the entire Mediterranean basin for the Roman Empire, attacking the Vandals in

these competing forces throughout his reign, and is remembered positively for it in the chronicles. He also embarked on a building campaign in peripheral regions of the peninsula, exiling or executing political opponents along the way. It is in Leovigild's reign that we see the beginning of royal court residency in Toledo, a precedent that would be followed for the remainder of the Visigothic kingdom and leave that town perched along the Tagus with a lasting political and mythological significance evident in both Latin and Arabic sources.¹¹

At this time, powerful Nicene Bishops were ministering actively to the Hispano-Roman population of the peninsula, but Leovigild was successful in urging conversions to Arian Christianity among his subjects and in defeating his rebellious Nicene Christian son, Hermenegild, in battle in 584.¹² By 585, the Visigoths were the largest political power in Hispania, and early in the reign of Leovigild's son and successor, Reccared (586–601), the kingdom and its king converted to Nicene Christianity in 587. This sparked a revolt among some of the mostly-Arian Visigothic nobility, but by the Third Council of Toledo in 589, religious unity was firm.¹³ This moment, as we will see below, would have tremendous significance in providing the justification for Catholic chroniclers to accept their Gothic overlords by reinterpreting their history in the peninsula. The Iberian brand of Catholicism remained

North Africa and the Ostrogoths in Italy. Justinian seems to have pursued in Late Antiquity an ideological reconquest of former Roman territory from which parallels can be drawn to the historically-motivated ideological reconquest of Iberia by Catholic kings in the Middle Ages.

¹¹ Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, 50–56; and Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 42–50.

¹² Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 45–6.

¹³ Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 46–50.

See also, Rachel L. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589–633* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

something of an insular faith, however, and the papacy seems to have had little influence in this period, formally disregarded by the Spanish church after the 680s.¹⁴

After Reccared, King Suintila (621–631) is renowned for completing the territorial conquests against the Byzantines in 625, an act which resulted in a unified peninsula that would be the focus of nostalgia for centuries and never again reestablished.¹⁵ “After he had ascended to the summit of royal dignity,” Bishop Isidore of Seville wrote of his sovereign, “he waged war and obtained the remaining cities which the Roman army held in Spain and, with amazing fortune, triumphed even more gloriously than had the other kings.”¹⁶ After Suintila follow the reigns of Sisenand (631–636) and Chintila (636–639), who both died of natural causes, and then Tulga (639–642) who was overthrown by Chindasuinth (642–653).¹⁷ Reccesuinth (649–672) ruled jointly with him in his old age, then for another two decades independently.¹⁸ He was

¹⁴ Jocelyn Hillgarth, *The Visigoths in History and Legend* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009): 17.

While perhaps not influential in liturgy and in influencing the decisions of the Toledan councils, the Church in Rome was nevertheless a clearly identifiable presence in Visigothic Spain, and it figures in the conquest chronicles as well. The *Chronicle of 754* tells us of a Bishop Taio of Zaragoza who is sent to Rome during the reign of Chindasuinth (642–653) in search of a particular commentary on Job, where he is able to locate the text through the assistance of an angel after spending a night begging at Peter’s shrine. Remembered less favorably is “Sindere of pious memory, metropolitan bishop of the royal city” who “a short time after the invasion of the Arabs...lost his nerve and, like a hireling rather than a shepherd, and contrary to the precepts of the ancients, he deserted Christ’s flock and headed for his Roman homeland.” See Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 131.

¹⁵ Peter Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993): 38–43.

¹⁶ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 107.

¹⁷ Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400–1000*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995): 118–9.

¹⁸ Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 54–5.

Reccesuinth’s bejeweled votive crown, among other remarkable artifacts found in the Guarrazar Hoard, is today one of the centerpieces of Madrid’s Museo Arqueológico Nacional and an unparalleled work of exquisite craftsmanship and goldsmithing. The treasure of Guarrazar was discovered in 1858 in the countryside near Toledo. Heavy rain exposed ancient tombs and the treasure’s location. One notable feature of the crown beyond its remarkable beauty is the fact that

succeeded by King Wamba (672–680), who successfully fought off a powerful usurper named Paul and is legendarily credited with witnessing and repelling the earliest Muslim incursion in the Iberian Peninsula.¹⁹ He is remembered in the anonymous *Chronicle of 754* for renovating Toledo “with wonderful and elegant workmanship,” and one of his marble inscriptions was apparently still visible and able to be transcribed by the chronicler in the mid-eighth century.²⁰ King Ervig (680–687) succeeded Wamba after his mysterious deposition at the Twelfth Council of Toledo and Ervig remained faithful in his reign to the bishops who facilitated his empowerment.²¹ He was followed by Egica (687–702), who “oppressed the Goths with cruel death” according to the chronicler of 754, but “was wise and patient” in the *Chronicle of Alfonso*

it contains a sapphire which has been gemmologically traced to Sri Lanka, indicating either an extensive trade network through the Byzantine Empire or, alternatively, that the gems used in the crown were taken from more ancient pieces of jewelry imported to the peninsula in the ancient period. For more on the treasure and its significance, see: M. F. Guerra and T. Calligaro, “The Treasure of Guarrazar: Tracing the Gold Supplies in the Visigothic Iberian Peninsula,” *Archaeometry* 49, v. 1 (2007): 53–74.

¹⁹ For the uprising of Paul, see Julian of Toledo and Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, *The Story of Wamba: Julian of Toledo’s Historia Wambae regis* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

For this unique and otherwise undocumented description of a Muslim raid before 711, see *The Chronicle of Alfonso III*: “In Wamba’s time also, 270 Saracen ships attacked the coast and there all of them were destroyed and burned.” [Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 160.]

²⁰ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 125.

²¹ The circumstances are bizarre and have generated an array of interpretations. On October 14th of 680, King Wamba was apparently lying ill and unconscious when he was administered the sacrament of penance, which prepared his soul for death and signaled a pending abdication of the throne to his subjects. Despite waking up later that night, his power was transferred in haste to Ervig, whose convocation of the Twelfth Council of Toledo brought a vitriolic rejection and revocation of Wamba’s laws and policies. Julian fared well however, becoming the primate of Spain in 680. See: Julian of Toledo, *Historia Wambae regis*, 56–57, 68; Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 77–8; and Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 56.

Description in the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*: Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 160–1.

III, a representative case of the relative obscurity of our knowledge as we move into the early eighth century.²²

Egica's son and successor Witiza (694–709) is remembered as the last legitimate Visigothic king, and his death seems to have thrown the peninsula into a debilitating civil war that exhausted and fractured potential defensive forces in advance of the Islamic conquest.²³ Witiza's former kingdom is seized by Roderic (710–711) "rebelliously" and "at the instigation of the senate," who soon thereafter died in the Battle of Guadalete fighting the forces of Tariq ibn Ziyad in a still-unidentified location described as the "Transductine mountains."²⁴ Here the Visigothic kingdom nominally comes to an end. We are fortunate enough to retain something of a postscript of fragmentary surviving evidence beyond this, but what happened to the Visigoths after this point is obscure.

We know of a Visigothic ruler called Theudemir in Murcia who made an agreement in 713 with his conqueror 'Abd al-'Aziz (d. 716 CE). The Arabic "Treaty of Tudmir," preserved in extant manuscripts likely copied from the original, declares to the people of seven towns in Murcia that they will not be harassed, killed, taken prisoner, or separated from their families.²⁵ The treaty continues, "They will not be coerced in matters of religion, their churches will not be

²² Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 127 and 162.

²³ Many scholars mark Witiza's regnal years as ending in 710, but Arcadio del Castillo and Julia Montenegro have persuasively argued that the chronology of his reign needs to adjust for a death "just before 8 November 709."

Arcadio del Castillo and Julia Montenegro, "The Chronology of the Reign of Witiza in the Sources: An Historiographical Problem in the Final Years of the Visigothic Kingdom of Toledo," *Revue Belge de philologie et d'histoire* 80, 2 (2002): 367–383.

²⁴ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 52; and Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 130–1.

²⁵ The towns were Orihuela, Valentila, Alicante, Mula, Bigastro, Ello, and Lorca. It has been strongly suggested that Valentila could be Valencia, where it is believed that the palatial archaeological complex at Pla de Nadal in Riba-Roja de Túria (Valencia) was ordered to be constructed by this same Theudemir, due to two surviving inscriptions bearing his name.

burned, nor will sacred objects be taken from the realm...”²⁶ Theudemir was surely not unique in his decision to sign an agreement with the conquerors of Murcia. We also know from coins and a regnal list of two kings, Achila and Ardo, who appear to have maintained their rule in the northeast of the peninsula for up to a decade after the initial invasion.²⁷ Though much of our direct evidence of Visigothic rulers fades out after 711, the religious and historical significance of their kingdom was kept alive by chroniclers. In coming to understand just what had been lost in the invasion, Christian chroniclers living under or resisting Arabic-Islamic rule would turn back to the rich literary tradition of the seventh century.

II. Embracing the Invaders: Making Protagonists of the Goths

The Visigothic kingdom was home to several renowned bishops whose works survive. John of Biclaro (c. 540–621) was arrested in 576 for his study and practice of Catholicism whilst a member of the Arian clergy.²⁸ He lived in exile in Barcelona until the reign of Reccared whose conversion to Catholicism in 587 allowed him to return as bishop of Gerona, at which point he set out to work on writing a history of the Goths in the tradition of Eusebius, Jerome and other church chroniclers of the east.²⁹ As Wolf writes, “John of Biclaro did not try very hard to hide

²⁶ Barbara H. Rosenwein (ed.), s.v. “Umayyad diplomacy: *The Treaty of Tudmir (713)*.” Original in Arabic.”, *Reading the Middle Ages: Sources from Europe, Byzantium, and the Islamic World*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014): 76–7; and Francisco Franco-Sánchez, “Análisis de las dos líneas de transmisión del tratado de Tudmir (94 H./713 e.C.)” *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes*, v. 27 (2016): 63–79.

²⁷ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 54 and 59–60.

One of Achila’s gold *triens* minted in Gerona was found at the Visigothic fortress site of Puig de les Muralles in the eastern Pyrenees. See Roger Collins, *Oxford Archaeological Guides: Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 222.

²⁸ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 1.

John was descended of Gothic parents himself, according to Isidore, which gave him incentive to be one of our earliest chroniclers of the Visigoths as protagonists. His birth and death dates are unknown.

²⁹ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 2–7.

his admiration for the kings of Toledo,” describing them in hyperbolic language and praising Leovigild for his territorial expansions while turning his attention away from the king’s Arianism and anti-Catholicism.³⁰ His chronicle aimed to forget the Arian past of the Goths and establish that God was now looking out for them. By deliberately rewriting the past to match a trajectory of impending Catholicism, certain formerly-unappealing aspects of their rule could be overlooked by sweeping such problematic issues underneath the merit of Reccared’s conversion and restoration of “all the people of the Goths and the Suevi to the unity and peace of the Christian church.”³¹ God had chosen the Goths and was understood to have had a hand in their entry and rise to power in the peninsula. To this end, John of Biclaro was careful to assert which portions of history should be forgotten and which should be remembered and celebrated.

Originally these sorts of universal chronicles would have been apologetic—an effort to champion Judaeo-Christian religious tradition over that of the pagan Romans and Greeks. John claims to follow in a direct line from this tradition, himself building on the work of Victor of Tunnuna (d. after 567) whose chronicle picked up where that of Prosper of Aquitaine’s (c. 390–463) left off, Prosper himself working from Eusebius (264–340) and Jerome (342–420).

Who his intended audience was is less clear, though given the time of his writing, promptly after the kingdom’s conversion, he may have been offering an apologetic for Catholics in the face of initial displeasure among some in the kingdom about the conversion.

³⁰ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 1–1.

John writes, “[Leovigild] received in marriage Gosuintha, the widow of Athanagild, and he wonderfully restored to its former boundaries the province of the Goths, which by that time had been diminished by the rebellions of various men.” [Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 64.]

Isidore, building on John’s details, is even more enthusiastic:

After Leovigild had obtained the position of king of Spain and Gallia Narbonensis, he set about to enlarge the kingdom through warfare and to increase his riches. With the zeal of his army and the concomitant success of his victories, he brilliantly succeeded in achieving a great deal... Many rebellious cities of Spain yielded to his arms. He put soldiers to flight in various battles and captured certain fortresses which they had seized... He extended his power over the greater part of Spain, for previously the people of the Goths had been confined to a small area. But the error of impiety tarnished in him the glory of such success.

[Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 102.]

³¹ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 76.

The most famous of the Visigothic bishops is Isidore of Seville, in fact an archbishop, “Church Father,” and, eventually, saint of the Catholic Church. Isidore could be especially proud of the Catholic Goths, as it was his own brother Bishop Leander of Seville who presided over their conversion. While John confined his work to a short chronological span in his work, Isidore took up the task of vindicating all of Visigothic history, beginning his *History of the Goths* deep in biblical tradition, with Gog and Magog.³² He borrowed from John and his chain of historical transmission but also from Paul Orosius’s *History of the Pagans*, a work which, as early as the first half of the fifth century, made the remarkable claim that the Goths would be “regarded by posterity as great kings, though they are now judged by us to be fierce enemies.”³³ To reinforce this Providential view of the Goths, Isidore placed the blame for their past Arianism on the Roman Emperor Valens, who had sent Arian missionaries to King Athanaric when his people were pagan. Isidore could not erase their Arian past, but he could justify it and work around it, laying emphasis on King Reccared and the conversion of the Visigoths to Catholicism, while passing over the less-ideal aspects of their history.³⁴

³² Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 81

³³ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 16.

³⁴ Wolf and Jamie Wood suggest that Isidore may have had his motives for writing tied up in his family’s connections to Cartagena. Isidore identifies his father as being from that city and a letter from his brother Leander to his sister Florentina seems to indicate that they all had roots in Cartagena before moving to Seville, a decision Wolf suggests could have been caused by the Byzantine occupation of Cartagena at some point between 552 and 555. This would provide Isidore a motive for celebrating Gothic military power precisely at the time the Goths would be embarking on a conquest in the direction of his ancestral home. Equally important, however, is the fact that Isidore had tutored the reigning King Sisebut, and he inherited good ties with the monarchy from his brother’s successful conversion efforts. He was not only read by and highly influential to other clerical writers, his primary audience, but he also wrote a rule for monasteries for monks and polemics against Jews intended not only for Jewish scholars but also as pastoral literature for his own congregants.

Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 22–6.

Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 46–8, 57–58.

“You are the pride and the ornament of the world,” Isidore wrote of Hispania, “the more illustrious part of the earth, in which the Getic people are gloriously prolific, rejoicing much and flourishing greatly.”³⁵ This is how his *History of the Kings of the Goths* begins, before tracing their ancestry to Magog and explaining how they struck fear into Julius Caesar.³⁶ Ultimately, Isidore seems far more interested in their military prowess than in their religion, borrowing his passages about Reccared’s conversion from John of Biclaro.³⁷ He describes how, on the battlefield, “all of the peoples of Europe feared them,” and ends his history explaining that their only weak spot was in their lack of naval ability—an obstacle, Isidore seems contented to point out, that had just been overcome.³⁸ “Subjected, the Roman soldier serves the Goths,” the *History* closes. Later on in the century, in 674 or 675, Julian of Toledo’s *Historia Wambae regis* described the rebellion of the usurper Paul.³⁹ The work, unique in its scope of a single campaign, glorifies King Wamba, explaining that he initially refused the kingship despite the prayers and groveling of the people until one military commander finally threatened to cut him down with his

³⁵ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 81.

³⁶ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 83.

³⁷ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 104.

³⁸ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 109.

³⁹ Julian of Toledo, *Historia Wambae regis*, 56–7.

Julian wrote the *Historia* early in his career, as a priest or deacon rather than in his later capacity as archbishop, which suggests that it could have been a wise and successful attempt at gaining the king’s favor and esteem among both courtly and ecclesiastical audiences. He rose in status under King Wamba and gained the primatial see upon his replacement by King Ervig. The *Historia*, in the version passed down to us, is composed of four parts: an *Epistola*, the letter of challenge from the usurper Paul to King Wamba; the *Historia*, describing the rise of Wamba and the conflict; then an *Insultatio*, an invective against Gallia for its rebellion; and the compilation ends with the *Iudicium*, which includes a supplemental account of the events and a description of trials held against the conspirators near Nîmes. There is some indication, based on some redundant and other unique contents, that this final portion the *Iudicium* and also the introductory *epistola* were not written by Julian himself, but were his own sources which he edited and incorporated into his larger historical compilation.

sword unless he took the kingship.⁴⁰ God is on the side of the Visigothic kings in Julian's work, and he follows Isidore in his praise for Gothic military skill.

John of Biclaro offered a chronicle heavy in the religious significance of the Visigothic conversion, Isidore of Seville was interested in the long-standing military and political success of his rulers, and Julian of Toledo offered the beginning of a Visigothic literary tradition in his story of Wamba and the usurper Paul. The three authors together create the impression of the Visigoths that would be set in stone by the invasion of 711.⁴¹ When the first Mozarabic chroniclers turned back to the pre-conquest historiographical tradition, all they could find were illustrious churchmen heaping praise on their converted kings. In this context, the path was paved for chroniclers and clerics of the Middle Ages to find their own symbolic and ancestral identity in the Visigoths and their kingdom.

III. Between the Lines of Law and Canon: Visigoths and Jews

It is clear that the celebration of the Visigoths began in their own day with the laudatory writings of figures like Isidore of Seville and John of Biclaro. It is important to note, however, that the Visigoths were not universally praised, especially by those who suffered under their homogenizing policies and the potentially strict punishments for religious infractions. If any part of society was pleased to see the dismantling of Visigothic rulership and institutions, it was the Iberian Jews who had been living and worshipping in the peninsula since long before the Goths had crossed the Pyrenees to claim it.

In Romans 15:24, Paul writes that he plans to visit Hispania, which suggests that there could have been a sizeable Jewish community there in the first century CE and in the earliest

⁴⁰ Julian of Toledo, *Historia Wambae regis*, 3–8 and 180–1.

⁴¹ Jamie Wood and Javier Martínez Jiménez, "New Directions in the Study of Visigothic Spain," *History Compass* 14, 1 (2016): 34.

periods of diaspora.⁴² A letter by Severus of Minorca indicates that Minorcan Jews had been forcibly converted to Christianity already in 418, but King Alaric II was the first to legally implement discriminatory decrees against Jews in the kingdom in his adaptation of the Byzantine Theodosian Code in 506.⁴³ Reccared's conversion to Catholicism and the Third Council of Toledo that recognized it were turning points, however, and anti-Jewish legislation harshened under subsequent reigns.

There were laws prohibiting Jews from intermarriage, owning Christian slaves, and holding any office in which a Jew might have the opportunity to take advantage of a Christian, but King Sisebut took these measures a step further by aiming to forcibly baptize all Spanish Jews, a decree for which he was scorned posthumously by the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633.⁴⁴ Isidore wrote of Sisebut's decision: "At the beginning of his reign he forced the Jews into the Christian faith, indeed acting with zeal, 'but not according to knowledge [Romans 10:2]', for he compelled by force those who should have been called to the faith through reason."⁴⁵ Though the decree was disapproved of by clergy-members after its execution, the fond dedication of Isidore

⁴²Abraham Ibn Daud and Gerson D. Cohen, *A Critical Edition with a Translation and Notes of the Book of Tradition: Sefer Ha-Qabbalah* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1969): 78–9.

Ibn Dawwud's twelfth-century *Sefer Ha-Qabbalah* or Book of Tradition looks back to the early diaspora and claims that noble Jews had been settled at Mérida almost immediately: "When Titus overpowered Jerusalem, his lieutenant in charge of Spain requested of him to send him some of the nobles of Jerusalem...these people remained at Merida where they raised families."

⁴³ Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, 129.

⁴⁴ Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, 76; Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 64–65; Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 68, 130; and Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus*, 136–7 and 154.

⁴⁵ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 106.

The *Chronicle of 754*, which will be introduced and analyzed further below, includes mention of the forced conversion, but with none of the critique. "Sisebut, a wise man of profound learning, held Spain for eight years. He conquered the Roman cities throughout Spain. He summoned the Jews to the Christian faith by force." [Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 114.]

of Seville's *De natura rerum* to the king indicates that these anti-Jewish sentiments were certainly no obstacle between the two.⁴⁶

Outside of these Church councils we have only three surviving civil laws pertaining to Jews, and all three regarding the prohibition of their owning Christian slaves.⁴⁷ At the Sixth Council in 636, King Chintila's wish that his domain be exclusively Catholic was made known, and this sentiment was reinforced at the Eighth Council in 653.⁴⁸ King Reccesuinth then outlawed Jewish marriage ceremonies and the celebration of Passover, and circumcision was banned together with all Jewish participation in judicial processes. The Ninth Council the following year legally required any formerly-baptized Jews to spend all Jewish and Christian holidays in the presence of a bishop to be properly observed.⁴⁹ Though the likelihood of its widespread enforcement is unlikely, the Sabbath and all remaining legal Jewish rites were proscribed under King Ervig (680–687), and followed by the introduction of the cumbersome obligation to check in with bishops not only on holy days, but whenever they felt they may have committed an error and also in every town they might travel to.⁵⁰

Julian of Toledo's *Liber de sextae aetatis comprobatione*, a work against Jewish arguments that the age of the messiah had not yet arrived, was dedicated to Ervig, who had been a personal friend of Julian's and shared his ideas on the incorrectness of Judaism.⁵¹ In his *Historia Wambae regis*, Julian refers to Gallia, a region which was fomenting a rebellion against

⁴⁶ Norman Roth, *Jews, Visigoths, and Muslims in Medieval Spain: Cooperation and Conflict*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994): 13; and Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 66.

⁴⁷ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 130–1.

⁴⁸ Roth, *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims*, 31–2; and Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 124.

⁴⁹ Stocking, *Bishops, Councils and Consensus*, 138.

⁵⁰ Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 66–67; Roth, *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims*, 28–9; and Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 132.

⁵¹ Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, 236; Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 77; and Julian of Toledo, *Historia Wambae regis*, 64–5.

the king, as “the whorehouse of Jews who blaspheme against our Lord and Savior.”⁵² To the anonymous Mozarabic chronicler of 754, Bishop Julian of Toledo himself was “descended from Jewish stock like a rose blossom amidst the spines of thornbushes.”⁵³ Isidore of Seville too wrote anti-Jewish polemic, and his *On the Christian Faith, against the Jews* argues from the Old Testament to suggest that the Israelites were unable to understand the authority inherent in their own scriptures.⁵⁴ Under Egica (687–702), in 693, Jewish converts were freed from their former tax obligations and a financial incentive was established for conversion. The following year, all remaining Jews were enslaved by the king and stripped of their property on the basis that they had been working with others outside of Hispania to overthrow the Christians, an idea which would continue to have a long life after Egica’s first proposal of it.⁵⁵

The earliest known Catholic Mass and feast in celebration of Mary was established at the Tenth Council of Toledo in 656, and curiously, substantial parts of it are polemically directed at Jews. Kati Ihnat suggests that this liturgy was likely developed as a means of reinforcing proper practice and belief among the many Jews who had converted or were forced to convert in the first half of the seventh century.⁵⁶ The liturgical performance of the feast included the dramatic recitation of a harsh polemical work of Bishop Ildefonsus (607–667), called *De virginitate*:

⁵² Julian of Toledo, *Historia Wambae regis*, 185.

⁵³ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chronicles*, 126.

⁵⁴ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 62.

⁵⁵ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 133–4.

M. Toch remarked that “The sheer bulk and fervour of these writings are unlike anything else encountered in early medieval Europe,” and Norman Roth refers to the incomparability of this bit of Visigothic law as “the most vile polemic and the harshest legislation against Jews encountered at any time in medieval Europe.”

Kati Ihnat, "Liturgy Against Apostasy: Marian Commemoration and the Jews in Visigothic Iberia," *Early Medieval Europe* 25, no. 4 (2017): 454; and Roth, *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims*, 37.

⁵⁶ Ihnat, “Liturgy Against Apostasy,” 443–6.

What do you say, O Jew? What do you propose? What do you suggest?
To what do you object? . . . But you, turned away by faithlessness, seized
by depravity, beset by blindness, taken hold of by error, hardened by
obstinacy: tell me, why do you not believe that a virgin of your stock
gave birth?⁵⁷

Ihnat hesitates to overemphasize the significance of anti-Jewish polemic like that contained in the liturgical office for the feast of Mary. She points out that some scholars have taken such anti-Jewish liturgy and law as indication of a sizeable and threatening Jewish population in the peninsula, while others have argued just the opposite—that it is a stylistic device and not at all reflected in contemporary society.⁵⁸

We are fortunate to retain a single canon from the Third Council of Seville preserved in one recension of the canon law collection *Hispana*.⁵⁹ The remainder of the council's proceedings were not preserved, but the gathering would have been presided over by Isidore around 624, and the one fragment we do retain is immensely useful in coming to understand the social position of Visigothic Jews in the Iberian Peninsula. The canon states,

Some Jews, who have just recently been called to the faith of Christ, have fraudulently committed some grave dishonesty, presenting other children than their own at the most holy baptismal font. These, whom they allege to be their children, are baptized a second

⁵⁷ Ihnat, "Liturgy Against Apostasy," 449.

⁵⁸ Ihnat, "Liturgy Against Apostasy," 454–5; and Julian of Toledo, *Historia Wambae regis*, 62–5.

⁵⁹ Wolfram Drews, "Jews as Pagans? Polemical Definitions of Identity in Visigothic Spain." *Early Medieval Europe* 11, no. 3 (2002): 189–207.

time, whereas they keep their own offspring as pagans by sinister and nefarious pretense.⁶⁰

Jews had originally retained the right to practice their ancestral religion in the Visigothic kingdom, unlike pagans and other heretics. But under the reign of Sisebut, they found themselves in an unprotected legal grey area, which makes the use of the term “pagans” in this canon especially intriguing and seems to suggest a retrogression from the long-held tradition of acknowledging the Jewish faith as *religio licita*.⁶¹

No writings of Spanish Jews from this period survive.⁶² It is difficult to discern how far these anti-Jewish laws and canons may have been enforced.⁶³ The numerous repetitions of certain laws—the decree against Jews owning Christian slaves, for example—suggests to us that outside of the royal capital, it is unlikely that these proclamations were as turbulent in society as they sound in writing.⁶⁴ Some scholars insist that the anti-Jewish works of Church figures like Isidore were less about Jews and more about creating a ‘straw-man’ to attack as a means of illustrating proper Christian faith.⁶⁵ In the Latin chronicles, we find Jews repeatedly stripped of

⁶⁰ Drews, “Jews as Pagans?,” 191.

⁶¹ Drews, “Jews as Pagans?,” 192–4.

⁶² Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 138.

⁶³ For a comprehensive list of the anti-Jewish laws and canons of this period, from the reigns of Receswinth, Sisebut, Egica and Erwig, and the Toledo Councils III, IV, VI, VIII, IX, X, XII, XVI, XVII, see: Roth, *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims*, 34.

⁶⁴ Alfredo Mordechai Rabello, “The Legal Status of Spanish Jews during the Visigothic Catholic Era: From Reccared (586) to Reccesswinth (672),” *Israel Law Review* 33, no. 4 (1999): 756–786.

⁶⁵ Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 58; and Sam Koon and Jamie Wood, “Unity from Disunity: Law, Rhetoric and Power in the Visigothic Kingdom,” *European Review of History: Revue Europeenne d'histoire* 16, 6 (2009): 793–808.

A straw-man is a deliberate misrepresentation or complete fabrication of an opponent or argumentative position to be easily defeated in support of one’s own position. In this case, the Jewish population served as a straw-man against which Christian clerics could articulate and argue their own doctrine. How closely these Christian sources resemble real Jews in the Visigothic Kingdom, then, is questionable.

rights, converted to Christianity by force, and eventually enslaved.⁶⁶ In the Arabic sources, on the other hand, local Jews are put in command of garrisons of Muslim troops and left responsible for the post-conquest management of major cities like Córdoba, Granada, Seville, and Mérida.⁶⁷

Between passages of forced conversion and grandiose tales of governing all of al-Andalus, where do we locate the Jews of Visigothic Spain?⁶⁸ We have some accounts of Visigoths being scolded for their benevolent policies towards subject Jews, and some surviving petitions made by the Jewish community of Toledo to the Visigothic kings that imply the community may have enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy. The anti-Jewish works of Isidore and Ildefonsus, together with the legal proscription of Jews defending against Christian theological debate suggests that there could have been a Jewish community intellectually robust and capable of formidable argumentation.⁶⁹ Beyond this, it certainly makes sense that the Jews would have sided with an invading force given the tradition of heavy and repeated legal oppression, and later into the period of Islamic rule in Hispania we even have cases of Jewish figures being given exceptional opportunity, like Hasdai ibn Shaprut rising to prominence at the Umayyad court in the tenth century.⁷⁰ But should we trust this portrayal of Jews conspiring, as they had been

⁶⁶ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 115; and Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 135.

⁶⁷ David James, *A History of Early Al-Andalus: The Akhbār majmū‘a* (New York: Routledge, 2012): 53.

⁶⁸ Popular webpages and tourist publications representing Córdoba’s Jewish quarter point to the Roman and Visigothic periods as evidence for the longstanding presence of the Jewish community in the city. See:

http://www.infocordoba.com/spain/andalusia/cordoba/jewish_quarter.htm

<http://www.andalucia.com/cities/cordoba/juderia.htm>

⁶⁹ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 136–8.

⁷⁰ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 199.

The Rabbi Dunash ben Labrat, writing under the patronage of Hasdai ibn Shaprut, expressed a certain guilt in his mid-tenth century poem *There Came a Voice*, for “spending in joy our hours” in the liberal climate of Islamic Córdoba, while “wrecked is Zion’s height” and “when by all men we are rejected and despised.” See Barbara H. Rosenwein (ed.), s.v. “A Jewish poet in al-

accused of previously by King Egica, to invite the invaders into Hispania and open the gates of their cities in exchange for positions of military command?

For Fred Astren, the later accounts of Jews controlling cities must be understood as backward projections of the tenth century in which the Umayyad rulers had an interest in portraying themselves as the unifiers of many divergent groups and needed a way to rationalize the coexistence and occasional privilege of Jews in later al-Andalus.⁷¹ It also offered a symbolic way of advertising Muslim over Christian theological policies regarding the Jews: “The garrisoning of the royal and ecclesiastical capital of the Visigothic kingdom by Jews after its conquest signifies the overthrow and invalidation of Christian political dominion which was so often expressed through anti-Jewish polemic and legislation.”⁷² Nicola Clarke has similarly analyzed how episodes in the chronicles, like the origin-story of Islamic Córdoba, have been reconfigured over centuries. The earliest Arabic description of conquest offers “barely two sentences” on Córdoba’s capture, but several centuries later a far more detailed story nevertheless develops. Clarke shows the way that the creation of Córdoba’s conquest history was a political necessity of “a caliphal capital – indeed, an entire peninsula – in need of its own Islamic foundation myth.”⁷³ Jews in command of the garrisons of Córdoba, then, likely fits into this process Clarke describes, as figures in a newly-constructed origin story for Islam in the peninsula.

Andalus: Dunash ben Labrat, *There Came a Voice* (Mid-10th c.). Original in Hebrew”, *Reading the Middle Ages: Sources from Europe, Byzantium, and the Islamic World*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014): 127.

⁷¹ Fred Astren, “Re-reading the Arabic sources: Jewish history and the Muslim conquests,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 36 (2009): 103.

⁷² Astren, “Re-reading the Arabic Sources,” 105.

⁷³ Nicola Clarke, “Medieval Arabic accounts of the conquest of Cordoba: Creating a narrative for a provincial capital,” *Bulletin of SOA*, 74:1 (2011): 41–57.

Albrecht Noth and Lawrence Conrad have been tremendously influential in this source-critical analysis of early Arabic-Islamic historiography. Noth and Conrad catalog *topoi* or themes which recur in Arabic histories and shape the content of some of our only sources for the seventh- and eighth-century conquests. “Damascus and Caesarea in Syria, Babilyun/al-Fustat and Alexandria in Egypt, Tustar in Khuzistan, and Cordoba in Spain are all described as having fallen into the hands of the Muslims in precisely the same fashion.”⁷⁴ A local traitor identifies a breach in the city wall, defending forces are disabled by distraction, and a few troops unlock the city from the inside.⁷⁵ Though filled with precise details of the city of Córdoba, Noth demonstrates that this account given in the *Akhh̄bār majmū’a*, the same which describes the most important cities of al-Andalus being left in the hands of local Jews, is interlaced with narrative models which do not accurately reflect the circumstances of the eighth-century conquest.

In the Latin sources we find Jews derided in polemic, subject to harsh legislation and accused of conspiring to overthrow the Visigothic kingdom. Centuries later, the *Akhh̄bār majmū’a* was compiled and contained within it a passage which affirmed Jewish participation on the side of the invading forces. Without a contemporary Jewish source to offer insight, our picture of Jews at the end of the Visigothic period is obscure, and the two sides of the Jewish “conspiracy theory” do not connect as evidence. As a result of these canons and laws, Jews after the conquest could not possibly have shared the nostalgia that Christians would increasingly express in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. The myth and legend of the Visigoths relied on an image of universal Catholicism, and to what extent the Jews figured in this, it was as outsiders to be

⁷⁴ Albrecht Noth and Lawrence I. Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1994), 19; and Fred McGraw Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, Vol. 14. (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1998).

⁷⁵ James, *A History of Early al-Andalus*, 51–2

corrected or expunged. The post-conquest historians and chroniclers of Spain understood this precedent and motive for their *Reconquista* expulsions, and the tradition of Spanish Catholicism would retain this Visigothic inheritance of anti-Judaism and couple it with Islamophobia.

IV. Conclusion

Figures like Isidore of Seville and John of Biclaro demonstrate that the celebration of the Visigoths, and the interpretation of their rise to power as being of great Catholic and even cosmic significance, was already present before 711. Overt adoration for the Goths seems to have begun with Reccared's conversion, however, and at this point historians began to integrate the Goths into Christian world history as protagonists. The situation of the Jews, then, indicates that this praise for the Visigoths was already complemented by a suspicion of outsiders and other religions. The great ecumenical gatherings in Toledo would be recalled nostalgically by Christian chroniclers in the future, and they offered a palpable reason for longing for the days of Visigothic rule. But just as the seeds of the legend of the Goths in Spain had been sown in these pre-conquest chronicles, so had the longing for a Catholic-ruled peninsula, a unified Spain that was first being reimagined in Asturias, and then in León and Castile. The degree to which Jews and Muslims could fit into this ideal image would become constrained in the later medieval and early modern periods and culminate in the forced conversions and expulsions of these groups from the peninsula beginning in 1492.

CHAPTER 2

Royal Bloodlines and Northern Refuge: Remembering the Visigoths in the Middle Ages

Thirty years after Tariq ibn Ziyad (689–720 CE) and Mūsā ibn Nusayr (640–716 CE) entered the Iberian Peninsula, a local chronicler noted it and said little more. The *Chronicle of 741* is our earliest documentary source for the conquest, but it offers us surprisingly little detail. Instead, the more laconic description of events, arranged tidily within an otherwise largely Byzantine and Arabic chronicle, has suggested to scholars that its author simply did not experience the conquest directly.⁷⁶ But even in this brief account, the Visigoths are already described fondly: “And in the regions of the Occident, by means of the general of his army named Musa, [Walid I (Umayyad Caliph, r. 705–15 CE)] invaded and subdued the kingdom of the Goths in Hispania, a firm and powerful reign since antiquity.”⁷⁷ The unknown author follows Isidore of Seville for information on Iberian history and possibly intended his work as a continuation of that of John of Biclaro, evidenced by the chronicle beginning in the reign of Reccared (586–601), right where John left off.⁷⁸ While the chronicler draws from sources of the

⁷⁶ Cyrille Aillet, “The Chronicle of 741,” *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, v. 1 (600–900), ed. D. Thomas et B. Roggema (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2009): 284–9.

⁷⁷ My translation, Juan Gil, *Corpus scriptorum muzarabiorum*, I (Madrid: Instituto Antonio de Nebrija, 1973): 13; and Jose Carlos Martín, “Los Chronica Byzantina-Arabica: Contribución a la discusión sobre su autoría y datación, y traducción anotada,” *e-Spania* 1, June (2006).

⁷⁸ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 29.

Aillet follows Hoyland’s source criticism in arguing that the *Chronicle of 741* is actually a compilation, the so-called *Chronica Hispana-Orientalia*, with a relatively brief account of

Visigothic period, it is only in the following decade that we receive our first detailed evidence of how the conquest was understood by those who lived on the Iberian Peninsula shortly after it was invaded.

At the other end of the Mediterranean, we find one earlier, non-textual source for understanding how the Visigoths were perceived shortly after the end of their rule. The desert palace of Qusayr ‘amra in Jordan contains a painting made within the first few years after the conquest that depicts six different kings conquered by the caliphate. The last Visigothic king Rodrigo, a figure eternally scolded in Latin historiography, stands nobly beside the Byzantine and Persian emperors, a symbol of the significance of the conquest of this region to its Islamic conquerors.⁷⁹ This heavily-damaged fresco at Qusayr ‘amra and the brief passages in the *Chronicle of 741*, preserved only in sixteenth-century manuscript copies, provide humble origins for a uniquely enduring historiographical phenomenon—the celebration of and identification with the Visigoths.

This chapter will trace the historiographical picture of the Visigoths portrayed by chroniclers of the medieval period. The Visigothic kingdom was admired in its own time, and earlier figures like Isidore of Seville and John of Biclaro were successful in integrating their rise to power and conversion to Catholicism into a narrative of world history and cosmic significance. Memories of the ancient Romans, Lombards, and Franks were also significant to the populations in other regions who descended from them in the Middle Ages and have received

Iberian history having been integrated into another eastern chronicle, *Chronica Orientalia*. See: Aillet, “The Chronicle of 741,” 285.

⁷⁹ For detailed images and study of the frescoes, see Elizabeth Drayson “Ways of Seeing: The First Medieval Islamic and Christian Depictions of Roderick, Last Visigothic King of Spain,” *Al-Masāq*, 18:2 (2006): 115–128.

See also: Garth Fowden, *Qusayr ‘amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) and Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 57.

recent and growing attention. But it was something about the abrupt displacement of the Visigoths by foreign invaders of a new faith, the epic and fantastic stories recounted by the earliest historians of this conquest, and the strong genealogical and religious ties some felt in their absence which has kept the legend of the Visigoths alive for thirteen centuries.

I. Arabs and Mozarabs: Nostalgia and Pedigree in the Heart of al-Andalus

There are several Arabic and Mozarabic works of critical importance to the historiographical and cultural legacy of the Visigoths in al-Andalus. The *Chronicle of 754*, the tenth-century *History* of Ibn al-Qutiya, the eleventh-century *Akhbār majmū'a*, and, though it was written outside of the Iberian Peninsula in Egypt, Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's ninth-century *Fath Ifriqiya wa- 'l Andalus*. Each work illustrates a different aspect of perceptions people in medieval Spain had of the Visigothic past and the combination of these elements ensured the survival of the Visigoths as ancestral figures. While the *Reconquista* ideology would come to flourish in the northern kingdoms of Asturias and León, a different and equally important portion of the tradition of Visigothic celebration was taking place in the south. The connection to Visigothic Christian identity that would fuel northern chronicle narratives can already be seen in the *Chronicle of 754*'s biblical language and enthusiastic description of church figures and councils of the past. Their political significance is strongly expressed in Ibn al-Qutiya's *History*, in which we see claims to Visigothic heritage among many major political figures in the first few centuries after the conquest. Ibn al-Qutiya himself claims descent from King Witiza, his name translating directly as "son of the Gothic woman." Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's *Fath Ifriqiya wa- 'l Andalus* is valuable for its inclusion of many fantastic and legendary stories about the Visigoths and the conquest which were remembered and retold for centuries. The *Akhbār majmū'a* is a detailed compilation of the early history of al-Andalus, essential to scholars of the period for offering an extended, though certainly embellished, version of the events of the conquest.

Shortly after their fall from power, The Visigoths seem to have been missed by at least one prominent member of the religious community of al-Andalus. For those who lived in conquered regions in the wake of 711, both Christians and Muslims, the Visigoths were remembered and identified with ancestrally for political and religious reasons. The Mozarabic *Chronicle of 754* describes devastation of biblical proportions befalling the Visigoths:

The Saracens set up their savage kingdom in Spain, specifically in Córdoba, formerly a patrician see and always the most opulent in comparison to the rest of the cities, giving its first fruits to the kingdom of the Visigoths.

Who can relate such perils? Who can enumerate such grievous disasters? Even if every limb were transformed into a tongue, it would be beyond human nature to express the ruin of Spain and its many and great evils.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Adque in eandem infelicem Spaniam Cordoba in sede dudum Patricia, que semper extitit pre ceteras adiacentes ciuitates opulentissima et regno Uisegothorum primitibas inferebat delicias, regnum efferum conlocant.

Quis enim narrare queat tanta pericula? Quis dinumerare tam inportuna naufragia? Nam si omnia menbra uerterentur in linguam, omnino nequaquam Spanie ruinas uel eius toth tantaque mala dicere poterit humana natura.

[Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 132.]

The *Chronicle of 754* is preserved in multiple codices; the oldest folios are housed in the British Library in London and the Biblioteca de la Academia de la Historia in Madrid, and later copies are at the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal in Paris. It’s author and the specific location of writing are unknown and contested, but the main contenders are Córdoba (Wolf, for example), because of precise information about its rulers and astrological events, and Toledo (Linehan), because of the chroniclers inclusion of an inscription there from the time of King Wamba.

José López Pereira appears to be the only scholar who suggests that the *Chronicle of 754* was written somewhere in the region of Murcia, see: José Eduardo López Pereira, *Estudio crítico sobre la crónica mozárabe de 754* (Zaragoza: Anubar, 1980): 72–3.

Carmen De Hartmann has rejected López Pereira’s hypothesis on the basis that Murcia was not likely to have even possessed the literary means from which the chronicler of 754 could have constructed his narrative. For more on the chronicler, the surviving codices of the chronicle, and a thorough analysis of its possible sources, see: Carmen Cardelle De Hartmann, “The Textual Transmission of the Mozarabic Chronicle of 754.” *Early Medieval Europe* 8: 1 (1999): 13–29.

The passage regarding every limb transformed into a tongue comes from Jerome’s *Epistolae* 108.1: “If all the members of my body were to be converted into tongues, and if each of my

It is a lamentation that carries on to evoke the ruin of Troy, Jerusalem, Babylon, and Rome as being less miserable than that suffered by Spain, and this type of nostalgic and calamitous description in the *Chronicle of 754* would continue to enjoy a very long historiographical life.⁸¹ It tries to make the invasion and subsequent political condition intelligible by framing the conquest in biblical language. While describing the troubles facing Emperor Heraclius, the chronicler early on ties the “rats from the desert” seen in one of the emperor’s dreams to the future wave of invasions.⁸² The latter half of the chronicle, however, attempts to give a balanced assessment of each individual caliph and offers no comments on theological differences.⁸³ It is remarkable that amidst such resentful language can be found genuine interest in the inner political workings of the conquerors.

limbs were to be gifted with a human voice, I could still do no justice to the virtues of the holy and venerable Paula.”

⁸¹ For more on this type of literary lamentation, see: Paul Oldfield, “‘To Destroy a City so Great and Remarkable’: Lamentation, Panegyric, and the Idea of the Medieval City,” in *Italy and Early Medieval Europe: Papers for Chris Wickham*, eds. Ross Balzaretto, Julia Barrow, and Patricia Skinner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); and Tamar M. Boyadjian, *The City Lament: Jerusalem across the Medieval Mediterranean* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018).

⁸² Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 113.

⁸³ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 37.

The chronicler of 754 was a devout Christian.⁸⁴ His careful description of many prominent church figures indicates that he may have been a clergyman himself.⁸⁵ He looks back very fondly on the great ecumenical councils formerly held in Visigothic Toledo “which enlightened the minds of the ignorant on many things, both sacred and profane.”⁸⁶ Consequently, he is very pleased with the kings responsible for these councils—Chindasuinth, for having “wonderfully ordered a synod to be celebrated,” and Reccesuinth, for having “excellently organized a well-attended council.”⁸⁷ The Visigoths are, for this chronicler, the protagonists in a larger Christian history. Like the chronicler of 741, the goings-on of the Byzantine and Arabic rulers were of equal importance to what was happening in Spain for the chronicler of 754. But this historian ultimately falls short of expressing any sort of formulated ideology that the Christian land of Hispania was conquered by Muslims and should be re-conquered by Christians. A celebration of the Visigoths for their rule and religion is evident, but it precedes the formation of Spain’s national foundation myth. The *Chronicle of 754* says nothing of Pelayo and the Asturians, the protagonists of the Visigothic legend.

⁸⁴ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 30 and 45.

Little is known about the anonymous chronicler and his audience. Beyond his clerical status, it is likely that he had connections to, or sources based at, the Umayyad court in Córdoba. This is based on his intimate knowledge of the peninsula’s military history in the 740s, of which he claims to have written a history that is now lost. Various stylistic choices and derogatory remarks towards Berbers suggest to Wolf that he must have known Arabic. Yet he wrote for a Latin Christian audience, and he offers surprisingly little detail on the Islamic faith, which suggests to Wolf that the chronicler’s agenda was to legitimize the conquerors to the conquered. He explains, “By downplaying religious differences, and treating al-Andalus as simply another Mediterranean *regnum*, the old Christian ruling class did not have to let ideological difference preclude positive interaction with their conquerors.”

⁸⁵ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 29.

⁸⁶ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 117.

⁸⁷ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 118 and 121.

A century later, Bishop Eulogius was writing his famous *Memoriale sanctorum* in Córdoba, at that time the capital of al-Andalus. Eulogius framed the passions of forty-eight Christians, who were executed between 850 and 857, within a cosmic Christian story.⁸⁸ He insisted that the tolerance of the Christian faith in Spain is not because of the benevolence of their Muslim rulers, but because of God’s favorable judgment of the Christians, who “have not ceased from the attack of the infidels.”⁸⁹ Eulogius writes possessively of the sin that caused the end of Visigothic rule, but he expresses a similar nostalgia as the Mozarabic chronicler a century before him. He praises “the Gothic kingdom—which for a long time, most fortunately, was strong in veneration of the Christian faith, flourished in the worthiness of the venerable priests and shone with the construction of wonderful basilicas...”⁹⁰ He echoes the chronicler of 754 in his praise for Visigothic rulers facilitating the flourishing of the Catholic Church, and the voluntary deaths of so many of his neighbors and congregants suggests that many who lived in al-Andalus a century after its conquest shared his longing for the past. His friend and biographer Paulus Alvar also claimed and celebrated his own Gothic heritage in a series of letters to Eleazar, formerly known as Bodo, a Frankish palace deacon who converted to Judaism.⁹¹ The Visigothic

⁸⁸ Eulogius was rather singularly-motivated in his writings—all of his works deal with these martyrs in some capacity. See: Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 51.

⁸⁹ Edward Paul Colbert, *The Memoriale Sanctorum of Eulogius of Cordoba: A Translation with Critical Introduction* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Library, 1955): 74.

⁹⁰ Gil, *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*, 392; Ann Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus 711–1000* (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 2002): 52; and Colbert, *The Memoriale Sanctorum*, 76–7.

⁹¹ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 79; Gil, *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*, 249, 269–70, 354; and Frank Riess, “From Aachen to al-Andalus: the journey of Deacon Bodo (823–76),” *Early Medieval Europe*, 13, 2 (2005): 131–157.

See also: Evina Steinová, “The Correspondence of Bodo-Eleazar With Pablo Alvaro: A Rare Sample of Judeo-Christian Dispute From the 9th Century,” *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic*, ed. Ryan Szpiech (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

past was alive, then, and in the heart of al-Andalus, from the first decades after the conquest to the later ninth century. Invoked at first by anonymous chroniclers, the legend of the Visigoths was picked up by figureheads in a movement of mass-martyrdom still harboring resentment for their political situation over a century after Tariq ibn Ziyad and Mūsā ibn Nusayr crossed over the strait of Gibraltar.

The ancestral legacy that was projected onto the Visigoths by Christian chroniclers after their fall is also evident, to a degree, in one of our Arabic sources. The *History* of Ibn al-Qutiya (d. 367/977) is a unique document.⁹² It offers us insight into the sentiments of European Muslims

Of Eulogius, Paulus tells us he was born into an aristocratic family, particularly “into a line of senators,” and trained in the priesthood, together with Paulus, under an esteemed abbot called Speraindeo. In 851, Eulogius and other clergy members appear to have been imprisoned for instigating the martyrdoms. Shortly after his release later that year he finished writing *Memoriale sanctorum*. Later waves of incarceration pushed Eulogius into hiding in 853, where he continued to update his *Memoriale* with the latest martyrs. As to its audience, Wolf explains “we have no way of knowing how the work was received by his Christian or Muslim opponents, if indeed anyone other than Alvarus even read it.” Having devoted his entire life to writing and preaching a fiercely uncompromising Christian cause in Islamic Córdoba, he was beheaded in 859 after haggling with the judge for a harsher sentence than the intended whipping.

Wolf, *Christian Martyrs*, 51–61.

The mention of Eulogius’s senatorial family is one of several vague references to a senate in early medieval Spain, the most prominent being the *Chronicle of 754* description of Roderic as taking the kingdom under the influence of the senate—perhaps the same Cordoban senate Eulogius is referring to. If so, it would align with the common description of Córdoba as the patrician city.

⁹² James, *The History of Ibn al-Qutiya* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 23.

The unique manuscript containing both al-Qutiya’s *History* and the *Akhbār majmū’a* is housed at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Muhammad Ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (Ibn al-Qutiya) was a Córdobaan who died in the city in 367/977. His history is better understood than the *Akhbār majmū’a* to which it is bound. His family remained Umayyad clients after four generations, and, as David James explains, “It is important to remember that it is in *this* capacity that he speaks throughout the text of the *History*: not as a latter-day Visigoth, nor as an Arab, but as a loyal client of the ruling dynasty of al-Andalus.”

The text itself appears to be secondhand, beginning with a passage that indicates Ibn al-Qutiya verbally related this account to an audience who then recorded it. He was an authority on Arabic grammar, and also an instructor of jurisprudence, *hadith* and *akhbār*. It was in this capacity that he must have related his *History* orally. There is no evidence of it having been written down in

who could or wished to trace the Visigoths in their genealogy. Ibn al-Qutiya claims to be the son of Sarah the Goth, a daughter of Almund, one of king Witiza's three sons.⁹³ The sources of his history are clearly cited and yet among his cited details are some beloved legends—the sealed house of Toledo, for example, which every king was responsible for keeping shut with locks. Roderic is said to have opened this house only to find depictions of the invading Arabs within, and the foreboding inscription “If this temple be opened and these pictures taken out, then al-Andalus will be invaded by the people shown in the pictures and conquered by them.”⁹⁴ The sealed house is a popular explanation for the turn of events, and Ibn al-Qutiya houses it side-by-side with the other most popular explanation for the invasion that occurred in 711: the story of Count Julian.⁹⁵ Julian, the ruler of Ceuta in North Africa, is said to have become enraged over the seduction of his daughter by Roderic, a legendary incident remembered popularly as “the rape of “La Cava” (or “Florinda”),” and he subsequently met with and invited Tariq ibn Ziyad to invade Hispania. The stories are fantastic, and many scholars agree that they do not reflect any

his lifetime, and it may have been compiled from the notes of various students. A detailed study of Ibn al-Qutiya's life and work can be found in James, *Early Islamic Spain*, 1–46.

⁹³James, *Early Islamic Spain*, 22.

It is important for him to claim descent from Witiza, the last *legitimate* Visigothic king. Roderic is said to have taken power illegitimately, and these circumstances were acknowledged in both Latin and Arabic sources.

⁹⁴James, *History of Ibn al-Qutiya*, 34–5.

This story of the sealed house of Toledo is present in both Latin and Arabic works and remains remarkably stable in detail regarding Rodrigo's breaking a royal tradition of keeping the house shut and encountering pictures of Arabs within. *El Victorial* (c. 1401) by Gutierre Díez de Games is a history about Don Pero Niño, but within this biographical work can be found a unique description of the fabled sealed house of Toledo being constructed by Hercules. See: Kenneth R. Scholberg, "Ingenuidad y escepticismo: Nota sobre el Victorial de Gutierre Díez De Games," *Hispania* 72, no. 4 (1989): 890–4.

⁹⁵For more on Count Julian, see: Denise Filios, “Legends of the Fall: Conde Julián in Medieval Arabic and Hispano-Latin Historiography,” *Medieval Encounters* 15, 2-4 (2009): 375–90 and Enrique Gozalbes Cravioto, “El comes Iulianus (Conde Julián De Ceuta), entre la historia y la literatura,” *Al Qantir: Monografías y documentos sobre la historia de Tarifa*, 11 (2011): 3–35.

actual events preceding the invasion. Instead, Ibn al-Qutiya's *History* shows that these fantastic legends of the Visigoths were remembered alongside more tangible political connections, not only of powerful and militant converts like the Banu Qasi, but of the author's inherited "thousand estates in the western part of al-Andalus" and the direct protection of Tariq ibn Ziyad, who stipulated that the family of Ibn al-Qutiya "should never have rise to anyone who approaches them, nor to anyone who takes leave of them."⁹⁶ He also offers details about parts of society unknown or unimportant to our other sources—Ibn al-Qutiya tells us not only of Visigothic and Arabic rulers, but of butchers, dog owners, and the descendants of the Vikings in the lower Guadalquivir.⁹⁷

A century earlier, several elements from Ibn al-Qutiya's *History* were already present in Arabic-Islamic historiography of the conquest. The sealed house of Toledo and the story of Count Julian and his daughter both appear, though in a slightly different version from Ibn al-Qutiya's, in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's (d.870/1) *Fath Ifriqiya wa-'l Andalus*. It also contains other famous anecdotes, like the story of the invaders killing Iberians and pretending to cook and eat them before sending the rest of the villagers off to inform and terrify others.⁹⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-

⁹⁶ James, *History of Ibn al-Qutiya*, 50.

⁹⁷ James, *History of Ibn al-Qutiya*, 82-90 and 100.

The popular understanding that the Vikings settled down to become cheese-makers is inaccurate and based on a mistranslation.

⁹⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 870/1) and John Harris Jones (ed. and tr.) *Ibn Abd-el-Hakem's History of the Conquest of Spain* (Goettingen: John Harris Jones, 1858), 20.

Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam was a scholar of *hadith* rather than a historian, and the elaborate stories compiled in his account of the conquest of Spain, and the remainder of his work that describes the conquest of Egypt, are a result of this training. His father and brothers were also well-reputed scholars of *hadith* and jurisprudence. Understood as part of *hadith* scholarship rather than as part of chronicling tradition, Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's work can be valuable in our study of perceptions of the Visigoths despite the claims made by scholars against the work's reliability. See: B. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam and David A. Cohen, "Narrative of the Conquest of al-Andalus," *Medieval Iberia*, ed. Olivia Remie Constable (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 32–6.

Ḥakam is keen on the amounts of treasure retrieved during the conquest, not only various troves of buried gold, silver, and jewels, but also such riches as the pearl-encrusted Table of King Solomon and a carpet of gold string and hyacinth that, despite great effort, could simply not be lifted without cutting it apart.⁹⁹ Around this same time, Ibn Ḥayyan embarked on a ten-part detailed look of the inner workings of politics in al-Andalus in his *al-Muqtabis*, but unfortunately the first volume of his work, the earliest chronologically and most likely to have contained information about the Visigoths, is missing.¹⁰⁰

The *Akhbār majmū'a* is an expanded version of the early Andalusī history seen in the work of the Egyptian scholar, Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam.¹⁰¹ It includes a more precise description of the early eighth-century military campaigns, but beyond the conquest, it is focused exclusively on Arabs. Some of the fantastic stories are still contained—Count Julian and his daughter are there, and while a sealed house in Toledo is not mentioned, Tariq ibn Ziyad does come across the Table

⁹⁹ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *History of the Conquest of Spain*, 20–2.

¹⁰⁰ Volume 2, which survives, begins in 796.

Ibn Ḥayyān, Abū Marwān Ḥayyān ibn Khalaf, Maḥmūd 'Alī Makkī, and F. Corriente. *Crónica de los emires Alḥakam I y 'Abdarraḥmān II entre los años 796 y 847 (Almuqtabis II-1)*, (Zaragoza: Instituto de Estudios Islámicos y del Oriente Próximo, 2001).

¹⁰¹ David James writes, “What is the *Akhbār majmū'a*, where was it written, when and by whom? Furthermore: why and for whom? There are no simple answers to most of these questions and those which have been suggested have produced intense, even furious argument among some of the greatest twentieth-century historians and mediaevalists of France and Spain and this argument continues...”

The unique manuscript containing both al-Qutiya's *History* and the *Akhbār majmū'a* is housed at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. The *Akhbār majmū'a* is a compilation dated no earlier than the late tenth century and, unlike many other Latin and Arabic accounts of the conquest, contains a large amount of unique information. The author(s), exact date and location of authorship are unknown and contested. For a comprehensive review of theories surrounding the text see David James, *A History of Early al-Andalus: The Akhbār majmū'a* (New York: Routledge, 2012): 1–42.

of Solomon.¹⁰² The *Akhbār majmū'a* is also valuable because it is aware not only of King Alfonso III, but also of Pelayo, the legendary leader of the *Reconquista*:

A ruler... who had sought refuge with three hundred men. The Muslims continually attacked and raided until his men died of hunger and a group of them surrendered. Their number was reduced to thirty men and hardly ten women so it is said. Their food was honey. They sought refuge on the mountain, eating honey from bees' nests in the crevices of the rocks.

But the Muslims wearied of them and left them saying: 'Thirty infidels - what can they do!' and feeling contempt. But their situation changed enormously as we shall relate when we get to that point God willing.¹⁰³

It is intriguing that the Asturian foundation story can be found preserved so intact in an Arabic work focused primarily on Arab-Andalusi history, and Daniel König has argued that in the tenth and eleventh centuries, new sources were offering details, like Pelayo's band of thirty troops surviving on honey in the mountains, to Islamic scholars curious about the pre-Islamic past in the Iberian Peninsula.¹⁰⁴

The awareness of genealogical ties to the Visigoths was heightened as accounts of indigenous families like the Banu 'l-Qutiya were written, and Latin-Arabic translations came to produce something of a new regional identity and Andalusian culture curious about its own past. By the twelfth century, most of the details we find in the various Latin narratives had entered the

¹⁰² James, *A History of Early al-Andalus*, 45.

This can also be found in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's *Fath Ifriqiya wa-'l Andalus*: Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *History of the Conquest of Spain*, 19.

¹⁰³ James, *A History of Early al-Andalus*, 61.

¹⁰⁴ Daniel König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West: Tracing the Emergence of Medieval Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

universal histories of Islamic scholars, and could be found in the works of many, though not all, historians working outside the peninsula in Egypt and scholarly centers farther east.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, in light of the strengthening reconquest effort and recapture of Toledo, Andalusī Islamic scholars were becoming less interested in the Visigothic heritage of the region.

In König's study, while the Visigothic myth was being expanded and transformed by Mozarabic and Asturian chroniclers, a similar transformative process was taking place in Arabic-Islamic historiography. Initially, the Visigoths provided a unique heritage for a distinctly Andalusian identity that was adopted with great interest in Arabic-Islamic historiography before reaching a turning point in the eleventh century, and subsequently being abandoned to an ever-closer, hostile Christendom. By the beginning of the eleventh century, Islamic histories produced in al-Andalus were becoming more informed on the Visigothic Kingdom, but after the successful capture of Toledo in 1085 and the subsequent entrance of a new Berber Dynasty into Spain, Christians revitalized their ancestral territorial claims.¹⁰⁶ In a sort of cultural juggle, Islamic scholars seem to have responded to the increasing Christian invocations of the Visigoths by passing back the tradition and making less detailed mention of them in Arabic histories.¹⁰⁷ In the first millennium, Arabic-Islamic interpretations of the peninsula's former rulers were still fluid and interlaced with fiction. But while scholars were curious about uncovering the pre-Islamic past and did so rather effectively in their use of Latin sources, the hostile ideological purposes

¹⁰⁵ This Latin narrative contained specifics like the Battle of Adrianople in 378 CE and subsequent migration south in search of agricultural lands. See: König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 168.

¹⁰⁶ William J. Purkis, "The Past as Precedent: Crusade, Reconquest and Twelfth-Century Memories of a Christian Iberia" in *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lucie Doležalová (Boston: Brill, 2010), 441–461.
König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 150–187.

¹⁰⁷ König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 150.

for which the Visigoths were being used by Christians in the reconquest made this period less appetizing for those in the Arabic historiographical tradition who inherited the knowledge of it.

II. Under the Protection of Divine Clemency: Northern Reconquista Ideology

The concept of the *Reconquista* relies on an imagined past in which the Visigoths and the nostalgia for a universally-Christian peninsula are central.¹⁰⁸ Already in the ninth century, the Asturian *Crónica Albeldense* describes it as predestined that Christians should repel the Muslims from Iberia, and Roger Collins has insisted that this notion was sustained and shared in popular consciousness without interruption until 1492.¹⁰⁹ Richard Fletcher points to a number of *Reconquista* texts produced in Oviedo which celebrate the former Visigothic rule of the peninsula, and he asserts that, though scarce, similar texts were still being produced in some parts of Hispania even in the late tenth century.¹¹⁰ Other scholars like Joseph O’Callaghan have pointed out that a divine crusading impulse for peninsular reconquest should not be mistaken as a

¹⁰⁸ While the idea and ideology is reflected in medieval texts, the term *Reconquista* only comes into popular scholarly use the nineteenth century, and with heavy nationalist overtones. See: Alejandro García-Sanjuán, “Rejecting al-Andalus, exalting the Reconquista: historical memory in contemporary Spain,” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 10:1 (2018): 127–145.

In 1063/455, Fernando I, King of Navarre and León, transferred the relics of St. Isidore of Seville, a Christian Archbishop and scholar of sixth-seventh centuries, to the Basilica of San Isidoro of León, a symbolic manifestation of the firm adoption of Visigothic memory by northern Christian kings. See: Roger Collins, *The Arab Conquest of Spain, 710–797* (New York: Blackwell, 1989), 33 and 94.

The *Reconquista* is a dominant narrative in modern Spanish historiography and pedagogy, but its relevance even extends to the modern Spanish economy. Daniel Oto Peralías and Diego Romero-Ávila demonstrated in 2014 that the speed and pattern of reconquest settlement has a direct correlation to modern income disparities across Spanish provinces. See Daniel Oto-Peralías and Diego Romero-Ávila, "The Economic Consequences of the Spanish Reconquest: The Long-Term Effects of Medieval Conquest and Colonization," *Journal of Economic Growth* 21, no. 4 (2016): 409–464.

¹⁰⁹ Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Europe 300–1000*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 314.

More on the *Crónica Albeldense* below, on page 41 and in footnote 114.

¹¹⁰ Richard Fletcher, “Reconquest and Crusade in Spain, c. 1050–1150,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5, 37 (1987): 31–47.

widely-diffused idea—in the ninth and tenth centuries, any consolidated notion of *Reconquista* would have been nearly unthinkable given Christians’ heavily subordinate position in al-Andalus.¹¹¹ How often and widespread these invocations of Visigothic memory were in the first centuries of *Reconquista* ideology is uncertain, but their legacy can be traced in the written record in at least some part of Iberia in every century.¹¹²

A church donation confirmation of Alfonso II issued in 812 explains that it was the “excessive arrogance” of the Goths which brought their demise and they “rightly suffered the Arabic sword.” Pelayo is said in this confirmation to have been plucked by Christ and rescued to become prince and defender of “the people of Christians and Asturians.”¹¹³ This document indicates that, while Mozarabic Christian chroniclers in the south were identifying with the Visigoths on religious terms, later Christian kings like Alfonso could look to Pelayo (variably described as a Visigothic swordbearer or a royal refugee himself) for a national origin story that connected directly to the Visigoths without taking responsibility for their fall from power.¹¹⁴

The Asturian *Crónica Albeldense* of 881 and its expanded edition, the *Prophetic Chronicle* of 883, offer us the first clear glimpse of *Reconquista* ideology.¹¹⁵ The chronicle

¹¹¹ Joseph O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 20–21.

¹¹² Purkis, “Past as Precedent,” 441–461.

¹¹³ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 65.

¹¹⁴ Brian A. Catlos, *Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), 40–1.

On Asturias under Alfonso II, see: José Antonio Maravall, *El concepto de España en la Edad Media* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos 1964), 300–6.

¹¹⁵ The *Crónica Albeldense* survives in several manuscripts, but the most famous is at El Escorial in Madrid. The work is the oldest preserved chronicle of Christian Spain, and clearly reflects the ambitions of a new kingdom in its language. It is named after the monastic complex of Albedo near Logrono where a version of the text was found which had been expanded to the year 976 by a monk named Vagile. Its original author, audience, and where it was written remain unknown, but its promotion of Asturias as a legitimate successor to the Visigothic kingdom indicates it was intended for the early Asturian court of Alfonso III. The *Crónica Albeldense* has been edited and

includes such miscellany as the distances between cities, a pedigree from Abraham to ‘Abd al-Rahman, and a breakdown of the six former ages of time, together with a detailed history beginning with the foundation of Rome and continuing through Pelayo and the kings of León. God is fighting alongside the Asturians in this chronicle, and the military success they were enjoying seems to have excited the author of 883 to exceptional optimism on the outlook of their situation:

Also the Saracens themselves, by some prodigies and signs of the stars, predict that their perdition is approaching and they say that the kingdom of the Goths will be restored by this prince of ours; also by revelations and apparitions of many Christians it is predicted that this prince of ours, the glorious Don Alfonso, will reign in the near future in all of Spain. And so, under the protection of divine clemency, the territory of the enemies wanes every day, and the Church of the Lord grows for more and better.¹¹⁶

So little of the peninsula was under Christian rulership at this time that the notion that Alfonso would be able to conquer the remainder in his lifetime was unrealistic. Our earliest post-conquest chronicles seem to have maintained a less sensational view of the Visigothic kingdom and its achievements, but here the restoration of their rule is described on a cosmic scale. This understanding of Asturian military affairs as being part of a peninsula-wide, divinely protected conquest places us firmly into the *Reconquista* tradition.

translated into Spanish with a detailed introduction in Fernandez, Moralejo, and Ruiz de la Peña, *Crónicas Asturianas*, 13–42.

Juan Gil Fernandez, Jose L. Moralejo, Juan I. Ruiz de la Peña, *Crónicas Asturianas* (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1985), 81–3.

From this Spanish version, it has been translated into English by Kenneth Wolf: Kenneth B. Wolf, “Narrative of the Conquest of al-Andalus,” *Medieval Iberia*, ed. Olivia Remie Constable (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 56–61.

¹¹⁶ My translation, Fernandez, Moralejo, and Ruiz de la Peña, *Crónicas Asturianas*, 188 and 262.

The early tenth-century Leonese *Chronicle of Alfonso III* reads, as Wolf writes, “as if it were a new chapter in Gothic history.”¹¹⁷ This Asturian chronicler saw the turning point of Gothic success as being during the reign of Witiza, already lost by the time of Roderic. “A reprobate,” “disgraceful in his habits,” Witiza “dissolved the councils. He sealed the canons. He took many wives and concubines. And so that no council would be convened against him, he ordered the bishops, priests, and deacons to take wives. This then,” the chronicler asserts, “was the cause of Spain’s ruin.”¹¹⁸ But in the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*, Spain is not ruined for long. Pelayo, here described as the swordbearer of Witiza and Roderic, gathers his army and is elected leader “at almost the same time” as Córdoba became the Islamic capital.¹¹⁹ It was a clean transfer of Visigothic heritage, lost with Witiza’s dishonorable behavior but recovered quickly by his swordbearer. At the mouth of the holy cave on Mt. Auseva, Pelayo proclaims, “Christ is our hope that through this little mountain, which you see, the well-being of Spain and the army of the Gothic people will be restored.”¹²⁰ The remainder of the chronicle is a story of that restoration, following the reigns of Asturian and Leonese kings and their territorial expansions, keeping track

¹¹⁷ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 47-8.

The *Chronicle of Alfonso III* is preserved in two differing versions, (*Rotensis*, or Rod. cod. 78 at the Real Academia de Historia in Madrid and *Ad Sebastiano*, or Oviedo text, which is not preserved in a manuscript but only in later works). The Oviedo version was written during the reign of Alfonso’s son Garcia (910–914 CE) and the Road version during the reign of Alfonso’s other son Ordoño II (914–924 CE), but neither version records events after the accession of Alfonso III in 866 CE. One line in the text which describes a royal order possessively seems to indicate that King Alfonso himself may have been involved in writing the text. It was certainly somebody at his court in any case, as the agenda of the text is to celebrate the Asturian kingdom, claiming that Witiza gave up his divine right to lead Spain as a result of his moral failure, and God chose Pelayo and Asturias to take up the cause of Christianity in the peninsula.

¹¹⁸ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 162.

¹¹⁹ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 164.

¹²⁰ The cave is described variably in the two versions of the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* as “cova Dominica” and “cova sancta Marie,” both referring to the presence of a Marian shrine there. See: Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 165, footnote 32.

of the tens of thousands of their slain enemies along the way. The *Chronicle of Alfonso III* is a tidy creation story for the kingdoms of Asturias and León that makes direct appeal to Visigothic ancestral claims. While Mozarabic chroniclers were expressing nostalgia for the glory days of Visigothic ecumenical councils, chroniclers in the north were insisting that the Visigoths had never been entirely defeated, but were divinely preserved in a cave in Asturias, and were now welcoming southern refugees into the kingdom and slowly regaining territory by bitter conquest.¹²¹

The problem with this national myth is that the Christians who reconquered the peninsula were not the same as those who had been conquered—they did not share the same interests. They were separated by centuries of time, of course, and migratory influences like the invasion of the Almohads had rearranged the demographic map of the peninsula. But at the heart of *Reconquista* ideology is the understanding that Christians and formerly-Christian lands would be liberated. In Peter Linehan’s words, “the Mozarabs had been duped.”¹²² In the conquest of Toledo, for example, the newly-appointed archbishop, Bernard of Sahagún (c. 1050–1125), oversaw the conversion of the main mosque of Toledo to a cathedral, incorrectly claiming its Christian ‘recovery’ due to its supposedly-Visigothic origin (in confusion with the true Visigothic cathedral on the other side of the city).¹²³ This transformation of the city’s topography and religious landscape was contrary to the terms of the city’s surrender, and “in the course of the year 1086 the Mozarabs of Toledo discovered that they had exchanged one set of alien rulers for another. The Muslims, who for centuries had permitted them to retain their distinctive customs,

¹²¹ Bitter in the sense that no prisoners were taken, decapitated heads were being delivered, islands were “depopulated,” and the wives and children of those slain were being sold into slavery. See: Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 175 for refugees from the south.

¹²² Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 217 and Brian A. Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, c. 1050–1614* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 22-3.

¹²³ Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 215–6.

culture, and religion, had been replaced by new masters who within little more than a year were already threatening to deprive them of all three.”¹²⁴

In 1074 Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085) had written to Sancho IV of Navarre and Alfonso VI of León and Castile (1065–1109) and ordered the replacement of Visigothic liturgy, long preserved throughout the peninsula under and outside of Islamic rule and a palpable connection with the Visigothic past, with the Roman model of worship. This transition was rough, and after the conquest of Toledo in 1085, Alfonso made the city the ecclesiastical capital of his territories and sought to impose uniformity in worship. The protections he promised to Toledans during the conquest, however, were trampled after the consecration of a powerful Burgundian Archbishop to enforce the change in worship throughout the conquered territories of the peninsula.¹²⁵ The center of religious life of Mozarabic Toledo was a site with Visigothic roots, the church of Santa María de Alficén. Yet after the loss of their lands to the destructive siege and the loss of their political, religious and cultural autonomy to new Castilian overlords, in 1099 the Mozarabs’ of Toledo saw their ancient church gifted to a local Roman Catholic monastery.¹²⁶ The tide of *Reconquista* was quickly turning in favor of the Christian rulers of León and Castile, Navarre, Aragon, and Portugal, under the influence of Burgundians and the Roman Catholic church, and at the expense of the Muslims who had for centuries dwelled in those regions.¹²⁷ But “in terms of

¹²⁴ Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 218–9.

¹²⁵ Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 216 and Brian A. Catlos, *Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), 232-3.

¹²⁶ Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 223–4.

¹²⁷ Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 203.

Clunian monks had previously influenced Catalan counties to adopt the Roman Catholic liturgy over the Mozarabic rite. Under this increasing Burgundian influence from the powerful monastery of Cluny as well as the Papacy, Alfonso is described in the *Crónica Najarense* as submitting the question to both a trial by combat and a subsequent trial by fire. In the trial by combat, the Mozarabic champion defeated the Roman champion, and when both liturgies were

disappointment of reasonable expectations,” Linehan writes, “it was the Mozarabs who suffered the most.”¹²⁸ As the flow of migrants from the south continued and even surged after the conquest of Toledo in 1085, the Visigothic rite, though never reinstated, was nevertheless reinvigorated in popular practice.¹²⁹

III. Successors of the Visigothic Past: The Meaning of Gothic Kings in the Later Middle Ages

The early twelfth-century anonymous *Historia Silense* sought to tell the history of Alfonso VI with emphasis on his Gothic heritage in both his ability to rule and also as motivation for his conquest of Toledo. The work was never finished and, as a result, the *Historia* leaves undescribed the conquest of the former Visigothic capital in 1085, but it speaks of the city with resentment over its Islamic occupation.¹³⁰ On the Visigothic period, the work follows the same narrative and language of the *Crónica Albeldense/Prophetic Chronicle* of 883, and in description of Pelayo and the kings of Asturias and León it borrows from the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*. Like Ibn al-Qutiya’s *History* and the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*, the *Historia Silense* is aware of the Visigothic heritage of powerful converted clans like the Banu Qasi. Mūsā ibn Mūsā ibn Fortun,

tossed into a great fire in the middle of the central square of Burgos, the Mozarabic liturgy leapt out of the flames. Alfonso is then said to have kicked the book back into the fire and proclaimed, “Let the horns of the laws bend to the will of kings.”

¹²⁸ Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 209–222.

¹²⁹ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 94.

¹³⁰ It appears to be a compilation, supposed to have originated at the Castilian monastery of Silos, but Richard Fletcher argues that it was the work of a cleric at San Isidoro in León, composed sometime between 1109 and 1118. It survives in a corrupted manuscript housed at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid. Fletcher explains of the *Historia*’s agenda, “The author... wrote at a time when the *Hispanie regnum* was being tested anew as it had under the attacks of Almanzor, or as when, long ago, God had permitted the barbarians to overrun the Visigothic kingdom. He wrote to comfort and instruct an unhappy present by holding up a reassuring past.” Beyond this, he also suggests that it may have been intended as “a mirror for the princes of an individual realm.” See: Simon Barton and Richard Fletcher, *The World of El Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000): 9 and 21.

for example, is described as “not unworthy of the greatness of his origin” and could only be defeated by another Gothic descendant, Ordoño I of Asturias.¹³¹ The work is careful to indicate apparently every single person of Gothic descent, from Alfonso III’s Gothic wife to a King García of Navarre, and ends with a celebration of the transfer of the body of Isidore of Seville to a new church in León and Fernando’s death, an account modeled on the death of Isidore in Redemptus’s seventh-century biography of him.

Bishop Lucas of Tuy’s *Chronicon mundi* (c. 1238) and Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada’s *De rebus Hispanie* (c. 1243) are fundamental texts for understanding the later medieval chronicling tradition. Lucas and Rodrigo knew each other personally, sharing a career at the court of Fernando III of Castile-León. While Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada has traditionally been the more renowned of the two, it was Lucas’s *Chronicon mundi* that served as the basis for seven out of the nine books that comprise Rodrigo’s *De rebus Hispanie*.¹³² Lucas was born in or around León and trained in the Church of San Isidoro, which since 1063 had housed the relics of Isidore of Seville. The bishop was not reserved about his fondness for Isidore and his Sevillian heritage, and this seems to be one of his main disagreements with Rodrigo, who was a die-hard Toledan. Lucas wrote at the request of Queen Berenguela, the mother of reigning King Fernando III, shortly after the symbolic conquest of Córdoba in 1236, and the chronicle reflects such an agenda by opening with a preface that asserts the Gothic blood of Spain’s rulers.¹³³ While he borrowed from (and even incorporated wholesale) earlier chronicles which are still used by historians today, he was also known to have drawn from some historical works which are now regarded as unreliable, not to mention inventing and falsely attributing a new source entirely. His

¹³¹ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 89; and Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 176.

¹³² Bernard F. Reilly, “Bishop Lucas of Tuy and the Latin Chronicle Tradition in Iberia), in *Catholic Historical Review* 93, 4 (Oct. 2007): 768–9.

¹³³ Reilly, “Bishop Lucas of Tuy,” 771.

adoration of the Visigoths is evident in the mental gymnastics of his explanation that all of the Visigoth's past failures were due to internal division and that their defeat in battle is nearly impossible except at the hands of another Goth.¹³⁴

Though born in Navarre, a region with historically less enthusiasm for the Visigoths, the full title of Rodrigo's work, *Historia de rebus Hispanie sive Historia Gothica*, is an appropriate indicator of its thoroughly Gothic focus. Rodrigo identified closely with the Visigoths and pointed to the Visigothic period and its political geography as support for his agenda in seeking the religious and political primacy of Toledo and Castile over all of the Iberian Peninsula.¹³⁵ "For Rodrigo," Lucy Pick writes, "the archbishops of Toledo were the true successors and guardians of the Visigothic past."¹³⁶ He borrows not only from Bishop Lucas of Tuy, but even reaches back to the *Chronicle of 754* to describe the Visigothic period, though he was careful to leave aside many of the references to Arabs and Romans.¹³⁷ While the Visigoths were favorites for practical and symbolic reasons, Rodrigo left an impressive collection of historical works, with separate studies of the Romans, Ostrogoths, Arabs, as well as histories of the Catholic Church and of barbarian tribes in his personal collection.¹³⁸ The Visigoths were not only being remembered by historians like Rodrigo, however, they were also remembered and invoked popularly, as seen in the *Poema de Fernán González* (c. 1250). The poem follows Lucas of Tuy to tell, in perfect Castilian rhyme, how the Visigoths were sent by Christ from the Orient to Hispania to establish

¹³⁴ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 105–8; and Peter Linehan, "Fechas y sospechas sobre Lucas de Tuy." *Anuario de estudios medievales* 32, no. 1 (2002): 19–38.

¹³⁵ Lucy Pick, *Conflict and Coexistence: Archbishop Rodrigo and the Muslims and Jews of Medieval Spain* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004): vii–xi; and Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada and Juan Fernández Valverde, *Roderici Ximenii de Rada: Historia de rebus Hispanie sive Historia Gothica* (Chicago: Brepols, 1987): x.

¹³⁶ Pick, *Conflict and Coexistence*, 22.

¹³⁷ De Rada, *Historia de rebus Hispanie*, xxxiii.

¹³⁸ De Rada, *Historia de rebus Hispanie*, ix–xli.

an ideal kingdom.¹³⁹ “They were the light and star of all Christianity,” the anonymous author eulogized; “When the Gothic kings passed from this world, they went to the heavens.”¹⁴⁰

Alfonso X of Castile’s (1252–1284) *Estoria de Espanna* borrowed from both Rodrigo and Lucas of Tuy. He was a Toledan himself and chose to write his work in vernacular Castilian, bringing a detailed perspective on the Gothic kings and the stories of Count Julian and the sealed house to a new linguistic audience.¹⁴¹ After 1284 Alfonso X died and the history was continued by other writers with less interest in the Goths, but the first redaction of the text features a heavy emphasis on Visigothic continuity.¹⁴² After Alfonso’s *Estoria*, however, the Visigoths were less significant in Spanish historiography until the fifteenth century. One important exception is the Portuguese *Crónica general de Espanha de 1344*. This was a work attributed to the Andalusí historian Muhammad al-Razi in the tenth century CE, and was translated from Arabic on the authority of King Dionís of Portugal, with a decidedly pro-Portuguese and anti-Castilian bent.¹⁴³ It is, however, one of our only sources for attempting to piece together what might have been contained in the now-lost *History of the Rulers of al-Andalus (Akhbār mulūk al-Andalus)* of al-Razi. According to later Arabic-Islamic authors, al-Razi used non-Islamic local sources for pre-Islamic history and perhaps contained a nearly complete list of Visigothic kings beginning in the

¹³⁹ John Lihani, *Poema de Fernán González*, Medieval Texts and Studies, 4 (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1991): 5; and Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 117–8.

¹⁴⁰ Lihani, *Poema de Fernán González*, 6.

¹⁴¹ Alfonso El Sabio and Ramón Menéndez Pidal (ed.), *Primera crónica general de España* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1955): 306–7.

¹⁴² Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 115.

See also, Carlos A. Sanz Mingo, "Translation, Adaptation, Propaganda: Alfonso X of Castile and Historia Regum Britanniae," *Acta universitatis Danubius. Communicatio* 10, no. 2 (2016): 22–39.

¹⁴³ Diego Catalán y María Soledad de Andrés, *Edición crítica del texto Español de la crónica de 1344 que ordenó el Conde de Barcelos don Pedro Alfonso* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, S.A., 1970): XXVII–XXVIII.

fourth century, but the exact contents of the original work of the historian are debated by scholars and cannot be determined.¹⁴⁴

Moving into the fifteenth century, one of the most vocal camps of support for Visigothic heritage was a family of converts from Judaism, the Santa María family. Pablo de Santa María (b. Solomon ha-Levi), wrote *Scrutim scripturarum* (a best-seller, with six editions between 1469–79 and republished in 1591) which revived the use of sources of Gothic history like Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada.¹⁴⁵ Pablo's universal history *Las siete edades del mundo* is a long poem stressing the Gothic ancestry of kings of Castile. Written during his time as a tutor to Juan II of Castile, the work places his pupil as a cosmic hero and messianic figure.¹⁴⁶ His son Alfonso de Cartagena's 1456 *Anacephaleosis* develops these ideas of Gothic ancestry by following Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada in tracing the genealogy of the Castilian kings, but such ongoing claims from Spain invited objection from the ambassador of the king of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, who insisted that his was the true Gothic ruler. Alfonso replied that the Goths who made it to Spain must be better than those who stayed at home.¹⁴⁷

Pedro de Corral's *Crónica del Rey Don Rodrigo* (1430) is "Spain's earliest historical novel" including new scenes like Rodrigo's penance after defeat alongside old classics like the sealed

¹⁴⁴ König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 162–5.

It is from one of these extant fragments of al-Razi's work that scholars were able to identify the monumental Visigothic city of Reccopolis, described first in John of Biclar's history, but only identifiable with the modern site of Zorita de los Canes upon notice of al-Razi's mention that Zorita's castle was built with stones from "Racupel." See: Collins, *Oxford Archaeological Guides*, 223.

¹⁴⁵ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 124.

¹⁴⁶ Pablo de Santa María and M. Jean Sconza, *Siete edades del mundo* (Madison, WI: The Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1991): 1–15.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Devaney, "Virtue, Virility, and History in Fifteenth-Century Castile" in *Speculum* 88/3 (2013): 734; and Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 126.

For Scandinavian traditions on Gothic heritage, see Kristoffer Neville, "Gothicism and Early Modern Historical Ethnography," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70, 2 (2009): 213–234.

house of Toledo and Rodrigo's rape of La Cava.¹⁴⁸ Though a work of fiction and intended as a Christian morality tale for a popular audience, his novel seems to have drawn from as many or more historical sources as other chroniclers of his time.¹⁴⁹ While Rodrigo or Witiza's moral corruption was typically held up in the chronicle tradition as the reason for the so-called 'ruin of Spain,' Corral rewrites the episodes leading to the conquest to entirely exonerate Roderic from moral culpability, introducing the name "La Cava" to Count Julian's daughter to imply her whorish nature and ultimate responsibility for the Visigothic king's temptation.¹⁵⁰

Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo (1404–1470), though he spent much of his life in service of the Vatican in Italy, was in R.B. Tate's words, a "nostalgic expatriate" who followed the

¹⁴⁸ Pedro de Corral and James Donald Fogelquist, *Crónica del rey Don Rodrigo: Crónica Sarracina* (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 2001).

¹⁴⁹ While seeming to emphasize Christian values, Elizabeth Drayson has explored Pedro de Corral's provocative use of eroticism and violence. She explains, "Corral was writing in a country he saw as corrupt and detrimentally affected by long-term crises which had fragmented society, rendering it unable to regain the perceived unity of Visigothic Spain." See: Elizabeth Drayson, "Penance or pornography? The exile of King Roderick in Pedro de Corral's *Crónica Sarracina*," *Al-Masaq*, 17, 2 (2005): 195–6.

Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, discussed below, opened his major work, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, with a critique of Pedro de Corral's style of history writing:

Some of those who undertake the writing and commentary of ancient matters are shameless men who would rather relate what is bizarre and extraordinary than what is true and exact...one such writer—not of our times—is an insignificant and presumptuous man named Pedro de Corral...

[Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, *Pen Portraits of Illustrious Castilians (Generaciones y semblanzas)* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press): 3.]

¹⁵⁰ De Corral, *Crónica del Rey Don Rodrigo*, 48–52.

Pedro de Corral seems to have been connected to the court of Juan II of Castile through his brother, Rodrigo de Villandrando, a veteran of the Hundred Years War in France. Otherwise, not much is known about de Corral—none of his works contain his name and we know of his authorship of the *Crónica* only through Pérez de Guzmán's description in *Generaciones y semblanzas*. He was born sometime between 1380 and 1390 to Pedro de Villandrando, a noble of Valladolid, and Aldonça de Corral. Before James Fogelquist's edition of 2001, the most recent was published in 1587. See: De Corral, *Crónica del rey Don Rodrigo*, 8–12; and J. J. Satorre Grau, "Pedro de Corral y la estructura de su crónica del rey don Rodrigo." *Al-Andalus*, 34, 1 (1969): 159–173

historiographical line of Pablo, Alfonso, and Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada in favoring the Visigoths over all other foreign influence.¹⁵¹ The Romans in particular were disliked by these fifteenth-century historians for their effeminacy, warm baths and wine-drinking.¹⁵² But there was more than a rejection of extrapeninsular cultural influence in Arévalo's work, Thomas Devaney explains. Instead, he suggests that Arévalo

...turned this perception of decadence into a call for action. The restoration of Hispania, he suggested, required not only the conquest of lost territories but also, and perhaps more importantly, the recovery of the cultural heritage of the Visigoths and the original *Hispani*. This could be accomplished only by expunging pernicious Roman and Islamic (as well as Jewish) cultural influences from the body social.¹⁵³

In the *Compendiosa historia Hispanica*, Tate identifies three major theses concerning the Visigoths in Arévalo's message to his rulers: "[1] That the Goths have a right to universal recognition because of their antiquity, their military prowess and their personal virtues; [2] that the kings of Castile and Leon descend directly from the Visigothic line without a break; [3] that all the territorial rights of the latter pass as a result to the former."¹⁵⁴ The popular and religious legend of the Visigoths had become decidedly political, and most invocations of the Visigoths in the later Middle Ages were in regards to the heritage of Spain's Catholic monarchs.

Fernán Pérez de Guzmán (1376–1460) wrote under Juan II (1406–1454) *Generaciones y semblanzas* and was known to have kept and drawn from manuscripts of Isidore, Julian of

¹⁵¹ R.B. Tate, "Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo (1404–1470) and his 'Compendiosa historia Hispanica,'" *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies*, 4 (1960): 60.

¹⁵² Devaney, "Virtue, Virility and History," 735 and 743.

¹⁵³ Devaney, "Virtue, Virility, and History," 736.

¹⁵⁴ Tate, "Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo," 72.

Toledo, and the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*.¹⁵⁵ He traces King Enrique III's descent "from a noble and very old and illustrious family of Gothic kings and, of special note, from the glorious Catholic Prince Recaredo, King of the Goths in Spain."¹⁵⁶ Though he was no fan of Roderic or Witiza, de Guzmán followed the historiographical customs of his day in celebrating Spain's royal family, a bloodline continuing unbroken for over 800 years, as a rare achievement in Christendom.¹⁵⁷ Diego de Valera, the son of a *converso* father and noble mother, himself a trained knight and prolific chronicler, was perhaps more progressive in his more general admiration for the past and its civilizations. He looked to the Romans as a model for meritocratic nobility and organization of military and political service and even included the accomplishments of great Muslim leaders in his works.¹⁵⁸ But de Valera too pushed forward the Visigothic legend into the Early Modern Period in affirming the ancient pedigree, writing that Catholic Monarchs Fernando and Isabella came from the glorious blood of the Goths and therefore Castile could now take back the remainder of the territorial extent formerly held by Kings Erwig and Wamba.¹⁵⁹

IV. Conclusion

King Witiza, Roderic, Count Julian and Pelayo were recognizable characters in a legend retold in the Iberian Peninsula throughout the Middle Ages. But such individuals and the fantastic and epic actions attributed to them faded into the distance in the later medieval period.

¹⁵⁵ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 130.

De Guzmán was part of a noble family, the nephew of court chronicler Chancellor Pedro López de Ayala (1332–1407), and the line of poets continued after him.

¹⁵⁶ De Guzmán, *Pen Portraits*, 7.

¹⁵⁷ His work is at least partially directed towards historians, offering in his prologue what appears to be the first Spanish historiographical text, with guidelines for how history should be written and for what purpose. See: De Guzmán, *Pen Portraits*, xxviii–xxix and 3.

¹⁵⁸ Devaney, "Virtue, Virility, and History," 727.

¹⁵⁹ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 131.

The various portraits of Gothic achievement and decline, the struggle of chroniclers to situate these Catholic monarchs into universal history and make sense of the Visigoths, was ultimately distilled into a single narrative and purpose. The adoration of the Goths and the perception of their fall from power as “the ruin of Spain” is an inheritance of the Mozarabic writers in the south of the peninsula. Genealogy had always been of prime importance, even for Ibn al-Qutiya centuries after the invasion. But the significance of the pre-Islamic past in al-Andalus came to be less and less about the various religious and cultural connections still surviving amongst Christians in Iberia and instead became fixated on Gothic blood in the royalty of Castile-León and Asturias. The *Chronicle of 741* offered us a mere sentence of general praise for the fallen Visigothic kings of Hispania. The *Chronicle of 754* and the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* picked up and expanded on this Visigothic admiration in the directions of religious identity and national origins. After the capture of Toledo in 1085, however, the Visigothic legend was far more restricted in expression. As the rulers of Castile continued to expand throughout the peninsula, the Goths were needed to provide the foundation for that expansion and political preeminence, and what better way to support monarchical aims than for chroniclers and historians to establish that the peninsula had belonged to them all along and remained theirs by inheritance.

CHAPTER 3

Beyond Visigothic Histories: Lombards, Franks and Archaeology

In the late-sixth and into the seventh centuries, bishops in Hispania were piecing together a history which made sense of their rulers, those barbarian-turned-Catholic unifiers, the Visigoths. The understanding that the Visigoths were a divine and benevolent force in the Iberian Peninsula continued to evolve in the Middle Ages—not only the idea that the land had once been ruled by powerful Christian monarchs, but the understanding quickly emerged that something of their essence survived politically, culturally, and genetically, and should be rightfully restored. Before turning to how this story developed in the early modern period and into the present day, in this chapter I will first consider a range of recent archaeological material to address how our understanding of the Visigoths and the aftermath of their ultimate defeat matches with what the chronicle sources describe. Then I will consider the ways in which the historiographical tradition of the Visigoths resembles that of nearby figures like the Franks in France and Germany or the Lombards in Italy. By drawing from archaeology and similar historiographical investigations surrounding other historical figures outside Hispania, we can assess how much the myth of the Visigoths was indeed a myth, a story that came to overshadow their actual political, cultural, and religious presence and impact on the Iberian Peninsula.

I. The “Ruin of Spain”: Archaeology and Topography in Transition

Modern archaeology is crucial in enhancing our understanding of the Visigoths today, but it was a problematic issue in twentieth-century Spain. Nationalist political interests that would culminate in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and Francoism (1939–1975) were encouraging

many to search exclusively for the origins of Gothic power in Iberia. As Wood and Martínez Jiménez explain,

The discipline later focused, under Franco, on the material identification of the Visigoths with the first Spaniards. This was done by focusing above all on early Christian sites (on the grounds that the Visigoths were Christians) and cemeteries with distinctively Germanic grave goods (the Visigoths were ‘German’, but soon became ‘Spanish’). This led, for many years, to the unsustainable situation in which the only things that were known about the Visigoths through archaeology were that they prayed, died and got buried. Sadly, the combination of these very specific objectives and inadequate excavation methodologies meant that in most of the sites excavated in this period... Islamic levels were ignored and not recorded, if not deliberately destroyed. This in turn led to the general assumption that seventh- to eighth-century pottery was indistinguishable from what had gone before and that there was no recognizable material culture for the eighth century as a whole.¹⁶⁰

Spanish archaeology formerly had trouble disentangling from a twentieth-century national agenda that destroyed and obscured far more of the peninsula’s archaeological resources than it can be credited with uncovering. This tendency to prioritize the Visigoths over others in the past persists in some cases even today and will be discussed in the next chapter, but developments in modern Spanish archaeology have fueled an increasing awareness of and interest in previously unknown sites in both rural and urban environments.¹⁶¹ The evolution and increasing availability

¹⁶⁰ Wood and Jiménez, "New Directions," 30.

¹⁶¹ This interest extends to tourism as well. The town of Riba-Roja de Túria outside of Valencia contains two major Visigothic archaeological complexes that enjoy a high level of awareness and esteem amongst locals. Each year the town celebrates a Visigothic-themed festival with early medieval food and dress, and the tourism office proudly labels its brochures and other materials with the cruciform monogram of Theudemir, the local Visigothic ruler of the early eighth century. The mayor has been highly supportive of archaeology in the town and the local public

of modern archaeological technologies has also pushed Visigothic archaeology forward in the past few decades so that, where once scholars leaned heavily on the chronicles to understand the demographic nature and cultural impact of the conquest of 711, there is now available material evidence which at times supports and in other cases rejects the chronicle narratives.¹⁶²

To effectively draw archaeology into our picture of the Visigothic historiographical tradition, I will consider the extent to which the material and cultural landscape changed between 711–1000 CE.¹⁶³ By illuminating this point, we can address how closely the material record

has also expressed great interest in visiting the site, an interest which brought in the summer of 2018 the arrival of television and film crews to document the excavations and put on a Visigothic cooking demonstration. The author participated in digs here in July and August 2018.

For more on the Visigoths in Riba-Roja tourism, see:

http://www.ribarojadeturiaturismo.com/rt/web_php/index.php?contenido=descripcion&id_boto=3995

The television feature can be found on the August 17, 2018 episode of *El Matí À Punt*: <https://apuntmedia.es/va/a-la-carta/programes/vist-en-tv/el-mati-a-punt/17-08-2018-el-mati-a-punt>

¹⁶² At Valencia La Vella in Riba-Roja, a site which had seen multiple seasons of excavation in the twentieth century, over 125 coins were found with the use of metal-detectors in July and August 2018. Among the coins were an equal number minted in Toledo and Córdoba, an important material supplement to what the chronicle sources tell us of the relatively unequal political position of these two important cities in the sixth and seventh centuries.

“En una excavación en Valencia aparece un pequeño y valioso tesoro toledano en un yacimiento Visigodo”, *Edcm/Europa Press* (El Digital Castilla - La Mancha), 20 August 2018:

<https://www.eldigitalcastillalamancha.es/cultura-y-sociedad/463842692/Aparece-un-pequeno-y-valioso-tesoro-toledano-en-un-yacimiento-visigodo.html>

Likewise, excavations at Mérida reveal a coin production there that rivaled Toledo in number and distribution of artifacts. See: Collins, *Oxford Archaeological Guides*, 185.

More on the archaeology of Valencia la Vella can be found in Albert Ribera I Lacomba, *Los orígenes del Cristianismo en Valencia y su entorno* (Valencia: Ajuntament de Valencia): 127-133.

¹⁶³ The fortuitous discovery of one hundred and fifty-three slate inscriptions in Castile sheds some light on the question of how Visigothic the Iberian Peninsula was in the early eighth century. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz identified fifty-two Visigothic and sixty-three Hispano-Roman names, indicating that the population of Salamanca in the sixth and seventh centuries could have been rather evenly split, though the fact that every inscription discovered is in Latin rather than Gothic indicates that though somewhat distinct culturally, the Iberian Peninsula may have enjoyed some degree of linguistic uniformity for centuries before the invasion.

follows the popular and historiographical conception of what happened to the Visigoths and compare the rather traumatic accounts of chroniclers with how the invasion looked on the ground. For one prominent example of the utility of archaeology in filling gaps in our chronicle sources, we can turn to Pamplona at the foot of the Pyrenees in northern Spain. On one hand, excavations in the city's Plaza del Castillo have yielded one hundred and ninety Muslim tombs, dated absolutely to the mid-eighth century. While this indicates the extent and thoroughness of Visigothic defeat in the north, other findings in the city at Argaray and the Casa del Condestable reflect Christian graves that contain epigraphic rings with Islamic religious inscriptions in archaic Kufic script.¹⁶⁴ These two discoveries within the same city indicate that initial waves of conquest were thorough and reached far to the north, while at the same time, the inscribed rings tell us that local elites could, in some cases, be enthusiastic to adopt Islamic material culture in the first decades after 711. Inscribed local pottery from El Tolmo indicates a nearly complete linguistic Arabization regardless of genetic descent, and the Visigothic hermitage of La Camareta in Albacete features Arabic-inscribed walls which tell us that, even in the rural context, Iberia was fully Arabized in the tenth century.¹⁶⁵ Likewise, in both urban and rural contexts we find Christian generational family burials which seamlessly transition to Muslim funerary practices within the same tomb, demonstrating that the conquest could have been largely

Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "El Latín de España en el siglo VII: Lengua y escritura según los textos documentales," *The Seventh Century*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Jocelyn Hillgarth: 30 and 40.

See: Isabel Velázquez Soriano, *Las pizarras Visigodas (entre el latín y su disgregación. La lengua hablada en Hispania, siglos VI–VIII)* (Burgos: Fundación Instituto Castellano y Leonés de la Lengua, 2004); and Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 42–3.

¹⁶⁴ Sonia Gutiérrez Lloret, "Early al-Andalus: An Archaeological Approach," *New Directions in Early Medieval European Archaeology: Spain and Italy Compared*, ed. Sauro Gelichi and Richard Hodges (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2016): 62.

¹⁶⁵ Gutiérrez Lloret, "Early al-Andalus," 68.

characterized as a smooth cultural transition for those who survived it.¹⁶⁶ The remarkable site of Las Vegas de Puebla Nueva features a fourth century Roman mausoleum converted in the sixth century into a small Visigothic church, then figuratively defaced but otherwise left intact and converted into a mosque in the eighth century.¹⁶⁷

In the region of Albacete, the basilica of El Tolmo de Minateda was protected by a conquest treaty, yet it still became obsolete through renovations that turned it into a fully deconsecrated domestic space in the ninth century, a transformation which indicates to Sonia Gutiérrez Lloret that “there was no will to appropriate religious ‘memory spaces,’” despite their legal protection.¹⁶⁸ A similar process can be seen in the gradual transition of the Visigothic royal palace complex at Reccopolis into an agricultural settlement and *spolia* quarry.¹⁶⁹ The archaeological record reveals that, as traumatic as the conquest was to the chronicler of 754 and the later Asturian chronicling tradition, the situation on the ground was significantly more stable. Visigothic architectural elements remain in the church of Sant Pau del Camp in Barcelona, which appears only to have faced destruction in the late tenth century.¹⁷⁰ The first decades of the eighth century are difficult to identify archaeologically as they offer little difference from the decades preceding the invasion. By the second half of the eighth century, however, we see distinctly Islamic coins, household goods, funerary practices, and agricultural technologies becoming widely adopted. Still, Gutiérrez Lloret places the end of the Islamization process only after 1000,

¹⁶⁶ Gutiérrez Lloret, “Early al-Andalus,” 70.

¹⁶⁷ Collins, *Oxford Archaeological Guides*, 160–1.

¹⁶⁸ Gutiérrez Lloret, “Early al-Andalus,” 72; and Sonia Gutiérrez Lloret and Julia Sarabia Bautista “The Episcopal Complex of Eio-El Tolmo de Minateda (Hellín, Albacete, Spain). Architecture and Spatial Organization. 7th to 8th Centuries AD,” *Hortus artium mediev*, v. 19 (2013): 267–300.

¹⁶⁹ Collins, *Oxford Archaeological Guides*, 224–5.

¹⁷⁰ Collins, *Oxford Archaeological Guides*, 80–1.

with much of the urban topographical transformations taking place from the ninth to the eleventh century. It was not a chaotic and destructive overthrow of the old regime causing waves of migration, but a far more gradual process of treaty-signing and voluntary adoption of Islamic material culture and religious practices in diverse parts of the peninsula.¹⁷¹

The treaty that protected the basilica of El Tolmo was signed by Theudemir, the Visigothic ruler who retained his power by making a treaty with his conquerors in 713. His case is remarkable because, not only is his signed *Pact of Tudmir* preserved in Islamic histories, but multiple archaeological sites have been tied to his name, including the firm identification of at least five of the cities of the *Pact*. A large palace is also suggested to be his construction, based on the discovery of two different inscriptions of his name, which can be found at Pla de Nadal near Valencia (often *B.l.nt.la* in the *Pact*), while a farmstead called *Tall al-Khattab*, which he gave as a dowry in his daughter's marriage to an Egyptian, continued to feature Christian burials in an otherwise Islamic settlement context into the late eighth century.¹⁷² The first decades after the invasion provide a great challenge to historians, but it is clear that archaeology has been able to make important contributions in indicating stability where our historical records describe tumult.

¹⁷¹ Gutiérrez Lloret, "Early al-Andalus," 72; and Albert Ribera y Miquel Roselló, "Valentia en el siglo VII. De Suinthila a Teodomiro" *El siglo VII frente al siglo VII*, CSIC, Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología (2009): 185–203.

¹⁷² Gutiérrez Lloret, "Early al-Andalus," 70.

Information about Pla de Nadal from personal visit to the archaeological site and accompanying museum with archaeologist Albert Ribera in Riba-Roja de Túria in July 2018. The identification of Theudemir's territory as having stretched as far north as Valencia has been called into question by other scholars but continues to be affirmed by archaeologists Miquel Roselló and Albert Ribera and the epigraphic evidence from the site. See: Sonia Gutiérrez Lloret, "La materialidad del Pacto de Teodomiro a la luz de la arqueología" *eHumanista/IVITRA* 5 (2014): 262–288.

On the other hand, we do have evidence of Visigothic sites like the village of El Bovalar which appear to have been abandoned suddenly, with findings like scattered gold coins and evidence of burning.¹⁷³ Limited and heavily damaged findings from the Visigothic period at Toledo have suggested to some that Toledo was damaged especially heavily during the Islamic conquest, and eleventh-century Islamic wares found at the Visigothic church of Santa Maria de Melque suggest that Christian worship at the site may have ended during the conquest.¹⁷⁴ But these cases of destruction and a sudden change of occupation are but few examples in an otherwise stable picture of eighth century political, religious, and cultural transformation.

Even in the heart of al-Andalus, the capital city of Córdoba, the transformation of the city was slow and matched this process of gradual Islamization over centuries.¹⁷⁵ The local palace, today called *Alcazar de Los Reyes Cristianos*, displays Visigothic remains found on the site to tourists, and Latin and Arabic conquest chronicles seem to be in agreement that the commander Mughith occupied a pre-existing palace which he had to give up when his superior Mūsā ibn Nusayr arrived in the city.¹⁷⁶ This same palace was remodeled until the tenth century, and even

¹⁷³ Collins, *Oxford Archaeological Guides*, 126.

¹⁷⁴ Collins, *Oxford Archaeological Guides*, 246–7 and 279.

¹⁷⁵ D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000): 38; and Ann Christys, “The Meaning of Topography in Umayyad Córdoba” *Cities, Texts and Social Networks, 400–1500* ed. Caroline Goodson, Anne E. Lester, and Carol Symes (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010): 114

¹⁷⁶ While not archaeological, the historical record allows us to speculate that parts of the former Visigothic structure may have still been intact and visible, leading to the inclusion of these details in the chronicles. For example, the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* mentions that “Before he became king, [Roderick] built a palace in the city of Córdoba which is now called 'uallat Ruderici' by the Chaldeans.” See: Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 163.

The *Akhbār majmū'a* says “[Mūsā] came to Cordova and told Mughīth: ‘This palace is not suitable for you; but only for the governor (*wālī*) of Cordova.’ So he took his place there. Then Mughīth took over a residence behind the Algeciras Gate – the Bridge Gate – opposite the fissure by which his men entered when Cordova was captured. It was a fine residence, well irrigated, with olives and fruit trees, called *al-Yusāna*, Lucena (?) and had belonged to the governor whom

with the rise of the palatial complex of *Madinat al-Zahra'*, the caliphs could not help but find other bits of ancient and early medieval spolia to incorporate in their spectacular new construction on a hillside not far down the Guadalquivir outside Córdoba.¹⁷⁷ Not only the palaces and monumental architecture reflected the Visigothic past, but citizens would have weaved through remnants of the Visigothic and Roman periods on a daily basis, and their rulers do not seem to have disliked the symbolic connotations of showcasing the architectural achievements of defeated kings and emperors.¹⁷⁸

At least one of the city's two ancient aqueducts continued to provide water to Cordobans into the Islamic period, and the Roman bridge was commissioned for repair by the governor of Córdoba already in 720, allowing easier access to another ancient piece of the city across the river.¹⁷⁹ Ann Christys explains, "the first two centuries of Islamic rule, witnessed few changes to Cordoba's topographical essentials – the walls, the religious and administrative foci inside the city and the suburb of Secunda, [there was] a continuity between the Visigothic and Islamic

he had captured. It made a fine and noble palace for him and was known as 'Mughīth's palace' (*balāt Mughīth*)." See: James, *A History of Early al-Andalus*, 57; Ruggles, *Gardens*, 40, and Susana Calvo Capilla, "The Reuse of Classical Antiquity in the Palace of Madinat al-Zahra' and its Role in the Construction of Caliphal Legitimacy," *Muqarnas* 31, (2014): 1–33.

¹⁷⁷ Ruggles, *Gardens*, 38 and 42.

¹⁷⁸ The situation can perhaps be paralleled with early Islamic Egypt, where the abundance of Pharaonic remains inspired awe and contemplation for Arabic writers, including various traditions of caliphs attempting to break into or destroy the pyramids. Medieval works like Ibrāhīm ibn Wasīf Shāh's *Reports about Egypt and Its Wonders* (12th/early 13th c.) and Abū Ja'far al-Idrīsī's (1173–1251 CE) wonderfully-titled *Lights Lofty of Form in Revealing the Secrets of the Pyramids* reflect the great curiosity many Arabic historians and chroniclers had for the pre-Islamic past. For more on Islamic perceptions of the Pharaonic past in Egypt, see: Martyn Smith, "Pyramids in the Medieval Islamic Landscape: Perceptions and Narratives" in *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 43 (2007): 1–14; and Ulrich Haarmann, "In Quest of the Spectacular: Noble and Learned Visitors to the Pyramids around 1200 A.D.," in *Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams*, ed. Wael Hallaq and Donald Little Adams et al. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991): 57–67

¹⁷⁹ Christys, "Meaning of Topography," 109.

cities...”¹⁸⁰ *Secunda* was called this because it was on the second milestone of the Roman *Via Augusta* leading out of Córdoba, and the suburb retained the name *Shaqunda* in the Islamic period, another palpable reminder of the pre-Islamic past. Likewise, the *cardo maximus*, a major vein of the city’s road network, was still in use in the tenth century.¹⁸¹ Córdoba was, of course, not unique in retaining a topography of the pre-Islamic past—cities like Mérida maintained and continue to preserve monumental features of the pre-Islamic landscape, with its marvelous Temple of Diana having been built directly into the Islamic palace that came to stand in its place.¹⁸² Toledo retained Visigothic inscriptions for chroniclers to record, and the Roman amphitheater of Sagunto was described as “the mother of the marvels” by Safwan ibn Idrīs and visited by many of the local *alfaquíes*, poets, and notables of the twelfth century.¹⁸³ The horseshoe arch is perhaps the most famous material legacy of pre-Islamic Spain, however. Often associated exclusively with Islamic architecture, examples can be found in mosques from Morocco to India. The horseshoe arch has been traced archaeologically to be, in its earliest manifestations, originally of Syrian design, but by a different line of cultural transmission, it was the Visigothic model that would be resituated and spread in the Islamic context.¹⁸⁴ The landscape

¹⁸⁰ Christys, “Meaning of Topography,” 111.

¹⁸¹ Christys, “Meaning of Topography,” 111.

¹⁸² The aqueduct, also still extant and today a notable touristic feature of the city, would have also been a major feature of the medieval city. See: Michael Greenhalgh, *Constantinople to Córdoba: Dismantling Ancient Architecture in the East, North Africa and Islamic Spain* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2012): 198–200.

¹⁸³ The inscription in Toledo survives in the *Chronicle of 754* (see Chapter 2). The description of the amphitheatre of Sagunto can be found here: Jasim Alubudi, “Dos viajes inéditos de Safwā b. Idrīs” *Sharq al-Andalus*, 10-11 (1993–1994): 223–4.

¹⁸⁴ Ruggles, *Gardens*, 38; and Andrew Petersen, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture* (New York: Routledge, 1996): 24.

Evidence of the horseshoe arch can also be found before the Visigothic period, in several Roman funerary inscriptions from León. Two well-preserved examples of Visigothic horseshoe arches erected in the seventh century can be seen at the Visigothic Church of San Juan de Baños, located in a small village between Burgos and Valladolid. Collins is careful to mention for

was then, in many ways, reminiscent of its previous rulers for the first two centuries of Islamic rule.¹⁸⁵

This understanding of the conquest and transition period of the eighth century poses something of a problem for interpreting our chronicle sources. Theudemir turns up in a fantastic account contained in the *Akhbār majmū'a*, ordering the women of Orihuela to stand disguised along the city's walls—a successful, though certainly fictitious, last-ditch effort to encourage the invaders to offer a peace treaty rather than fight.¹⁸⁶ The lamentations of the chronicler of 754 are more incongruent: “the ruin of Spain and its many and great evils...that which, historically, the city of Troy sustained when it fell; that which Jerusalem suffered...that which Babylon bore...; that which finally Rome went through, martyrially graced with the nobility of the apostles—all this and more Spain, once so delightful and now rendered so miserable, endured as much to its honour as to its disgrace.”¹⁸⁷ Could the chronicler have meant this figuratively or did he simply live in a region far more drastically transformed than other sites in our archaeological record seem to suggest?¹⁸⁸ Recent excavations and topographical studies offer a picture of relative stability in both settlement and the cultural and religious landscape. We find religious buildings,

especially curious visitors, that (at least in 1998) one might inquire after the key to the locked church with the priest, whose house could be found at the opposite end of the village. See: "Hallan una estela discoidea con arcos de herradura en las murallas de León" *Soitu*, 30 January 2009; and Collins, *Oxford Archaeological Guides*, 232–3.

¹⁸⁵ Chris Wickham indicates that Alicante has been most heavily studied and indicates a pattern of weak settlement hierarchies until the turn of the tenth century, while in Jaén, a region more central to the economic activity of the Guadalquivir River Valley, Roman and Visigothic sites appear to have retained their same patterns of occupation and aristocratic settlement hierarchy over the same time span. See: Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, 490–1.

¹⁸⁶ David James, *An Early History*, 53.

¹⁸⁷ Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 132–3.

¹⁸⁸ He is variously speculated to have lived and written his chronicle in Toledo, Córdoba, and in the formerly Byzantine provinces of the east coast, in descending order of the theory's popularity.

like the basilica of El Tolmo and others in Theudemir's domain, that were permitted to survive, and major road networks and domestic structure types seem to have survived unchanged for centuries.¹⁸⁹ As Bishop Eulogius made his way through the streets of Córdoba, reflecting on and giving encouragement to the martyrs who were offering their lives in protest to the Islamic regime, he must have been walking down many of the same streets and looking upon many of the same facades, not to mention practicing the same liturgical rites in the same houses of worship, as his Christian ancestors before the conquest. Our early medieval Latin writers seem to be in grief over the displacement of their former Christian rulers, but archaeologically we see conversions in burial evidence and the repurposing of religious structures without any indication that these changes were coerced by the new rulers.

What we find in the archaeological record then are two indications. First, while we have no reason to doubt that the conquest involved significant bloodshed in some cases, we have many indications that the new rulers only had a surface-level impact on their subjects in the first decades, and even centuries, after 711. On the other hand, when looking at evidence of linguistic Arabization and religious conversion, we can find examples of Christians who were quick to

¹⁸⁹ For a study of the house structures and Islamization see Gutiérrez Lloret, "Early al-Andalus," 74–5.

Though her work is based on Arabic sources rather than archaeology, Maribel Fierro has recently shed light on this transitioning early religious landscape of Islamic Spain. Far from annihilation or civilizational overhaul, a sacred olive tree dating to pre-Christian times still stood in San Torcuato after the conquest, described in both Latin and Arabic sources. Ibn Hayyan reports a pagan idol in Cádiz which resisted destruction by the Umayyad emir, and the Church of the Crows on the Cape of San Vicente was routinely shared by both Muslims and Christians. These are simply more scattered bits of evidence of the stability some communities enjoyed during the eighth century, but together these case examples offer witness that not only the physical landscape, but much of the religious practices of the Visigothic period were allowed to be preserved to some extent, and the landscape retained ancient worship patterns and places.

Maribel Fierro, "Holy Places in Umayyad al-Andalus," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 78, 1 (2015): 121–133; and Francisco Javier Simonet, *Historia de los Mozárabes de España deducida de los mejores y más auténticos testimonios de los escritores Cristianos y Arabes* (Madrid: Estab. Tip. de la Viuda é Hijos de M. Tello, 1897): 805.

adopt the religion of their conquerors, or at least to wear its material culture into the grave. If the Latin chroniclers tell us of an epic defeat and destruction redeemed by the divinely-inspired rise of Pelayo in Asturias, excavations in the twenty-first century reflect a process of little coercion on behalf of the conquerors but steady appropriation on the part of those conquered. There was interest among clerical chroniclers in portraying the events of 711 as a tumultuous disaster. It is unclear what motive the anonymous chronicler of 754 may have had for setting post-conquest historiography on a trajectory of lamentation, but by the late ninth century and the rise of Asturias it became clear how far this narrative of victimization could be taken. In portraying 711 as chaos and displacement, the stage was set for a restoration.

II. The Visigoths in Historiographical Context: Ostrogoths, Lombards and Franks

The Visigoths were remembered, and rather accurately in terms of regnal information, in both Latin and Arabic chronicles after the conquest of 711. But the Visigoths were not the only early medieval kings eligible for the type of cultural celebration they received. With shared Germanic origins and similar military successes, the Lombards in Italy and the Franks in France and Germany enjoyed a similar legacy. The abrupt and widespread Arabic-Islamic conquest left the Christian community with a shock of loss and nostalgia for their former rulers that is unique in comparison to these other case examples, but the Franks have enjoyed a continuous national association with modern France and Germany, and the Lombards retain a region in their name. While a comprehensive analysis of Frankish and Lombard historiography and national sentiment is not possible in this thesis, addressing some notable similarities and differences will put the Visigoths and their memory in Spain into perspective.

The eastern Gothic branch, the Ostrogoths, at one time controlled an area far greater than modern Italy, before they were conquered and expelled by the Byzantines under Justinian I's campaign to reconquer large swathes of formerly Roman territories around the Mediterranean.

Peter Heather writes rather conclusively that “some Goths certainly survived as landowners in Italy after 561. They were no longer numerous enough, however, to assert an independent identity. The Ostrogoths had ceased to exist.”¹⁹⁰ In 1891, Thomas Hodgkin reflected in his *Theodoric the Goth, the Barbarian Champion of Civilisation*,

Theodoric the Ostrogoth is one of those men who did great deeds and filled a large space in the eyes of their contemporaries but who, not through their own fault, but from the fact that the stage of the world was not yet ready for their appearance, have failed to occupy the very first rank among the founders of empires and the moulders of the fortunes of the human race.¹⁹¹

He appears to have been at least partially right, the Ostrogoths do not enjoy the same historiographical significance as the Visigoths.¹⁹² It has been suggested, however, that what remained of them was absorbed into another Germanic tribe invading Italy, the Lombards. Many of the key features of Visigothic historiography after the conquest of 711 are mirrored in Lombard historiography after their defeat by the Carolingians in 774. Walter Pohl has demonstrated how the cultural and ethnic significance of the Lombards has been reshaped at different points in Italian history and today they continue to be relevant politically in aims for

¹⁹⁰ Peter Heather, *The Goths*, 276.

Others have agreed, see: Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 192; and Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 55.

¹⁹¹ Thomas Hodgkin (1831–1913), *Theodoric the Goth, the Barbarian Champion of Civilisation*. (London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1891): 1.

¹⁹² Indeed, Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince* ends with an “Exhortation to Liberate Italy from the Barbarians” and reflects a much closer identification with the ancient Romans than with any of their early medieval successors. See: Niccolò Machiavelli and George Bull, *The Prince* (London: Penguin, 1961).

regional sovereignty of Lombardy or Padania, the regional name for northern Italy including Lombardy and Venice.¹⁹³

Paul the Deacon's late 8th century *Historia Langobardorum* is the key text in drawing this parallel.¹⁹⁴ With over 100 extant manuscripts the work had tremendous appeal to an audience that was interested in looking back to the Lombards from their position of Carolingian rule. Paul himself had held office under the last Lombard kings, a detail which certainly influenced his decision to portray them as protagonists in Italian history. "In some ways, written expressions of Lombard identity became more important after the Lombard kingdom had lost its independence," Pohl explains, "Lombard tradition was used in many ways to reassert separate identities, to propagate ways of coexistence with mighty neighbours or to find comfort in defeat."¹⁹⁵ Paul's *Historia Langobardorum* then "became as much a book about the future as a book about the past."¹⁹⁶ The lawbook *Codex Gothanus* compiled by Lupus of Ferrières (c. 805–862) contains the first fully-Christianized origin story for the Lombards which "sees God's hand at work in the Lombards' arrival in Italy," rather than the version Paul includes in which the Lombards are helped and named by the pagan god Wodan, made popular by the mid seventh-century *Origo gentis Langobardum*.¹⁹⁷

Eduardo Fabbro explains that this Christianization of the Lombards was a strategic move in "the battle the Lombards fought after 774, not with weapons but with books, in order to regain

¹⁹³ Eduardo Fabbro, "Charlemagne and the Lombard Kingdom That Was: the Lombard Past in Post-Conquest Italian Historiography" in *Journal of Canadian Historical Association*, v. 25, n. 2 (2014): 2; and Walter Pohl, "Memory, identity and power in Lombard Italy," *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, edited by Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 9.

¹⁹⁴ Pohl, "Memory, identity and power" 10–1.

¹⁹⁵ Pohl, "Memory, identity and power," 21.

¹⁹⁶ Pohl, "Memory, identity and power," 27.

¹⁹⁷ Pohl, "Memory, identity and power," 16 and 27.

control of their Christian past.”¹⁹⁸ The papal biographical compilation the *Liber pontificalis* had slandered the Lombards as a threat against the Church in order to legitimize the looming Carolingian invasion of the Italian Peninsula.¹⁹⁹ This papal alliance fostered the response of Paul the Deacon, who worked St. John the Baptist and St. Michael the Archangel into the chronicled history of the Lombards, the former protecting King Rothari’s (636–652) grave and the latter helping King Cunincpert (688–700) in battle.²⁰⁰ The early ninth-century *Gotha origo*, which expanded on that of the seventh-century, explains their conversion to Christianity in “the land of Italy, [where they found milk and honey flowing, and, what is even more important, they found the salvation of baptism.”²⁰¹ The anonymous author found it important to historiographically absolve the Lombards, even after their defeat and fall from power, in response to the papal polemic of the *Liber pontificalis*.

Around 1000 the legacy of the Lombards survived through the production of various manuscripts annotating and synthesizing the 643 *Edictus Rothari* of the Lombard King Rothari, many of which contained histories and reflections on their ethnic origins. Interest in the Lombards and their role in Italian history, like the Visigoths, increased after their ultimate defeat. While Church figures in Hispania were already working the Goths into Christian history in the sixth and seventh centuries, the Lombards were only understood to have divine importance in Italy after their reign had ended. Their significance grew into the High Middle Ages and a similar value seems to have been placed on both Visigothic and Lombard law codes. Finally, we

¹⁹⁸ Fabbro, “Charlemagne and the Lombard Kingdom,” 2.

¹⁹⁹ Fabbro, “Charlemagne and the Lombard Kingdom,” 3–7.

²⁰⁰ Dick Harrison, “Political Rhetoric and Political Ideology in Lombard Italy,” in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. Walter Pohl with Helmut Reimitz (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1998): 251; and Fabbro, “Charlemagne and the Lombard Kingdom,” 13.

²⁰¹ Fabbro, “Charlemagne and the Lombard Kingdom,” 14.

find that the ancestral political significance of the Visigoths is echoed in the celebration of a unique Lombard history among modern Lombard and Padanian nationalist and secessionist movements, a heritage claim which has been bitterly challenged as anachronistic.²⁰² Many elements in the Visigothic and Lombard historiographical tradition are similar. But a primary distinction can be drawn at the degree of praise each group received—the Lombards have certainly been remembered for their historical significance, but the duration and extent of the tradition of the Visigoths appears far more amplified and pervasive in Spanish history than that of their Italian counterparts.

The historiographical legacy of the Franks also appears similar to the Visigoths in many ways. While the Mozarabic *Chronicle of 741* is less than enthusiastic about the Visigoths, the Carolingian *Chronicle of 741* wastes no time in placing the Franks in a universal Latin-Christian history, linking their genealogy to Frigas of ancient Troy.²⁰³ Likewise, Archbishop Ado of Vienne's *Chronicon* of the late ninth century works to put his own bishopric and the Franks into a narrative of larger importance—Vienne becoming a place of exile for Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the Franks being credited with a decisive impact in the *filioque* theological dispute.²⁰⁴ Regino of Prüm (d. 915) also works Christian figures like John the Baptist and Saint Stephen into his universal Frankish chronicle, but more striking is his decision to include Reccared's conversion to Catholicism, the great Councils of Toledo during the reigns of Chintila and

²⁰² Dwayne Woods, "The Crisis of Center-Periphery Integration in Italy and the Rise of Regional Populism: The Lombard League," *Comparative Politics* 27, no. 2 (1995): 187–203; Benito Giordano, "Italian regionalism or 'Padanian' nationalism – the political project of the Lega Nord in Italian politics," *Political Geography* 19 (2000): 445–471; and Benito Giordano, "The Contrasting Geographies of 'Padania': The Case of the Lega Nord in Northern Italy," *Area* 33, no. 1 (2001): 27–37.

²⁰³ Rosamond McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006): 27–28; and Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 8.

²⁰⁴ McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past*, 29–30.

Sisenand, and the affirmation of Catholicism at the Third Council of Toledo in 589.²⁰⁵ The Franks would continue to be a point of interest in German philology of the nineteenth century, and the quest for a German history in which, Patrick Geary explains, “the Goths, the Franks, the Burgundians, the Vandals, and other early “peoples” were identified by an uninterrupted history which preceded the establishment of the medieval Holy Roman Empire and which reached through the nineteenth century.”²⁰⁶ The Franks are pointed to in modern French history as well, with the Carolingians fitting tidily into the family pedigree of the Kingdom of France.²⁰⁷

The foundation for Frankish historiography is the work of Bishop Gregory of Tours (538–594). While Isidore of Seville found his Visigothic rulers to be praiseworthy in many respects, Gregory of Tours was hard-pressed to find likeable qualities in his Frankish overlords. Yet still, Gregory worked the Franks into a cosmic Christian framework of history much like Isidore and John in Hispania. The anonymous eighth-century author of the *Liber historiae Francorum* borrowed judiciously from the first six books of Gregory’s *Historia*, but the *Liber* stresses the Franks superiority over other Goths and chooses to follow an earlier seventh-century work, the *Chronicle of Fredegar* in seeing the Frankish origin story as beginning with the Trojans, rather than placing their rise within a framework of Roman emperors and Catholic saints as Gregory did.²⁰⁸ Interestingly, the story of the Table of Solomon kept in Toledo is preserved in the *Liber*, indicating to Richard Gerberding that refugee Goths crossing the

²⁰⁵ McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past*, 30–2.

²⁰⁶ Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002): 28–31.

²⁰⁷ See, for example, John E. Morby, s.v. "France, Kingdom of," *Dynasties of the World*, ed. Charlie Rozier (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²⁰⁸ Richard A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber historiae Francorum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987): 13, 31; and Gregory of Tours and Lewis Thorpe, *The History of the Franks* (New York: Penguin Books, 1974): 65–100.

Pyrenees to flee the Muslims must have brought these stories with them into the literary world of the Franks.²⁰⁹ But ultimately, Gregory wrote in fear of the precarious position of the Church under the Franks, insisting that the two could relate in their shared historical origins. The *Liber historiae Francorum*, however, did not follow this narrative trajectory and seems less interested in God's particularism with the Franks, and more concerned with telling the Franks' own story of military and political might, independent from their neighbors and the Romans.²¹⁰ Perhaps the combination of this narrative shift in the eighth century together with the rise and solidification of Frankish political power left the Franks with less of a unified historiographical portrayal than that developing around the Visigoths. Christian chroniclers of the Iberian Peninsula were in agreement, after the seventh century, that the Visigoths were directly tied to Christian universal history. Frankish chroniclers after Gregory, however, were less certain of the divine position of their leaders, and the fact that they were not violently overthrown prevented their historiography from being crystallized into nostalgia.

Mary Garrison has identified a common element behind the various early Visigothic, Lombard, and Frankish histories, and has identified similar sentiments in the self-understandings of Dutch Calvinists, Massachusetts Bay Puritans and the notion of Manifest Destiny in nineteenth-century United States territorial expansion. In her own words:

Despite the authority of the Petrine view that *all* Christians were an elect, the notion of election would be privatized in successive appropriations. Medieval Franks, Britons, Anglo-Saxons and Spaniards alike at various times each claimed the status of God's chosen people for their own, sometimes in ways that excluded other Christians...despite

²⁰⁹ Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, 35.

²¹⁰ Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, 45–6.

Gerberding ultimately finds that the purpose of the *Liber historiae Francorum* was to advocate the rise of Charles Martel and his descendants as legitimate Franks. See pages 171–2.

its biblical grounding, the conviction of special election by God can have no single meaning or function – hence its great interest for historians. It is an enormously powerful idea and at the same time a malleable one.²¹¹

Garrison’s understanding of early medieval Frankish historiography is key to our study of that of the Visigoths, though her analysis of divine election could stretch far beyond the scope of Christianity.²¹² It is this notion of God’s election of one’s own group, kingdom, or religion over others that fuels the memory of figures like the Visigoths, Lombards and Franks. The Lombards and Visigoths fell from power, but they retained this sense of divine election, while the Franks maintained and increased their political position, their cosmological significance fading away later in the Middle Ages.

While the Visigoths fell from their elite position in Iberian society, the kings of Asturias, León and Castile would still lay claim to their textual narrative and thereby form a Christian

²¹¹ Mary Garrison, “The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an identity from Pippin to Charlemagne,” *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 116.

²¹² Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, xvi.

As a point of comparative analysis, however, Garrison follows Kenneth Wolf in making the argument that the *Chronicle of 754* does not see the Visigoths as elect because to render them as such would suggest that the Islamic conquest represented “the elect gone astray.” She agrees that later in Asturias, chroniclers could see themselves in this way as the new elect, despite the Visigoths’ shortcomings, through the figure of Pelayo. But I would argue that the language in the *Chronicle of 754* works against the position of Wolf and Garrison that this conquest was understood “more or less matter-of-factly as a change of regime,” by invoking decidedly biblical and apocalyptic language and raising questions of God’s hand in the destruction by drawing Biblical and early Christian parallels:

That which Jerusalem suffered, as foretold by the eloquence of the prophets; that which Babylon bore, according to the eloquence of the scriptures; that which finally Rome went through, martyrially graced with the nobility of the apostles—all this and more Spain, once so delightful and now rendered so miserable, endured as much to its honour as to its disgrace.

[Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 132–3].

identity in hostility to Islamic powers in the peninsula.²¹³ For clerical historians in the Middle Ages, Germanic groups like Goths, Franks, and Lombards represented a time when God became immanent in their history and was understood to be actively guiding the fate of their kingdom over that of their neighbors. Such ideas, laid down by monumental clerical authors like John of Biclaro, Paul the Deacon, and Gregory of Tours are indeed powerful—strong enough to have been envisioned by chroniclers over a thousand years ago and, in the case of the Visigoths and Lombards, remain continuously relevant to rulers and bishops until the present day, reflecting an enduring tribalism that values early medieval historical mythology as a means to assert political, religious, and cultural claims in the present.²¹⁴

III. Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to demonstrate that the archaeological record offers a far less traumatic picture of the conquest than might be expected given the nostalgic and disconsolate language found in the chronicles describing it. The topographical and religious landscape was largely preserved intact after 711, leaving local inhabitants in a similar world as they had occupied in the seventh century, and local populations seem to have chosen to adopt Islam relatively quickly. As archaeological data expands our perspective on Visigothic historiography, so too does a comparative analysis of the Franks in France and Germany and the Lombards in Italy. These figures each had their own chroniclers to champion them as a source of ancestral political, religious, or cultural identity, and, like the Visigoths, they retained or even grew in importance in the centuries after their political prominence. As the Lombards are invoked in modern discussions of northern Italian secessionist movements and the Franks are

²¹³ McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 7–8.

²¹⁴ Michael Dietler has offered a similar study on Celtic identity in modern Europe, see: Michael Dietler, "Our Ancestors the Gauls': Archaeology, Ethnic Nationalism, and the Manipulation of Celtic Identity in Modern Europe," *American Anthropologist*, 96, 3 (1994): 584–605.

recalled as the ancestral origin of modern France and Germany, so too will the Visigoths continue to be worked into a Spanish national history and for this reason they remain politically relevant today.

CHAPTER 4

The Visigothic Past in Spanish Historiography, Religious Identity and National Origins

Fernando Arce-Sainz, an archaeologist for Spanish state research agency Centro Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), declared in 2015 that the Visigothic Basilica de San Vicente, which is visible in ruins beneath the famed Mosque-Cathedral (*Mezquita*) of Córdoba, was “a historical myth” and “an obstinacy of historiography.”²¹⁵ The popular publication of Arce-Sainz’s hypothesis in various web-based news sources poses great difficulty—what are we to make then of the tourist pamphlet and the dozens of artifacts from the site which are displayed prominently throughout the Mosque-Cathedral and clearly labeled “Visigothic”? If one should go and visit the Mosque-Cathedral in Córdoba, Arce-Sainz’s recent comments would seem absurd.²¹⁶ A transparent floor reveals beautifully-preserved mosaics, a marble Christian altar

²¹⁵ Fernando Arce-Sainz, “La supuesta basílica de San Vicente en Córdoba: de mito histórico a obstinación historiográfica,” in *Al-Qantara*, XXXVI 1, enero-junio (2015): 11–44.

My translation. The Mosque-Cathedral is otherwise known as the Great Mosque of Córdoba. Its construction began in 786 CE under ‘Abd al-Rahman I, the first caliph of the independent Umayyad Emirate of Córdoba. It contains a great variety of architectural styles, including spolia from ruined Roman and Visigothic sites nearby. It is known for its great size, its numerous rows of red and white columns, an original *qibla* wall indicating the direction of Mecca, and an enormous gothic cathedral which was constructed in the center of the mosque in 1532 CE. See: Juan Velasco, “Fernando Arce: “La existencia de la Basílica de San Vicente bajo la Mezquita es un mito,” in *Cordopolis* [Córdoba] (03/12/2017): <http://cordopolis.es/2017/12/03/fernando-arce-la-existencia-de-la-basilica-de-san-vicente-bajo-la-mezquita-es-un-mito/>

²¹⁶ See page: “Visigoth Basilica of San Vicente,” <https://mezquita-catedraldecordoba.es/en/descubre-el-monumento/el-edificio/basilica-visigoda-de-san-vicente/>

shines on display beside a single brick bearing the name of its originating sixth-century workshop.²¹⁷ Arce-Sainz is far from being the first scholar to challenge this narrative, however.²¹⁸ Manuel Ocaña Jiménez wrote in 1942 of the academic debate already surrounding the Mosque-Cathedral, “So many conjectures have been formulated about the great church...that the abundance of such speculation may in itself be the cause for the doubts that exist today on this subject.”²¹⁹ The debate surrounding the ruins lying beneath this UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of Spain’s most popular tourist attractions, offers a case example through which I will analyze later in this chapter how the long tradition of identifying with the Visigoths has continued to live on some thirteen centuries after its first appearance in the work of John of Biclaro. I will first outline the early modern and modern historiographical tradition of the Visigothic period before turning to recent religious and political invocations of the early Middle Ages to demonstrate how, for over a millennium, a uniquely enduring fascination with the Visigothic past has endured.

²¹⁷ These artifacts and remains were discovered during excavations conducted by Félix Hernández Giménez between 1930 and 1936, the findings of which were never published. These artifacts were only retrieved from storage and put on display in January 2005, along with a few photographs depicting the excavation of the 1930s. These remains were not mentioned by Hernández Giménez as belonging to the remains of a former Visigothic basilica. For more on the contested origins of the Visigothic cathedral and its remains, see: Velasco, “Fernando Arce,” 23–6; Jessica R. Boll, “Irony made manifest: cultural contention and Córdoba’s Mosque-Cathedral,” *Journal of Cultural Geography* 34, 3 (2017): 275–302; and D. Fairchild Ruggles, “The Stratigraphy of Forgetting: The Great Mosque of Cordoba and Its Contested Legacy,” *Contested Cultural Heritage: Religion, Nationalism, Erasure, and Exclusion in a Global World*, ed. Helaine Silverman (Springer: New York, 2011): 51–67.

²¹⁸ See Nuha N. N. Khoury, “The Meaning of the Great Mosque of Cordoba in the Tenth Century,” *Muqarnas* 13, 1 (1996): 80–94 and Susana Calvo Capilla, “Las primeras mezquitas de al-Andalus a través de las fuentes árabes, 92/711–170/785,” *Al-Qantara: Revista de estudios Árabes* (2007): 143–180.

²¹⁹ Manuel Ocaña Jiménez, “The Basilica of San Vicente and the Great Mosque of Córdoba: A New Look at the Sources,” *The Formation of al-Andalus* 2 (1942): 257.

I. The Historiography of Spanish National Identity: *Convivencia* and *Reconquista*

Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas (1580–1645), an aristocratic poet of the Spanish Golden Age, composed a sonnet that celebrated Christopher Columbus for having “brought the Visigoths to the unknown edge of the globe.”²²⁰ The sentiment would have resonated with Quevedo’s contemporaries. The understanding that Spain’s royalty and national essence could be connected to the Visigoths was firm in the early modern period.²²¹ At the very end of the fifteenth century, Giovanni Nanni of Viterbo, known as Anniius, wrote a best-selling work called *Antiquitatum variarum* which explained that these “most Christian rulers Ferdinand and Elisabeth,” who the book was dedicated to, could look to the Goths and Alans, who first entered Europe from the Caspian Sea, to find their origins.²²² Though already notorious in his own time for including

²²⁰Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 153 and Jocelyn Hillgarth, “Spanish Historiography and Iberian Reality,” *History and Theory* 24, 1 (1985): 23–43.

“Colón pasó los godos

Al ignorado cerco de esta Bola”

Francisco De Quevedo Villegas, “Advertencia a España de que ansi como se ha heco Señora de muchos, ansi sera de tantos enemigos envidiada” *Poesias escojidas*, 5, (Madrid: Imprenta de Don Enrique Trujillo, 1843): 30.

See an earlier example of this Columbus and the Goths idea here: Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, Real Academia de la Historia, and Jos Amador de los Rios, *Historia general y natural de las Indias, islas y tierra-firme del mar oceano*, 2. (Madrid: Impr. de la Real academia de la historia, 1852): 4.

²²¹ Ana Méndez-Oliver, “‘Translating’ the Origins of the Spanish Nation in Miguel De Luna’s Verdadera Historia Del Rey Don Rodrigo,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de littérature comparée* 44, (2017): 749; and Devaney, “Virtue, Virility, and History,” 748–9.

²²² Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 141.

Porro quum Gothi et Alani a Caspiis in Europam se primū diffuderint: hiq post Christum in tanto in Hispanias penetrauerint atque ad hanc aetatē regnauerint; cōsequēs necessario est ut posterī Gothi nō variauerint priscā originem Hispanice gētis. Hec igit est tum inuariata: tum maxime vera vestra origo celsi reges Ferdinande et Helisabet christianissimi principes.

[Johannes Anniius, *Antiquitatu[m] variar[u]m volumina XVII*, ed. Josse Bade, Jean Petit, Colegio Menor de la Compañía de Jesús (Universidad Complutense (Alcalá de Henares), and Colegio Imperial (Jesuitas) 1515): 189.]

many fraudulent ancient texts and for his methodology of blending source-based history with romantic fiction, Anniius' work continued to be reprinted and cited in the works of other prominent historians throughout the sixteenth century and beyond. The popularity of Anniius' work ensured that this message of royal Gothic origins and its implications in Spanish national identity would survive through the early modern period.²²³

If you happened to live in Toledo at the turn of the next century, you might have been lucky enough to witness the performance of one of Lope de Vega's comedies, the *Comedia de Bamba* (1604) and *El ultimo godo* (1617), which presented the history of the Visigoths through the legends surrounding King Wamba and Rodrigo. Bruce Burningham writes of *El ultimo godo*, "Lope has constructed his *comedia* in such a way as to provide for his audience's natural desire to leave the theater remembering not the biggest tragedy in the nation's history, but the heroic determination of the *crisianos viejos* (Old Christians) in the face of such a catastrophe."²²⁴ Lope de Vega's work is not representative of the historical lives of the kings he portrays, but was rather intended to evoke romantic memories of a distant yet familiar time in Spanish history with

²²³ Anniius was Italian himself, and his *Antiquitatum variarum* was especially beloved in France. Portions of it seem to have been recognized as forgery only a few years after publication. See: M. Rothstein, "The Reception of Anniius of Viterbo's Forgeries: The Antiquities in Renaissance France," *Renaissance Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (2018): 580–609.

For Anniius' methodology, see Christopher R. Ligota, "Anniius of viterbo and historical method," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): 44–56.

²²⁴ The comedies are also remarkable in that they include many accounts which survived intact from the earliest chronicles and were preserved in de Vega's source Miguel de Luna, like the stories of Count Julian and the sealed house in Toledo. They are not the earliest works of theatre based on Visigothic legend, however; Bartolomé Palau's early sixteenth-century play *Historia de la gloriosa Santa Orosia* follows a daughter of the king of Bohemia who is martyred by Muslim invaders while traveling to Spain to marry King Roderic. See: Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 129, 156–7.

For a detailed look at *El ultimo godo* and de Vega's influences, see Bruce R. Burningham, "The Moor's Last Sigh: National Loss and Imperial Triumph in Lope De Vega's the Last Goth," *LATCH: A Journal for the Study of the Literary Artifact in Theory, Culture, Or History* 3, (2010): 34.

which they could connect through a shared religious heritage. As the tiny market town on the meseta, Madrid, was looking to the future and rising to overcrowded, metropolitan glory, artists and audiences on the ancient Toledan promontory were content to turn away from the noise of the new capital's construction and look far into the past for entertainment and heroic legend.²²⁵

As Spanish Visigothic identity found new life in these early modern voices, there were plenty of writers and intellectuals in this period who were quick to challenge and complicate the praise many were expressing for the Visigoths. In 1519, Martín Fernández de Enciso, the first geographer to publish a scientific description of America, rejected what Annius had written of Ferdinand and Isabella just two decades before. He deliberately instructed his nineteen-year-old pupil and the grandson of Ferdinand, Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor (1500–1558) that Iberians were more warlike than the Goths and that the king should remember that he descends from the superior Iberians through Pelayo, not a Goth in his eyes, but the son of the duke of Cantabria.²²⁶ The rhetorician Alfonso Garcia Matamoros slightly later in the century referred to the Goths as a plague of barbarians who could only be civilized by the diligent work of Spanish bishops and church leaders.²²⁷ Miguel de Luna was a Morisco, or a Spanish former-Muslim whose family had been compelled to convert, and an official translator of Arabic for Kings Felipe II and Felipe III. He was careful to point out in his 1589 *Historia verdadera del Rey Don Rodrigo y de la perdida de España* that the Arabic-Islamic invasion was completely legitimate, following that 'Abd al-Aziz did, after all, marry Egilona, the daughter and legitimate heiress of

²²⁵ C.W. Sieber, *The Invention of a Capital: Philip II And The First Reform Of Madrid* (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Microfilms International, 1985): ii–iii.

²²⁶ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 146–147; and Andrés Prieto, "Alexander and the Geographer's Eye: Allegories of Knowledge in Martín Fernández De Enciso's *Suma De Geographía* (1519)," *Hispanic Review* 78, no. 2 (2010): 169–188.

²²⁷ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 149; and G. G. Vioque, "Humanistic Influences in the Spanish Rhetorician Alfonso Garcia Matamoros: A Study of *De Ratione Dicendi Libri Duo* (Alcala, 1548)," *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 12, 2 (1994): 150–171.

Roderic.²²⁸ He saw the Arab invaders as far more virtuous than Rodrigo and the multiple translations of his work, a “true” version of Visigothic history, are to Hillgarth “another witness to the power of the Gothic myth.”²²⁹ Jesuit historian José de Moret portrayed Romans, Goths, and Muslims alike as invaders of Spain in his *Investigaciones históricas* (1665), and he was in accord with de Enciso in arguing against the common conception that these foreign groups went on to produce the kings and nobles of the region, declaring instead that they came and left, contributing very little blood to the Spanish gene pool.²³⁰ José de Sigüenza had already expressed this type of blanket distaste for non-Iberian influences in 1600 when he explained that Spanish architects were finally opening their eyes to the artistic techniques that had been betrayed and ruined by “the Goths, Moors, and other barbaric nations...for over a thousand years.”²³¹

The Moroccan historian Muhammad al-Maqqarī reflected more positively on medieval al-Andalus from seventeenth-century Ottoman Cairo, finding the region and its history to be unique and deeply intertwined with the rest of the Islamic world.²³² His *Nafh al-tīb* is a unique

²²⁸Méndez-Oliver, "'Translating' the Origins of the Spanish Nation," 735; José Godoy Alcántara and Real Academia de la Historia, *Historia crítica de los falsos cronicones* (Madrid: Impr. de M. Rivadeneyra, 1868): 97–8; and Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 151.

²²⁹ Hillgarth, *Spanish Historiography and Iberian Reality*, 31.

²³⁰ José de Moret (1615–1687), *Investigaciones históricas de las antigüedades del reyno de Navarra*, (Pamplona: Pascual Ibañez, 1766): 169–170; and Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 150 and 164.

²³¹ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 164.

Levantose un claustro grande, y de los bien entendidos de la Arquitectura de aquel tiempo, que yua ya abriendo los ojos a mejores trazas, dando en rostro a los Españoles lo que les avian dexado Godos y Moros, y otras naciones Barbaras que arruinaron, por decirlo ansi, con sus avenidas todas las buenas artes, y en España las ahogaron casi de todo punto, por mas de mil años.

[José de Sigüenza (c. 1544–1606), *Historia de la orden de San Jerónimo*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Bailly, Bailliére é Hijos, Editores, 1907): 43.]

²³² Sabahat Fatima Adil, *Memorializing Al-Maqqarī: The Life, Work, and Worlds of a Muslim Scholar* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2015): 12–3, 217; and Sabahat F. Adil,

and comprehensive history of al-Andalus that incorporates the work of much older scholars whose writings would otherwise be lost. He includes stories familiar from the medieval chronicles, like the account of Tariq ibn Ziyad finding the table of Solomon in the temple in Toledo, and also some less familiar, a detailed account of the mythical Ishbán, the namesake of Hispania, for example.²³³ His account of the conquest is extremely detailed in comparison to other conquest histories, and he speculates at various length on three potential causes for the conquest of al-Andalus: (1) the appointment of Mūsā ibn Nusayr, (2) the invitation of the invaders by the vengeful Count Julian in Ceuta, (3) Roderic's opening of the sealed house in Toledo.²³⁴ Daniel König explains, however, that, though comprehensive in scope, al-Maqqarī fails to furnish a better version of Visigothic history” than those he is drawing from.²³⁵ While he revitalizes the conversation, his work marks the twilight of Islamic interest in the Visigoths, rather than representing any widespread seventeenth-century fascination. Regardless, Al-Maqqarī's *Nafh al-tīb* is a unique exploration of al-Andalus and its past from afar, reflecting the remarkable interest some Muslims retained for not only their own history in the peninsula, but also that of the Visigoths. It is remarkable that, nearly a millennium after their fall from power in 711, and more than a century after the surrender of Nasrid Granada, the last stronghold of Islamic rulership, the legends of Visigothic kings were still circling the mind of a scholar on the opposite shores of the Mediterranean.

"Scholarship, Space, and Strategies of Belonging in Al-Maqqarī's (d. 1031/1632) Literary and Historical Writings," *The Journal of North African Studies* (2018): 12.

The only English editions of al-Maqqari's *Nafh al-tīb* are based on the nineteenth-century translation of Pascual de Gayangos y Arce (d. 1897), known to be problematic for the translator's elaborations and rearrangement of the original text. See: Pascual de Gayangos, *History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 2000).

²³³ Gayangos, *History of the Mohammedan Dynasties*, 24–5.

²³⁴ Gayangos, *History of the Mohammedan Dynasties*, 255–7.

²³⁵ König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West*, 181.

In the following centuries, the memory of the Visigoths became decidedly more political. Outside Spain, many seventeenth-century English writers like Peter Heylyn (1599–1662), James Harrington (1611–1677), and Sir William Temple (1628–1699) all pointed to Visigothic institutions for early models of political liberty.²³⁶ Visigothic historiography began to take on a national-political agenda in Spain when in 1762 the Academy of History in Madrid decided to promote investigation of the geographical origins of the Goths and to study the first Gothic king in Iberia.²³⁷ Melchior de Jovellanos (1744–1811) and Francisco Martínez Marina (1754–1833) idealized the Visigoths as brilliant lawmakers and influential monarchs. Contemporary to these more romantic thinkers was Catalan Jesuit historian Juan Francisco de Masdeu (1744–1817) who first began to critically analyze and find major problems with our sources for the Visigothic period, though even he stayed in line with the historiographical trend of the time, viewing Gothic rule favorably as an era of cultivation and reinvigoration of the Spanish warrior spirit.²³⁸ Only much later would the celebration of the Visigoths face significant challenge again. José Ortega y Gasset offered a fairly critical perspective in his 1921 *España invertebrada*, labeling the Visigoths as weak rulers before they had even entered the Iberian Peninsula, and consequently,

²³⁶ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 162–163; Samuel Kliger, *The Goths in England: A Study in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952); and Hillgarth, J. N. *The Mirror of Spain, 1500–1700: The Formation of a Myth* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000): 234–5.

²³⁷ Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 165.

²³⁸ Juan Francisco de Masdeu (1744–1817), *Historia crítica de España y de la cultura Española. Tomo I y preliminar a la historia, discurso histórico filosófico sobre el clima de España, el genio y el ingenio de los españoles* (Madrid: Don Antonio de Sancha, 1783); and Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 165–7.

“En tiempo de los Godos y de los Arabes, cuando las demás naciones eran rudas e incultas, la Española prosiguió en su cultura en todo género sin decadencia.” [de Masdeu, *Historia crítica*, 182–183.]

“Debajo del monimio de los Godos volvió a tomar su natural vigor de espíritu guerrero de los Españoles, dando pruebas extraordinarias, con singularidad en las guerras contra los Moros, que duraron muchos siglos.” [de Masdeu, *Historia crítica*, 109.]

he understood them to have been rather easily swept off of it.²³⁹ Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo was precise in expressing his aversion to the Visigoths in his *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* (1880–2):

... That same *individualism* or excess of *personality* that the races of the North brought, induced them to frequent and scandalous rebellions, to internal discord, and what's worse, to betrayals, to perjuries against their people and race because they did not harbor those great ideas of *homeland* and of *city*, typical of Hellenes and Latins. Because of that the Visigothic nobility, headed by the sons of Witiza and by the Archbishop Don Oppas, sells the land to the Muslims, deserts the Battle of Guadalete, and Theudemir, after brief resistance, surrenders to the dishonorable pact with 'Abd al-Aziz.

Great faults had to purge the Visigothic race. It was not least their absolute incapacity to constitute a stable regime or a civilization. And, yet, how much greatness in that period! But the science and art, the canons and laws are glory of the Church, Spanish glory. The Visigoths have left nothing, not a stone, nor a book, nor a memory, if we take out the letters of Sisebut and Bulgoranos, written perhaps by Spanish bishops and put in the name of those high personalities... What the Goths brought was reduced to some barbarian laws which fight with the rest of our law codes, and it was that indiscipline and disorder that ruined the empire that they established.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Ramón Menéndez Pidal and Walter Starkie, "The Essay on Spain," *The Spaniards in their History* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1950): 6–7; Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 172; and José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955), *Espanã invertebrada; Bosquejo de algunos pensamientos históricos* (Madrid: 1921): 153.

For more on influences to Ortega's historiography, see Nelson R. Orringer, "Henry Buckle's Decadent Spain in Ortega's "España invertebrada"," *Hispanic Review* 72, 1 (2004): 101–124.

²⁴⁰ My translation, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, v. I, (Madrid: Raycar, S.A. Impresores, 1947): 371–2.

It is interesting to note to that he describes the Pact of Theudemir as "deshonroso," as today this pact is something of a point of pride in Valencia, commemorated in the logo for the community

As Spain entered the modern period, the national foundation myth and its sources began to be thoroughly investigated and challenged, but this trend in historiographical criticism was interrupted by Spain's next major military conflict.

The Spanish Civil War (1936–39) fostered warmer memories of the Visigoths in questions of national religious and political identity. Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1869–1968) championed Castile as the natural leader and unifier of Spain, a direct political heir to the Visigothic kingdom. He saw the Visigoths as admirable in their rule and describes a direct connection between the Visigothic Catholic Church and modern Spanish religious sentiment, writing:

The pure unfettered religious spirit which had been preserved in the north gave impetus and national aims to the Reconquest. Without its strength of purpose Spain would have given up in despair all resistance and would have become denationalized. In the end it would have become Islamized as did all the other provinces of the Roman Empire in the east and south of the Mediterranean...What gave Spain her exceptional strength of collective resistance and enabled her to last through three long centuries of great peril was her policy of fusing into one single ideal the recovery of the Gothic states for the fatherland and the redemption of the enslaved churches for the glory of Christianity.²⁴¹

In 1937, General Francisco Franco similarly pointed to the north as a historical symbol of Spanish national identity, saying in a speech, “our banner has been raised beside the Cross of

of Riba-Roja de Túria's tourism office, which oversees two major Visigothic sites, one of which is believed to have belonged to Theudemir himself, in his capacity as the Duke of Valentia, though this is disputed. See: http://www.ribarroja.es/patrimoni_i_turisme

²⁴¹ Ramón Menéndez Pidal and Walter Starkie, *The Spaniards in their History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966): 41–3; Ramón Menéndez Pidal and Diego Catalán, *Los españoles en la historia* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1982): 105–6; and Ksenia Bonch Reeves, *Visions of Unity After the Visigoths: Early Iberian Latin Chronicles and the Mediterranean World* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2016): 27.

Covadonga.”²⁴² This sentiment, preserved even in some of the earliest sources of the eighth-century conquest, was most recently echoed by Princess Leonor when she visited Covadonga in Asturias as her first official act outside of the palace in September of 2018.²⁴³

After the Spanish Civil War, medieval Spain again provided the battleground for major historiographical debates, most popularly the notions of *convivencia*, whether and to what extent medieval Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived harmoniously under Islamic rule, and *Reconquista*, the notion of an ideologically-unified Christian military campaign against Islamic forces in the peninsula. In 1948, Américo Castro picked up the term *convivencia* from Menéndez Pidal and ran with it as a historiographical focal point, championing both the cultural commingling and antagonism of the eleventh to fourteenth centuries as fundamental in forging the unique modern Spanish identity. Shortly after, Claudio Sánchez Albornoz began responding to Castro in a debate that would survive both of their deaths in the mid-1970s. Though it mainly concerns the high and late Middle Ages, the Visigoths play a role in this debate. In his later work, Castro came to acknowledge that Visigothic memory was a force in the kingdoms of León and Castile, but he at first saw them as unessential to Spanish identity.²⁴⁴ Sánchez Albornoz held the pre-Arab past in a special kind of reverence. He believed that true Catholic Spanish identity

²⁴² Hillgarth, *The Visigoths*, 172–3.

For more on Franco, National Catholicism, and notions of *Reconquista*, see Alejandro García Sanjuan, “Rejecting al-Andalus, exalting the Reconquista: historical memory in contemporary Spain,” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 10:1 (2018): 127–145.

See also: Eduardo Manzano Moreno and Perez Garzon Juan Sisinio, “A difficult nation?” *History and Memory*, 14, 1 (2002): 259–284.

²⁴³ The first battle of the *Reconquista* is believed to be the Battle of Covadonga in 718 CE during which Pelagius secured a victory and established the Christian kingdom of Asturias. See: Lucía Abellán, “La princesa Leonor estrena su agenda oficial de viajes en Asturias” in *El País*, 8 September 2018: https://elpais.com/politica/2018/09/08/actualidad/1536398715_714338.html

²⁴⁴ “Un debate histórico: Centenario del autor de ‘La realidad histórica de España,’ *El País* (archived), first appeared 3 May 1985. https://elpais.com/diario/1985/05/03/cultura/483919201_850215.html

was only burdened by Islam and Judaism, rather than cultivated by interactions with these supposed outsiders, and, like Menéndez Pidal, he imagined a Visigothic Spanish identity that would endure, rather than be shaped by, the Islamic conquests.²⁴⁵ The history of the Visigoths, their religion and their rule, has remained important long after Castro and Sánchez Albornoz argued over the essence of modern Spanish identity, and it remains a critical backdrop for understanding the religious policies that fostered *Convivencia* in the centuries of Islamic governance.²⁴⁶

Convivencia and the ancient *Reconquista* narrative of Pelayo and Covadonga are foundational concepts in medieval Spanish historiography, and the implications these concepts have in notions of modern religious and national identity have fostered decades of argument.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Kenneth Baxter Wolf, "Convivencia in Medieval Spain: A Brief History of an Idea," *Religion Compass* 3, 1 (2009): 74; Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, *España, un enigma histórico*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1956); and Américo Castro, *España en su historia: Cristianos, Moros y Judíos*, 3rd. ed. (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1984).

This sentiment of Spanish identity enduring the conquest is still reproduced in the twenty-first century, evident in the recent publication of Emilio González Ferrín's notoriously problematic *Cuando fuimos árabes* (Córdoba: Almuzara, 2018).

²⁴⁶ The *convivencia* debate has been taken up by many scholars and remains a fruitful object of analysis today, although the focus is now largely removed from the notion of Spanish ethno-religious identity. See: P. E. Russell, "The Nessus-Shirt of Spanish History," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 36, 4 (1959): 219–225; Vivian B. Mann, Jerrilynn Denise Dodds, and Thomas F. Glick, *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*, (New York: G. Braziller, 1992); Maya Soifer, "Beyond Convivencia: Critical Reflections on the Historiography of Interfaith Relations in Christian Spain," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 1 (2009): 19–35; Oriol Pi-Sunyer, "The Perception of the Past: Spanish Historiography," in *The Bucknell Review* 18, 2 (1970): 1–11; Alex Novikoff, "Between Tolerance and Intolerance in Medieval Spain: An Historiographic Enigma," in *Medieval Encounters* 11 (2005): 7–36; Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom*.

²⁴⁷ Including the "negationist" argument of Ignacio Olagüe and Emilio González Ferrín, which suggests that there was no such conquest as we understand it, and Islam in Spain the result of an internal peninsular transformation. See: Alejandro García San Juan, "Ignacio Olagüe y El Origen De al-Andalus: Génesis y Proceso De Edición Del Proyecto Negacionista," *Revista de estudios internacionales Mediterráneos*, 24 (2018): 173–198; Ferrín, *Cuando fuimos Árabes*; Luis Molina, "La conquista Islámica de la Península Ibérica y la tergiversación del pasado," *Medievalismo* (25) (2015): 455–9; Ignacio Olagüe, *Les Arabes n'ont jamais envahi l'Espagne*

Both Castro and Sánchez Albornoz wrote in exile from the Spanish Republic, not least because of the political implications of their writings at a time when many were invested in finding the origins of a Spanish “national character.”²⁴⁸ The language of the debate has largely shifted away from overtly political themes like ethnogenesis, but modern *Convivencia* and *Reconquista* studies have continued to push forward our understanding of medieval and modern conceptions of the Visigothic past. For a case example of the significance of the Visigoths in Spain today, we can turn to the heart of former al-Andalus, to Córdoba’s *Mezquita* and the tensions surrounding prayer at the site.

II. Deploying the Visigothic Past: Muslim Visitors at the *Mezquita* of Córdoba

In Córdoba, most invocations of the Visigothic past surface in discussions of the Mosque-Cathedral, and this particular site serves as a stage for the most bitter debate about our archaeological and historical sources from this period. Fernando Arce-Sainz’s refutation of the story of the Basilica de San Vicente points to archaeology for support, and his findings are maintained by other scholars as well as some of the most authoritative archaeological publications on the subject.²⁴⁹ The archaeology attests to multiple periods of occupation and construction at the site, but none of the pre-Islamic structural remains are identifiably

(Paris: Flammarion, 1969); and José Sánchez Herrero, "Nació El Islam En España?" *Hispania Sacra* 65, (2013): 7–28.

²⁴⁸ Wolf, “Convivencia in Medieval Spain,” 72–5.

²⁴⁹ See: Nuha N. N. Khoury, “The Meaning of the Great Mosque of Cordoba in the Tenth Century,” *Muqarnas* 13, no. 1 (1996): 80–94; and Antonio Fernández-Puertas, *Mezquita de Córdoba: Su estudio arqueológico en el siglo XX* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, Universidad de Córdoba, 2009).

Eric Calderwood also notes that Susana Calvo Capilla rejected the notion of a church on the site of the Mosque-Cathedral in a public lecture in Córdoba in October of 2014. See: Eric Calderwood, “The Reconquista of the Mosque of Córdoba,” in *Foreign Policy*, 10 April 2015. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/10/the-reconquista-of-the-mosque-of-cordoba-spain-catholic-church-islam/>

religious.²⁵⁰ Additionally, the traditional story of the Basilica de San Vicente comes only from Ibn Idhari's fourteenth-century *al-Bayan al-Maghribi* and al-Maqqari's (d. 1632 CE) quotations of a much earlier source.²⁵¹ The story tells of the partitioning of a Christian church, but Nuha Khoury has suggested that this may be a literary emulation of the partitioning and destruction of the church of St. John in Damascus.²⁵² Strangely, Christian authorities and the exhibit within the Mosque-Cathedral also point to these same excavations and sources for evidence of the Basilica's existence.²⁵³ It must be noted then that the marble altar and numerous *chi-ro* inscribed "Visigothic" remains displayed around the site were only retrieved from storage and put on display in January 2005, together with the photographs depicting the excavation of the 1930s.²⁵⁴ These remains were not mentioned publicly by supervising archaeologist Felix Hernández Giménez as belonging to the remains of a former Visigothic basilica, and photos of them could not be found when researching in the photographic archive of his excavations held at the Museo

²⁵⁰ Arce-Sainz, "La supuesta basilica," 40.

²⁵¹ They both look back to Muhammad al-Razi's tenth-century *Ajbar mulūk al-Andalus*. Our surviving versions of this work are Spanish and Portuguese editions of the fourteenth-century and these do not contain the description of the Basilica or its partitioning. See: Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Rāzī, Diego Catalán, and María Soledad de Andrés, *Crónica del Moro Rasis: Versión del Ajbār mulūk al-Andalus* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1974).

²⁵² Khoury, "Meaning of the Great Mosque of Cordoba," 84.

²⁵³ Photos of the Hernández Giménez excavations are displayed on the interior walls of the Mosque-Cathedral, see Figure 10.

For the claims of church authorities see Giles Tremlett, "Two arrested after fight in Córdoba's former mosque," in *The Guardian*, 1 April 2010.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/apr/01/muslim-catholic-mosque-fight?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487>

²⁵⁴ Arce-Sainz, "La supuesta basilica," 23–4; and D. Fairchild Ruggles, "The Stratigraphy of Forgetting: The Great Mosque of Cordoba and Its Contested Legacy," in *Contested Cultural Heritage: Religion, Nationalism, Erasure, and Exclusion in a Global World*, ed. Helaine Silverman (Springer: New York, 2011): 57.

For images of the Visigothic remains, see Figures 2-9.

Arqueológico de Córdoba.²⁵⁵ With these considerations in mind, it appears that the Basilica de San Vicente may indeed be a myth—and yet we can find it recalled *ad nauseum* in journalism and tourist information, with palpable repercussions.

Two visitors were arrested and two guards were injured in late March 2010 after several Austrian Muslim students out of a much larger visiting group began to pray inside the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba. Other Muslim visitors have described a hostile security presence regardless of any attempt to pray.²⁵⁶ Descriptions of this situation nearly always include the detail that the mosque was built on a Visigothic church, and the eighth to the thirteenth centuries were labelled at one time in the site's brochure (though since removed) as “the Muslim Intervention.”²⁵⁷ By claiming a Visigothic origin for the site, the authors of the Mosque-Cathedral's tourist brochure challenge the validity of Islamic claims of identity and heritage in association with the structure's past.²⁵⁸ While Arce-Sainz and even others long before him have

²⁵⁵ Fernández-Puertas has illuminated this controversy by juxtaposing the thoughts of various experts on the archaeological work of Hernández Gimenez in the 1930s. They all essentially relate that Hernández Gimenez was on the fence about it, hesitant to say that the remains beneath the Mosque-Cathedral were indeed a church, see 279–296.

Arce-Saiz, “La supuesta basilica,” 39–41; Velasco, “Fernando Arce,” 23–26; Jessica R. Boll, “Irony made manifest: cultural contention and Córdoba's Mosque-Cathedral,” *Journal of Cultural Geography* 34, no. 3 (2017): 275–302; and Ruggles, “The Stratigraphy of Forgetting,” 51–67.

²⁵⁶ More below, but see Figure 12 for one example.

²⁵⁷ Calderwood, “Reconquista of the Mosque of Córdoba.”

The situation has been titled by Wikipedia as the “Muslim campaign at Córdoba Cathedral.”

Wikipedia contributors, “Muslim campaign at Córdoba Cathedral,” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia,

https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Muslim_campaign_at_C%C3%B3rdoba_Cathedral&oldid=808557794 (accessed May 3, 2018).

²⁵⁸ See Figure 11 for a photo of the current tourist brochure. Figure 14 is a photo of the information sign describing the origins of the Visigothic Basilica.

For only one example of the symbolic importance of the Mosque of Córdoba in Islamic tradition, see Muhammad Iqbal's, “The Mosque of Córdoba” *Iqbal, a Selection of the Urdu Verse: Text*

worked to challenge this narrative, the suggestion in some chronicles that a Visigothic church existed beneath the mosque, and especially the much later account by Ibn ‘Idhari of the sharing of the Basilica de San Vicente have provided the ground on which this brochure narrative stands.²⁵⁹ Today, when entering the Mosque-Cathedral as a tourist, the Visigothic origins claimed for the site cannot be ignored, and likewise they are consistently invoked in discussions of Muslim prayer inside the building.

Two articles from British newspaper *The Guardian* serve to illustrate this persistent appeal to the Visigothic past. In April 2010, Giles Tremlett detailed the violent altercation between Muslim visitors and security guards, mentioning that “Church authorities also recalled that archeologists had shown that...a Christian temple had stood on the same spot.”²⁶⁰ When reporting several years earlier that the pope had been asked if Muslims might be able to pray within the Mosque-Cathedral, journalist Dale Fuchs was careful to mention that the mosque was built on a Visigothic church and even a Roman temple before that.²⁶¹ These claims are unfortunately echoed in public conversations, made evident in the comment sections of popular travel websites like Tripadvisor. In a 2008 post, a contributor warns other potential Mosque-Cathedral visitors of the atmosphere of heavy security and the repeated reminders Muslims

and Translation, ed. Sir Muhammad Iqbal and David Matthews (New Delhi, India: Heritage Publishers, 1993).

²⁵⁹ Guy Hedgecoe, “Córdoba controversy: Historic Mosque-Cathedral mired in cultural dispute,” in *Aljazeera America*, 24 March 2015. <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/5/24/cordoba-mosque-cathedral-controversy.html>

²⁶⁰ Giles Tremlett, “Two arrested after fight in Córdoba’s former mosque.”

²⁶¹ The Roman temple is an embellishment which appears from time to time in unofficial information about the Mosque-Cathedral, but in my opinion, it seems to be some confusion regarding the revealed mosaic which is labeled onsite as Visigothic, but is occasionally referred to in publication as Late Roman; see Fernández-Puertas, 74; and Dale Fuchs, “Pope asked to let Muslims pray in cathedral,” in *The Guardian*, 28 December 2006.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/dec/28/spain.catholicism?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT348>

receive not to pray. One comment in response reads "...I do think that you should be allowed to pray in the Mosque. It was muslims who built it after all." To which another contributor replied, "Not really, the Mosque was built by the moors over San Vicente Chapel, this is a visigothic temple built on VI century [sic]."²⁶² A distinction must certainly be made between professional journalists and Tripadvisor contributors, but it is important to consider the way these discussions of the early Middle Ages play out in public, non-academic settings.

D. Fairchild Ruggles explains, "Medieval history plays a powerful role in modern heritage politics. Especially in Spain, the interpretation of the medieval Iberian past, with its intertwining threads of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish culture, is a deeply political act."²⁶³ Ruggles ultimately buys the story of the Basilica de San Vicente, but she makes clear that the exhibition of Visigothic remains beginning in 2005 represents a political deployment of archaeology against claims of cultural and religious identity at the site. In 2017, Jessica R. Boll pointed out similarly that, "despite financially benefitting from the building's heterogeneous past, the Church has thus reinforced and reiterated a discriminatory discourse and contradicts a tourist industry that explicitly celebrates the monument's Islamic history."²⁶⁴ Though she too rejects Basilica-skeptics like Khoury and Arce-Sainz in a footnote, Boll illustrates how, despite a town hall annulment of the Catholic Church's ownership of the Mosque-Cathedral, patronizing language online and in publication suggests that the Church rejects and ignores this local government decision. Alongside the invocation of the Basilica de San Vicente, the official

²⁶² "Important Info for Muslim Tourists, Mezqita, Halal & Masjids," *Tripadvisor*, 30 December 2008: https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowTopic-g187430-i733-k2433023-Important_Info_for_Muslim_Tourists_Mezqta_Halal_Masjids-Cordoba_Province_of_Cordoba_Andaluci.html

For screenshots of this conversation see Figures 12–13.

²⁶³ Ruggles, "The Stratigraphy of Forgetting," 51.

²⁶⁴ Boll, "Irony Made Manifest," 276.

website of the Mosque-Cathedral notes to visitors that the only reason the mosque survives is because of the “Church and Cathedral Chapter who have made the preservation of the Great Mosque of Cordova possible...”²⁶⁵ Ruggles and Boll demonstrate that claims made about the early medieval past have placed the Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba in the crosshairs of modern political debates which seem far from settled, and even these two scholars who work diligently to expose the political motives behind tourist brochures and educational webpages seem to fall victim to their own subject’s foundation myth.

These claims about the distant past made by Church authorities strongly resemble certain characteristics of modern religious fundamentalism as put forward by Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan. In introducing the cosmology of fundamentalists, Sivan points out that a fundamentalist “time perspective tends to be somewhat shrunken, collapsed, and condensed. The past is reduced to a few key eras or episodes, closely related to the enclave’s notion as to what accounts for the glory and decline of the tradition.” He continues, “an imminent danger of decline concentrates the mind, condenses the past. Relevant are periods that account for the present menace and/or may provide an ideal to strive for, a model to be reconstituted.”²⁶⁶ This fundamentalist conception of time accounts for the political deployment of history and archaeology at the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba, described by Ruggles and Boll. The former labeling of over five centuries as an “intervention” in the tourist brochure is a collapse of time. The few key areas to which the structure’s past is reduced are the supposed mid-sixth-century Christian origins, the beginning of the Great Mosque’s construction in 786, and the reestablishment of daily masses stretching uninterrupted from 1236 to the present.

²⁶⁵ Boll, “Irony Made Manifest,” 289.

²⁶⁶ Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003): 57–9.

Church authorities and their supporters (Almond, Appleby, and Sivan’s “enclave”) look back and make regular references to a long chain of tradition which is currently perceived as being jeopardized by the identity and heritage claims of modern Muslims. One comment beneath the web version of the *Cordopolis* article refuting the Basilica reads, “Well, if it was never a Catholic cult, it returns to the Muslims, it’s theirs. You will see how we are going to have fun, when the inside of the Mosque is a Souq, oriental-style, with their prayers and their jihadism.”²⁶⁷ How much this resembles Sivan’s explanation that “enclaves tend indeed to be obsessed with binary formulations, revolving around a before/after axis. The watershed mark is the historical moment when decline and decay sets in.”²⁶⁸ It is impossible to know the social and religious position of the commenter, but the notion that the right to the Mosque-Cathedral rests on the archaeology beneath it, that it is either “ours” or “it’s theirs,” represents a fundamentalist conception of time and a concern for identifying historical origins as a source of legitimacy. Just as Sivan says is true of all fundamentalist enclaves, the Church authorities of the Mosque-Cathedral and their supporters feel they “had known such dangers in the past,” and they take great pains to prevent these dangers from recurring in the present, much to the discomfort of Muslim visitors.²⁶⁹

In 2015 Eric Calderwood detailed what he poignantly calls “The *Reconquista* of the Mosque of Córdoba.” He points out that the idea of Spanish *Convivencia* is at odds with contemporary religious sentiments. He explains, “in 2013, 65 percent of Spaniards surveyed by the Bertelsmann Foundation agreed with the statement that “Islam is not compatible with the

²⁶⁷ My translation, see Velasco: <http://cordopolis.es/2017/12/03/fernando-arce-la-existencia-de-la-basilica-de-san-vicente-bajo-la-mezquita-es-un-mito/>

²⁶⁸ Almond, et al., *Strong Religion*, 59.

²⁶⁹ Almond, et al., *Strong Religion*, 59.

Western world,” as compared to 55 percent in France and 45 percent in Britain.”²⁷⁰ Though increasingly a destination for Muslim tourists and long a symbol of religious diversity in Europe, the ideal of *Convivencia* in Córdoba is being supplanted by a more insular sentiment. Calderwood demonstrates how the language in the tourist brochure has changed dramatically since the 1980s, at one point romanticizing the monument as “Hispano-Muslim style at its greatest splendor,” but since the mid-2000s, the brochure has focused on the Christian origins of the site. This emphasis on Christian heritage is mirrored in the agenda of far-right Spanish political party Vox and its leader Santiago Abascal, who even produced a fictional Youtube newscast documenting the impending Muslim appropriation of the Mosque-Cathedral.²⁷¹ This xenophobic and fundamentalist rhetoric in Spain has been recently stoked by ISIS proclamations of the coming re-reconquest of al-Andalus, and the 2017 Barcelona terrorist attacks have also fueled an ongoing rise in Islamophobia throughout the country.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Calderwood, “The Reconquista of the Mosque of Córdoba.”

²⁷¹ The original video, which Calderwood says had over 300,000 views in the first week, has since been removed. A duplicate can still be found, “Andalucía en 2018, según Vox: periodistas con velo” *Zoomin.TV España*. Published 19 March 2015, accessed 2 May 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcX9tYFMnjE>

²⁷² F. Brinley Bruton, “Spain Terror Attacks Put Muslims in Catalonia Under Harsh Spotlight,” *NBC News*, 20 August 2017. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/spain-terror-attacks-put-muslims-catalonia-under-harsh-spotlight-n794216>; Hagar Jobse, “Spain’s Muslims see hatred spike since Barcelona attacks,” *DW*, 31 August 2017. <https://www.dw.com/en/spains-muslims-see-hatred-spike-since-barcelona-attacks/a-40294207>; Christopher Woolf, “ISIS says it wants to rebuild the Muslim caliphate in Spain,” *PRI*, 25 August 2017. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-08-25/isis-says-it-wants-rebuild-muslim-caliphate-spain>; Daniela Michanie, “Islamophobia on the rise in Spain,” *The Local*, 5 March 2018. <https://www.thelocal.es/20180305/rising-trends-of-islamophobia-in-spain>; and see also: Carmen González-Enríquez, “The Spanish Exception: Unemployment, inequality and immigration, but no right-wing populist parties,” *Elcano Royal Institute* 2017, 3, 14 February 2017. <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/wcm/connect/e9e0d7c1-7c71-4335-a2fb-15b219e62c5e/WP3-2017-GonzalezEnriquez-Spanish-Exception-unemployment-inequality-immigration-no-right-wing-populist-parties.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&cacheid=1487009991261>

III. Conclusion

The Visigothic past has long been drawn from in the debates of Spanish national origins and religious identity. The Catholic monarchs of early modern Spain were seen as the inheritors of Visigothic Christianity, preserved and strengthened in Asturias before being reestablished throughout the peninsula in the wake of the *Reconquista*, and this belief was preserved intact from Annus to Franco. The historiography of the Visigoths continues to be deployed for ideological and political purposes in modern Córdoba, in the heart of former al-Andalus. Church authorities and supporters are pointing to the Visigothic Basilica de San Vicente as a justification for the prohibition of Muslim prayer at the site, and journalists, scholars, and members of the public turn to the highly contested archaeological excavations of the early twentieth-century as proof of the Basilica's existence and former importance. The Visigoths ruled most of the territory of modern Spain as Catholic monarchs for around 125 years, yet this brief period can be seen to have cast a disproportionate ripple in Spanish historiography and popular memory from the seventh century to the present. The impressions early medieval chroniclers expressed for the Visigoths were profoundly enduring, and though there have been plenty of challengers to this fetishization, the Visigoths live on and continue to influence modern concerns of religion and identity.

CONCLUSION

In 2018, the Office of Tourism in the town of Riba-Roja de Túria, about an hour's metro-ride into the countryside of Valencia, invited visitors to "Discover the Visigothic Secret (*Descubre el secreto Visigodo*)" in a series of spring and summer events. A free, two-hour tour was offered to take those curious about the Visigothic past from the local museum, housed in Riba-Roja's castle over the river Túria, across town to the palatial archaeological complex of Pla de Nadal, "where the lord of the villa, Theudemir and his wife Theodora will be waiting for us with their servants." They spoke to visitors about daily life in the Visigothic period, local customs, diet, and fashion, and they passed out 3D glasses to "travel through time and discover what the villa would be like in the 7th century." After a Visigothic banquet, visitors returned home, invigorated for the upcoming summer's Great Festival of the Duke, which would feature Visigothic-themed goods, crafts, and more guided tours of local Visigothic sites. At least four similar festivals have been hosted in Spain and Portugal in recent years, often annually. In 2018, thirteen centuries after the legendary first battle of the *Reconquista* fought by Pelayo and the Asturians, the Visigoths are not only remembered, but are celebrated in the Iberian Peninsula.

The tradition of praising the Visigoths as Christian rulers began in the late sixth- and early seventh centuries, with chronicles like that of John of Biclaro, Isidore of Seville, and Julian of Toledo working to integrate the Visigoths as protagonists in a larger Christian history. After their fall in 711, the celebrated reputation of the Visigoths was crystallized in historiographical tradition. The earliest extant post-conquest source, the *Chronicle of 741* describes the Visigoths

favorably, while the *Chronicle of 754* and the writings of leading Mozarabic figures like Eulogius in Córdoba lamented the conquest and the ruin it spelled for the Iberian Peninsula. In the north, Asturian chroniclers pieced together a reinterpretation of the Visigoths in which their grace was transferred to the north through the legendary figure of Pelayo, while less admirable elements of the former monarchs could be figuratively swept away in the conquest. Meanwhile, in al-Andalus, Arabic-Islamic historians and scholars of *hadith* were working to create an Islamic origin story for the peninsula and its inhabitants. At times this was reflected in fantastic stories, like those found in the work of Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam or the anonymous *Akhhbār majmū’a*, and at others in concrete dynastic connections, like in the *History* of Ibn al-Qutiya.

Later medieval authors would increasingly support the notion that, despite the frequent changes in rulership among the Visigothic kings, they somehow represented a bloodline that was preserved unbroken through the monarchs of Asturias, then León, and finally Castile. This would be a powerful sentiment, put to use in the expansionist and centralizing political efforts of clerical figures like Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada or Ferdinand and Isabella. Though facing some critique on the basis of problematic sources or the moral shortcomings of the Goths, the Visigothic historiographical tradition retained momentum until it was picked up during the Spanish Civil War and Francoism as a shared point of national unity.

When compared to other early medieval rulers like the Franks, Ostrogoths, and Lombards, it is clear that certain elements in Visigothic historiography were shared in the traditions of their neighbors. But while the celebrated reputation of the Visigoths is understandable in this context, the duration of the popularity and pervasiveness of claims to Visigothic identity among scholars, kings, clerics, and literary figures in every century of the peninsula’s history makes this a unique historiographical tradition worthy of study for what it can tell us about our present. When compared to the material landscape, it is apparent that the

Visigoths grew to legendary proportions, their praise far outstretching their archaeological footprint. Yet they represent a poignant example of how distant and ill-understood historical figures can come to represent idealized versions of the past, and these imagined histories can come to displace those that are more fact-based, as seen in the arguments for prohibition of Islamic prayer at the *Mezquita*.

Future studies might consider perceptions of the Visigoths alongside those of ancient Rome, or provide a more comprehensive analysis of Visigothic historiography as it compares to other early medieval figures. Increasing archaeological activity and improving technologies will continue to expand and challenge what we understand from the written record. In this thesis I have worked to expand our understanding of the historiographical tradition of the Visigoths, emphasizing its impact and continuity from the seventh century to the present. I have argued that the celebration of these figures is unique when considered alongside similar examples, and that it is mythological when held against the archaeological and material record. The “secret of the Visigoths” being showcased in Riba-Roja will require more than 3D glasses to be uncovered. The enduring significance of these figures rests only lightly in the ruins of their fortresses and the extant chronicles of their subjects—the greater part of their religious, political, and ancestral reputation rests on an amalgamation of the many centuries of royal, clerical, literary, and popular descriptions of the Visigoths that carried them from the status of barbarian invaders to founders of the modern Spanish nation.

FIGURES



Figure 1 – Visigothic fountain in Grazalema, Spain. Photo by author, 31 August 2015.



Figure 2 – Visigothic remains inside the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba. Photo by author, 26 July 2018.



Figure 3 – Visigothic remains bearing chi-ro symbol inside the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba.
Photo by author, 26 July 2018.

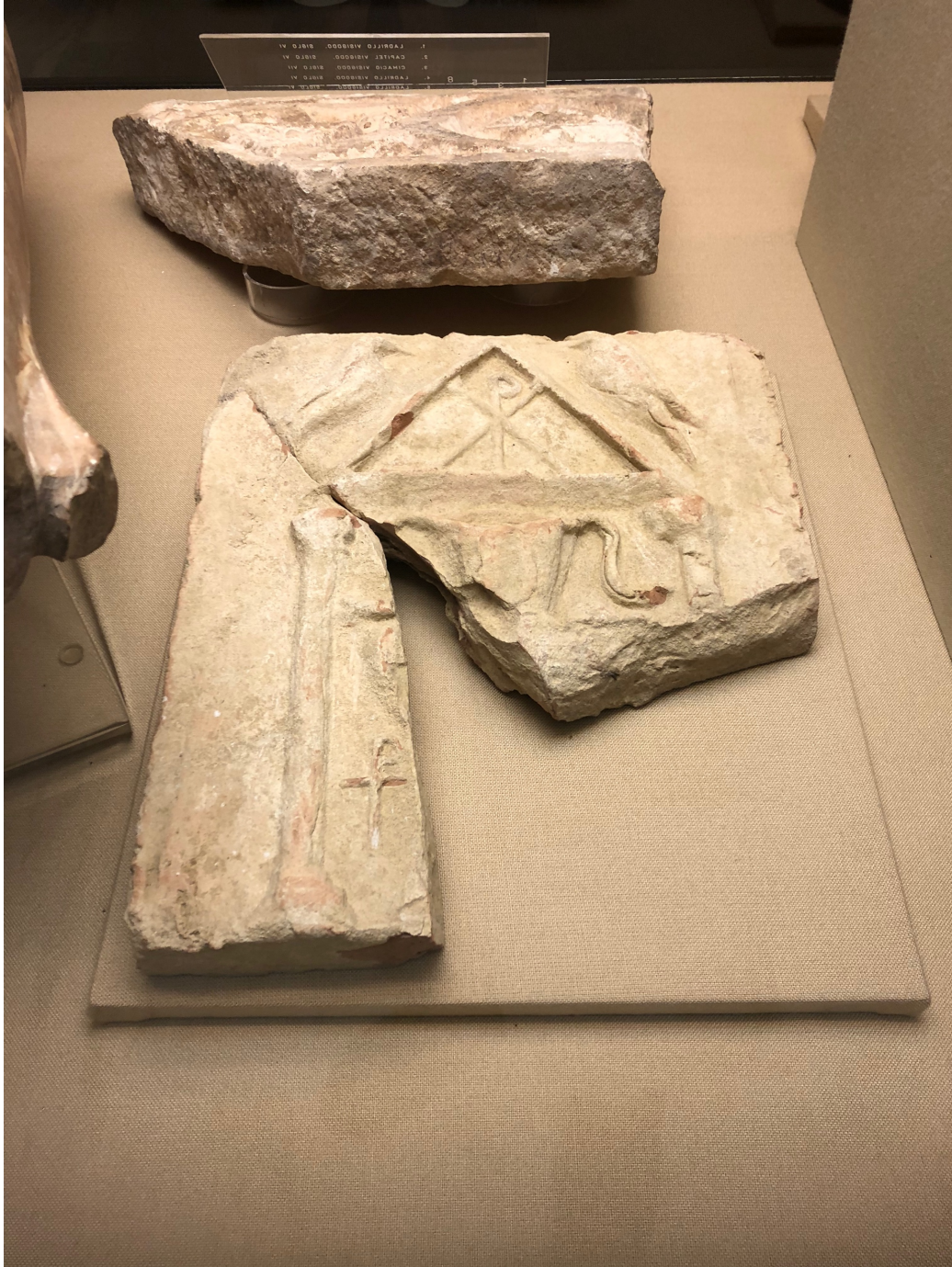


Figure 4 – Visigothic remains bearing chi-ro symbol inside the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba.
Photo by author, 26 July 2018.



Figure 5 – Visigothic brick bearing name of originating workshop displayed inside the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba. Photo by author, 3 July 2017.



Figure 6 – Visigothic marble altar inside the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba. Photo by author, 26 July 2018.



Figure 7 – Rear and side of Visigothic marble altar inside the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba.
Photo by author, 3 July 2017.



Figure 8 – Visigothic remains bearing chi-ro symbol inside the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba.
Photo by author, 3 July 2017.



Figure 9 – Mosaic attributed to the Basilica de San Vicente, visible through a plexiglass floor inside the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba. Photo by author, 26 July 2018.



Figure 10 – Photographs of the 1930s excavations of Felix Hernández Gimenez, displayed inside the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba. Photo by author, 3 July 2017.

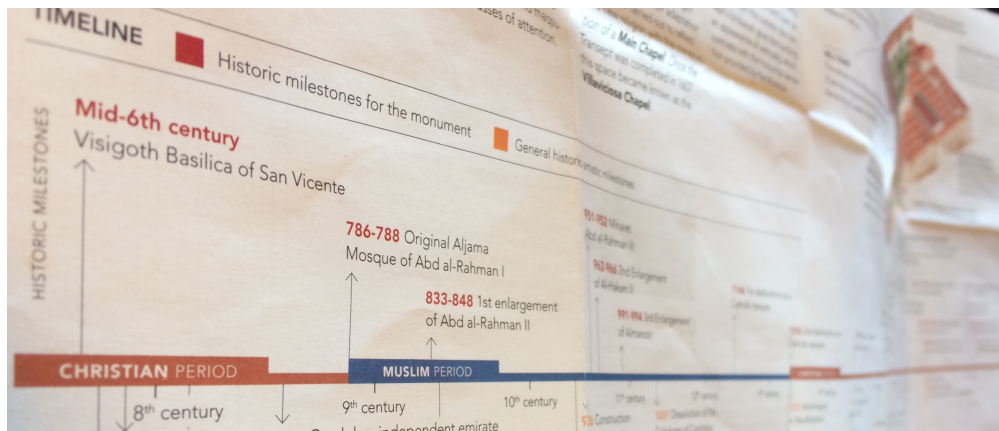



Figure 11 – Timeline from tourist brochure received at Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba on 3 July 2017.



ibster
UK

Level **5** Contributor

79 posts
52 reviews

Important Info for Muslim Tourists, Mezqta, Halal & Masjids

Dec 30, 2008, 11:53 AM

[Save Topic](#)

During our recent visit, we went to [Cordoba](#) for the day.

We started our visit with the [Mezquita](#), on seeing our appearance, at the ticket office we were told that we were not allowed to pray and to only see.

Before we entered again the guard at the gate again informed us that we were not allowed to pray. During our visit we were continuously followed by Security Guards even to the loo !

So if anyone is planning on going and gets asked to not pray and gets followed, don't get alarmed, they must have had some instances where some people have tried to offer prayer but as it is now a cathedral and not a Masjid it is not allowed.

Figure 12 – Online post describing security presence at Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba. Posted 30 December 2008.



MACPollo
Malaga, Spain

Destination Expert
for Malaga, Costa
del Sol

Level 6 Contributor

5,171 posts

4 reviews

6. Re: Important Info for Muslim Tourists, Mezqta, Halal & Masjids

Jan 1, 2009, 2:53 PM

Save Reply

ibster,

I don't like religions (ANY religion I mean), but I do think that you should be allowed to pray in the Mosque. It was muslims who built it after all.

We're off to Lanzarote tomorrow... Happy new year!

[Report inappropriate content](#)



Rafa1411
Cordoba, Spain

Level 6 Contributor

776 posts

3 reviews

7. Re: Important Info for Muslim Tourists, Mezqta, Halal & Masjids

Jan 2, 2009, 6:31 PM

Save Reply

Not really, the Mosque was built by the moors over San Vicente Chapel, this is a visigothic temple built on VI century. This temple was very important for the citizens due to its central location. When the moors arrived to [CO](#)rdoba they agreed respect for the building as long as tributes were paid, but at the end of the day, the temple was partially destroyed to build the Mosque.

What's more, this former visigothic chapel is said to be built over some Roman ruins...and so forth.

Rgds

Figure 13 – Responses to post in Figure 12. Posted 1-2 January 2009.



Figure 14 – Information sign describing the origin of the Basilica de San Vicente. Photo by author, 26 July 2018.

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