

Volume 11

Number 014

Muslim Conquest of Spain - II

Lead: Following the expansionist inclination of the Umayyad caliphate of Damascus, evangelical Islam by 714 had conquered almost all of the Iberian peninsula. In Spain they created a brand new society.

Intro. : *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Disunity among Christians, powerful armies, and a sense of spiritual inevitability compelled the armies of God north through Spain and into central France. Everywhere Islam swept all

before it. Not until the Christian Franks outflanked and defeated the Muslims at the first Battle of Poitiers in 732, did the Islamic tide recede and retreat.

Between Poitiers and the final Muslim defeat in 1492, Islam established a brilliant society in Spain, one whose influence in architecture and culture remains strong into a new millennium. There were many reasons for Muslim or Moorish success. Disunity among the Christian kingdoms along the Pyrenees Mountains helped, but for those who lived under Moorish control, there were great advantages. Under Christianity, the Jews were treated as inferiors, in Muslim Spain,

Jews and Christians were social and economic equals, not for the most part required to abandon their religions. Taxes were much less under the Moors, and the lowest class, considered serfs under Christian control, became freedmen and could rise in status and wealth.

Muslim control was ascendant until about 1100 when Christian armies of Castile began to gain traction and penetrated south as far as Toledo and, under Rodrigo Dias de Vivar, the legendary El Cid, to Valencia. Thereafter the ‘Reconquista,’ the re-conquest, in fits and starts, gradually pushed back the Muslim areas until in 1492 the final Moorish enclave of Grenada fell to

**the Christian monarchs, Ferdinand
and Isabella.**

**At the University of Richmond,
this is Dan Roberts.**

Resources

Armstrong, Karen. *A History of God*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1994.

Boase, Roger. "The Muslim Expulsion from Spain." *History Today* 52 no. 4 (2002): 21-28.

Burman, Thomas. *Review of From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle, by Thomas Glick*, *Speculum*, 74 (1999):756-8.

Chejne, Anwar. *Muslim Spain*. Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press: 1974.

Fletcher, Richard. *The Quest for El Cid*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Fletcher, Richard. *Moorish Spain*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1992.

Linehan, Peter. "The Cid of History and the History of the Cid" *History Today* 37 September (1987):26-32.

Menocal, Maria. *The Ornament of the World*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company: 2002.