

# **CRUSADE IN AL-ANDALUS: THE ELEVENTH CENTURY FORMATION OF THE *RECONQUISTA* AS AN IDEOLOGY**

**ROBERTO MARIN-GUZMAN**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the rapid expansion and spread of Islam, the Muslims conquered almost the whole Iberian Peninsula in a matter of years, from CE 711 to 718. The Visigothic Christian Kingdom was defeated and its last king, Rodrigo, apparently killed. As Muslims consolidated their dominion, the Visigothic Christians moved north and formed the Northern Christian Kingdoms of the Peninsula. It has been often pointed out that the *Reconquista* by the Christians started almost as soon as they were defeated by Muslim forces.<sup>1</sup> The battle of Covadonga has been understood as the first Christian victory in the eight-century *Reconquista* process. However, the *Reconquista* as an ideology, as an organized movement, and as an international army against Muslims in Spain, started only after the eleventh century.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this essay is to analyse the origins of the *Reconquista* as an ideology, its military formation, the international participation of French religious orders, the pope's preaching of a Crusade in Spain, the French military involvement in the Crusade, the expansion of feudalism in the Peninsula, an aggressive and military movement in conquest of new Muslim lands and the creation of the Military Orders in Spain which, with its international support, tipped the balance in favour of the Christians against the Muslims in al-Andalus.

This essay also studies the formation of the two antagonistic and controversial ideologies in this war: Crusade versus *Jihād*. For the comprehension of this issue, it is absolutely essential to analyse the political, social and economic developments in both regions, the Christian Kingdoms and al-Andalus. This is why this essay also considers the popular and social dimensions of the Christian expansion to the south, which occurred in the eleventh century, as well as the political fragmentation of al-Andalus after the fall of the Umayyad caliphate in 1031. It further considers the contract of the rapid population-growth in the north, which accelerated the repopulation process south of the Ducre river in the frontiers of no man's land.

This movement south, with international support, helped the Christian *Reconquista* against the Muslims. Finally, this paper analyses the importance of the international Christian participation as one of the major events which tipped the balance in favour of the Christians.

## II. THE FORMATION OF THE *RECONQUISTA* AS AN IDEOLOGY

It would be a serious mistake to think that profound ethnic and social divisions stood in the way of the creation of a common Islamic culture and the consciousness of being Muslims and also being politically different from the rest of the Islamic empire. Despite the ethnic divisions, Muslims of al-Andalus were culturally unified. For Muslims, Islam became the unifying element and the base for a common culture. Berbers, Arabs and the *muwalladūn* mixed with each other through marriage, and had close dealings and relationships in daily economic life. They all shared the same faith, the same judicial system (the Malikiite *madhhab* was almost all the time the only one accepted), the same organization, structure and ideology of the State, the same government and the same Islamic traditions. They were able to have their own identity as a Muslim society—specific, peculiar, with its own characteristics—different from the rest of the Muslim empire. To identify themselves as different and separate from the ‘Abbāsids of the East or the Fatimids of North Africa, al-Andalus became, with ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, an independent and distinct caliphate in the year 929. Despite the political differences between the Umayyads in al-Andalus and the ‘Abbasids in the Mashriq (east), the Umayyads kept the name of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs of Baghdad for some time in the *khuṭbah* in the same way that the last Umayyad *wālī* of al-Andalus, al-Fihri, had kept it. Arabic sources mention that the *khuṭbah* in Cordoba replaced the ‘Abbāsīd names by the Umayyads of al-Andalus, at an early stage during the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I al-Dākhil. However, it was not until the declaration of al-Andalus as caliphate by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III in the year 929, that al-Andalus really became completely autonomous, because the show of all loyalty to the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs of Baghdad ceased. The late Muslim historian Muḥammad ibn Abū’l-Qāsim al-Qayrawānī, known as Ibn Abū Dīnār (*d.* 1698) in his *Kitāb al-Mu’nis fī Akhbār Ifriqiyyah wa Tūnis* has brilliantly summarized the whole process.<sup>3</sup>

It is important to keep in mind that before ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, all the Umayyad *Umarā’* of al-Andalus were loyal to the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs of Baghdad, even though they were politically independent. When ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III proclaimed himself as caliph and took the name of *Nāsir li-Dīn Allāh* and *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*, all loyalty to the ‘Abbāsīds as caliphs was suspended. The major question to raise here is what the *khuṭbah* really

meant. There is no doubt that until 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, the Umayyads recognised the 'Abbāsīd caliphate and never claimed the title of *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*. The *khutbah*, as the proclamation of the name of the caliph in the mosque in the *Juma'ah* prayers had been substituted by that of the Umayyad rulers since a very early period, after the Umayyad conquest of al-Andalus by 'Abd al-Raḥmān I. However, it was not until 'Abd al-Raḥmān III that the Umayyads of al-Andalus stopped recognising the 'Abbāsīd caliphs as *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, even if their names were not proclaimed in the mosques of al-Andalus.<sup>4</sup>

Several Muslim historians explained in detail these issues of the *khutbah* and the autonomy of al-Andalus. Among them is Ibn Khaldūn, who affirms that the *khutbah* was changed by the Umayyads at an early stage, even before the time of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III. Other major Andalusian authorities like Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn al-Abbar and al-Maqqarī pointed out that the *khutbah* in the name of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs was kept for a very short time after the arrival of 'Abd al-Raḥmān I al-Dākhil, who was responsible for its change. Ibn Ḥazm, for example, in his *Naqt al-'Arūs*<sup>5</sup> has stated that it was continued for several years until 'Abd al-Raḥmān I stopped it. Ibn al-Abbar in his *Kitāb al-Ḥillah al-Sīrah*<sup>6</sup> stated that 'Abd al-Raḥmān I kept the *khutbah* in the name of 'Abbāsīd caliph Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr. In this respect, the words of al-Maqqarī, who followed Ibn Ḥayyān and explains the continuation of the relations and connections between the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsīds, are very important:<sup>7</sup>

و فر من الشام الأمير عبد الملك بن عمر بن مروان الأموي خوفا من المسودة  
(أي العباسيين) فمر بمصر ومضى الى الأندلس، وقد غلب عليها  
الأمير عبدالرحمن بن معاوية الداخل، فآكرمه ونوه به وولاه اشبيلية لأنه كان قعد  
بني أمية (كان ابن عم هشام بن عبد الملك أي أنه بالنسبة لعبد الرحمن الداخل  
في مقام جده). ثم انه لما وجد الداخل يدعو لأبي جعفر المنصور العباسي، أشار  
عليه بقطع إسمه من الخطبة، وذكره بسوء صنيع بني العباس ببني أمية فتوقف  
عبدالرحمن في ذلك، فهازال به عبد الملك حتى قطع الدعاء له وذلك أنه قال له  
حين امتنع من ذلك: إن لم تقطع الخطبة لهم، قتلت نفس، فقطع حينئذ عبدالرحمن  
الخطبة بالمنصور بعد أن خطب بإسمه عشرة أشهر

### III. THE ROLE OF THE POPE AND THE FRENCH CLUNY AND CISTERCIAN RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Muslims established a powerful emirate in al-Andalus which became a caliphate in 929 with 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, responding to local and international events.<sup>8</sup> Despite internal divisions, owing to social classes, ethnic

groups and political parties, al-Andalus had great moments in political administration, development of the art, sciences, philosophy and agricultural and industrial techniques and became one of the major culturally advanced lands in the world during the Middle Ages. Al-Andalus was able to face and solve the various problems which a state could face at that time. However, it is important to analyse that the major threats to the structure of the state came from outside, at the international level, especially after the fall of the Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba in 1031. The purpose of this section is to study the origins and impact of the Christian *Reconquista* as an ideology: its international support and its impact and threats to the Muslim identity and specificity, as well as the political and military threats to al-Andalus, from the eleventh century onwards, which had the support of the pope and the Christian states, first mainly through the specific works of the Cluny Order and later on through the Cistercians.

The road to Santiago de Compostela and the pilgrimage to the tomb of the apostle James (Santiago) were important elements for the formation of the *Reconquista* ideology, since it brought a sense of unity of the Church and of all Christians against Islam, their common enemy.<sup>9</sup> The transformation in the character of this saint, from a peaceful apostle to a warrior who kills Moors, ready to fight on the Christian side against Muslims, shows the change in Church ideology, in favour of a universal mission, to be directly involved in the *Reconquista* process in Spain.

The Church and, particularly, the papacy, emphasised the spiritual relevance of the apostle and the importance of the pilgrimage to his tomb. Massive propaganda was organized in favour of the apostle James and several books were written at that time concerning his actions. Among those works were the one supposedly written by Pope Callistus II, which should be only attributed to him, under the title *Liber Sancti Jacobi, Codex-Calixtius*. This book aimed at developing a special devotion to the saint and encouraging the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.<sup>10</sup>

There is no doubt that in these issues one can easily recognise that the pilgrimage, the roads to Santiago, the defence of the pilgrims, the commerce required to fulfil all their needs, the hospitality in the monasteries, the hotels and other activities always encouraged by the Church as a way of helping the pilgrims, really meant a way of penetration and self-defence of Christianity against Islam. This penetration, which took religion as an important means, also contributed to religious unity and eventually led to the creation of stronger unified Christian armies against the Muslims.

The papacy had a special interest in uniting the Christians of the Iberian Peninsula under the Roman Church as a first step to successfully

face the Muslims. At that time Rome thought that Christian Spain was isolated from the rest of the Christian world; proof of this was the existence of the *mozarab*'s own liturgy which was considered a "national religious rite".<sup>11</sup> Even though the kings and the clergy in Spain recognised the authority of the pope, his intervention in the Peninsula from the ninth to the eleventh centuries was almost nill, to the point that Marcelin Defourneaux, an authority in the field wrote:

Un des aspects les plus caractéristiques de l'isolement de l'Espagne par rapport au reste de la chrétienté jusqu' au XI siècle réside dans l'existence d'un véritable "nationalisme religieux". Si les royaumes chrétiens de la péninsule reconnaissent l'autorité dogmatique de la papauté romaine, c'est un fait que l'intervention pontificale en Espagne est pratiquement nulle entre le IX et le XI siècles. Après l'intervention de Charlemagne contre l'hérésie adoptioniste, l'Église d'Espagne mène une existence autonome, fondée sur les traditions et les pratiques de l'ancienne Église Wisigothique. Elle à conservé en particulier sa liturgie (dite liturgie mozarabe) qui lui est commune avec celle des Églises chrétiennes vivant sous le joug musulman, Ce particularisme liturgique apparait suspect a la papauté et l'unification de la liturgie sera l'un des premiers objectifs des grands papes réformateurs du XI siècle.<sup>12</sup>

One of the major leaders in Rome in the eleventh century was Pope Gregory VII (1073–1080), former Hildebrand of the Cluny Order, who had a special interest in the total unification of the Church and the suppression of all local or "national" movements in Christianity. He exercised considerable pressure on the *mozarab* Church to force it to quit the traditional rituals and practices and to follow those universal ones implemented by the pope in Rome.<sup>13</sup> His interest was not only in the rites and practices, but also in the control of all Churches.

These centralized and unifying movements had a tremendous impact on the Spanish Church. In the ensuing years several reforms were imposed on this Church attempting to replace the *mozarab* or local ritual with the universal rites. These reforms were enacted through the role played by the Cluny Order in Spain. Next to these reforms, Spain was penetrated, through the Cluny monks, by the cultural, artistic and architectural influences of the rest of Europe, leading to unite Spain with the rest of Christian Europe. The cultural unity was on its way in the form of religious penetration, which was the mask for centralization, unity and control.<sup>14</sup> This process started first in Cataluña, where France had a strong influence and connections for many years. From Cataluña it expanded to other regions in Christian Spain, following the reforms of the popes from Gregory VII on, who used the

Cluny Order for this purpose and for the purpose of uniting Christian Spain with the rest of Christendom, obviously a slow process, even though the popes desired a faster pace. Some clergy members in Spain, from various congregations including the Cluny Order, opposed the imposition of Roman unification.<sup>15</sup>

The political leadership of the kingdoms in Christian Spain clearly understood the impact of these reforms and the relation and unity with the Church as a means to fight the Muslims. This is portrayed in the letter written by the Castellan king Alfonso VI to Hughes, Abbot of Cluny, requesting him to send a monk to Castilla to introduce such reforms, from which the kings would benefit. Hughes sent Robert, whom Alfonso VI appointed Abbot of Sahagún in 1079. The reforms started almost immediately, under the Cluny influence. In order to obtain the support of the Cluny Order for his political leadership, the king granted the monks various endowments; the most special being the monastery of San Isidro de las Dueñas in Castilla. Other Spanish kings were also aware of the importance of the Cluny Order and the ecclesiastical reforms taking place in the Peninsula, and they granted the Cluny Order monasteries and properties, like García II of Navarra who had donated the monastery of Santa María de Nájera in 1052.<sup>16</sup>

The reforms of the monasteries in Spain, following the Cluny line, had a tremendous impact on the Spanish Church, similar to the effect it had on the Church in the rest of Europe. The Cluny monasteries in Spain became real emporiums, and important economic centres for the people on the pilgrimage route to Santiago. Sahagún, for example, which was an important centre for devotion and spiritual life, was also an extremely successful centre for agricultural enterprise and for commercial activities. These reformed monasteries also became important centres in the process of the *Reconquista*.<sup>17</sup>

Even though the reforms were taking place, Gregory VII was not content with the slow process and he called for a faster pace. On the other hand, some clergymen and some members of the Cluny Order even opposed the pope's unification plans; among them was Robert of Cluny, whom Gregory VII went as far as to call a "pseudo monk".<sup>18</sup> The pope could not tolerate any opposition to his orders and even threatened King Alfonso VI to nullify his second marriage, on the basis of an alleged kinship between the king's first wife Agnés d'Aquitaine with Constance, his second wife, unless he would accelerate the reform process and stop opposition to the Abbot of Sahagún.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the king and his new wife enforced the reform process and supported the Council of Burgos (1080?), which abolished national liturgy in Spain, thus pleasing Gregory VII. In turn the pope withdrew his threats of declaring the king's marriage void. Although the pope

and the king were again on good terms after these events, the *mozarab* "national" liturgy continued to be practised and survived for a while.

When Alfonso VI conquered Toledo, he stopped the traditional *mozarab* practice of appointing their own Archbishop of Toledo, which further weakened this local church. The king appointed Bernard de Sédillac, a French monk of the Cluny Order, at that time Abbot of Sahagún, to that post. It can thus be observed that the king complied with the pope's orders. Both the king and the pope believed that the church of Toledo was a superstition, *superstitio toletanae*. They did not agree to the right of the local clergy to appoint the Archbishop of Toledo for economic and political reasons, since the monarchy would benefit from the spiritual and political unity of the Peninsula, as much as the pope in Rome.<sup>20</sup> Bernard had the difficult task of imposing the Roman rites in Spain, in opposition to the *mozarab* rituals and practices, even though the Council of Burgos (1080?) had already abolished them at least in theory. Still in the time of Pope Urban II (1088–1099) reforms were in progress. Urban II frequently wrote to Bernard encouraging him and advising him to be strong in his task: "*operam te dante, te dare non pigeat ne romanum officium in terra uestra susceptum decidat, sed auxiliante Domino conualescat.*"<sup>21</sup>

In order to bring Spain under the leadership of Rome, Pope Paschal II (1099–1118), also a former member of the Cluny Order like Gregory VII, declared that a Crusade against the Muslims in Spain was as valid as were the Crusades in Palestine. This had a tremendous impact on the Christian community and caused the unity of many Christians against Islam. The spread of a strong ideology for the *Reconquista* was on its way. However, even though in several Councils and on several occasions the *mozarab* rituals had been abolished, Rome remained concerned, throughout the twelfth century, both about the practice of the *mozarab* ritual, which had not been eradicated from the Peninsula, and the disobedience of the Spanish Church to the pope's reformation orders. This concern is evident from the fact that Raimundo (1126–1152), the famous Archbishop of Toledo, sent a letter to the pope, complaining that the church and the people of Spain did not accept, and did not comply with, the instructions to follow the Roman rituals and practices, as ordered in the past by various popes, and that most of the Christians in Spain were still attached to the old *mozarab* liturgy. Pope Eugene III (1145–1153), in response to Raimundo's letter ordered everybody in Spain to follow the Archbishop and the universal Church, and to stop the *mozarab* rites and practices.<sup>22</sup> It was not until the second half of the twelfth century that the *mozarab* rituals and practices, opposed by the pope, the Spanish clerical leadership, and the Spanish rulers, and allegedly abolished by the Council of Burgos, lost influence and were gradually replaced by the universal Roman rite. This unification of the Spanish Church

under the leadership of Rome led to a rapid expansion of the ideology of the *Reconquista*, with the influence and support of the Cluny Order in the eleventh century and the Cistercian Order in the twelfth century. These were relevant issues in favour of a strong ideology and attitude against Muslim rule in Spain, and were the reasons that tipped the balance in favour of the Christians after the eleventh century.

Early in the twelfth century, the Cluny Order and the monasteries under its influence in Spain started to decay due to corruption, loss of its previous prestige and royal support and encouragement. This made the famous Pierre le Vénérable, abbot of the Cluny Order in France, undertake a trip to Spain in order to reorganize the monasteries under the Cluny influence, stop all corruption, strengthen their influence and regain royal support. However, his trip was unsuccessful regarding his plans to reorganize the monasteries. This failure shows the problems that the Cluny monasteries encountered in Spain and the difficulties in any possible reorganization. The failure of Pierre le Vénérable's trip to Spain further weakened the position of the Cluny Order in the Peninsula.<sup>23</sup>

Early in the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux founded a new religious order, in reaction to some of the practices and ideas of Cluny. Bernard's new Order, named the Cister Order (Cistercians) called for a direct involvement of the monks in the production process, contrary to the economic practices of the Cluny monks of being landlords and having serfs in their dominions for agricultural production to meet the monasteries' needs. The Cister Order claimed a more austere life visible in every aspect: the architectural styles, nourishment, clothing and involvement in agricultural production. The founder of this Order frequently asserted that the monks who followed his rules should produce what they eat. These new ideas and practices were understood by some Spanish kings as more effective than those of Cluny in colonising conquered Muslim lands and the *Reconquista* process. As a result of the weakening of the Cluny monasteries in the Peninsula, various Spanish kings granted special donations to the Cistercians, which became very popular monasteries.<sup>24</sup> Alfonso VII of Castilla in 1143 donated the village of Moreruela to Ponce de Cabrera with the purpose of establishing a monastery of the Cistercian Order. The *Carta Puebla* even mentioned that the village was at that time uninhabited.<sup>25</sup> One has to notice the important socio-economic role played by these monasteries in colonising several regions in Spain and that the Cluny monasteries, later substituted by the Cistercians, became strongholds in the process of *Reconquista* and colonisation of conquered lands. The reference in the *Carta Puebla* that the village was uninhabited clearly reveals its condition and leads towards the understanding that the mission of the monastery was to repopulate and to become a point of advancement in the *Reconquista* process. The monasteries,





















































