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EL CID AND THE RECONQUISTA 1050-1492

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El Cid and the Reconquista

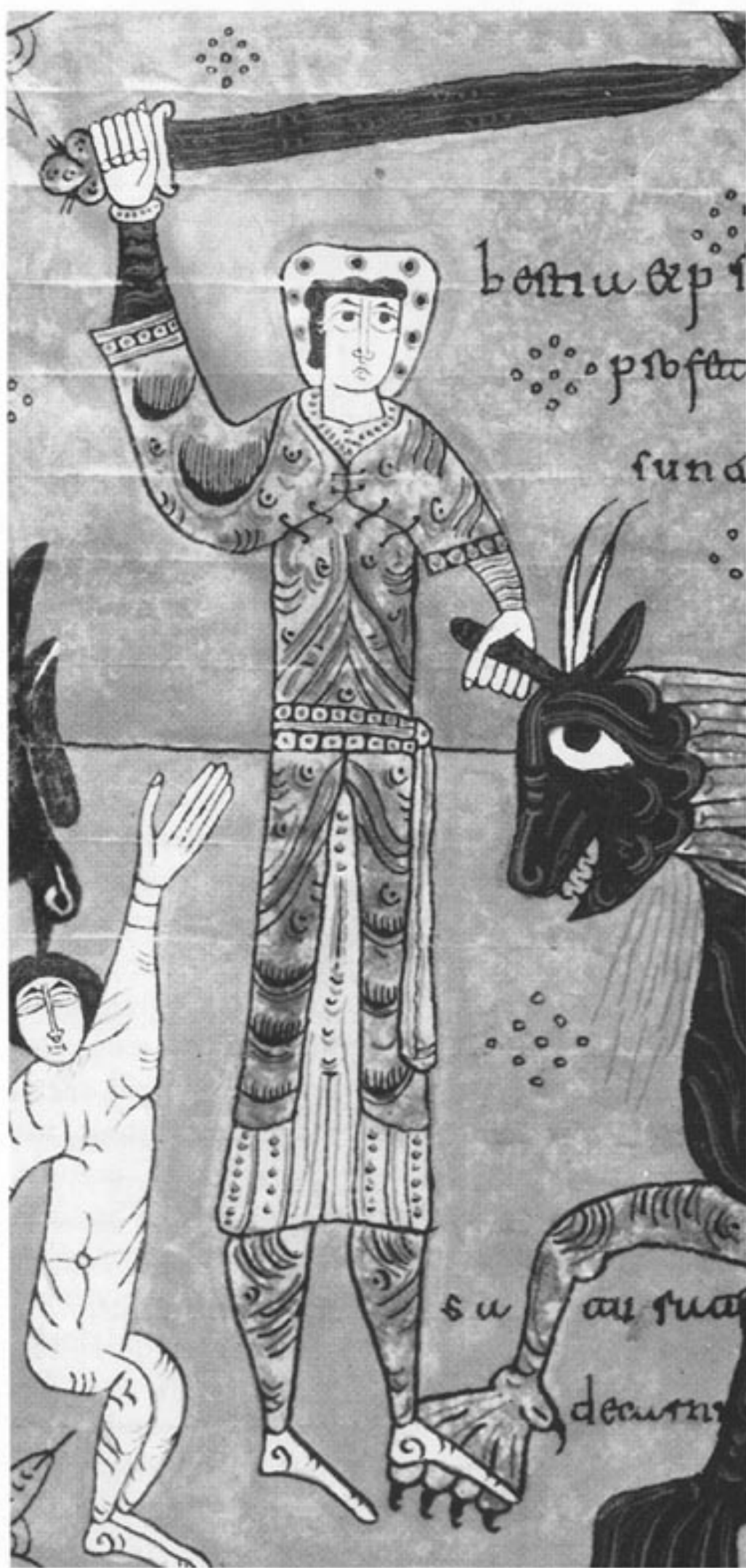
Introduction

The very name *El Cid* sums up much of the special character of medieval Spanish warfare. It comes from the Arabic *al sayyid*, master or chieftain, and seems to have been given to Rodrigo de Vivar by his Muslim foes. But was it given in recognition of El Cid's victories against Islam in the 'Reconquista'—or because this Castilian nobleman was as content to serve beside the Muslims as to fight them?

Rodrigo de Vivar came from the lesser nobility of Castile. He was not one of the great magnates, and his successes were sometimes distasteful to such barons. The popular view sees El Cid as a Christian champion whose early victories gave leadership of Spain to Castile rather than Leon, but who was then exiled to Aragon through the machinations of his rivals. El Cid was supposedly obsessed with the idea of a unified Spain and the defeat of the 'Moors', while his capture and government of Muslim Valencia is portrayed as an example of cultural harmony under Christian leadership. He is also believed to have halted the Almoravid, African (and consequently barbarian) tide which threatened to engulf Spain.

Another view of El Cid comes from those who study the civilisation of *al Andalus* (Muslim Spain and Portugal), some of whom note his acceptance of Arab-Andalusian culture, and portray him almost as an Andalusian rather than Spanish hero. Perhaps El Cid was simply an adventurer, one of many seen on the turbulent Christian-Muslim frontier, comparable to the Portuguese Giraldo Sempavor—who seized the Muslim city of Badajoz in the 1160s, only to lose it to the Almohades just as El Cid's followers lost Valencia to the Almoravids.

The story of the Reconquista, or the Christian conquest of the Iberian peninsula, is a classic case of history being written by the winning side. For hundreds of years the Muslim period was dismissed



Beatus Commentaries on the Apocalypse, 1091–1109. In this Mozarab manuscript an angel fights the Beast, wielding a sword with a trilobate pommel and wearing an outer garment of large pieces of heavy material stitched together—perhaps of buff leather. (Ms. Add. 11695, British Lib., London.)



'The Betrayal', carved capital late 12th C. Note the small kite-shaped shields, (*in situ* Monastery of las Huelgas, Burgos).

as an alien interlude, the Muslim Andalusians simply being conquerors justly reconquered. In fact these Andalusians were of mixed origin. The Muslims were descended from local converts, Arab and Berber immigrants, and northern or eastern European slaves. Those who had remained Christian were called Mozarabs; and there was also a sizeable Jewish population. Family and tribal divisions were now political rather than ethnic, the entire community being Arabised in culture, though generally speaking an early form of Spanish in their homes. By the 11th century the local élite was largely demilitarised, the army being drawn almost entirely from European slaves and 'new' Berbers from North Africa (see MAA 125 *The Armies of Islam 7th–11th Centuries*). Small wonder that when the Umayyad Caliphate of Cordova collapsed early in the 11th century, it was the Berber and Slav army which fought over the pieces. In 1031 the Berbers and their puppet Caliph were defeated, and Andalus fragmented into numerous petty states known as *taifa* kingdoms.

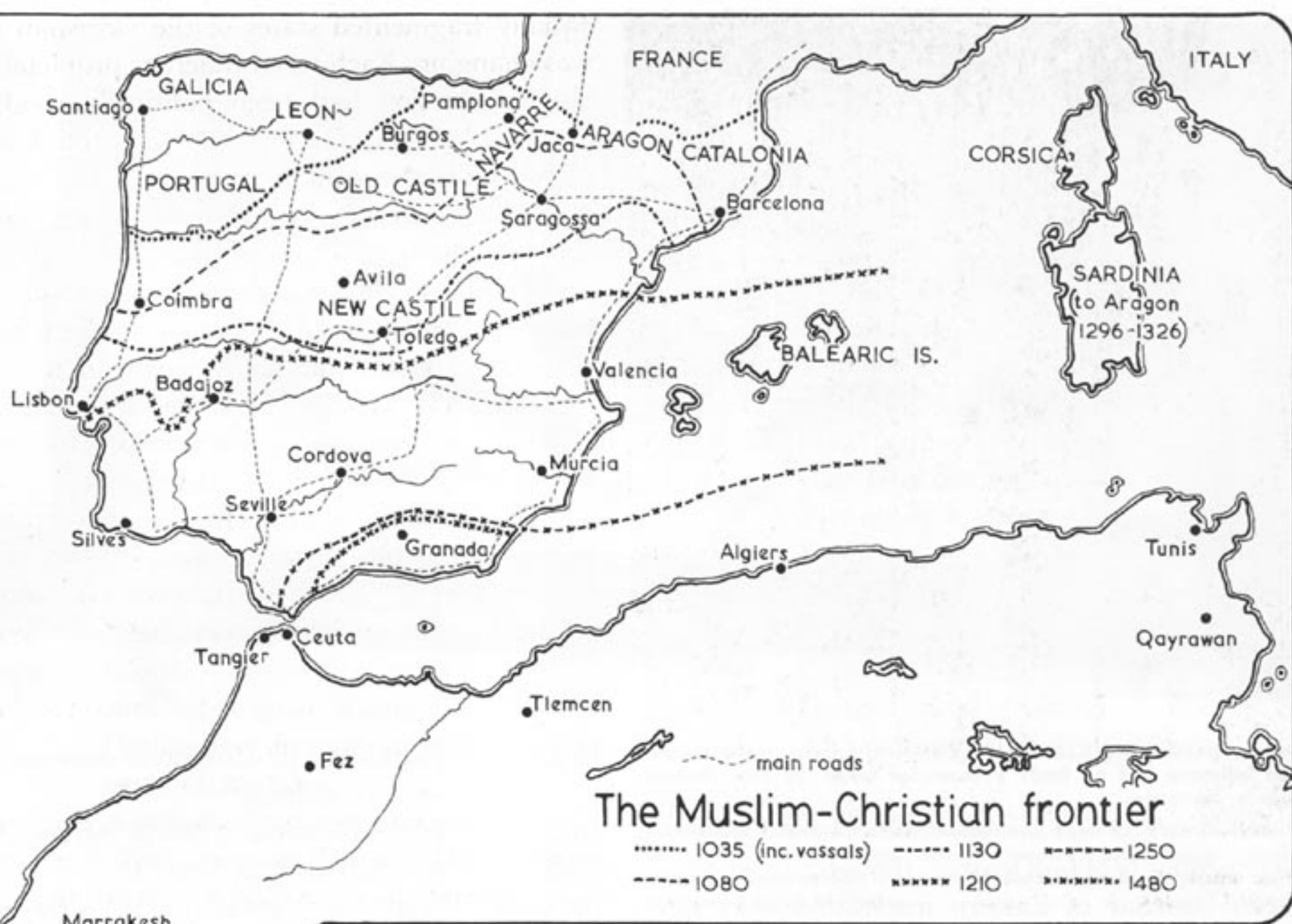
Meanwhile the situation among the almost

equally fragmented states of the Christian north was changing. Each faced different problems. The king of Aragon had been politically weak and chronically short of money since the 10th century. Urban militias appeared as early as the 9th century in Leon, and were certainly a major feature in 11th century Castile. Such forces included mounted *caballeros* and infantry *peons*. *Caballeros* were summoned more often than *peons* while southern frontier cities faced heavier military burdens than those in the north. The 11th and 12th centuries were a time of population expansion in Christian Europe, and northern Spain was soon relatively overpopulated (though the cities of the Muslim south were still much bigger than those of the Christian north). Christian confidence and aggression was also seen in the Iberian peninsula. Yet there was no real Crusading attitude before the 12th century, and even then religious motives were often secondary to political or economic calculations.

In this explosive situation warfare was dominated by mountain ranges and great rivers which tended to provide defensive frontiers, while a road system created by the Romans and extended by the Muslims channelled major campaigns. Spain's fierce climate also meant that most fighting took place in summer or autumn. Castles varied greatly in size, some defending bridges, fords or passes while the biggest served as major operational bases. Castles were not, however, the target of expansion: cities were the goal of all conquerors, their seizure usually following years of raiding, the destruction of surrounding agriculture, a blockade of trade and finally a siege.

Iberian warfare differed from that of the rest of western Europe in its emphasis on light cavalry, light infantry (including archers), a lack of body armour and on raiding rather than pitched battles. As the Christians pushed south of the sierras and onto the high plains, long-distance raiding *cabalgadas* by cavalry forces increased in importance. The peninsula had, of course, been a cavalry arena since the time of the Ibero-Celts.¹ Their tactics of repeated attack and retreat can be compared to the Roman *cursores et defensores*, the Arab *karr wa farr* and the later Spanish *torno fuya*. Of course these traditions were constantly refined, the spread of

¹ See MAA 180, *Rome's Enemies (4): Spanish Armies, 218 BC–19 BC*.



The Muslim-Christian frontier

..... 1035 (inc. vassals) - - - - - 1130 ■■■■■ 1250
 - - - - - 1080 1210 ▲▲▲▲▲ 1480



superior Barb and Arab horses giving even greater advantage to a cavalryman, culminating in the *jinete* light cavalry of later medieval and renaissance Spain. Both Spaniards and Andalusians adopted the Middle Eastern palate-curb bit in the 11th century, though Andalusian saddles and bridles seem to have been similar to those of Christian Iberia.

Weapons like maces, cavalry axes, sophisticated infantry weapons, composite bows and a continued use of javelins also set Iberia apart from the rest of western Europe. Yet the region was not militarily isolated, swords being imported from many parts of Europe while equipment also came from the rest of the Muslim world. In terms of armour Iberia also differed slightly from countries to the north. Separate mail coifs, round helmets of one-piece construction or extended to protect the sides and back of the head were quite advanced and probably betrayed Middle Eastern influence. On the other hand iron helmets were rare and expensive in the Christian states, while hardened leather defences seem to have been widespread on both sides of the frontier. The hide coats mentioned in some sources



Carved portal, 12th C. Here two identical knights have shields and helmets but no body armour or coifs (*in situ* church, Artaiz, Navarre).

were probably of buff leather, though hardened *cuir bouilli* lamellar of Eastern inspiration may have been known. Some Christian sources speak of 'Moors' wearing 'cordwain' but this was a soft leather originally made in Cordova, and probably referred to light leather clothing worn by some North Africans.

Other regional peculiarities included, on the Christian side, a custom of raising newly proclaimed leaders on two spear-shafts, and a strong, almost anti-feudal clan spirit which echoed the supposed tribalism of Andalus. To the south the Andalusian élite had adopted Egyptian rather than Berber fashions, but showed a strong reluctance to wear turbans, these being reserved for religious leaders, while the military sported scarlet capes inspired by the Spanish *capa*.

Chronology

(Main Muslim-Christian conflicts in *italics*)

1031 End of Umayyad Caliphate in Andalus; fragmentation into 'taifa' petty states.

1040s	Formation of Almoravid movement in western Sahara.
1052-7	Fragmentation of North Africa.
1054	Almoravids raid Ghana.
1055-65	'Taifa' states tributary to King-Emperor of Castile-Leon.
1064	Capture of Coimbra by Portugal.
1065	Civil war in Castile-Leon.
c.1069	Almoravids conquer Morocco.
1082	Almoravids capture Algiers.
1085	Capture of Toledo by Castile; Muslims ask Almoravids for aid.
1086	Almoravids defeat Castile-Leon at Zallaka.
1086-91	Almoravids conquer Andalus.
1094	<i>El Cid</i> seizes Valencia.
1097	Almoravids defeat Castile at Consuegra and Cuenca; autonomy of Portugal recognised by Leon.
1099	Almoravids besiege <i>El Cid</i> in Valencia, death of <i>El Cid</i> .
1108	Almoravids defeat Christians at Ucles.
1110	Almoravids capture Saragossa from last 'taifa' king.
1118	Capture of Saragossa by Aragon.
1120s	Formation of Almohade movement in Morocco.
1121	Anti-Almoravid revolt in Cordova.
1125	Castile ravages Andalus.
1127	Leon invades Portugal.
1135	King of Leon recognised as overlord of

	Navarre and Aragon.	1203	Almohades conquer Majorca from Almoravids.
1139	<i>Portuguese defeat Almoravids at Ourique.</i>		
c.1141-7	Almohades defeat Almoravids, capture Marrakesh.	1205-7	Almohades defeat Almoravids in Tunisia.
1143	Full independence of Portugal.	1212	<i>Christian alliance defeats Almohades at Las Navas de Tolosa.</i>
1146-9	<i>Capture of Tunisian coast by Normans of Sicily.</i>	1227	Almohade civil war and conflict with Marinids.
1147	Almohades capture Seville, Almoravides flee to Majorca.	1228	Foundation of Hafsids dynasty in Tunisia.
	<i>Capture of Lisbon by Portugal and English Crusaders.</i>	1229-35	<i>Capture of Majorca by Aragon.</i>
1150	Almohades recognised as rulers of Andalus.	1230	Final reunion of Leon and Castile.
1152	Almohades conquer Algeria.	1230s	Ibn Hud controls most of Andalus; Ziyaniid dynasty in Algeria.
1159	<i>Almohades drive Normans from Tunisian coast.</i>	1233	<i>Castile defeats Granada at Jerez.</i>
		1236	<i>Capture of Cordova by Castile.</i>
1170-80	Intermittent war between Leon and Castile.	1236-49	<i>Capture of Algarve by Portugal.</i>
		1238	<i>Capture of Valencia by Aragon.</i>
1172	<i>Almohades capture Murcia.</i>	1246	<i>Granada vassal of Castile.</i>
1179	Castile and Aragon agree future partition of Andalus.	1247-58	<i>Muslim revolt in southern Valencia.</i>
1184	<i>Almohades defeated at Santarem.</i>		
1195	<i>Almohades defeat Castile at Alarcos; Almoravids of Majorca seize Tunisia.</i>		

Gate of Al Jaferiya Palace, Saragossa, 1046-81. This fortress is of typical Andalusian stone (towers) and brick (walls) construction, and is in a tradition dating back to the early Islamic period in Syria.



1248	<i>Capture of Seville by Castile; foundation of Nasrid dynasty in Granada.</i>	1367	Civil war in Castile, Anglo-Castilians defeat Franco-Castilians at Najera.
1250	Marinid dynasty at Fes, Morocco.	1373	Anglo-Portuguese treaty signed 'for ever'.
1252-1310	Periodic civil wars in Castile.		
1264-7	<i>Muslim revolt in Andalusia.</i>	1385	Anglo-Portuguese defeat of Castilian invasion at Aljubarrota.
1269	Extinction of Almohades by Marinids.		
1270	<i>King Louis of France invades Tunisia, defeated.</i>	1402	French adventurers occupy Canaries in name of Castile.
1275-85	<i>Four Marinid expeditions to Spain.</i>	1410	<i>Castile captures Antequera from Granada.</i>
1276-80	<i>Muslim revolt in Valencia.</i>	1415	<i>Capture of Ceuta by Portuguese.</i>
1282-3	Aragonese conquest of Sicily.	1420	Portuguese occupation of Madeira.
1285	War between France and Aragon-Catalonia.	1435	Aragon defeated by Genoese.
		1431-45	Portuguese occupation of Azores.
1291	Castile and Aragon agree partition of North Africa in expectation of conquest.	1445	Rebel nobility of Castile defeated by royalists at Olmedo.
		1449	Portuguese civil war.
1292	<i>Castile captures Tarifa from Marinids.</i>	1458-91	<i>Capture of Moroccan Atlantic ports by Portuguese.</i>
1295-1302	Civil wars in Castile.		
1310	<i>Castile captures Gibraltar.</i>	1462	<i>Gibraltar again captured by Castile.</i>
1319	<i>Castilian invasion defeated outside Granada.</i>	1469	Marriage of Ferdinand Prince of Castile and Isabella Princess of Aragon.
1324	Catalonia occupies Sardinia.		
1333	<i>Gibraltar retaken by Granada.</i>	1470s	Full Castilian conquest of Canaries.
1337	Marinids capture Tlemcen.	1474-9	Civil war between Castilian-Portuguese alliance and Castilian-Aragonese alliance; victory of Castilian-Aragonese leads to unification of Castile-Aragon under Ferdinand and Isabella.
1340	<i>Castilian fleet defeated by Marinids off Algeciras; Marinid invasion defeated at Salado; capture of Algeciras by Castile.</i>	1482-92	<i>Castile-Aragon conquers kingdom of Granada; expulsion of Jews in Castile-Aragon.</i>
1341	Portuguese raid Canary Islands.		
1347-9	Marinid occupation of Tunisia.	1502	Expulsion of Spanish Muslims in violation of 1492 surrender terms.
1358	Marinids lose Tlemcen.		

Carved basin called the *Pila*, probably from a palace early-mid 11th C. Here two apparently unarmoured horsemen fight with broad-bladed spears. (Archaeol. Museum, Jativa, courtesy of L. A. Mayer Inst., Jerusalem.)



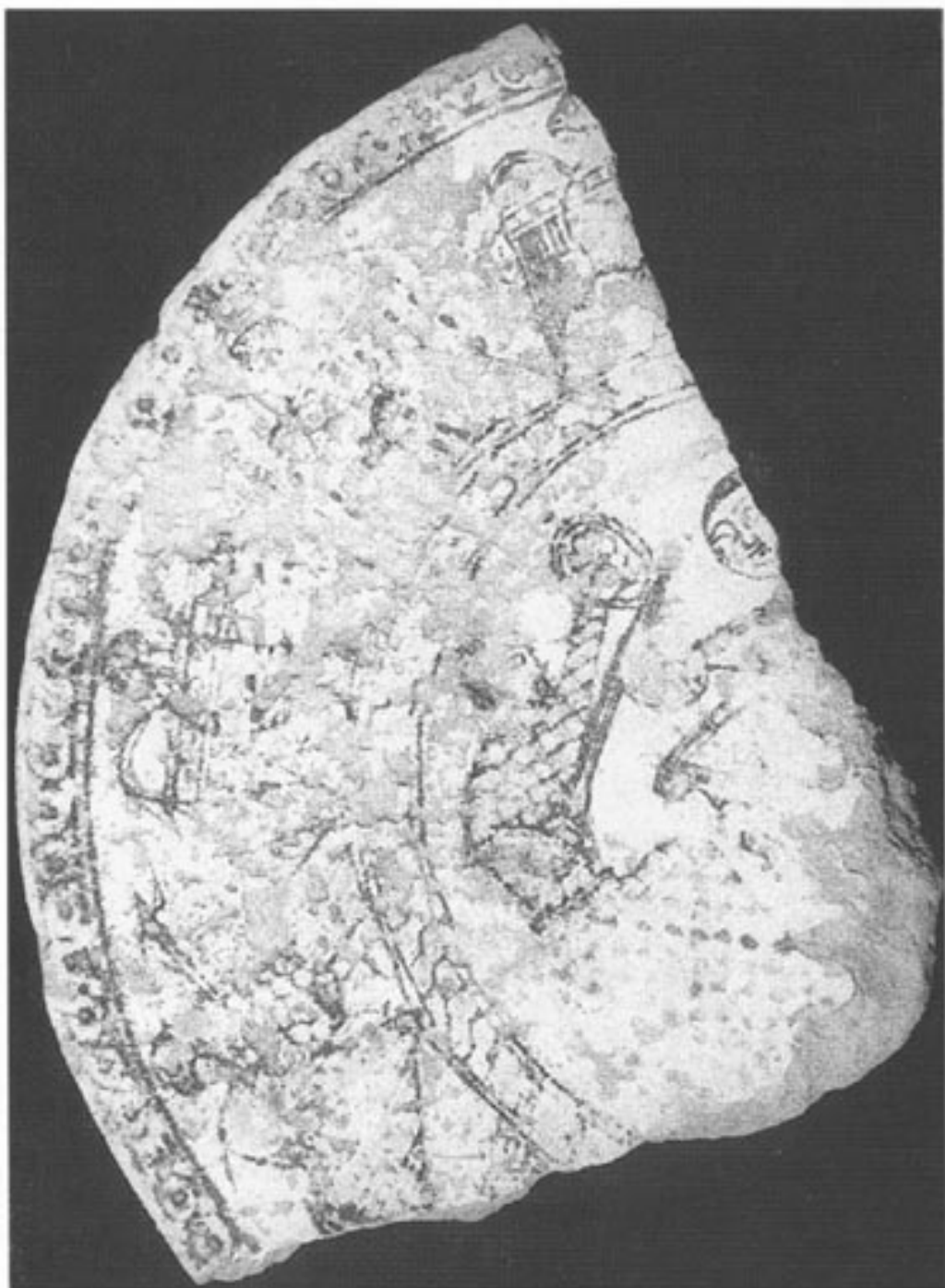
Christian Armies 1050-1150

The loose feudal structure of Spanish military organisation is reflected in troubadour epics of the period, including the *Poema del Cid*. Even the area's frontiers, particularly those between Christendom and Islam, were not very rigidly defined, each side holding towns while the heavily raided zone between fell to whoever was stronger at the time.

On the other hand French military influence was now felt, most strongly in Catalonia. A cavalry élite adopted the tall saddle, straight-legged riding position and couched lance of typical 12th century knights, plus shock-cavalry tactics of close-packed formations designed to break enemy ranks by weight or momentum. Mail hauberks became more common, though scale armour probably remained in use and may indicate a survival of Arab-Islamic ideas. Quilted armour was certainly used, either alone or with mail, and clearly reflected Islamic influence. Brightly coloured cloaks were a mark of the military class but were normally removed before combat. The adoption of 'modern' cavalry tactics was not always an advantage, however. The difficulty of remounting when using a tall saddle and long stirrup landed many a horseman in trouble when facing lighter and more agile Muslim cavalry.

Another, perhaps more significant military development was the widespread adoption of crossbows during the 11th century: Spaniards probably led the way but Andalusians were only a few years behind. As elsewhere in Europe this led to a decline in ordinary archery; yet for various reasons, such as the remoteness of some regions and continued influence from North Africa, simple archery survived right up to the 15th century. Morale and fighting spirit were strengthened by a *cantador* who rode ahead of the troops, singing heroic tales such as that of El Cid.

The Christian offensive which began in the mid-11th century followed the tradition of earlier wars and involved two forms of campaign. First there were raids of varying magnitude designed to seize valuables, livestock and prisoners; such expeditions were carried out by mounted troops, and were of limited duration. Then there were longer-term campaigns intended to seize and hold territory;



Ceramic wall-plaque from the Sabra Palace, Tunisia, mid-11th C. It shows a bearded infantryman with sword, small round shield and perhaps quilted armour facing a beardless horseman. (Bardo Museum, Tunis.)

more troops were involved, and naturally included infantry, siege engineers, baggage trains and the wherewithal to resist counter-attack. Muslim armies operated in the same way and both sides developed systems to exchange or ransom prisoners. By the 1130s Christian frontier towns incorporated such regulations in their charters and most of the Military Orders also had special centres for this purpose. Early in the 13th century a special Order of St. Mary of Mercy was created specifically to negotiate ransoms. Muslim, Christian and Jewish doctors served on both sides, while towns built hospitals to care for the wounded. Such concerns may have made Iberian warfare more civilised than elsewhere in Europe, but there were many darker sides.

Leon

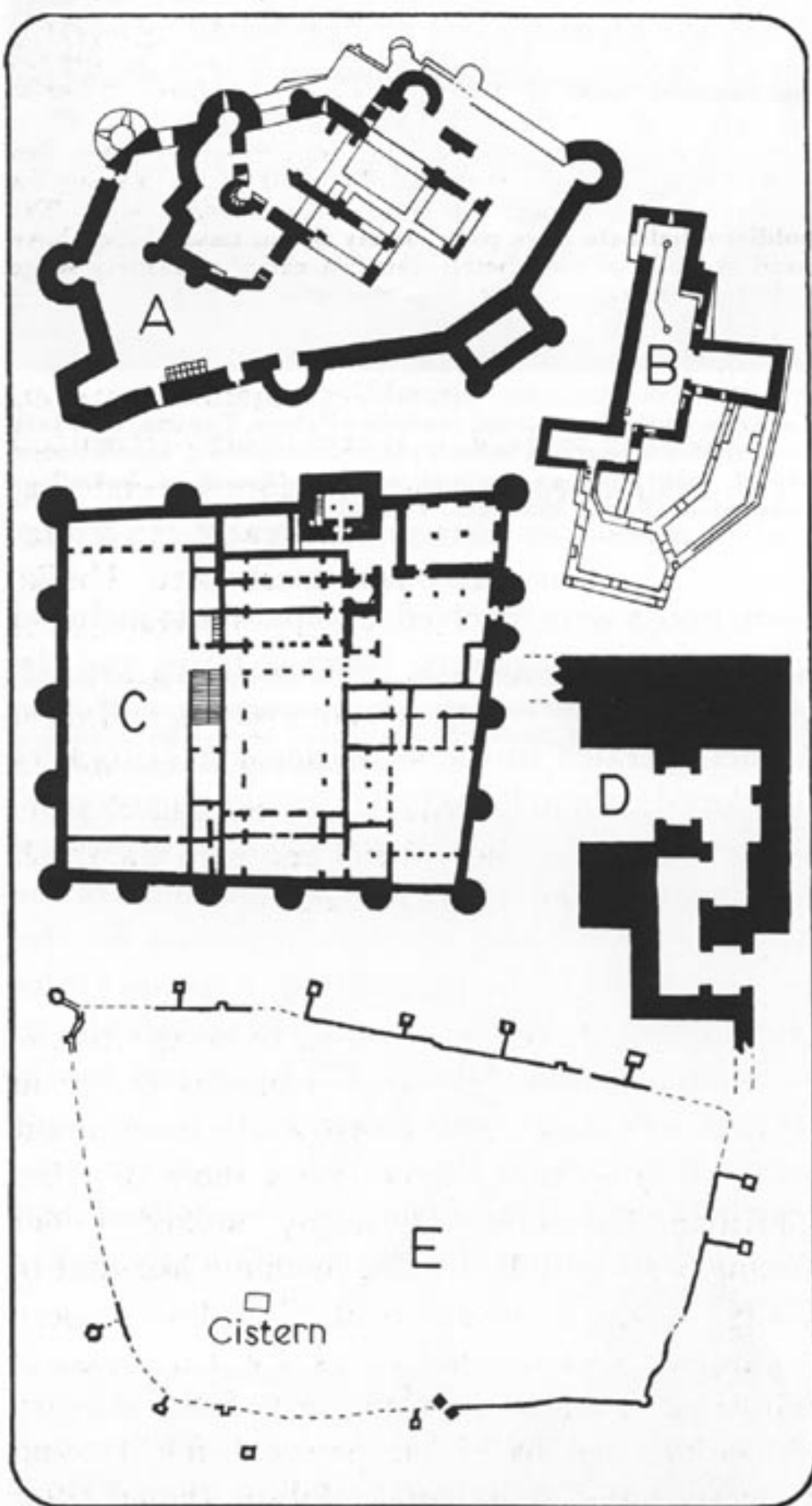
By the 12th century the Spanish kingdoms assumed that a total Reconquista was inevitable. Each

kingdom claimed legal descent from the Visigothic state overthrown by Muslim Arabs in the 8th century, but Leon claimed more: its rulers projected themselves as 'Emperors' over all Iberian states, Christian and Muslim. Leon had indeed taken the lead against Andalus, but its claim to empire sounded increasingly hollow as the 11th century drew to a close. Nevertheless Leon remained a potent force and its military aristocracy became increasingly feudalised. Fiefs became hereditary, though in the 12th century a knight could still pass on his arms, armour and horse to an heir only if he died in action—if he died in bed his gear reverted to the king. Urban militia infantry forces were, however, relatively undeveloped in Leon even by the 13th century.

Castile

The military systems of neighbouring Castile were rooted in those of Leon. In the late 11th century a king or baron could give arms to any free man in return for military service, while equipment could also be captured directly from the foe or purchased with the profits of booty. The division of spoils was, in fact, carefully regulated throughout Castile. Different forms of warfare were reflected in summons to service. *Fonsado* or *hueste* were formal expeditions on horseback, while defensive actions against enemy raids were called *apellido*. *Anubda* and *arrobda* entailed siege, pitched battle, frontier guard or garrison work. Failure to answer any such summons led to a fine or *fonsadero*, this eventually evolving into a form of tax with which a ruler could pay professional troops.

From the mid-11th to mid-12th centuries the Castilian army basically consisted of noble *caballeros hidalgos* who fought as vassals in return for fiefs or pay. Many, like the king himself, had their own professional private armies or *mesnadas*. These in turn were led by members of the *infanzones* or lesser nobility such as El Cid. Of increasing importance were non-noble but prosperous *caballeros villanos* who fought in return for tax exemptions. They could, however, lose such status if they failed to attend a twice yearly military inspection properly equipped and mounted. Urban infantry *pedones* also fought in return for privileges. The *juez* or leader of an urban force was usually appointed by the king, but each city section elected its own *alcalde* or leader when it joined a campaign. Other vital militia auxiliaries included the *atalayeros* scouts. They were something of an élite, mounted on the swiftest horses and paid a special salary. Like many Spanish military terms these titles often come from Arabic. During a raid these forces were divided into two parts, one of which built and defended a base camp while the rest, the *algara* or raiders, rode on to do what damage they could. Rules governing a city's involvement in warfare were enshrined in its *fuero* charter; these covered information-gathering, espionage, the division of spoils, compensation for



(A) Almenara castle (Cuenca), late 14th C. around 11th–12th C. core. (B) Calatrava la Nueva (Ciudad Real), early 13th C. castle within 15th C. enlargement. (C) Aljaferiya Palace (Saragossa), 1046–81. (D) Gate of the Law, Alhambra Palace (Granada), 1348. (E) Almohade defences of Cáceres, showing *albarrana* towers projecting from the circuit wall, late 12th C.

1200 concepts of vassalage did develop under strong French influence. Nevertheless Catalan military obligation remained confused and unclear, the great vassals of Barcelona clearly owing the count some military duties while in other areas service seems to have been purely voluntary.

Portugal

Portugal, as the westernmost state in Christian Iberia, also differed from the general pattern. It was not, in fact, fully recognised as a separate entity by the others until the 13th century, and much of Portugal's effort went into preserving its independence from Leon and Castile. The country's military organisation was old-fashioned, or at least remained true to an Arab-Andalusian tradition, until the 14th century. The army commander had an Arabic title, *alferes mor*, as did the *alcalde* governors of castles or fortified cities. Portuguese costume continued to be influenced by Mozarab-Andalusian styles while an even older tradition may have lain behind a continued use of longbows, though crossbows had also come into fashion.

Taifa and Almoravid Armies

When Muslim Andalus settled down after the collapse of the Caliphate of Cordova a kaleidoscope of petty states emerged, some quite large, others consisting of little more than one town. These have too often been dismissed as self-defeating, as inviting destruction by the growing power of Christian Iberia, and as surrendering to an African-Islamic Empire as the only means of prolonging the existence of Andalusian Islam. Such a view is, however, oversimplified.

These *taifa* (party or group) states represent an example of the Iberian tradition of regionalism, a tradition directly opposed to a centralising concept of unification. Both still exist and can still be seen in Spain. The *taifas* were also part of a wider trend in 11th century Islamic history and were mirrored by events in Iran where another people, similarly conquered by Arabs in the early Islamic period,



Wall painting from San Baudelio de Berlanga, Soria early 12th C. In this Mozarab style painting a huntsman uses a large crossbow of primitive construction. (Prado Museum, Madrid)

reasserted their identity. Iran's revival remained within the Islamic orbit; but in Iberia Christians were numerous, perhaps even an overall majority, while neighbouring Christian states could draw upon the growing strength of Europe beyond the Pyrenees. Most significant of all, perhaps, was the fact that the Muslims did not appreciate the changes taking place to their north. They were confident of cultural superiority and were accustomed to military security. It simply did not occur to *taifa* rulers that the despised Christians of northern Iberia posed a serious threat—not, at least, until it was almost too late. And why should they? Crusades to the Holy Land had yet to begin, and everywhere else except Sicily, Islam was victorious.

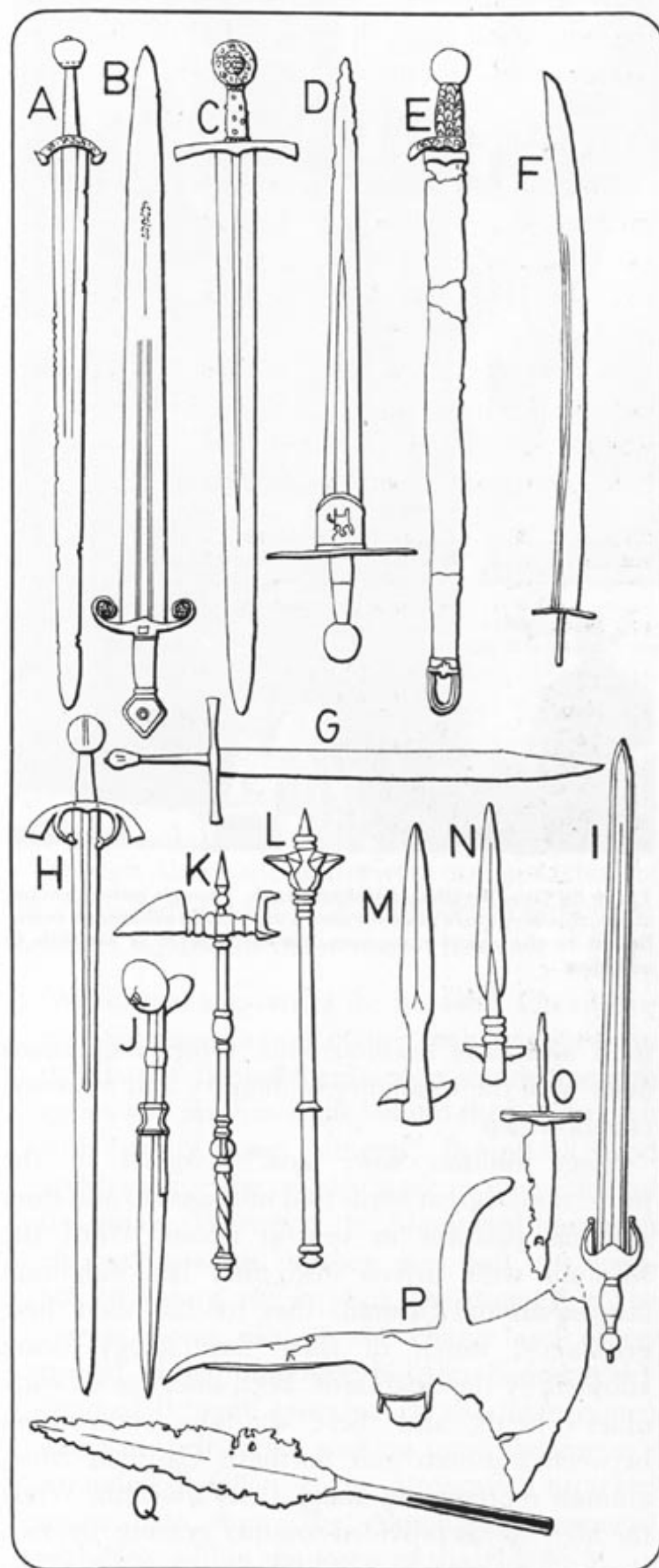
Taifa states also differed from one another. The biggest, Badajoz, Toledo and Saragossa, were centred upon the *thughur* or military frontier zones of the old Caliphate. The tiniest were clustered in the south-west (*al Gharb* or the Algarve) far from the Christian frontier, while some were ruled by an Andalusian aristocracy which thus enjoyed power for the first time in a century.

Comparable fragmentation was taking place in North Africa; in fact Ceuta and Tangier, at the very northern tip of Morocco, formed a *taifa* state, having previously been part of the Andalusian Caliphate. From c.1060 to the 1070s Ceuta was ruled by Barghawata Berbers, a people who, having evolved their own peculiar religion, were considered infidel by ordinary Muslims. Though powerful enough to field 12,000 horsemen, the

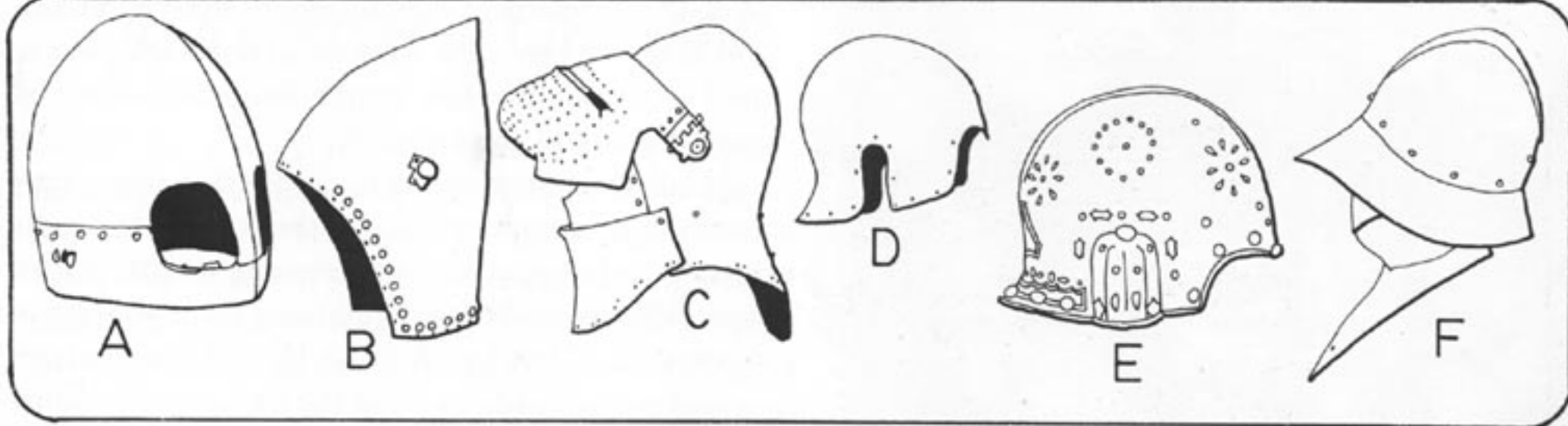
In the 1160s, for example, the Azagra family held some mountain valleys, first as vassals of Muslim Valencia and then as independent rulers. After the fall of Valencia the Azagras extended their territory until the family died out in 1276. Muslim *qa'ids* also survived the conquest, administering a Muslim countryside and supplying the king with troops. Among these lords was a certain al Azraq who, in 1244, did homage for eight castles around a small palace in the Alcala valley. Al Azraq and his fellow *mudejar* ('tamed') Muslim lords might have continued in relative freedom if circumstances had not pushed them into revolt. Increasing Christian colonisation might have been the major cause, and it was certainly a serious affair. Trouble began in 1245 but really exploded two years later. The rebels retreated into al Azraq's mountains where they seized more castles and maintained a guerrilla war, crushing a major Christian offensive around 1249 and almost capturing King James. The next few years saw stalemate while the Aragonese faced further defeat in southern France. Fighting then flared up in 1256, and two years later, following agreement with Castile, King James launched an all-out assault, seized al Azraq's main citadel and brought the rebels to heel. Even these events did not end Andalusian participation in Christian armies—Valencian Muslims fought for Aragon against a French invasion only a few years later.

The role of Iberian urban militias continued, however, to be more important, particularly in Castile. Such troops were present at the great victory of Las Navas de Tolosa, in the capture of Cordova in 1236, Valencia in 1238 and Seville in 1248. Militias along the frontier were also strengthened and reorganised in the late 12th and

13th centuries. Regulations concerning equipment became more specific: horses had to be of a minimum quality, *caballeros* had to have shields, lances, metal helmets, swords, mail hauberks and padded *perpunt* soft-armours plus arm and thigh defences. Certain troops such as standard-bearers



Iberian weapons. (A) Sword, 11th–13th C. (Alava Prov. Museum, Vitoria). (B) 'Sword of St. Ferdinand', prob. Andalusian blade 13th C. (Real Armeria, Madrid). (C) Sword 13th C. (Instituto Valencia Don Juan, Madrid). (D) 'Sword of St. Martin', Aragonese? c.1300 (Musée de l'Armée, Paris). (E) Sword from St. Martin's Cave, Gibraltar, Andalusian? early 14th C. (British Museum, London). (F) Blade called 'Gajere', North African or Mamluk with shortened modern hilt (regalia of Katsina emirate, Nigeria). (G) Falchion from Puente Genil. c.1350–1400 (Archaeol. Museum, Cordova). (H) Sword c.1500 (Instituto Valencia Don Juan, Madrid). (I) *Jinete* sword from Granada, late 14th C. (Met. Mus. of Art, New York). (J) Ear-dagger, prob. from Granada late 14th–early 15th C. (Instituto Valencia Don Juan, Madrid). (K–L) Maces, 15th C. (Army Museum, Madrid). (M–N) Spearheads, 12th–14th C. (Alava Prov. Museum, Vitoria). (O) Dagger, Andalusian? 12th–14th C. (S. Juan Duero Museum, Soria). (P) Axe-head, 13th–14th C. (Alava Prov. Museum, Vitoria). (Q) Spearhead, 10th–13th C. (Nat. Archaeol. Mus., Madrid).

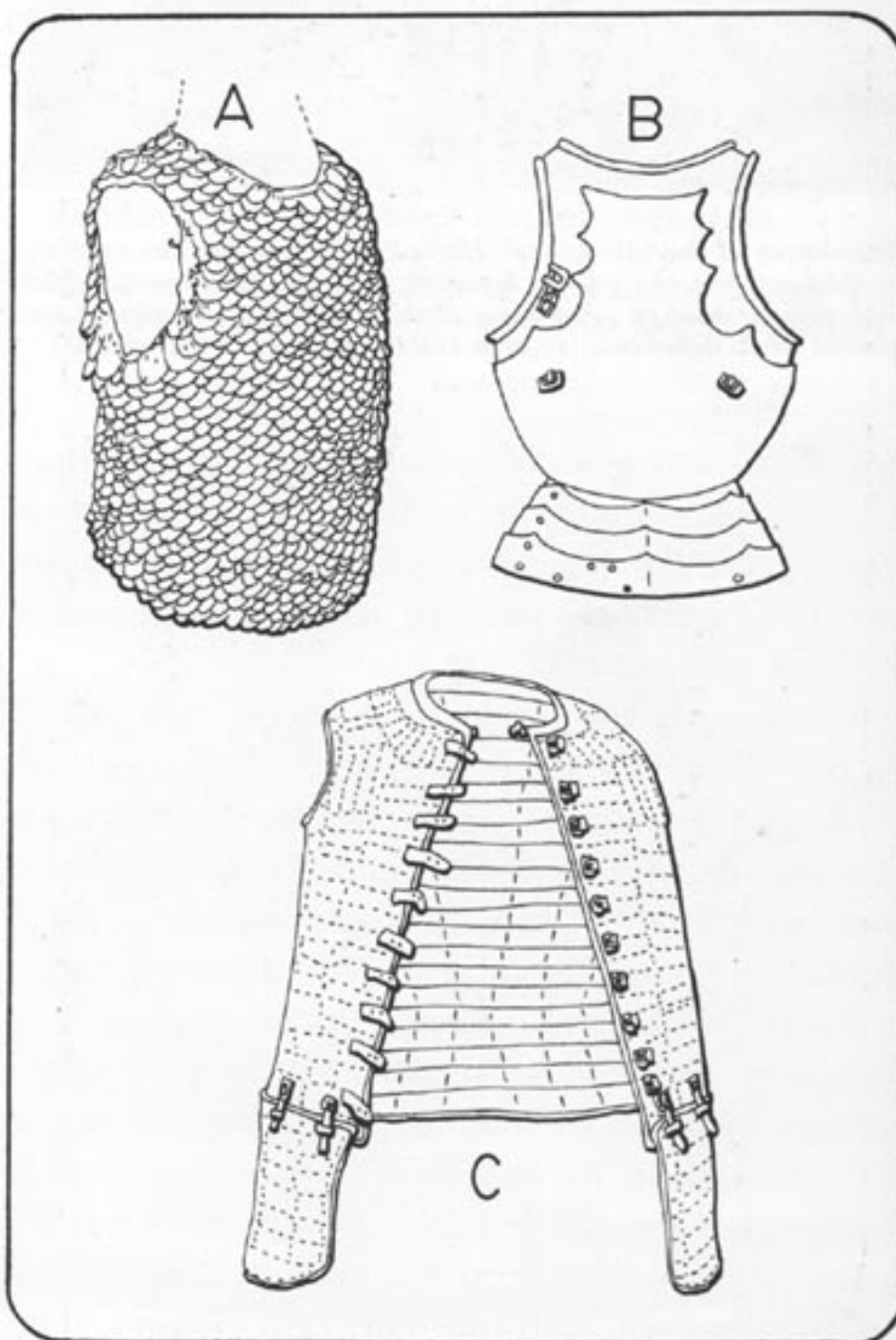


Iberian helmets. (A) Helmet, 12th–early 14th C. (Scollard Coll., Los Angeles). (B) Bascinet, late 14th C. (Provincial Museum, Burgos). (C) Great bascinet from Pamplona Cathedral, c.1430 (Navarre Mus., Pamplona). (D) Sallet, late 15th C. (Musée de l'Armée, Paris). (E) 'Helmet of Boabdil', Italian sallet with Andalusian decoration, late 15th C. (Met. Mus. of Art, New York). (F) Cabacete and barbete, late 15th C. (formerly Pauillac Coll., Paris)

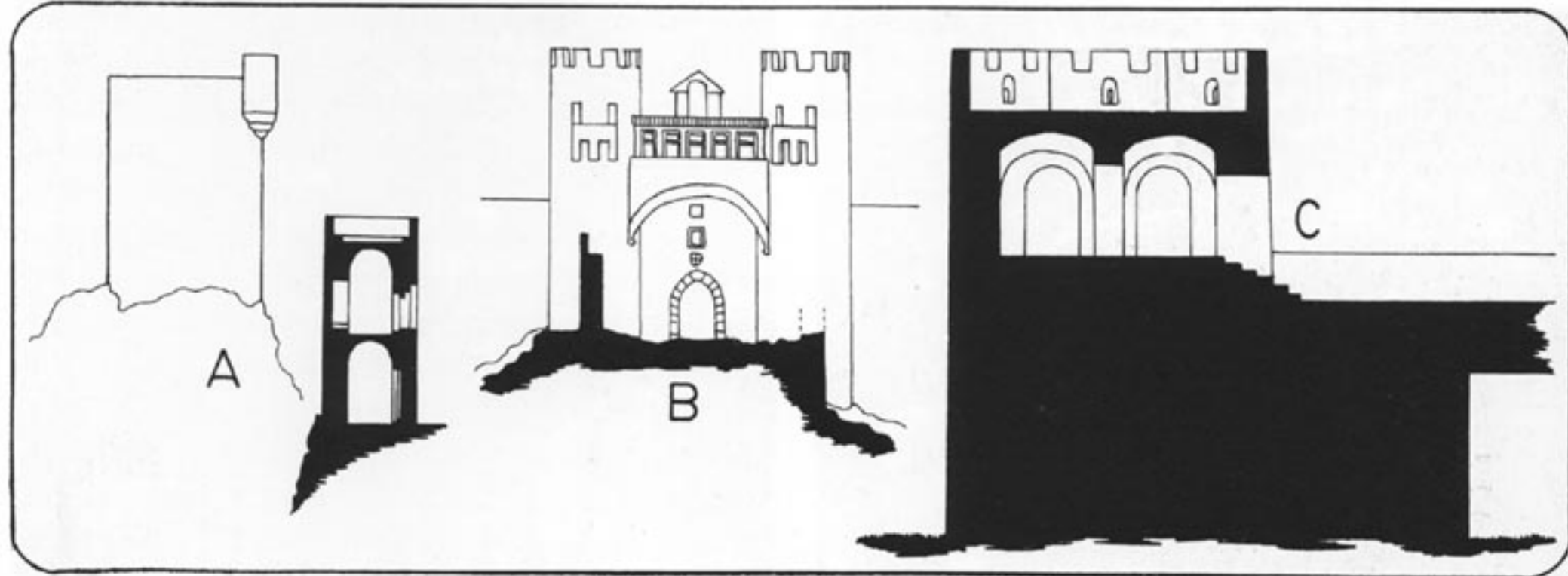
Mobilisation systems differed along various parts of the Castilian frontier with Granada, involving the Military Orders as well as local barons and large numbers of militia cavalry. Frontier lords or *alcades* were often described as being 'between the Christians and Moors', and had as their primary responsibility the maintenance of peace. Beneath them came the *fieles del rastro* or *ballesteros de monte* whose duty was to track down unofficial raiders. Next came the *caballeros de la sierra* who were frontier guards, and the *alfaques*, often Jews, who acted as go-betweens whenever problems arose. A large Muslim community survived on the Christian side and this also acted as intermediaries when negotiating the release of prisoners, who were often given into the custody of mosques. Despite such useful roles, the Jewish and Muslim minorities faced increasing hostility by the late 14th century.

In late 14th–15th century Aragon-Catalonia the situation was somewhat different. A temporary division of the country into the kingdoms of Catalonia-Aragon and Roussillon-Majorca ended in 1345 but the Aragonese Mediterranean empire was now in decline. Finances were again low and it was difficult to pay the troops. Urban militias and the *sometent* were perhaps more important than ever. The *almogavers* no longer fought only for the Crown but helped rebels as well. Cross-border marriage alliances meant that many Castilian barons now held fiefs in Aragon, and vice-versa, which led to divided loyalties. Certain Aragonese baronial families were again rising in power, one of the most prominent being that of De Luna. Alvaro de Luna was one baron with a foot in each camp; he became

a strong supporter of an Aragonese claimant to the Castilian throne, virtually manipulating the entire situation. He won a great victory on behalf of King John II of Castile at Olmedo in 1445, only to be disgraced and executed eight years later. There was



Iberian armour. (A) Cuirass of iron scales, 11th–13th C. (Alava Prov. Museum, Vitoria). (B) 'Cuirass of Duarte de Almeida', 1470–75 (Toledo Cathedral). (C) Brigandine of iron scales under red velvet, 15th C. (Estruch Coll., Barcelona)



were used at Moclin in 1486 and at Malaga a year later, but only played a significant role in the final struggle for Granada. This city's defences had, in fact, been strengthened with low semi-circular artillery bastions at the base of some high towers. Yet it might still be true to say that, in the end, the last Andalusian kingdom of Granada was betrayed not by its defenders, nor even its last unfortunate king, Boabdil El Zogoiby—'The Unlucky'—but by its lack of modern gunpowder artillery.

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(A) Elevation and section of Atienza castle (Guadalajara), mid-12th C. (B) Gate of Sigüenza castle (Guadalajara), 1124. (C) Section of Torre Redonda, one of the *albarrana* towers of Cáceres, late 12th C.

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Iberian firearms. (A) *Trom* with burst muzzle, late 14th C. (Milit. Mus., Lisbon). (B) Iron handgun, 14th C. (unknown locat., Lisbon). (C) Cannon from Baza, 15th C. (Army Mus., Madrid). (D) Handgun with wooden stock, early 15th C. (Armeria Reale, Madrid). (E) Mortar from Burgos, 15th C. (Army Museum, Madrid).

