

UNITS 4 & 7

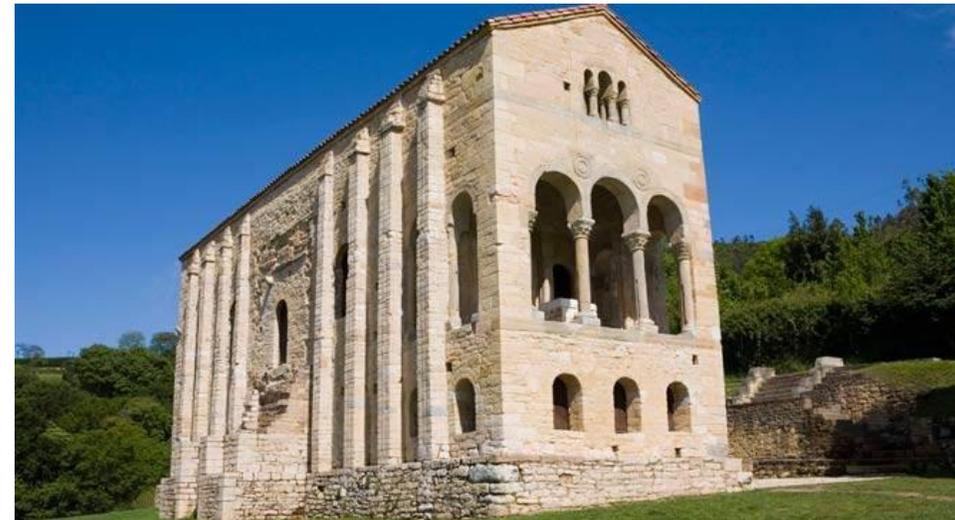
Christian Peninsular Kingdoms

1. How were the first Christian kingdoms formed?

After the arrival of the Muslims to the Iberian Peninsula in 711, only **two narrow areas of land in the north** remained outside the control of Al-Andalus governors.

A) Asturias (in the Cantabrian Mountains).

B) The Pyrenees (*Marca Hispánica*, part of the Carolingian empire).



A) ASTURIAS

- In the mountains of Asturias, they refused to pay tributes to the Muslims and one local leader (caudillo) called Pelagius (Pelayo) defeated a little Muslim army in the battle of Covadonga (722).
- The Cantabrian territories actually became independent, and with Alfonso I Asturias became a kingdom. Alfonso II made Oviedo the capital of this kingdom that spread from Galicia to Cantabria (2nd half of 8th century to the 1st half of 9th century).

The kingdom of Asturias became the kingdom of León

- In the second half of the 9th century Alfonso III expanded his kingdom to the South, up to the Duero valley (an area practically uninhabited, but some towns like Porto, Astorga, León, Zamora...) and his son Ordoño II moved the capital from Oviedo to León (Kingdom of León, 914, 10th century).
- From the 10th century, León established its border near River Tormes (Salamanca) but the Muslims of the Caliphate of Córdoba with their military leader Al-Mansur (Almanzor) attacked this Christian kingdom with violent raids. León stopped expanding and tried to defend its borders. This changed after the death of Al-Mansur, shortly after year 1000.



How was the kingdom of Castile formed?

- In the east of the kingdom of León (Burgos, La Rioja, Álava, etc.) several castles were created to protect the territory from Muslims' attacks. The kings gave this lands to the counts as fiefdoms, and these counts began to act more independently. In the 10th century the **count of Castile, Fernán González** united all these counties and his title became hereditary, creating the **County of Castile**.
- In 1035 Castile became a kingdom because its count (**Fernando I**) married a Leonese princess and became the **King of Castile and León**.
- **Castile and León** expanded to the south for many years while they were frequently **separating and reuniting**, until the reign of **Fernando III "the Saint"**, who **united both kingdoms forever** in 1230, 13th century.



The Crown of Castile

A **CROWN** is the result of joining together two or more kingdoms under the government of the same king.

After the unification of the kingdoms of Castile and León, this last kingdom was a part of the Crown of Castile, as well as the new territories conquered from Al-Andalus. The Crown of Castile was formed by the kingdoms of León, Castile, Galicia, Toledo, etc.



SOME IMPORTANT DATES ABOUT THE “RECONQUISTA” OF LEÓN AND CASTILLA



- Between **1080-1085 Alfonso VI**, king of Castile and León, conquered **Madrid and Toledo**. However, Alfonso was stopped by the Almoravids, who defeated him in the **Battle of Sagrajas (1086)**. Almoravids had linked the taifas.
- The King of Castile, Alfonso VIII failed to stop the Almohads in **Alarcos**, where he lost (**1195**), but he won some years after at the **Battle of Navas de Tolosa (1212)**.
- Fernando III and his son Alfonso X occupied Extremadura and the Guadalquivir Valley (Sevilla, Huelva, Cádiz) in the 13th century.
- During the 14th and 15th centuries the rest of the taifas of Andalucia were conquered while Castile asked for *parias* (taxes) from Muslim kingdoms in exchange for the peace.

End of the “Reconquista”

Castile finished the Christian conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 1492.

Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragón (the Catholic Monarchs, had joined together their Crowns for their children. They conquered Granada on the 1st of January, 1492.



B) The Pyrenees (*Marca Hispánica*, part of the Carolingian empire).

- Charlemagne obtained control of Hispanic ground in the Pyrenees, struggling against the Muslims of Al-Andalus in the 9th century, just in the Pyrenees. These territories are known as Marca Hispánica, because they were the borders of his empire.
- The marquises and counts who ruled these territories started to act autonomously from the Frankish empire and their titles started being hereditary. This is the **origin of the Kingdom of Pamplona, the Aragonese Counties and the Catalan Counties.**

From “Kingdom of Pamplona” to “Kingdom of Navarra”

- The land between the Arga and Aragón rivers, where the Basques lived resisted pressure from the Franks and the Muslims. The Arista family expelled the Frankish rulers and established the Kingdom of Pamplona, which started expanding with territories as Álava and La Rioja and temporarily Aragón (10th century)
- In the 11th century Pamplona was separated from Aragón and achieved the present day territory of Navarra.
- In the 12th century the King Sancho VI changed the name of the kingdom to Kingdom of Navarra. It soon stopped expanding, surrounded by Castile and Aragón borders.



From Kingdom of Aragón to Crown of Aragón (and the Catalan Counties)

Aragón:

In the 9th century Aragón was a county that became independent from the Franks. Aragón and Sobrarbe and Ribagorza counties formed the Kingdom of Aragón in the 11th century and they advanced to the south.

Catalan Counties:

In the 9th century the Count of Barcelona annexed many Catalan counties that used to belong to the Franks, and made his position hereditary. At the end of the 10th century they became independent from the Franks and the Count of Barcelona was the most powerful of the counts in Catalonia. During the 11th and 12th centuries the County of Barcelona arrived to the Ebro valley.

Birth of the CROWN OF ARAGÓN

In the 12th century the princess of Aragón, Petronila, married the count of Barcelona, Ramón Berenguer IV. Their son, Alfonso II inherited both territories and became the first King of the Crown of Aragón (Kingdom of Aragón + Catalan Counties + the new kingdoms that were going to be conquered).

In the 13th century they conquered the Kingdom of Valencia, as a new kingdom belonging to the Crown of Aragón, and also the Kingdom of Majorca (Mallorca).

In the Crown of Aragón every kingdom had its own traditional laws and Cortes (parliament).



Resettlement

As Christians advanced to the south, Christian population settled in the lands they conquered. Depending on the period, they used 4 different systems to distribute the lands:

- **Free resettlement (presura or aprisio):** From the Cantabrian Mountains and Pyrenees up to the Duero river and North of Aragón and Catalonia. The first free peasants who arrived to the territory were given their own small plots of land, and founded villages with collective pastures and properties.

- **Concejl resettlement:** From Duero and Ebro Rivers up to Tajo river and Tarragona. Monarchs granted privileges to the new cities and the new inhabitants through municipal charters and fueros.

- **Military orders resettlement:** From Tajo and the South of Ebro up to Guadalquivir and Júcar rivers, the land was entrusted to Christian military orders (knights that were also monks, who were dedicated to war and prayer). These orders created towns and villages and gave plots to peasants in exchange for taxes. (Military orders of Santiago, Calatrava, Alcántara and Montesa.)

- **Latifundia (land grants):** Donations of land given by the king to the nobles who had participated in the conquest. Typical of the south of Extremadura, and La Mancha, Valencia and Andalucía. The nobles created big properties of land called latifundia, the beginning of the problem of lack of land for farmers in Andalucía nowadays.

Fueros and municipal charters: documents where the king guaranteed some rights and tax exemptions granted to the inhabitants of a town or city, and conditions for cultivating the land.



Economy and culture in the age of ALFONSO X, the Wise

Transhumance and the Mesta

Transhumance: moving livestock from one place of pasture in summer to another place in winter.

Most people worked in agriculture in Castile. However, the most important economic activity was Merino sheep farming. Merino sheep produced exceptional wool that was sold in the workshops of the north of Europe (Flanders, England, etc.).

The great flocks of sheep belonged to nobles and military orders or monasteries. To protect their interests, the king **Alfonso X** created the **Honrado Concejo de la Mesta** in the 13th century. Their interests during the routes of transhumance were protected over the peasants' rights. These routes (that existed since the Neolithic Era) were protected as "cañadas reales".



School of Translators of Toledo

Alfonso X brought scholars of Hebrew, Arabic and classical languages (Greek, Latin) to his court in Toledo and formed a *scriptorium* where books from these languages were translated into Latin or Romance languages (eg. a primitive Spanish).

Thanks to the job of these translators (who had different religions), these books were spread throughout Europe.



Aragonese expansion across the Mediterranean Sea

The kingdom of Aragón focused its expansion along the Mediterranean Sea, as Castile surrounded its peninsular expansion. Catalan, Majorcan and Valencian merchants established a trade network in the Mediterranean.

The Crown of Aragón expanded between the 13th and 15th centuries, conquering Sicily, Sardinia, Naples and even Athens and Neopatria (a piece of Greece). These territories were conquered by the *almogávares* army (mercenaries).

They created embassies in the main Mediterranean cities to protect the merchants' interests. These are known as *Consulate of the Sea*.



Christian art made by Christians: Pre-Romanesque and Mozarabic

- **Pre-Romanesque art:** between the years 711 and 910, the period of the creation and expansion of the kingdom of Asturias. Similar characteristics to the subsequent Romanesque.



Church of San Miguel de Lillo
(Oviedo)



Santa María del Naranco (the kings' palace
transformed into a church, Oviedo).

Mozarabic art (Christian art in Al-Andalus territory)

- Small churches built in the 9th and 10th centuries by the Mozarabs who moved to Duero Valley.
- Small stone buildings with thick walls and horseshoe arches.
- Structure of old Visigothic churches, such as horseshoe arches with columns decorated with plant motifs and buttresses.



San Miguel de la Escalada (León)

Christian art made by Muslims: MUDÉJAR ART

- Style of art built by Muslims in Christian territories. The Muslim artisans were paid by Christians to build churches with their traditional Arabic techniques (use of bricks, plaster, tiles, carved wooden roofs and panels, blind arches, etc.)
- We can find examples of Mudéjar Romanesque (semicircular arches, etc.) and Mudéjar Gothic (pointed arches, rose windows, etc.).



San Lorenzo church
in Sahagún



Cathedral of Teruel



Monastery of Guadalupe
(Cáceres)

- Royal Alcázar of Sevilla



- Santa María La Blanca, Toledo (Former Synagogue)

