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*A History of Spain and Portugal*  
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## Chapter One Ancient Hispania

[1] The Hispanic peninsula lies at the extreme southwestern tip of Europe, in the direction of Africa and the outer Atlantic. It is partially separated from the rest of Europe by the Pyrenees and forms a geographic stepping stone between that continent and Africa. Despite its unique location, the peninsula does not form a fully unified geographic entity, for it is divided by steep internal mountain ranges and in some regions by virtual deserts. It is second only to Switzerland as the highest area in western Europe, the land rising rapidly from the narrow coastal lowlands to hill country. Save for the green belts that comprise the northern and northwestern fringes, it is a predominantly dry area, in most parts of which the rainfall scarcely exceeds fifteen inches a year. Though the peninsula contains mineral deposits of value, its soil has always been poor compared with that of most of western Europe. According to a classic categorization made in 1891, only 10 percent of the surface of the peninsula is genuinely fertile. Approximately 45 percent is moderately arable. Another 35 percent can be used for any sort of productive purpose only with difficulty, and 10 percent is totally useless.

Most formal histories of Spain devote considerable space to the peninsula's prehistory. During the past century some attention has been given to archaeology, and even more to hypothetical definitions of the various ethnic groups that inhabited the region before the [2] Roman conquest. A great deal of this remains speculation, for the data unearthed by archaeological study in Spain is still rather scant, and the origins, culture, and duration of pre-Roman ethnic groups are for the most part poorly defined.

During the first millennium B.C. the peninsula was inhabited by a complex variety of peoples, most of them organized into tribal groups. There has been much controversy over the ethnic and geographic origins of the ancient inhabitants. In the early twentieth century the "African" thesis was in vogue, postulating that the ancient Hispanic tribes were mainly the descendents of white migrants from northwest Africa. More recent interpretations, however, have stressed immigration and cultural influences from southern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. Conclusive proof for any single unified interpretation is lacking, but the weight of evidence now favors the "Europeanist" interpretation. At any rate, in ancient times the peoples of the peninsula were not radically distinct from but possessed many of the cultural characteristics of the population of other parts of southern Europe and the Mediterranean littoral. The largest single ethnic element were the Iberian tribes that moved into the peninsula at some point during the second millennium B.C.--whether from north Africa or southern Europe--and spread out over a broad area. The first clearly definable group of immigrants from central or northern Europe was a sizable wave of Celtic migrants who entered the peninsula during the eighth and ninth centuries B.C.

It appears that the main ethnic and genetic components of the historic Hispanic peoples were already present before the Roman conquest, and that the great majority of subsequent "Spaniards" (or "Portuguese") were descendents of the original highly diversified ethnic stocks established in the pre-Roman period. Though the peninsula has been subject to invasion and very light immigration throughout its history, population movement at any time since the Roman conquest was not heavy

enough to alter the genetic or phenotypical composition of the inhabitants significantly. The Romans described members of most of the Hispanic tribes as rather short, dark-haired, white-skinned, and physically agile, if not particularly muscular-- characteristics which would seem to describe modern as well as ancient inhabitants of the peninsula.

*Hispania*, the name given by the Romans to the peninsula, was a strictly geographic label without specific cultural or political connotation. The peninsula had always been divided into geographic and ethno-cultural regions which differed greatly from each other. The most advanced of the ancient Hispanic communities was the kingdom of Tartessos in the south, covering roughly the modern region of western Andalusia. When first encountered by Greek traders, Tartesian [3] society was centered in a number of fairly large cities and had a well developed economy based on agriculture, cattle-raising, fishing, commerce, and mining. Its technology was comparatively sophisticated, as evidenced in its mining, shipbuilding, irrigation, and ox drawn plows. The society was highly stratified, dominated by warrior and priestly castes and a small class of large landholders and wealthy merchants. Much of its land cultivation and cattle production was undertaken on the large estates owned by the upper classes, and the bulk of the population were peasants with few rights. In general, Tartessos was not greatly dissimilar to other relatively advanced urbanized societies of the Mediterranean. It was governed by a despotic monarchy legitimized by divine myth and thaumaturgy. The Tartessian state reached its maximum strength in the late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C., dominating the southern part of the peninsula and wielding influence in the affairs of the west Mediterranean. By the fifth century it had fallen under Carthaginian domination, whence it later passed to Roman rule.

The largest ethnic group in the peninsula, the Iberians, were strongly tribal and warlike, qualities characteristic of the population of ancient Hispania as a whole. The most advanced of the Iberians and the people to whom the name Iberian was originally given (the word was extended in Greek usage to refer to the peninsula) lived in communities on the eastern coast. The eastern Iberians were considerably influenced by Greek and Phoenician merchants and immigrant colonies, who contributed much to their culture and political organization. Their communities never formed a major state, as did Tartessos, but were organized in a variety of small city-states not dissimilar to the Greek. In the east as in the south, forms of monarchy prevailed. The Iberian alphabet in the east was one of two alphabets found in pre-Roman Hispania; the other was the Tartessian alphabet in the south. Rather similar in structure, they were both alphabetic and syllabic in form.

Ancient Hispanic societies were increasingly primitive and less politically and technologically advanced the farther they were from the south and east and the nearer to the north and west. The tribes of the southern part of the central plateau revealed a transitional pattern; they were partly urbanized and semiliterate but proportionately more rural and pastoral than their counterparts to the south and east. The central tribes were also more representative in political and social structure. Their larger towns were governed by a form of republican assembly dominated by a semiaristocratic oligarchy.

The northern and western groups were almost completely rural and illiterate and never formed organized states. The most distinctive ethnic community among them was that of the Basques of the western [4] Pyrenees and adjacent foothills. The origin of the Basques is shrouded in mystery. Whether or not they were indeed the original, pre-Iberian inhabitants of the peninsula, as is sometimes conjectured, their language--which has persisted in rural regions to this day--is unique and non-Indo-European. Their society was familial and tribal, and their economy, like that of most of the peninsular tribes, was essentially pastoral. They remained comparatively secluded in their hills until late Roman times.

Celtic immigration spread through much of the northern part of the peninsula during the eighth and ninth centuries B.C. In the northern sector of the central plateau and in the Duero valley in the interior of the northwestern area the Celts fused with the earlier population to form so-called Celtiberian communities. Some of these practiced extensive agriculture along with raising flocks and herds, and in the Duero valley tribal collectivist social patterns prevailed. In the northern hills of Asturias and the central Cantabrian range tribal life was more primitive. There the original population were mostly immigrants from southern France and northern Italy and were apparently taller and more muscular than the average Iberian. Partly because of the poorer soil, the economy of the northwest was largely pastoral, and social patterns tended toward matriarchy, possibly from Celtic influence.

The west, called Lusitania by the Romans, is set apart from the northern and central areas by watersheds. The Lusitanians had a better-developed agrarian culture than was to be found elsewhere save in the sophisticated south and east. More prosperous than the groups of the center and north, their society was also more sharply divided by class. During antiquity, this western area was largely ignored by the outer world and by the advanced eastern and southern cultures. It had few metals, the principal commercial attraction of the peninsula.

The complete lack of political or cultural unity among the disparate societies of the peninsula impeded rather than facilitated their conquest by Rome. The incorporation of Hispania into the empire was a long, slow process, lasting from 218 B.C. to 19 B.C. (though the major part was completed by 133 B.C.). This was a much longer time than was required to subjugate other major portions of the Mediterranean littoral. The fact also that it was highlighted by celebrated examples of diehard resistance--the most famous of which was the struggle to the death of the town of Numantia in 133 B.C.--has led some Spanish historians to view the ancient Hispanic tribes as already "Spanish" in their cultural characteristics, particularly in their xenophobia and obstinate resistance to foreign domination. In fact, the relative difficulties encountered in subduing Hispania stemmed in part from the [5] very absence of any such coherent entity as "Spain" or an "Hispanic culture." Many of the tribes had to be conquered separately, one by one, whereas in more advanced or unified regions defeat of the central government was enough to bring the whole area under Roman sway. The cultural particularism of the Hispanic tribes, together with the formidable geographic obstacles imposed by the peninsula, are as important as Hispanic xenophobia in explaining the long delay in consummating the Roman conquest.

Yet the discovery of enduring characteristics common to prehistoric Hispania and historic Spain may not be entirely the product of the cultural imagination. Then, as later, the peninsula was a marginal area culturally as well as geographically, and participated only with some lag in the major developments of antiquity. Most of the peninsula's societies were economically and technologically backward compared with the advanced areas of Mediterranean civilization--a gap that for the most part was never fully made good in Spanish history. The ancient population of the peninsula was less urbanized and not merely more agrarian but more pastoral than the more sophisticated regions of Mediterranean Europe. The social structure was obviously more archaic, and in much of the peninsula dominated by a kind of military aristocracy. The emphasis was on military much more than on productive values. In some respects, these qualities of ancient Hispania paralleled those of most of the rest of the ancient Mediterranean world, but in Hispania they were more pronounced and were less challenged by alternate developments. Historically, the tendency in the peninsula toward such ways of life has been more widespread and persistent than elsewhere in Mediterranean and western Europe.

Moreover, there is some support for the notion that the rather baroque quality of Spanish esthetics was also characteristic of ancient times. In the more developed areas there was considerable emphasis on the gaudy and sumptuous. Much of the gold in the ancient Mediterranean came from the peninsula, which seems to have been the "El Dorado" of ancient times, and Hispanic gold ornaments were known throughout the ancient world. It has even been conjectured that the valuing of gold as a precious metal

originated in the peninsula. Certainly the opportunity to obtain gold and other metals whetted Roman interest.

The Romans brought political unity and juridical norms to the peninsula for the first time. Endemic warfare and raiding between the pastoral tribes and the more settled communities was brought to an end. The Roman road system was extended throughout, unifying Hispanic communications. During the golden age of Roman Hispania--from the first to the third centuries A.D.--the entire peninsula [6] was incorporated militarily and most of the population was incorporated culturally into the Roman world. Linguistic unity was slowly achieved as Latin-derived dialects replaced the former native languages, even among most of the common people. This process encountered the least resistance and went forward most rapidly in the more cosmopolitan south and east, where the upper classes, who controlled most of the land, often made common cause with the Romans. In other regions, tribal chiefs were brought into the Roman property system as *latifundists*.

There was extensive Roman immigration to the more developed eastern and southern areas of the peninsula. In other regions Roman culture was spread by administrators, educators, soldiers, merchants, and technicians. Sons of the Hispanic upper classes were sometimes sent to Rome for education. During the early part of the second century A.D. Rome was ruled by emperors of Hispano-Roman origin, and there were three more emperors from Hispania in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Several important philosophers and writers of the empire, including Seneca and Lucan, came from the peninsula. Yet it should be noted that nearly all these major figures were the offspring of Roman officials and colonists living there, not of Romanized native Hispani.

Large numbers of Hispanic troops served in the Roman forces; the closing phases of the conquest of the peninsula itself had been carried out to a considerable degree by Hispanic auxiliaries from the conquered regions. Indeed, the majority of the "Roman" troops that besieged Numantia had been Hispanic auxiliaries. (But conversely, the loss of life in the Hispanic wars had been a major factor in decimating the old Roman citizen army and converting it into a professional mercenary force.) Hispanic warriors had served abroad as mercenaries under Carthage, and later fought under diverse foreign banners after the fall of Rome. Altogether, the peninsula was the major source of mercenaries in the Mediterranean for nearly two thousand years.

The vital centers of Roman Hispania were its flourishing cities, and the key unit of local administration, the *civitas*, combined both town and countryside in a single district organized around the city. The boundaries of the *civitas* were often based upon ancient Iberian or Celtiberian tribal districts but under the Roman system were geared to the social and economic needs of the urban centers. In 73 A.D. the right of Roman law and citizenship was apparently extended to nearly all Hispanic towns. During the first and second centuries there was a great expansion of urban wealth and a fairly strong Hispanic urban middle class was formed. During the troubled final centuries of the empire the Hispanic cities seem to have been somewhat more [7] orderly than those of the eastern part of the Roman world, and economic decline from the third century on apparently affected Hispania proportionately rather less than certain other regions of the empire, including the most advanced and prosperous sectors.

Roman capital dominated commerce, in which Hispania played an essentially colonial role. Hispanic metals, especially gold, and Hispanic wool were imported by Rome in great volume. The peninsula also shipped large quantities of the three Mediterranean food staples, grain, olive oil, and wine, to Rome. By the fourth century, Hispania had begun to rival Egypt as the empire's most important granary and continued to sustain a considerable volume of Mediterranean commerce as late as the fifth century.

Under Roman rule much of the countryside was transformed. Extensive irrigation projects were completed and the area under cultivation greatly expanded. Yet despite extension of the *latifundia* system, a sizable proportion of the cultivated area was evidently exploited as small, individual

properties during the first part of the Roman period, partly as a result of the Roman breakup of collective and communal patterns in the north-center and west. Moreover, Roman reorganization and expansion of agriculture relocated and stabilized part of the tribal population in the north and west, bringing the people down from the hills and settling them on small farming plots. In general, the concentration of land in large latifundia was not as extensive as in Italy or Gaul until the second or third centuries.

At its height Roman Hispania may have had a population of five million or more. This was concentrated particularly in the more urban south and east but was also fairly dense in the south-central region, in Lusitania, and in parts of the northwest. Yet the Romanization of the peninsula was far from complete. Much of the north and northwest was influenced little by Roman life. Resistance was always strongest among the more primitive, warlike tribes of the Cantabrian mountain range in the far north. A somewhat tenuous military dominion was maintained, but even at the height of the empire there were only a few Roman towns in the far north. The Basques offered less direct military resistance but remained even more impervious to cultural assimilation.

Christianity spread through Roman Hispania during the second and third centuries. There, as elsewhere, it was a predominantly urban religion. Large portions of the countryside remained for a long time almost untouched, as did most of Cantabria and almost all the Basque region. By the beginning of the fourth century, however, Hispania apparently had a Christian minority at least as large proportionately as that of the empire as a whole--upwards of 10 percent. After the official recognition of the church early in the fourth century, [8] its following greatly increased, until almost the entire peninsula had become Christian. The pattern of Hispanic church organization was similar to that of most other parts of the empire: bishoprics became coterminous with the urban-centered civitas units and archepiscopal sees were established in provincial capitals. By the fifth century there had developed a distinctively Hispanic church, whose individual religious culture was most evident in the use of the special Hispanic rite (later inaccurately called the Mozarabic rite) in its services until the eleventh century. Theologically the Hispanic church was orthodox Catholic, though the Priscillian heresy of the late fourth century originated in Galicia (the northwestern corner of the peninsula) and Donatism was temporarily widespread in the fifth century. Yet the orthodox Hispano-Catholic church became increasingly strong and well organized, and provided spiritual and cultural leadership and identity which a faltering imperial government could no longer offer.

Hispania could not escape the general effects of the Roman social and economic decline from the third century on. If at first the economic decline seemed less severe than in parts of Gaul and northern Italy, this was because Hispanic agriculture had never developed to as high a level and because, aside from the barbarian devastation of 264-276, it did not at first suffer as much from the Germanic incursions.

The social changes that took place in the Hispanic countryside paralleled those of the rest of the empire. Latifundia increased in size and the pressure against small farmers and shepherds mounted. Inflation, taxes, warfare, and the drop in commerce produced great unrest, climaxed by sporadic peasant revolts in parts of Gaul and Hispania during the fourth and fifth centuries. Several efforts at land reform were made by the imperial administration in Hispania to protect and encourage small farmers, mainly in the central plateau, but institutional weakness and uncertain economic conditions frustrated these attempts. By the fourth century a significant minority of the peninsula's population lived as *enservid coloni* on great estates, seeking shelter from the want and violence which the decline of imperial order and prosperity had left behind. Moreover, free peasants tended increasingly to place their land and labor at the service and the protection of large landlords by clientage relations known as *commendatio* and *patrocinium*.

The dissolution of Roman authority and its replacement by that of a Visigothic monarchy was a long, slow process. There was no sudden Visigothic invasion or conquest. The small host of the Visigothic

ruler Ataulf that crossed the Pyrenees into Hispania in 415 acted as a federated army of the feeble Roman state, charged with expelling Vandal invaders from southern Hispania and subduing the Germanic [9] Suevi who had dominated the northwestern quarter of the peninsula for several years. From their principal base in southwestern France, Visigothic bands slowly began to extend their control over the more lightly inhabited central plateau of the peninsula, sometimes acting in the name of the emperor, sometimes merely advancing their own interests. The imperial government had broken down and the Hispanic population lacked the civil or military means to defend itself. The main body of Visigoths did not enter the peninsula until the reign of Alaric II (484-507), and then largely as a result of military pressure from the Franks to the north. They may have numbered no more than 300,000 in a peninsula with 4,000,000 inhabitants. The Visigoths were superior to the Hispani only in the application of armed force; economically, socially, and culturally the Hispanic population was in most regions far more advanced.

Though before their entry into the peninsula the Visigoths were culturally more Romanized than any other Germanic group, they were an essentially pastoral people, unlike the Ostrogoths and Suevi, whose societies were agrarian. The Visigoths settled in greatest numbers in the more sparsely populated, largely pastoral north-central area of the peninsula, and were thereby isolated from the main social and economic centers of the Hispanic population.

The Visigothic monarchy as an independent state was first proclaimed by Euric in southwestern France in 476, after the deposition of the last emperor in Rome by the Ostrogoths. The political center of the monarchy was not moved to the peninsula, however, until the reign of Athanagild (551-567), when a new capital was established at the town of Toledo in the central plateau, moving the axis of Hispanic life from the coastal regions for the first time. Visigothic authority was slowly expanded throughout the entire peninsula with the conquest of the Suevi during the reign of Leovigild (568-586) and the expulsion of Byzantine forces from their last remaining toehold in the southeast by Swinthila (621-631).

Like other post-Roman rulers in different parts of the former empire, the Visigothic kings of Hispania considered themselves the heirs of Rome and adopted Roman insignia and symbols of authority. They viewed themselves as successors, rather than destroyers or even replacers, of the empire. The Visigothic monarchy accepted the Roman theory of the state as a public power resting upon essentially absolute authority, though the official conversion to Catholicism that occurred during the reign of Leovigild accepted a modification of royal sovereignty by the religious and ethical tutelage of the church.

At the top of Hispano-Visigothic society there emerged an elite of some two hundred leading aristocratic families associated with the court and a broader aristocratic class of perhaps ten thousand people who held possession of most of the best land. Under the Visigoths, [10] the aristocracy did not form a closed caste but were steadily recruited from below on the strength of personal achievement or royal favor. Over a period of a century or more there occurred a partial fusion of the original Visigothic warrior aristocracy and the socioeconomic elite of Hispanic society.

The Visigothic monarchy remained an elective institution, each new king nominally chosen or ratified by the aristocracy. The crown was assisted in decisions and administration by an *aula regia* or royal council, but until the next to the last generation of Visigothic rule broad assemblies of notables were called to ratify important decisions, a last residue of the earlier tribal assemblies of the Germanic peoples. Administratively, the Visigothic monarchy relied on much of Roman usage and employed Hispanic personnel in local administration. By the sixth century, however, the Roman administrative system had fallen into such decay that it could not be revived, and in place of the old provincial system

there evolved a new pattern of regional and local overlordship based upon regional dukes (*duces*) and heads of smaller districts or *territoria* called counts (*comes*). The new ducal administrative regions tended to coincide with the old Roman provinces, and the *territoria* of the counts with the old *civitas* units. The old municipal system also fell into desuetude and was slowly replaced by a pattern of royal administration and local overlords nominally ratified by the crown. Most of the Hispanic population remained juridically free, but the process of *commendatio* continued, as peasants pledged parts of their land or services to local overlords for security, and the class of *enserfed coloni* grew larger. Yet there were still a number of relatively autonomous local rural communities that preserved their legal identity.

The cultural and economic life of Visigothic Hispania was carried on almost exclusively by the native Hispani, to whom was due the relative prosperity of part of the sixth and seventh centuries. Roman law had to be relied upon in administering the affairs of the social and economic infrastructure, and over a period of two centuries there evolved a slow fusion of Visigothic custom and Roman common law. The general trend was away from the Roman system of explicit private property toward more communal, reciprocal, usufructual relations in the ownership and use of property. The Hispano-Visigothic *modus vivendi* found codified expression in the promulgation of the *Liber Iudiciorum* (later commonly known in Castilian as the *Fuero Juzgo*) in 654. This fusion of aspects of Visigothic personal codes with Latin civil and property law superseded several less complete codifications and provided an organized code on which to base property rights and civil administration for the Visigothic aristocracy and, to some extent, the Hispanic common people.

[11] It has sometimes been maintained that under the Visigothic monarchy a mode of theocracy developed that thereafter characterized Hispanic religion and government. Such a notion is considerably exaggerated. Even during the Arian period of the Visigothic monarchy, when a great theological gulf existed between the rulers and organized Christianity, the Hispanic bishops proved themselves to be obedient to legally established authority. They rarely hesitated to uphold the power of the state in the secular realm, even to the extent of supporting one Arian king against his rebellious (but orthodox Catholic) son. When finally the monarchy accepted Catholicism in 589, it was made clear that this conversion was not forced upon the state by the church but was freely decided upon by the monarchy to promote its own interests. The church lost a significant measure of independence by recognizing the right of the crown to appoint the members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The king became the nominal head of church councils and took a formal responsibility to see that church affairs were properly run. The subsequent Councils of Toledo were organized along more or less Byzantine lines as mixed assemblies of high ecclesiastical and state officials, with the clerics responsible for church affairs and the secular officials bearing primary responsibility for state legislation.

Thus rather than theocracy there developed a church-state symbiosis in which the power of the crown was uppermost but in which the church played a major role in trying to stabilize public institutions and authority. After the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633, approval by the councils was required to legalize succession to the nonhereditary Visigothic throne, anathematize usurpers, and ratify amnesties. Church leaders were increasingly employed by the crown in administration because they were the primary source of educated, technically competent, and trustworthy personnel. Yet the crown did not intervene in the theological affairs of the church; religious councils were presided over by an archbishop, not the king. The Christian church became the only cohesive institution in Visigothic Hispania.

The early Hispanic church reached its cultural height during the era of Isidore of Seville (first third of the seventh century), shining briefly as the brightest center of learning in western Europe. For the common people it provided the only identity and hope which they knew during this period. Hispanic monasteries played a special role, becoming quite numerous, and the most active force in raising spiritual standards, expanding the influence of the church, and providing a spiritual leadership for the

church.

Toward the end of the Visigothic period the church had become a major property holder, with almost every parish and monastery of note possessing lands or rights that provided it with income. The [12] church had achieved a special legal status, developing a code of canon law and special tribunals for the clergy and their affairs. The Hispanic church thus came to constitute a fairly well ordered state of its own within the poorly structured Visigothic political framework.

Yet despite its outwardly imposing strength, the Hispanic church failed to incorporate all the population of the peninsula within its following even as late as the seventh century. The peoples of the northern hills remained vague in their religious identification, while the Basques were almost untouched by Christianity. Even among the more densely inhabited southern and eastern districts, conversion of much of the rural population remained nominal at best. Hispanic Christianity was still to a considerable degree an urban religion, and tended to become weaker the farther one moved from the principal centers of population.

This was the more significant because it may be roughly generalized that throughout the Visigothic era the urban economy and society of southern and eastern Hispania continued to decline. The failure of administration, which the Visigothic crown was unable to restore, the absence of monetary order, progressive disruption of trade routes, and the decline of economic opportunities all continued even after the disorders of the fifth and sixth centuries had ended. The rise of Muslim power in the east Mediterranean during the seventh century presaged new commercial and military challenges. By that time Hispanic urban society had lost most of the vigor and prosperity that it had known during the high Roman period.

Even at its height, Roman rule had been unable to eliminate the strong regional and ethnic differences that divided the peninsula, and these became more pronounced again under the Visigoths. Fusion between the Visigothic elite and the Hispani population was never complete. The northwestern corner of the peninsula, ruled for two hundred years by the Suevi monarchy, remained a distinctive, not thoroughly assimilated region. The southwestern tip of France, known as Septimania, remained under Visigothic rule and tended to link northeastern Hispania with France. The sophisticated eastern coastal region had long been interconnected with the commerce and culture of the Italian peninsula, while the equally sophisticated towns of the south were closely associated with northwest Africa and with Byzantine commerce. In the far north, Asturians and Cantabrians were at best only partly assimilated, and the Basques remained almost entirely apart. Finally, there was a significant Jewish minority in the southern and eastern towns that played a major role in manufacturing and commerce. Subjected to attempted conversion and sporadic persecution by the Visigothic crown in the seventh century, Hispanic Jews were a politically disaffected and potentially rebellious element in the major towns.

[13] The Visigothic monarchy never developed a cohesive polity. Visigothic aristocrats and military leaders deemed themselves part of a personal power association with the crown and resisted extension of control. Royal succession remained elective, and the entire history of the monarchy was one of revolt, assassination, and internecine feuding. This insecurity placed a premium on military power, but the monarchy could not marshal resources to restore the independent standing army of Rome. Instead, a process of protofeudalization developed early and was expanded more rapidly in Visigothic Hispania than in Merovingian France. Decentralization was unavoidable, and power became a matter of personal relationship and example. The chief lieutenants of the crown were rewarded for their services by salaries or *stipendia* in the form of overlordship of land or temporary assignment of income from land held in *precarium*, that is, on a nominally revocable basis. This system was actually first used by the church to support local establishments, and by the seventh century was widely employed by the crown and also by the *magnates* (the high aristocracy) to pay their chief supporters and military retainers. The process of protofeudalization inevitably carried with it a splintering of juridical and economic



sovereignty that further weakened political unity.

If the Visigothic aristocracy was unable to develop a unified, viable political system, it was nevertheless itself the beginning of the historic Hispanic master class. In this Visigothic caste the military aristocracy of the peninsula had its roots, creating a style and a psychology of the warrior nobleman that provided the dominant leadership for Hispanic society for more than a thousand years; this psychology ultimately managed to superimpose its values and attitudes on much of the society as a whole. Yet the success of the aristocratic ethos was a consequence of the experience of medieval Hispania, not of the rule of the Visigothic oligarchy, which largely proved an historic failure.

In the seventh century the caste relationship between the ruling group and much of the peasantry was little better than that of master to serf. A large proportion of the peasantry had been reduced to a kind of serfdom, and as the economy declined, economic exactions very likely increased. Evidence indicates that many Hispanic serfs and even many free peasants did not consider the protection and leadership they received worth the service demanded of them. During the last Visigothic century there were a number of peasant revolts and urban riots in protest against economic conditions.

In sum, the political and social structure of Visigothic Hispania was brittle and incohesive. It survived only until the first major challenge from without, then collapsed much more rapidly than it had been built.

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On Roman Hispania, see R. Thouvenot, *Essai sur la province romaine de Bétique* (Paris, 1940); J. de Sena Ráfols, *La vida en España en la época romana* (Barcelona, 1944); C. H. V. Sutherland, *The Romans in Spain 217 B.C.-A.D. 117* (London, 1939); and F. J. Wiseman's manual, *Roman Spain* (London, 1956). M. Tarradell, ed., *Estudios de economía antigua de la Península Ibérica* (Barcelona, 1968), is tedious but rewarding.

There is no satisfactory history of Visigothic Hispania. The best general account has been written by Manuel Torres as volume 3 of Menéndez Pidal's *Historia de España*. See also E. A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford, 1969); Ramón de Abadal, *Del reino de Tolosa al reino de Toledo* (Madrid, 1960); and volumes I and 3 of J. Orlandis, ed., *Estudios visigóticos* (Madrid, 1964). There is a narrative of Visigothic history in Harold Livermore's *The Origins of Spain and Portugal* (London, 1971). The church under the Visigoths is treated in Z. García Villada, *Historia eclesiástica de España*, vol. 2 (Madrid, 1929); A. K. Ziegler, *Church and State in Visigothic Spain* (Washington, D.C., 1930); and Abadal, *La batalla del adopcionismo en la desintegración de la iglesia visigoda* (Barcelona, 1949). Two key monographs on institutional changes by Claudio Sánchez Albornoz are *Ruina y extinción del municipio romano en España* (Buenos Aires, 1943), and *El 'stipendium' hispano-godo y los orígenes del beneficio prefeudal* (Buenos Aires, 1947). The Germanic kingdom of the Suevi in the northwest corner of the peninsula is treated in Wilhelm Reinhard, *Historia general del reino hispánico de los suevos* (Madrid, 1952).