Themes in Medieval and Early Modern History

WAR IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA, 700–1600

EDITED BY FRANCISCO GARCÍA FITZ
AND JOÃO GOUVEIA MONTEIRO

WAR IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA, 700–1600

War in the Iberian Peninsula, 700–1600 is a panoramic synthesis of the Iberian Peninsula including the kingdoms of Leon and Castile, Aragon, Portugal, Navarre, al-Andalus and Granada. It offers an extensive chronology, covering the entire medieval period and extending through to the 16th century, allowing for a very broad perspective of Iberian history which displays the fixed and variable aspects of war over time.

The book is divided kingdom by kingdom to provide students and academics with a better understanding of the military interconnections across medieval and early modern Iberia.

The continuities and transformations within Iberian military history are showcased in the majority of chapters through markers to different periods and phases, particularly between the Early and High Middle Ages, and the Late Middle Ages.

With a global outlook, coverage of all the most representative military campaigns, sieges and battles between 700 and 1600, and a wide selection of maps and images, *War in the Iberian Peninsula* is ideal for students and academics of military and Iberian history.

Francisco García Fitz is Professor at the University of Extremadura, Spain. Expert in Medieval History, his research has addressed the military history and more specifically the policies and warlike relations between Christians and Muslims in medieval Spain.

João Gouveia Monteiro is Professor at the University of Coimbra, Portugal. His research has focused mainly on the military history of Portugal and Europe in the Middle Ages.

Themes in Medieval and Early Modern History

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Edited by Francisco García Fitz and João Gouveia Monteiro

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2018
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-138-70745-0 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-8153-9999-5 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-20037-8 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781315200378

Typeset in Bembo
by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India

The Open Access version of Chapter 6 is funded by national funds through FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, I.P, in the scope of the projects UIDB/04311/2020 and UIDP/04311/2020.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Antonio José Rodríguez Hernández (National Distance Education University, Spain)

Carlos de Ayala Martínez (Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain)

Fernando Arias Guillén (University of Vallodolid, Spain)

Francisco García Fitz (University of Extremadura, Spain)

Javier Albarrán (Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain)

João Gouveia Monteiro (University of Coimbra, Portugal)

Jon Andoni Fernández de Larrea Rojas (University of the Basque Country, Spain)

José Varandas (University of Lisbon, Portugal)

Luís Costa e Sousa (CHAM/FCSH – Nova University, Lisbon, University of Azores, Portugal)

Mario Lafuente Gómez (University of Zaragoza, Spain)

Martín Alvira Cabrer (Complutense University of Madrid, Spain)

Miguel Gomes Martins (Instituto de Estudos Medievais/FCSH – Nova University, Lisbon, Portugal)

Vítor Luís Gaspar Rodrigues (History Centre, Faculty of Arts, University of Lisbon Portugal)

PREFACE

Over the last three decades, historiography on medieval war has grown rapidly in Spain and Portugal, experiencing a methodological renewal which has helped to produce a body of first rate studies on the topic. In universities and other research centres dozens of master and doctoral theses have been submitted, various research projects have been carried out, a large number of conferences and seminars have been organized, and hundreds of academic papers and monographs have been published on specific topics, as well as some collective works summarizing Portuguese and Spanish military history.

Institutions such as the Comissão Portuguesa de História Militar, founded in 1989, or the Instituto de Historia y Cultura Militar in Spain, created in 1997, have systematically organized conferences, awarded research prizes, edited specialized journals and published books on the subject. But it has been in Portuguese and Spanish universities that research on the military history of the Iberian Middle Ages has been more intensely developed and has benefited from institutional support. Even though in the late 1960s Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada had already published some pioneering work on the Granada War (Ladero 1967–1969), it was not until the 1990s that doctoral theses and other research material began to be produced and published in a more consistent and continuous fashion.

All the Iberian medieval kingdoms have been thoroughly covered: in terms of the kingdom of Castile and Leon, the studies of Francisco García Fitz on military strategy and tactics against Islam during the High Middle Ages and Martín Alvira Cabrer's work on the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa have deepened our knowledge about war during this key period in the military expansion of the northern kingdoms (García Fitz 1998; Alvira 2012). The reality of war in Castile in the Late Middle Ages was analysed in the theses of Manuel Rojas Gabriel and Fernando Arias Guillén (Rojas Gabriel 1996; Arias Guillén 2012). The dissertations by Alvira Cabrer on Muret, Sáiz Serrano on the kingdom of Valencia and Mario Lafuente

Gómez on Aragon have added significant detail to our knowledge of the military history of the Aragonese crown during the last three centuries of the Middle Ages (Alvira Cabrer 2008; Sáiz 2008; Lafuente 2011 and 2014), and these have already been investigated, with an emphasis on Catalonia, in the pioneering work of María Teresa Ferrer (Ferrer 2001). War in the kingdom of Navarre, particularly during the late medieval period, has been studied mainly by Jon Andoni Fernández de Larrea (Fernández de Larrea 1992 and 2013). As for Portugal, João Gouveia Monteiro's thesis soon became a seminal work for the knowledge of Portuguese military history during the Late Middle Ages, later complemented by Miguel Gomes Martins' study of the previous period (Monteiro 1998; Martins 2014). Vítor Rodrigues, Rui Bebiano, Luís Sousa, Gonçalo Couceiro Feio and Francisco Contente Domingues made invaluable contributions to the study of the Portuguese 16th century (Rodrigues 1999; Bebiano 2000; Sousa 2016; Feio 2013; Domingues 2017), and those writing about the Spanish Crown during the same period such as Geoffrey Parker and René Quatrefages have engendered a line of continuity in the more recent work of Martínez Ruiz and Rodríguez Hernández (Parker 1991; Quatrefages 1996; Martínez Ruiz 2008; Rodríguez Hernández 2011, 2013 and 2015).

In addition, many other lines of research of a more specific nature have been developed, such as those dedicated to castle architecture in Portugal by Mário Barroca (1991 and 2000), to Spanish and Portuguese weaponry (respectively Soler del Campo 1991; Barroca, Monteiro and Fernandes 2000) as well as those supervised or published by Carlos de Ayala Martínez on military orders in Spain (Ayala 2003), to cite just a few examples. Within this rich panorama, al-Andalus and the kingdom of Granada are still deserving of more in-depth study like the one recently published by Javier Albarrán (Albarrán 2017), although the general contributions of Lévi-Provençal, Rachel Arié and María Jesús Viguera have already created the main framework of investigation for the field (Lévi-Provençal 1982; Arié 1984 and 1993; Viguera, 2000).

Although our emphasis is primarily on Iberian authors, several other researchers, namely from the Anglo-Saxon world, deserve a mention. Peter E. Russell, Derek Lomax, Joseph O'Callaghan, James Powers, Andrew Villalon, Donald Kagay, Theresa Vann and Nicholas Agrait, are just a few of the scholars who have given crucial contributions to this area of study.

These are not, of course, the only studies that have been published on issues related to the Iberian military history of the Middle and Early Modern Ages, but the cited texts give an idea of the extraordinary growth of the field in the last few decades. These new developments have made possible the publication of two great syntheses on peninsular military history in the form of monographic volumes on the Middle Ages: in Portugal, the *Nova História Militar de Portugal*, with Manuel Themudo Barata and Nuno Severiano Teixeira as general editors, was published between 2003 and 2004 in five volumes, of which the first, dedicated to the Middle Ages, was edited by José Mattoso and authored by Mário Jorge Barroca, João Gouveia Monteiro and Luís Miguel Duarte (Barata and Teixeira, Editors, 2003). In Spain, the six volumes of the *Historia Militar de España* were published between 2009 and

2017, with Hugo O'Donnell as general editor, and with a second volume also dedicated to the Middle Ages under the coordination of Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, including contributions from many specialists (Ladero Quesada, Editor, 2010).

These works clearly reveal the methodological differences between past and present: intensive use of archival sources (in particular the Torre do Tombo National Archive in Lisbon, the National Historical Archive of Spain, the Archivo General de Simancas, the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón and the Archivo General de Navarra), detailed knowledge of narrative sources (Portuguese, Spanish and foreign) and a body of up-to-date international bibliography (especially French and Anglo-Saxon) to which we must add a clear concern with the study of the military history of the kingdoms both in their Iberian and international contexts.

The last 25 to 30 years have in fact witnessed the birth of a scientific, technically demanding and very comprehensive military history: not only the study of pitched battles, castles, arms and armoury, but also of recruitment methods, military organization (administration, equipment, finances), strategy, tactics (including not only battles, but also sieges, cavalcades and other types of operations), mental and religious aspects (fear, courage, devotional practices, superstitions), the economic and social effects of war (destruction, social promotion, redistribution of wealth), among other significant aspects.

The 'Iberian Association of Military History, IV–XVI centuries' (aihmilitar.wix.com/site) was founded in 2015 with the stated aim of publicizing, promoting and creating an international profile for this field of study. In order to bring together Portuguese and Spanish specialists, the Association organizes regular academic events and publishes the journal *e-Strategica*, also awarding a biannual prize for young researchers (financed by Banco Santander Totta). Its support has been instrumental in bringing about the present publication.

Thanks to all of this, the military history of the Iberian medieval kingdoms is in good health and is now an integral part of higher educational curricula: in Portugal, there has been since 2013–2014 an inter-university Masters course on Military History, which brings together eight institutions (four universities and all the military schools of higher education), and every year there are about 300 first year students studying Military History in the universities of Coimbra, Lisbon and Universidade Nova de Lisboa. In Spain, the Universidad Complutense de Madrid also launched a Chair of Military History in 2017.

Above all, it has been demonstrated that war has been a major factor for the historical development of many facets of the life of those societies and for the political and territorial composition of peninsular kingdoms.

This accumulation of knowledge now allows us to offer a panoramic view of war in the medieval Iberian Peninsula, which may be very useful both for Iberian students and specialists who wish to have a summary of these topics, especially for those interested around the world who have difficulty in accessing historiography written in Spanish or Portuguese. This work will offer all of them a first general consideration of the themes that have been researched in Spain and Portugal in the field of medieval military history.

In order to offer an overall perspective as broad and complete as possible, this work has firstly adopted a very extensive chronology, covering the entire medieval period from the 8th to the end of the 15th centuries, as well as the 16th century. The disappearance of the Visigoth kingdom of Toledo and the conquest of the Peninsula by Muslims from the year 711 usually marks the beginning of the Iberian Middle Ages, the end of which is generally accepted as the last decades of the 15th century, coinciding with the disappearance of the last Islamic state – the Nasrid kingdom of Granada – and with the beginnings of the overseas expansion of the peninsular kingdoms throughout Africa and America. From the point of view of military history, the medieval period is distinctly coherent, but also shows very clear transformations, hence most of the chapters are divided into various internal phases, particularly between the Early and High Middle Ages – the 8th to 13th centuries – and the Late Middle Ages – 14th and 15th centuries. As well as including the entire medieval period, we have chosen to extend the study to the 16th century, not only because it enables the fixed and changed aspects of the reality of war to be confirmed with regard to the previous phase, but also due to the extraordinary interest that this century has for Iberian history and for its repercussions on European, African and American history.

From a geopolitical point of view, the criterion adopted in the work is also globally oriented, hence the study of all the Iberian peninsular kingdoms has been included: the kingdoms of Leon and Castile, which emerged from the former kingdom of Asturias, which throughout the period were united and separated on different occasions, although they were definitively united from 1230; the Crown of Aragon, which included the kingdoms of Aragon, Valencia, Mallorca and the Catalan counties; the kingdom of Navarre, organized around the city of Pamplona; and the kingdom of Portugal, which would attain its independence from Leon from the middle of the 12th century. Each of them is the subject of a separate chapter in the book.

The dynastic unit obtained between the crowns of Castile-Leon and Aragon, along with the inclusion of Navarre, simplified this political map, so that in the 16th century there were only two states, Spain and Portugal. The former – the Spanish empire of the 16th century – is studied in a specific chapter, while the study of the Portuguese 16th century has been integrated within the general chapter dedicated to that kingdom.

Furthermore, with the aim of presenting the most complete panorama, the study of the reality of war in al-Andalus has also been included, with two chapters of the book dedicated to this topic. The first deals with the military history of peninsular Islam from the conquest to the 13th century, which includes historical periods and different states, such as the Umayyad emirate and caliphate of Cordova, the Taifa Kingdoms and the North African Berber Empires – the Almoravids and the Almohads – who integrated al-Andalus within their dominions. The second chapter, which is dedicated to peninsular Islam, focuses on the last Muslim state in the Peninsula, the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, and it chronologically covers the period from the 13th century until the end of the 15th century.

Finally, following the general criterion of offering the reader a comprehensive general vision of Iberian military history, a varied selection of contents has been included about the most important facets of the reality of war for all the kingdoms and states. In order to historically contextualize the themes dealt with, the various chronological periods studied in each chapter begin with a brief political and military overview of the period that presents the main lines of evolution of each kingdom for each period.

From the point of view of the military organization of the kingdoms and states, special attention has been paid to the various military obligations of the subjects and vassals of the monarchs. We have also explored the main components of the armies and their chains of command: personal guards of the monarchs, forces recruited and led by the nobles, militias offered by the cities, contingents of military orders, castle or other fortress garrisons. The analysis of these realities in all the kingdoms and throughout the whole period presents not only the similarities and differences between one kingdom and another, but it also follows the changes experienced by its military organization down through the centuries and shows the transformation of medieval armies into permanent and professional modern armies. In addition, the study of these aspects in the chapters devoted to al-Andalus demonstrates the enormous differences between the military organizations of the Christian kingdoms and those adopted by the Andalusian and Berber Muslim states.

Another of the themes considered in all the chapters relates to the ways of waging war, the strategies used by the warring parties and the tactics deployed against the enemy. The analysis of these issues reveals a preference for military operations developed within the framework of a strategy of attrition, in which incursions to destroy and loot the adversary's resources predominate: *fonsados*, *cabalgadas, razzias*, *aceifas* were the names for these operations of short duration which became the daily form of combat. However, Iberia was, from very early on, a strongly fortified space where the various warring parties carried out a strategy of controlling terrain, which required the conquest of the strong points associated with this. That is why siege warfare and the great sieges became essential military operation for any force that wanted to expand its political dominion. Finally, pitched battles were extraordinary episodes which were not very frequent, but they certainly had a strong impact on their contemporaries. Their study also shows the evolution of tactics used on battlefields, from the time of the predominance of heavy cavalry to the 16th century, when infantry was undoubtedly the most important weapon, although not the only one. Once again, the analysis of the ways in which war was carried out by the Andalusian and Berber armies allows us to appreciate the existence of very different tactical models.

The forms of waging war and their evolution are closely related to two other central aspects of military history: armament and fortifications. Both have received particular attention in each chapter, showing their considerable similarities and evolution, practically simultaneous in all the kingdoms, regarding defensive and offensive weaponry for the warrior and also their fortifications. As for the former, perhaps the most noteworthy evolution was the appearance of increasingly heavy

equipment and, from the 15th century, the introduction of portable firearms and artillery. In keeping with this latter reality, the analysis of the fortifications shows the transition from the medieval castle to the modern bastion.

Because of its uniqueness in a context in which military operations on the ground predominated, the navy and naval warfare merits a specific section in all the chapters. Needless to say, the importance of naval conflicts and the strength of the navy were very variable from one historical context to another and from one kingdom to another, but in almost all of them we can see a naval presence, sometimes in defining moments. However, as we move forward in time, throughout the Late Middle Ages, and especially in the 16th century, its importance increased at pace with the extension of the interests of the different Iberian kingdoms, firstly in the Mediterranean and, later, in the Atlantic.

There are also specific sections in each chapter on fundamental issues in the management of war, such as logistical and financial aspects. The capacity to move an army, to feed it, to supply it with arms and equipment, and to face the economic cost of its maintenance proved vital in the development of conflicts. As such, the book also looks closely into the organizational, administrative and fiscal mechanisms set up by the Iberian monarchies and Muslim states to overcome the enormous logistical and economic challenges posed by wars.

The Iberian military settings of these centuries, in particular the medieval centuries, show that the warring parties not only had to organize, fight, move, arm, fortify, feed and finance themselves, but they also had to justify and legitimize confrontation with their adversary and build the propaganda discourse necessary to mobilize their populations. In this case, where a large part of the conflicts pitched Christians against Muslims, this generated a whole ideology of war that used arguments linked to the notions of the just war and holy war. The result crystallized around the concept of the *Reconquista*, combining legal arguments – the claim of an asset (the homeland of Gothic ancestors) unjustly taken away by the Muslims – with other religious elements – the defence of the Church and faith, which was reinforced from the 11th century onwards by the arrival of Roman ideas concerning the crusade. Parallel to this, jihad served in al-Andalus to achieve similar objectives: the justification of war, the legitimation of power and the mobilization of the community.

Finally, in order for the reader to have a broad idea of the development of war in the Peninsula, each chapter offers a selection of the most representative military campaigns, sieges and battles, showing the circumstances, causes, development and consequences of the main military events of the period.

The text is accompanied by a selection of maps that allow the reader to more easily follow some of the campaigns explained and a set of images that illustrate the military reality of the period. Furthermore, a final glossary facilitates the understanding of some of the terms used throughout the book, while the bibliographic selection included will provide the reader with some essential references for a better understanding of war in the Iberian Peninsula between the 8th and 16th centuries.

Francisco García Fitz
João Gouveia Monteiro

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1

AL-ANDALUS

Javier Albarrán[1]

Political outline

The conquest of al-Andalus and the first steps

The history of al-Andalus begins in the year 711, when, commanding an army consisting mostly of Berbers and some Arabs, Tariq b. Ziyad crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and initiated the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula at the service of Musa b. Nusayr, the Umayyad ruler of the province of Ifriqiya. Apparently, Tariq achieved a decisive victory against the Visigoth King Rodrigo next to the River Guadalete, although not all scholars agree with this location of the battle. Soon, barely offering any resistance due to the state of decomposition of the Visigothic kingdom, important cities fell one by one, such as Seville, Cordova and Toledo, the Visigothic capital. The success of the expedition led Musa b. Nusayr to intervene directly, and within a few years practically the entire Iberian Peninsula, and even southern France, had been conquered. Al-Andalus was thus established as an additional region of the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus, dependent on the province of Ifriqiya (Manzano 2006: 29–53).

The Umayyad Emirate of al-Andalus

After the triumph of the Abbasid revolution in the East and the disappearance of the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus (750), one of the few survivors of the outgoing dynasty, ʻAbd al-Rahman, managed to reach al-Andalus and proclaim himself emir in the year 756. Thus began the period known as the independent Umayyad emirate of al-Andalus, with its capital at Cordova. During this period, Islamic power consolidated in the Iberian Peninsula and the islamization and arabization process began, which did not reach its apex until approximately the 11th century. A few

DOI: 10.4324/9781315200378-1

mountainous regions north of al-Andalus escaped the control of the Umayyad emirs, where, after the legendary Battle of Covadonga (722), the Asturian kingdom would first come into existence. Cordova carried out numerous campaigns against these northern Christians, with the main goal being to prevent them from advancing southwards.

Furthermore, al-Andalus was witness to a period of important internal commotions. Conflicts frequently arose between the central power and the rulers of the marchlands, *thughur* (see Glossary), frontier territories located around the cities of Zaragoza, Toledo and Mérida. Tensions of a social nature also occurred, in which minorities, especially converts to Islam, played an important role. The first symptoms of such conflicts arose under emir Hisham I (d. 796). Early in the 9th century, under al-Hakam I (d. 822), serious riots occurred, such as the one at Toledo in 807, and at Cordova in 818. Severe repression by the authorities managed to solve both situations (Manzano 2006: 189–359).

Under the government of emir ʻAbd al-Rahman II (d. 852), the so-called orientalization of al-Andalus occurred. In addition, an important conflict with the Christian community of Cordova also took place, known as the 'voluntary martyrdom', which ended with the execution of several Christians. Moreover, we must not forget that in the year 844, Normands appeared on the coastline of al-Andalus, more specifically in the vicinity of Lisbon and Seville (Manzano 2006: 189–359).

In the latter half of the 9th century, coinciding with emir Muhammad I (d. 886) and due to greater pressure by the Christians of the north, frontiers were further fortified. However, there were also strong tensions between the emiral power and the lords of the marchlands, such as Ibn Marwan in Mérida and Badajoz or the Banu Qasi dynasty in the Zaragoza region. In any event, the largest riot was initiated in the year 879 by ʻUmar ibn Hafsun in the region of Bobastro. After the short-lived emirate of al-Mundir (d. 888), during which Ibn Hafsun extended his range of action and Toledo underwent rebellion again, the *fitna* (discord or civil war) reached its climax during the emirate of ʻAbd Allah (d. 912). The year 890 was a particularly critical one: the emir only controlled the city of Cordova and its vicinity, whereas the remainder of the territory was atomized into a plethora of autonomous manors. The generalized riot of al-Andalus started to subside from the year 900 onwards, but its complete repression did not take place until the first third of the 10th century, on the verge of the caliphate (Manzano 2006: 189–359).

The Umayyad Caliphate of Cordova

ʻAbd al-Rahman III (d. 961) became emir of Cordova in the year 912, and was soon able to pacify al-Andalus. At the same time, he decided to launch offensives against the Christians of the north, who, at the beginning of the 10th century, taking advantage of internal disputes in al-Andalus, had advanced through the northern plateau, reaching the line of the Duero River. Another danger arose which the emir had to face, namely that of the Fatimids, an Ismaili Shia caliphate established

in North African territory in the year 909. However, 'Abd al-Rahman III's most spectacular success in those years was the crushing of the riot which, after 'Umar Ibn Hafsun's death in the year 918, his sons had continued. In 928, the fortress of Bobastro, the centre of the rebellion of the Banu Hafsun, fell under the control of Cordova. One year later, encouraged by this victory and in order to fight back against the Fatimid caliphate, the Umayyad ruler proclaimed himself caliph with the title of *al-Nasir li-din Allah*, thus initiating the period known as the Umayyad caliphate of Cordova (Manzano 2006: 363–469; Fierro 2011).

In the following years he continued his victorious march, successfully constraining the dissidence within the frontier territories, especially Toledo and Zaragoza, and leading successful campaigns against Christian territories, such as the Osma campaign in 934. However, 'Abd al-Rahman III did suffer some defeats against the Christians, the most significant being the one at Simancas in the year 939, after which the caliph would no longer undertake any more expeditions.

In North Africa, Cordova remarkably improved its position, especially due to the conquest of the city of Ceuta in 931. The indisputable prestige obtained by the Umayyad caliph enabled him to establish relationships with both the Byzantine Empire and with the newly born Roman-Germanic Empire. 'Abd al-Rahman III also ordered the construction, to the west of the city of Cordova, of the magnificent city-palace of Madinat al-Zahra', which became the centre of the caliphal power and the construction of which was finished by his son. As such, the power of the Cordova Umayyad had reached its apogee (Manzano 2006: 363–469; Fierro 2011).

His son al-Hakam II (d. 976) succeeded him on the caliphal throne. His brief reign experienced a few shocking events. For instance, the establishment of the Fatimids in Egypt in the year 969 meant their definitive withdrawal from the Maghreb region, a situation exploited by Cordova to restore its control over the western zone of northern Africa. Moreover, arts and culture underwent spectacular development in al-Andalus during this period, the most representative examples being the alleged library gathered by al-Hakam II and the enlargement of the Great Mosque of Cordova with its spectacular *mihrab*, which represents an interesting cultural exchange with Byzantium. However, an important change occurred in the times of al-Hakam II's successor, his still underage son Hisham II (d. 1009). Effective power was assumed by his tutor, Ibn Abi 'Amir (d. 1002), Almanzor, who eventually became the true leader of al-Andalus. Almanzor, who had the support of the Berbers, started a vigorous political propaganda to legitimate his power. From the religious point of view, he was extremely orthodox, and turned the army, the *jihad* and the numerous victories he obtained into the basis of his power. Among his many incursions into Christian territory, those that stand out are Barcelona (985) and Santiago de Compostela (997). After the brief rulership of one of Almanzor's sons, 'Abd al-Malik (d. 1008), caliph Hisham II abdicated in the year 1009. A great *fitna* or civil war followed thereafter, which would lead to the disintegration of the Umayyad caliphate and to the *taifa* kingdoms (Echevarría 2011).

The taifa *kingdoms*

In November 1031, the Umayyad caliphate of Cordova was officially abolished, whereby the civil war between the different factions worsened. The result of this process was the rise of 30 minor kingdoms ruled by local dynasties, namely the *taifa* kingdoms. Traditionally, three larger groups were established according to their ethnic background: Berber *taifas*, in the centre, west and south of the Peninsula; Slavic *taifas*, on the Mediterranean seaboard; and Arab-Andalusi *taifas*, in south-western al-Andalus and in the Ebro valley. The most powerful ones were those founded on the old Umayyad frontier marches, like Toledo (the Banu Dhi al-Nun, Arabs) or Zaragoza (the Banu Hud, Arabs), but Seville (the ʻAbbadids, Arabs) and Granada (the Zirids, Berbers) were of great importance (Guichard and Soravia 2005).

Nevertheless, one must not underestimate the military and economic capacity nor the exercise of sovereignty that presided over the governmental action of the most important kingdoms, capable of stopping the expansionist momentum of the Christian kingdoms for decades and of growing through the annexation of weaker nearby territories. Within this context, there are figures like that of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, the Cid, the noble Castilian confronted with Alfonso VI who, after leaving Castile, put himself at the service of kings such as al-Muqtadir of Zaragoza and eventually occupied the *taifa* of Valencia (1094–1099). Moreover, the Christian kingdoms, making use of military pursuit, were able to implant the *parias* regime, whereby kings such as Sancho Garcés IV of Pamplona (d. 1076) obtained substantial payments from the *taifa* of Zaragoza in exchange for peace and assistance (Guichard and Soravia 2005).

While the economic development of the Muslim statelets tolerated the *parias* system, the survival of the *taifas* was guaranteed, but once this ceased, Christian expansionist pressure increased which led to the disappearance of the *taifa* kingdoms. Finally, the fall of Toledo before Alfonso VI of Castile in 1085 forced the *taifa* kings to seek help in North Africa, specifically from the nascent Almoravid Empire.

The Almoravids

The movement of the Almoravids, literally the 'dwellers of the *ribat*', took place on the African Atlantic coast, 500 kilometres north of the Senegal River. The objective of the founder of the movement, the pious Maliki missionary Ibn Yasin (d. 1059), was none other than to extend his vision of Islam among the Berber tribes, making use, when necessary, of the *jihad*.

After Ibn Yasin's death, Abu Bakr b. ʻUmar (d. 1088) rose to power and laid the bases for sedentariness with the foundation of Marrakech (1071). He began to look towards the Maghreb and al-Andalus instead of the Sahara. When Yusuf b. Tashufin (d. 1106) took over the leadership in 1073, the jump across the Strait into al-Andalus was only a matter of time. The process quickened first with the fall of Barbastro and Coimbra (1064) and later with the fall of Toledo (1085). The *taifa* kings of Seville, Badajoz and Granada asked the emir for help against Alfonso VI and the request was answered with the Almoravid victory over the Christian troops in

the Battle of Zalaca on 23 October 1086. Four years later, the Berber dynasty made the decision to conquer al-Andalus and to finish off the fragmented *taifa* kingdoms (Bennison 2016).

On 8 September 1090, the Zirid king ʻAbd Allah of Granada handed the city over to the North African emir. Next came Malaga, Tarifa, Cordova and within a few months the entire Andalusi territory. Thus, unification of the entire Islamic West under one government was achieved with the Almoravids for the first time. In view of this, sources exalt this phenomenon as opposed to the previous chaos. In al-Andalus, the hunger for reunification, especially from the point of view of the caliphal legitimists, is reflected in numerous texts, which consider the Almoravids true saviours. Moreover, the Almoravid regime relied on the same social, political and ideological bases as the Seljuk sultanate in the East: acknowledgement of the (Abbasid) caliph's weakness and the consequent possibility for an independent local authority to legitimize himself in practice due to delegation of power on the caliph's part. All this added to an important connection with the Maliki elites, which had wielded indisputable influence ever since the Cordova emirate (Bennison 2016).

Yusuf b. Tashufin was succeeded by his son ʻAli b. Yusuf (d. 1143), under whose government the first symptoms of Almoravid decadence became visible on three fronts: the Christian advance, the Andalusi unrest and the rise of the Almohads. Still in 1108, victory was attained at Uclés, and in 1110 the *taifa* of Zaragoza was conquered, but in 1118 the latter city fell to Alfonso I of Aragon. These mishaps were followed by the ever more pressing unrest of the Andalusis. In addition, the Almohad problem was growing ever more serious. When the son of the emir ʻAli, Tashufin b. ʻAli, took the reins of the empire in 1143, it was already fatally wounded. Only two years later, in 1145, the 'prince of the Muslims' fell in battle against the new North African power, the Almohads, which had been taking shape. In 1147, the successors of Ibn Tumart, founder of the Almohad movement, seized Marrakech, thus bringing the Almoravid dynasty to an end (Bennison 2016).

The Almohads

In the early 12th century, a reformationist movement rose up in the Maghrebi Atlas that changed completely the political, social and religious scenario of the Islamic West. Muhammad Ibn Tumart (d. 1130), founder of this new impulse, along with the *Masmuda* Berber tribes that supported him, was beginning to preach and impose his doctrine, a new orthodoxy, against the Almoravids. The members of this new reformationist spiral considered themselves the restorers of the original purity of Islam. The Almohad project relied on two pillars: obedience to the impeccable and infallible *mahdi* Ibn Tumart and to his successors, and radical unity, thus receiving the name of *al-muwahhidun*, i.e. the unitarians. Nevertheless, one may not speak of an Almohad 'doctrine', but of an 'evolving doctrine'. Although Ibn Tumart's successor, the self-proclaimed caliph ʻAbd al-Mu'min (d. 1163), conqueror of Marrakech and initiator of the seizing of al-Andalus, tried to continue the *mahdi*'s alleged prescriptions, the second caliph, Abu Yaʻqub (d. 1184), tended much more towards

the philosophical elites, whereas the winner of the Battle of Alarcos, al-Mansur (d. 1199), turned to the traditionalists (Bennison 2016).

Shortly before the conquest of Marrakech in 1147 by the Almohads, this new movement had already carried out various incursions into peninsular territory. After the disappearance of the Almoravids, al-Andalus was once again divided into petty kingdoms ruled by local leaders such as the notorious Ibn Mardanish, the 'wolf king', who ruled Murcia and Valencia and would provide strong resistance to the arrival of the new North African empire, as did the Banu Ghaniyya in the Balearic Islands. Seville, which was conquered in 1147, became the Almohad capital of al-Andalus. As the Almohad expansion continued, the North Africans had to confront both Andalusi rebels (they would put an end to the danger represented by Ibn Mardanish in 1172, and by the Banu Ghaniyya in 1203) and Christian kingdoms. In fact, the caliph Abu Ya'qub, who entertained intellectuals such as Averroes and Ibn Tufayl in his court, would die in 1184 while leading the *jihad* against the infidel in Santarém. His successor received the epithet of al-Mansur, the 'Victorious', for his triumph in the famous Battle of Alarcos (1195) against Alfonso VIII of Castile. This would mark the climax of the Almohad power (Bennison 2016).

Abu Yusuf al-Mansur was succeeded by his son, Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad al-Nasir (d. 1213), who proved incapable of resisting the opposition of two simultaneous fronts, one in North Africa and the other in al-Andalus. He was defeated in the Iberian Peninsula by an amalgam of Christian forces led by Alfonso VIII in the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212), which marked the beginning of the end of the Almohad control in al-Andalus. Moreover, new Maghrebi movements, such as that of the Marinids, began to threaten the Almohad authority. After al-Nasir's death in 1213, a number of caliphs rapidly succeeded one another until 1228, when al-Ma'mun, ruler of Seville, abandoned the city and proclaimed himself caliph by crossing to North Africa. He was the last Almohad ruler in al-Andalus. Although there still were some isolated Almohad authorities in Andalusi territory, the central power no longer existed (Bennison 2016).

New independent kingdoms, new *taifas*, appeared, constantly fighting one another and in close relationship with the Christian kingdoms, with which they allied and from which they constantly requested help. The Christians, in turn, took advantage of the situation of collapse of the Almohad power to conquer a substantial part of the Andalusi territory, as Fernando III did with the emblematic cities of Cordova (1236) and Seville (1248), or Jaime I of Aragon with Valencia (1238). Of all the independent Andalusi kingdoms that had been established, only that of Yusuf Ibn Nasr (Muhammad I or Ibn al-Ahmar, d. 1273) survived, later to become the Nasrid kingdom of Granada.

Recruitment system and composition of the armies

Military obligations and recruitment methods

Available sources supply little information on the military obligations that existed in al-Andalus or on the recruitment methods and, when they do, it is not possible

to be absolutely certain of correctly identifying what they refer to. However, an outline can be sketched which gives us a general idea of the situation.

To begin with, in Umayyad-period chronicles the *diwan al-jund/al-jaysh* (see Glossary) is frequently mentioned, which, apparently, was a military record verifying that the forces had a fixed salary, both soldiers and officers, which all bore the name *mutadawwan*. To this register further lists of forces were occasionally added, known as *malahiq al-diwan* (Lévi-Provençal 1982: 31–65; Meouak 1993: 361–391).

Who was subject to the service of arms in al-Andalus? In the first place, the *jund* (see Glossary), i.e. the Arabs of Syrian origin who were descendants of the troops that arrived with Balj in the year 741 to suppress the Berber rebellion, grouped into territorial districts that were under the denomination of *kora mujannada*, i.e. *koras* formed into *jund*s. Initially, these forces of Syrian origin, who had received a concession of lands, an *iqta'* (see Glossary), had to heed the call to arms for no further compensation, although they eventually gained more benefits such as the *'ata'*, a payment that was given before each expedition. After the Umayyad period, these territorial and military districts lived on until those of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada, which Ibn al-Khatib must have been referring to when he indicated how his emir Muhammad V put him in charge of the military command, the *qiyada*, in the district of Orgiva. Moreover, it seems that in the 10th century the term *jund* referred not only to the descendants of those who arrived with the Syrian Balj, but also to any Andalusi subject to military service. In other words, the *jund* was apparently shaped into a regular army of a permanent character, inscribed in a register and dependent on the central power for everything related to management, equipment, financing and maintenance. It should not be forgotten that the *jund* also fought together with voluntary troops that were recruited during the entire history of al-Andalus through the call to holy war (Lévi-Provençal 1982: 31–65; Chalmeta 1988: 33–42).

Additionally, the *hushud* (see Glossary) and the *bu'uth* were two types of forces also subject to some form of mandatory service. The former, who in an early stage might have been the descendants of the Arabs settled in al-Andalus, were also formed through recruitment. The latter group was apparently made up from the city-dwellers who were not part of the *jund*. Both the *hashd* and the *ba'th* could be avoided by paying a special tribute or by finding a substitute, a practice that is also attested in pre-Islamic Arabia and during the first conquests of Islam. This gave place to a 'combatant-rental' contract, the *isti'jar ghazi*, between the substituee, *mustanfar*, i.e. he who had been levied, and the substitute, the *na'ib*, of whom, unfortunately, no evidence has been found apart from al-Jaziri's notarial formulary in the 12th century. Contrarily, it is known that the exemption from the duty of recruitment gave rise to a specific tax called *daribat al-hashd*, which is first attested in the early 9th century, during the time of the emirs al-Hakam I and 'Abd al-Rahman II. It is possible that mercenary troops were paid with this tax (Lévi-Provençal 1982: 31–65; Chalmeta 1988: 33–42).

The call to ranks, *istinfar* (see Glossary), for expeditions, which received the name of *sa'ifa*, because these were usually made in the summertime, took place during the months of February and March. At that time, troops were levied in all territorial districts (*koras*) of the state in two ways: firstly, each province's rulers met and sent to a specific place, usually the capital Cordova, the men appearing in that *kora*'s *diwan*;

secondly, enrolments (*hushud*) were accepted, which were in charge of recruiting agents, *hashid*. We can get an idea of the recruitment capacity of the Cordova emirate thanks to the cavalry census communicated by the chronicler Ibn Hayyan on the occasion of an expedition by the emir Muhammad I against the Asturians in the year 863: 2,900 men in the *kora* of Elvira, 2,200 in Jaén, 1,800 in Cabra, 900 in Priego, 1,200 in Écija, 256 in Tudmir, 1,403 in Morón, and so on, up to a total of 22,000 knights. Besides *koras*, in this document castles were also included as troop suppliers, such as that of Calatrava. The difference in combatants supplied by each location could have been due to two reasons: the military capacity of each one of these territories, and the control Cordova had on each one of them (Lévi-Provençal 1982: 31–65; Chalmeta 1988: 33–42; Meouak 1993: 361–391; Viguera 2001: 17–60).

Furthermore, each frontier region, *thaghr*, had to contribute troops to the caliphal expedition when this passed through their territories and upon request. Apparently, during the Umayyad period three *thughur* took place, but this cannot be ascertained, since its denomination kept changing. The upper frontier region had its capital at Zaragoza, the central one at Toledo and later at Medinaceli, and the lower one at Mérida and later at Badajoz. Troop recruiting in these provinces was a complex matter because of the independent and rebellious attitude towards Cordova of many of the lineages that ruled over them. Hence, for instance, sources often mention how the Cordovan caliph headed for these *thughur* before heading to Christian territory in order to secure their rulers' loyalty and his troop supply (Manzano 1991: 23–69).

Almanzor's ascent to power changed this situation, since the Andalusis were no longer forced to undertake military service and a special tax was collected with which mercenary troops were paid, especially troops from northern Africa. After making a record of properties, a collective sum was fixed and paid by the proprietors according to a system of quotas. Moreover, it seems that the *taifa* kings continued with this established precedent. For example, Zirid Granada used a division of the kingdom into districts which he entrusted to relatives in charge of tax-collecting and making payments to soldiers. We have no specific information on the average payment, but, for specific cases, some sources speak of two dinars daily plus meat and drink. The Almoravids also used a record called, unsurprisingly, *diwan al-jund*, for recruitment, where the combatants were inscribed. For this, every so often a mustering of troops, *'ard* (see Glossary), took place, through which both the number of forces available to them and their condition were examined (Aguilar 1997: 192–206; Marín 1999: 193–225; Echevarría 2011: 119–136).

During the Almohad period there was also a *diwan* in which troops were entered, an *'ard* or mustering of troops, and a division of the army into different provinces. Sources mention regular armies stationed in cities like Seville, Marrakech, Valencia, Murcia, Granada and Cordova. The city governors actively cooperated in the administrative and economic management of the army through, for instance, the distribution of service payment or the control of land concessions. These governors were possibly in charge of the mandatory, temporal and extraordinary recruitment of the *hushud*, i.e. troops with lower military preparation than the regular Almohad forces which, once their service was over, returned to their normal occupations (Aguilar 1997: 192–206; García Fitz 2012: 275–301).

Composition of the armies

Umayyad Period

The Andalusi armies, *jaysh*, were mainly composed of three kinds of forces: firstly, forces that were permanent or supplied by levies among the Andalusis subject to military service; secondly, mercenaries; and, finally, volunteers for holy war.

The troops of the *jund*, those called up, constituted the bulk of the forces of the Cordovan emirate and caliphate, probably until Almanzor's reforms. Certainly, it was a centralized army, but we do find some divisions in some sources, such as that existing between the army of the capital, *al-jaysh al-hadra*, and the frontier army, *al-jaysh al-thaghr*. Apparently, *jund* forces were moved to launch specific campaigns or to momentarily reinforce a certain region, due to the minor entity of the permanent forces at the service of the local authorities. The composition of the troops of the *jund* basically consisted of cavalry, *fursan*, and infantry, *rajjala* (including archers), but it must be borne in mind that foot soldiers must have been considered of lesser importance, as they are infinitely less reflected in the texts (Lévi-Provençal 1982: 31–65; Arié 1984: 122–136; Chalmeta 1988: 33–42; Viguera 2001: 17–60).

FIGURE 1.1 Muslim horseman. *Arqueta de Leyre*, 10th century. (Creative Commons)

There were also those denominated *hasham* (see Glossary), mercenaries, of a very different provenance (prior rebel lords with their own retinues, foreigners, ex-captives, slaves, Christian mercenaries that had kept their religion, slaves converted to Islam, and freed slaves, etc.), converted into professional soldiers. In contrast with the members of the *jund*, the *hushud* and the *bu'uth*, these were available at all times, thus becoming a permanent army of sorts. As mentioned above, they appeared first as a bodyguard for emir al-Hakam I, among which were the famous mutes (*khurs*), so called due to their not knowing the Arab language. This emir's initiative came along with a reorganization of the Andalusi troops, to which he gave regular units, and with the establishment at Cordova of the arms deposits and military stocks that stored the items produced in the official workshops. The strength of the *hasham* resided in a few thousand knights that were considered Cordovan shock forces, the best soldiers in the army. The importance of these troops was such that the individual responsible for their inspection had the status of vizier. Below him was the *sahib al-ahsham*, the chief of the *hasham*, an office superimposed on that of *sahib al-khayl*, chief of the cavalry, which seems to point to the fact that the majority of these forces were mounted on horses. These troops, also recorded in the *diwan*, besides their corresponding pay, also received their mount (*humlan*), their harness for their horse (*hilya*), their arms (*silah*), their right to accommodation, food rations, and fodder. Furthermore, the palace guard inaugurated by al-Hakam I and, as already noted, made up of these *hasham*, received the name of *da'ira*, comprising 3,000 knights and 2,000 infantrymen, both of a servile condition (*mamluk*), who could be Galicians, Franks, Slavs, etc. Organized into companies of 100 men, the tradition of foreign mercenaries making up the royal guard would remain in use in al-Andalus and in the Maghreb until the end of the Middle Ages. Together with these *hasham*, Umayyad sources, at least since the 9th century, present another mercenary category formed by Maghrebi Berber militias and, to a lesser degree, by black men of Sudanese origin and of a servile condition, *'abid* (see Glossary). They represented the lowest level of the military hierarchy and carried the generic name of Tangerines (*tanjiyyun*), for it seems it was at Tanger were they registered and embarked for al-Andalus (Lévi-Provençal 1982: 31–65; Arié 1984: 122–136; Chalmeta 1988: 33–42; Viguera 2001: 17–60).

After Almanzor's reforms, the situation changed. The wage-earning Berber troops became the majority in the caliphal army. For the *hajib* of caliph Hisham II, the intensive recruitment of Berbers as a means of substituting Andalusi levies had its advantages: an increase in their forces to face the summer raids (*sa'ifa*), and a way of weakening the prestige of the Arab military aristocracy and of the Slav mercenaries in the capital, thus further underpinning Almanzor's power. Often, they were entire tribal groups, under the orders of their own chiefs, who crossed the Strait to serve in Almanzor's army. Meanwhile, in exchange for exemption from military service, the Andalusis had to pay a tax to hire and equip these mercenary troops (Lévi-Provençal 1982: 31–65; Arié 1984: 122–136; Viguera 2001: 17–60).

As has already been noted, the third type of forces available to the Andalusi army were *jihad* volunteers, designated by sources as *mutatawwi'a*, *muttawwi'a*, *mujahidun*, *ahl al-jihad* or *ahl al-ribat*. These groups, heterogeneous with regard to provenance and preparation, constituted the least efficient corps of the army. Their enthusiasm to fight the infidel seldom compensated for their modest military training. They appear in the sources as joining and accompanying the centralized military expeditions, and in frontier zones as well, both on land and on sea, doing *ribat* (see Glossary), i.e. going to frontier fortresses to carry out a military activity which could certainly be active and offensive, but which was usually, instead, pious, ascetic, passive and, eventually, defensive (Viguera 2001: 17–60; Marín 2004: 191–201).

Taifa *kingdoms*

The disappearance of the caliphate along with the reign of the *taifa* kings also introduced some remarkable novelties in the composition and, especially, in the typology and terminology of their armies. Besides the terms *jund* and *hasham*, inherited from the Umayyad period, new names for the different units that composed each army can be found, such as *katiba* or *sariyya*, yet it is not possible to accurately determine what they made reference to. Words also occur that seem to refer to small-sized detachments, such as *ta'ifa* or *firqa*. This was perhaps due to the limited number of combatants that, for obvious demographical and economic reasons, made up the local armies during this period. The kingdom of Seville, without a doubt the greatest *taifa* military power, had only 1,300 knights when it conquered Cordova. Moreover, although the previous caliphal capital seems to have also preserved the term *da'ira* to make reference to the palace guard, at least during the first years after the disappearance of the caliphate, new names also arose for these elite troops, such as *'abid*, *fityan* and *ghulman*. Furthermore, and essentially due to the situation of instability and defencelessness that some regions were experiencing, new types of forces appeared, such as, for instance, an urban militia at Cordova in the mid-11th century, whose ultimate objective was to defend the city (Arié 1984: 122–136; Marín 1999: 193–225; Viguera 2001: 17–60; Guichard and Soravia 2005: 211–238).

Because of Almanzor's reforms, the Berbers still formed the most important component of the *taifa* armies. Troops of slave origin formed another basic component. Among these stood out the blacks, the *'abid*, who occasionally appeared as the praetorian guard of several monarchs, such as the Zirids of Granada. However, one must not ignore either the ever more numerous presence of northern Christian mercenaries, Franks, who began to play an increasing role in the Andalusi military structures. Despite certain Islamic texts forbidding the use of non-Muslims in their armies, the famous Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) justified their use by mentioning the need that Islamic rulers had of the Christian cavalry forces, but did not for the undertaking of the *jihad* against the infidel, in order to prevent Christian militias from rebelling against the Muslims (Arié 1984: 122–136; Marín 1999: 193–225; Viguera 2001: 17–60; Guichard and Soravia 2005: 211–238; García Sanjuán 2006: 435–447).

Almoravids

As for the Almoravids, their armies stand out for their heterogeneity, something that would be even more characteristic in the case of the Almohads. At first, the army was composed of contingents of the *Lamtuna* Berber tribe, the main one among those that formed the Almoravid confederation. Later on, troops from other tribes would join up, such as the *Massufa* or the *Ghuddala* mercenary forces, Andalusis and, naturally, *jihad* volunteers (one must not forget that Almoravid means precisely 'those who do *ribat*'). In fact, for the first time in al-Andalus the Almoravids introduced the custom of rewarding holy war combatants recognized for their valour with concessions of land in usufruct. Moreover, one of the earliest pieces of information offered by Arabic sources with regard to the Almoravid army was the decision made by emir Yusuf b. Tashufin to create a personal guard composed of black, *'abid*, and white slaves, *'uluj*, which was given the name *hasham*, a collective which can also be designated by terms such as *fityan* or *ghulma*. According to sources, in the year 1071 the emir bought 2,000 black slaves and provided them with mounts. Once in al-Andalus, he acquired 250 white slaves, also knights. Later, Berber contingents from allied tribes also joined, some of which became a part of those *hasham*. There was another group, somewhat obscure in the chronicles, called *al-dakhiliyyun*, the domestics, which was formed by white slaves. These diverse groups were used to form a palace guard of about 3,000 forces, which reflected the sovereign's need to make a professional and most loyal body of the army not related to his tribe. These troops were so assimilated to Almoravid power, that the term *hasham* would become synonymous with the latter in some Almohad sources. To all these corps one should also add that of the archers, an activity in which the first to be engaged were the *'abid al-makhzan*, slaves of the dynasty or of the state (Lagardère 1979: 99–114; Arié 1984: 122–136; Aguilar 1997: 192–206).

After they had crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, the Berber troops of the *taifa* kingdoms and some Andalusi forces joined the Almoravid armies. The services of the latter were highly esteemed for their knowledge of the terrain and of the Christians' fighting techniques and for their combat capacity during sieges. For instance, the Aledo siege (1089) was accomplished with the help of Andalusi contingents. This Andalusi involvement in the Almoravid military structure caused them to establish their residence at Marrakech (Lagardère 1979: 99–114; Arié 1984: 122–136; Aguilar 1997: 192–206).

With the Almoravids, a phenomenon was becoming visible in the Maghreb which was already occurring in al-Andalus among the *taifa* armies, namely the presence of Christian knights acting in northern Africa at the service of the North African dynasty. Sources attribute the initiative of having been the first to use Christians as combat militias and tax collectors to the second Almoravid emir, 'Ali b. Yusuf. The only explanation given by Arab sources is that by the famous Ibn Khaldun, based on an argument of a military and merely technical nature, namely that Christian militias were extremely useful, as they were used to stand fast in battle and could supply the North African armies with a strong rearguard. Trust

in the Christians' military ability was the second reason, since rulers let them take charge of collecting taxes. This job could be extremely lucrative for mercenaries, for if force was required to collect taxes, the collected fee amounted to double the agreed quantity, half of it to be kept by the chief of the Christian militia. Furthermore, the Tunisian scholar states that Christian militias were immune to the different Islamic religious movements, so their loyalty was rarely at stake (García Sanjuán 2006: 435–447).

Many diverse explanations have been given for the origin of these Christian mercenary troops, yet the most plausible one is of a political nature: they were denaturalized knights who, having had a conflict of one kind or another with their lords, made the decision to seek exile in the lands of infidels, either to fight against their previous kings, or simply as a means of living. They had a remarkable level of importance in the Almoravid army. For example, the Christian knight Reverter (d. 1144–1145) and his militias were a key element in the resistance against the Almohads (García Sanjuán 2006: 435–447).

Almohads

The Almohads continued with the typological structure of troops we have already seen, namely a regular army, forces recruited through obligatory recruitment, mercenaries and holy war volunteers. However, behind this organization it is possible to find an extremely heterogeneous army, especially with regard to the provenance of the troops. Nevertheless, such diversity was not equivalent to military inefficiency, since on numerous occasions the Almohad fighting forces showed great reliability and efficiency in battle (Aguilar 1997: 192–206; Molénat 2005: 547–565).

We do not know for certain what the relation was between the regular army and such a plurality of forces of diverse provenance. Perhaps at first the *jund* was only formed by primitive Almohad tribes, mostly *Masmuda*, but what seems sure is that it eventually opened up to the participation not only of contingents from other Berber tribes, but also from other ethnic groups and traditions, a process which seems to have been consolidated in the late 12th and early 13th centuries. Thus, in the regular army, there were, for instance, Arab troops, Kurdish horsemen and Andalusi hosts. It is not clear either if that regular army paid by the central power was always available or if there existed different degrees of mobilization depending on the type of campaign. In this sense, sources sometimes distinguish between contingents called *al-Jumu‘* (the community), who received pay and had settled permanently in the capital, Marrakech, and others denominated *al-‘Umum* (the commons), who only appeared in major mobilizations (Aguilar 1997: 192–206; Molénat 2005: 547–565; García Fitz 2012: 275–359).

Of all the heterogeneous elements, the novelty with respect to the previous situation lay in the Arab and Kurdish troops. *Hilal* Arab tribes, experienced horsemen, entered the Almohad army as a consequence of the empire's eastward expansion, towards Ifriqiyya, where they had settled since the 11th century. As they could have