The village world of early medieval northern Spain: local community and the land market


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Abstract

The pattern of rural life in early medieval Spain is here vividly brought to life through careful examination of contemporary documents. In the early eighth century, the Muslim general Tariq ibn Ziyad led his forces across the Straits of Gibraltar and conquered most of the Iberian Peninsula. However, alongside the flourishing kingdom of al-Andalus, the small Christian realm of Asturias-León endured in the northern mountains. This book charts the social, economic and political development of Asturias-León from the Islamic conquest to 1031. Using a forensic comparative method, which examines the abundant charter material from two regions of northern Spain - the Liébana valley in Cantabria, and the Celanova region of southern Galicia - it sheds new light on village society, the workings of government, and the constant swirl of buying, selling and donating that marked the rhythms of daily life. It also maps the contact points between rulers and ruled, offering new insights on the motivations and actions of both peasant proprietors and aristocrats.

Keywords: Hispanic studies, Medieval history

Subjects: V Historical and Philosophical studies > V130 Medieval History
V Historical and Philosophical studies > V220 European History

Divisions: College of Arts > School of History & Heritage > School of History & Heritage (History)

ID Code: 27457

Deposited On: 02 May 2017 13:56

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