

1. Expansion of the Christian kingdoms

- After the Moorish invasion, a small group of Visigoths hid in the Cantabrian mountains. Led by Pelagius, they confronted the Moors at the Battle of Covadonga in 722, beginning the Christian reconquest of the Peninsula.
- From the 8th century, small areas of Christian resistance to the Moors became counties and kingdoms in the north of the Peninsula. In the Cantabria area, the Astur-Leonese Kingdom was formed, which became part of the Kingdom of Castile in 1035. In the area of the Pyrenees, the Kingdom of Pamplona, the county of Aragon and the Catalan counties were created.
- In the 11th century, the Christian monarchs started to conquer Al-Andalus. They demanded tributes from the taifa kings and used the money to build castles and create armies.
- In the 13th century, following the Christian victory at the **Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa** in 1212, Al-Andalus was reduced to the **Kingdom of Granada**.
- Four major Christian kingdoms were established: the **Kingdom of Castile, the Kingdom of Navarre, the Crown of Aragon and the Kingdom of Portugal**.
- People from the Christian kingdoms repopulated the conquered lands. The kings gave them land and privileges (they did not have to pay taxes). The Muslims, or **Mudejars**, who remained there were allowed to keep their religion and their belongings.

2. Nobles and their castles

- There were three distinct social groups in the Christian kingdoms, each with a specific role. The nobles fought wars, the clergy worshipped God and the peasants worked the land.
- The nobility and clergy owned most of the land and did not pay taxes.
 - The nobles swore loyalty to the king and became vassals. They provided the king with men and weapons in exchange for land.
 - The clergy made up a large section of society. The monks and nuns wrote manuscripts and cultivated the land. The priests looked after the people and the churches.
- To defend their territory, the nobles built castles and organised large armies. Castles were fortified (with walls, watchtowers and moats) and located in high places.

3. The lands of the fiefdom

- The lands that the king gave to the nobles and clergy made up the fiefdom.
- Most of the population was made up of peasants (serfs) who worked for a feudal lord (a noble or a cleric). They had to give him part of their harvest and could not leave the land without permission.
- The peasants grew cereals, pulses and vegetables in the fields and planted vineyards and orchards. Their tools and cultivation techniques were very simple. As a result, agricultural production was low and there was not always enough food for everyone.
- The peasants lived in small villages. There was a church in the centre whose bells rang out every hour so people knew what time it was.
- Peasant houses were made of adobe walls, thatched roofs and dirt floors. There were also isolated farms outside the villages.

4. I live in a Castilian city

- In the 11th and 12th centuries, ancient cities in the Christian kingdoms in the north of the Peninsula became more populated. New cities were also built around the castles.
- The people who lived in the city were free and did not depend on a feudal lord like the peasants.
- They mainly worked in trade and banking or as artisans. They made up a new social group, the bourgeoisie.
- The artisans had workshops, often grouped together in the same part of the city. Those in the same trade (carpenters, goldsmiths, etc.) formed guilds.
- Guilds were responsible for controlling the quality and price of products.
- Artisans sold their products in their own workshops, and also at fairs and weekly markets.
- The wall protected the city and its gates were closed at night. The oldest section of the wall was by the castle.
- Cities were divided into districts, made up of narrow streets. Many Jews lived in the city, as they were not allowed to own land. They lived in a separate district called the Jewish quarter.
- Streets were made of mud. The residents threw their rubbish onto them, which attracted all kinds of animals. Disease and epidemics were common.
- The most important buildings, the city hall and the cathedral, were here. It was also where most of the city's festivals and religious celebrations took place. The municipal council that governed the city met at the city hall.

The Historian's Apprentice: The Camino de Santiago

- The Camino de Santiago was a route created in the Middle Ages for pilgrims who wanted to visit the tomb of the apostle St. James (Santiago in Spanish).
- James was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. It is believed that he preached in Hispania. According to popular myth, a bright star revealed James' burial place. The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela was built on this spot. Compostela became a holy place, and thousands of people from all over Europe travelled to visit the apostle's tomb.
- Pilgrims travelled to Santiago de Compostela to ask for forgiveness or for protection from danger and disease.
- Sculptures of Jesus Christ and the apostles adorn the cathedral's main entrance. Pilgrims believed they were at the entrance to heavenly paradise. Upon reaching the holy city, the pilgrims encounter the resplendent and glorious church dedicated to the apostle Santiago.

Zoom in on... heritage: Romanesque and Gothic architecture

- In the Middle Ages, two new architectural styles emerged in Christian Europe: Romanesque and Gothic. Churches, monasteries, palaces and official buildings were built in these styles.
- The Romanesque style developed during the 11th and 12th centuries. Many small churches in rural villages and monasteries were built in this style, and took the form of a Latin cross. The arches and vaults were rounded. The churches had thick stone walls, small windows and large bell towers. Inside, the walls of the church were painted with scenes from the Bible and the life of Jesus. In the centre was the Pantocrator, an image of Jesus Christ.
- Gothic cathedrals are large buildings that were built in medieval cities between the 13th and 15th centuries. They were very high and slender. Their walls had large windows and a rose window on the façade. They were built in the form of a Latin cross and the ceiling was pointed (rib vault). Sculptures representing Jesus, the Virgin, the apostles and the saints decorated the façades of the church and the interior.
