THE VISIGOths

Who were the Visigoths?

The Goth people came from the Germania (corresponding to the current Germany). They were divided into two branches: (Western) Ostrogoths and Visigoths (Eastern).
• From the 3rd century, began to dominate Europe taking advantage of the decline of the Roman Empire. At the end of the 5th century, the King Ataúlfo, allied with Rome, led his people to the South of The Gaul (today France) and founded the Kingdom of Toulouse, whose capital was the current Toulouse.
• Later, in 416, the Visigoths came in Hispania again as allies of Rome to expel to other Germanic peoples that had previously invaded Iberian Peninsula: the Swabians, Vandals, and Alans.

• Since then, the Visigoths began to settle the Iberian Peninsula in 507 since the Franks (another Germanic tribe) defeated the Visigoths at the Battle of Vouillé (507) and drove them out of the Gaul. At that time ended the kingdom of Toulouse. They crossed the Pyrenees and settled in the territories of Hispania. So the kingdom of Toledo was born.
• The new capital was Toledo is located in the reign of Atanagildo (555-567), but there is no record of the exact moment.

• His son, King Recadero (586-601), became the Visigoths from Arianism to Catholicism. In this time, Saint Isidoro de Sevilla, Archbishop of Seville, influenced the kingdom conversion to Catholicism and leaving a very extensive literature. This helped unite the Visigoths and Hispano-Roman and they leave many of their customs.

• Another very important king was Recesvinto (653-672), who unified laws in the kingdom under a single code of law subsequently improved by King Wamba. In the last decades of the seventh century, the Visigoths entered a continue struggle for power between the two branches of the nobility (the Chindasvinto and Wamba families) and clergy.

• Thus ended the kingdom of Toledo and began the Al-Andalus. The Visigoths took refuge in Asturias where the reconquest began at the Battle of Covadonga Muslims won by Don Pelayo. This lasted until 1492 with the conquest of Granada by Ferdinand and Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon.
The visigoths code law which had been part of aristocratic oral tradition, was set in writing in the early 7th century and survives in two separate codices preserved at the Escorial.
Prior to the Middle Ages, the Visigoths, as well as other Germanic peoples, followed what is now referred to as Germanic paganism. The Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and Vandals were Christianized while they were still outside the bounds of the Roman Empire; however, they converted to Arianism rather than to the Nicean ("Catholic") version followed by most Romans, who considered them heretics.
THE VISIGOTHICS

A BIT MORE OF HISTORY...

Since the last years of the 7th century, the visigothic Kingdom had famines and epidemics due to agriculture crisis; in addition they had a politic crisis since their monarchy was elected amongst nobles.

In 702, Witiza became king, but many nobles fought between them, because all of them wanted to be the next king. Finally, when Witiza died, Roderik (another noble) was elected as king. Witiza's children did not recognise Roderik as the new king, and they decided to ask Muslims for help, who were the North of Africa's conquerors. Muslims came into the Iberian Peninsula and defeated Roderik in 711 (The Guadalete's battle).
POLITIC ORGANIZATION

The Visigothic kingdom was ruled by a king, who was elected by the other nobles. This is an elected monarchy and it had many problems because nobles frequently fought against each other for the crown.

The Visigothic king ran the administration, made laws as well as he was the most important judge and the army commander.

The king was helped by the Aula Regia, a board of nobles which advised him. Besides, the king was supported by the Catholic Church through Toledo's councils.

VISIGOTHIC SOCIETY

During the first years in the Iberian Peninsula, the Visigothic were separated from hispanic-roman inhabitants, but finally they mixed with Peninsula's inhabitants.