The concept of Spanish identity has preoccupied scholars for over a century. The nationalistic interpretation, popular in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, posited the existence of an essential Spanish character, while more recent scholarship, influenced by the theory of convivencia, has argued that Spanish identity is the product of cultural influences that have been absorbed over the course of history. Spanish identity in the twelfth century was informed by both historical understanding and contemporary realities, and the city of Toledo was particularly important in both respects. Toledo had been the political and ecclesiastical capital of the Iberian Visigoth kingdom from the late sixth to the early eighth centuries, and became a symbol of Spanish Christian unity after the Muslim conquest of the Iberian peninsula in 711 C.E. It was the kings of Asturias, who sought
to create a dynastic connection with their Visigoth predecessors, who kept alive the memory of Toledo's former glory.

Alfonso VI of León-Castile conquered Toledo in 1085, and he, like his Asturian ancestors, played upon Toledo's history to bolster his regal and even imperial claims. He, furthermore, selected the former Cluniac monk, Bernard of Sedirac, as Toledo's archbishop, and therefore the *primatus Hispaniae*, who held an analogous position as the preeminent cleric of the Iberian Church. The reassertion of archbishop's power was helped a great deal by the papacy, which, being influenced by Gregorian Reform, privileged a hierarchical model of authority. The popes of the twelfth century, through their decrees and correspondence, cemented Toledo's supreme place in the Iberian Church.

The historical association drawn between the city of Toledo and the crown of León-Castile, as well as the prestigious position of its archbishop, made Toledo's cathedral a focus of donation. The royalty of León-Castile solidified their dynastic relationship with the former *urbs regia* through privileges and bequests, and the nobility close to the royal family did the same. Toledo's cathedral chapter became greatly enriched through these donations, and the vast wealth and power the chapter commanded made it Toledo's most elite social institution. The social, religious, and economic prestige associated with the cathedral attracted members of Toledo's different Hispanic, Frankish, and Mozarabic Christian communities. The growth of the cathedral's power and wealth throughout the twelfth century, therefore, made it a vehicle for assimilation to an identity based upon Toledo's historical importance as a symbol of Spanish unity.