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Revisiting the Conquest of Al- Andalus

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Abstract

The Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, also known as the conquest of Spain, occurred between 711 and 726 AD. The conquest was influenced by internal divisions within the Visigothic Kingdom, the Umayyad Caliphate's power, and the "Witizans" faction seeking help to overthrow Roderick. The conquest began in 711 when a Muslim army led by Tariq ibn Ziyad defeated the Visigothic forces in Gibraltar. The Muslims rapidly conquered most of the Iberian Peninsula, establishing Al-Andalus, a new province within the Umayyad Caliphate. The conquest had a profound impact on the region, including religious and cultural exchange, economic development, and political changes. The conquest left a lasting legacy on the region's culture, politics, and society.

Introduction

Imagine stepping into a vibrant crossroads, where towering mosques touch shoulders with ornate Christian churches, where Arabic script mingles with Latin phrases, and where scholars of diverse faiths share knowledge under the warm Andalusian sun. This is the captivating reality of Spain under Muslim rule, a period spanning centuries and etching its mark deeply onto the region's history. Though often condensed into a singular entity, this epoch pulsates with diverse narratives. It begins with the swift conquest in 711 AD, fueled by a confluence of factors: internal strife within the Visigothic Kingdom, the expansionist ambitions of the Umayyad Caliphate, and even an invitation from a rival Visigothic faction. Following the conquest, Al-Andalus emerged as a new province within the sprawling Muslim empire. Yet, it soon blossomed into much more. Cordoba, its resplendent capital, became a beacon of knowledge and artistry, attracting luminaries from across the Islamic world. This vibrant milieu fostered groundbreaking advancements in various fields, from mathematics and astronomy to medicine and literature.

Beyond intellectual pursuits, religious and social threads interlaced through society. Muslims, Christians, and Jews coexisted under Muslim rule, navigating periods of peaceful coexistence alongside moments of tension. This intricate tapestry of faiths and cultures nurtured a unique understanding and mutual influence, leaving an indelible mark on the region's social fabric. But the story doesn't end there. Al-Andalus also gave rise to architectural marvels that still stand as testaments to its ingenuity. From the breathtaking Alhambra palace, a masterpiece of Islamic architecture, to the awe-inspiring Great Mosque of Cordoba, these structures continue to enthrall visitors with their intricate beauty and historical significance.



However, as history rarely follows a linear path, the seeds of change were sown within. The long process of the Christian Reconquista began to unfold, ultimately leading to the end of Muslim rule in Spain. Despite this shift, the legacy of Al-Andalus remained deeply embedded, woven into the language, architecture, and cultural fabric of the region. Exploring this period demands delving beyond simplistic narratives and embracing multifaceted perspectives. By acknowledging both the triumphs and challenges of Muslim rule in Spain, with a deeper appreciation for its contributions to not only the Iberian Peninsula but also to the wider tapestry of human history.

The Conquest and Consolidation

In the second half of the 7th century CE, the Byzantine strongholds in North Africa gave way before the Arab advance. Carthage fell in 698, and in 705 al-Walid I appointed Musa ibn Nuşayr governor in the west, annexed all of North Africa as far as Tangier, and made progress in propagating Islam among the Imazighen. The Christian ruler of Ceuta, Count Julian, reached an agreement with Musa to launch a joint invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. The invasion of Spain was the result of a Muslim readiness to invade and a call for assistance by the Visigothic factions, the "Witizans."¹ In 711, Musa sent an Amazigh army headed by Ṭariq ibn Ziyad, who defeated Roderick in a decisive Battle of Guadalete. The rapid success of the Muslim forces can be attributed to the Hispano-Visigoth society not yet achieving a compact and homogeneous integration. The Muslim conquest brought advantages to many elements of society, such as less onerous taxes, the advancement of serfs who converted to Islam and equality for Jews, Hispano-Romans, and Goths. The period between 711 and 756 is known as the dependent emirate, as Muslim Spain, or Al-Andalus, was dependent on the Umayyad caliph in Damascus.²

The Andalusian Umayyads (756–1031) was a significant period in Spain's growth and perfection of Arab civilisation. The dynasty was divided into two major periods: the independent emirate (756–929) and the caliphate (929–1031). The dynasty was centered on three individuals: 'Abd al-Raḥman I (756–788), 'Abd al-Raḥman II (822–852), 'Abd al-Raḥman III (912–961), and the all-powerful Hajib (chief minister) Abu 'Amir al-Manşur (976–1002).³ 'Abd al-Raḥman I organised the new Arab state, protecting the religious authorities and holding in check the Christians of Asturias. He faced intrigues from the Abbasids and the ambitions of Charlemagne, who threatened the valley of the Ebro. The Frankish advance ended with the Muslim seizure of Girona, Barcelona, and Old Catalonia, which were later taken back by the Franks and formed part of the Spanish March.⁴ 'Abd al-Raḥmān II initiated an era of

¹Katelyn L. Bolhofner, *Conquest and Conversion in Islamic Period Iberia (A.D. 711-1490): A Bioarchaeological Approach*, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/97833519.pdf>, accessed on 12 May, 2023.

²Ibid. see also Nicola Clarke, *The Muslim Conquest of Iberia: Medieval Arabic Narratives* (Hoboken, Taylor and Francis, 2012).

³William Montgomery Watt and Pierre Cachia, *The Independent Umayyad Emirate*, <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9781474473446-007/html?lang=en>, accessed on 12 June, 2023.

⁴Ibid. see also Agha Ali Ibrahim Akram, *The Muslim Conquest of Spain*,



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political, administrative, and cultural regeneration for Muslim Spain, beginning a sharp "Orientalisation" or "Iraqisation." He faced severe problems from his vassals in the Ebro valley, including the Banu Qasi family and the Mozarabs. He conducted intensive diplomatic activity; exchanged ambassadors with the Byzantine Empire and the Frankish king Charles II, and established permanent defences against Viking invaders. The muwallads, a new threat to the Umayyads, rose in revolt in the north and south of Al-Andalus. Despite their defeat, 'Abd al-Raḥman III successfully restored order and subdued all of Al-Andalus.⁵

'Abd al-Raḥman III faced a political problem with his juridical status concerning the 'Abbasid caliphate at Baghdad. He proclaimed himself caliph in 929 and adopted the caliphal title of al-Naṣir, which would rule Al-Andalus for over a century. However, his internal situation was almost assured, and he was able to devote all his efforts to foreign affairs. The Fatimids fought the establishment of an empire in Tunis, occupying the North African ports of Melilla and Ceuta. Intense naval warfare occurred, and al-Naṣir nearly overthrew the Fatimid caliphate by supporting the rebel Abu Yazid al-Nukkari. The conflict between the Umayyads and the Fatimids ended in 969, leaving a power vacuum filled by the Umayyads.⁶ Al-Mustanṣir's son, Hisham II al-Mu'ayyad, succeeded him as the all-powerful al-Manṣur, who resolved the Maghrib problem and halted the expansion of Christian kings. Al-Manṣur played the role of a grand lord, protecting poets and scholars, and was the darling of the faqihs. Al-Muzaffar continued his father's policies, hemming in Hisham II and fighting against the Christians. His brother 'Abd al-Raḥman Sanchuelo took the reins of power but lacked the fortitude to maintain the structure built by his father.⁷ The death of 'Abd al-Raḥman in 1009 led to 21 years of unrest, resulting in the formation of numerous independent kingdoms, or *ta'ifas*. These kingdoms were divided into three factions: Andalusian in the frontier areas, new Imazighen in Granada and Málaga, and groups of slaves in the east. The political history of this period was marked by an uninterrupted series of internecine wars, with the Arab factions under Sevilla and the Imazighen under Granada.⁸

The fragmentation facilitated the expansion of Christian states in the north, which imposed a heavy economic burden on the *ta'ifas*. The *ta'ifas* constantly had to increase the yield from their imposts and lay new tax burdens on their subjects, leading to popular discontent and the eventual occupation of Toledo by the Castilians.⁹ Yusuf ibn Tashufin, an Almoravid ruler, entered the Iberian Peninsula from North Africa and advanced to Al-

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1746035.The_Muslim_Conquest_of_Spain, accessed on 09 January, 2024.

⁵ Spain - Muslim Rule, Reconquista, Culture | Britannica.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Spain/Muslim-Spain>, accessed on 09 January, 2024.

⁶ Carmen M. Tagle, Transformations: Suburban Cordoba During the Umayyad Caliphate, 929-1009, https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3626&context=gc_etds, accessed on 12 March, 2023.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Stepanova A, Who Conquered Spain? The Role of the Berbers in the Conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, <https://journals.eco-vector.com/2410-0145/article/view/35149/23575>, accessed on 14 June 2023

⁹ Ibid.



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Zallaqah, where he defeated a Castilian army in 1086. However, he returned to the Maghrib and remained indecisive until the siege of Aledo in 1088. He deposed the rulers of Granada, Málaga, Almería, Sevilla, and Badajoz. Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, exiled from Castile, established an independent kingdom in Valencia, establishing a new *ṭa'ifa*. After his death, Valencia remained under his control until 1102, when they were forced to evacuate and seek refuge in Castile. The Almoravids occupied Zaragoza in 1110, but their decline began with renewed Christian assaults by the Aragonese kings. The Almoravids faced difficulties in Africa after 1121 and had to hire Christian mercenaries.¹⁰

The Almohad dynasty, which emerged in Africa, aimed to integrate Muslim states into Spain through religious unification. They assumed the title of caliph and introduced severe religious measures, compelling Jews and Christians to convert to Islam or emigrate. Two great sovereigns, AbuYa'qub Yusuf and AbuYusufYa'qub al-Manṣur, raised Western Islam to its zenith. However, their victories were unable to be exploited, leading to a power vacuum. The policies of these emirs were divergent, with Muḥammad ibn Hud focussing on Muslim resistance against Christians, while Muḥammad I ibn al-Aḥmar acknowledged himself as a vassal of the king of Castile and helped him against his Muslim coreligionists. After the 13th century, no independent Muslim dominions remained in Spain, except for Granada, Minorca, and Crevillente.¹¹ The Naṣrid dynasty, founded by Muḥammad ibn al-Aḥmar in Granada, endured for two and a half centuries. Muslims of Granada lacked sufficient forces to pose a genuine threat to Christians, who limited themselves to collecting tribute and attacking them from time to time. They maintained a policy of balance of power, allowing the influx of volunteers from Africa to fight against the Christians but never permitting the crossing of the Strait of Gibraltar by massive organised contingents. The years between 1302 and 1340 were complex diplomatically and militarily, with the Banu Marins in both western Maghrib and Castile vied for the possession of the Granadan ports of Tarifa and Algeciras. Granada allied alternately with Africans and Christians to maintain the balance of power. The institution of the "judge of the frontier" was developed during this time, which reduced frontier incidents between Muslims and Christians.¹²

The decline of the Naṣrid dynasty is less known due to the death of the last great Muslim historian of Al-Andalus, Ibn al-Khaṭīb. The 15th century saw the Reconquista proceed apace, with Castilian regent Prince Ferdinand seized Antequera, Jimena and Huescar fell, Huelma, and Gibraltar, leading to a policy of intolerance and xenophobia among the people of

¹⁰Nicola Clarke, *The Muslim Conquest of Iberia: Medieval Arabic Narratives* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012).

¹¹Anastasia, Stepanova, *Who Conquered Spain? The Role of the Berbers in the Conquest of the Iberian Peninsula*, <https://journals.eco-vector.com/2410-0145/article/view/35149/23575>, accessed on 14 June 2023.

¹²David Michael Olsen, *The Almohad: the Rise and Fall of the Strangers*, https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6643&context=open_access_etds, accessed on 14 June 2023. See also Rolando J. Gutierrez, *Pieces of a Mosaic: Revised Identities of the Almoravid Dynasty and Almohad Caliphate and alBayan al-mugrib*, https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1840&context=cmc_theses, accessed on 14 June 2023.



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Granada. This policy saved the Maghrib from external enemies but became the *casus belli* for the "Granada War" (Guerra de Granada).¹³ Muḥammad XII was captured by the Catholic Monarchs and signed the Pact of Córdoba to regain his freedom. He pledged to deliver the Zagal kingdom in exchange for help in recovering Granada, including the Alhambra. Muley Hacén and the Zagal allied against Muḥammad XII, who fled and sought asylum in the Catholic Monarchs' court. Muley Hacén's death allowed Muḥammad XII to occupy the Alhambra. The Christians seized Ronda, Marbella, Loja, and Málaga, laying siege to Granada. Muḥammad XII capitulated in 1491 but brought Castilian troops to avoid disturbances. The official surrender ended Muslim political power on the Iberian Peninsula in 1492.¹⁴

Governance and Society in Al Andalus

The Umayyads established lasting forms of governance and a hereditary line of caliphs, leading to a civil war in the late seventh century. The empire's size was a major challenge, as the Arabs had a strong lingual and cultural identity, and many saw themselves as separate from their subjects. The power structure of the Caliphate remained resolutely Arabic, making the Arabs a small minority ruling over various groups. To govern the empire, the Umayyads adapted the bureaucracies of the conquered people, creating new borders and provinces to better suit their administration. Arabic replaced the vernacular of the land conquered during the Arab conquests, benefiting trade and cultural exchange. Arabs colonised the places they conquered, setting up communities within conquered cities and building new cities on the Hellenistic and Roman model. The Umayyads imposed taxes across their empire, even insisting that fellow Arabs pay a tax on their land. This allowed them to support a large standing army and quash rebellions. The Umayyads oversaw a tremendous expansion in trade and commerce across the Middle East and North Africa, with commercial practices and regulations codified in Sharia law.¹⁵ There were several social categories within the Muslim population in Spain: Arabs, Imazighen, muwallads, Mozarabs, Jews, and slaves. Due to conversions that decreased the number of Christians, the population grew throughout the first centuries of the occupation. The peninsula was home to about 4,000,000 Spaniards at the time of the conquest, with roughly 50,000 Arab immigrants and about 250,000 Imazighen. With urban populations in places like Córdoba, Toledo, Almería, Granada, Zaragoza, Valencia, and Málaga, the population was predominantly rural. The emir, caliph, sultan, or king made up the administrative structure and held authority by delegating it from the sovereign. Spain's Muslim cities included mosques, markets, parks, and baths, among other distinctive cultural

¹³Andrew Ashton, The Nasrid Dynasty, <https://www.nomads-travel-guide.com/the-nasrid-dynasty/>, accessed on 08 July, 2023.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Christopher Brooks, The Umayyad Government and Society, accessed on 23 January, 2024, [https://human.libretexts.org/Courses/Coastline_College/Hum_C100%3A_Introduction_to_the_Humanities_\(Volmer\)/02%3A_Prehistory_through_Medieval_Europe/2.01%3A_Book- Western_Civilization_-_A_Concise_History_I_\(Brooks\)/2.1.04%3A_Religion_and_Culture/2.1.4.02%3A_Islam_and_the_Caliphates/2.1.4.2.07%3A_The_Umayyad_Government_and_Society](https://human.libretexts.org/Courses/Coastline_College/Hum_C100%3A_Introduction_to_the_Humanities_(Volmer)/02%3A_Prehistory_through_Medieval_Europe/2.01%3A_Book- Western_Civilization_-_A_Concise_History_I_(Brooks)/2.1.04%3A_Religion_and_Culture/2.1.4.02%3A_Islam_and_the_Caliphates/2.1.4.2.07%3A_The_Umayyad_Government_and_Society)



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elements. The army relied on contracts with foreign soldiers or voluntary recruitment, but the merchant marine and navy continued to function until the mid-14th century.¹⁶

Religious Policy of Muslims in Spain

The policy of religious tolerance by Muslims in the Middle Ages significantly facilitated the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula and the entry of large numbers of the population to Islam. This tolerance included not interfering in Christian administration, religious rites, private affairs, and worship. Muslims respected places of worship and churches and respected the terms of lenient treaties with people from various parts of the country. They lived with the people in peace without making them feel like Masters, allowing them to remain Christians. The conditions of the Muslim community, their free will within the Muslim community, and their willingness to embrace Islam without undue influence or coercion. Muslims also allowed Christians to assume positions of service, such as the post of judge of (agam) or Alcalde.¹⁷

The settlement of Muslims included almost all parts of the Iberian Peninsula, and the Islamic rule lasted about eight centuries. This tolerance has been praised by many Europeans as one of the basic causes of the spread of Islam in Al-Andalus. Muslims did not interfere in the administration of Christian religious rites, their affairs, and places of worship, and did not prevent them from resorting to their religion. Muslims allowed Christians to build new monasteries and establish prosperous ones, allowing them to live in security and tranquility with the Muslims. They also allowed Christians to undertake high positions in the state and carry out their tasks without fear of persecution. Muslims followed a policy of tolerance, despite facing different societies, customs, and traditions.¹⁸The Treaty of Rajab in 713 A.D. aimed to establish cooperation with the indigenous population in Alandalus, allowing freedom of belief and religious practice for the Christian population. Muslims respected this policy, establishing peace and maintaining good relations with Andalusian Christians. They settled in Huesca, built homes, and lived in peace, allowing the people to follow their laws and practice their faith. Some Arabised Christians embraced Islam gradually. The Muslims allowed Christians to assume positions of service to their community, including the post of Judge Qadhi al-Ajam, who judged with the "costume of the Christians" along with the Muslim Judge.¹⁹

Muslims held councils for the church in Cordoba and made the Spanish church a separate entity in al-Andalus, resulting in a different religious ceremony from the Catholic Church. The organisation of the church remained unchanged after the conquest, except for changing the names of posts based on the Arabisation of the people's tongues. Muslims maintained religious institutions without touching or hurting them, such as monasteries, small churches, and public and private chapels. They also respected private property,

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷Abdulwahid Thanoon, RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES IN AL-ANDALUS TAHA, <https://www.ayk.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/TAHA-Abdulwahid-Thanoon-RELIGIOUS-TOLERANCE-AND-RESPECT-FOR-THE-RIGHTS-OF-MINORITIES-IN-AL-ANDALUS.pdf>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ J. Derek Latham, The Rise of the Umayyad dynasty in Spain, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000090316>



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controlling it and gaining unchallenged authority. For example, Muslim leaders, such as Sumayl Ben Hatem Al Kilabi, and influential Governors like Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah Al Ghafiqi, did not subject themselves to the property of Christians. This demonstrates Muslim respect for the indigenous population's property and mutual respect and cooperation between Muslims and Christians.²⁰

Literary Achievements

In the 9th century, court poets like 'Abbas ibn Naṣīh, 'Abbas ibn Firnas, Yaḥya al-Ghazal, and Sa'id ibn Judi flourished. Muḥammad ibn Hani', known as the "Mutanabbi of the West," forsake his native land to serve Faṭimid caliph al-Mu'izz. In the 10th century, al-Manṣur assembled a notable group of court poets, who sometimes reached literary heights.²¹ The pinnacle of Islamic literature reached during the ṭa'ifas era in Spain, when the poet-king al-Muṭtamid founded an academy of *belles lettres*. Al-Muṭtamid was difficult for other minor monarchs to match, but they were unable to put together a similar group of writers. Prominent poets from eastern Andalusia during the 12th century were Ibn Khafaja of Alcira and his nephew Ibn al-Zaqquq.²² Notable poets of the 13th century were Ibn Sa'id and Abu al-Baqa' of Ronda. Poetry is more lively in Arab literature than prose, however there are some excellent prose writers, such as Ibn Shuhayd, Ibn Ḥazm, and Ibn al-Khaṭīb. Grammarians such as al-Zubaydi, Ibn Maḍahḥ, Ibn Malik, and Abu Ḥayyan contributed to the evolution of the language in Al-Andalus, producing works that are still utilised at traditional Islamic colleges.²³ In Andalusia, the Qur'anic sciences were shaped by scholars such as Abu 'Amr of Denia and Ibn Fierro of Játiva. With leaders such as Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Ibn Rushd, and Ibn 'Aṣim, the Andalusians emulated the East. The Memoirs of King Ziri 'AbdAllah, the Muqtabis of Ibn Ḥayyan of Córdoba, and the Ta'rikhifitahāḥal-Andalus are some of the early chronicles of Muslim Spain. Al-Maqqari and Ibn Khaldun, two historians from North Africa, also added to our understanding of Al-Andalus.²⁴

Philosophy

Strong philosophical traditions existed in Andalusia, thanks to the importation of books from the East by al-Ḥakam II al-Mustanṣir, the caliph of Córdoba, who aimed to establish a centre

²⁰ Ibid. See also Larry J. Simon, Jews, Visigoths, and the Muslim Conquest of Spain, Journal UCLA Historical Journal. <https://escholarship.org/content/qt17h688pf/qt17h688pf.pdf?t=mjq4mb>

²¹ Safvet Halilović, ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN SPAIN – A MAGNIFICENT EXAMPLE OF INTERACTION AND UNITY OF RELIGION AND SCIENCE, https://www.psychiatria.danubina.com/UserDocsImages/pdf/dnb_vol29_noSuppl%201/dnb_vol29_noSuppl%201_64.pdf

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ RAYMOND P. SCHEINDLIN AND MARÍA ROSA MENOCA
THE LITERATURE OF AL-ANDALUS,
<https://assets.cambridge.org/97805214/71596/sample/9780521471596ws.pdf>



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of learning. Philosophy, geometry, and other subjects have benefited from the contributions of three outstanding intellectuals, one of whom is Ibn Masarra. In the 12th century, Neoplatonic ideas were highly prevalent in Muslim Spain, where philosophers such as Avempace and Ibn Ṭufayl made significant contributions to the field. Neoplatonism is further developed in Avempace's *Tadbir al-mutawahhib* and Ibn Ṭufayl's philosophical novel *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzan*.²⁵ The most influential Muslim philosopher and greatest Andalusian was Ibn Rushd, sometimes referred to as Averroës. He was a religious judge and court physician in Spain, and Jewish and Christian intellectuals greatly benefited from his commentary on Aristotle's writings. Averroës also defended philosophy against al-Ghazali and authored a commentary on Plato's *Republic*. He made the case that philosophy and religion should coexist.²⁶ A Toledo-born qaḍhi named Ṣa'īd penned a manual on the history of science in the middle of the 11th century, with an emphasis on technical topics. While there was minimal focus on mathematical sciences, one noteworthy exception is Maslama al-Majrīṭī, who transcribed Ptolemy's *Planisphaerium*. 'Ali al-Qalaṣādī, who was a commentator on Ibn al-Banna', produced significant work on fractions during the Granada period. The azafea device was invented by al-Zarqālī, who demonstrated the Andalusians' superiority in both theoretical and practical astronomy.²⁷ Muslim Spain was a popular place for astrology, and the most used treatises were those of 'Ali ibn Abi al-Rijāl and another unnamed scholar. Latin classics on natural science were known to the Andalusians, who also worked on the revision of Pedanius Dioscorides, the first-century Greek physician, into the *Materia medica*.²⁸

Linguistic and Literary Exchanges

Cultural exchanges between the East and West, particularly between Muslims and non-Muslims, have provided valuable lessons for understanding and improving cooperation. These exchanges have been explored in three areas: Arabic and Spanish languages, Arabic poetry and European lyrical poetry, and Arabic and European tales and stories. Arab scholars have shown an increased interest in the influence of Arabic heritage on global literature, leading to a new and comprehensive overview of these areas. The lexical influence of Arabic on the Spanish language reached its peak during the Christian Reconquista (1492). Early works by Martínez Francisco Marina and Leopoldo Eguilaz showed the effects of Arabic on Spanish and Portuguese culture. French Orientalist Évariste Lévi-Provençal established that the Spanish language was obliged to borrow words from Arabic to expound new concepts about public institutions and social and private life.²⁹

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Safvet Haliovic, *Islamic Civilization in Spain - a Magnificent Example of Interaction and Unity of Religion and Science*, <file:///C:/Users/KHAAN/Downloads/ISLAMICCIVILIZATIONINSPAIN-AMAGNIFICIENTEXAMPLEOFINTERACTIONANDUNITYOFRELIGIONANDSCIENCE.pdf>

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Munjid Mustafa Bahjat, Tahraoui Ramdane and Abdul Shakour Preece, *Muslim Andalusia: New Insights into Linguistic and Literary Exchanges between the East and the West*, accessed on 12 May 2023, [file:///C:/Users/KHAAN/Downloads/Muslim Andalusia new insights into lingu%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/KHAAN/Downloads/Muslim%20Andalusia%20new%20insights%20into%20lingu%20(1).pdf)



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The Arabic language has also had extensive linguistic influences over areas such as navigation, arts, agricultural products, minerals, and material comforts. The most significant exchanges between these cultures were found in their social and psychological interchanges. The Catalan language has few Arabic lexical elements, but Spanish has numerous Arabic-derived words (some 4,000) as one moves south.³⁰ The influence of Andalusian literature on European culture, particularly French and Spanish culture, is attributed to the cultural link between Arabs and Europeans. The discovery of the *kharjas*, or Andalusian *muwashshahat*, revealed close ties between Arabic poetry and European lyrical poetry, leading to the development of modern European lyrical poetry. The lexical influence of Arabic on the Spanish language reached its peak during the Christian Reconquista (1492). French Orientalist Évariste Lévi-Provençal established that the Spanish language was obliged to borrow words from Arabic to expound new concepts about public institutions and social and private life. Examples of words with semantic relationships include Arabic place names, agricultural terms, and expressions of luxury and prosperity.³¹ Scottish historian William Montgomery Watt asserts that most Western names for musical instruments originate from Arabic, and some words taken from Arabic underwent minor modifications to comply with local language norms. The influence of Andalusian literature on European culture, particularly French and Spanish culture, is attributed to the cultural link between Arabs and Europeans. Maria Barbieri, a sixteenth-century Italian philologist, argued that European advancements in science, industry, literature, and art were due to the vision and legacy left by the Arabs. The influence of Arabic literature on Spain and Italy led to a cultural renaissance that transformed both its form and substance. The influence of Arabic poetry on European lyrical poetry, with the emergence of troubadour lyrical poetry in the early twelfth century revealed no known European origin.³²

The influence of Andalusian poetry on the troubadour is difficult to deny, and many researchers have studied this phenomenon carefully. Both Arabic stories and poetry contributed greatly to the advancement of European art and literature in the second part of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Scholars have recognised the Eastern origin of Arabic stories that migrated to Europe, with Andalusia playing a significant role in the development of European literature. The expansion of Andalusian civilisation into Europe attracted the attention of nobles and princes of southern France, who absorbed and imitated Arabic culture in various forms.³³ The Muslims introduced cultural innovations like alchemy, algebra, chess, Arabic numbers, and Aristotelian philosophy. Spanish music and cooking also incorporate herbs and spices from northern Africa, such as the garbanzo bean. Arabic words in Spanish

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Al-Attar, Suleiman. "A Study in the Origins of Andalusian Muwashshahat", *Journal of Egyptian Institute in Madrid*, 29 (n.d.): 27-45.

³² Ibid.

³³ Anna Celeste Cruz, *Modes of Loss: al-Andalus in the Arabic Poetic Imagination*, https://escholarship.org/content/qt881872pm/qt881872pm_noSplash_a85f5664c36e4695f9aee9d517bcb3b4.pdf
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share traits such as nouns and place names, adjectives or verbs, and prepositions.³⁴The Arab influence is evident in the names of places, such as the Mosque of Cordoba, Alhambra, and Giralda. Southern Spain's Maghrebian heritage, mainly Moroccan, brings its culture closer to Spanish culture.³⁵The death of 'Abd al-Raḥman Sanchuelo in 1009 led to 21 years of unrest, resulting in the formation of numerous independent kingdoms, or ṭa'ifas. The political history of this period was marked by an uninterrupted series of internecine wars, with the Arab factions under Sevilla and the Imazighen under Granada.

Fabulous Libraries

Al-Hakam II, the Caliph of Muslim Spain, was renowned for amassing 400,000 volumes in his library. His father, Caliph Abdur Rahman III, began amassing a sizable collection of brand-new and rare books for the library. Al-Hakam paid excessive rates for rare books, and he even rewarded anyone who brought him an original volume of poetry with a thousand gold dinars. The library was large, with marble flooring, alabaster and mosaic walls, and bookcases made of fragrant wood. Copyists, binders, and illuminators were among the staff members, who were of both sexes. During the height of Islam, libraries served as both status symbols and emblems of knowledge. It was fashionable for both the rich and the poor to have libraries in their houses; in 1300, Canterbury had the biggest library in all of Europe. In Cordoba, there were also seventy public libraries and employment for women in copy shops. The Royal Library attracted erudite scholars from the Muslim world and grew to represent Islamic civilisation.³⁶

Muslims in Samarkand acquired how to make paper from Chinese in the seventh century. Muslims could write quickly because Muslim academics had an endless supply of paper from the paper mills in Jativa. Every year, Cordoba released close to 70,000 publications, with numerous academics penning works in numerous fields of study. The major Cordova mosque served as the location for bookshops, which were mostly used by calligraphers or copyists. Up to the Renaissance in Europe, Arabic was the language that was translated the most worldwide, with intellectuals from Andalusia penning works on a wide range of topics. In Spain, Arabic was regarded as an international language that brought Muslims and non-Muslims together. It was utilised for everyday communication, administration, and literary expression starting in the ninth century. Arabic held a significant position in the globe for eight centuries, during which time it was believed to be the language that held the mysteries of nature.³⁷

Educational System

³⁴Munjid Mustafa Bahjat, Tahraoui Ramdane and Abdul Shakour Preece, [Muslim Andalusia: New Insights into Linguistic and Literary Exchanges between the East and the West](file:///C:/Users/KHAAN/Downloads/Muslim%20Andalusia%20new%20insights%20into%20lingu%20(1).pdf), accessed on 12 May 2023, [file:///C:/Users/KHAAN/Downloads/Muslim Andalusia new insights into lingu%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/KHAAN/Downloads/Muslim%20Andalusia%20new%20insights%20into%20lingu%20(1).pdf)

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.



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Education began in the tenth and eleventh centuries, with scholars from eastern Islamic lands traveling to Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Persia to learn in fields such as medicine, astronomy, mathematics, and ophthalmology. The next two centuries saw a golden period of science in Spain. Education was not a state responsibility, with schools in every village, usually attached to mosques, serving as educational centers. Elementary education consisted of memorising the Holy Quran, while higher studies were taught for a fee. Universities in cities like Cordoba, Seville, Toledo, and Granada were established, with the University of Cordoba being the most celebrated in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Emir Yusef Abul Hajjaj established the University of Granada, which included studies in religion, philosophy, chemistry, medicine, and astronomy. A rector was selected from among the faculty members to oversee the university.³⁸In Spain, public schools were free, and Al-Hakam II established 27 new schools for poor children. Education in the Arab world went beyond elementary education, focusing on traditions, grammar, philology, rhetoric, literature, history, ethnology, logic, mathematics, and astronomy. Students took active roles in lessons, and helpers and assistants helped review what the teacher taught. Many peasants entrusted their sons to masters in exchange for money or food, promising them a future public function.

The student's journey to deepen their knowledge often led them to the mosque, where they could listen to conferences of visiting scholars from faraway regions of the Arab Empire. These scholars spread new ideas and required written approval for their teachings. This process, known as *licenti adocendi*, allowed students to propagate ideas and gain the right to teach in public. Arab universities spread since the 9th century, attracting illegal visitors and providing a model for temporary scientific institutions. The Arabic language became the language of the learned, and later, Western scholars translated the works of Muslim scholars during the 7th and 8th centuries. Arabs also transmitted the works of ancient philosophers and scientists.³⁹Arabs developed the scientific knowledge of the Greeks through experience and observation, leading to the development of experimental research and the inductive method. They took isolated facts in their context as the starting point for all research, allowing for a wide range of experiments to test and rectify ideas. The Arab spirit was influenced by the Christian Front Union against Islam, which disintegrated due to internal fights between Christian leaders for power. The Spanish spirit remained strongly influenced by Islam, with weddings among the nobility and common people becoming common. Arab teachers were responsible for educating the royal children of Aragon, while Arab physicians and civil servants at the court influenced the way of life in Barcelona, Burgos, and Lisbon. Abd al-Malik, the fifth caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, reformed and Arabised the diwan, internal administrative reforms, and created a new currency.⁴⁰

³⁸ Zakaria Virk, Science and Technology in Islamic Spain,
https://www.academia.edu/6431626/Science_and_Technology_in_Islami

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid



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The school of translation in Toledo, established by Bishop Raymond, had a team of translators who translated many works, including important texts from Arabic and Hebrew philosophers. This school of translation had a precious collection of scientific and literary Arab works that attracted enlightened spirits from all European countries. In the 15th century, the fall of Cordoba, Valencia, Seville, and other centers of the Moorish world marked the end of a perennial civilisation of the European continent during the Middle Ages. The scientific and literary Arabic treasures were seized and destroyed, highlighting the importance of the Arab Renaissance in Western culture. Charles Martel's defeat of the Arabs during the war led to the destruction of fields and dwellings. However, the Umayyads and Abbasids periods were rarely mentioned. The Abbasid Caliphate required the handover of ancient Greek manuscripts as a condition for peace treaties. Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII sent a trunk of old manuscripts, including the Pharmacology of Dioscorides, which became the principal reference work on pharmacology across Europe and the Middle East. This book, circulated in Latin, Greek, and Arabic, was the precursor to modern pharmacopoeias.⁴¹

Muslim Architecture in Spain

During the Muslim conquest of Spain and North Africa, a distinct architectural style known as Muslim architecture was formed in Spain. Its use of nature pictures, calligraphy, and elaborate geometric patterns define it. A characteristic of Muslim architecture in Spain is the horseshoe arch, which can be found in a number of structures, such as the Alcazar of Seville, the Mezquita-Cathedral in Cordoba, and the Alhambra Palace in Granada.⁴² In addition, the Muslims brought new methods of construction, like the use of tile and brick, which enabled them to produce elaborate patterns and decorations. During the more than seven centuries while Muslims ruled Spain, the Iberian Peninsula developed into a hub of scholarship and culture.⁴³ Islamic architecture is a unique and influential aspect of civilisation, representing the cultural identity, synthesis, creative, and aesthetic level of human beings.

It has evolved from speculators in the countryside to urban centres, with mosques serving as the core of cities. Islamic architecture is characterised by Islamic art that is a common unit that can identify any piece produced under Islamic civilisation in the Muslim world. Islamic architecture is a homogeneous architecture, aiming to be in harmony with nature and the environment without deducting any of it. Early architectural thinking was limited, especially in the context of environmental factors, such as the simulation of structural structures or animal behaviour. Aristotle believed that the emergence of art was due to the existence of human simulations, which served a social function.⁴⁴ The impact of Islamic architecture on Spain has been significant, particularly in the era of Prince Abd-Al-Rahman, who devoted his life to building an Islamic state in Andalusia. His architecture began to focus

⁴¹ LOULOU AL-AKL KHOURY, Education during the Arab Renaissance and Its Path to the West, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7e1b/dcc18649d885a51a49b32afc068b4ce8de7b.pdf>

⁴² Michael Husni, Christian Capitals and Islamic Pillars: Islamic Identity in Spanish Architecture, <https://www.cas.udel.edu/dti-sub-site/Documents/curriculum/units/2011/01/11.01.04.pdf>

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Islamic Architecture In Spain Cultural Studies Essay, <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/cultural-studies/islamic-architecture-in-spain-cultural-studies-essay.php>, accessed on 09 March, 2023.



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on religious buildings and civil rights. The first architectural designs inspired by designs prevalent in the land of Islam were developed by artists who became Muslims or stayed the religion.⁴⁵ Islamic architecture depends on the visual language and knowing the creation. The Romanian and Byzantine Empire's architectural traditions imposed their identity through the reuse of architectural elements in temples and facilities, such as mosques. The conditions of prayer in mosques led to the development of Islamic architecture, with minarets replacing tower bells and domes providing niche habitats for decorations and creativity.

Trade and Commerce in Muslim Spain

Muslim conquerors divided seized lands from Christians and operated them through tenant-farmer leases. Woodlands expanded in the 10th century, and irrigated lands were encouraged. The state-protected plants for textiles and medicinal purposes. Livestock rose, led, iron, gold, and mercury were mined. The domestic industry focused on luxury cloths, tanning hides, and ivory exports. Commerce was selective, reaching remote regions. Political events influenced economic life, with Muslim commercial vigor diminishing as productive centres passed to Christian hands.⁴⁶ Markets in the Iberian Peninsula were strongly connected to markets in other parts of the Islamic world from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, and Cairo and Cordoba were connected by a robust east-west Mediterranean commercial network. Muslim and Jewish traders travelled the coast of North Africa, carrying eastern products to Muslim Spain, and then exporting Andalusian things back east. Andalusian markets, which were located on the periphery of the Islamic world, served as hubs for the exchange of goods between Christian Europe and the Islamic world. The Iberian Peninsula entered the European economy after the thirteenth century with the opening of the Straits of Gibraltar to Christian trade and the modern decline of the Muslim trading network in the Mediterranean.⁴⁷

Conclusion

The strength of cross-cultural innovation and interaction is demonstrated by the centuries of Muslim rule in Spain. Al-Andalus attracted academics, artists, and philosophers from all over the Islamic world, emerging as a beacon of knowledge and creativity. This dynamic environment encouraged breakthroughs in astronomy, medicine, mathematics, and other sciences. Under Muslim administration Jews, Christians, and Muslims coexisted and interacted, resulting in a distinctive fusion of social and religious customs. This co-existence, though not without its tensions, fostered a richer cultural understanding. From the majestic

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Olivia Remie Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment in Iberian Peninsula, 900- 1500*, https://ia600804.us.archive.org/10/items/Tokyo.Elektro_20170811/TRADE%20AND%20TRADERS%20IN%20MUSLIM%20SPAIN.pdf

⁴⁷Ibid.



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Alhambra Palace to the intricate Great Mosque of Cordoba, Al-Andalus left behind architectural marvels that continue to captivate visitors today. While Muslim rule eventually gave way to the Christian Reconquista, the influence of Al-Andalus remained deeply embedded in Spanish culture, language, and architecture. Understanding the complexities of Muslim rule in Spain requires acknowledging both its contributions and challenges. This period was not a monolithic entity, but rather a multifaceted story of conquest, cultural exchange, and ultimately, evolving power dynamics. By looking beyond simplistic narratives and embracing nuanced perspectives, we can appreciate the true richness and lasting impact of Al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula and beyond. History is a tapestry woven from countless threads. Exploring the period of Muslim rule in Spain invites to delve into a vibrant and complex chapter, acknowledging its diverse voices and appreciating its long-lasting legacy.