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Convivencia: the Burden of Spain?

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Declaration

I, Bibi Tasleema Rashid hereby declare that this thesis, entitled "*Convivencia: the Burden of Spain?*" submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within it of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the List of References.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

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New York, August 15, 2011.

*“the love we hide,
the love that gives us away” –
Ibn Zaydun
The Nuniyyah*

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1. Introduction

Convivencia, that wondrous, often romanticized period of medieval Spanish history evokes words like tolerance and acceptance. Unfortunately, these very words have become the bane of my existence. I understand that this seems to be rather harsh; but if you indulge me for a few moments, I will explain. If you have not figured it out by now, I am a Muslim (my name tends to often be a dead giveaway). As a Muslim, words like tolerance have been instilled as a part of my vocabulary from my very first madrasa class. There, we were taught that Islam is a religion of tolerance and that Muslims are a tolerant people.

Now, when you are five years old, these words are just words; they mean nothing and they lack substance. Fast forward a few years, to July 27, 1990; on this day members of the *Jamaat al Muslimeen* attempted to stage a coup d'état against the government of Trinidad and Tobago. Members of this militant Islamic group, charged into the Red House (the nation's seat of Parliament) and the Trinidad and Tobago Television (TTT), then the nation's only television station. In a siege lasting a relatively short period of time (six days), this group sought to overtake the government. In the immediate aftermath of the attempted coup d'état, there was a period of palpable tension between Muslims and the rest of Trinidad's population; as often the Muslims that did not participate in the coup d'état were unfortunately, lumped together with those that partook in it. As one of those unfortunate Muslims, I distinctly remember being asked why I wanted to take over the country. Not knowing how to respond, and feeling something that I would much later recognize as guilt (for exactly what, I still do not know); I found my eight year old self, both defending and reiterating the tolerance of Islam without knowing exactly what that meant.

My ambiguity towards this tolerance reached its climax when I moved to New York, in the United States. My move was almost three years removed from the terror attacks of September 11. At this time, there was a heightened sense of security in the city's subways, airports, malls and other places of interest. Thus, during my early days in the United States, my daily existence was defined by the number of "random" searches that I was made to endure. Here again, the tolerance of Islam reared its head as I was expected

to accept my daily reality without getting angry. I was expected to understand the need for the searches, while not being allowed to vent any frustration over the frequency of them. Even though these searches are not as frequent anymore, save only for the airport; they still remain completely “random.” It took me a long time to accept that questions like “why do Muslims hate us?” or “are all Muslims terrorist?” are a part of my reality. Seeing the changes in people’s faces when they find out that I am a Muslim and feeling the need to defend my beliefs still remain bitter pills to swallow.

My experiences are but a mere microcosm of a much larger global situation where Islam seems to be incompatible with the rest of the world, particularly the Judeo-Christian world. This global situation has sparked renewed interest in the *convivencia* period of Spain’s medieval history. Essentially, the tolerant version of Islam that made this period a possibility has apparently been lost. This does not mean that there are no tolerant Muslims; but unfortunately, the actions of a few have resulted in the creation of countless depictions that serve to cast an image of intolerance and incompatibility on all Muslims. Therefore, the tolerant Muslim is often incapable of escaping this branding. The tolerance, synonymous with *convivencia* is nothing more than an albatross around the collective necks of the global *ummah* due in large part to the fact that Islam is being portrayed as a religion of intolerance. Focusing primarily on the tolerance of the past does little to help find effective means of counteracting the intolerance and incompatibilities of the present. Let us consider for a moment the statements of Arun Gandhi:

When we stop dwelling on where our faiths diverge and focus instead on the similarities, we will find that religion is like climbing a mountain. If we are all attempting to scale the same peak, why should it matter which side of the mountain we chose to climb.¹

If we apply these statements to the *convivencia* period, we can surmise that the success of the era was predicated by the fact that the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities of that time were able to maintain the characteristics that make them diverge from each other; while simultaneously, being comfortable enough to interact with each other. Gil Anidjar writing in “Postscript: Futures of Al-Andalus,” “wonders about the

¹ Arun Gandhi, “One God, Many Images,” *Tikkun*, September/October 2005, <http://www.tikkun.org/article.php/Gandhi-OneGod/print> (Accessed May 5, 2011).

significance of the burden repeatedly placed on Islam by Western intellectuals when describing the exceptional and ephemeral dimensions of ‘a culture of tolerance’ in what is admittedly a litany of long centuries, a singularly European history, after all, of extreme intolerance.”² If we acquiesce to the fact that the “culture of tolerance” is today, a burden on Islam; then does it not stand to reason that the *convivencia* period itself, known for its “culture of tolerance,” should be a burden on contemporary Spain?

Spain, like its neighboring European Union member nations, is dealing with an increasing immigrant Muslim population. However, in the case of Spain, addressing the issues arising from this increasing immigrant population is undoubtedly complicated by the importance of the *convivencia* period to Spanish history. Therefore, this thesis seeks to determine whether or not *convivencia* is a burden on contemporary Spanish society. Ultimately, this thesis will show that determining whether or not *convivencia* is a burden depends on its recognizability as an aspect of Spanish identity. Since Spanish identity can be national, regional or local; this thesis focuses primarily on Spanish national identity, an identity “constructed at the expense of political and physical erasure of the Muslim and Jewish differences.”³

This thesis will be presented with the following structure: four chapters plus a concluding statement. In the chapter, titled, “They Came. They Conquered. They “Left.”: The Arrival of the Moors,” we set the stage from which the act of *convivencia* takes place. The Moor, the term used to characterize the North African Muslims of Arab and Berber ancestry; invaded the Iberian Peninsula for the first time in the year 711. Completing the religious triumvirate of monotheistic faiths; Jews, Christians and Muslims lived together; creating what the modern world would describe as a pluralistic society – “where communities often lived in the same neighborhoods, engaged in business and shared ideas

² Gil Anidjar, “Postscripts: Futures of al-Andalus,” in *In the Light of Medieval Spain: Islam, the West, and the Relevance of the Past*, edited by Simon R. Doubleday and David Coleman, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 189-208, 196.

³ Daniela Flesler & Adrian Perez-Melgosa, “Marketing Convivencia: Contemporary Appropriation of Spain’s Jewish Past,” 65, in *Spain is (Still) Different*, (edited by) Afinoguenova & Marti-Olivella, 63-84.

with each other; while simultaneously mistrusting and were often jealous of each other.”⁴ It is from this pluralistic society that idea of *convivencia* emerges.

The idea of living together brings us to our next chapter, “*Convivencia: A Most Perplexing Society;*” where we attempt to unravel the complexities of this pluralistic society. In order to comprehend this period of vaunted coexistence, we shall examine elements ranging from definition of the term to a comparison between policies of both Muslim and Christian rulers. Having examined past *convivencia*, we shall focus our attention on the present in the chapter, titled “*Convivencia in Contemporary Spain.*” Using the concept of nation-branding ⁵ - the application of marketing strategies to individual countries with the aim of promoting a positive self image and acquiring an international reputation that can be useful to the nation’s interest - this chapter focuses on how *convivencia* is addressed in modern Spanish society; where on the one hand, the returning Moor (via specifically the immigration of Moroccans for economic reasons) plays on Spanish fears of ghosts of the past; while, on the other hand, *convivencia* is a proven revenue maker for Spain’s tourism industry.

In the chapter titled, “Is *convivencia* a Burden on Contemporary Spanish Society?” the question of whether or not it is a burden will be addressed; the extent of which is based on how much it is identifiable as a part of Spanish identity. Finally, in the concluding statement, what was uncovered will be surmised; and limitations to the research will be offered as well as suggestions for future research. Before beginning our journey back in time to the arrival of the Moors, it is pertinent to discuss the relevancy of *convivencia*.

Coexistence joins words like open-mindedness and tolerance in being fruits of a modern secular world; what Stuart Schwartz describes as “fundamental outgrowths.”⁶ Since, today’s world is one rife with war due in large part to religious conflict and

⁴ Benjamin R. Gampel, “Jews, Christians and Muslims in Medieval Iberia: *Convivenica* through the eyes of the Sephardic Jews”, in *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims and Christians in Medieval Spain*, edited by Vivian B. Mann, Jerrilynn D. Dodds & Thomas F. Glick, 11-37. New York: George Braziller Inc., 1992), 14.

⁵ Nation Branding: Everything about Nation Branding and Country Brands <http://nation-branding.info> (Accessed August 9, 2011).

⁶ Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World*, (Yale University Press: 2008), 7.

perceived incompatibilities; these words have become increasingly more common in our everyday vocabulary. As a result, the overwhelming tendency is to look to the past for solutions to issues of the present. Employing this “Schindler’s List syndrome: the desire to find in the humane and tolerant actions of a few individuals saving and exculpatory grace that gives one hope for the human condition;”⁷ is often misleading, as the tolerance ascribed to the past was more than likely a result of necessity rather than being driven by a desire to fulfill some lofty ideal.

Today, the Spanish population finds that there is a renewed preoccupation with *convivencia*; that the remembrance of medieval al-Andalus remains an increasingly relevant and controversial issue. This is particularly true when examined through the consequences of both the events of September 11, 2001 in the New York and the “11-M”, the commuter train bombings that resulted in the deaths of 191 people in Madrid on March 11, 2004. These issues have been and continue to be a topic of research; with many endeavoring to prove that conflict does not have to be a reality. Many have shown that there are commonalities between Judaism, Christianity and Islam that should and need to be embraced for there to be peace.

Jews, Christians, and Muslims, as we know, come from different religious traditions, but have many ties to each other. In fact, all believers of these three religions refer back to Abraham ... for whom they have a profound respect, although in different ways ... If there is not an amiable peace among these religions, how can harmony in society be found?⁸

Given the current world climate, the words of Pope John Paul II remain remarkably resonant. Terror and violence have unwittingly become associated with Islam, resulting in its repeated portrayal as being irreconcilable with the modern secular world and primarily with, Christianity. Amin Maalouf speaks of “fighting against the idea that on the one hand there’s a religion – Christianity – destined forever to act as a vector for modernism, freedom, tolerance and democracy, and on the other hand another religion – Islam –

⁷ Schwartz, *All that Can be Saved*, 8.

⁸ Pope John Paul II, “Address to participants in Sant’Egidio Interreligious Meeting,” April 30, 1991, Rome, in *John Paul II Spiritual Pilgrimage Texts on Jews and Judaism 1979-1995*, edited by Eugene J. Fisher and Leon Klenicki, (New York: Crossroad, 1995), in *A Vanished World: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Medieval Spain*, Chris Lowney, (Oxford University Press, 2006), Epigraph.

doomed from the outset to despotism and obscurantism.”⁹ Acquiescing to this idea would be extreme folly.

Hence, the preoccupation with medieval Spain and the period of *convivencia*; since for all intents and purposes, it remains the only period in history of lasting compatibility (albeit a need driven compatibility) between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It was a time when power and control were in Muslim hands; thus making Islam seem more flexible and more open. During the reign of Abd ar-Rahman III, al-Andalus was at its apogee; allowing Muslims to depict their faith in a spirit of acceptance and open-mindedness. Unfortunately, the inherent danger of this preoccupation is the creation of a romanticized past. The *dhimma* model, employed by the Muslim rulers highlighted the fundamental difference between Islam and Christianity. Islam is more than a religion, it is a way of life and as such; it dictates all aspects of the Muslim’s life, from diet to clothing; and is therefore, unquestionably more austere, and unfortunately, incapable of being flexible. Now, with Islam becoming the unwilling symbol of terror, both Muslims and non-Muslims find themselves looking back, searching for that tolerance.

The preoccupation with the period of coexistence in al-Andalus is based on the fact that this period remains one of the only instances when Islam and the West were on equal footing for a protracted period of time. Shining another spotlight on this period is not driven by a need to answer some worldwide imperative. Rather, our examination into this period of coexistence is based on the desire to determine whether or not the preoccupation with coexistence is a burden on Spain, especially as the country tries to address contemporary issues regarding its growing Muslim population? Ultimately, if today’s world is an echo of “one of those medieval Andalusian villages of the past, where we (...), hear the cry of the muezzin and cantor and chorister, and find that the music, words and ideas of Muslim, Christian and Jew have seeped into a pooled cultural ground water;”¹⁰ then trying to understand the past so that we can cope with the present seems like the

⁹ Amin Maalouf, (trans. by Barbara Bray), *In Search of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, (New York: Arcade Pub., 2001), 55.

¹⁰ Lowney, *A Vanished World*, 260.

appropriate thing to do. As we turn the page, we do so ever mindful of the words of L.P. Hartley, “the past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.”¹¹

¹¹ L.P. Hartley, (introduction by Colm Tobin), *The Go-Between*, (New York: New York Review Books, 2002, c1953), Prologue, 17.

2. They Came. They Conquered. They “Left.”: The Arrival of the Moors.

*“There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and messenger.”*¹²

*“Our God and Your God is One.”*¹³

Discussions revolving around the topic of Medieval Spain often evoke a sense of religious tolerance and coexistence; alluding to the fact that three monotheistic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam - occupied the same space for a rather lengthy period of time. The conditions that made the intertwining of these faiths a reality were due in large part to the Romans. Followers of both Judaism and Christianity were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, with many of them choosing to reside in Hispania - the name given to the Iberian Peninsula by its Roman rulers. Christianity eventually became the official religion of the Empire upon the conversion of Emperor Constantine in 313 AD. Therefore, by the end of Roman rule in the peninsula (409 AD), Jews and Christians were already present. It would be another three centuries before the first Muslim forces entered the peninsula. Islam would maintain a presence in the region for more than seven centuries, with its followers occupying the role of both the ruler and the ruled at different periods during these years. The religious triumvirate, from which contemporary ideas of coexistence had arisen, was now complete; as often any allusion to an atmosphere of peaceful cohabitation has often coincided with the presence of Islam in the region. Since coexistence is often synonymous with the period of Muslim rule in the Iberian Peninsula, it is necessary to provide the historical background of this time. The following chapter aims to satisfy this requirement by providing the necessary broad strokes, or in other words a condensed history of the place that Muslim rulers labelled al-Andalus.

The impetus for the arrival of Islam to the Iberian Peninsula has its roots almost a century earlier with the birth of the religion in 610 AD. Islamic traditions hold that in a

¹² Islam is a religion based on a foundation of five pillars – the declaration of faith (Shahadah), prayer (Salah), fasting during the month of Ramadan (Sawm), paying of taxes that goes towards charity (Zakat) and the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj). The quoted statement constitutes the Shahadah, the basic tenet of Islam.

¹³ A. Yusuf Ali, (trans.) “Sura ‘Ankabut: chapter 29, Verse 46,” *The Holy Quran* (Amana Corp.: Maryland, 1983), 1042.

mountain cave above the city of Mecca, Muhammad – the last and arguably the most important prophet of Islam, then, a forty year old merchant - received the first revelation of the Quran, Islam’s Holy Book. The revelation of the Quran firmly established Islam as a faith. Today, Islam is the world’s fastest growing religion, as evidenced by the 1.57 billion people that profess the faith.¹⁴ However, at its infancy, rapid conversion to Islam was completely non-existent as the Prophet encountered resistance to his message. Eventually, both he and those who chose to follow him were forcibly exiled from Mecca. Returning eight years later in 630 AD, with an army of soldiers the prophet was able to garner victory for Islam when the Meccans chose to surrender without a fight.

Claiming Mecca in the name of Islam did not mean that all Meccans suddenly converted Islam. The prophet employed practices that did not require forced conversion to Islam. The non-believer was allowed to continue carrying out his beliefs, with the stipulation that his idols be destroyed as the Prophet was determined to emphasize the oneness of Islam. Soon, voluntary conversions to Islam became popular. This attitude towards non-Muslims emphasized the duality of Muhammad’s role as both prophet and statesman; as his message was one that carried with it a number of political overtones. It was a message that enjoined traditionally independent tribes to abandon their tribal loyalties in lieu of the creation of a community of believers, an *ummah*. Inherent to the *ummah* was (and remains) the fact that, adherence and loyalty to Islam was above all, most important. The creation of this community of believers meant that expansion became an outright necessity. And so, in a relatively short period of time, the entire Arabian Peninsula was united under the banner of Islam.

Unfortunately, the Prophet’s death in 632 AD left a void in the structure of Islam’s leadership. This void centered around the question of succession; since the Prophet had no male heirs and had named no religious successor. The determination of a coherent line of succession was and remains one of the most highly contested issues in Islam. This void was filled by a caliph, (from the Arabic *khalifa*, meaning “successor”) who lacked prophetic power and therefore, was incapable of making any decisions regarding religious

¹⁴ *Mapping the Global Muslim Population*. Washington, D.C.: The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, October 7, 2009, <http://pewforum.org/uploadedfiles/Topics/Demographics/Muslimpopulation.pdf> (October 30, 2010). See Appendix 1 - 61.

issues. The internal divisions – Sunni/Shiite, caliphs/emirs, Umayyad/Abbasid – that have long been a part of Islam since the Prophet’s death were the result of the reign of the first four caliphs. Chosen from amongst Muhammad’s closest allies, these caliphs (known as the Rashidun) ruled for a short period of time, 632-661. It was the assassination of the last of this foursome, Ali, the prophet’s son-in-law; which paved the way for the creation of a new dynasty – the Umayyads.

The Umayyads descended from the same tribe as the Prophet, the Quraysh; but from a different clan. Ruling from Damascus, after having moved the caliphate capital from Mecca; their reign was primarily known for territorial expansion and, the resulting cultural and administrative issues that arose from this expansion. At its zenith, the Umayyad caliphate ruled over one of the largest empires that the world had ever seen and one of the largest contiguous empires to exist.¹⁵ To cope with the managerial problems that arose due to exponential rate at which expansion occurred; the Umayyads made Arabic the language of administration as official state documents and currency were being issued in the language. Expansion brought more Muslims to the caliphate; effectively, altering the ethnic composition Islam followers, ensuring that all Muslims were no longer only Arabs. Hugh Kennedy, writing in *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live In*, comments that the changing ethnic composition of Muslims allowed for the shifting of allegiances away from one based on ethnic identity to one based religious identity.

In 632, all Muslims were Arabs, and in the early years of the conquests we can use the terms Arab and Muslim interchangeably to describe the armies of the conquest. When we move into the late seventh and early eighth centuries, however, such a usage would be misleading. Arabs formed only a proportion of the armies that conquered North Africa, Spain and Central Asia. What defined these armies was not their Arabness, even if the leaders were Arabs and the language of command and administration Arabic, but their identity as the armies of Islam – that is, religious identity had replaced the ethnic.¹⁶

¹⁵ See Appendix 2 - 62. This map depicts the Islamic world in the seventh through tenth centuries; thereby illustrating the rapid spread of Islam from the deserts of the Arab Peninsula to the Iberian Peninsula.

¹⁶ Hugh Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live In*, (Da Capo Press, 2008), 7.

Referring specifically to the armies that conquered the Iberian Peninsula in 711, we find that they were comprised mainly of North African Berbers (Moors) and Syrians being led by Arabs proper (from the Arabian Peninsula) who were often the minority. Even though, “religious identity had replaced the ethnic,” the Ummayyads were more inclined to favor the rights of the old Arab families, particular, their own as opposed to those of their newly converted; holding to a less Universalist concept over Islam. Treating the caliphate as less than a religious construct and more like a royal title; the Ummayyads sought to control the caliphate via the maintenance of hereditary succession. The fact that power and control were in the hands of the proper Arab minority undermined the sense of community, unity and equality inherent to the *ummah*. The resulting tension between the non-Arab majority and the proper Arab minority was the basis of an anti-Umayyad movement. The negative attitude towards the ruling Umayyad dynasty festered until they were eventually ousted by a new group, the Abbasids. Claiming a different caliphal legitimacy, the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyads in 750 by massacring the entire family save one prince. They ruled over the Islamic world until they too were eventually overthrown and a new group emerged to claim the seat of power. In the interim, the last surviving Umayyad prince, Abd ar-Rahman fled to the recently conquered al-Andalus. There, he began the task of separating this most westerly of Islam’s territories from the caliphal seat now situated in Baghdad.

Abd ar-Rahman used the fact that he was of half Berber descent to form alliances with the large Berber population that he found already inhabiting al-Andalus. These alliances as well as aid offered by Yemenite and Syrian settlers allowed the young prince to quickly declare himself *emir* (governor) of al-Andalus. As governor, he was for the most part, left alone to rule what was essentially a border territory; and in so doing, created a political entity completely independent of the main Islamic body. Abd ar-Rahman and the subsequent emirs of al-Andalus devoted much of their respective reigns to securing their new territory. The early years of the emirate were marked by a number of minor revolts, mainly along the region’s periphery; which were sprinkled intermittingly between periods of thriving prosperity. Order and peace was maintained by an army of more than

forty thousand soldiers that had been created when Abd ar-Rahman first assumed the title of emir. However, despite the presence of this army, the more than occasional skirmish persisted; particularly during the sixty year period from 852 to 912, coinciding with the reign of Muhammad I (852-886), al-Mundhir (886-888) and Abdullah ibn Muhammad (888-912). Additionally, while internal strife and chaos became characteristic of the emirate during these years; the Umayyad Emirs had to simultaneously contend with the Christian controlled regions in the north that had been trying to make inroads into al-Andalus. Both the presence and the persistence of these regions reflect the inability of the Umayyad rulers to fully control the entire Iberian Peninsula – an inability that remained a constant factor throughout the period of Islamic rule.

When Abd ar-Rahman III became emir in 912; he inherited an al-Andalus that was anything but stable. As the new emir, his first tasks included reestablishing a sense of unity in al-Andalus as well as halting raids into Muslim controlled territories by surging Christian armies. Between the years 912 to 960, forces under this Abd ar-Rahman effectively quelled the advancement of these armies. In the decades that followed, Muslim control of the Iberian Peninsula was never more complete in spite of the fact that their control never quite extended to encompass the entire peninsula. Abd ar-Rahman III had settled the borders of his territory to his satisfaction and was now turning his attention inwards, towards the governing and prosperity of al-Andalus. Before the advent of Islam to the Iberian Peninsula, the region experienced similar (and perhaps varying) levels of the cultural and material bankruptcy that was synonymous with the rest of Europe at this time. The institutions necessary for cultural, political and economic prosperity were either yet to be formed or perhaps, due to neglect, were no longer viable. Regarding the Iberian Peninsula specifically, the cultural baggage brought to the region by the Romans, which included among other things an advanced legal system; witnessed great retardation in the interim after the fall of the Roman Empire and the arrival of the Muslims. The relative ease with which the peninsula was conquered was perhaps, due in large part to the fact that its inhabitants welcomed any change from the years of instability and unreliability that were characteristic of this interim. Abd ar-Rahman III, who by this time had assumed the title '*al-Nasir li-din-Allah* (Champion of the Religion of God); was able to reverse much of this retardation and propel al-Andalus to new heights. His decision to establish the

Spanish Umayyad Caliphate with Cordoba as its capital, not only reinforced the independence of al-Andalus; but, also, reaffirmed his place as its ruler.

The stability and longevity of the Spanish Umayyad Caliphate allowed for the upward mobility of al-Andalus, and made the countless statements and sentiments that boast of its multi-cultural heritage a reality. These accolades are attributed primarily to the prosperity fostered in al-Andalus, particularly during the reign of Abd ar-Rahman III. These sentiments of praise not only pay homage to, but also echo those expressed by the nun, Hroswitha of Gandersheim. Writing in the tenth century, she stated that, “a brilliant ornament of the world shone in the West.”¹⁷ The abundance of these sentiments makes it extremely difficult to answer an otherwise simple question – what made this period great? There is no single answer to this question; whose difficulty in answering reflects the fact that Arab/Islamic influence impacted many areas of the peninsular society.

One of the most potent examples of this influence can be found in the ability of Arabic, the language of Islam, to effortlessly diffuse across the imaginary boundaries that separated the religious world from the secular one. Arabic, at this time, was solely part of the religious identity of the Muslim. However, inherent to Arabic are a number of characteristics, including a rich vocabulary, made the language an ideal implement for creative endeavor. The attention directed towards Arabic filled a void created by the fact that according to strict Islamic traditions, the making of images (specifically the painting of humans and animals) was prohibited. The graceful and elegant quality of the written Arabic word, served as the ideal decorative tool for the many mosques and palaces that were being constructed throughout the Islamic world. The political independence of al-Andalus did not hinder its rulers from employing similar decorative practices on the archways, fountains, mosques and palaces that they themselves were commissioning throughout their realm.

Arabic was also integral to the development and evolution of poetic traditions in al-Andalus. Arab poetry (both pre and post Islamic) was already an established art form long

¹⁷ Katharina Wilson, *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: A Florilegium of Her Works*, (D.S. Brewer, 1998). The nun’s words are a description of Cordoba – the capital of al-Andalus during the reign of the Spanish Umayyad Caliphate.

before the arrival of Tariq ibn Ziyad and his forces to the Iberian Peninsula. However, once there, Arab poetry evolved and fused with local traditions, resulting in the creation of new genres – the *muwashshah* and the *zajal*.¹⁸ On the development of the *muwashshah*, Emilio Garcia Gomez writes that it represented the “marvelous fusion of two literatures and two races (...), and is undoubtedly the most original product of Umayyad culture.”¹⁹ In al-Andalus, Arabic had moved beyond the boundaries of religious usage, seeping into secular everyday life. Words of Arabic origin were adopted into the local language, becoming part of its vocabulary. Countless words of Arabic origin, including algebra, alcohol and many others are globally recognized and remain in use today.

The Spanish Umayyads depended on both the stability and longevity of their reign to guarantee the prosperity of al-Andalus. An integral factor of this stability was the acquiescence to Muslim rule by the Jews and Christians who remained inhabitants of the region - “the acceptance on Muslim rule was the result of Muslim policy towards the enemy: it was always preferable to surrender to invaders and pay taxes.”²⁰ Within the Islamic world, Jews and Christians were known as the *dhimmi* or the protected “Peoples of the Book,” and shared both scripture and monotheism with the Muslims. According to the Quran, the *dhimmi* were not to be harmed but rather should be tolerated.²¹ The Spanish Umayyads adhered to this Quranic mandate by allowing the Jewish and Christian communities to practice their respective faiths provided that a *jizya* (tax) was paid to the Muslim sovereigns. The adoption of aspects of the ruling culture was an ongoing process and not a direct result of conquest. The growing prosperity of al-Andalus encouraged conversion to Islam; with increasing numbers of non-Muslims seeking to partake in and identify with the ruling elite.

¹⁸ Both genres were structurally similar, with the only difference being the language used to write them. The *muwashshah* was written in classical Arabic while the *zajal*, which developed in the twelfth century, was written entirely in the colloquial language.

¹⁹ Emilio Garcia Gomez, “Moorish Spain: The Golden Age of Cordoba and Granada,” in *The World of Islam: Faith, People, Culture*, edited by Bernard Lewis, 225-245. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992), 229.

²⁰ Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests*, 376.

²¹ This can be seen in the Arabic to English translation of chapter 29, verse 46 of the Holy Quran which reads, “And argue not with the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), unless it be in (a way) that is better (with good words). See A. Yusuf Ali, (trans.) *The Holy Quran*, (Amana Corp.: Maryland, 1983), 1042.

For a relatively lengthy period of time, al-Andalus remained a thriving success. However, this proved unsustainable as threats to the long coveted stability began emerging. The root cause of these threats proved to be the decision of al-Hakam II in 976 to name his son Hisham II his successor; an act that effectively, transferred authority from a single individual to a number of advisors. Hisham was only 10 years old when his father died, and therefore, did not have the requisite skill or experience to be caliph. Hisham's guardian, Al-Mansur ibn Abi Aamir assumed the responsibilities of caliph until he was of age. Compared to al-Andalus under the rule of Abd ar-Rahman III; al-Andalus under al-Mansur was decidedly more cruel. He isolated Hisham in Cordoba while eliminating his opposition and allowed Berbers from Africa to immigrate to al-Andalus; thereby increasing his support base.

The title of caliph was reduced to being a mere symbol; devoid of any power and influence. Dissension ripped apart the unity that had been preserved by the caliphate, leading to a period of self destructive behaviour known as the *fitna* (time of strife). The remnants of the caliphate would be rocked by violence until it finally dissolved in 1031. In lieu of a single, unified al-Andalus, a number of *taifas* (individual, independent kingdoms) arose; all vying for the prestige once synonymous with al-Andalus under the Umayyads.²² While these Muslim *taifas* were engaging in power struggles between themselves; the northern Christian kingdoms had begun combining their forces, becoming increasingly more powerful and united. Slowly, they began moving southward; engaging in the same grab for territory that had now become the modus operandi of their Muslim counterparts.

In 1085, the Islamic *Taifa* of Toledo fell to Alfonso VI of Castile. This Catholic monarch proceeded to make the city his new capital. The fall of Toledo to Catholic forces made the Andalusian Muslims desperate; prompting them to request aid from the Almoravids – fundamentalist, Berber tribesmen from North Africa. The Almoravids were characterized as being conservative followers of Islam; and as such, were quite disapproving of the *taifa* kings lifestyle. They felt that the *taifa* kings were far too flexible

²² See Appendix 3 - 63. This map depicts al-Andalus between the years 1009 – 1248. This timeframe saw disintegration of al-Andalus from a relatively large, unified territory into a number of small *taifas*. Additionally, during this time, both the Almoravids and the Almohads reigned over what remained of al-Andalus until they were eventually ousted.

regarding their politics and were focused entirely too much on attaining material wealth. They shared this opinion of the *taifa* kings with the Muslim Andalusian masses. Originally requested to act as reinforcements; the Almoravids quickly overthrew the *taifa* kings and united al-Andalus for themselves. Their ability to repel the forces of Alfonso VI in 1086; meant that the Almoravids momentarily quelled any further advancement by the Christian forces. At this time, al-Andalus was smaller in size; and under Almoravid rule, markedly different. This was particularly true regarding the attitude towards Jews and Christians. The Almoravids were politically inflexible and favored limited contact between Muslims and non-Muslims. Therefore, earlier practices that saw the promotion of Jews to positions within government, frequent under the Umayyads; were not even entertained by the Almoravids. The Almoravid reign was relatively short lived. Facing pressure from the resurgent Catholic kingdoms, the Almoravids' grip on al-Andalus weakened until eventually a new group emerged to seize authority – the Almohads.

Like the Almoravids before them; the Almohads were also a fundamentalist, Berber tribe from North Africa. The Almohads shared similar opinions with the Almoravids regarding al-Andalus – namely, disdain for the religious and moral leniency characteristic of al-Andalus under the both the Umayyad caliphate and the *taifa* kings; in addition to an opulence contrary to the teachings of Islam. However, shared opinions were not enough to hinder the Almohads from leveling similar criticism against the Almoravids; as the former Almohads practiced an even more conservative understanding of Islam than the latter. By 1170, control of al-Andalus was squarely in the hands of the Almohads. They proceeded to place more restrictions on Jews and Christians leading to a mass exodus from Almohad controlled territories.

Mass exodus had alternating outcomes for both Muslim and Christian controlled territories. For example, the religious diversity that had once been attributed to Muslim cities, like Seville was lost; replaced by an inflexible adherence to Islam. The cultural and linguistic diversity, once a feature of the cities of al-Andalus; were now flourishing in the now Christian ruled cities. Although its borders were constantly being redrawn; the cultural crossover that had been a part of Umayyad ruled al-Andalus was still ever present. This was particularly true in Christian cities, like Toledo; where both they

and the rest of Latin Europe had begun to collect the material and intellectual fruits of associating with the tolerance and open-mindedness of al-Andalus. Unfortunately, what remained of al-Andalus languished and grew increasingly more oppressive. Both the Almoravids and the Almohads sought to impose their own specific interpretation of Islamic doctrine. The steadfast zeal to recreate al-Andalus by stripping it of what they both believed was a too liberal and too tolerant view of Islam practiced first by the Umayyads and then by the *taifa* kings led to civil unrest.

In 1212, Spanish Christians who remained in al-Andalus during the reign of the Almohads sought aid from the north to decisively deal with their fanatical rulers. The victory at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa by the allied kings of Castile, Aragon and Navarra signaled the beginning of the end of Muslim rule in the region. Momentum lay squarely with the Christian armies as city after city – Cordoba in 1236, Valencia in 1238, Seville in 1248 – fell from Muslim control.²³ Granada, the last Islamic city, was created as a reward for services rendered by the Nasr family to Ferdinand III during the battle for Cordoba. The Nasrids ruled Granada for roughly two hundred and fifty years. There, they built the final monument of al-Andalus, the red brick fortress known as the Alhambra. In 1492, the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella (whose marriage in 1469 united the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile); rode to Granada to receive the keys to the city from the last Nasrid Prince Muhammad XII, known as Boabdil. This action effectively ended the period of Muslim rule on the Iberian Peninsula. Although many chose to stay and convert to Christianity, many Muslims migrated at this time. Soon after the fall of Granada, edicts expelling the Jews were issued. Those Muslims that chose to remain and convert to Christianity abandoned the use of Arabic and the wearing of Arab clothing. It was not until an official edict in the 1600s that all remaining Muslims were expelled.

And so we have it - the rise and fall of al-Andalus or simply put a short history of an unparalleled time. It is within these ups and downs, within the changing of political authorities, and within the constant redrawing of its borders that the idea of *convivencia*

²³ See Appendix 4 - 64. This map depicts the kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula from 1248 to 1492. During this time, Christian armies had reclaimed key cities from their respective Muslim rulers. The region known as al-Andalus was now, effectively only the Nasrid ruled kingdom of Granada.

has its roots. What did this much vaunted coexistence entail? As we move to the next chapter, we turn our attention to understanding this most complicated idea

3. Convivencia: A Most Perplexing Idea.

*“I have kept the Holy Law of Moses. I have kept the law of Jesus Christ, and if right now Saint Muhammad appeared, by God! I would keep all three; and if all were to end tomorrow, I would not fear God because I had walked in all three laws.”*²⁴ – Simon de Santa Clara (Calatayud, 1489)

No trip to Seville is complete without a visit to the city’s famous cathedral. Once an Almohad mosque; the cathedral houses the tomb of Ferdinand III of Castile, arguably the greatest of the Spanish Crusader Monarchs. The grandeur of his tomb, which was commissioned by his son, Alfonso X; serves to illuminate the military acumen of a King, who in a period lasting a little over a decade was able to wrest the important cities of Seville and Cordoba away from their respective Muslim leaders. Beyond its sheer monumentality, the tomb is best known for its most intriguing epitaph. Etched in not one but four languages; the epitaph serves as a potent example of the openness to other cultures for which this period was known. Even though at the time of Ferdinand’s death, Castilian was a local vernacular – it would eventually become the language of authority and history under the direct patronage of Alfonso – it joined Latin, Hebrew and Arabic as being the four peninsular languages represented on the tomb. One can interpret the presence of these languages as being both an homage to the cultural diversity of the time as well as being representative of the direction that the new king (Alfonso) which to take his kingdom.

In *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture*, Sarah Pearce translates each façade of Ferdinand’s tomb from their respective original languages to English.²⁵ From these translations, we find that each language offers the same message regarding Ferdinand’s life while maintaining the cultural traits that make each language different from each other. For example, the date of the death etched on the tomb reflects the calendars of the cultures associated with their respective languages. Another example of the integration of culturally specific traits into the meaning of the epitaph can be seen in the fact that in the Arabic translation, Ferdinand is declared as ruler of “*Andalus*;” while in the Hebrew translation, it states that he “seized all of *Sefarad*.”

²⁴ Schwartz, *All That Can be Saved*, 43.

²⁵ See Appendix 5 - 65.

Similarly, in the Latin translation, Ferdinand is declared as king of “*Hispania*,” while in the Castilian translation, he is proclaimed as the ruler “of all *Spain*.”

And so, we have four languages representing four cultures serving a single purpose. Ferdinand’s tomb becomes a symbol of cultural diversity and open-mindedness. Also, it serves the additional purpose of informing about Ferdinand’s military prowess and the vastness of his kingdom. Undoubtedly, this was a message that was received and transmitted by the many visitors paying their respects. It was (and remains) an emblem of *convivencia* that is associated with this period of Spanish history. These poignant reflections and interpretations are part of the inherent complexities associated with comprehending what is meant by *convivencia*. In what follows, we undertake the task of deciphering what it means to have lived the *convivencia* lifestyle; beginning with an understanding of the development of this most perplexing idea.

Of Definitions and Meanings

Spanish historians coined and used the term *convivencia* to describe the relationship between Jews, Christians and Muslims during two simultaneous periods of their nation’s history between the years 711 to 1492 – the Muslim Umayyad Conquest and the Christian Reconquest. During this highly disputed period of history, Jews, Muslims and Christians lived under similar rules and interacted with each other on varying levels. Comprehending these interactions remains a source of a much heated debate. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand the term *convivencia* itself, before attempting to understand it as an epoch known for remarkable cultural interactions.

The term *convivencia* remains a source of intense debate among the students of the culture and history of Spain. Non-Spanish writers translate the term to mean coexistence – “to exist in mutual tolerance despite different ideologies or interests.”²⁶ One of the interpretations of *convivenica* can be found in the work of famed Spanish historian and

²⁶ Oxford Dictionaries Online, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_us1234233#m_en_us1234233.005 (Accessed March 1, 2011)

philologist, Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1869-1968). Writing in *Orígenes de español* (1926), he uses the term *convivencia de normas* (coexistence of norms) to describe the “existence of variant forms in early Romance languages of the peninsula, for example the diphthongs of the open *o* as in the Castilian *puerto, puorto, puarto*; norms he saw, in conformity with prevailing notions of cultural evolutionism, as competing with one another until all but one were selected.”²⁷ From Menéndez Pidal’s use of *convivencia*, one gleans an element of competitiveness inherent to his understanding of the term. However, the analyses on the subject by Americo Castro (1885-1972), a disciple of Menéndez Pidal and a literary scholar in his own right, reveals a decidedly more idealistic understanding of the term. While retaining some of Menéndez Pidal’s ideas - namely, portraying “medieval Iberian culture as a field of interaction among all kinds of cultural elements” - Castro conceives that this interaction is “intelligible only if filtered through the collective consciousness of the three castes; (...) that the culture a group projects is something itself recognizes as worthy.”²⁸

Using the term *convivencia* implies the “coexistence of the three groups, but only as registered collectively and consciously in the culture of any one of them.”²⁹ Perhaps due to his being exiled to the United States shortly after the start of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939); Castro’s writings seem to point to a decidedly utopic past that cannot be recovered. Writing in *La Realidad Histórica De España*, Castro essentially states that the key problem of Spanish history lies in the hidden desire to upend the harmonious accord between Jews, Christians and Muslims. Beyond the notion of a lost idealized past, Castro’s understanding of *convivencia* points to the genesis of Spanish identity. Castro strongly emphasizes the importance of the presence of the three castes (his terminology for Jews, Muslims and Christians), as he sees in them the roots of modern Spanish culture.

In the previous chapter, the abundance of evidentiary proof used to support the creation of an intercultural mosaic as an integral part of medieval Spanish history was

²⁷ Thomas F. Glick, “Convivencia: An Introductory Note,” in *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims and Christians in Medieval Spain*, edited by Vivian B. Mann, Jerrilynn D. Dodds & Thomas F. Glick, 1-9. New York: George Braziller Inc., 1992), 1. This edited volume was published in conjunction with an exhibition (of the same name), held at the Jewish Museum of New York in 1992.

²⁸ Ibid, 1-2.

²⁹ Ibid, 2.

mentioned. This cultural exchange was visible in many fields ranging from architecture and literature to philosophy and science. The creation of this intercultural mosaic highlights the fact that cultures are fluid constructs. Often they tend to borrow components and habits from outside their specific culture in order to fill deficiencies inherent to their own. This was particularly evident among Castro's castes. His almost single-minded devotion to the cultural intermixing of his three castes and their resulting hybridity; emphasizes the idea that for Castro, *convivencia* involves the ability of these castes to exist as separate communities, sharing and gaining from each other without losing themselves. The ability of the Jew, Muslim and Christian of that time, to acknowledge and recognize the limitations of their respective traditions; and the willingness to accept and seek help from the outside their traditions is important to Castro's understanding of the interactions between his castes. Castro sees *convivencia* as being a necessary factor to the formation of Spanish identity. Ultimately, the salient point of his theories is that the positive relationship between Jews, Muslims and Christians during Spain's medieval history is responsible of making Spaniards what they are.

Castro's decidedly positive views attributed to his three castes are met with both support and criticism. In fact, his idealized interpretation of intergroup relations, where the positive outcomes are touted at the expense of the negative ones; forms the basis of one two schools of thought regarding the subject of medieval Iberian history. The antithesis of this school of thought is based primarily on the work of another Spanish medieval historian, Claudio Sanchez-Albornoz. Like Castro, Sanchez-Albornoz was also forced into exile shortly after the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. However, unlike Castro, he does not believe that the foundations of Spanish culture and identity are rooted in the interactions of Jews, Muslims and Christians. He advocates for a Spanish identity existing long before the Arab invasion of 711; arguing that the "Spanish character was forged in the political and cultural conflict of Catholic Spain with its traditional opponents, the Muslims and the Jews."³⁰ While not dismissing the presence and importance of both Jews and particularly, Muslims to Spanish history; Sanchez-Albornoz strongly believes the formation of modern Spanish culture predates the *convivencia* period. Accordingly, he

³⁰ Schwartz, *All That Can Be Saved*, 44.

sees in Castro's theory the formation of a number of "existentialist and largely pessimistic and deterministic conclusions such as (...) the history of Spain as the history of insecurity or a life of longing."³¹ Regarding Sanchez-Albornoz views on Spanish history and its Arab invaders, we find that he envisions a Spain that was forced to veer from its true destiny due to the invasion of the Arabs.

Despite the evolution of these ideas; where today, some scholars stress the dangers of placing too much of an emphasis on the topic of *convivencia*; and others, argue that the idea of *convivencia* is a hindrance to medieval Iberian studies; the core of this intellectual debate remains a source of heated controversy. Regarding the term *convivencia*, we find that both Castro's and Sanchez-Albornoz's positions on intergroup interactions are polar opposites of each other. Therefore, any definition of the term must lie somewhere in the middle of these two opposing extremes. One can argue that the negative aspects of social dynamics seem to have eluded Castro or simply, that he chooses to only recognize the positive aspects of the inter-cultural dialogue of his three castes. *Convivencia* cannot be understood as overwhelmingly positive as in the case of Castro, nor can it be understood as overwhelmingly negative as in the case of Sanchez-Albornoz. It must include the violence and conflict that American historian, David Nirenberg insists was a part of its construction – "violence was a central and systemic aspect of the coexistence of majority and minority in medieval Spain, and even suggests that coexistence was in part predicated on such violence."³²

We can understand *convivencia* in terms of culture vis-à-vis the many examples where the living side by side by Jews, Christians and Muslims enriched their respective cultures by drawing from their neighbor. We can also understand it in terms of economics. Jews, in particular, were predominantly involved in commerce; ensuring that the interactions between Muslims, Christians and themselves were more than culturally oriented, as contact in the marketplace generated communications between the followers of three religions. The *convivencia* society evokes a sense of religious toleration; a toleration

³¹ David Sven Reher, Introduction to *Spain: A Historical Enigma*, by Claudio Sanchez-Albornoz, trans. by Colette Joly Dees and David Sven Reher, Hispanism Series- 2, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Madrid: Fundacion Universitaria Espanola, 1975), 3.

³² David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton University Press: 1996), 9.

that “no one believed to be beneficial in either political or religious terms.”³³ Therefore, *convivencia* can also be understood as a by-product of the attempts to create a politically stable territory. History shows that while daily interactions and a degree of religious tolerance were achieved; it by no means meant that there was complete equality and harmonious living. The political policies that promoted the exchange of ideas added pressure to the three groups; thereby making tension, conflict and violence as much a part of the *convivencia* period as the symbols of cross-culture interaction.

Therefore, it is incumbent on writers and researchers of the topic to carefully couch the interpretation of the term that they employ in their work. For example, Thomas Glick, in his Introductory Note to *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims and Christians in Medieval Spain*, makes a point of clarifying the definition of *convivencia* used by his text. In it he states that “the word as we use it here, is loosely defined as coexistence but carries connotations of mutual interpretation and creative influence, even as it also embraces the phenomena of mutual friction, rivalry and suspicion.”³⁴ Similarly, this paper uses the term *convivencia* based on a definition that allows for the interjection of the inevitable push and pull characteristic of intercultural relations to the process of acculturation implied by Castro’s views – “a process of internalization of the ‘other,’ that is the mechanism by which we make foreign cultural traits our own.”³⁵ Simply put; this paper employs the term in an effort to understand what living together in medieval Iberia meant for Jews, Christians and Muslims; what it meant to coexist during these years.

*Historical Background: The Triumph of Assimilation over Rebellion*³⁶

We have already seen that the acquisition of the necessary variables from which the ideas of *convivencia* takes its roots – the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula by the Umayyad

³³ Schwartz, *All That Can Be Saved*, 7.

³⁴ Glick, *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims and Christians in Medieval Spain*, 1.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 7.

³⁶ Jerrilynn D. Dodds, Maria Rosa Menocal and Abigail Krasner Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture*, (Yale University Press: 2009), 17. Here the statement “assimilation largely triumphed over rebellion,” was used in reference to the fact that while Arabized Jews and Arabized Christians were essentially second class citizens within the Islamic polity; the standard of living and worship were such that life was acceptable.

dynasty – resulted from the commingling of three different religions and cultures. If we acquiesce to the fact that the much vaunted *convivencia* was a result of this unique situation, then we must also acquiesce to the fact that the emergence of this lifestyle was a relatively slow undertaking; that the tolerance shown towards religious minorities was a result of legalized policies that did not guarantee the peaceful interaction between religious groups. The idea of *convivencia* being understood as the “triumph of assimilation over rebellion,” where rebellion refers to conflict between religious groups is an interesting hypothesis; for, if we define assimilation as “the process by which individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of society; a process involving the taking on of traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society;”³⁷ then we must accept the fact that assimilation was the fear of the Christian zealots of the mid- ninth century. The ease with which Jews and Christians were readily embracing Arab culture, does suggest that on some level assimilation did in fact take place. However, perhaps it is more accurate to understand what occurred as being a process of acculturation – the internalization of the other via the adoption foreign cultural traits – rather than assimilation; which is an extreme form of acculturation. As we begin our journey into the world of *convivencia*; we do so ever mindful of the fact that the resulting melding of cultures is only understandable if the groups involved are examined individually so that their differences can be made identifiable.

Beginning with the Muslims, we find that there were three groups of varying ethnicities that constituted the Muslim population of al-Andalus. The first of these groups and by far the largest was the Berbers from North Africa. These Berbers (not to be confused with Nomadic Berbers of the same region in North Africa) formed the rural class of al-Andalus and were all Muslims. The second group was the Arabs who made up a considerably small portion of the population but were the majority of the ruling elite. These were the individuals credited with bringing elements of Arab culture to the

³⁷ “Assimilation.” *Encyclopedia Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, 2011.
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/39328/assimilation> (Accessed March 30, 2011).

peninsula – their language and their credo: *seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave*.³⁸ The third group, known as the *muwallads*, includes both Muslims of Iberian descent, who traced their origin to marriages between the proper Arabs who conquered the peninsula and the women of Iberia – invading Arabs did not bring females with them – and the native Iberians who converted to Islam. Therefore, in terms of numbers, the muwallads were more than the Arab ruling elite but less than the Berber rural class. By the time Abd ar-Rahman III became emir in 912, there was no longer a distinction between Arabs and muwallads.

When the Muslims first came to the Iberian Peninsula, it was home to Jews, Christians of either Hispano-Roman or Visigothic descent, and members of native Iberian tribes. Once the peninsula had been conquered to the satisfaction of the Muslims, and in accordance with Islamic law; Christians fell under the category of *dhimmi* – one of the protected Peoples of the Book. This status gave Christians certain rights and privileges. Among these was the right to continue practicing their faith and the creation of an independent civic authority which included a Christian judicial system. The openness of Islamic governance eventually led to many Christians becoming *Arabized* – the process by which aspects of Arab culture: language, customs and so on; are adopted by non-Arab individuals. We shall return to an examination of what the adoption of Arabic customs meant to Christian culture, as well as a more in depth look at the restrictions and allowances afforded Islamic governance. For the moment, we turn our attention to the third and final player needed to complete our trio.

The Jews were small but major minority inhabiting the Iberian Peninsula. Jews were never in a position of authority, as they lived under Christian Visigothic rule prior to the arrival of Islam. Under the Visigoths, they faced constant persecution. Therefore, one can argue that this was one of the reasons why they more readily accepted the Muslim rulers than the Christians. Jews were also categorized as one of the protected Peoples of the Book under Islamic Law. They were afforded similar rights and privileges as their

³⁸ According to the Hadiths (sayings of the Prophet) recorded by al-Tirmidhi, the Prophet said “the seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim” (Hadith 74) and “The knowledge from which no benefit is derived is like a treasure out of which nothing is spent in the cause of Allah.” (Hadith 108) Alim: The World’s Most Useful Islamic Software alim.org. (Accessed August 9, 2011).

Christian counterparts; making their experience under Muslim rule markedly improved over the experience under the previous regime. They were confident in the *dhimma* system. They believed that adherence to the pact could mean “an expectation of protection and freedom from discrimination.”³⁹ Jews residing in the cities occupied various positions ranging from merchants and bankers to scribes and court officials. Therefore, Jews were invaluable; particularly to the early Muslim conquerors of al-Andalus as they were mainly desert warriors, who lacked the necessary skills required in order to govern. Being invaluable to the ruling Muslim elite allowed Jews to embrace aspects of Arab culture, leading to their own Arabization.

Since the first Islamic envoys set out from the Arabian Peninsula charged with the task of spreading Islam; the practice has always been to not compel conversion to Islam by the inhabitants of the conquered lands as compulsory conversion to Islam was foreign to the *ummah*. The *dhimma* pact meant that among the non-Muslims, Christians and Jews occupied a place of respect. Under this pact, both Christians and Jews were “protected from injury to their person and property, were allowed freedom of settlement and movement, and granted the freedom to pursue any occupation as long as it did not involve hegemony over Muslims.”⁴⁰ Ultimately, the *dhimma* pact was an innovative device when dealing with diverse cultures on conquered lands; and provided overwhelming evidence to support the idea that Christians and Jews experienced an extremely high degree of both religious and social freedom under Muslim rule. Unfortunately, this proof can also be used to illustrate the fact that the *dhimma* pact created a barrier between Muslims and non-Muslims. The rights and privileges afforded by the pact can be interpreted as essentially nothing more than a “second class status conferred on Christians and Jews in Islamic regimes (that did not) meet the minimum human rights expectations in nation states.”⁴¹

³⁹ Mark R. Cohen, “The “Convivencia” of Jews and Muslims in the High Middle Ages,” in *The Meeting of Civilizations: Muslim, Christian and Jewish*, edited by Moshe Ma’oz, 54-66. (Sussex Academic Press: 2009), 58.

⁴⁰ Gampel, “Jews, Christians and Muslims in Medieval Iberia,” 14.

⁴¹ Anouar Majid, *We are all Moors: Ending Centuries of Crusades against Muslims and other Minorities*, (University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 99.

For both Christians and Jews, the privilege which afforded them the right to freedom of religion was predicated on the fact that they paid a *jizya* (an annual poll tax) to their Muslim sovereigns. One can argue that paying an annual poll tax was a small price to pay for religious freedom. Conversely, one can also argue that this tax was just one of taxes that the Muslim sovereigns leveled at their non-Muslim subjects; as in addition to the *jizya*, there was also the *kharaj* (land tax) that unlike the *jizya* had no basis in Islamic law. Non-Muslims paid most of the taxes to the rulers while Muslims only had to satisfy the religious requirement of paying the annual *zakat* - the obligation to pay 2.5 percent of one's wealth to assist the less fortunate. Therefore, the adornment of the cities of al-Andalus was largely financed by the taxes paid by non-Muslims.

A perfect example of this practice of adorning cities financed largely by non-Muslims can be found in the city of Cordoba. Today, Cordoba is internationally known for the polychromatic double tiered arches of the city's famous *La Mezquita*. The *Mezquita*, now a cathedral was built over the ruins of a demolished church. The embellishment of Islamic Cordoba began under the reign of Abd ar-Rahman I. During his reign, properties owned by non-Muslims were confiscated and the amount of tribute that they had to pay was increased. This was continued by subsequent Muslim rulers; until finally, under Abd ar-Rahman III, Cordoba was "taken to (new) heights of glory (...) financed largely through the taxation of Catholics and Jews and the booty and tribute obtained in military incursions against Catholic lands."⁴² This example illustrates that "non-Muslim subjects bore the heaviest weight of taxation (...) providing the state with its revenues."⁴³

We have already discussed that the reality of the *dhimma* pact was that it resulted in significant cultural exchange as access to classical authors was facilitated through Arabic texts and the peninsular languages gained a number of Arabic words to their vocabulary. Additionally, we have briefly mentioned that many Jews and Christians became Arabized; with many choosing to convert to Islam. Conversion to Islam was both advantageous and disadvantageous for all involved. For the Muslims, conversion to Islam by Jews and Christians meant that they were fulfilling the Islamic mandate of spreading the word of

⁴² Dario Fernandez- Morera, "The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise," *The Intercollegiate Review* (Fall 2006), 23-31. 24.

⁴³ Richard A. Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1992), 35.

Allah. However, it meant that there would be a reduction in the number of would-be taxpayers. Regardless, many Jews and Christians converted to Islam; as it allowed them to be a part of the unfolding intercultural mosaic by aligning themselves with the ruling elite thereby increasing their opportunities for social mobility. The presence of Arabized Jews and Christians created a sense of homogeneity within certain aspects of al-Andalus. However, there were still a number of zealots who felt that this homogeneity was an attack on their respective indigenous cultures. This was particularly true amongst some Christians.

An example of the action taken by these Christian zealots can be found in Richard Fletcher's *The Cross and the Crescent: Christianity and Islam from Muhammad to the Reformation*, where he recounts that in "the 850s, a number of Christians in Cordoba, (...) and smaller numbers elsewhere, deliberately and publicly insulted Islam and so brought upon themselves the capital punishment which the *sharia*, the religious law of Islam, prescribes for this offence; (resulting) in these individuals being hailed as martyrs."⁴⁴ These zealots could not comprehend the zeal with which Christians were converting to Islam. Their outrage seems to have been a precursor to sentiments expressed by Petrus Alfonsi, a Jewish Spanish writer born in twelfth-century al-Andalus, who converted to Christianity after rising to prominence. He writes, "I have read the books of the Muslims, written their language and was always nurtured by them, but it is not proper that I should follow their religion."⁴⁵ The actions of these zealots served to reinforce the fact that in 711, when the first Muslims invaded the Iberian Peninsula many Christians resisted Muslim rule. Many fled north to form the northern Christian kingdoms that would eventually initiate and successfully carry out the Reconquest. The martyrdoms of the ninth century did not garner widespread support and the number of executions eventually subsided.

In the previous chapter, we saw Abd ar-Rahman III, the relatively young emir who spent the early years of his reign quelling uprisings, firmly reestablishing the borders of his kingdom and eventually, overseeing the flourishing of what would one day be described as

⁴⁴ Richard A. Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent: Christianity and Islam from Muhammad to the Reformation*, (New York: Viking Publishing), 44-45.

⁴⁵ Dodds et al, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 77.

a paradise. It is important to acknowledge that while being ruled by Muslims, al-Andalus would and could never be united under the banner of Islam. The fact that forced conversion was not a part of Islamic doctrine effectively rendered that idea obsolete. Therefore, religion could not be the basis of unity. Neither could ethnicity. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the proper Arabs (Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula), though in power, were often the minority. Therefore, the most productive area of contact between Christians and Muslims was in the area intellectual life. Luckily, the new ruler was an avid supporter of the arts and sciences; sparking the cultural efflorescence that is, today synonymous with his reign. The creation of libraries encouraged the migration to the cities of al-Andalus by numerous learned individuals to further academic interests. The promotion of these intellectual pursuits ranging from but not limited to literature and medicine, became an essential part of the politics of Abd ar-Rahman and his successors.

The reign of Abd ar-Rahman III has often been described as being a testament to the tolerance of a forgotten past; a time when Islam was deemed open and adaptable to others. It is important to remember that this vaunted epoch of tolerance ascribed to the Spanish Umayyads was based on their interpretation of Islam – an interpretation that can be described as being anything but conservative. Abd ar-Rahman III and his successors effectively, “pursued an ethnically and religiously inclusive policy dedicated to the pacification and unification of the Islamic Iberian state of al-Andalus;”⁴⁶ based on the liberal understanding of Islam that they practiced. When subsequent Almoravid and Almohad regimes from North Africa, took control of al-Andalus; they too sought to impose their own respective interpretation of Islam. Both of these respective interpretations were extremely conservative and could not sustain any form of the Muslim/Jewish/ Christian dichotomy. Therefore, the intercultural dialogue that had made Umayyad al-Andalus a functioning reality were a mere afterthought. For example, the Mozarabs (Iberian Christians living under Muslim rule) of Toledo found that the “Muslims who had once granted them the rights to retain their specific customs, cultures and religion, had been unfortunately, replaced by new rulers who did not care for such provisions. And even though, both the Almoravids and the Almohads, displayed a more open-minded

⁴⁶ Gampel, “Jews, Christians and Muslims in Medieval Iberia,” 25.

attitude towards the arts and philosophy once they became part of the daily life in al-Andalus, they remained strongly against religious contact, and continued to impose strategies aimed at separating the People's of the Book from the Muslims; resulting in both Mozarabs and Jews fleeing from Almoravid and Almohad controlled territories.

The presence of the Almoravids and Almohads raises another interesting point regarding the presupposed period of peaceful coexistence during the reign of Muslims in al-Andalus. One of the problems with this supposition is that it presumes that Muslim rule was continuous and stable, that the territories ruled by the Muslims were the same for these seven centuries. As discussed in the previous chapter, al-Andalus under the Muslims was never more secure than under Abd ar-Rahman III, despite his inability to conquer the entire peninsula. The collapse of the caliphate into *taifa* kingdoms and the looming presence of the Christian armies in the North (the part of the peninsula never conquered by the Muslims); meant that during the 700 years, the borders of al-Andalus were constantly being redrawn. Christian armies began reclaiming Muslim cities, until eventually al-Andalus became essentially the single province of Granada.⁴⁷ The remapping of lands meant that it was now the responsibility of the Christian rulers to create the policies from which they would govern their Mudejar - the name given to Muslims who lived under Christian Rule – and Jewish populations.

It is a common misconception to ascribe tolerance to the Muslim rulers of al-Andalus and intolerance to the rulers of Christian Spain. Essentially, claiming that these rulers, particularly the Umayyad rulers were more open to peoples of other faiths than the Christian regime that replaced them is an unfortunate inaccuracy. Simply put, the policies employed by the Christian rulers were quite similar to those employed by the Muslim rulers. Christian rulers utilized a system comparable to the Muslim *dhimma* pact; for once a city was conquered by the Christian armies, “the regulations for [its] administration were committed to writing by the Christian authorities in a document known as a *fuero*.”⁴⁸ The *dhimma* model was “borrowed by the Christian rulers but implemented as civil not

⁴⁷ Refer to Appendices 1 -4, (61-64), for maps showing the remapping of al-Andalus over the centuries.

⁴⁸ Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, 137.

religious law;”⁴⁹ since unlike Islamic tradition, Christian law does not have any policy that would allow for the toleration of the Peoples of the Book.

When comparing the life of the Mozarab, the Christian living under Muslim rule, to the life of the Mudejar, the Muslim living under Christian rule; we find a number of consistencies. Essentially, Muslims and Christians reversed roles; with much of the privileges that were once granted to Christians by Muslim rulers being reciprocated in the reemerging Christian Spain. Firstly, the *dhimma* pact which granted Mozarabs privileges made them effectively second-class citizens to the Muslim sovereigns. Conversely, when the situation was reversed, the Mudejars living in Christian Spain were also deemed second-class. Therefore, the decline in status that was a reality for Christians when Muslims first invaded was now a reality for the Mudejars in Christian Spain. We have seen that under Muslim rule, Jews and Christians were “levied a special tax according to their lowered yet legal status as an agreement regarding social status in the land of another religion; (conversely,) Muslim vassals paid higher rents and taxes for smaller parts of land than Christian tenants.”⁵⁰

Secondly, part of the freedom of religion that the *dhimma* pact afforded was that neither Jews nor Christians were allowed to entice Muslims to join either of their respective faiths. Similarly, Mudejars were not allowed to make converts of Christians. Dario Fernandez-Morera writing in “The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise,” states that *dhimma* pact was effectively a tool that Muslim rulers used to “curtail any possibility of sharing power or compromising the hegemonic positions of Islam.”⁵¹ Similarly, the policies of Christian rulers could be understood as way of restricting the power of Muslims. Even though, “they (Mudejars) chose their officers for the management of their own communal affairs, they had no say in the general municipal administration of the cities where they lived.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Glick, “*Convivencia: An Introductory Note*,” 7.

⁵⁰ Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 29.

⁵¹ Fernandez-Morera, “The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise,” 25

⁵² Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, 138.

Fletcher writes that the “living side by side (...) reached down to levels of intimacy in social life which the documentation of that age rarely illumines.”⁵³ However, it was at these levels, particularly in the rural areas where Jews, Christians and Muslims engaged in mundane, daily activities like laundering and the planting and reaping of crops; that an acute awareness of the differences in cultural customs became increasingly more evident. These differences manifested themselves in simple things like diet, hygiene and marriage. Legislation of the time served to reinforce these tendencies. Therefore, the *convivencia* lifestyle can be understood as a tangible outcome of a “legally prescribed regime of discrimination.”⁵⁴ For example, “segregation was often the rule at the municipal bath houses, with different days for Christian, Muslims and Jews.”⁵⁵ Regarding sexual relations, both Christian law and Islamic opinion were in agreement – transgressing sexual boundaries, depending on the composition of the couple involved; was punishable by death, flogging and/or stoning.

Forgotten in this Muslim/Christian power struggle were the Jews. Forever a minority and always occupying the role of witness; the life of the Jew was often overshadowed by the Mozarab/Mudejar relationship. In fact, it can be argued that Jews were not seen as a separate group but rather that they were absorbed into the particular group that was serving as subjects at that time. Essentially, under Muslim rule Jews were treated as Christians with the reciprocal action being employed when Christians were the ruling authority. Therefore, Jews were always subject to the will of the ruler at any given time. Their goal was to carve out a niche for themselves within Muslim ruled al-Andalus and Reconquered Christian Spain, so that they were an integral figure regardless of who occupied the position of ruler. The Jewish community readily availed itself to both courts, occupying the positions of merchant and administrator; in addition to being effective mediators, who possessed the necessary cultural and language skills to prosper in either the dominant Muslim or Christian society.

⁵³ Fletcher, *The Cross and The Crescent*, 114.

⁵⁴ Cohen, “The ‘Convivenica of Jews and Muslims in the High Middle Ages,’”⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, 138 & Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent*, 114.

The year, 1492 is an important year in Spanish history. It was the year that Christopher Columbus set out to discover the world. It was also the year that the era known for *convivencia* came to a dramatic end. The circumstances that had made this society a reality were steadily being altered until they finally came to head on January 2, 1492. On this day, the ruler of Granada, Boabdil, surrendered to the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella. The surrender of Granada to the Catholic monarchs saw the initiation of compulsory edicts and restrictive statutes aimed at recreating the identity of their kingdom; an identity that was devoid of Jewish or Muslim influence. Like the previous rulers of the Iberian Peninsula, Ferdinand and Isabella sought to assign specific roles and levels of inferiority. Unfortunately, for Jews and Muslims; Ferdinand and Isabella ascribed to a vision of Spain that was religiously homogenous geared towards Catholicism.

One of the imposed statutes, the *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) was essentially, a way that the state could unite; thereby, creating an inaccessible scenario for Jews and Muslims. The *convivencia* society which was known for its tempered acculturation and mutual friction became a society of discrimination and persecution as the policies of forced conversion and/or expulsion replaced cross cultural exchange; serving to divest Catholic Spain of its Muslim and Jewish population. Therefore Spain became, as historian Henry Kamen writes in *The Disinherited: Exile and the Making of Spanish Culture 1492-1975*, “the only European country to have attempted to consolidate itself over the centuries, not through offering shelter but through a policy of exclusion.”⁵⁶

From 1492 onwards, the Catholic monarchs achieved the much sought after religious unity by restricting the activities of Jews and Muslims, eventually expelling the former and conquering the latter. Despite these restrictive practices, the Muslim and Jewish influences remain ever present in Spanish society; for “as is the case of most decreed exclusions, Spain could not (and has not) been able to divest itself of those cultures that gave it a large part of its vocabulary, place names, architecture, (...) and even the game of chess.”⁵⁷ The Moriscos, Muslims who converted to Christianity and the

⁵⁶ Henry Kamen, *The Disinherited: Exile and the Making of Spanish Culture 1492-1975*, (New York: Harper Collins Pub., 2007), Preface ix-x.

⁵⁷ Alberto Manguel, *The City of Words (CBC Massey Lecture)*, (House of Anasi Press, 2007), 93.

Marranos, Jews who converted to Christianity, stayed in Spain and largely lived within the prescribed rules; even though some people continued to practice their respective faiths in secret. By the sixteenth century, their status changed and their lives became increasingly more repressed so that they would “conform to what was deemed to be the current national norm.”⁵⁸ Over the subsequent centuries, decrees would be issued ordering the expulsion of these groups starting with the Jews and culminating with the decree signed by Phillip III in 1609 expelling the Moriscos.

The Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella whose marriage united the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, sought to create a Spain that was united the banner of Christianity. Unfortunately, the influence of Jews and Muslims carried with it longevity and more importantly, permanence. In the next chapter, we turn our attention to the present in order to determine how the *convivencia* society of the past is acknowledged in contemporary Spain.

⁵⁸ Deborah Root, “Speaking Christian: Orthodoxy and Difference in Sixteenth Century Spain,” *Representations* 23 (1988: 118-34), 118-119, cited in Daniela Flesler, *The Return of the Moor: Spanish Responses to Contemporary Moroccan Immigration*, (Purdue University Press, 2008), 6.

4. *Convivencia* in Contemporary Spain

“No Christian country’s faith has been more intertwined with Islam.”⁵⁹ – Anouar Majid

“Spain is different.” These are the words of one of the most renowned slogans in Spanish history. They first appeared as the logo of a series of photographic tourist propaganda posters issued in 1929 by the Patronato Nacional de Turismo (National Tourism Board). Since 1964, the slogan in its current state (in 1948, the slogan, “Spain is beautiful and different” was launched, but was never quite successful); was employed by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, Minister of Information and Tourism of the dictatorial government of General Francisco Franco. Iribarne put the slogan on the propaganda posters that marked the official celebrations of the twentieth-fifth anniversary of the Regime in order to promote a program aimed at an economic and ideological renovation of the country via tourism.⁶⁰ *Spain is (Still) Different* is part of the title of a volume, edited by Eugenia Afinoguenova & Jaume Marti-Olivella; which consists of a number of essays that uses “definitions of Spain, along with travel and tourism practices as powerful agents of Spanish nation-building and self-identification.”⁶¹ The essays in this volume serve to illustrate the fact that Spain is both “different and ‘still’ the same – as an integrated part of the European Union, Spain has officially ceased to be different from the industrialized European nations; (...) yet as the *de facto* border between Europe and Africa, Spain has forced into the role of a border patrol nation, which deeply problematizes its own (...) cultural heritage of its Jewish and Arabic past.”⁶²

Theories abound as to the reasons why Spain is different. Thus far, we have been discussing one of these reasons – the *convivencia* society that resulted from the close contact between Jews, Muslims and Christians. Additionally, we have alluded to the fact that *convivencia* (and in fact most remembrances of medieval al-Andalus), is almost always depicted in terms of a Muslim/Christian dynamic. Owing to the current global state

⁵⁹ Majid, *We Are All Moors*, 26.

⁶⁰ Antonio Elorza, “El ‘via crucis’ de la oposición,” *El País*, November, 22nd 2000, www.elpais/especiales/2000/franco/elorza.htm (accessed August 1st, 2007), in Eugenia Afinoguenova & Jaume Marti-Olivella, “A Nation under Tourists’ Eyes: Tourism and Identity Discourses in Spain,” *Spain is (Still) Different: Tourism and Discourse in Spanish Identity*, edited by Eugenia Afinoguenova & Jaume Marti-Olivella, Introduction, xi, (Lexington Books: 2008).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, xxviii.

of affairs that sees a renewed obsession with *convivencia*; reveals that Jews have been co-opted to the side of the Christians, who have once again been pitted against Muslims. This is particularly true in Spain, where “the Jew has morphed into a seemingly natural member of a Judeo-Christian civilization; the Moor has once again reappeared to haunt the West with its troubling presence and resistance to national assimilationist policies.”⁶³ In contemporary Spain, words like “Moor” – a reference to the North African Muslims of Arab and/or Berber ancestry that conquered the Iberian Peninsula in 711 – and phrases like “the return of the Moor,”⁶⁴ have become part of the everyday vernacular. Therefore, in this chapter, we turn our attention to the resurging theme of *convivencia*, vis-à-vis the Moor – his return and his historical representations.

*Welcome to Moorishland*⁶⁵

Daniela Flesler, writing in *The Return of the Moor: Spanish Responses to Contemporary Moroccan Immigration*, rightly surmises that what we are witnessing in Spain today; is essentially the “double return to Spanish national imaginary of the figure of the *Moor*; (where) on the one hand, fictional representations of the historical Moors have multiplied in the culture industry, (while) on the other hand, the number of Moroccan immigrants in Spain has increased significantly over the last twenty years.”⁶⁶ Contemporary responses to the “Moorish” question reveal a certain ambivalence regarding Spain’s heterogeneous past; particularly its Muslim past, as ambivalence tends to result in the refusal to acknowledge their part in the formulation of Spanish identity. Kamen writing in *Golden Age Spain*, points out that “few Europeans have disagreed so much about their own history as Spaniards. The difference of opinion, centering both on culture

⁶³ Majid, *We Are All Moors*, 122.

⁶⁴ “Estimates put the Muslim population of Spain at roughly 1 million, of these an estimated 20,000 are thought to be converts to Islam. (...) Spain does not keep census records regarding religion,” in Lisa Abend, “Spain’s New Muslim: A Historical Romance,” from *In the Light of Medieval Spain: Islam, the West, and the Relevance of the Past*, edited by Simon R. Doubleday and David Coleman, (Palgrave Macmillan: 2008), 133-156. 135.

⁶⁵ Giles Tremlett, “Welcome to Moorishland,” Foreword to *In the Light of Medieval Spain: Islam, the West, and the Relevance of the Past*, edited by Simon R. Doubleday and David Coleman, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), xii-xx.

⁶⁶ Daniela Flesler, *The Return of the Moor: Spanish Responses to Contemporary Moroccan Immigration*, (Purdue University Press, 2008), 3. (Italics added by Tasleema Rashid)

and on politics, dates back to at least the eighteenth century and is still acute today; (...) affecting the way Spaniards look at their past and write about themselves, their history and their literature.”⁶⁷

Spaniards approach their heterogeneous past with much ambiguity; an ambiguity that stems partly from the categorization of the Moroccan immigrant as Moors. This particular categorization effectively ties the “current Moroccan emigrant to the traditional enemies of Christian Spain, awakening a series of historical ghosts related to their invading threatening character; (...) when today’s Moroccan immigrants are called “*moros*” (moors), their identity becomes symbolically collapsed with the concept of that attacking enemy.”⁶⁸ Evoking Jacques Derrida’s statement in *Specters of Marx* that “haunting is historical;”⁶⁹ it seems that Spaniards have bestowed upon the Moroccan immigrants the fear that was a part of their historic past – a fear based on the belief that these new Moors with their ties to the Moors of history would desire to reclaim what was they owned by their ancestors. While Derrida applies his theories to Marx’s ghosts; Flesler uses the statement to express that the “Spaniards difficulties with Moroccan immigrants and their perception of them as *Moors* becomes a symptom of the ghostly slippage between the present and the past they produce, and the unresolved historical trauma they awake.”⁷⁰ Whether or not this fear is warranted is not of immediate relevance. However, what is relevant is the fact that this fear shapes how Spaniards and Moroccan immigrants interact with each other; as the latter are viewed simultaneously as guests seeking economic opportunities and invaders, determined to reclaim what was once historically theirs.

This fear manifests itself in the portrayal of Muslims in the many films and books that focus on depicting the incompatibility between Spanish Christians and Moroccan immigrants (i.e. Christians and Muslims) in modern Spain. The aforementioned refusal to

⁶⁷ Henry Kamen, *Golden Age Spain*, (Palgrave Macmillan: 2004), 1.

⁶⁸ Flesler, *The Return of the Moor*, 3.

⁶⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 4, cited in Daniela Flesler, “Contemporary Moroccan Immigration and its Ghosts,” from *In the Light of Medieval Spain: Islam, the West, and the Relevance of the Past*, edited by Simon R. Doubleday and David Coleman, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 116 & Flesler, *The Return of the Moor*, 56.

⁷⁰ Flesler, “Contemporary Moroccan Immigration and its Ghosts,” 115-117 & Flesler, *The Return of the Moor*, 55-56. (Italics added by Tasleema Rashid)

acknowledge the Muslim's role in the creation of Spanish identity can be found in Josep Maria Navarro's 1997 study about the way Islam is presented in Spanish school textbooks.

Since, textbooks today still deny a meaningful relationship between the European and African or Middle Eastern cultural traditions; it should not be any surprise (...) that in Spain we try to abominate our Islamic roots (...) for international prestige purposes – how are we going to get in the 'VIP countries' club with such and un-European past? Schools reproduce the discourse of Spanish Europeanness “from an adulterated model of the construction of Spain and the Iberian identity that excludes Islam and Judaism.”⁷¹

Navarro's study reveals that as recently as fourteen years ago, there was still an element of exclusion regarding Islam. His suggestion there is an attempt to “abominate Islamic roots” in lieu of a seat at the European table; plays into the ideology that Spaniards are still somewhat unclear as to how they should react to their past.

Returning to the depictions of the incompatibility between Spanish Christians and Moroccan immigrants; we find a more recent example in the thirty minute documentary *Mezquita NO! (Mosque NOT!)*⁷², directed by Alberti Aranda and Guillermo Cruz released in 2005. The documentary illustrates a conflict in Santa Coloma de Gramenet (Barcelona, Spain) in October and November 2004. It centered on the opening of a Muslim oratory in the basement of a block of flats. The Muslim community had been granted a provisional license by the Town Council. The neighbors felt that they had been deceived by the Town Council; since they had been protesting for months against the opening of the oratory. Attempts were made by representatives from the Cultural Center Ateneu in Santa Coloma to resolve the conflict between the neighbors, the Town Council and the Muslim community. Under the pretext that the space did not satisfy the necessary physical conditions to be a place of worship; the neighbors staged loud protests at the times when people were praying in the oratory. The representatives from the Cultural Center urged protestors to respect those who were praying, defending their constitutional right of freedom of religion. Unfortunately, their attempts at reaching a workable accord were

⁷¹ Flesler, *The Return of the Moor*, 28-29. Quoted from Josep Maria Navarro (ed), *El Islam en las aulas: contenidos, silencios, enseñanza*, (Barcelona: Icaria Antrazyt), 1997, 20.

⁷² Synopsis of the *Mezquita NO!*, paraphrased from the Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0467619/> (accessed on February 15, 2011). See also, Flesler, *The Return of the Moor*, 35.

unsuccessful; as the protestors became louder and more determined to interrupt the activities at the oratory. This went on until the authorities had to “relocate” the mosque to a site outside the city. Taoufik Cheddadi, the spokesman of the El Singuerlin Muslim community, commented, that this decision sent the message that it was better to have the Muslims isolated and as far away as possible.⁷³

Navarro’s study and documentaries like “*Mezquita NO!*” serve to enforce the present uneasy relationship between Christians and Muslims. However, some of the fictional representations of this relationship are decidedly nostalgic; harkening back to an al-Andalus that was ultimately an eden of tolerance, where Castro’s three castes cohabitated in harmony. Regardless of the pop culture genre, the common thread that ties these nostalgic portrayals is the suggestion that “what destroyed al-Andalus was intolerance.”⁷⁴ By depicting al-Andalus as a Mecca of tolerance; an image is created which belies the discrimination and persecution that was a part of al-Andalus. Unfortunately, these contemporary depictions do not help to alleviate the real- life tensions between Spaniards and the ‘new’ Moors. However, lest we think that this relationship was (and is always tension filled); we have the creation of a tentative balance via *Los moros y cristianos* festivals.

The *moros y cristianos* (Moors and Christians) festivals are essentially a number of intriguing and perhaps peculiar celebrations that occur in many different cities along the Spanish coast, particularly in the southern Valencian community. The main attraction of these festivals is the commemoration of battles between Muslims and Christians that occurred centuries earlier. In these festivals, the participants who are either a part of the Moorish or Christian legions; reciprocate roles as they reenact the historical battles of the Reconquest. During the festival the host city is captured by the Moorish legion and subsequently, reconquered by the Christian legion.

⁷³ Flesler, *The Return of the Moor*, 35.

⁷⁴ Denise K. Filios, “Expulsion from Paradise: Exiled Intellectuals and Andalusian Tolerance,” 91 – 113, from *In the Light of Medieval Spain*. Filios offers the Salman Rushdie’s novel *The Moors Last Sigh* as an example of Christian intolerance; and Youssef Chahine’s film *Al Masir* (Sestiny) as an example of Muslim intolerance. (91)

Moors and Christians take turns parading their troops through the city and acting as owners of the castle, defending it from the attacks of the invading other, in pairs of ceremonies that contain exactly the same elements. Each group, (...) succeeds the other as conqueror (...), defeating the interim owners of the castle and replacing their identifying flag in the highest tower of the castle. The act of taking turns, both sides perform their double role of invaders and invaded, of hosts and guests. (...) Every town that celebrates the festivals of Moors and Christians supposes they are celebrating the “Reconquest,” understood as a definitive Christian victory over Islam.⁷⁵

Little effort is made to ensure historical accuracy regarding the costumes worn by participants as they are loosely inspired by the fashion of the time. For the most part, Christians wear armor, helmets and/or fur; while riding horses. Conversely, the Moorish representatives ride real camels or elephants while dressed in Arab inspired costumes and carrying scimitars. The use of copious amounts of gunpowder, the sound of medieval music and fireworks are all elements of these festivals.

While it is true that the *moros y cristianos* festivals can be viewed as a yearly reaffirmation of the “Christian victory over Islam;” many chose to see these festivals as a means to confront and interact with the past. The outcome of these festivals is always the same; therefore, its participants are free to focus on the festivity itself rather than getting bogged down by the historic underpinnings. Regarding the exercise in coexistence and dialogue that these festivals undoubtedly provide, Eva Borreguero writes the following:

“Moors and Christians” captures the racial and cultural crossroads of contemporary Spain; it is a point of convergence where past and present, apprehensions and opportunities meet. Although the festival recreates a historical confrontation of the Cross and the Crescent and could be seen as an updated version of the clash of civilizations, the celebration has an essentially playful nature. From the psychological perspective, it helps cope with cultural anxiety through games and reenactments. At the same time, it also endorses closeness to “the other” through the scenic representation of those fears. It is a catharsis for tensions and violent instincts, if any exist: a game in which, although there are champions and defeated, there are no winners and losers, no good guys or bad guys; above all, people identify with one another, as they all participate on both sides. What was

⁷⁵ Flesler, *The Return of the Moor*, 103-104.

yesterday's conflict, has now been transformed into the celebration of an encounter, or, as a participant pointed out, "a war of friendship."⁷⁶

These *moros y cristianos* festivals are extremely popular, particularly amongst tourists and their presence both in cities with a historical Muslim/Christian relationship and in cities without; brings us to the fact that any emphasis placed on Muslim and/ or Jewish contributions to Spain, are effectively part of a marketing strategy meant to entice tourists to visit Spain. The most famous of these festivals takes place around the Feast Day of St. George (April 22 to 24), in the city of Alcoy in the southern part of the Valencia; where according to legend, the Moors were battling to reclaim the city, shortly after it had been reconquered by James I of Aragon. During battle St. George miraculously appeared to aid the Christians. The Christians won the battle, while the Moorish armies retreated. The position of these festivals in the tourism package of many cities throughout Spain, leads us to the concept of nation-branding or country brands.

Nation-branding is a field of theory pioneered by Simon Anholt. This theory seeks to measure, construct and manage the standing of countries. Anholt frequently conducts two global surveys the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index and Anholt-GfK Roper City Brands Index. These studies are based on the answers to thousands of interviews in a number of countries. They are aimed at determining how countries are perceived by others; and, in the case of the Nation Brands Index, is based on criteria that include measurements on a population's competency and education, the global perception of a nation's legacy and the ability of a nation to attract visitors to natural and man-made attractions. Many countries employ this practice; creating nation-brands that effectively serve as a form of soft power. It is the reason why many nations vie for the right to host global sporting events. For example, the 2008 summer Olympics held in Beijing, China; was an opportunity of the Chinese to showcase the highlights of their country on a global stage. Some nations use this practice as means of reintroducing themselves to the world after gaining independence their colonial masters by accentuating their pre-colonial heritage. The creation of nation-brands is a means by which nations can compete against the global cultural homogeneity by emphasizing the traits that make them unique. This

⁷⁶ Eva Borreguero, "The Moors Are Coming, the Moors Are Coming! Encounters with the Muslims in Contemporary Spain," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 17: no. 4 (October 2006): 417-432, 420, in Majid, *We are All Moors*, 165-166.

form of branding is not a new initiative; but, it is one that gaining in popularity as more and more countries are remaking their national identities so that they can compete with their neighbours for power and prestige.⁷⁷

The tourism industry is plays a part in this branding initiative as almost every nation uses tourism as a means of projecting a particular image of itself onto to the world stage. Every nation promotes the characteristics that make it unique from the rest of the 195 nations of the world. Nations pride themselves on being labeled the “Home of the ____;” and Spain is no exception. For example, since 2010, Spain has been the home of the FIFA World Cup; or every year, during the San Fermin festival in Pamplona (July 6-14), Spain is home to the Running of the Bulls. Finally, Spain is known as the place from which the idea of *convivencia* emerged. It has already been acknowledged that Spain’s dictator, Francisco Franco encouraged the use of tourism as a means of enticing foreigners to return to the country after the civil war; the hope being that these visitors would return to their native countries with a decidedly positive image of Spain. However, up until Franco’s death in 1975, Spain was drastically underdeveloped and less modernized than the rest of Europe; with tourists coming for the sun and the beaches. Since, Franco’s death, Spain has sought to promote an altered image of itself; one that stresses among other things its diverse, multicultural history. Even though, the sun and beaches still remain main attraction for tourists; the Spanish Tourism Board has been pushing “the promotion of urban tourism, the concept of the “historic city” and cultural and heritage tourism,” in an effort to cultivate and “appeal to a more discriminating clientele than that which looks for inexpensive beaches: people interested in art, architecture, and cultural heritage.”⁷⁸

This type of cultural tourism is a “worldwide phenomenon that has grown from a small niche market to a firmly established mainstream, mass tourism activity.”⁷⁹ An example of the cultural initiatives developed to promote Spain’s cultural heritage was the creation of the *Caminos de Sefarad* – a tourist route through a cluster of cities that had had

⁷⁷ Nation Branding: Everything about Nation Branding and Country Brands <http://nation-branding.info> (Accessed August 9, 2011).

⁷⁸ Flesler & Perez – Melgosa, “Marketing *Convivencia*,” 66-67.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 82. Note 19, from Bob McKercher and Hilary Du Cros, *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*, (New York: Haworth Hospitality Press, 2002), 135.

significant Jewish presence before the 1492 expulsion⁸⁰ – by the Spanish government in 1992 to promote the nation’s Jewish past. These initiatives eventually resulted in the formation of *La Red de Juderías de España: Caminos de Sefarad*; which according to its website, “is a nonprofit public association with the goal of protect[ing] the urbanistic, architectonic, historic and cultural Jewish heritage in Spain; [via] the promotion of cultural, touristic and academical projects, sharing experiences and actions in Spain and abroad, and developing politics of sustainable cultural tourism in their cities.”⁸¹ Organizations like *La Red de Juderías de España: Caminos de Sefarad*; lead us to Dean MacCannell’s characterization of tourism “as travel against the space/time divide opened by modernity: a quest for an escape from the separation of work from leisure and the compartmentalization of land, a search for an experience that would allow one to touch the “authentic” in order to “reconstruct a cultural heritage or a social identity,” now removed in time (to history) or in space (to natural, “primitive” or exotic destinations);”⁸² where Spain’s pre-1492 Muslim and Jewish heritage, where al-Andalus itself represents “experience that has been removed in time;” what Lou Charnon-Deutsch describes as a “dream world where time could be slowed [and] life savored to its fullest.”⁸³

The commercialization of Spain’s pre-1492 Muslim and Jewish legacy is a complex situation that simultaneously satisfies the desires of the foreign visitor seeking an exotic cultural experience; as well as offering an avenue from which the Spanish towns partaking in the revival of this legacy can address unresolved issues and confront aspects of their past that they chose to purge. Spain chose to divest itself of its Muslim and Jewish heritage; expelling people, seizing property and reconsecrating mosques and synagogues. By keeping place names and architectural motifs, Spain took the initial steps in the painstakingly slow process of coming to terms with not only its unsuccessful cleansing; but also, with the permanence of the exiles in the creation of Spanish culture and identity. Therefore, the marriage of Spain’s pre-1492 heritage and tourist initiatives seems quite apropos.

⁸⁰ Flesler & Perez – Melgosa, “Marketing *Convivencia*,” 67.

⁸¹ “Red de Juderías,” <http://www.redjuderias.org/red/acerca.php?lang=2> (accessed June 24, 2011).

⁸² Afinoguenova, “A Nation under Tourists’ Eyes;,” xi-xii, from Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1976) 11-13.

⁸³ Flesler & Perez-Melgosa, “Marketing *Convivencia*,” 64, from Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Spanish Gypsy. The History of a European Obsession* (University Park, PA: the Pennsylvania University Press, 2004) 59.

Unfortunately, the commercially motivated strategies aimed at promoting medieval al-Andalus often generate a decidedly skewed version of what historically took place. Therefore, this skewed version of the past results in the creation of what Giles Tremlett aptly describes as *Moorishland*: “the semi-fictional version of Spain’s past where exotic offerings of orientalism- with-tapas are combined with “nostalgia” tourism for Sephardic (Spanish-rite) Jews, and where Charlton Heston’s El Cid meets the sun-loungers of the Costa del Sol beaches.”⁸⁴ Citing the recent changes in Granada⁸⁵ and the development of the Grupo al-Andalus,⁸⁶ Tremlett sees in this “theme park version of medieval Spain (...) the happy raiding of (its) Moorish history to provide a narrative that will attract visitors to make Euros out of the past.”⁸⁷ The remembrance of medieval al-Andalus is primarily a marketing tool for the tourism departments in Spanish cities. The existence of the ‘City of Three Cultures’ in Toledo, the ‘Routes of al-Andalus’ or the newly denominated ‘Route of El Cid;’ reveals that commercializing the past is a way of tapping into Spain’s tourism industry.

We began this section with a discussion centering on the practice of labeling Moroccan immigrants with the title of Moor; resulting in the regrettable association of these “new” Moors with the Moors of Spain’s historical past. It can be argued that this association is unfair as it puts unwarranted fears on the collective psyche of these immigrants causing them to retract further into their communities, thereby eliminating any contact between them and their Spanish neighbors. This negative attitude towards the “new” Moor seems to suggest that the Spaniard addresses issues regarding its current Moorish population by employing past strategies and policies. Despite the presence of a law that granted rights to Spain’s Muslims, the conditions of most Muslim immigrants

⁸⁴ Tremlett, “Welcome to Moorishland,” xii.

⁸⁵ Tremlett (Ibid) describes that “for many years the Alhambra, the narrow, winding streets of the Albaicín district were the sum of (Granada’s) Moorish offering to tourists. Now the streets of the Albaicín boast couscous restaurants and gift shops selling Moroccan knick-knacks imported directly from Morocco, as if they had always been there.”

⁸⁶ Ibid, xiii-xiv. The Grupo al-Andalus is a “business set up to exploit Spain’s Muslim past for tourism by opening hammam-style baths in Granada, Madrid, and Cordoba and is moving into tearooms, restaurants, and hotels. In Madrid’s case there is evidence that the renovated bath being run and marketed by the company as Arab, may actually be Roman in origin.”

⁸⁷ Ibid. xii.

(particularly those from Morocco) remain sub-standard.⁸⁸ Flesler points out that “statistics show that they [Moroccan immigrants] are the ones afforded the least preference in facilitating their permanence in Spain, and those who earn the lowest level of acceptance as neighbors.”⁸⁹

Overall, there is a renewed interest in the historical Moors, who were primarily seen as a charming reminder of Spanish history, and whose position in contemporary Spain was limited to language, place names and architectural motifs. This renewal has been exacerbated by intertwining of current global and European issues. Globally, Islam is still seen as the face of terror. On the European front, the growing Muslim population in a number of the European Union member countries raises the question of whether or not integration of Islam into the European way of life can be achieved. David Masci writing in “An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe,” speaks of the creation of a “new Europe” where the “streets that have witness hundreds of years of European history are now playing hosts to a decidedly non-Western people and culture.”⁹⁰ Regarding Spain, its renewed interest has its roots partly in both the post 9/11 world as well as in the aftermath of the Madrid bombings (2004).

Therefore, we see in contemporary Spain the unsuccessful attempts at forging an identity without its forcibly exiled others. Moroccan immigration to Spain has been a source of both fear and concern because these immigrants are unfairly linked to the historical Moors who invaded the Iberian Peninsula. As would be expected, tension abounds between these communities. However, it would seem that in the creation of a

⁸⁸ “Acuerdo de Cooperación entre el Estado Español y la Comisión Islámica de España.” <http://www.webislam.com/?idt=175%3E> in Flesler, *The Return of the Moor*, 1. On November 10, 1992, the 500th anniversary of the Christian conquest of Granada; the Spanish state signed a cooperation agreement with the Islamic communities in Spain, which became Law 26/1992. The agreement was made possible due to the changes in the Spain’s 1978 Constitution that assured the rights of equality and religious freedom. As an introduction to the description of the protected rights that Muslims and their places of worship would henceforth have in Spain, the agreement states that Islam which has become “noticeably rooted” in Spanish society has a “secular tradition in our country, with considerable importance in the formation of Spanish identity.”

⁸⁹ Antonio Izquierdo, *La Inmigración inesperada: la población extranjera en España (1991-1995)*, Madrid: Trotta, 1996, in Flesler, *The Return of the Moor*, 2.

⁹⁰ David Masci, “An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe,” *The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, October 2005, http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Religion_in_public_life/Pew_religion_Muslims_Europe_1204.pdf (Accessed May 31, 2011).

skewed version of al-Andalus the Spaniard has begun the task of coming to terms with its history of unity via expulsion. It is not clear if these often fictionalized depictions help or hinder the Spaniard's progress; but, it seems that "the narrative of *convivencia* in its most idealized form is especially valuable to the marketers."⁹¹ However, one unassailable truth about these depictions and the marketing strategies is their overwhelming popularity. Festivals like "*moros y christianos*" are popular both globally and domestically. Ultimately, it is the popularity of these depictions, regardless of their fictional nature; that serves to illuminate the point that Spain will always be forever Moor and forever Jew. But, is there a burden?

Spain finds itself in an uncomfortable situation as it sees its history twisted while it simultaneously confronts the ghosts of its past. The surprising thing is that Spain itself often twists its own history in the name of the almighty euro via the commercial marketing of a semi-fictionalized past. In the next chapter, our attention turns to the determination of whether or not *convivencia* is a burden; keeping in mind that this determination is based on the connection between Spanish national identity and *convivencia*.

⁹¹ Tremlett, "Welcome to Moorishland," xiv.

5. Is *Convivencia* a Burden on Contemporary Spanish Society?

*“We take pride in our sangre pura, pure blood. No Catholic wants to face the thought of Moors on the family tree.”*⁹² - Rafael de Tramontana y Gayangos

In his foreword, “Welcome to Moorishland,” to *In the Light of Medieval Spain: Islam, the West, and the Relevance of the Past*, Giles Tremlett poses the question, “do you believe in *convivencia*?” to an official at Segovia’s city hall. Her response: “Not really; except when it is useful.”⁹³ Her terse, but thought provoking response speaks volumes about the attitude towards *convivencia*. As discussed in the previous chapter, the singular instant when *convivencia* is perhaps at its most useful is when, its capacity as a marketing tool is utilized to its fullest extent in an effort to entice visitors to Spain - “Islam can be as profitable a thing as any other religious or political phenomenon.”⁹⁴ Therefore, we find in this particular *quid pro quo* relationship; a situation where as long as *convivencia* continues to attract visitors, thereby maintaining a lucrative revenue stream; Spain will accept it as a part of its identity.

Since the Spanish, (or more accurately, the tourist departments of Spain’s numerous cities, regions and provinces) are the arbitrators of this relationship, setting and controlling its parameters; then can *convivencia* ever be viewed as a burden? This paper contends that deciphering whether or not *convivencia* is a burden, is dependent on its place in Spanish identity; that the extent to which it is deemed recognizable by the Spanish, determines its propensity to be a burden. Therefore, formulating an answer to this question requires an examination of the relationship between *convivencia* and Spanish identity. Since, Spanish identity may be national, regional or local; our focus would be on the relationship between national Spanish identity and *convivencia*. Spanish national identity is often conflicting with regards to the place of its Muslim and Jewish pasts.

⁹² Thomas J. Abercrombie, “When the Moors ruled Spain,” *National Geographic*, Vol. 174, No. 1, July 1988, 86-119. He quotes Rafael de Tramontana y Gayangos (Rafa), who presided over a Madrid-based institute to promote cultural exchange between Spain and its Muslims neighbors.

⁹³ Tremlett, “Welcome to Moorishland,” xiv.

⁹⁴ Ibid. From Tomás Navarro, *La Mezquita de Babel: El nazismo sufista desde el Reino Unido a la Comunidad Autónoma de Andalucía* (Granada: Ediciones Virtual, 1998), 21.

It has been established that identity is a complex, multifaceted, fluid construct; often likened to the layers of an onion, where the peeling back of one layer serves to only further complicate things. Spain's national identity is no different. There are many factors that constitute Spanish identity. These range from language (both official and unofficial) and history to geography and politics. Its geographical location means that it serves as a sometimes buffer and/or sometimes bridge between the European West and the African East; straddling between its European membership and its eastern roots via its medieval history. In terms of *convivencia*, we find that it is another of those factors of Spanish identity that makes Spain different. Thus, since its formulation, the theory has always had a relationship with the conceptualization of Spanish identity. In fact, it can be argued that the development of this concept was largely influenced by a decision to include the parts of Spanish identity that were once excluded. In any case, we find that this relationship, which is often contentious at best, remains the key to determining if *convivencia* is burden on modern Spain.

One of the most conspicuous pieces of evidence of a concrete link between Spanish identity and *convivencia* was the contentious intellectual debate between Spanish medievalists Americo Castro and Claudio Sanchez-Albornoz. As previously discussed (see Chapter 3), both Castro and Sanchez-Albornoz had diverging views regarding the much vaunted coexistence between Jews, Muslims and Christians that was a characteristic of medieval Spanish history. Placing little to no emphasis on the obvious negative aspects of the interactions between these three communities; Castro chose to advocate for the positive, stressing that the *convivencia* period was imperative to the creation of modern Spanish identity. Conversely, Sanchez-Albornoz, while not dismissing the *convivencia* period; argued that roots of Spanish identity were formulated long before this period was even a possibility. These diverging opinions form the basis of the two schools of thought regarding the topic; and remain a focal point for many scholars of *convivencia* today.

Convivencia is complicated subject, compromised of a number of factors; factors that tend to often control the perception of this period. It is a modern theory whose creation was due in large part to the application of other modern theories to Spain's

medieval past in an effort to explain the reminders of coexistence. As previously discussed, the creation of this theory was based on the fact that Jews, Muslims and Christians lived together for a prolonged period of time. Lest we think that this theory single-mindedly invokes a utopian ideal; *convivencia* acknowledges that protracted cohabitation of Jews, Muslims and Christians was not as harmonious as many depictions would have us believe. Tension, friction and bouts of violence were very much a part of this period of coexistence. Regarding the conceptualization of a unified peninsular identity during the era of *convivencia*; we find that no such idea existed because at that time, what we consider to be Spain today was in actuality a number of independent kingdoms – various Christian realms to the North and Muslim ruled al-Andalus to the South.

The creation of an Andulsian identity was a direct outcome of the cross-cultural contact between the Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities; the creation of which brings to mind the four possible outcomes – pluralism, segregation, expulsion and assimilation - for a minority society that modern theorists have developed. The definitions of these four concepts show that they are applicable to various time periods during medieval Spanish history. As previously discussed, assimilation can be understood as a process whereby minority ethnic groups are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. Pluralism can be defined as “a form of society in which the members of minority groups maintain their independent cultural traditions.”⁹⁵ Segregation is defined as “the enforced separation of different racial groups in a country, community, or establishment;”⁹⁶ while expulsion involves the forcible removal from a place or country.

Applying these definitions to the *convivencia* era” we find that, Muslim adherence to Quranic mandate, meant that not only could they not enforce conversion to Islam; but they also, could not expel the Jews and Christians as the *dhimma* pact demanded that these Peoples of the Book were to be respected. The overwhelming evidence of cross-cultural interaction between Jews, Muslims and Christians reinforce the fact that during the course of its history al-Andalus evolved into a pluralistic society. As a pluralistic society, a

⁹⁵ “Pluralism.” Oxford Dictionaries Online, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/pluralism?region=us> (Accessed March 30, 2011).

⁹⁶ “Segregation.” Oxford Dictionaries Online, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/segregation?region=us> (Accessed March 30, 2011).

unified Andalusian identity could not be a reality; at least not one based on race, religion or ethnicity. However, within this pluralistic society, rulers applied policies that could best be describes as segregation. For example, certain days were delineated for when Jews, Muslims and Christians were supposed to visit the bath houses. Ultimately, each community was able to interact with each other, while remaining independent from each other. Therefore, Jews and Christians had a strong sense of identity that would not allow for their assimilation into the ruling Muslim culture. Even though assimilation did not take place, the presence of Arabized Jews and especially Arabized Christians fostered the fear of it; and perhaps it is better to say that within the pluralistic society that was al-Andalus, a process of acculturation rather than assimilation allowed for the conception of the idea of *convivencia*.

History shows that even as the Reconquest of Spain was fully underway, remnants of Andalusian society remained; as Christian rulers employed similar practices to those employed by their now dethroned Muslims counterparts. The marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the eventual surrender of Granada, the last Muslim ruled territory on the peninsula; resulted in a dramatic shift away from these pluralistic ideals. These monarchs sought to create a new identity for their kingdom; one that was religiously grounded firmly in Christianity. Their vision of their kingdom was one devoid of heterogeneity. To that end, edicts of conversion and statutes of purity of blood were issued in an effort to force the assimilation of the Jewish and Muslim population into the Christian fold. These statutes and edicts were meant to keep these populations in a particular niche; away from the ruling Christian elite. Eventually, the Catholic monarchs took the final step in ensuring the creation of their homogeneous kingdom by issuing edicts of expulsion resulting in the mass exodus of Jews and Muslims. Therefore, statues of pure blood and virtuous Christian faith became characteristic of Spanish identity.

This expulsion remains a point of contention as Spaniards are charged with the task of rationalizing the fact that by expelling the Jewish and Christian populations; they were effectively expelling a part of themselves. The most famous acknowledgment of this rationalization can be found in the canonical work of Spain's Golden Age, Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Through the character of Ricote, Cervantes reminds the reader of

what was done, while simultaneously revealing a certain reluctant acceptance of the monarch's decision. Ricote is a villager; a Morisco who was expelled under the decree of 1609. When he meets Sancho, he is in the process of returning to Spain in disguise to recover treasure he left there. He laments to Sancho that:

In short, it was just and reasonable for us to be chastised with the punishment of exile: lenient and mild, according to some, but for us it was the most terrible one we could have received. No matter where we are we weep for Spain, for after all, we were born here and it is our native country.⁹⁷

As the quintessentially Spanish novel, *Don Quixote* is globally read; with each reading reiterating the expulsion through the voice of Ricote. Today, many scholars endeavor to determine the message that Cervantes wished to convey through this particular character. Some argue that Cervantes reveals a “subversive yet silent compassion for Moriscos;” while others argue that “given his life and times, Cervantes could never have felt sympathy for the enemy of his religion and state, and that these passages therefore bear out neither a secret critique of the Expulsion nor any serious compassion for Muslims.”⁹⁸ *Don Quixote* was released in two volumes. The edicts of expulsion were issued years after the release of the first volume in 1605; and before the release of the second volume in 1615. Alberto Manguel suggests that Cervantes, through the character Ricote; seems to say that “he (Ricote) is part of Spain and if we are true to ourselves, then we must accept that we are also what we have expelled and branded; that which we see as alien is merely ourselves condemned to exile.”⁹⁹

The writings of Americo Castro in the late 1940s and early 1950s; coupled with, the argument for Cervantes' pro-Morisco tendencies; brought the idea of coexistence between Jews, Christians and Muslims into the forefront. Castro from exile; saw in his writings, the means of recalling a past whose return was only hindered by Spain's conservative leaders. At this time, Spain was under the control of Francisco Franco. As Spain's dictator, Franco enforced conservative and nationalistic policies. He, like the monarchs of the past, steadfastly defended Catholicism and sought to, among other things,

⁹⁷ Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. Edith Grossman (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 813.

⁹⁸ Leyla Rouhi, *Reading Don Quijote in a Time of War*, 53-66, in *In the Light of Medieval Spain*, 57.

⁹⁹ Manguel, *The City of Words*, 111.

to emphasize the idea of religious homogeneity in Spain. Franco's policies recall to those of the monarchs who had issued the edicts of expulsion. For those who sought to reject Franco's policies, found the cultural diversity offered in works like *Don Quixote* a worthy cause to champion. Franco's death in 1975 resulted in the reopening of Spanish society. Counterculture movements such as *La Movida*¹⁰⁰ were responsible for the creation of a new Spanish identity based on freedom. While these movements were focused primarily on the arts, one can argue that the reopening of Spanish society allowed for the reemergence of Judaism and Islam as the stranglehold of religious homogeneity was lifted. In terms of Spanish identity, the reemergence of Judaism and particularly, Islam did not necessarily equate to acceptance. Spain's overall desire to be viewed as being in line with the rest of Europe; often manifested itself in the reluctance of many to claim their Muslim and/or Jewish heritage.

Today, modern Spanish society faces the problem of the returning Moor in the form of the Muslim immigrant. These immigrants, particularly those from Morocco, are given the label of Moor; causing the line to be blurred between them and the Moor of Spain's historical past. Unfortunately, for these immigrants this label and their increasing presence plays into the collective fears that they are here to reclaim what was once historically theirs. But, perhaps the most predominant fear is based on the fact that the culture of this immigrant minority is decidedly different from that of the Spanish majority. Essentially, the perceived incompatibility of Islam comes into play as part of the fear of the returning Moor; leading to renewed interest in *convivencia*, as authors and scholars use this period of Spanish history to rebuff claims of said incompatibility. Their presence invokes the assimilation versus acculturation debate, akin to the one ascribed to comprehending the existence of both Arabized Jews and Arabized Christians in medieval al-Andalus. This period of coexistence is used to highlight that for a prolonged period of time not only was Islam compatible, but also that its followers were productive members of society. In today's uncertain world the notion of these three monotheistic coexisting is a reality that warrants attention. But, how much attention is too much attention? And how does this attention affect the question of *convivencia's* place in Spanish identity? We will return to

¹⁰⁰ La Movida was a countercultural movement characterized by among other things the freedom of expression and the transgression of taboos imposed by Franco's Regime.

these questions in a moment; but first let us address the marketing of *convivencia* in relation to Spanish identity.

We have already seen that the marketing of *convivencia* is and remains a potent revenue earner, and is a form of nation-branding. We have already seen that nation-brands involve the interpretation, internalization and global projection of a country's identity. These brands are geared at creating the most competitive visions of countries. This type of branding is a necessity, since today's world is effectively a global market where nations compete for investors, tourists and consumers. The challenge to the creation of nation-brands lies in the formulation strategies that satisfy the needs of the actors involved. Essentially, they must be credible and applicable to the consumer, in keeping with the authenticity of the place and above all, not alienate the native population. Nation-branding enjoins nations to promote the characteristics that make them different from other countries. In Spain, the use of *convivencia* in this manner addresses a shift in global tourism practices that began in the early 1990s. This shift saw the development of cultural tourism. Essentially, initiatives were being implemented to appeal to a more discernible clientele, one with more refined tastes. This particular clientele which travels in search of cultural enrichment is more willing to spend money; as opposed to the tourist seeking the sun and beach. In order to appeal to what McKercher and du Cros term "the purposeful cultural tourist,"¹⁰¹ programs were initiated and organizations were created at both national and regional level in order to facilitate the effective marketing of *convivencia*. *La Red de Juderías de España: Caminos de Sefarad*, mentioned in the previous chapter is one of these organizations.

Tomas Navarro's words, "it looks somewhat ridiculous when politicians try to exploit our history with the message 'visit Andalusia and Granada,' a beautiful Muslim and Jewish land, but without any Jews or Muslims in it,"¹⁰² are extremely poignant as they reveal one of the underlying issues regarding the marketing of coexistence – the ambiguity regarding the past. McKercher and du Cros speak of "tourist interests having to be

¹⁰¹ Flesler & Perez-Melgosa, "Marketing *Convivencia*," 67, from McKercher & Du Cros, *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*, 144.

¹⁰² Tremlett, "Welcome to Moorishland," xiv. From Tomás Navarro, *La Mezquita de Babel: El nazismo sufista desde el Reino Unido a la Comunidad Autónoma de Andalucía* (Granada: Ediciones Virtual, 1998), 21

negotiated with the site's traditional owners, those indigenous or ethnic community groups that own the intellectual property or land rights associated with a cultural asset."¹⁰³ Let us apply this to a cultural asset that is marketed under the banner of *convivencia*, *La Mezquita*. *La Mezquita* represents the Golden Age of the Umayyad Caliphate. It was formerly the Great Mosque of Cordoba, and upon the Spanish Reconquest, it became a Roman Catholic Church. Now it can be argued that the Reconquest saw the return of the site to its right owners; as before it was a mosque, it was a Visigothic Christian Church, but before that it was a pagan temple. However, the monument is known primarily as a mosque despite the insertion of a cathedral within its walls. The famous photographs of the site tend to depict the horseshoe arches characteristic of both mosques and Moorish architecture. Since it is known primarily as being mosque, and since, countless visual depictions tend to focus on the features that are characteristic of mosques; and, while not an exactly an ethnic group, one would be hard-pressed to deny that Muslims own the rights associated with this particular asset. Introducing the tourist to this situation; reveals that the site is marketed as mosque;¹⁰⁴ even though Muslims are not allowed to pray there; perhaps because the present of praying Muslims might create a disturbance with the large number of tourists who visit the monument. Security guards at the Mezquita, make a point of stressing that it is a cathedral and not a mosque. They often stop Muslims who attempt to pray in the mosque. Since the early 2000s, Spanish Muslims have been unsuccessfully petitioning both the Spanish Catholic authorities and the Vatican to grant the permission to pray in the Mezquita.

Returning to our premise that the determination of whether or not *convivencia* is a burden on modern Spanish society depends on its place in Spanish nation identity; we find that moment when *convivencia* becomes recognizable as a part of Spanish national identity is when it becomes established as a concept; primarily through the writings of Americo

¹⁰³ Flesler & Perez-Melgosa, "Marketing *Convivencia*," 67, from McKercher & Du Cros, *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*, 7.

¹⁰⁴ See the websites Lonely Planet, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/spain/andalucia/cordoba/sights>, Rough Guides, <http://www.roughguides.com/travel/europe/spain/andalucia/cordoba/la-mezquita.aspx> & Fodor's Travel Intelligence <http://www.fodors.com/world/europe/spain/andalusia/review-101502.html> (websites accessed June 1st 2011) Each of these popular tourist websites, encourage travelers to visit either *La Mezquita* or Mezquita.

Castro and the interpretations of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* that suggested the author's pro-Morisco tendencies. Castro advocated of the concept; using it to recall a culturally diverse past rather than embracing the conservative policies of Francoist Spain. Therefore, the link between Spanish identity and *convivencia* remained for long time in the realm of the intellectual, owing its existence to the debate between Americo Castro and Claudio Sanchez-Albornoz. While it can be argued that Franco's death and the resulting removal of the restrictions of Francoism made religious diversity a reality; it is perhaps best to remember that for many Spaniards it was normal to ignore the Jewish and Muslim parts of their heritage.

Ultimately, the connection between *convivencia* and Spanish national identity was solidified in the early 1990s, when the Spanish Tourism Board made a concerted effort to initiate programs aimed at promoting its cultural heritage as a means to entice a more intellectually savvy tourist; a move that was becoming increasingly more popular globally. In the years that followed, these initial programs evolved into the formation of a number of organizations that work to preserve and promote Spain's Jewish and Muslim past. This connection based on tourism reveals that the marketing of coexistence focuses primarily on the needs of foreigner. Tourism caters to the foreigner; and in the case of Spain, it focuses on his desire to see in al-Andalus the loss of a utopic past. To that end, the many tourism departments throughout Spain often exploit and create false, idealized versions their history in attempt to appeal to the foreigner's need for the exotic.

If *convivencia* is a burden, it is not placed or felt by the Spaniard, for he seems ambivalent towards it. Rather this burden would be imposed by the foreign academic and/or tourist, who uses Spain's past not only as a means satisfying his need for the "romantic dream world of al-Andalus;" but also as a means of finding solutions to the global present. However, this practice comes with its own set of issues. The following excerpt from, Olivia R. Constable's speech "Is *Convivencia* Dangerous?" reveals the inherent dangers of seeking answers to the problems of the present in the past:

People today consider mediaeval Spain's *convivencia*, or "living togetherness," a positive thing that produced a golden age of harmony and understanding, along with flourishing cultural exchange. But people living in those times consistently recorded their anxiety about it. They expressed apprehension about young Christians knowing more Arabic poetry than Christian classics, intermarriage, Jews impositions of power, intergroup

sexual relations, conversion or persuading others to convert, and Muslims adopting Christian ways. These anxieties emerged during both Christian and Muslim rule, from both the majority and the minority populations, and across the whole medieval period. The story of a harmonious al-Andalus, or even Christian kingdoms where relations among the three religions were fairly congenial, appeals to modern American sensibilities but distorts the complexities of the historical record. Worse the perpetuation of these myths undermines our ability to address modern world problems because the nostalgia for a lost paradise and the painful memory of its loss function as a lens through which modern situations are viewed, making it more difficult to bring a clear and open mind to new circumstances.¹⁰⁵

This extract from Constable's speech succinctly describes the main issues surrounding *convivencia*; that historically, it was a period of tempered acculturation and mutual friction. Additionally, we find that from the perspective of non-Spanish individuals; the idea of a "harmonious al-Andalus or Christian Kingdoms appeals to modern American sensibilities;" thereby, reinforcing the commercialization of *convivencia* and its relevancy predominantly to those involved in Spanish tourism. Determining if *convivencia* is a burden is as complicated as the concept of *convivencia* itself. However, since *convivencia* seems only pertinent to the Spaniard in its role as marketing strategy, then it cannot be a burden. Perhaps, if it was seen as having another role, beyond its involvement in tourism (by no means dismissing the importance of tourism) it would warrant a different interpretation. *Convivencia* is not a burden; rather it is a period of heavily commercialized romance meant to conjure images of a lost past.

¹⁰⁵ Doubleday & Coleman, *In the Light of Medieval Spain*, 47-48. Olivia Remie Constable, "Is Convivencia Dangerous?" Unpublished paper presented at the International Medieval Congress, Kalamazoo, MI, (May 5th 2005), cited by Anne Marie Wolf, "Juan de Segovia and the Lessons of History, 33-52.

6. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, we have seen that within the mosaic of controlled acceptance and conflict in medieval Spanish history, the creation of a society labeled *convivencia*. This idea of living together derived from an understanding of the *convivencia* society; is based on the prolonged contact between Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities in medieval Spain. This is modern term; coined by Spanish historians who sought an avenue from which to explain the juxtaposition of their nation's tumultuous past regarding its decision to expel its Jewish and Muslim population with the acceptance and marketing of its cultural efflorescence; the result of the melding of Jewish, Christian and Muslim cultures. The preoccupation with *convivencia* is due in part to the current world dynamic that sees the pitting of Islam against the Judeo-Christian relationship. Therefore, interest in *convivencia* can be seen as a response to the idea that; during this period, the present day intolerant and incompatible version of Islam was indeed compatible with and open to Judeo-Christian sensibilities. It seems that in order to cope with the present, we find ourselves focusing on the past.

Contemporary Spain currently finds itself embroiled in a situation that sees it trying to reconcile its increasing Muslim (particularly, Moroccan) migrant population with its past. Derrida's theories regarding the haunting of ghosts of the past are very much visible in Spain. By assigning the same name to the Moroccan immigrants as they did to the Muslim invaders; the Spaniard has created an unnecessary tension where the former has become the embodiment of the fears of the latter. Immigration and the presence of minority cultures within a society are always tense and, always raise sentiments of incompatibility. The memory of coexistence is not the factor that draws the Moroccan immigrant to Spain. Rather it is chance for economic betterment that accounts for their increasing presence. If *convivencia* was to be a burden it would arise here; in the assimilation versus acculturation debate that is a result of the growing Moroccan immigrant population. Historically, the extent to which both the Jews and the Moriscos assimilated into Ferdinand and Isabella's Spain eventually resulted in their expulsion. Currently, government initiatives are being implemented to address the returning Moor; in

an effort to ensure that this immigrant will feel open to interaction and will want to participate in wider Spanish society.

Ultimately, if the question of coexistence is determinant on its place in Spanish identity, we find that this place is often conflicted. On the one hand, it is a lucrative revenue stream, while on the other hand, beyond this role, most don't really care one way or another about *convivencia*. We have seen that the relationship between *convivencia* and Spanish identity is sometimes a contentious issue; as evidence by the Castro/Albornoz-Sanchez debates. However, since *convivencia* continues to be a profitable aspect of Spain's tourism industry; Spaniards will continue to accept it as part of their identity. Therefore, regardless of whether one endorses Spain's commercialization of this part of their history; the fact remains that as long as it remains useful and relevant to the tourism industry, it will not be seen as a burden. Even though it has the potential to complicate things, the idea that *convivencia* equating to a burden will not be an aspect of contemporary Spanish society.

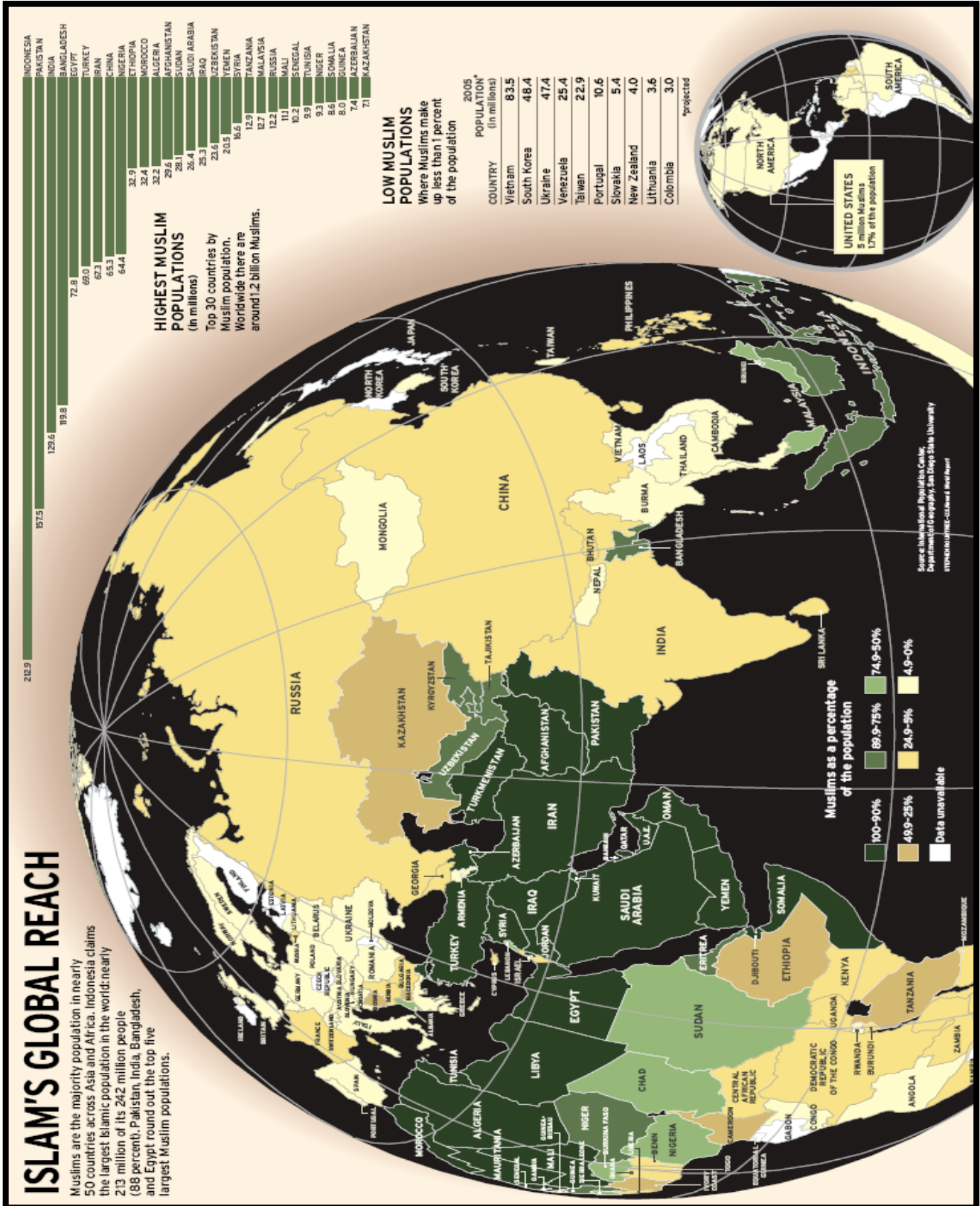
Limitations & Topics for Further Research

Regarding the limitations of this research, I believe that the opportunity to immerse myself in Spain would have been extremely beneficial. To be honest, arrangements were made for me to be able to do this; but unfortunately, life intervened and I was unable to go. I am sure that the opportunity to discover if visitors to the monuments of *convivencia* were doing so out of some higher reasoning or were they attracted by the market strategies; or even to question whether *convivencia* was even a factor in the migration of the "new" Moors; or to visually experience how much the Spaniard embraces this aspect of his past; would have been valuable to my research. Another limitation is the fact that this paper focused on Spain's national identity, at the expense of both its local and regional identities. Since most regions in Spain cling to their regional identity than to the national one; it would have been useful to discover how these regions respond to era of coexistence, particularly these regions that historically had both a Jewish and a Muslim presence. Even though, I was able to more than adequately equip myself to write this thesis; I felt that my inability to read Spanish was a limitation. While, I was able to rely of Google Translator and my Spanish speaking friends, I would have preferred to read the texts myself.

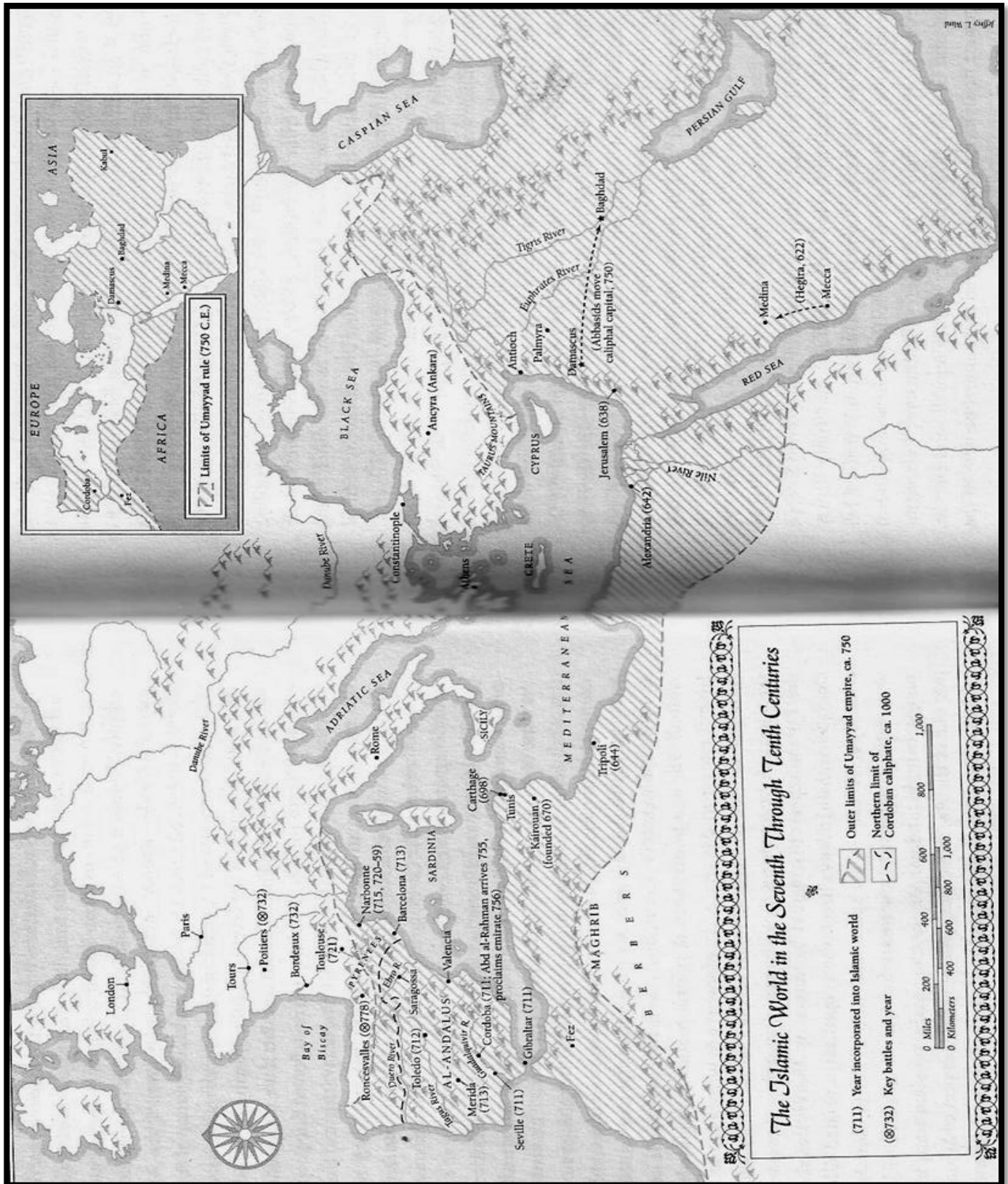
Having completed this thesis, I find myself even more fascinated by the topic *convivencia*. Obviously, I would like to be able to turn my limitations to reality. I would like to be able to answer questions like “do Moroccan immigrants have any expectations based on Spain’s history of *convivencia*?” I would like to be able to revisit my plans that fell part with the hope that the next time I have this opportunity; I will be able to use it effectively. Beyond this, the title of Beverley Southgate’s study, “What is History For?” intrigues me; as I am trying to understand if there is a failure of Muslims to limit their focus on learning and teaching only the religious aspect of Islam. Admittedly, I have not read this study; but, I find that its title is applicable when trying to determine how *convivencia* is interpreted by contemporary Muslims.

Personally, my knowledge of al-Andalus was reared on a diet of repeated viewings of Charlton Heston’s film *El Cid*. I did not learn anything about it during my religious or academic education until my first semester in college. Now, some might argue that this can be explained by the fact that I spent most of my life in the Caribbean. However, I have had the opportunity to visit Islamic schools in New York and to speak with teachers about their syllabi. I have come to realize that students are not taught about *convivencia* and certainly, not about al-Andalus. I can understand that Islam, first and foremost, is a religion; therefore, the emphasis of learning and educating should be on the religious facets of Islam. However, every Muslim is taught that Islam is more than a religion; that it is a way of life and as such, influences every aspect of our lives. Therefore, and since, we as Muslims live by a credo of constantly seeking knowledge; should we not embrace other aspects of Islam beyond the religious? I would happily embrace the opportunity to understand the relationship between contemporary Muslims and *convivencia*.

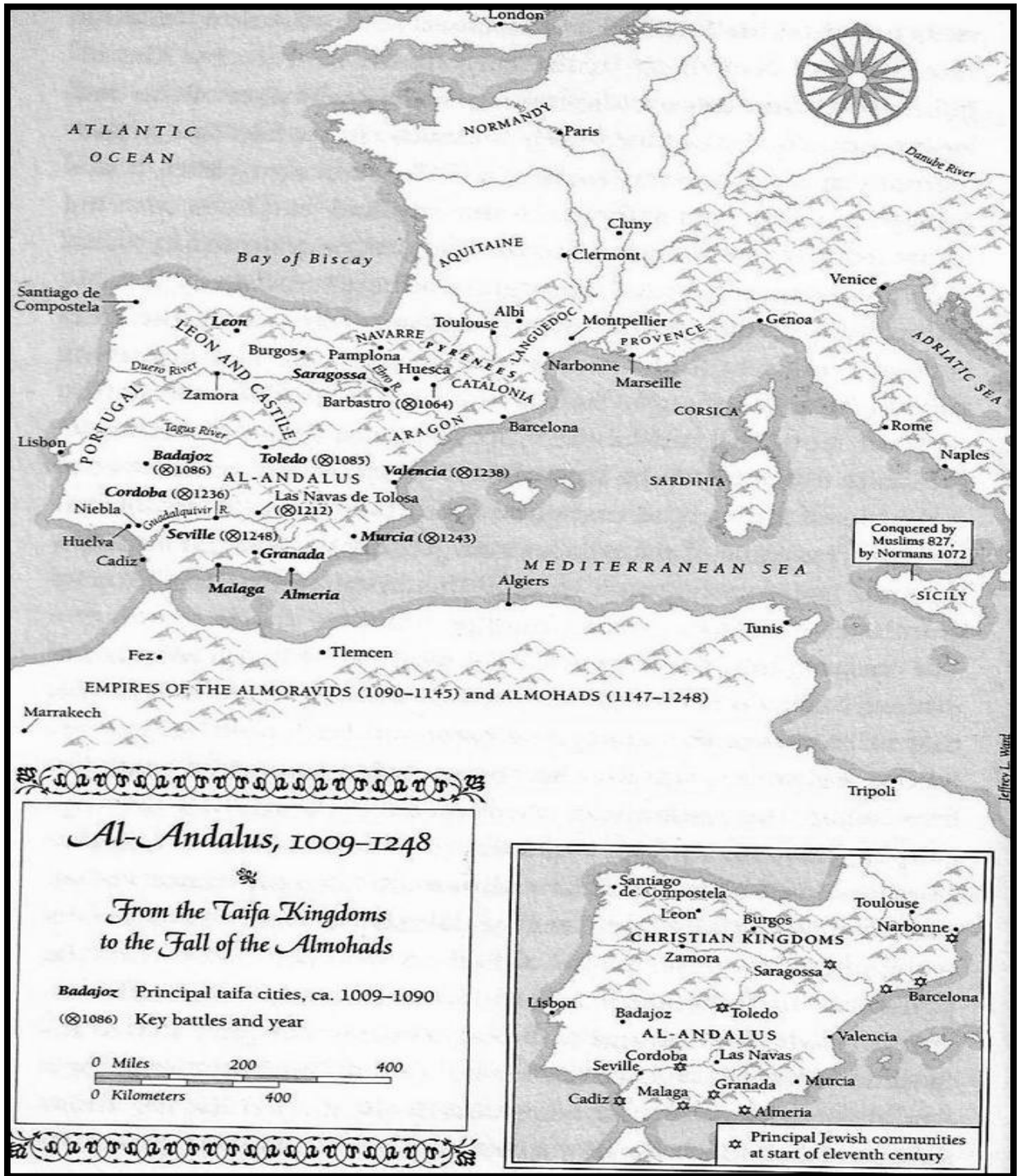
Appendix 1: Map showing Islam's Global Reach



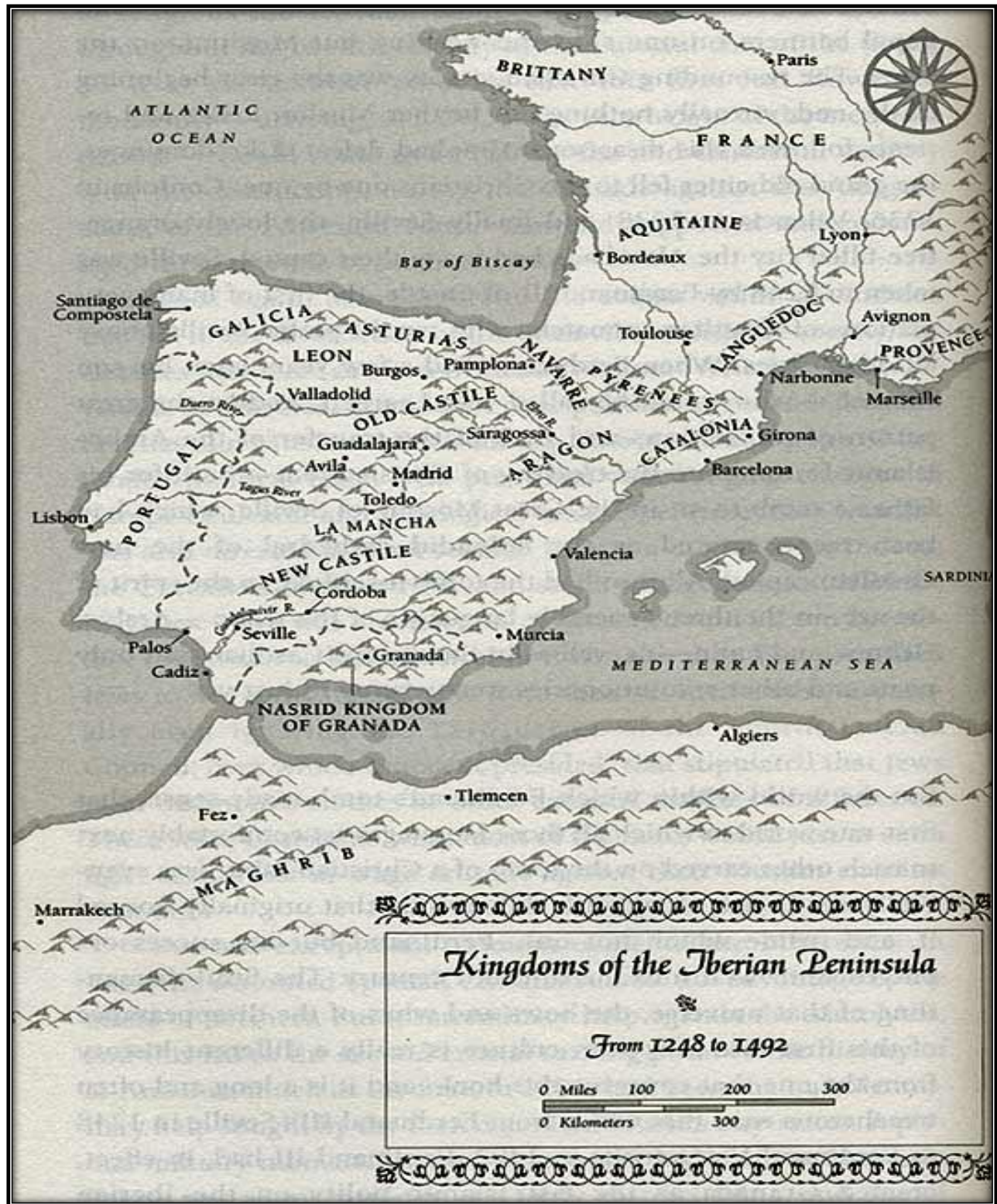
Appendix 2: Map showing the Islamic World in the Seventh through Tenth Centuries



Appendix 3: Map showing The Disintegration of al-Andalus into Taifa Kingdoms



Appendix 4: Map showing The Kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula from 1248-1492



Appendix 5: Translations to English from each façade of King Ferdinand’s Tomb

Latin: Here lies the most illustrious King Ferdinand of Castile, Toledo, León, Galicia, Seville, Cordoba, Murcia, and Jaén, who conquered all of Spain (*Hispania*), the most loyal, the most veracious, the most constant, the most just, the most energetic, the most tenacious, the most liberal, the most patient, the most humble and the most effective in fear and in the service of God. He conquered and all but exterminated the arrogance of his enemies, protected, raised up, and exalted the men who were his friends; he captured the city of Seville, the capital of all Spain, from the hands of the pagans and restored it to the Christians, and that is the city where he paid his debt to nature and passed to the Lord on the last day of May in the year of the Incarnation, 1252.

Arabic: Here is the tomb of the great king Don Ferdinand, lord of Castile, Toledo, León, Galicia, Seville, Cordoba, Murcia, and Jaén, may God be pleased with him, who ruled all of Spain (*Andalus*), (who is) the most faithful, the most veracious, the most enduring, the most just, the most valiant, the most propitious, the most noble, the most forbearing, the most visionary, the greatest in modesty, most suitable to God and His greatest servant. He died (God had mercy on him) on the Friday night and God raised him. He honored and ennobled his friends and took possession of the city of Seville, which is the capital of all of Spain, and in which he who broke and destroyed all of his enemies died on the twentieth of the month of First Rabiya of the year 550 of the Hijra.

Hebrew: In this place is the tomb of the great king Don Ferdinand, lord of Castile, Toledo, León, Galicia, Seville, Cordoba, Murcia, and Jaén – may his soul be in paradise – who seized all of Spain (*Sefarad*) the upright, the righteous, the enduring, the mighty, the pious, the forbearing, the one who feared God and served Him all of his days, shattered and destroyed all of his enemies, praised and honored all of his friends, and took the city of Seville which is the capital of all of Spain, in which he died on the night of Friday, the twenty-second of the month of Sivan, of the year 5012 since the creation of the world.

Castilian: Here lies the most honored king Don Ferdinand, lord of Castile and Toledo, of León, of Galicia, of Seville, of Cordoba, of Murcia, and of Jaén, he who conquered all of

Spain (*toda España*), the most loyal and most truthful and the most forthright, the strongest and most decorated, the most illustrious and the most forbearing and the most humble and the one who is most fearful of God, and the one who did the most service to Him; who broke and destroyed all of his enemies, who praised and honored all of his friends, and conquered the city of Seville which is the capital of all of Spain and died in it on the last day of May in our era, the year of 1252.

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