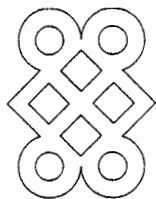


A HISTORY OF
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SPANISH-ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

Muslim Spain from the Arab conquest to the liquidation of the last Muslim possessions in Granada in 1492 represents yet another variant of the Caliphal type of early Islamic civilization. This civilization was built upon the assimilation of the Spanish and Berber populations to Arabic and Islamic culture, and was fostered by extraordinary economic prosperity. Muslim Spain bears an aura of glory. The great mosque of Cordova, the gardens, fountains, and courtyards of the Alhambra, the *muwasshabat* and *zajal* poetry with their Arabic verses and romance language refrains, the irrigated gardens

of Seville and Valencia, the wisdom of philosophy and science – these are the monuments of Spanish Islam. Spain was the focal point for the transmission of Greek philosophy from the Arab world to Europe. No less important was the drama of the defeat of this brilliant Muslim civilization by its European enemies, the expulsion of the Arabs, and the reabsorption of Spain into Christian Europe.

For all its brilliance Muslim Spain was a province of the Arab Caliphate. Already overrun by successive waves of Alaric and Vandal invasions from the north, Spain was conquered by Arab and Berber forces from North Africa led by Tariq, who defeated the Visigothic King Roderic at the River Barbate in 711. The Arab advance into France was checked finally by Charles Martel at the battle of Poitiers in 732. Whereas in the East, Arab conquerors were generally forced to settle in garrison towns and villages, leaving the land in the direct control of its pre-conquest land-lord elite and a tax-collecting bureaucracy, in Spain large territories were parceled out among Arab and Berber clans. This immediately led to factional quarrels. In the very first decades of Muslim rule, Berbers, allocated poor mountain lands in Galicia and Cantabria, rebelled against Arab governors. The rebellions were put down by Syrian Arabs and the new forces were in turn given fiefs. The Arabs themselves were divided into tribal factions called Qays and Yemen, representing the first-generation settlers and later immigrants.

Dispersed settlement, however, contributed enormously to the Arabization and Islamization of Spain. The Arabs took on clients, captured slaves, hired mercenaries, and married into local families. By the ninth century Arabic was widely used by the indigenous population and there were many converts (*muwalladun*). As converts multiplied, the distinction between the original Arab elite and assimilated Arabs blurred, and a more homogeneous Hispano-Arab society came into being.

This development was abetted by extraordinary economic prosperity in the ninth and tenth centuries. The introduction of irrigation agriculture based on eastern models led to the cultivation of valuable new crops including cherries, apples, pears, almonds, pomegranates, figs, dates, sugarcane, bananas, cotton, flax, and silk. A Damascus type of irrigation assigned water to each cultivator in proportion to the size of his land. A Yemeni type of irrigation, used in the oasis-like *huertas* of Valencia, distributed water by a fixed time flow. Irrigation was administered either by a town authority under the control of the *sahib al-saqiya*, who policed the distribution of water and assured equity, or by local communities, who selected their own irrigation managers. At the same time, Spain entered a phase of commercial prosperity due to the breakdown of Byzantine naval control over the western Mediterranean. Cities such as Seville and Cordova prospered on the bases of rich agricultural production and international trade.

The Caliphal era

The result of these social and economic changes was political consolidation. After a succession of weak governors appointed from North Africa, three great rulers built

up the Spanish-Muslim state. 'Abd al-Rahman I (756–88), a grandson of the Umayyad Caliph Hisham, supported by Berbers from North Africa and by Syrian clients of the Umayyads, founded the Umayyad dynasty in Spain. The new regime followed the 'Abbasid pattern. It suppressed local revolts, and built up a client army of soldiers coming from north of the Pyrenees. 'Abd al-Rahman II (822–52) further centralized administration, brought into being a new secretarial class made up of merchants and clients, and created state monopolies and control of urban markets. 'Abd al-Rahman III (912–61) completed the consolidation of the central government. He built his army up from captives from northern Spain, Germany, and the Slavic countries. These troops, known as *saqaliba*, were later reinforced with detribalized professional Berber soldiers and local levies. A *hajib*, equal in rank to a vizier, was in charge of administration and taxation. Provincial tax collectors were appointed to raise revenues and send the surplus to Cordova. While twenty-one provinces were governed by appointees of the central government, frontier districts were managed by local *qat'ids* and hereditary petty lords. A chief qadi supervised judicial administration and managed the properties endowed for religious and charitable purposes.

'Abd al-Rahman III also sought a new basis for the legitimization of his regime by adopting Baghdad's 'Abbasid cultural forms. While Islamic culture in Spain assimilated some aspects of local culture, it was primarily an outpost of Middle Eastern Arabic-Islamic civilization. As in the East, court culture tried to integrate Muslim and cosmopolitan symbols. 'Abd al-Rahman adopted the title Caliph, or *amir al-nu'min*, in reaction to the claims of the Fatimids in North Africa. Thus the precious title signifying the unity of the Muslim community was claimed by no fewer than three rulers in the early tenth century. 'Abd al-Rahman expanded the Cordova mosque, installed irrigation works, and waged jihad to check Christian attacks in northern Spain.

Poetry became the primary expression of Spanish cosmopolitan culture. Spanish poetry was originally based on Arabic models, which carried with them the warrior sentiments and factional interests of the Arab conquerors. The urbane Baghdad style was introduced by bringing the poet and singer Ziryab (789–857) to Cordova. In early Hispano-Arabic poetry, the *qasida*, which praised the virtues of the ruler and served official purposes, was the dominant form. New Spanish forms, however, came into being. The new poems had Arabic strophes, and sometimes an additional *kharija*, or refrain, in Romance dialect, and were a synthesis of Arabic and Romance verse forms. The Arabic part, usually a love poem, was courtly in theme, masculine in tone; the *kharija* was usually the voice of the lower classes, or of a Christian slave girl, and feminine in inspiration. While the poems were composed in Arabic, the metrical system, the syllabic prosody, and the rhyme scheme all indicate a Romance influence.

Other literary activities flourished under Caliphal patronage. Eastern scholars emigrated to Spain, and the royal libraries were enlarged. Grammar and philology

came from Iraq. Aḍab, or belles-lettres in eastern style, was first composed in Spain by Ibn 'Abd al-Rabbih (d. 940). Caliphal patronage broadened scientific learning. Aristotle's philosophy was introduced by the reception of the *Organon*; the *Republic*, the *Latus*, and the *Timaeus* of Plato were known. Galen became the standard medical author. A new translation of a classic work – Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* – was made in Spain. The earliest translations of astronomical and geometric works from Arabic into Latin were also made in the tenth century.

The architecture of the Caliphate, including mosques, palaces, and baths, was also eastern in inspiration. The mosque of Cordova was expanded and rebuilt by successive rulers. It was a vast hall divided by columns surmounted by horseshoe arches; a niche with a fluted shell-like vault and a horseshoe arch indicated the direction of prayer. Visigothic and Roman elements were built into the Muslim design. The mosque was redecorated between 961 and 966 by mosaic workers, who gave it a vivid and brilliant interior. The mosque of Cordova, like the mosque of Damascus, was a symbol of the incorporation of ancient values and their supersession by Islamic civilization. In the tenth century the Caliphs also built the royal city of Madinat al-Zahra, a city of splendid palaces, fountains, and gardens which imitated the palace complexes of Baghdad.

Under the auspices of the Umayyad regime, a Muslim as well as an Arab civilization came into being. The Syrian school of law, founded by al-Awza'i, favored by Syrian-Arab military lords, was imported into Spain, but the town populations favored the Maliki school from North Africa. From the East came Shaf'i's concepts. Hadith studies were introduced in the ninth century, and Muslim scholars were divided between the *shuyukb al-'ilm*, or students who favored hadith and theology, and the *shuyukb al-fiqh*, or scholars of law. This distinction may, as in Nishapur, have represented the division between Arab elites and later converts. Shaf'i scholars, however, had to accept Maliki law, and Malikism remained the primary religious identity of Muslim Spain. Muslim theology and Mu'tazilism were also introduced from Baghdad in the ninth century. Muhammad b. Masarra (883–931), whose father had studied in Basra, amalgamated neo-Platonic, Shi'i, and Sufi thought. The legal scholars, however, restricted the public expression of mystical tendencies.

Arabic-Islamic culture in Spain was associated with different social milieus and sociopolitical movements. Monumental architecture, formal poetry, and philosophic interests characterized the royal style of culture in Spain as in Baghdad. The scribal class was identified with Arabic belles-lettres. As in the East, the secretarial class, composed of Spanish converts, generated an Arabic literature which was intended to prove their equality with the Arab warrior elites. The *Risala* of Abu 'Amir b. Garcia provoked an avalanche of contemptuous Arabic poetry in response.

Important lower-class social movements were also connected with religious trends. In circumstances that still remain obscure, the 'ulama' of the Rabad quarter of Cordova led local rebellions in 805 and 818. They denounced the regime for corruption, fiscal exploitation, use of foreign military forces, and chronic insecurity.

Though the revolts were put down, the power of the religious leaders rose. 'Abd al-Rahman II created a religious council to demonstrate that he ruled in accordance with Islam. Thus the Umayyad princes sought to legitimize their rule by coopting the scholars of law. As in North Africa, Baghdad, and other parts of the Muslim world, the 'ulama' assumed political responsibilities and a voice in the direction of society. Sufis led a lower-class movement opposed to the exploitative accumulation of wealth by the upper classes, and espoused an ascetic, mystical, and communalist doctrine.

Arab-Muslim rule also had profound effects on the Christians. Christians under Muslim rule rapidly adopted the Arabic language, Arab customs and manners, and assumed the style of life led by the political elites. Thus the *mozarab* identity came into being. This assimilation of Christians was opposed by a priest named Eulogius, who called for a more purely Christian culture stripped of Arab influences. Between 850 and 859 he led a revolt of the mozarabs of Cordova in which Christians martyred themselves to protest against Arab-Muslim rule.

Like its 'Abbasid model, the Spanish-Muslim state was subverted by internal conflicts. The hostilities between provincial and urban mercantile elites, between townsmen and Berber troops, and converts and Arabs made it impossible to stabilize the regime. In the early eleventh century, the Caliphs lost control of the central government, provincial governors became independent, and Arab clans revolted. As in the history of the eastern Caliphate, a central imperial government was replaced by smaller provincial regimes. The Caliphate was abolished and Spain was divided into petty warring principalities, called the *mutuk al-tawai'if*, or the party kings (1030–90). Arab, Slav, and Berber soldiers and local elites took power, and each province became an independent state with an army, court, and administration of its own. The Amirids – descendants of former Caliphal administrators – ruled the eastern coast of Andalus. The saqaliba settled Denia in the southeast. Regimes based on local Arab families were founded at Cordova, Seville, and Saragossa; Berber-dominated states were founded at Toledo, Badajoz, and Granada. In Granada the Berber ruling elite governed with the help of the Jewish Banu Naghriia family. This provoked intense Muslim hostility and a pogrom against Jews in 1066.

While the emergence of provincial regimes was a defeat for centralized government, Spanish society was not as fragmented as the political division of power would imply. Muslim law and a Muslim-Arab identity were universally accepted, and the 'ulama' continued to represent the urban populations. Spanish-Muslim society was also integrated by a flourishing regional and international commerce. Andalusia traded with Morocco, importing wood, alum, antimony, and cloth, and exporting cloth and copper. It traded with Tunisia and through Tunisia with Egypt, importing the wool, flax, and dyes that came to Egypt from Iran, Arabia, India, and China. Spanish Muslims also traded with the Christian north, where growing wealth and the rising power of new states created ever larger markets.

The Reconquista

Despite its great prosperity and cultivated urban life, the extreme degree of political fragmentation undermined Spanish-Islamic civilization. The initial Muslim advance had left a small belt of northern territories along the Pyrenees in Christian hands. In the course of the eighth and ninth centuries small kingdoms in this region began to reconquer and recolonize the Muslim areas of Spain. Christian sentiment was also expressed in the founding of Benedictine monasteries and the pilgrimage of Santiago de Compostela. Pope Gregory VII made the reconquest a religious duty of Christians as well as a territorial ambition of Spanish kings.

The disintegration of the Muslim states in the eleventh century allowed for the rapid expansion of the various Christian kingdoms. In 1085 Alfonso VI, on the strength of the unified kingdoms of Castile, Leon, and Galicia, conquered Toledo. This was a signal event in the struggle between Muslims and Christians, for a brilliant center of Muslim civilization, once the capital of Visigothic Spain, again fell into Christian hands. Christian migrants flocked to Toledo, but the Muslim and mozarab populations were allowed to remain. In the meantime the kingdom of Aragon captured Huesca (1096), Saragossa (1118), Tortosa (1148), and Lerida (1149). In the second half of the twelfth century the reconquest became institutionalized. Religious-military fraternities, such as the orders of Calatrava and Santiago, financed by landed estates, conquered and colonized Muslim territories.

The Christian advance was countered by the Muslims. In 1082 a delegation of 'ulama' urged the Almoravids to intervene on behalf of the Spanish-Muslim community. Thus in 1086 a Moroccan army crossed the straits and defeated Alfonso VI, and from 1090 to 1145 the North Africans conquered the Spanish-Muslim cities and governed Spain as a province of Marrakesh. Military commanders governed the cities in collaboration with the 'ulama'. Almoravid rule, however, increasingly incurred the hostility of the local population. There were Sufi-led revolts in Silves and Niebla, and 'ulama'-led revolts in Cordova and Valencia, which eventually overthrew Almoravid rule. The Almohads, who took Marrakesh in 1147, unhesitatingly accepted the concept of a Moroccan empire which included Spain. In turn, they took Seville and Cordova in 1149, and the rest of Muslim Spain by 1172.

A new Moroccan suzerainty was imposed upon Spain, but the Muslim position nonetheless continued to weaken under the combination of Christian pressures and regional anarchy. The Almohads were defeated in 1212 by the combined Christian forces of Leon, Castile, Navarre, and Aragon at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. With the defeat of the Almohads the Spanish-Muslim states again found themselves independent but helpless before the resumption of the Christian reconquest. The union of Castile and Leon in 1230 opened the way for the conquest of Cordova in 1236 and Seville in 1248. The Aragonese advanced along the coast to take Valencia in 1238 and Murcia in 1243. By 1249-50 the Portuguese had taken all of the lands west of the Guadiana River. By the middle of the thirteenth century only Granada remained in Muslim hands. It was protected by a large populace, a mountainous ter-

ritory, and a productive economy which paid heavy tribute to the princes of Castile. Aragon had turned its interests to the Mediterranean, Castile was embroiled in civil wars, and the military orders were disbanded. Christian rulers gave no priority to the conquest of Granada until the union of Castile and Aragon opened the way for the final conquest of the last Muslim possession in Spain in 1492.

Hispano-Arabic civilization

The disintegration of the Caliphate and the centuries of struggles with the Christians did not disrupt Spanish-Muslim cultural life. With the decline of the Caliphate the patronage of art and culture shifted to the courts of the provincial rulers and merchants. In place of grand mosques, private palaces became the characteristic symbols of Hispano-Arabic civilization. In the late tenth century the muwashshahat poetry flourished, as city dwellers rediscovered the beauties of nature. Freed from religious restraints, *qasidas* devoted to descriptions of nature and gardens, wine and war, and love and passion were composed. Ibn Quzman (d. 1160) cultivated the *zajal*, a form of poetry in colloquial Arabic, whose themes were the life of towns and markets, the common people, and the underworld. This was a deliberately irrelevant form of art. After a long period in which the Baghdad style had dominated Arabic-Spanish literature, poetic interests were transferred from the political to the personal. Love and art for art's sake became the dominant themes.

Love was the central theme of the philosophy of Ibn Hazm (d. 1093). He taught that the attraction of two people was based on an eternal affinity, a timeless connection of souls. Ibn al-'Arabi later explained that a man loves a woman because she is the mirror that reveals his innermost true being - the spiritual being that transcends his animal reality. The love of a woman is the love of the original nature of the soul and therefore a reminder of God. Love stems from the creation of man in the image of God, and sexual love is a symbol of the extinction of the separate natures in the divine reality.

With the breakdown of Spanish-Islamic society, Sufism also became important. From Almeria came Abu al-'Abbas b. al-'Arif (1088-1141), whose writings described the stages of mystical ascent to the realization that only God exists. Ibn al-'Arabi also from Spain, was probably the greatest Muslim mystical metaphysician.

Almohad rule also introduced theological and philosophic debates. While the Almoravids had favored strictly legal views, the Almohads were the patrons of Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-98). Averroes took up the classic debate of theology and philosophy concerning human knowledge of spiritual realities. Al-Ghazzali taught that direct apprehension was the basis for the knowledge of the divine being, and that the Quran was a direct expression of God's being. Averroes held that reason was the basis of human knowledge of the divine being, and that the Quran was an allegory requiring rational interpretation.

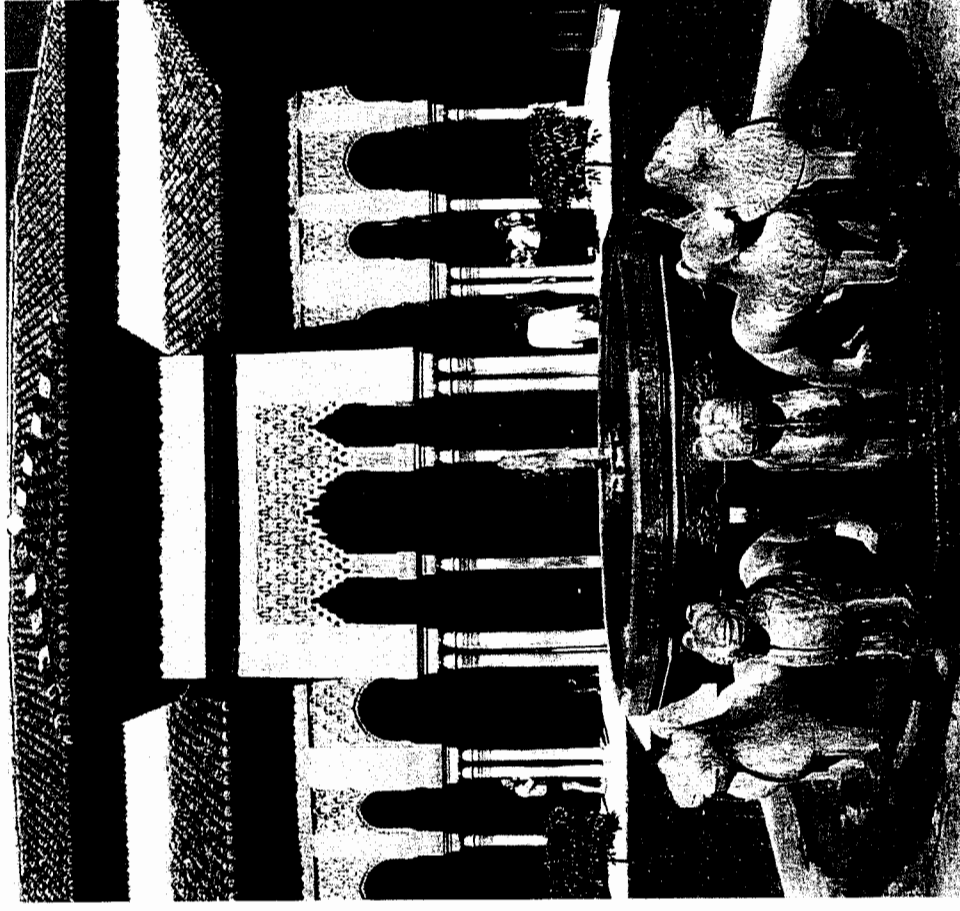
From Spain, Islamic scientific and philosophical thought was transmitted to Europe. With the conquest of Toledo in 1085 and Saragossa in 1118, Hispano-Islami

culture had a strong and immediate influence upon Christian style. Nobles and churchmen built their houses in the Moorish manner and borrowed Hispanic-Islamic motifs for their heraldry. They dressed in Arab fabrics, and had Jewish and Muslim literatures translated into Castilian and Latin. Alfonso X arranged for the translation of the Bible, the Talmud, and the Quran into Castilian. The story of the mi'raj, the ascent of the Prophet into heaven, was translated into Castilian and then into old French and Latin, where it may have become available to Dante. In Toledo, Petrus Alphonsi, a Jewish convert to Christianity, and other translators under the patronage of Archbishop Don Raimundo, rendered Arabic works on astrology and astronomy into Castilian and then into Latin. The works of Ptolemy were translated. The Muslim philosophers al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Avicenna were also translated into Latin, making the thought of Aristotle available to Europeans. Between 1160 and 1187 Gerard of Cremona translated into Latin some eighty-seven works, including the Quran, many books of Aristotle, and the *Qanun* of Avicenna. Between 1220 and 1250 Averroes's commentaries on Aristotle and the works of Maimonides were rendered into Latin, and were quoted by St. Thomas Aquinas. Thus Greek philosophic thought came through the Arab world to Europe.

Not even the Reconquista could extinguish the cultural vitality of Muslim Spain. Granada, the surviving Muslim enclave, maintained a sophisticated style of life. The city was adorned with patios, fountains, and pavements; Granada copied Eastern styles in bronzes, ivories, ceramics, and furniture. In order to meet its huge burden of tribute, Granada developed an export trade in ceramics, porcelains, silks, and weapons.

The Alhambra was one of the great achievements of Islamic urban art. It was first constructed as a fortress and royal residence in the eleventh century. By the thirteenth century it had been enlarged into a princely city. Like Baghdad and Cairo, it was a symbol of the power and aloofness of royalty. The Nasrid dynasty of Granada (1230–1492) built the famous Court of the Myrtles, the Court of the Lions, and innumerable gardens and pavilions. The palace complex was decorated with Islamic symbols and water motifs. It was embellished with Quranic inscriptions, and provided with a large mosque, an open prayer field, and a "Gate of the Law." Pools and fountains symbolized refuge, repose, and paradise. Inscriptions bore allusions to the legend of the glass floor built by King Solomon to resemble a pool of water – the Solomonic story linked Granada with the royal art of the ancient Near East and its later Islamic versions. It was a last echo of the courtly cosmopolitan civilization of the Arab East in the Mediterranean far West.

The Christian reconquest did not extinguish the Muslim presence. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries Muslim populations were found under Christian rule in Toledo and Saragossa. In the thirteenth century Muslims under Christian domination survived in Valencia. Apart from the small crusading principalities in Palestine, Lebanon, and Sicily, this was the first experience of Muslims under non-Muslim rule. James I of Aragon, who took Valencia in 1238, attempted to secure Christian hegemony by



15 Patio de los Leones, Alhambra (Granada, Spain)

bringing in new settlers, establishing religious orders, giving lands to Christian landlords, and organizing a tax-collecting administration. Otherwise the Christians did not interfere with the Muslim population. Muslims kept their residences; merchants and artisans continued to flourish, and indeed took the lead in the overseas trade of Valencia. Small farmers, property owners, and tenants kept their tenures.

There was also substantial continuity in the social and political organization of the Muslim population. The kings of Aragon at first maintained the authority of the Muslim elites by treating them as vassals of the crown. They required oaths of loyalty and military service. The old rural social structure, consisting of small village or castle-scale communities governed by a *qa'id*, was maintained. In the cities, Muslims retained control of civil courts and of internal community matters. The *qadi* was the chief Muslim official, the *amin* the main administrator and tax collector, and the *sahib al-madina* was in charge of the police. The organized Muslim communities could thus both cooperate with and ward off state interference. Organized as a self-regulating religious community, the Muslims became – as the Christians had been – a protected population.

The terms of Muslim survival, however, would not always remain favorable. While the monarchy took a beneficent attitude, Christian nobles and churchmen sought to exploit their new subjects. Christian settlement and competition for trade and land led to rioting between Christians and Muslims. In 1276 Christians attacked the Muslim quarters in Valencia and other towns, and Muslims rebelled. In retaliation, Muslim property was seized, Muslim quarters were looted, and many people were sold into slavery.

By the middle of the fourteenth century the Muslim position had sharply deteriorated: the Muslims acquired additional financial obligations; Muslim communities lost their internal autonomy; free Muslim peasants were pushed into servitude. Political control also led to a progressive restriction of Muslim religious liberties. In 1311 King James II prohibited the public call to prayer, though in 1357, in return for payment, it was permitted in a low voice. By the middle of the fourteenth century some 80 percent of judicial cases were heard in Christian rather than Muslim courts and were tried under Christian rather than Muslim law. The once organized and autonomous Muslim community had been subordinated to direct Christian rule.

Despite this deteriorating environment, the Valencian Muslims maintained their identity. While Aragonese Muslims who had been conquered centuries earlier lost their knowledge of Arabic and were fully assimilated to Christian rule, Valencian Muslims continued to speak Arabic, refused to learn the local Romance dialect, and did not interact with the Christian population. Valencia's Muslims continued to identify with Granada and North Africa.

However, by the late fourteenth century Christians became actively interested in the conversion of the Jews and Muslims and the creation of religious uniformity in Spain. In 1391 Jews were forced to accept baptism. In 1478 the inquisition was inaugurated, and offered Jews a choice of baptism or exile. In 1492 virtually the entire

Jewish population, once a flourishing commercial and cultural community, was expelled from Spain to other parts of Europe and the Ottoman empire.

The Christian conquest of Granada in 1492 marked the beginning of the end of the Muslim population in Spain. While the treaty of surrender guaranteed Muslim religious liberty and property, in practice these rights were ignored. In 1501 Spanish law offered Muslims a choice between conversion and exile. Many Granadans became crypto-Muslims who tried to reconcile the secret practice of Islam with the outward profession of Christianity. In 1556 Arab and Muslim dress was forbidden, and in 1566 Philip II decreed that the Arabic language could no longer be used. Thus there emerged the *aljamiado* literature composed in Romance language but written in Arabic script and translating Arabic texts. Finally, in 1609 Philip III expelled the Muslims from Spain. They took refuge in North Africa where Andalusian communities once again contributed to a flourishing Islamic civilization.

Thus the first major Muslim experience of Christian rule showed how in the multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies of the Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Muslim concepts of autonomous religious community could serve for a time to accommodate Muslims in a Christian society just as they had accommodated Christians in a Muslim society. In the long run, however, the Christian demand for religious homogeneity led to the forced assimilation or expulsion of the Jewish and Muslim populations.