

## The Heritage of *AL-ANDALUS* and the Formation of Spanish History and Identity

Imam Ghazali Said

Indonesia

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**Abstract:** *This research deals with the Islamic cultural heritage in al-Andalus and its significance for Spanish history and identity. It attempts to answer the question relating to the significance of Islamic legacies for the construction of Spanish history and identity.*

*This research is a historical analysis of historical sources or data regarding the problem related to the place and contribution of al-Andalus' or Islamic cultural legacies in its various dimensions. Source-materials of this research are particularly written primary and secondary sources. The interpretation of data employs the perspective of continuity and change, and continuity and discontinuity, in addition to Foucault's power/knowledge relation.*

*This research reveals that al-Andalus was not merely a geographical entity, but essentially a complex of literary, philosophical and architectural construction. The legacies of al-Andalus are seen as having a great significance for the reconstruction of Spanish history and the formation of Spanish identity, despite intense debates taking place among different scholar/historians. From Foucauldian perspective, the break between those who advocate and those who challenge the idea of convivencia in social, religious, cultural and literary spheres is to a large extent determined by power/knowledge relation. The Castrian and Albornozan different interpretations of the Spanish history and identity reflect their relations to power and their attitude to contemporary political situation that determine the production of historical knowledge.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic legacies; heritage, Spanish history and identity.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The presence of Muslims (either Arab or Berber) in the Iberian peninsula from 711 to 1492 had become an important part of Islamic history. Different Muslim dynasties that ruled Spain have contributed in a great deal to economic prosperity, political stability, intellectual progress and cultural achievement in many important cities of the region. Indeed, the Muslim presence has a significant influence on the intellectual and cultural development in Spain, or even Europe. However, among European and, in particular, Spanish scholars, the history of Muslims and their cultural heritage in the region constitute a crucial subject of academic or even political debates. This is mainly resulted from the perception of European, or especially Spanish, scholars towards Islam as religion in general, and towards the Muslim presence and rule in various parts of Europe, such as southern Spain, Italy and elsewhere in the past centuries. This can also be related to the issue of the relation between Europe's self-identification and the others' (i.e. Muslims') existence.

Historically, the influence of Islamic culture on Spain cannot be separated from the Muslim presence in the region. It can be traced back to events taking place in July 710, when about 400 Muslim armies crossed from North Africa to the southern part of the Iberian peninsula. It has been said that the armies initially monitored the situations there, but the information they gathered raised their interest to undertake serious campaigns to rule the territory. They fought very effectively and succeeded in overthrowing the existing king of the Visigoth, Roderick, and occupying the capital of his kingdom. Since then, there has been no longer resistance, except in the local level, toward Muslims.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> W. Montgomery Watt and Pierre Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), 13-14.

Islamic Spain, or then called *al-Andalus*, is usually regarded as achieving its peak of power and prosperity during the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Rahmân III (912-961). During the first twenty years of his rule, he had to face various threats towards his territorial unity. Not long before his death he had established his control over almost all regions in the Iberian peninsula, even his rule and sovereignty had been recognized by the existing Christian kingdoms. Prosperity continued under the control of his son and then grandson, but the latter did not take care of the kingdom so it passed to the hand of an imperial officer known as al-Manşûr (Almanzor). When al-Mansur’s son died in 1008, there was no figure who maintained the unity of *al-Andalus*, so the Umayyad dynasty underwent split. Up to 1031, there had been about thirty independent local rulers, and there began the period of ‘party kings’ (*mulûk al-tawâ’if*). Although there were political problems, a level of prosperity was still successfully maintained. However, tensions and conflicts among Muslims themselves gave benefits to the Christians, and therefore in 1085 the fortress of Toledo fell to their hands.

Under the Muslim rule, Jewish and Christian people were seen to have shared Abrahamic religious tradition, and were treated equally to Muslims (except that they should pay poll tax – *jizyah*). They were usually called *dhimmî* or *ahl al-kitâb*, an important concept in Islamic history. During the Umayyad rule, the Jews and Christians who had been assimilated into Islamic culture played a prominent role in the development of Islamic civilization. Menocal, as quoted by Gerald Shenk, portrays a 250-year experiment in creating what constitutes a much brighter picture of “culture of tolerance”, or termed by modern scholars as *convivencia*, among Christians, Jews and Muslims.

In this regard, *al-Andalus* (Cordoba and Granada) can be seen as a place of “the very heart of culture as a series of contraries.”<sup>2</sup> There, the Arabized Jews rediscovered and reinvented Hebrew. There the Christians embraced almost every aspect of Arabic style--from the intellectual style of philosophy to the architectural styles of mosques--not only while living in Islamic territories but also especially after taking over political control from them. There the men of different faiths, like Abelard and Maimonides and Averroes, saw no contradiction in pursuing the truth, whether philosophical, scientific or religious. This vision of culture of tolerance contributed significantly to the development of high cultures.

Despite their location in the West and in predominantly Catholic inhabitants, Andalusian cities like Cordoba and Granada are still strongly marked by the Muslim rule from 711 to 1492. They are therefore usually regarded as “vivid oriental representation in the Western mind.” However, the architectural style dominantly influenced by the Muslims who dominated these cities is regarded as distinctively Spanish.<sup>3</sup> Of course, this fact is caused by the ongoing debate or contestation among different scholars regarding whether the Islamic history constitutes a part of Spanish history and whether its cultural heritage forms an important element of Spanish cultural identity.

In addition to Islamic architectural heritage, Muslim’s traces in Spain, especially Cordoba and Granada, can also be known from the use of Arabic in road signs, names of street, building and places, and other public signs. According to Landry and Bourhis, as quoted by Lawrence, the identification of language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government building is part of linguistic landscape (LL).<sup>4</sup> This identification may help understand social phenomena, including, the role of Arabic as part of Muslim culture in (de)forming the Spanish’ identity.

Such research of the use of Arabic in public places was conducted by Shohamy and Ghazaleh-Mahajneh in Israel.<sup>5</sup> They collected data from the town of Ume El Pahem and Haifa University campus. The study reports that in the town of Ume El Pahem Arabic is not a minority language; it is widely used in the signs in the roads and in schools. However, Arabic is not popular in Haifa University campus. The interviews with Arab students in Haifa University campus reveal that the campus authority means to weaken the status of Arabic language and this has a strong implication as

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> See Jerrilynn D. Dods (ed.), *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> C. Bruce Lawrence, “The Korean English Linguistic Landscape,” *World Englishes* Vol. 31 No. 1 (2012): 74.

<sup>5</sup> E. Shohamy & A. Ghazaleh-Mahajneh, “Linguistic Landscape as a Tool for Interpreting Language Vitality: Arabic as a Minority Language in Israel.” *Research Gate* (January, 2012).  
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279861334>

an offensive act, lack of respect, exclusion, and a form of denial and erasure of the Arab students' presence.<sup>6</sup> Referring to May, the researchers conclude that the marginalization of Arabic language is the result of political colonization and continuous public talk by some prominent government representatives.<sup>7</sup> The Arabic deletion has both symbolic meanings in terms of erasing the Arabic speech community and functional meaning to exclude Arabic language from the situation of high security and safety. Learning from May that linguistic consequences cannot be separated from socioeconomic and socio-political consequences,<sup>8</sup> it is important to identify Arabic language apparent on public spaces in Cordoba and Granada to understand how parts of Muslim culture in the past help (de)form the identity of Spanish in both cities.

To conclude, it can be asserted in this background that the core problem of this research is concerned with the significance of *al-Andalus*' legacies in the formation of Spanish history and identity. It is essential to consider the linkage between identity formation with the whole political, social, and cultural development of *al-Andalus* since there has been a strong interconnection between different facets of human history where one influenced, or paved a way for, another; in this case Islamic historical and cultural legacies in *al-Andalus* have provided basis for Spain in the construction of its history and identity.

## 2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Islamic history in Spain has been studied briefly by Montgomery Watt in *A History of Islamic Spain*. This work is a description of Islamic history in the region from 711 to 1492. It covers discussion on the Muslim invasion on the Iberian peninsula, the decline of Muslim Arab rule and the reconquest of Islamic Spain by Christian kingdoms. This work also gives emphasis on socio-religious movements and institutions, and on intellectual and cultural life, philosophy, literature, mysticism and architecture.

Watt also deals with the influence of Islam on medieval Europe. Here, Watt asserts that the renaissance of Europe could not be separated from the contribution or influence of Islamic cultural heritage in Spain. This has been proven by the prevalence of a number of Arabic words. Watt even maintains that the transmission of Greek heritage to modern Europe would have been possible only through the works of Muslim philosophers, such as IbnRushd (Averroes).<sup>9</sup>

Other works on Islamic Spain is *Revisiting al-Andalus: Perspectives on the Material Culture of Islamic Iberia and Beyond* which covers different perspective on Islamic cultural heritage in the Iberian peninsula.<sup>10</sup> There is also *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, which deals with the exposition of artistic achievement of Islamic Spain.<sup>11</sup> In addition, there have been large numbers of scholarly works, either books or articles, on the history of Moriscos,<sup>12</sup> and on the specific feature of Medieval Iberia, that is "*convivencia*", which becomes an intense debate among Spanish scholars and historians.<sup>13</sup> These works will also become important sources for this study with critical analysis.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 139-142.

<sup>7</sup> S. May, *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 164.

<sup>9</sup>See Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*.

<sup>10</sup>Glaire D. Anderson, Mariam Rosser Owen (eds.), *Revisiting al-Andalus: Perspectives on the Material Culture of Islamic Iberia and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>11</sup>Jerrilynn D. Dods, (ed.), *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Carr, *Blood and Faith: The Purging of Muslim Spain 1492-1614* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Among others are: Alex Novikoff, "Between Tolerance and Intolerance in Medieval Spain: An Historiographical Enigma," *Medieval Encounters* 11, 1-2 (2005): 7-36; Maya Soifer, "Beyond Convivencia: Critical Reflections on the Historiography of Interfaith Relations in Christian Spain," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January, 2009): 19-35; Jonathan Ray, "Beyond Tolerance and Persecution: Reassessing Our Approach to Medieval Convivencia," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, No. 2 (Winter, 2005): 1-18; Dario Fernandez-Morera, "The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise," *The Intercollegiate Review* (Fall, 2006): 23-31; Antonio Urquizar Herrera, "Literary Uses of Architecture and the Explanation of Defeat: Interpretation of the Islamic Conquest in the Context of the Construction of National Identity in Early Modern Spain," *National Identities*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (June, 2011): 109-126.

Meanwhile, works in Arabic on Islamic Spain oral-Andalus include among others *Fajral-Andalus: DirâsahfiTârîkhal-Andalus min al-Fath al-IslâmîilâQiyâm al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah 711-756* which deals mainly with the Umayyad rule in Andalusia,<sup>14</sup> and *Al-Târîkhal-Andalusî Min al-Fath al-IslâmîHattaSuqûtiGharnâtah* which covers a long period of Muslim rule in Spain from its beginning to the defeat of Granada in the hands of Christian rulers.<sup>15</sup> The nature of Arabic works is confined to discussions on the historical perspective of *al-Andalus* from the beginning to the end of Muslim rule, lacking of critical analysis with regard to the place of Islamic past in the construction of Spanish history of identity.

This research analyzes the historical and cultural development of *al-Andalus* from the perspective of continuity and change. It is theoretically perceived that in the course of history any cultural or intellectual product develops not independently from previous heritages or legacies. It can be a continuation of a particular tradition although it may undergo modification or change in its form, practice or value. This is particularly caused by the interplay between the existing cultures and the newly invented ones. Moreover, in a certain case, what happens in history or society may be a discontinuation, break and rupture from the previous cultures and accordingly there emerges a new invention of culture or idea. Michel Foucault states that discontinuity, epistemic rupture, and continuous shifts in conceptual boundaries are what define the space of ideas, be they modern or classical. This idea is referred to as historical a priori that underlines knowledge and therefore represents conditions which enable the development of a particular discourse in a particular epoch. Some epistemes may exist in the same time and interact with each other as part of the system of power/knowledge relation.<sup>16</sup>

With regard to the linguistic aspect of the Islamic heritage, theories related to linguistic landscape which was introduced by Landry and Bourhis<sup>17</sup> is used to identify the use of Arabic in Cordoba, Seville and Granada. Findings of linguistic landscape from different places, for example Akindele, Botterman, Gotter, Lawrence, Shohamy and Ghazaleh-Mahajneh will enrich the discussions.<sup>18</sup>

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a critical historical analysis of different facets of *al-Andalus* from 711 to 1492 and the following implications after the Islamic period. This study employs historical method, which includes the processes of collecting source materials, historical criticism, analysis and historical writing.

Source-materials for this research consist of primary as well as secondary ones, either in the forms of written materials or artifactual and pictorial materials. Some of the written primary source materials were obtained from libraries in some universities in Spain. One of the primary sources with regard to the early Islamic history in Spain is *Early Islamic Spain: The History of Ibn al-Qûtiyyah*,<sup>19</sup> although critical studies of historical sources have been carried out by many scholars and historians. For artifactual source materials, the researcher made visits to important historical sites, such as the great mosque of Cordoba (*Le Mezquita*), Madînat al-Zahrâ' (caliphal palace) of the Cordoban

<sup>14</sup>Husayn Mu'nis, *Fajr al-Andalus: DirâsahfiTârîkh al-Andalus min al-Fath al-IslâmîilâQiyâm al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah 711-756* (Bayrut: Dar al-Manahil, 2002).

<sup>15</sup>Abd al-Rahmân 'Alî Al-Haji, *Al-Târîkh al-Andalusî Min al-Fath al-IslâmîHattaSuqûtiGharnâtah*(Bayrût: Dâr al-Qalam, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

<sup>17</sup>Rodrigue Landry, and Richard Y. Bourhis, "Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study," *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 16 (1997), 23-49.

<sup>18</sup> D. O. Akindele, "Linguistic Landscapes as Public Communication: A Study of Public Signage in Gaborone Botswana," *International Journal of Linguistics*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2011); A. Botterman, *Linguistic Landscapes in the City of Ghent: An Empirical Study*. Ghent University: Master Dissertation, (2011); Gorter, D. *The Linguistic Landscape in Rome: Aspects of Multilingualism and Diversity*. Paper presented at The Iprs (Istituto Psicoanalitico Per Le Ricerche Sociali), Roma, (February 2007); C. Bruce Lawrence, "The Korean English Linguistic Landscape," *World Englishes*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (2012): 70-92; M. A. G. Mahajneh, & E. Shohamy, "Linguistic Landscape as a Tool for Interpreting Language Vitality: Arabic as a Minority Language in Israel," *Research Gate*. Retrieved on 15 March 2016; <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279861334> (2012).

<sup>19</sup> David James, *Early Islamic Spain: The History of Ibn al-Qûtiyyah* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).

Umayyads, the royal palace (*Real Alcazar*) of Seville, and Alhambra of the Nasrids in Granada. Linguistic data were collected from public signs in the important historical sites and main roads in the cities mentioned above.

Secondary written sources consist of academic/scholarly works by either Muslim or Western scholars. Different scholars have written on *al-Andalus* from different perspectives with different subjects or topics, such as on political, intellectual and architectural dimensions of Islamic Spain or *al-Andalus*.<sup>20</sup> Some of these works were obtained from libraries in Cordoba, Seville and Granada. We also interviewed a number of Spanish scholars and people in order to obtain contemporary views on the subject.

These materials were verified or criticized in terms of their authenticity and credibility in order for the researcher to obtain valid and reliable historical data to be reconstructed. Some written secondary sources containing an analysis or interpretation of primary source materials have become established as historical reconstruction. Therefore, this research also made use of these historical works as data sources, yet with critical review and analysis.

Historical interpretation includes a textual analysis, intertextual analysis, and contextual analysis. The combination of these modes of analysis is aimed at revealing the relation between texts, contexts, and epistemic dimensions which underline the mode of perception or interpretation used by different scholars.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part attempts to highlight some of the legacies of Muslims in *al-Andalus*, and their place in Spanish society. It will also be devoted to tracing the historical continuity of the Islamic past in the historiography of Spain which brought different scholars, particularly Spanish, into intense debates on such issues as *convivencia* and tolerance. Then, it will discuss the formation of Spanish cultural identity in its relation to the Islamic past.

##### 4.1. The Legacies of Al-Andalus in Spanish Context

Islamic legacies of *al-Andalus* were sometimes viewed with a wide range of aesthetic, moral, intellectual, cultural, and even religious prejudices. These legacies form historical and cultural precedents made up the history of the land where people lived and culture developed. Islamic cultural traditions were therefore essential for the making of Spanish history. It can be argued here that it is difficult to disconnect the development of Spain from the Islamic/Arabic past of *al-Andalus*.

The creation of the Spanish polity was a complex and difficult process that brought together issues of self-determination, territorial organization, social and political arrangement and even imperialism. Spanish medieval religious history offered numerous matters for discussion for early modern historians, such as the definition of Spain as a Christian nation in opposition to the Moors and the Jews, the negotiation of these minorities' (including Islamic) legacies, and the management of religious conversion.<sup>21</sup>

Generally, *al-Andalus* might broadly be identified as the Islamic culture of the Iberian Peninsula from the beginning of the Muslim rule in 711 to the fall of Granada in 1492. For modern Spain, the nature of *al-Andalus* is rather more problematic than simple definitions. *Al-Andalus* is not just relating to the past, or to a geographical entity, but refers to complex political, social, religious, cultural and architectural phenomena. When Western or Oriental tourists see the Alhambra in Granada, the great mosque in Cordoba, or, if they are adventurous, the irrigation systems of the Guajares, they are necessarily impressed by the works of the other.

From a historical perspective, it can be suggested that the culture of the first Muslims in *al-Andalus* seem to have been much more Arabic than Islamic. The dominance of the Arab element

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<sup>20</sup> For example, W. Montgomery Watt and Pierre Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain*; Jerrilynn D. Dods (ed.), *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992); Glaire D. Anderson, Mariam Rosser Owen (eds.), *Revisiting al-Andalus: Perspectives on the Material Culture of Islamic Iberia and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2007);

<sup>21</sup> Antonio Urquizar Herrera, "Literary Uses of Architecture and the Explanation of Defeat: Interpretation of the Islamic Conquest in the Context of the Construction of National Identity in Early Modern Spain," *National Identity* vol.13, no.2 (June, 2011): 109.

continued to be characteristic of *al-Andalus*. This is evidenced by the interest in Arabic poetry, in grammar, in the writing of commentaries on such typically Arab works as the *Maqâmât* of al-Harîrî, and in details of Arab genealogy. The adoption of the Malikî legal rite points in the same direction, for this was the most truly Arabian rite.

Likewise, the philosophical theology of the east had no real footing in Spain. This predominance of the Arabs and anti-intellectual element makes it all the more remarkable that there should have been such a flowering of philosophy under the Almohads. However, the reasons suggested above do not solve the mystery. Watt and Cachia maintain that the Arab element continued to be dominant until the eleventh century, and that Islamic element only exerted its full influence under the Almoravids and the Almohads.<sup>22</sup>

In *al-Andalus*, Arabic intellectual interest in science, in particular astronomy finally pervaded both Jewish and Christian intellectual spheres. The rising of interest in philosophy and its relation to religious belief and doctrine introduced astronomy to other communities, especially its relation to each respective religious calendar. They made new progresses in finding tools to compute the skies, thus uniting all three communities in scientific interchange. In addition, *al-Andalus* exhibited a particular interest in botanical and pharmacological work as a result. Astrolabes, for example, were tools for practical astronomy and altitude measurements, and were further developed in *al-Andalus*, contributing to fields including navigation and astronomy.<sup>23</sup>

Fletcher maintains that the Muslim Spain became the donor of knowledge and culture, while the western Christendom the eager recipient. The Muslims of *al-Andalus* had nothing to learn from the Christian neighbors and were lacking curiosity about them. Geographers' account of Christian Spain tended to be cursory in the extreme: "it was cold, the inhabitants were barbarians who ate pigs, you could get slaves there – that was about the sum of it. The Muslim discovery of Europe did not begin until several centuries after the fall of Granada. However, Christian reactions to the Muslims as Muslims must be distinguished from western interest in the knowledge that arrived by way of *al-Andalus*."<sup>24</sup>

During the Muslim period, as travel was usually easy, it was normal for the scholars of *al-Andalus* to have studied in the great centers of Islamic learning, such Medina and Baghdad. The introduction of canons of taste from Baghdad by Ziryab in the ninth century does not seem to have greatly influenced the intellectual and religious life. More important was al-Hakam II's construction of a great library and the encouragement given about the same period to scholars from the heartlands to settle in *al-Andalus*. This eventually created the foundation on which a more comprehensive structure of distinctively Islamic learning could be raised. The growth of specifically Islamic thought and feeling which this made possible was nurtured by both Almoravids and Almohads because of their religious outlook.<sup>25</sup>

One of the most important cultural traditions in *al-Andalus* was literary works, such as poetry. The poetry, which under the Umayyads had established itself in new soil, growing and building up energy, developed significantly in the late tenth and the eleventh centuries. Even though this was a period of political disintegration and instability, poetry did not immediately rise and fall with every fluctuation of political sphere. And it is an interesting fact that under the party kings (*ta'ifas*) there were several courts, each rivaling the others in the patronage of arts, gave scope for many poets to prove their talents and obtain their rewards.<sup>26</sup> The most famous of all Andalusian poets was IbnZaydun (1003-1070) who expressed with much tenderness and delicacy his unhappy love for the princess Wallâdah, herself a poetess. The theologian IbnHazzam (994-1064) also composed a treatise on love, *The Ring of the Dove*, illustrating each of the aspects of love and the experience of lovers with verses by him and by others, as has been mentioned earlier.

In this literary sphere, particularly distinguished was the court of the 'Abbâsids in Seville, where the tone was set by princes who were themselves gifted poets, by al-Mu'tadîd (1012-1069), a poet of

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<sup>22</sup> W. Montgomery Watt and Pierre Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), 166-167.

<sup>23</sup> Watt and Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain*, 167.

<sup>24</sup> Richard Fletcher, *Moorish Spain* (Berkeley & California: University of California Press, 1992), 174.

<sup>25</sup> Watt and Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain*, 167.

<sup>26</sup> Watt and Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain*, 112.

vigorous spirit capable of coining some striking similes, and even more by his son al-Mu‘tamid (1040-1095). al-Mu‘tamid gave fine expression to the fashionable theme of his time before he was reduced to captivity by the Almoravids. In his service also was a close friend who he promoted to high office but who eventually fell out of favor and was put to death, Ibn ‘Ammâr (1031-1083). His verses have a certain grandeur and resonance. To his court came also Ibn Hamdis (1055-1132) when driven out of Sicily by the Normans.<sup>27</sup> The golden age of Andalusian poetry is generally believed to have declined with the eleventh century. However, brilliant poets continued to flourish under the Berber dynasties, not least in the provinces. The most outstanding was Ibn Khafaja of Alcira (1050-1139), particularly renowned for his descriptions of gardens.

Watt and Cachia maintain that it is tempting to connect this flowering of poetry with life in the secular, tolerant principalities of the *mulûk al-tawâ‘if* (the party kings), or rather with the leisure of their courts. It is also easy to relate its subsequent loss of vitality to the reactionary and repressive character of the Berber dynasties, as their rulers are often depicted as semi-barbarians lacking the capability of appreciating the subtleties of the Andalusian mind.<sup>28</sup> These assertions are to some degree true, but against their unqualified acceptance must be set the facts that life under the *mulûk al-tawâ‘if* was not without its seamy side of base intrigue and gnawing insecurity, that the successors of Yûsuf ibn Tashfîn were quick to adopt Andalusian attitudes and offer their patronage to poets, and that poetry did not in fact significantly change its character as one dynasty succeeded another. However, in terms of cultural developments in *al-Andalus*, these appear to have been determined (except in political sphere) almost entirely by the culture of the heartlands, though by different strands at different times.<sup>29</sup>

In linguistic field, *al-Andalus* can be said to have been a place of mixture between languages. Originally, the grammatical structure and lexical capabilities of Arabic made it subject to early translations from Syriac, which was translated from the original Greek texts. In the analysis of Mann, Glick, and Dodds, the similarities in structure between the two languages (Arabic and Greek) allowed it to translate abstract ideas and express them coherently, eventually inducting Aristotelianism as philosophy itself.<sup>30</sup> The trend of translating philosophy continued in the Iberian Peninsula, and eventually included Jewish authors like Maimonides, who wrote in Arabic. This was later on translated into Hebrew. All of these evidences of the creative productivity of the *convivencia* time period are a testament to the potential in a multicultural society rooted in traditionalism. The implications for such findings are very relevant to the discussions of political theory even today, despite the seemingly outdated government under which it flourished.<sup>31</sup>

It is worthy to note that the academic interactions culminated in enormous efforts in translation. These efforts make clear the security that each culture must have felt with its own identity. Sharing knowledge in sciences is a very real sign of trust, and implies a sense of “academic camaraderie” or friendship. It represents a willingness to share that requires confidence in one’s social position, stability and status, as well as social interaction on a personal level. King Alfonso X of Castile, 1252-1284, commissioned a group of translators to collaborate in translating a whole host of texts into Castilian. The court provided patronage for their efforts.<sup>32</sup>

While there were translation endeavors before this particular group, Alfonso X’s team received more visibility and protection. Using Castilian as the shared language of the translators and Toledo as the nourishing culture, Alfonso created a multireligious team to incorporate the Jewish and Muslim learning into Spanish culture. While the teams examined many abstract intellectual writings, their work with each other proved fruitful and of great academic value. Working together for the king consolidated the knowledge of three religions into one readable form, exemplifying the *convivencia* mindset of a sharing spirit coupled with a pride and belonging to one entity.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Watt and Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain*, 113.

<sup>28</sup> Watt and Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain*, 113.

<sup>29</sup> Watt and Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain*, 113.

<sup>30</sup> Mann, Glick and Dodds, *Convivencia*, 103.

<sup>31</sup> Mann, Glick and Dodds, *Convivencia*, 104.

<sup>32</sup> María Rosa Menocal, Jerrilynn D. Dodds, Abigail Krasner Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 206.

<sup>33</sup> Menocal, Dodds, Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 206.

More specifically, each translation imbued the culture that it represented into the meaning of the epitaph. The Latin translation, for example, proclaims Ferdinand as king of “Hispania”, while the Arabic translation calls him the leader of “Andalus”. The Hebrew translation says that he seized all of “Sefarad”, and finally, the Castilian translation declares him ruler of “all Spain.” The mere fact that such distinctions were allowed is a telling piece of evidence of the openness of the time to different cultures and their respective beliefs. Translation efforts and their profound implications for mutual understanding extended into the field of philosophy.

While Islamic art displayed mathematical patterns as representative of philosophical values, it also demonstrated that this math was crucial to the art, because of its status as a universal language. Narrative imagery was replaced by abstract symbolism in many churches and synagogues, as a result of the Islamic rule of *al-Andalus*, and the reappropriation of many buildings, as well as attempts by leaders to appease their varied subjects. Mozarabs, or Christians governed by Muslim rule, did not explicitly convert to Islam (nor did their descendants), but adopted elements of the Arabic lifestyle and integrated them into their own.<sup>34</sup>

From this perspective, it can be argued that the medieval period cannot be divided into sacred and secular as religion penetrated all aspects of society in Spain at the time. The fluidity of faith, society, economy, and politics blend together in a way that could only truly be understood by medieval contemporaries, experiencing the messages, the architecture, and the art, first hand. This teleological imposition imposed by modern art historians inhibits the portrayal of the cultural stimulation, aggression, and acceptance of medieval Spain as seen through the three different religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

It is also important to consider the perception of early modern towards mosques and other Islamic structures that should be analyzed in relation to the political visibility of these buildings, and any arguments against Islam. Many of these ‘unfavorable texts’ were inside the first history books written in early Imperial Spain. Commonly, the Islamic historical period of particular cities was only narrated through the history of Christian resistance, and Muslims were considered only through the idea of confrontation.

According to Herrera, the treatment of Islamic buildings as *lieux de memoire* (place of memory) for the Christian community involved the transformation of their symbolic contents. Despite the changes of use and the architectural or ornamental transformations, the ideological and cultural meaning of these monuments required further fabrication by the Christians.<sup>35</sup> While it is indeed difficult to locate exactly who deserves credit for a certain aesthetic style, the ornamental motif definitely speaks to a profound intimacy with Islam from the beginning of its rule in 711. One of the most emblematic examples of this three-way exchange of ideas is the church Santa María la Blanca in Toledo, originally the Ibn Shushan Synagogue, or the Congregational Synagogue of Toledo. The Toledan Jews for whom the synagogue was constructed spoke Arabic fluently, and considered many factors of Islamic culture as theirs, too. Its understated linear program reflects the modest synagogue architectural traditions of the time, but “only in the carved stucco capitals of the piers does the decoration erupt in what might be considered opulent and mannered fantasies of pinecones and interwoven bands in massive and deeply drilled forms”<sup>36</sup>

There has been a complex meaning inside any form of Islamic buildings which were mostly marked by geometric design. While the structure is now owned and run by the Catholic Church, the building itself speaks to the complex cultural history that nourished it. This visual vocabulary began under the Almohad dynasty, and after centuries of rule, eventually integrated into the Jewish and Christian culture. At this point, the style lost its primarily religious implications, as it was adopted by other religions to further political and aesthetic goals. And while Mann, Glick, and Dodds find that some historians believe that “The Jews in Spain would never exercise that level of cultural sympathy with

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<sup>34</sup>Menocal, Dodds, Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 206.

<sup>35</sup> Antonio Urquizar Herrera, “Literary Uses of Architecture and the Explanation of Defeat: Interpretation of the Islamic Conquest in the Context of the Construction of National Identity in Early Modern Spain,” *National Identity* vol.13, no.2 (June, 2011): 110.

<sup>36</sup>Mann, Glick and Dodds, *Convivencia*, 118; Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ, 1979); Glick and Oriel Pi-Sunyer, “Acculturation as an Explanatory Concept in Spanish History,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History II* (1969): 136-154.

the architectural traditions of the Christians however long they survived under their rule,<sup>37</sup> it is undeniable that both Christian and Jewish subjects in *al-Andalus* embraced this language of Islamic design. Santa María la Blanca is one of four distinctly Mudéjar Sephardic synagogues in Iberia.

More specifically, for example, the synagogue of Córdoba, built in 1315, contains a wall inscribed with the lyrics of the “Song of Songs.” This scriptural text, as it is carved into the wall, demonstrates an intimate understanding of Islamic design tradition. As the viewer attempts to differentiate between what is abstract and what is writing within the image, and simultaneously tries to gain religious meaning from this exercise, he enters into an extended, meditative relationship with the work of art, in which writing and design, taken together, become the messengers of significance.”<sup>38</sup> This profound understanding of Islamic aesthetic practices demonstrates the integral part that it played in the Córdoba Jewish population of the time. The relationship between the two cultures was not superficial or simply neighborly. After years of exchanging ideas and the resulting changes in thought and perspective, the two cultures overlapped in many of their priorities and way of life.

As generally conceived, the use of Islamic motifs in non-Muslim setting is referred to as *Mudejar* (from the Arabic *mudajjan*, ‘domesticated’). The term *Mudejar* was first used in 1859 to describe an artistic style, but it derives from a demographic condition caused by the Recon quest. As Christian rulers won larger swatches of territory along the loosely defined frontier that divided *al-Andalus* from the northern kingdom of Leon, Castile, Navarre, Aragon, and Catalonia, entire communities of Muslims stayed on often governed under surrender treaty.<sup>39</sup>

Ruggles maintains that although the Muslims were subject to their new lords, laws, and taxes, not only the individuals but also the social fabric that united them continued intact in many cases. Thus, there was a continuity of marriage practices, names, clothing, cuisine, religious observance, daily economy, city plans, and artisanal expertise. Significance examples of churches and other structures built in cities with large *Mudejar* population exhibit the ornamental elegance and even the structural typology of Islamic architecture. The thirteenth-century churches of San Pedro in Aragon have a rectangular brick tower that resembles mosque minaret of *al-Andalus*. Such buildings, Islamic in style but built for Christian patron, are *Mudejar*.<sup>40</sup>

Still according to Ruggles, *Mudejar* as an official style for churches and palaces began at the same time that Gothic emerged. *Mudejar* churches were typically built just off the pilgrimage route, where church patronage was more local, more Spanish than French. In Teruel (Aragon), for example, several churches had rectangular tower like the minaret of mosque. Ruggles maintains that buildings built in the *Mudejar* style reflected the idea of “Spanish” identity, even before the emergence of the idea of modern nationalism (nation-state). The idea went back to even as early as the ninth century up to the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, during which the resistance to more politically powerful and culturally attractive Islamic culture in the south were launched by French religious and political authorities, representing a symbol of Christian identity. The Christian rulers of Spain, like those in Seville, sought an indigenous Iberian identity as the alternative to the dominance of French culture, to make a kind of political balance.<sup>41</sup> By the mid-thirteenth century, much of the Iberian Peninsula had been conquered, the political threat of Islam was diminished, and the rulers of newly conquered territories found themselves the stewards of built landscapes that were profoundly Islamic in character. They did not destroy the well constructed fortresses and city walls and the palaces and mosques, the Christian rulers appropriated these works and converted them to their own use.

The *Mudejar* style was probably adopted in northern Castile, Leon, and Aragon as a form of resistance to increasing French dominance and may reflect divisions in political allegiance among the Christian royal families. Pedro may have admired the *Mudejar* style because it was not Gothic and

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<sup>37</sup>Mann, Glick and Dodds, *Convivencia*, 118.

<sup>38</sup>Mann, Glick and Dodds, *Convivencia*, 123.

<sup>39</sup> For discussion on the influence of Islamic architecture on Christian buildings, such as churches and royal palaces of Christian kingdom, especially that of Seville, see D. Fairchild Ruggles, “Alcazar of Seville and Mudéjar Architecture,” *Gesta* Vo. 43, No. 2 (2004), 87-98.

<sup>40</sup>Ruggles, “Alcazar of Seville and Mudéjar Architecture,”98.

<sup>41</sup>Ruggles, “Alcazar of Seville and Mudéjar Architecture,” 96. For example, after the conquest of Seville in 1248, the prayer hall of the Seville mosque was not replaced by a cathedral until 1519, and the Giralda minaret was preserved and used as a bell tower. And when the mosque of Cordoba was remodeled beginning in 1523, the architect who gutted part of its interior was severely criticized by his patron, Charles V.

therefore not imbued with French identity; however, it is also possible that he chose *Mudejar* because it was identifiably Andalusí –like Pedro himself. Pedro was very much influenced and inspired by his closeness with many Islamic landmarks left in Seville, from certain parts of his royal palace, the mosque and the *gilarda*, as well as his alliance with the ruler of Granada. More specifically, despite his adoption of Gothic architecture in his royal palace (Alcazar), Pedro was much more identified with his choice of Islamic architecture that gave him a specifically Andalusí identity. He reconstructed his palace with the inspiration from Alhambra’s architecture. Although the Alcazar lacked the dramatic landscape of the Alhambra, the architectural affiliation with the Alhambra was very clear. In Ruggles’ analysis, “Pedro’s decision to adopt *Mudejar* was not made by default; rather, it expressed an important aspect of his cultural identity that transcended any religious associations. By the fourteenth century, the “Islamicate” artistic forms of *Mudejar* were perceived, not as religious signs, but as cultural expression that conveyed an emerging sense of ‘national’ identity that, even today, find its strongest expression in Andalusia.”<sup>42</sup>

#### 4.2. The Construction of Spanish Cultural Identity

Most Spanish historians, for most the twentieth century, have approached, made categorization of, and referred to, any historical event that occurred in the south of the Iberian Peninsula between the years 711 and 1492 (and later) as “*al-Andalus*.” The term substantially represents diverse phenomena such as social behavior, political entities and artistic manifestations, belonging to different historical moments and contextual situations, from the early period of conquest, the literary and scientific achievements particularly under ‘Abd al-Rahmân III’s caliphate, the social mobility enjoyed by the Jewish people during the reign of the party kings or rulers (*mulûk al-tawâ’if*), to the defeat of Granada and the expulsion of the Moriscos.<sup>43</sup>

With regard to debates over Spanish identity, there have been at least two “historiographic positions.” The first is that of those who defend the idea of Spanish identity which is purely based and founded upon European Christian traditions. The second is that of those who think the opposite, suggesting the importance of the past Andalusian history. This debate highlights the varying perceptions that are utilized to examine this history, and the basis for a modern Spanish identity. It is vital that we look closely at how these subjects formed their identities through evidences of their habits, in order to understand how they define themselves.

Most present-day scholarship on *al-Andalus* seems to be moving away from such essentializing tendencies and to espousing a more subtle understanding.<sup>44</sup> Burgeoning criticism of the simplistic twofold perspective suggests that the debate needs to be disentangled from the development of nationalist myths, and that it does not make sense to attempt to elucidate the medieval situation in terms of modern ideas concerning national and religious identity. Moreover, the tolerance/persecution dichotomy (glorifying/depreciating) has the effect of conferring an aura of uniqueness upon *al-Andalus* that recent comparative studies of medieval Iberia and other political entities in the medieval Mediterranean have come to question.<sup>45</sup>

Discussions concerning the treatment of religion in historical representations of *al-Andalus* have in many ways conveyed a straightforward identification between *al-Andalus* and Islam. The result is that *al-Andalus* is described as a “Muslim” phenomenon. It not easy to claim that it was not, but at the same time it is necessary to contend that conferring upon Islam an unequivocal role in fostering, for example, more tolerant government and higher literacy rates than the rest of Europe, simply because *al-Andalus* was ruled by Muslims would be misleading.

But how and why has this long chapter in the peninsula’s history come to be so important to the people of Spain today? It can be suggested that this is directly due to the fact that the “*al-*

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<sup>42</sup>Ruggles, “Alcazar of Seville and Mudejar Architecture,” 97.

<sup>43</sup>Justin Stearns, “Representing and Remembering al-Andalus: Some Historical Considerations Regarding the End of Time and the Making of Nostalgia,” *Medieval Encounters*, 15, (2009), 355-374.

<sup>44</sup>A good and recent example of a more nuanced academic discourse can be found in Maria Rosa Menocal, “Visions of al-Andalus,” in *The Literature of Al-Andalus*, Maria Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindl and Michael Sells (eds.) (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1-24.

<sup>45</sup>See, for example, Maya Soifer, “Beyond Convivencia: Critical Reflections on the Historiography of Interfaith Relations in Christian Spain,” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 1(1) (2009): 19-35.

*Andalusmyth*” in its various forms has been used to legitimize ideas concerning the nature of Spanish identity and that this has had important repercussions on the building of nationalist discourses.

While they use specifically Spanish history to construct a theory of Spanish identity, we can believe that the two examples of subjects under *convivencia* and *conversos* offer a template from which we may theorize about the process of identification more generally and reactions to changes in the infrastructure of political, religious, social, and economic contexts. While the discussion about *convivencia* may indicate a systemic reliance on religious toleration, this can hardly be the full explanation for the three cultures living side-by-side.

All three cultures (Christian, Jewish, Muslim) filled deficiencies with borrowed components from the tangential margins of their communities. With this idea, Castro introduces the notion that a *convivencia* type society –one rooted in separate communities existing and sharing together – is able to gain new components without losing pieces of them. He notes, “the Spanish Christian, without anywhere to go outside his own beliefs, saw that it was impossible to extract from the Christian community all that was necessary to survive; he had to accept as inescapable fact various superiorities offered by the Muslim and Jewish ways of life.”

This example of sharing habits between cultures could apply to capabilities in the economic sphere – different communities excelled in different fields. The remarkable cultural exchange that took place in architecture, design, philosophy, and other important fields also prove the ways that different cultures recognize their own respective needs and how they then shared these solutions with each other. One populace can identify within itself a void, and satisfy this by borrowing from another community. These communities exchange such products with confidence and security because each is established legally as an entity, and its members do not expose themselves to accusations of heresy, so long as they continue to identify with their group. Social or aesthetic phenomena such as Mozarabism and *Mudejarism*, whose hybrid essence, define their respective denominations. As we can see, there are many conceptions of what this period meant, both to its subjects and to future generations looking back in retrospect.

Marta Dominguez Diaz has explored how Andalusian past can be used as historical representation for Spanish national identity. Spanish identity seemingly cannot be separated from the history of *al-Andalus*. Scholars differ from each other in the way they analyze, understand and review the relevance attributed to the historical and cultural legacy of *al-Andalus* to the modern Spanish history and identity. *Al-Andalus* has not only concerned historians, but has permeated discourses at all social and political levels. It has been problematic with regard to modern Spanish nationalism and the past Andalusian nationalism.<sup>46</sup>

In Diaz’s analysis, the Muslim presence (i.e. significant parts of the population being Muslims and ruled by Muslim) which has endured for eight centuries can no more be ignored in discussions concerning Spain’s past and they cannot be brushed aside in any serious discussion about her present. Diaz quotes the historian of *al-Andalus* Mercedes Garcia-Arenal who observes that the legacy of *al-Andalus* “appeals to the emotions and is closely related to contemporary matters.”<sup>47</sup>

We can glean some insight into the construction of identity as influenced by external factors, how subjects of this process react to their surroundings, and how they relate to our modern debate about different ways to discuss and form an identity. We will see through historical investigation into the Iberian Peninsula that social identities do, indeed, change according to their surroundings, and the extent to which we are constituted of a kind of mix of partial identities made up of both individual and

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<sup>46</sup>Marta Dominguez Diaz, “The Islam of ‘Our’ Ancestors: An ‘Imagined’ Morisco Past Evoked in Today’s Andalusian Conversion Narratives,” *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 2 (2013): 137-164. Diaz refers to nationalism to denote a shared sense of identification of a group of individuals with a “nation” (i.e. a community of people who share a mental image of a certain cultural and historical affinity). As has been known, the nation has a territorial demarcation; when speaking of Spanish nationalism, Diaz refers to identification with a territory that coincides with the modern borders of Spain. However, when speaking of Andalusian nationalism Diaz reflects a sense of belonging connected to the southern region of Andalusia. For discussion on imagined communities, see Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

<sup>47</sup>Mercedes Garcia-Arenal, “Moriscos and Jewish Converts: Religion as Cultural Identity,” in *Intercultural Dialogue Between Europe and the Mediterranean* (Barcelona: Institut Europeu de la Mediterranea, 2010).

community based developments, according to our various social and ideological investments. In modern, free nations, we are able to associate with various groups, rather than being politically or traditionally restricted to one religious community. Our freedom of communication encourages this, and demonstrates a different kind of pluralist view of identity construction.

It is important to keep in mind that if we consider any of these issues from a purely culturalist, social, or individualist standpoint, we will be missing the whole picture. Identity construction is special because of its variability of form and influence. This is made especially clear when we understand that we can experience both individualist and community-based conceptions of the self, in the same society, in the same lifetime, even in the same individual. Both philosophies do have room for nuanced interpretations because that is how they exist in reality.

Architecture Synagogues and churches of this time began adopting some architectural and design styles from their Islamic counterparts, the mosques. Islamic aesthetic tradition favors the geometric arts above the use of iconic and direct images. Abstract patterns, meditative designs, and symbolism were largely used for creative expression within the walls of mosques.

While this is certainly evidenced here, all three groups did not equally share the exchange. The subjects under Islamic rule, for example, would have exhibited more signs of Islamic culture than of another group, largely a result of political motives. Mozarabs, for example were allowed to construct churches under Islamic rule. Often, these structures contained the characteristic red and white horseshoe arches<sup>48</sup> because Mozarabs of the time and place had adopted it as their own. They were also paying homage to the ruling party of the time and the symbol served as a reminder of the strength of Islamic leaders of the past; both in and out of the Iberian Peninsula. They were a reflection both of the interactions between the groups under *convivencia*, and of esteem for their leaders. In many ways, the *convivencia* paradigm prefigures modern ideas of multiculturalism, among other things.<sup>48</sup>

It is also of importance to connect architecture with identity. In the context of using architectural legacies for negotiating identity, Herrera argues that in the sixteenth-century the Muslims was a fictional stereotyped character defined and constructed as barbaric. The common European characterization of the Islamic culture through the concept of otherness acquired some special features in early modern Spain. The *Reconquista* and the moriscos made the Islamic presence of the Peninsula more familiar. The Muslim was *other*, yet he was *our other*. However, the Muslim was also the other that had defeated Christian Spaniards, and who had ruled the Iberian Peninsula. This closeness caused a special animosity against them. The repeated references of the texts to the barbarian nature of Islamic architecture show his conflict. Political events like the battle of Lepanto (1571), the revolt of the moriscos (1568-1571) and their expulsion (1609) helped shape the otherness of the Islamic culture.<sup>49</sup>

The shift in the appreciation of the Islamic legacy was accompanied by the physical seizure of man of the buildings. The cathedral inside the mosque of Cordoba had its corresponding peer works in the belfry of the Giralda of Seville, and Charles V's Renaissance palace in the Alhambra of Granada. In addition, discourses of conceptual appropriation were written to provide myths about martyrs and inventions of presumed holy pre-Islamic images. "All these efforts were sustained and reinforced by similar projects of memory management."<sup>50</sup> In this context, in Herrera's analysis, the deception about the Christian transformation of the mosque of Cordoba must be considered a strategy of fabrication of identity through Spain's monumental heritage. In Spanish case, whereas Roman stone could legitimate empire, the interpretation of Islamic buildings was strongly conditioned by the identity arguments. While the construction of Christian Spanish national identity was partly founded upon the narratives of destruction and defeat and the references to Barbarian otherness, Islamic remains (as memories of this civilization) were interrupted through the framework of identity.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Mann, Glick and Dodds, *Convivencia*, 126.

<sup>49</sup> A. Urquizar Herrera, "Literary Uses of Architecture and the Explanation of Defeat: Interpretation of the Islamic Conquest in the Context of the Construction of National identity in early Modern Spain," *National Identities*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (June, 2011), 119.

<sup>50</sup>Herrera, "Literary Uses of Architecture and the Explanation of Defeat," 119.

<sup>51</sup>Herrera, "Literary Uses of Architecture and the Explanation of Defeat," 119.

## 5. FINAL REMARKS

In today's Spain, there are at least three types of cultural views or "ideological positions": a) those who are heirs of the Franco political tradition, preserving an *Hispanidad* stance which often involves a xenophobic discourse critical of the newly consolidated pluralistic map of national, cultural and religious identities within the country; b) those who form part of the bourgeoisie's traditional left and have inherited the Europeanizing tradition which orientalizes Spain with the aim of censuring the political culture of the country. For these, the *al-Andalus* heritage functions negatively, impeding Spain's progress towards a laic societal model, and for this reason it should be eradicated; and c) those who are part of a popular, younger, post-democratic leftist trend which is supportive of a multicultural society that revisits the "*al-Andalus* myth", presenting it as a romanticized ideal of Muslim Spain, a cultural *mélange* of Jews, Muslims and Christians coexisting peacefully. It evokes this historical icon in order to revive it, so that *al-Andalus* becomes a symbol of good practice in the management of diversity, and a nationalist emblem for future generations of Andalusians.

The "*al-Andalus* myth," with one of its oldest national foundational fables, that of the *Reconquista*, was recurrently used to attempt to provide "scientific" legitimacy to this politico-religious agenda. After almost forty years of dictatorial rule (1936-1975), a reinvigorated uniform idea of Spanish national identity framed in terms of a dual loyalty to monarchy and church had been consolidated. Some might be surprised that the integration of *al-Andalus* into Spain is even problematic. One might expect this to be yet another case of Orientalism, in the sense of a western mythology that simplifies and distances the other (this can be compared to Edward Said's *Orientalism* 1978). From a particularly orientalist approach, Spain is regarded as the "Orient" for Europe; or it is regarded part of Romanticism's "Near East" (for those who want to explain today's "Middle East").

From discussion it can be clearly observed that debates on Spanish history and identity and its relation to *al-Andalus* or Islamic past in fact resulted in what can be called epistemic communities, each of which shared the same vision or the same methodological approach. The polemical debate among different scholars demonstrate the prevalence of their break or rupture from each other, not merely in chronological sense, but also more importantly in epistemic one. Continuity and discontinuity are very evident either in the context of historical trajectories of Spain from Islamic past to modern time, or in the context of epistemic communities that share the same viewpoint of their own.

From Foucauldian perspective, the break between those who advocate and those who challenge the notion of *convivencia* in social, religious, cultural and literary spheres is to a large extent determined by power/knowledge relation. The Castrian and Albornozan different interpretations of the Spanish history and identity reflect the interplay between their respective relation to power and their attitude to contemporary political atmosphere to the production of historical knowledge. And the above propositional assertion is yet additional and complimentary to the perspective of ideology-based production of knowledge, as being represented by scholars and historians involved in the discourse.

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