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THE ECHOES OF AL-ANDALUS

Ibn Rushd, Ibn Barrajan,
Ibn al-'Arabī, Ibn Tufayl

A DREAM OF AL- ANDALUS

Tales of daily life, ancient fables, and
hidden gardens

THE ARTISAN'S LEGACY

Music in al-Andalus, Truths
Engraved in Stone

ORIGIN

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FROM THE EDITORS



This issue of our journal is devoted to the rich intellectual, cultural, and spiritual legacy of al-Andalus. Far beyond being merely a geographical space or a historical period, al-Andalus represents a unique civilizational experience shaped by scholarship, philosophy, literature, art, music, and intercultural encounters. Through the diverse contributions gathered in this volume, we aim to revisit this multifaceted heritage from different perspectives and disciplines.

The articles featured in this issue remind us that civilizations endure not only through political power, but also through the ideas they produce, the knowledge they preserve, and the cultural memory they leave behind. From studies examining the psychological dimensions of religious identity in al-Andalus to discussions on the relationship between reason and revelation in Ibn Rushd, from the mystical thought of Ibn al-‘Arabī and Ibn Barrājān, this volume brings together different aspects of the intellectual and spiritual world of al-Andalus. In addition, this issue explores the transformative power of language, the cultural journey of music from East to West, and questions of migration, identity, and belonging that continue to resonate in the modern world.

One of the most valuable aspects of preparing this issue has been witnessing the intellectual curiosity and dedication of our contributors. Each article included here represents not only an academic effort, but also a sincere attempt to engage critically with history, culture, and thought. We hope that these studies will encourage readers to approach al-Andalus not merely as a lost civilization of the past, but as a living intellectual and cultural legacy whose influence continues to shape contemporary discussions.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our Vice Rector, Prof. Dr. Kaan Orhan, for his valuable contribution to this issue. We are also honored to include international contributions from both Spain and Argentina, including the contribution of Dr. Esteban Greif, whose work has enriched this volume with a broader academic perspective and strengthened the intercultural spirit of our journal.

We extend our special thanks to Asst. Prof. F. Merve Çınar for her interview on Spanish horseback pilgrims and for generously sharing photographs from her personal archive with our journal. In addition, we would like to thank Dr. Enes Ateş and Hilal Aksoy for kindly contributing to this issue by sharing valuable photographs from their personal archives, which helped us reflect the visual and cultural atmosphere of al-Andalus throughout this volume.

As editors, we hope this volume will offer readers both an engaging academic experience and an opportunity to reflect on memory, coexistence, identity, and cultural continuity through the enduring legacy of al-Andalus.

With best regards,



AL-ANDALUS: WHERE KNOWLEDGE BECAME CIVILIZATION



When we think about al-Andalus, we often imagine magnificent mosques, elegant arches, flowing fountains, and cities illuminated by art and science. Yet al-Andalus was far more than a geographical region or a historical period. It was a civilization built upon the belief that knowledge, faith, aesthetics, and human dignity could coexist harmoniously.



For centuries, al-Andalus became one of the world's greatest centers of learning. In cities such as Córdoba, Granada, and Seville, scholars from different backgrounds gathered around a shared intellectual horizon. Muslims, Christians, and Jews contributed together to philosophy, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, architecture, literature, and theology. Libraries flourished, translations multiplied, and scientific curiosity was encouraged rather than feared.

At a time when much of the world struggled with intellectual fragmentation, al-Andalus cultivated a culture of dialogue. Ancient Greek philosophy was translated into Arabic, interpreted by Muslim scholars, and later transmitted to Europe through al-Andalus. In many ways, the intellectual awakening of medieval Europe was deeply connected to the scholarly atmosphere of al-Andalus.

From the perspective of theology, al-Andalus teaches us a timeless lesson: faith and knowledge are not rivals. On the contrary, the search for truth through science, philosophy, and reflection can become a form of spiritual responsibility. The Qur'anic emphasis on reading, thinking, observing nature, and seeking wisdom found one of its most remarkable expressions in Andalusian civilization.

Among the greatest intellectual figures of al-Andalus was Ibn Rushd, who defended the harmony between reason and revelation. His writings argued that philosophy and faith should not contradict one another because both ultimately seek truth. His ideas influenced not only Islamic theology but also the intellectual foundations of Europe for centuries.

Another remarkable figure was Ibn al-'Arabī, born in Murcia, whose spiritual philosophy transformed Islamic mysticism. His understanding of unity, compassion, and the inner journey of humanity continues to influence theological and spiritual thought across the Muslim world. Ibn al-'Arabī once wrote:

“He who knows himself knows his Lord.”

Man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa Rabbahu. This statement reflects one of the central spiritual dimensions of Andalusian thought – the idea that the pursuit of knowledge is not merely intellectual, but also a journey toward deeper moral and spiritual awareness.

One of the most fascinating aspects of al-Andalus was its understanding of balance. Science developed together with ethics. Art flourished alongside spirituality. Architecture reflected not only technical mastery but also metaphysical depth. The geometric patterns, gardens, and calligraphy of Andalusian structures remind us that beauty itself can become a language of belief.



Today, in an age shaped by artificial intelligence, digital transformation, and rapid technological change, al-Andalus still speaks to us. Modern societies generate enormous amounts of information, yet they often struggle to transform information into wisdom. Al-Andalus reminds us that civilizations become truly meaningful only when knowledge serves humanity.

For students of theology, al-Andalus is not merely a historical memory; it is also an intellectual invitation. It encourages young scholars to think beyond boundaries, to engage with science without losing ethics, and to approach different cultures with confidence rather than fear. Its legacy demonstrates that openness to knowledge does not weaken identity; instead, it enriches and strengthens it.

As we reflect on al-Andalus today, perhaps the most important question is not why that civilization declined, but how its spirit of curiosity, coexistence, and intellectual courage can inspire the future, because civilizations survive not only through power, but also through their ability to cultivate wisdom, compassion, and beauty together.

Al-Andalus was not simply a place in history.
It was a way of thinking.

Prof. Dr. Kaan ORHAN
Vice Rector, Ankara
University





THE LAST LETTER OF AL-ANDALUS: ALJAMIADO LITERATURE

By Asst. Prof. Tuğba ÖZOĞLU



When al-Andalus is mentioned, what usually comes to mind is the splendor of the Alhambra Palace, the scholarly circles of Córdoba, the philosophy of Ibn Rushd, or the mystical world of Ibn al-ʿArabī. Yet the story of a civilization is not limited to its periods of glory and prosperity. Sometimes, the real story lies hidden within the traces left behind by people struggling quietly to survive during times of decline and dissolution. Aljamiado texts constitute one of the most sorrowful yet fascinating legacies of the history of al-Andalus.

Following the Reconquista, Muslims lost their political authority and gradually faced increasing religious and cultural pressure. Learning, writing, and even speaking Arabic became progressively restricted, and specifically practicing an Islamic identity turned dangerous.

Despite these pressures, however, the Muslims in al-Andalus did not entirely lose their cultural memory. Although Moriscos spoke Arabic in daily life, as they began to write in Castilian, they also gradually began to forget Arabic. They desired to secretly preserve, maintain, and pass on their culture and religion to future generations. Thus, there emerged the unique literary tradition known as Aljamiado.

At first glance, these texts may appear to be merely examples of a linguistic transition. In reality, however, they carry a much deeper significance. Aljamiado became the final refuge of a disappearing identity. Even when people could no longer think in Arabic, they sought to preserve their prayers, religious knowledge, stories, and collective memory within the protective world of Arabic letters. In this sense, the script itself became more than a writing system; it transformed into a symbol of belonging and resistance.



Aljamiado texts contain a wide range of material, from religious instruction and prophetic narratives to moral advice and reflections on everyday life. For this reason, these writings are not simply literary or philological documents; they are also historical testimonies reflecting the fears, hopes, and struggle for survival of an entire community. Secretly copied and circulated by hand, such texts may be regarded as some of the clearest examples of the silent resistance of the Muslims of al-Andalus.

Today, when we examine Aljamiado literature, we see not only a fragmented memory of the past but also the profound relationship between language, religion, and identity. A society may lose its land and political power, yet as long as it preserves its memory, it does not entirely disappear. The Castilian texts written in Arabic script by the Muslims of al-Andalus preserve precisely the traces of that memory.

Perhaps this is why Aljamiado texts represent the quietest yet most moving story of al-Andalus. After the grandeur of palaces and magnificent cities faded away, what remained were sometimes only a few letters. Yet within those letters continued to live the pain, resilience, and memory of an entire civilization.



BETWEEN EAST AND WEST: MEDICAL SCIENCE IN THE CRUSADER STATES



By Dr. Esteban Greif (CONICET/Universidad de Buenos Aires)

Following the European siege and capture of the Holy City on July 15, 1099, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the rest of the "Crusader states"—the *County of Edessa*, the *County of Tripoli*, and the *Principality of Antioch*—were definitively established. The Latin presence in Outremer (Old French for "Overseas") persisted until 1291, when the Crusaders were ultimately expelled by the armies of Sultan Khalīl (1263-1293), an event that concluded the history of the Crusader states in the Holy Land. Throughout these two centuries of Latin rule, new social actors—many of them originally from Europe—settled in Syria and Palestine, generating a rich and intense combination of elements and knowledge from the diverse cultures of the Mediterranean.



However, a common assumption in the study of medieval history is the association of the historical phenomenon of the Crusades with European intolerance and the rejection of the Eastern societies of the Holy Land. Viewed in this light, the Latin establishment in the Middle East between the 12th and 13th centuries has often been characterized by the segregation of local populations and the rejection of knowledge regarding the social and natural world produced by local figures and institutions. Similarly, a lack of interest in the training and production of knowledge among the Latin population in the East during the Crusades has been assumed.

However, in recent decades, this perspective has begun to be challenged and replaced by new approaches that focus on the constitution within the Crusader states of a dynamic network of knowledge exchange that served as a suitable environment for medieval scientific development.

If we concentrate on the scattered evidence concerning medical science and the presence of medical practitioners, we can affirm the importance of men and women dedicated to the art of healing in these territories. Professionals of European origin arrived in the Palestinian territories and collaborated with local doctors, forming a professional environment mutually enriched by different traditions of knowledge and shaped through encounters with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Indeed, we have different testimonies of physicians requested for their services regardless of their nationality. For example, there was a case where a local physician was employed at the court of a Frankish king in *Outremer*. A native of Jerusalem, Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd gained notable fame as a physician and astrologer in Fatimid Egypt. Towards the end of 1160, he agreed to treat Baldwin's leprosy – the future Baldwin IV (1161-1185) – after King Amalric I (1136-1174) requested that his Egyptian allies send distinguished doctors to cure his son's illness.



Similarly, it occurred that European doctors were requested by the Muslim nobility. This was the case with *Benvenutus Grapheus* of Jerusalem (ca. 1200-ca. 1290). An ophthalmologist of the late Middle Ages, he authored a treatise entitled *Ars probatissima oculorum*, which circulated widely in Latin and several vernacular languages. This physician is a compelling example of a professional of European origin who reportedly worked for an Arab sultan and, furthermore, was invited to compile a specialized volume of his knowledge by a certain "Master of Damascus."

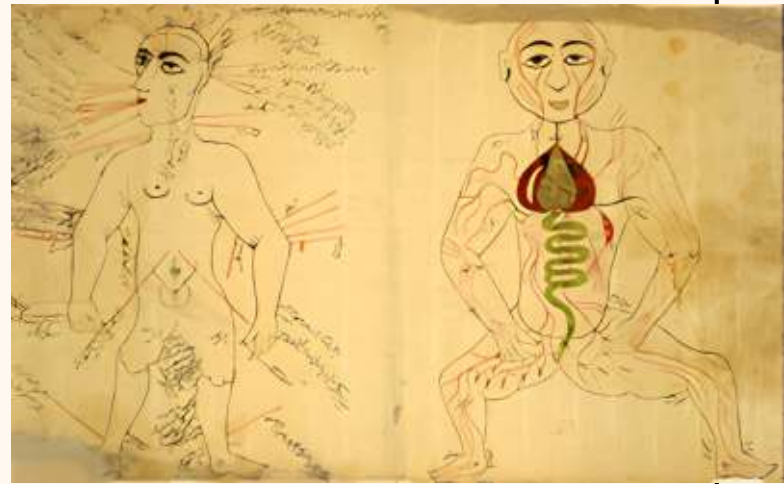


This interest in the expertise of a European professional not only challenges the common historiographical interpretation regarding the training inferiority of Western doctors, but also encourages us to view the circulation of medical knowledge as multifaceted and diverse. The fact that a professional from Damascus could take interest in the work of a European doctor who had practiced in the Latin Eastern states demonstrates the complexity of these intellectual exchanges. Therefore, we may affirm that the preferences for medical professionals based solely on geographical origin often reflect historiographical assumption rather than historical reality.

In the same sense, the production and circulation of scientific texts is an aspect that highlights the value of the Latin world of Syria and Palestine for the appropriation and production of knowledge and intellectual practices. In this regard, for example, an Arabic manuscript from the year 1196 has been found – a copy that included *The Hundred Books of the Medical Art* by Abū Sahl al-Masīhī (d. ca. 1010?) – which clearly expresses the interest that Latins in the Holy Land had in reading Eastern medical texts.

Another interesting example can be found in the medical legislation of the Crusader states. There were two articles within the *Assises de la Cour de Bourgeois* – the code that legislated on the activities of the free population in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem that was not part of the nobility – which regulated the practice of doctors. Its composition would have derived from more than one legal model, but various elements of Syrian legal custom likely served as the model for the medical section of the *Assises de la Cour de Bourgeois*. Indeed, it has been pointed out that this model was the manual of Muslim civil legislation called *ḥisbah*. This consisted of a varied set of regulations on different activities carried out in cities under Muslim rule, from commercial transactions to the civil activity of various professionals.

The *muḥtasib* was the officer in charge of ensuring this legislation was followed. This aspect reinforces the idea that the *ḥisbah* could be the substrate of the *Assises* due to the fact that in the Latin Kingdom, the responsibility to ensure that a doctor, among other professionals, met certain standards in his or her work practice was the job of the *mathessep*, an assistant of the viscount of the *Cour des Bourgeois*. The functions of the Muslim and the Frankish officials were the same, and the similarity in the names indicates the effort to adapt the Arabic term into the Old French to name the same official that the Franks inherited from the Arab administration and legislation.



In conclusion, following the European capture of Syria and Palestine at the end of the First Crusade (1099), a unique society emerged in the East that combined a series of elements from the different cultures of the Mediterranean world. This convergence facilitated the circulation and integration of texts, practices, and knowledge that enriched the professional medical work of the doctors who settled in the Holy Land, regardless of their geographical origin. According to the testimonies inherited from this period in the Latin world of *Outremer*, a rich medical and scientific culture emerged that contributed to the development of professionals and institutions dedicated to the art of healing by combining elements from the various traditions with which they came into contact.



THE IMĀM OF THE ANDALUSĪ SŪFĪS IN THE SIXTH/TWELFTH CENTURY: IBN BARRAJĀN



By Assoc. Prof. Mehmet YILDIZ

Abū al-Ḥakam Ibn Barrajan (d. 536/1141) is one of the most important and prolific *sūfī* exegetes (*mufasssir*) of *Andalusī* mystical thought in the sixth/twelfth century. The author, who is referred to in the sources by the honorific title “*Ghazālī of al-Andalus*” (*Ghazāliyyu’l-Andalus*), was most likely born in the city of Ishbīliyya (Seville), and his family origins trace back to the African continent. Possessing a multifaceted scholarly identity, he acquired profound knowledge in the fields of *Qur’ānic* variant readings (*qirā’āt*), Ḥadīth, Qur’ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), Islamic theology (*kalām*), and astronomy. He received his education in the science of Ḥadīth from Abū ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Manẓūr.

Possessing sufficient independent means to sustain himself, Ibn Barrajan remained in Seville until his forties, after which he retreated into solitude (*inqibād* / seclusion) in a village near Seville. In accordance with his reclusive personality, he continued his teaching with a small number of students in the village where he lived a life of seclusion, advising them to be renunciants (*zāhid*) toward the world and especially to keep away from rulers. Despite this life of seclusion, his growing fame attracted the attention of the state-jurist entente during the *al-Murābiṭūn* period. Due to the authority of the *Mālikī* jurists (*fuqahā*) over the rulers and their unwillingness to make room for other ideas, Ibn Barrajan was perceived as a political threat. As a result of these tensions, he was summoned to Marrakesh by Sultan ‘Alī b. Yūsuf, where he was put on trial by the *fuqahā* and imprisoned. When he died in the year 536/1141, at the instigation of the *fuqahā*, it was intended that his corpse be thrown into a garbage dump without funeral rites; however, thanks to a large crowd of people gathered by the announcement of the Sūfī Ibn Ḥirzihim, his funeral prayer was performed, and he was buried close to Ibn al-‘Arīf in Marrakesh.

The *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* constitute the absolute center of the author's thought system. He accepts divine revelation (*waḥy*) as the litmus test and ultimate reference for all kinds of knowledge. Inheriting the mystical legacy continuously transmitted from Ibn Masarra in *al-Andalus*, he systematized it through the concept of contemplative crossing (*i'tibār*) centered on the *Qur'ān* and prophecy. In his view, *i'tibār* is not a purely intellectual endeavor but a fundamental mode of apprehension representing the "crossing from the visible to the unseen" (*al-'ibra min al-shāhid ilā al-ghā'ib*), in which the intellect ascends, and which is strictly acquired through empirical experience. The foundation of his ideas regarding creation is formed by the directly Qur'ānic-based concept of "The Reality Upon Which Creation is Created" (*al-ḥaqq al-makhlūq bihi*). He elaborates on the *Allāh*-cosmos-human relationship through the concepts of the Universal Servant (*al-'abd al-kullī*) and the Particular Servant (*al-'abd al-juz'ī*). The human being is a prototype of the universe (the particular world, *al-'ālam al-juz'ī*), while the universe is the magnified state of the human being (the universal man, *al-insān al-kullī*), and all of existence is a servant standing in prayer before *Allāh*. He constructs the dialogical relationship between the human being and *Allāh* through the concepts of revelation and cosmos (*waḥy-ālam*), which he terms as "two beings" (*wujūdān*). He explains the functioning of the world through the polarities of "Opening" (*fath*), which represents the goodness originating from heaven, and "Scorching" (*fayḥ*), which represents the evils coming from hell. On the same plane, he uses the concepts of remembrance (*al-dhikr*) and strife (*al-fitna*) to indicate the dual aspects of the human being and the universe.

He authored the works named *al-Irshād*, of which very little has survived to the present day, concerning the concordance of *Ḥadīth* and the *Qur'ān*; *Sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*, in which he commented on the divine names; his comprehensive *Qur'ān* commentary (*tafsīr*), *Tanbīh al-afḥām*; and his shorter commentary, *Īdāḥ al-ḥikma*. His ideas exerted influence on many *sūfīs*, exegetes, and authors of the sciences of the *Qur'ān* (*'ulūm al-qur'ān*), most notably Ibn 'Arabī. His allusion in his commentary, *Tanbīh*, to the date when Jerusalem, which was under Crusader occupation during his time, would be recaptured by Muslims increased his fame, and these inferences were considered evidence of his mystical insight (*kashf* / spiritual unveiling).



THE STORY OF THE HAJJ ON HORSEBACK FROM AL-ANDALUS TO THE PRESENT: FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF AL- ANDALUS

By Asst. Prof. F. Merve ÇINAR

Some journeys are not merely about traversing physical distances. At times, they are journeys that build new bridges, revive memories buried in the long-dried pages of history, and bring to life narratives that were never personally witnessed yet faithfully transmitted from the past to the present. The story of the “Hajj on horseback” was precisely such a journey for us—an account that seemed to emerge from the pages of a book written five centuries ago. Indeed, the last Andalusian pilgrims recorded in history, Omar Patún and Muhammad del Corral, set out from the Spanish city of Ávila toward Mecca in the autumn of 1491. Centuries later, this memory became a source of inspiration for others.



Last year, a group of three men completed their journey, which aimed to revive the horseback pilgrimage of the Muslims of al-Andalus from five hundred years ago and to fulfill the rites of Hajj in the same spirit. Crossing more than eight thousand kilometers and numerous countries, they retraced a path that symbolically connected past and present, al-Andalus and Mecca. Two members of this meaningful journey, Abdullah Hernandez and Abdulkadir Harkassi, visited our faculty during their travels. One of the group members, Abdullah Rafael Hernández Mancha, told us that he first encountered Islam and Muslims at the age of twenty-four. He explained that while studying geography books in preparation for university entrance examinations, he noticed striking correspondences between what he read there and the verses of the Qur'an that came into his hands, a realization that eventually led him to embrace Islam. Through their journey, these Spanish pilgrims brought many forgotten stories back to life. On numerous occasions, all members of the group emphasized their sense of belonging to a heritage rooted in al-Andalus.

Their aim was both to experience a tradition as it had once been lived in its own time and to bear witness, together with all humanity, to a journey that connected time and space. Day by day, we followed their experiences on horseback through social media. As a historian of al-Andalus, witnessing this journey felt like exchanging a direct greeting with al-Andalus itself. Just as people had once set out centuries ago, they too embarked upon the road in the same spirit. Their months-long journey became far more than an effort to reach a destination; in every country, every city, and every new encounter, it transformed into a symbol of goodness and tawḥīd. In many ways, it revived the spirit of al-Andalus for us.

Exactly one year after their journey, we met with them once again as witnesses to this universal and precious experience. We wished to record our testimony. Al-Andalus still breathes—we bear witness to it.



- It has been a year since you completed your 8,000-kilometer journey on horseback. Looking back, how has this experience changed your perspective on life and faith?

Making the Hajj pilgrimage on horseback was the greatest experience of our lives. Nothing has been the same, and nothing will ever be the same again. Some mornings I wake up and wonder if that journey across Europe was a dream or reality. One morning I even jumped out of bed and ran to see if our mares were in the field. Finding they weren't there confirmed that the journey had been real. Our mares were no longer at home. The hardships of the journey, and the miracles that occurred during the most difficult moments, have not only strengthened my faith but also the faith of many who experienced the journey with us. In my daily life, everything has changed. Now I am retired and dedicate myself to my family, playing the oud, and remembering the journey with both longing and pride. I feel that I have fulfilled my obligations in life, that I have kept my promise to Allah, and that I can die peacefully whenever the Almighty calls me. I feel very serene and at peace, like someone who has paid off a great debt.

- You revived a 500-year-old pilgrimage tradition. Now that the vow is fulfilled, what does it mean to you to have successfully connected with this historical legacy?

Having done what our Muslim ancestors did, traveling from Spain to Arabia, reminded us of the difficulties they, too, must have faced. In many places, we have looked at landscapes, mountains, and even caravanserais where they must have traveled, and stayed. It is like going back in time and coming face to face with our ancestors. A unique experience.

- As modern-day Muslims from Spain, how do you define the spirit of al-Andalus in the 21st century?

The spirit of Al-Andalus is still very much alive in 21st-century Spain. It is an eight-century period in our history that has left an indelible mark on monuments, language, customs, folklore—flamenco is a prime example—and culture in general. Some try to denigrate this period, while others consider it a flourishing period of medieval culture. We are undoubtedly the children and heirs of al-Andalus, and we continually reclaim this heritage.

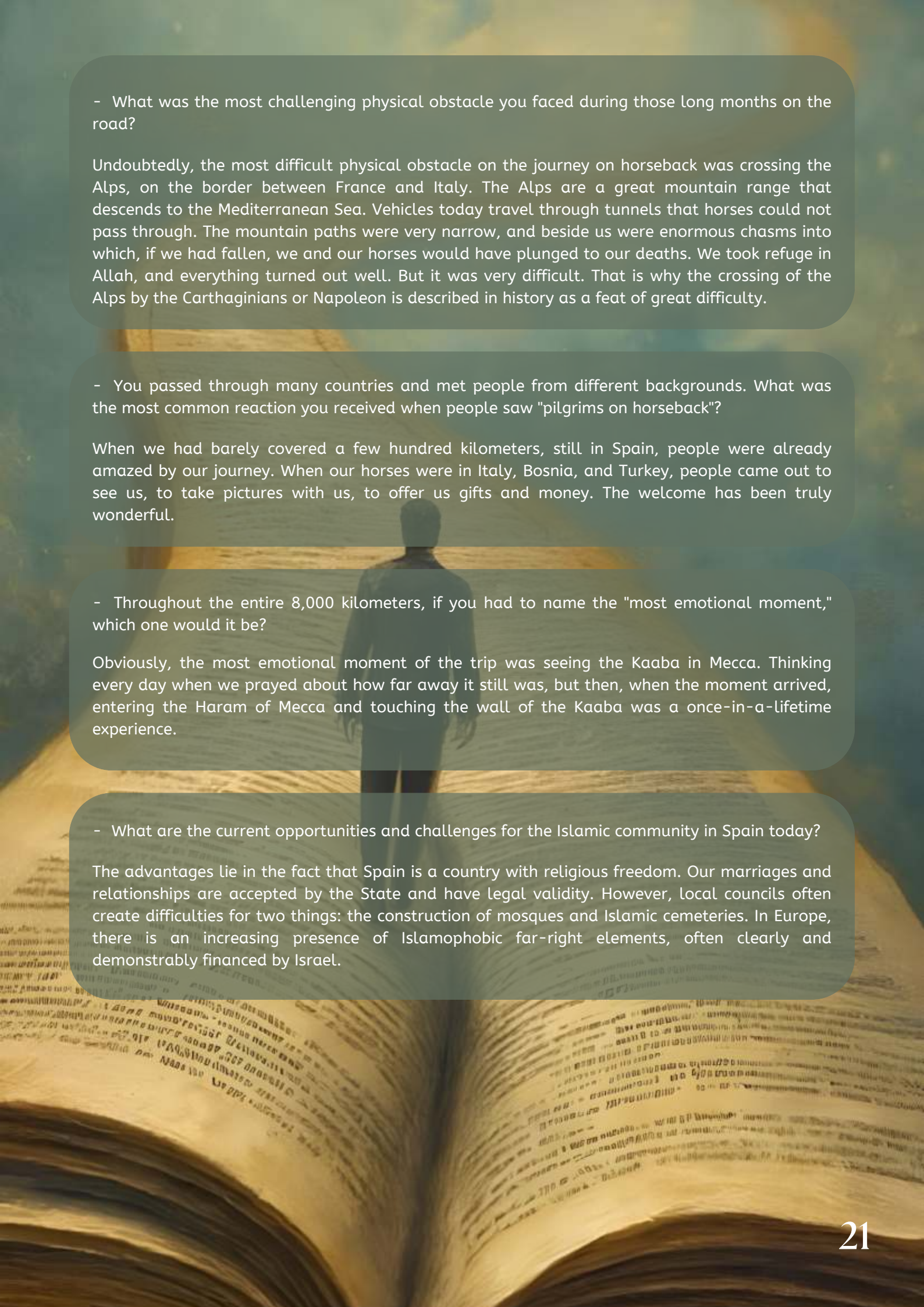
- The history of the Moriscos is a story of resilience. During your journey, did you feel like you were retracing their steps and carrying their silent prayers to the Holy Lands?

The Moriscos were the Spanish Muslims forced into Christian baptism, but who continued to secretly practice their Islamic faith. Almost all Spaniards are descendants of Moriscos. Proclaiming our Islamic faith, bringing it into the open, is both an obligation and a tribute to our ancestors.



- How important is it for the young generation of Muslims in Spain to learn about their roots in al-Andalus and Morisco history?

Remembering al-Andalus is very important. Among young Spanish Muslims, al-Andalus is very present, and its history is very much alive. This is not always the case within institutions, as we cannot forget that, although Spain is a secular country, the majority of the population is Catholic.



- What was the most challenging physical obstacle you faced during those long months on the road?

Undoubtedly, the most difficult physical obstacle on the journey on horseback was crossing the Alps, on the border between France and Italy. The Alps are a great mountain range that descends to the Mediterranean Sea. Vehicles today travel through tunnels that horses could not pass through. The mountain paths were very narrow, and beside us were enormous chasms into which, if we had fallen, we and our horses would have plunged to our deaths. We took refuge in Allah, and everything turned out well. But it was very difficult. That is why the crossing of the Alps by the Carthaginians or Napoleon is described in history as a feat of great difficulty.

- You passed through many countries and met people from different backgrounds. What was the most common reaction you received when people saw "pilgrims on horseback"?

When we had barely covered a few hundred kilometers, still in Spain, people were already amazed by our journey. When our horses were in Italy, Bosnia, and Turkey, people came out to see us, to take pictures with us, to offer us gifts and money. The welcome has been truly wonderful.

- Throughout the entire 8,000 kilometers, if you had to name the "most emotional moment," which one would it be?

Obviously, the most emotional moment of the trip was seeing the Kaaba in Mecca. Thinking every day when we prayed about how far away it still was, but then, when the moment arrived, entering the Haram of Mecca and touching the wall of the Kaaba was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

- What are the current opportunities and challenges for the Islamic community in Spain today?

The advantages lie in the fact that Spain is a country with religious freedom. Our marriages and relationships are accepted by the State and have legal validity. However, local councils often create difficulties for two things: the construction of mosques and Islamic cemeteries. In Europe, there is an increasing presence of Islamophobic far-right elements, often clearly and demonstrably financed by Israel.

- How does the legacy of al-Andalus contribute to the dialogue between Muslims and the wider Spanish society?

It is paradoxical that the Islamophobic far-right leader Santiago Abascal is heir to al-Andalus even in his surname and physical appearance. That says it all. Fortunately, this is not always the case, and there are, for example, publishing houses that publish many books and research works on al-Andalus. There are also music competitions and cultural programs about the memory of al-Andalus aimed at the general public.

- During your stay in Türkiye, what impressed you the most about the Turkish hospitality and the local Islamic culture?

Türkiye has been an essential part of our trip. The first day we rode horses in Türkiye coincided with the first day of Ramadan. Every day, we received breakfast and lunch to break our fast from neighbors, town halls, institutions, or even the Turkish police. It was very moving to ride horses without knowing where or how we were going to eat, but not a single day did we lack food, and not a single day did we have to cook. They hosted us in their homes, in spas, and in beautiful places. We will always remain grateful to Türkiye and this gratitude can be summed up in one sentence: We love Türkiye! And we will return every time we have the opportunity to do so.

- What profound message does the legacy of al-Andalus hold for the modern world and the global Muslim community today?

I believe there are many hidden messages in the history of al-Andalus. The first of them is that division, confrontation, and civil war cause the weakness that our enemies exploit to destroy us. Al-Andalus was a light of science, wealth, prosperity, monuments, and happiness, but the confrontations between brothers, between cities and peoples, weakened them to the point that the "lousy" Christian kingdoms of the north conquered and destroyed them.



- In your opinion, how should we approach and truly understand this unique period of history?

Al-Andalus also teaches us the importance of education and knowledge for Muslims. Al-Andalus was a continuation of "human civilization." It took science and knowledge from the classical Roman, Greek, and Byzantine worlds and transmitted them to Europe, which was then able to develop the Renaissance and eventually discover America. In al-Andalus, science grew; without al-Andalus, the Renaissance would not have existed in Europe.

- What is your final message to the theology students who are reading this interview and may wish to embark on their own spiritual journeys?

My personal message to theology students is that Islam is the pinnacle of human development; it is the highest point humanity can reach. But to understand it in its true dimension, one must know the natural sciences, Creation itself. I especially recommend studying Ibn Rushd, who personally influenced me greatly and encouraged me to study and pray, which, in short, are the same thing because they allow us to see the greatness of Allah's Creation.



BEYOND CONVIVENCIA: RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS IN AL-ANDALUS

By Nisa Nur DEMİR

Al-Andalus encompasses several significant features. However, owing to its historical background, its development as a multireligious society and its diverse cultural characteristics that fostered religious diversity, it can be considered a cornerstone for examining interactions between cultures and religions from both historical and psychological perspectives. To understand the events that occurred in al-Andalus during Muslim rule, it is necessary to consider the region's historical background.

Al-Andalus emerged in the early eighth century. The conquest of al-Andalus (then known as Muslim Iberia) took place in 711, when Muslim Arab and Berber armies under the command of Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād conquered the Visigothic kingdom that ruled there. This marked the beginning of Muslim rule in al-Andalus, which would last for eight centuries.



That long period enabled the emergence and development of various cultures, religions, and forms of diversity in Muslim Iberia.

Considering the importance of these forms of diversity, this period of al-Andalus under Muslim rule represents an extensive time span that offers valuable perspectives and values from religious, cultural, and psychological standpoints.

In this context, this essay argues that such diversity not only facilitated interaction but also shaped identity formation in complex ways. Therefore, it is necessary to briefly address some of these values.

One of the most crucial features for understanding the context of al-Andalus in that period is the multireligious lifestyle in the region. It is not just a social condition but a broad concept that shapes both the region and the people who live in it in terms of identity and psychology. During the reign of Muslims in al-Andalus, various religious communities existed, such as Jews and Christians. Religion may be the main factor shaping people's lives, because different religions and faiths offer distinct ways of life to their believers. Therefore, living with diverse lifestyles and beliefs is a highly complex situation; even today, there is still a tendency for people to live with others who share similar beliefs. From this perspective, it is reasonable to assume that living within this "convivencia" in that period was much more difficult than it is under today's conditions. This complexity highlights that coexistence was not merely harmonious but also psychologically demanding for individuals.

After addressing one of the most important aspects of the societal structure of al-Andalus, it is now necessary to clarify what "*convivencia*" means. The term *convivencia* (Spanish for "living together") is commonly used by scholars to describe the coexistence of Christians, Muslims, and Jews in medieval Spain (Islamic Spain), as well as the cultural interaction fostered by their proximity. The concept was introduced by the Spanish historian Américo Castro in 1948, who portrayed al-Andalus as a "utopian multireligious society in perfect harmony." This can be considered a definition of *convivencia*; however, this interpretation has been widely questioned in modern scholarship. The reason behind these debates lies in the arguments of some modern scholars, who claim that the coexistence of different faith communities did not necessarily mean a completely peaceful and unproblematic atmosphere, but rather a complex and at times conflictual situation. Therefore, *convivencia* should be understood as a complex and dynamic process rather than a purely harmonious condition.

Despite these debates, this vibrant interaction among different groups led to increased cultural and scientific developments. In particular, scientific activities gained momentum through the collaborative work of scholars from different backgrounds. For example, translation movements in the Toledo School contributed to the sharing of knowledge in philosophy, science, and medicine. These interactions also gave rise to significant social, cultural, and economic exchanges in daily life. Thus, coexistence not only created tension but also fostered intellectual and cultural productivity.

Consequently, from a contemporary perspective, al-Andalus is now being examined through a more nuanced lens, highlighting its rich cultural heritage and diversity. In the light of these insights, it is crucial to analyze this model of coexistence, including the underlying tensions it harbored and its impact on individual psychology, identity formation, and, consequently, the construction of societal identity. This perspective allows for a more balanced understanding.

Furthermore, the main issue regarding the position of people in al-Andalus, as indicated in the title, is the psychological approach to *convivencia*. It is necessary to approach these events from both their positive and negative aspects, especially in cases where people live in coexistence, such as in al-Andalus. From this perspective, the psychological dimension becomes central, raising several questions: How are individuals affected by such complex societal conditions? More specifically, how do situations such as living in a multi-religious society affect the psychology and identity development of individuals and, consequently, of society? At this point, Social Identity Theory in psychology may be beneficial in seeking answers to these questions. In particular, this theory provides a framework for understanding group-based distinctions within such a society. This theory attempts to explain individuals' tendency to define themselves based on their nationality, religion, or the social class to which they believe they belong. It suggests that people seek to enhance their self-esteem by joining certain groups. As a result, individuals tend to identify with and feel a sense of belonging toward their own group, while simultaneously experiencing a sense of alienation toward groups to which they do not belong. This process leads to a distinction between "us" (the in-group) and "them" (the out-group).



Therefore, this in-group favoritism creates distinctions among people living in a multi-religious society, which is precisely what makes al-Andalus both a vibrant and a complex context. However, the positive aspects of this situation should also be considered, as such categorizations can reduce cognitive load while sharpening the boundaries between groups. In this context, identity formation in al-Andalus emerges as a key issue.





Moreover, al-Andalus was a distinguished example of diverse coexistence, but it also offered a strict social structure with a dynamic character. With these distinct features of its social structure, al-Andalus shaped people's identities through different categorizations. In other words, the social structure played a direct role in shaping identity boundaries. As in every society, al-Andalus also had some dominant figures, like Muslims. During that period, while al-Andalus was under the rule of Muslims, Muslims were the elite group of administrators in the society. However, it must also be noted that this group was internally differentiated, with stratification among Arabs, Berbers, and Muwallads (indigenous converts to Islam), indicating the presence of hierarchical structures within Muslim society itself. Furthermore, when discussing the construction of this social identity, it is necessary to address the situation of non-Muslims as well. For example, Christians and Jews were protected under the status of *dhimmīs* but were naturally regarded as a minority. However, they were granted the space to preserve their identities, and scholars from the non-Muslim population were also valued; indeed, Muslim and non-Muslim scholars worked together on translation activities, which was highly significant in supporting the construction of a shared culture and identity. Consequently, in al-Andalus, a rigid hierarchy was established by clearly defining inequalities among identity groups, yet at the same time, religious and ethnic diversity allowed for complex interactions and a certain degree of mobility (particularly among Muslims).





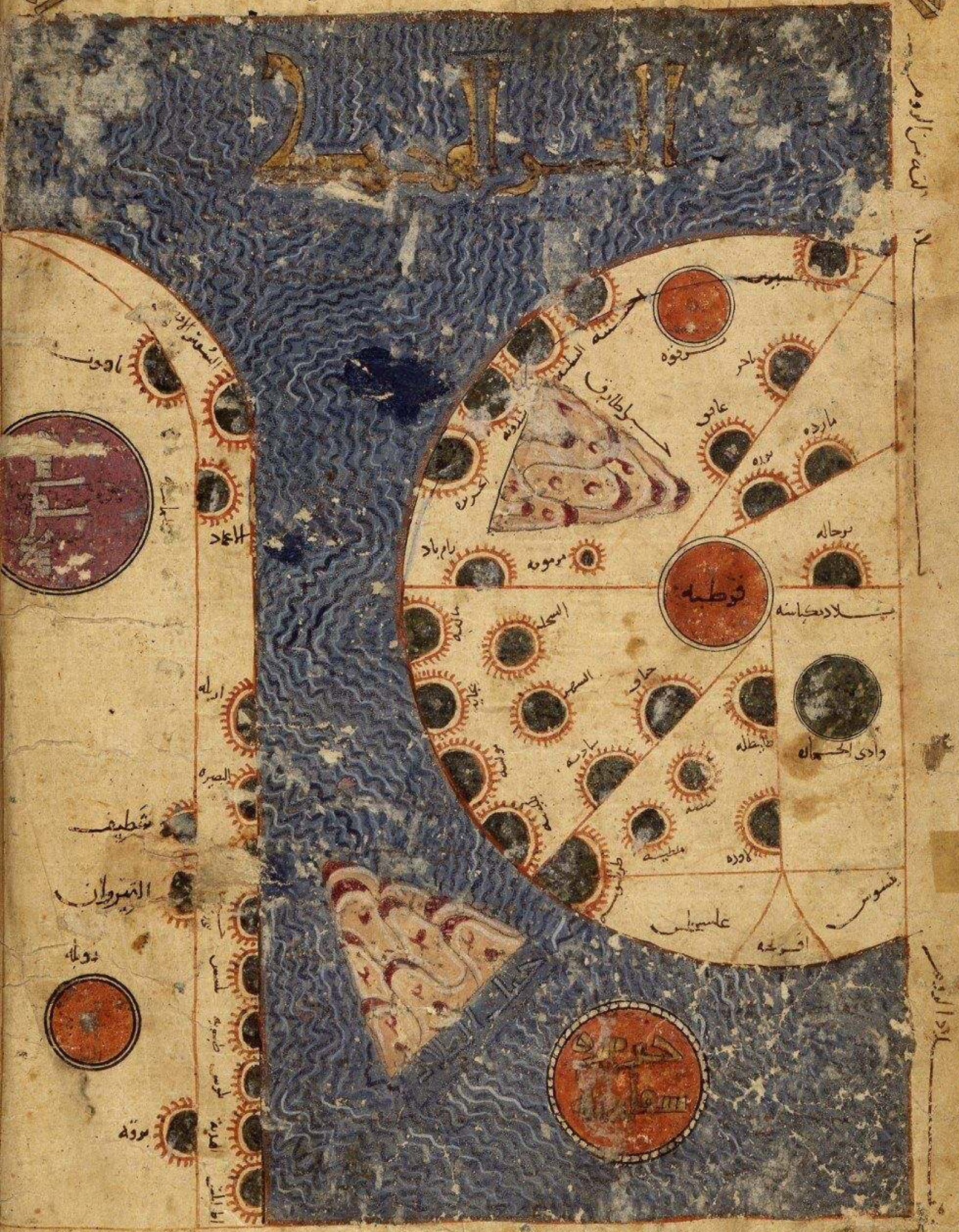
After discussing these topics, the psychological dimensions and positive reflections of this multicultural, religious, and coexistent society should also be considered. In this context, "The Contact Hypothesis" in modern psychology can be applied. It suggests that contact between groups can reduce prejudice and increase empathy among individuals. According to Gordon Allport, who first developed the theory, there are four conditions necessary for this hypothesis to hold: equal status, common goals, cooperation, and institutional support. In this way, common ground can be found within a social structure that includes many different groups, and personal judgments and divisive perspectives can be set aside, thereby strengthening empathy and a sense of coexistence. From this perspective, al-Andalus can be partially interpreted as a setting in which these conditions were at times met, allowing coexistence to function over long periods. From this perspective, the granting of certain rights to different groups in al-Andalus, along with efforts to establish a degree of equality, helps explain how coexistence was sustained over long periods.

In conclusion, in the light of all these aspects, al-Andalus may be defined as a historical laboratory where identity can serve as both a barrier and a bridge. Thus, it can be argued that al-Andalus illustrates the dual nature of identity in a multi-religious society. It can be said that this period in history (711–1492) has taught us just how critical a role the "Andalusian identity," a superordinate identity, played in ensuring harmony within such societies. Consequently, life, with all the diverse groups it encompasses and the various perspectives on their influence, is not a static state; on the contrary, it is an active, dynamic process that is constantly evolving, and must be sustained through tolerance and cooperation in a delicate balance. Therefore, coexistence should be understood not as a fixed ideal, but as a continuous and negotiated process.

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قوله المذموم





Limited edition

◆ Breaking News ◆



THE LANGUAGE THAT CAUSED THEM TO FORGET LATIN:

The Deep Traces of Arabic in Spanish

By Rümeysa Kardelen YAZICI

Arabic is undisputedly the common language of the Islamic world and holds an invaluable place in Muslim history. It may seem surprising today, but centuries ago, the paths of a nation and this language crossed in a way that created a magnificent cultural synthesis: Spanish. Although awareness of this interaction remains relatively low in the Islamic world today, fate brought these two languages together at a unique crossroads.

“So, how did this language, arriving like a desert wind, transform into the key to a deeply rooted civilization in the far west of Europe?”



This interaction is the result of a long journey dating back to the Umayyad Caliphate. Our story took root with the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula. Later, the Umayyad prince who escaped the Abbasids founded the Umayyad Emirate of Córdoba, a turning point that would profoundly shape history. From that point on, cultural exchange reached its peak, moving beyond the palace and finding a place among the common people.



This deep interaction was not just a political success, but also an emotional bond. The most touching example of this is found in the life of 'Abd al-Raḥmān I, the founder of al-Andalus. While conversing with a single palm tree he brought from his homeland in Syria, these verses flowed from his soul, illustrating how Arabic became a 'language of emotion' in these lands:

*"A palm tree stands in the middle of Rusafa,
Born in the West, far from the land of palms.
I said to it: How like me you are, far away and in exile,
In long separation from family and friends."*

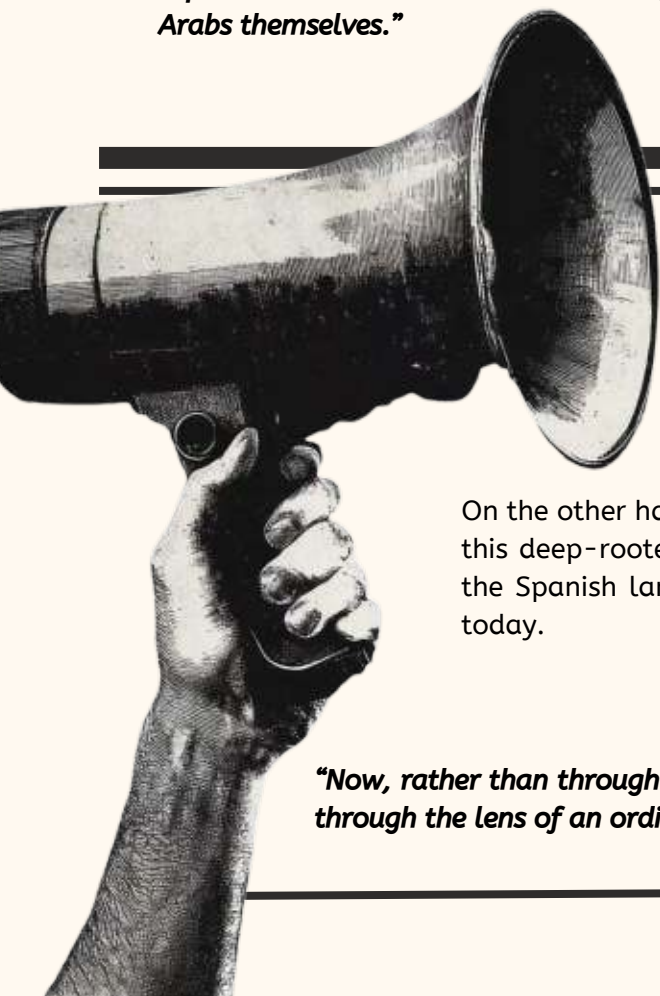
يا نخلُ أنتِ غريبةٌ مثلي في الغرب

– 'Abd al-Raḥmān I (Menocal, 2002, p. 62)

However, this poetic longing would eventually give way to such a profound cultural admiration that the local people would reach the point of forgetting their own mother tongue. The most striking evidence of this transformation was recorded in 854 AD by the Córdoba cleric Paul Alvarus, who lamented the loss of Latin culture:

"The Christians love to read the poems and romances of the Arabs; they study the Arab theologians and philosophers, not to refute them but to form a correct and elegant Arabic. Where is the layman who now reads the Latin commentaries on the Holy Scriptures? Alas! All talented young Christians read and study the Arab books with enthusiasm; they gather immense libraries at great expense; they despise Christian literature as unworthy of attention. They have forgotten their own language. For everyone who can write a letter in Latin, there are a thousand who can express themselves in Arabic with elegance, and write better poems in this language than the Arabs themselves."

– Paul Alvarus, Córdoba (854 AD) (Menocal, 2002, p. 66)



This lament by Paul Alvarus is the greatest evidence that Arabic had become not a language of "conquest," but a language of "admiration." So much so that for every person capable of writing a letter in Latin, a thousand youths were raised who could compete with the Arabs themselves in Arabic poetry.

On the other hand, this fascination did not remain merely a literary whim; this deep-rooted cultural interaction descended into the very marrow of the Spanish language, forming nearly 8-10% of the language we know today.

"Now, rather than through an academic discourse, let's explore this interactive culture through the lens of an ordinary Spanish person's daily routine."

◆ A Day in the Life of Dainela

Our character's name is **Dainela**. Dainela is a 10-year-old girl living in Spain. She loves playing games, painting, and going to school to learn new things with her friends. Let's follow her through a typical day:

*Her day begins in the soft light of morning as she lifts her head from her favorite **Almohada**. This simple act of waking up on a pillow is her first connection to a thousand-year-old heritage. Shortly after, she heads to the kitchen for breakfast, where she enjoys her morning tea sweetened with **Azúcar**.*

*As she prepares for school, she pulls on her uniform made of soft **Algodón**, perhaps never realizing that the very fabric she wears carries the name given to it by merchants centuries ago. Finally, as she steps out of the house, she whispers a heartfelt hope for the day ahead: "**Ojalá**!"*

As we can see, these words are not merely part of a historical record; they exist in the most ordinary moments of a person's life. This magnificent bridge between languages, stretching from the courts of Córdoba to a child's breakfast table, is history's sweetest and most enduring victory.



Spanish Word	Arabic Script	Meaning
Almohada	المخدة	Pillow
Azúcar	السكر	Sugar
Algodón	القطن	Cotton
Ojalá	إن شاء الله	God willing



◆ "For the curious mind: Here are just a few of the thousands of words that are still alive in daily life..." ◆

ENGLISH	ARABIC WORD	SPANISH WORD
Apricot	البرقوق	Albaricoque
Lemon	ليمون	Limón
Orange	نارنج	Naranja
Watermelon	سندية	Sandía
Olive	الزيتون	Aceituna
Acorn	بلوط	Bellota
Eggplant	باذنجان	Berenjena
Carrot	اسفنارية	Zanahoria
Basil	الحبق	Albahaca
Saffron	الزعفران	Azafrán
Meatball	البندقة	Albóndiga
Noodle	فداوش	Fideo
Coffee	قهوة	Café
Syrup	شراب	Jarabe

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HAYY IBN YAQZĀN

By Sinemnur ŞENER



Who is Ibn Tufayl?

His full name is Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Ṭufayl al-Qaysī. He is widely known in the Islamic world as Ibn Tufayl and as Abubacer in the West. It is estimated that he was born at the beginning of the 12th century.

He received his education in Ishbīliya (Sevilla) and Qurṭuba (Córdoba), benefiting from the works of Ibn Bājjah in philosophy. He practiced as a physician and even served the amirs of that era. Ibn Tufayl passed away in 1185 in Marrakesh.

Let's examine the core themes of *Ḥayy b. Yaqzān* after this brief introduction.

This work belongs to Ibn Tufayl, one of the most significant Muslim philosophers in al-Andalus. *Ḥayy b. Yaqzān* is the only extant work by Ibn Tufayl.

Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) authored a work with the same title; however, the distinction is that Ibn Tufayl's *Ḥayy* represents a human being who interacts with the external world, experiences, and attains knowledge through intellect. The work is also known as *Asrār al-Ḥikmat al-Mashrikiyya*.

This book posits that a human being can reach the knowledge of Truth (al-Ḥaqq) without waḥy (revelation). The main aim of the author is to express that knowledge reached by reasoning, questioning, and contemplation does not contradict the divine truth revealed (waḥy) through the Prophet.



The Plot of *Ḥayy b. Yaqzān*

There are two main characters in the story: *Ḥayy*, who represents pure reason capable of reaching the knowledge of Truth (al-Ḥaqq), and *Absāl*, who represents revelation (waḥy) derived from God.

Ibn Tufayl presents two alternative accounts regarding the origins of *Ḥayy b. Yaqzān*:

- The First Account: *Ḥayy* is said to have emerged spontaneously from the soil. Over time, as the earth eroded, “water blisters” formed where he was nurtured. When these blisters eventually cracked, the infant *Ḥayy* began to cry, attracting a mother gazelle that subsequently raised and fed him.
- The Second Account: *Ḥayy* is the son of human parents. His mother was the sister of a cruel king on a neighboring island. Because the king did not deem anyone worthy of becoming the husband of his sister, she could not marry anyone. She applied secret ways. She had loved a man named *Yaqzān*. After that, she had a boy, but she placed the baby into the water because of her fear of her brother.

The author wanted the readers to choose from these stories about Ḥayy's beginning according to their own will.

The aim of the work is to demonstrate to the reader the extent to which a human being can intellectually develop - within the heart of an untouched wilderness, without formal education, removed from any sociocultural environment, and relying solely on the experiential and contemplative capacities of innate reason.

Ḥayy interacted with beings on the island during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. In time, he began to understand the real truth behind the objects by reasoning and contemplation. By these mental activities, he reached the idea of God without any revelation.



Later, Absāl came to the island where Ḥayy lived because the society from which Absāl came had become corrupted. There was an immoral atmosphere there; therefore, he left that society. Furthermore, this society had received knowledge through revelation from the prophet.



In time, Absāl encountered Ḥayy on the island. Ḥayy was very shocked; he had never seen a being like him before. Then Absāl started to notice that Ḥayy had obtained the knowledge of Truth by himself without any instruction. After that, Absāl explained the situation of the society he came from. Ḥayy wanted to guide this society through his own contemplative progress toward reaching God. Hayy then travelled with Absāl to the island where this society lived.

At the end of the story, Ḥayy understood that the society's members (awām) went astray when he shared his intellectual journey toward Truth with them. The reason for this was that the community was not at the level of this intellectual capacity. That's why he decided to come back to his island.

The Philosophical Progression of Hayy

- Turning the interaction of a human with nature into empirical knowledge.
- Progressing from empirical knowledge to the theoretical level.
- Experiencing Truth (al-Ḥaqq) within oneself through mystical enlightenment.

This work has been appreciated by people from various cultures. Therefore, it has been translated into different languages by several scholars, such as:

- Moses b. Joshua (translation into Hebrew)
- Léon Gauthier (translation into French)
- Edward Pococke (translation into Latin as Philosophus Autodidactus)
- Babanzade Rashid (translation into Turkish)
- Badī'uzzamān Furūzānfar (translation into Persian)

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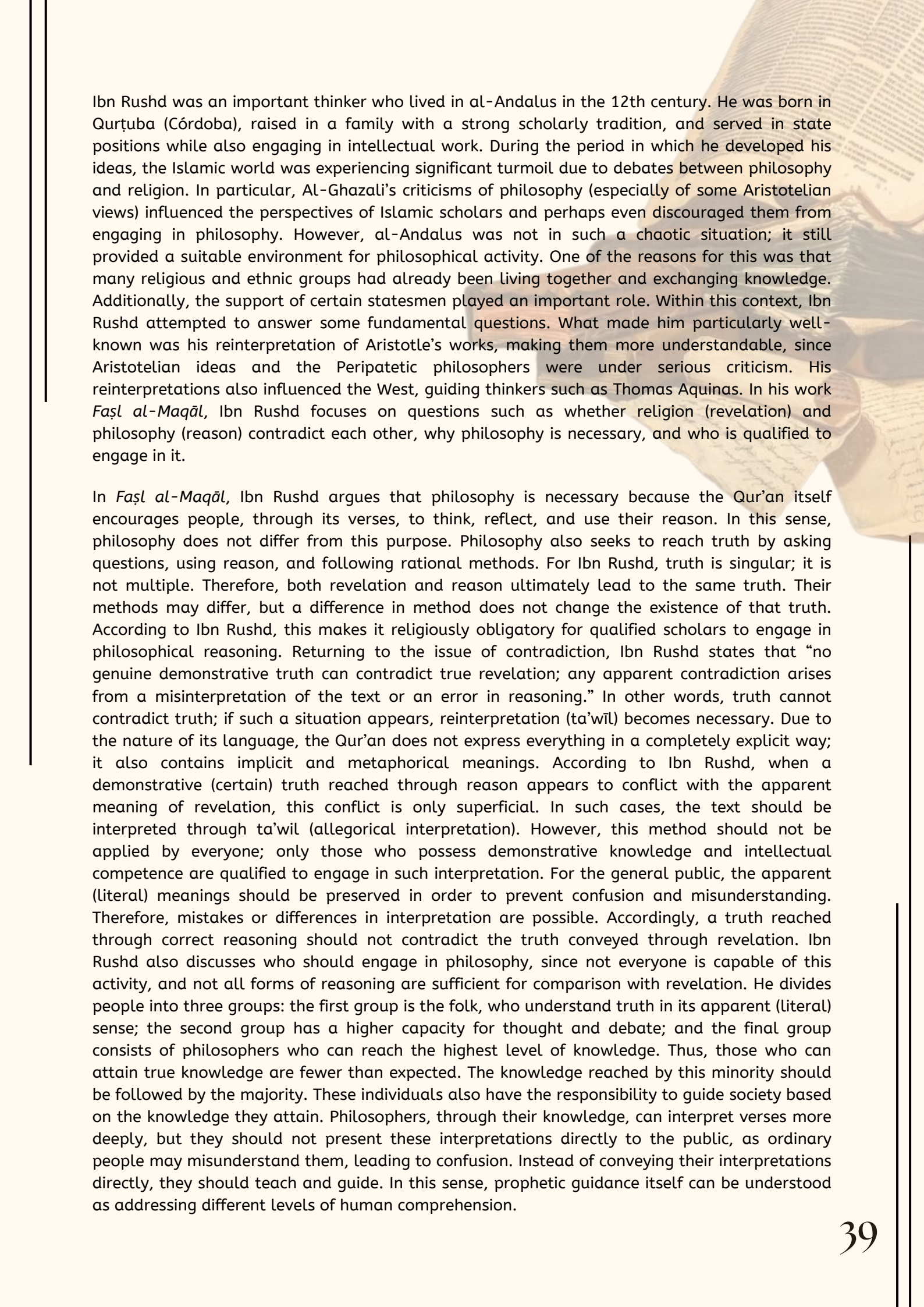


ONE TRUTH, TWO PATHS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REASON (AQL) AND REVELATION (WAHY) IN IBN RUSHD

By Rana KOCABEY



Al-Andalus was a state that had a significant impact on both Islamic and world history. It can be considered as one of the veins of Islam beating within the West. With both its strengths and weaknesses, it contributed to the development and expansion of Islamic civilisation in many fields. Among these fields, one of the most important is undoubtedly philosophy. Alongside the philosophical ideas transmitted to Europe through translation movements, philosophers in al-Andalus also made major contributions. Ibn Rushd was one of the leading figures among them. Although he served as a bridge in transmitting philosophy, he also provided interpretations that made it more accessible and comprehensible. One of the greatest debates between philosophy and religion has been whether they contradict each other. Even today, discussions such as whether reason and religion (revelation) are in conflict or whether scientific inquiry opposes religious truth remain ongoing. This shows that the issue continues to be a subject of active debate. Hence, do reason and revelation really contradict each other? In this text, I will attempt to answer this question from Ibn Rushd's perspective, while also relating it to the present day.

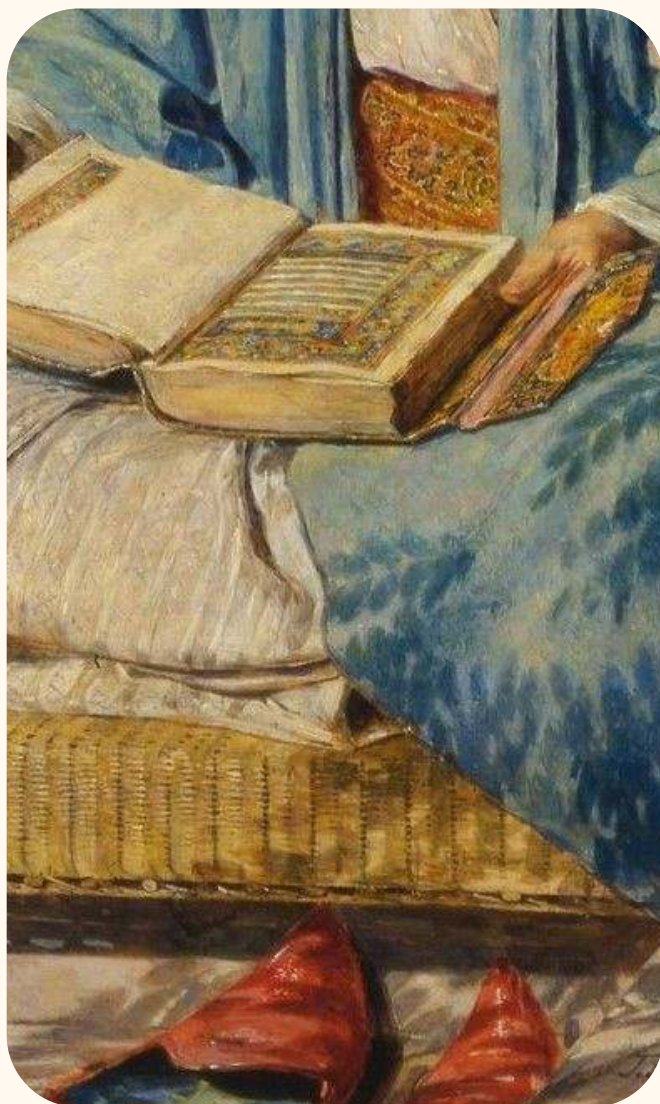


Ibn Rushd was an important thinker who lived in al-Andalus in the 12th century. He was born in Qurṭuba (Córdoba), raised in a family with a strong scholarly tradition, and served in state positions while also engaging in intellectual work. During the period in which he developed his ideas, the Islamic world was experiencing significant turmoil due to debates between philosophy and religion. In particular, Al-Ghazali's criticisms of philosophy (especially of some Aristotelian views) influenced the perspectives of Islamic scholars and perhaps even discouraged them from engaging in philosophy. However, al-Andalus was not in such a chaotic situation; it still provided a suitable environment for philosophical activity. One of the reasons for this was that many religious and ethnic groups had already been living together and exchanging knowledge. Additionally, the support of certain statesmen played an important role. Within this context, Ibn Rushd attempted to answer some fundamental questions. What made him particularly well-known was his reinterpretation of Aristotle's works, making them more understandable, since Aristotelian ideas and the Peripatetic philosophers were under serious criticism. His reinterpretations also influenced the West, guiding thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas. In his work *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, Ibn Rushd focuses on questions such as whether religion (revelation) and philosophy (reason) contradict each other, why philosophy is necessary, and who is qualified to engage in it.

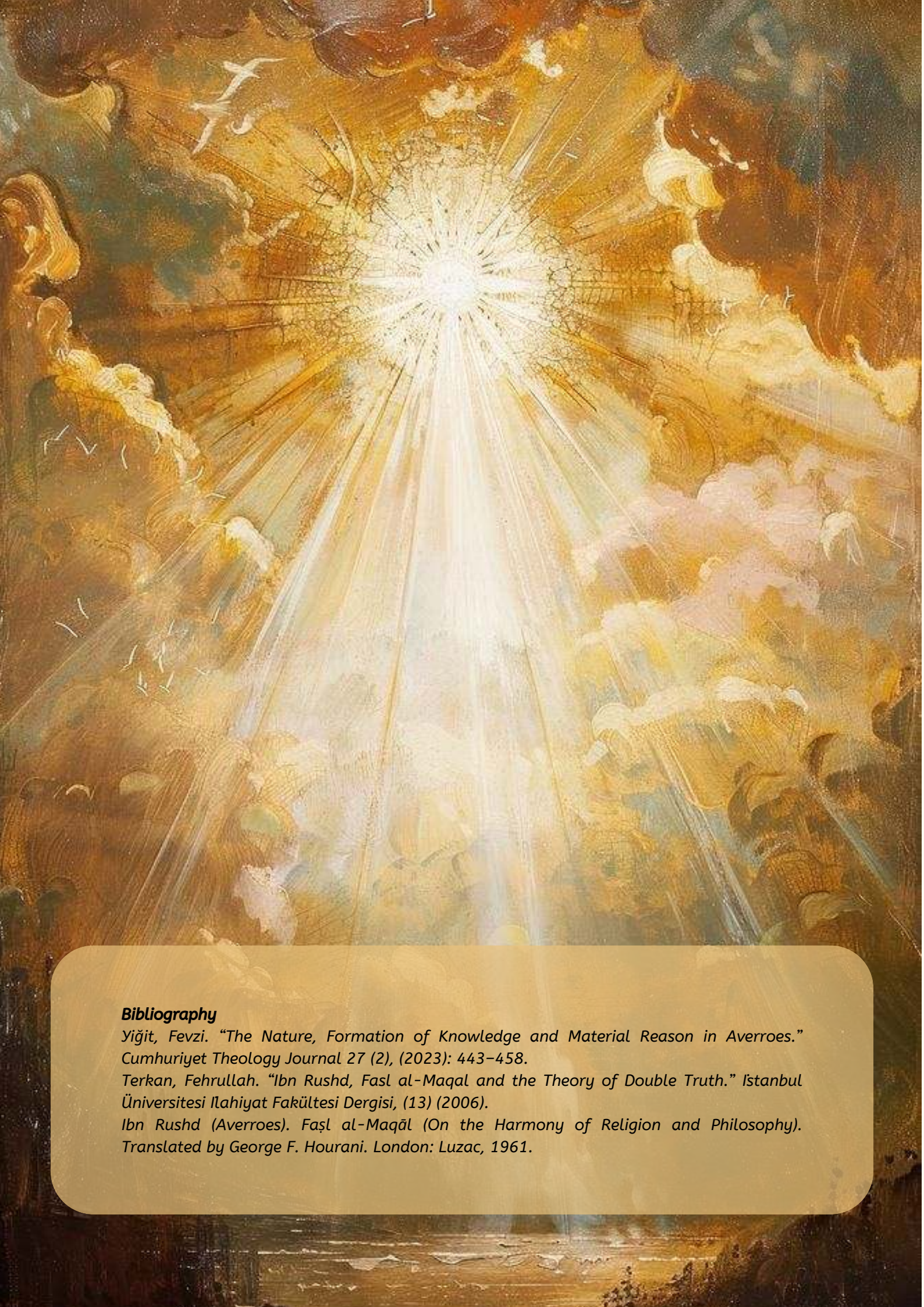
In *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, Ibn Rushd argues that philosophy is necessary because the Qur'an itself encourages people, through its verses, to think, reflect, and use their reason. In this sense, philosophy does not differ from this purpose. Philosophy also seeks to reach truth by asking questions, using reason, and following rational methods. For Ibn Rushd, truth is singular; it is not multiple. Therefore, both revelation and reason ultimately lead to the same truth. Their methods may differ, but a difference in method does not change the existence of that truth. According to Ibn Rushd, this makes it religiously obligatory for qualified scholars to engage in philosophical reasoning. Returning to the issue of contradiction, Ibn Rushd states that "no genuine demonstrative truth can contradict true revelation; any apparent contradiction arises from a misinterpretation of the text or an error in reasoning." In other words, truth cannot contradict truth; if such a situation appears, reinterpretation (ta'wīl) becomes necessary. Due to the nature of its language, the Qur'an does not express everything in a completely explicit way; it also contains implicit and metaphorical meanings. According to Ibn Rushd, when a demonstrative (certain) truth reached through reason appears to conflict with the apparent meaning of revelation, this conflict is only superficial. In such cases, the text should be interpreted through ta'wīl (allegorical interpretation). However, this method should not be applied by everyone; only those who possess demonstrative knowledge and intellectual competence are qualified to engage in such interpretation. For the general public, the apparent (literal) meanings should be preserved in order to prevent confusion and misunderstanding. Therefore, mistakes or differences in interpretation are possible. Accordingly, a truth reached through correct reasoning should not contradict the truth conveyed through revelation. Ibn Rushd also discusses who should engage in philosophy, since not everyone is capable of this activity, and not all forms of reasoning are sufficient for comparison with revelation. He divides people into three groups: the first group is the folk, who understand truth in its apparent (literal) sense; the second group has a higher capacity for thought and debate; and the final group consists of philosophers who can reach the highest level of knowledge. Thus, those who can attain true knowledge are fewer than expected. The knowledge reached by this minority should be followed by the majority. These individuals also have the responsibility to guide society based on the knowledge they attain. Philosophers, through their knowledge, can interpret verses more deeply, but they should not present these interpretations directly to the public, as ordinary people may misunderstand them, leading to confusion. Instead of conveying their interpretations directly, they should teach and guide. In this sense, prophetic guidance itself can be understood as addressing different levels of human comprehension.

Considering all this, the point Ibn Rushd aims to reach is quite simple: while reason questions why the universe was created, religion already provides an answer. Ultimately, reason will arrive at the same answer given by religion. If both are blessings granted by God, why should they contradict?

In a sense, Ibn Rushd also provides an answer to contemporary debates. The same response can be given to the question of whether science and religion conflict. In fact, rather than conflicting with science, the Qur'an has even functioned as a source of inspiration for scientific reflection. The Qur'an encourages thinking and reflection, which in turn can contribute to the development of scientific inquiry. Despite this, it can be argued that many ongoing debates stem from misunderstandings or oversimplifications rather than genuine contradictions. Verses that insist on thinking and understanding cannot possibly be an obstacle to this; if anything, such an obstacle would itself be the real contradiction. Moreover, reducing this relationship to a simple conflict overlooks the depth of both religion and human reason. Scientific inquiry, when properly understood, does not weaken faith but can deepen one's awareness of the order and purpose within creation. In this sense, the pursuit of knowledge should not be seen as a threat, but rather as a means of approaching truth more closely. Misinterpretations on either side can create artificial tensions that do not actually exist at the level of truth itself. Therefore, instead of continuing these unproductive debates, a more balanced and thoughtful approach is needed, one that recognizes the limits of human understanding while still valuing both revelation and reason as essential sources of knowledge.



In conclusion, the discussion of the relationship between reason and revelation, which was central to Ibn Rushd's thought, still maintains its relevance today. From his perspective, the idea that truth is singular and cannot contradict itself provides a strong basis for reconciling philosophy and religion. What appears as a contradiction is, in most cases, the result of limited understanding or incorrect interpretation. Therefore, rather than positioning reason and revelation as opposing forces, it is more meaningful to see them as complementary ways of reaching the same truth. Ibn Rushd's approach not only reflects the intellectual atmosphere of al-Andalus but also offers a framework that can guide contemporary debates. In this sense, his thought continues to provide a valuable perspective for understanding the harmony between faith and reason in both past and present contexts.



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AN ANDALUSIAN ŞŪFĪ: MUḤYĪ AL-DĪN IBN AL- ‘ARABĪ

By Ömer TŪRK

His full name is Muḥyī al-Dīn/Muḥyiddīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-‘Arabī al-Tā’ al-Ḥātimī. The epithet “al-Shaykh al-Akbar” was conferred upon him subsequently by the Şūfī community.

الشيخ الأكبر محيي الدين محمد بن علي بن محمد العربي الطائي الحاتمي

It is well-documented that the author himself used the name Muḥammad Ibn ‘Arabī in many places. Furthermore, in some biographical sources, it can occasionally be observed that the *nisba al-Andalusī* was also added to his name to indicate his region of origin.



His Birth, Youth, and Formative Milieu

Muḥyiddīn Ibn ‘Arabī was born on 17 Ramaḍān 560 (27th July 1165, Monday night), in Mursiya/Murcia, the capital of the district of Tudmīr, located in the southeast of al-Andalus (modern-day Spain), into a wealthy and noble family.

Ibn ‘Arabī would later refer to his youthful years as years of *jāhiliyya* (heedlessness) (*al-Futūḥāt*, I/201). After this brief period of confusion associated with the onset of puberty, he withdrew into seclusion following a spiritual sign and decided to attend to his inner world (III/45); at that time, he was around sixteen years old. He states that after disciplining his spiritual life in this manner, the gates of *ma’rifa* gradually began to open to him (*fath*) as a result of the *riyāḍāt* (ascetic practices) he performed during these periods of retreat (II/616). It is reported that at times he remained in this state of seclusion for as long as fourteen months.

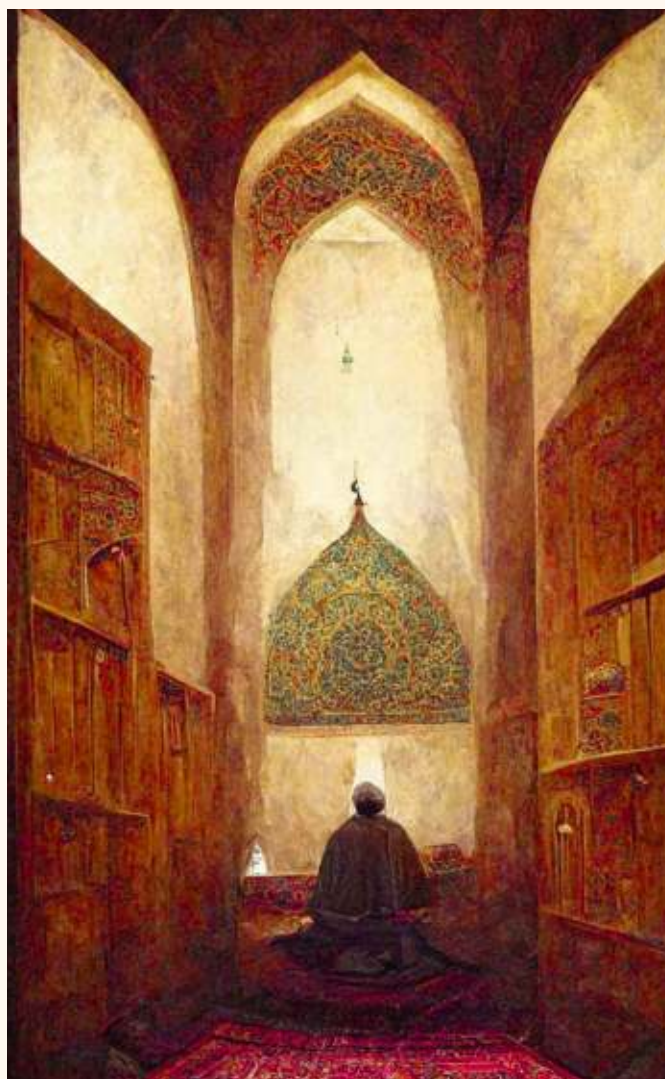
During certain phases of this period of *zuhd*, he would also withdraw into *murāqaba* (contemplation) in the city cemetery, during which he is said to have gained insight into the states of some of the deceased in their graves.

His First Guides and Early Spiritual States

Although he says, “At the beginning, I had no *murshid* anywhere in the world in whom I could confide my struggles” (*al-Futūḥāt*, II/548), later he met certain spiritual figures. He derived distinct spiritual benefits from each of them. Throughout the rest of his life, whenever their names were mentioned, he spoke of them with immense praise and reverence. For instance, he states that the first person from among the people of *ahl al-bāṭin* (inward dimension) to take him by the hand was Abū al-‘Abbās al-‘Uryabī, whom he refers to as “my first *murshid*.” He describes his first *bay‘ah* (spiritual pledge) to him as follows:

“While I was still on this path, I entered the presence of my shaykh al-‘Uryabī, who had newly arrived in Ishbīliya (Sevilla). He was the first *murshid* to whom I attached myself. He was a consummate master of *dhikr*. He recognized my *ḥāl* (spiritual state) and knew exactly what I needed. He asked me, ‘Are you truly determined to enter the *ṭarīq Allāh* (path of Allah)?’ I replied, ‘A servant may possess determination, but *thabāt* (steadfastness) comes from Allah.’

Then he said to me,



سدّ الباب واقطع الأسباب، وجالس الوهّاب، يكلمك الله من دون حجاب

“If you close your door, sever yourself from all the chains of causation, and be only with al-Wahhāb, Allah will speak to you without any veil. I followed his advice until the *fath* (spiritual opening) occurred.”

He also says, “The *dhikr* that my first *murshid* continuously practiced and transmitted to me was the *asmā’* of Allah,” which shows that he received *talqin al-asmā’* from him (*al-Futūḥāt*, III/298–300).

His View of The Universe: Waḥdat al-Wujūd

References From the Qur'ān al-Karīm



وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا

“Allah is the one who encompasses everything.” (4/Surat al-Nisā’, 126)



According to the Sūfis, this encompassment (*iḥāṭa*) is not like an envelope surrounding its contents. Rather, it resembles the sun’s embrace of light and shadow, the spirit’s permeation of the body, or water’s relation to its waves. Therefore, all objects are mere accidents (*‘araḍ*) of their spirits, not their substances (*jawhar*). For this reason, no object can exist without its spirit.



مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرُ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ
أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا

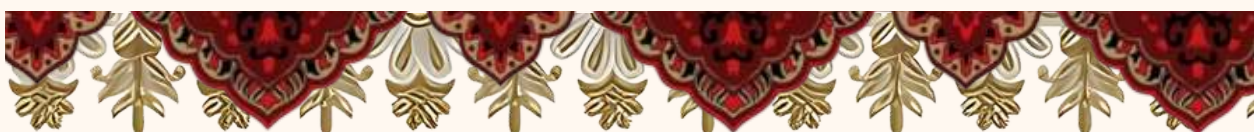
“If three converse privately, He is their fourth. If five, He is their sixth. Whether fewer or more, He is with them wherever they may be.” (58/Surat al-Mujādalah, 7)





وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

“And We are closer to him than his jugular vein.” (50/Surat al-Qāf, 16)



Verses or statements such as these should not be disclosed to *al-‘awāmm* (the common people) as they may lead the uninitiated into beliefs of *ḥulūl* (indwelling) or *taḥdīd* (delimitation) which are *ḥarām* (strictly forbidden). The ḥadīth qudsī, “I was hungry, and you didn’t feed Me; I was sick, and you didn’t visit Me,” should be understood in the same manner. Such secrets must be safeguarded from those unprepared to comprehend them. (al-Futūhāt, I/520)



وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ

“And you did not throw when you threw, but it was Allah who threw.” (8/Surat al-Anfāl, 17)



Normally, the eyes perceive a human figure shooting an arrow; however, the true doer behind the archer is none other than Allah.

A Metaphor for Waḥdat al-Wujūd

by
Mahmut Erol KILIÇ



Suppose you and I are in a completely dark room, and I am holding a cigarette. When I light the tip, a small glowing point appears. Since the room is pitch-black, you cannot see my hand. If I ask, “What shape do you see now?” you would naturally say, “I see a red dot.”

If I tie a string to the cigarette and swing it like a pendulum, and then ask what you see, you would say that you see an arc (a semi-circle). If I then spin it faster and faster in a continuous circular motion, you still cannot see my hand, the person moving it, or the background. You only perceive a continuous shape, which is nothing more than an optical illusion. If I ask what shape you see now, you would say, “I see a circle.”

However, if you recall from geometry, to form an actual circle, I would need to place 360 cigarettes (or points) side by side. But how many cigarettes do I actually hold in my hand? Only one. That is called “Waḥdat al-Wujūd” (the unity of existence).



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AN OVERVIEW OF TAFSĪR IN AL-ANDALUS

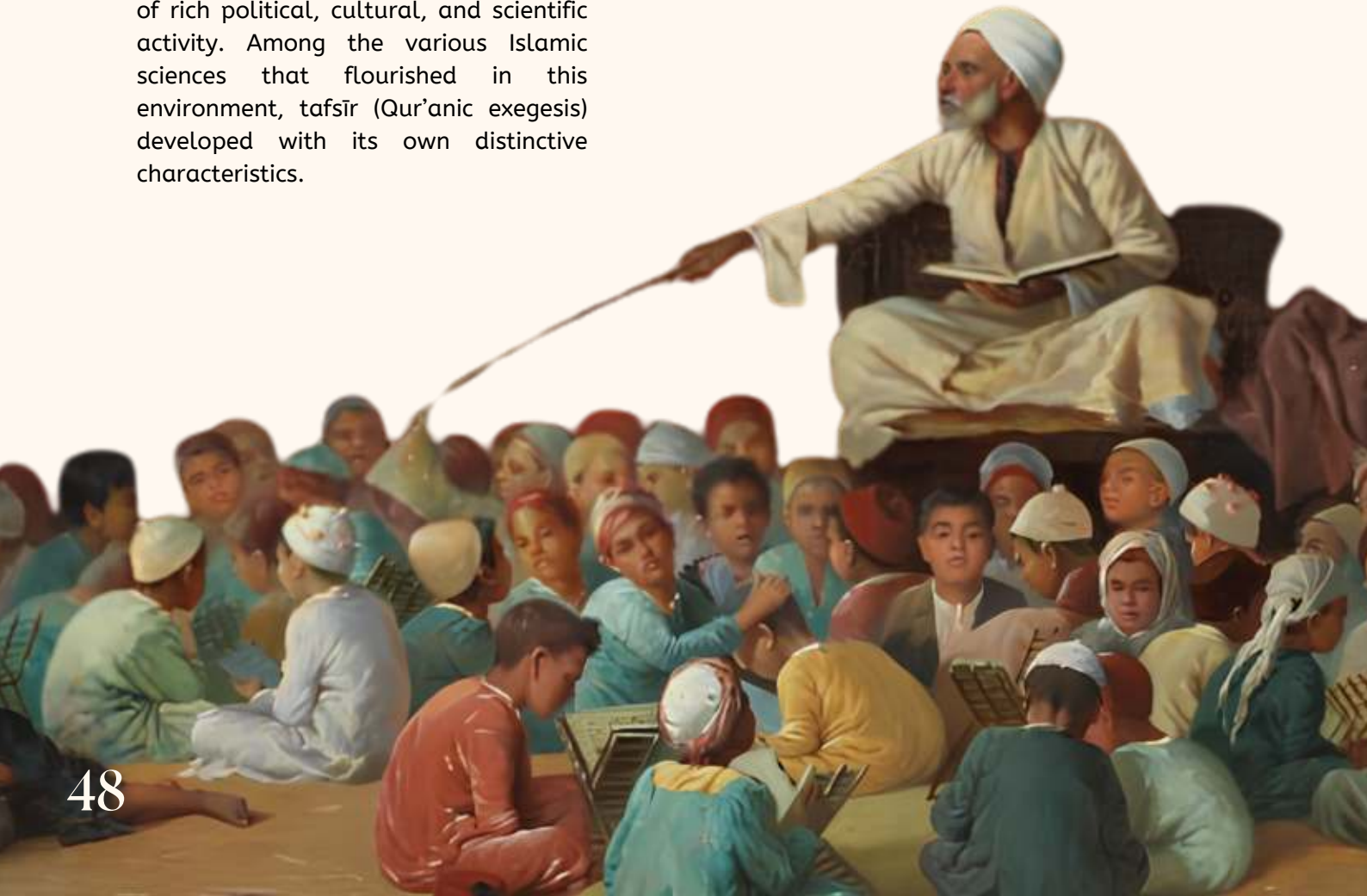
By Furkan AY

It is a historical fact that Muslims rapidly carried Islam and the Qur'ān to different geographies and cultures through conquests following the period of the Prophet Muḥammad. In this context, al-Andalus represents one of the westernmost and most distinctive regions of early Islamic expansion. According to widely accepted reports, in 711 an army under the command of Ṭāriq b. Ziyād, acting under the authority of Mūsā b. Nuṣayr, conquered the Iberian Peninsula, initiating centuries of Muslim rule in the region.

Over time, al-Andalus became a center of rich political, cultural, and scientific activity. Among the various Islamic sciences that flourished in this environment, tafsīr (Qur'anic exegesis) developed with its own distinctive characteristics.

This study aims to examine the scientific dimension of tafsīr in al-Andalus, focusing on its main sources, methodological features, and representative scholars. In doing so, it seeks to explore whether Andalusian tafsīr differs from other exegetical traditions and, if so, what constitutes its primary character.

As reflected in the field of tafsīr, Arabic became the dominant language in al-Andalus and played a central role in intellectual life. Despite occasional resistance, particularly during the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān II, Arabic was widely used and became especially common among the youth. Over time, the Christian population was also deeply influenced by Islamic culture, adopting Arabic as both a written and spoken language alongside their native tongues.



In terms of social structure, although Arabs were relatively few in number, their cultural and intellectual influence remained strong, especially until the decline of the Umayyad state. This influence is also visible in the educational system, where children began their education at an early age, studying the Qur'ān, basic religious knowledge, and Arabic language and poetry. Here, we observe a reflection of the fact that the source of religion is Arabic; it highlights the importance Muslims attach to Arabic for understanding their religion, the Book, and the Prophet in the most accurate way.

Here, we will take a brief look at the existence of tafsīr in al-Andalus, which is rooted in the Arabic language. Proficiency in Arabic is recognized as a primary condition for understanding and interpreting the Holy Qur'an, which stands as the foundational text for all commentators. However, since a scholar and their science cannot be evaluated in isolation from their geography, we emphasize the status and importance of the Arabic language before introducing the tafsīr in al-Andalus. It is crucial to note that, in parallel with the spread of Arabic, linguistic studies also made significant progress in the region.

In this regard, it is accurate to state that works from the East (al-Mashriq) were initially utilized for tafsīr, which is the central subject of our article. Muslims in al-Andalus did not sever their ties with their ancestral lands in the East and maintained a continuous intellectual exchange with the great central Islamic world.



Although some sources suggest a specific century for its emergence, it is not possible to determine exactly when tafsīr began to emerge as an independent discipline in al-Andalus. Several factors contribute to this difficulty in periodization. First, in the Islamic tradition, scholars were typically competent across the entire spectrum of Islamic sciences; even if a scholar became famous in one specific field, they were often simultaneously recognized as a mufasssīr, muḥaddith, and faqīh. Furthermore, the pedagogical structure of the time integrated all Islamic sciences within the teaching circles (ḥalaqāt) in the mosques of Andalusian cities.



The roots of Islamic science in al-Andalus can be traced back to the generation of the Companions (such as Munaysir al-Ifrīqī) and Tābi'ūn (such as Mūsā b. Nuṣayr (d. 97/715) and Hanesh al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 100/718)). These early foundations were significantly strengthened through scientific expeditions to the East, which facilitated a continuous intellectual exchange.

Initially, Andalusian tafsīr studies placed heavy emphasis on qirā'āt (Qur'anic recitations), with pioneering works by scholars such as Abū Amr al-Dānī and Ibn Shurayh shaping the field. This flourishing of knowledge was further bolstered by royal patronage; notably, al-Ḥakam II established a legendary library in Qurṭuba (Córdoba), reportedly housing 400,000 volumes.

The transmission of tafsīr to the Western Islamic world remained intimately linked to Eastern traditions. Early Andalusian tafsīrs drew heavily upon authority figures such as Ibn 'Abbās and al-Tabarī. By the third century of the Hijri calendar, scholars such as Bāqī b. Makhlad (d. 276/889) began producing tafsīr. Although many of these early efforts have not survived, they paved the way for a distinct Andalusian tradition.

A notable characteristic of Andalusian tafsīr throughout different periods is the prevalence of the term aḥkām (legal rulings) in titles. This suggests a primary focus on legal verses (āyāt al-aḥkām), likely influenced by the social necessity of defining Islamic law in a geography marked by close relations with the Ahl al-Kitāb and the later challenges of the Crusades.

The Golden Age of Andalusian Tafsīr (IV and V Centuries AH)

The fourth century AH witnessed a maturing scholarly tradition in al-Andalus, with works reflecting a more diverse range of subjects. Prominent scholars of this period included Abu'l-Aswad al-Kattānī, Ahmad b. Ziyād al-Fārisī al-Qayrawānī, and Ibn Āmine al-Qurtubī. Their contributions were instrumental in solidifying the foundations of local exegesis and paved the way for the monumental works of the following century.

However, the fifth century is widely regarded as “the backbone” of Andalusian tafsīr. During this period, leading commentators such as Makkī b. Abī Thālib and Abu Bakr Ibn al-Jawzī al-Sabtī produced significant tafsīr works that combined local insights with the classical influences of the earlier Eastern tafsīr, establishing a mature and reference-grade exegetical tradition.

In summary, the trajectory of tafsīr in al-Andalus can be viewed in three main stages:

1. Emergence: Established as a separate science in the third century AH.
2. Maturity: A brilliant period of development during the fifth century AH.
3. Peak: Reaching its zenith in the sixth century AH with the works of Ibn Ibn 'Aṭīyya.

Methodologically, two primary schools of thought emerged among these renowned commentators. While the works of Ibn Ibn 'Aṭīyya and Abū Hayyān are characterized by a strong emphasis on linguistic analysis, the exegeses of Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī and al-Qurṭubī are primarily dominated by aḥkām.

Statistical data from Fahrāsa further highlights the significance of these studies: between the ninth and the twelfth centuries (3-6 AH), approximately 9.4% of the total intellectual production (133 out of 1,405 works) was dedicated to the Qur'ān and its sciences. Remarkably, about half of these works were authored by native Andalusian scholars, underscoring the region's vital role in the history of Islamic exegesis.

The Sources and Characteristics of Andalusian Tafsīr

When we consider the question, “What were the sources of tafsīr in al-Andalus?” it is evident that the sources in the region did not differ from the classical understanding of tafsīr. In relation to the circulation of exegetical works, the most frequently commented upon and transmitted works of tafsīr in al-Andalus were those of ‘Abd al-Razzāq, Yaḥyā b. Sallām, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn ‘Aṭiyya, al-Naqqāsh, and al-Zamakhsharī.

Characteristics of Andalusian Tafsīr Culture

As previously noted, education in al-Andalus prioritized language sciences, such as ṣarf and naḥw, immediately after the study of the Qur’ān. Therefore, a tafsīr style based on linguistic explanations, alongside narration, became a distinctive feature of the region. Scholars such as Ibn ‘Aṭiyya and Abū Ḥayyān stood out in this regard, successfully combining both riwāyah and dirāyah methods in their understanding of the Qur’ān.

According to Kenuni, the tafsīr tradition in al-Andalus can be summarized in three main points:

1. Analyzing the Qur’anic texts in terms of isnād, transmission, and ḥifz, while giving importance to documenting the text of the Qur’ān through these supports.
2. Attempting to understand the Qur’ān in terms of irāb, naskh, and i’jāz,
3. Reflecting on the meaning of the Qur’ān and deducing correct legal rulings.

Moreover, most Andalusian commentators served as qadis in their respective regions. Consequently, in their tafsīr, they gave significant importance to aḥkām verses and jurisprudential rulings. They developed their interpretations within the framework of Mālikī fiqh, the most widespread madhhab in the region. As is well known, fiqhī tafsīr is the defining characteristic of the works of Abū Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabī and al-Qurtubī.





In al-Andalus, tafsīr largely followed the classical tradition, grounded in the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the views of the Companions and Tābi'ūn, while incorporating dirāyah upon this foundation. Andalusian exegetes emphasized qirā'āt and linguistic analysis, generally avoiding philosophical, allegorical, and isrā'īlyyāt approaches. Sufism was not widely accepted and was occasionally criticized. They also benefited from earlier tafsīr works and primarily focused on narration-based exegesis, often utilizing hadith without providing detailed isnād.

Ultimately, it is evident that Andalusian commentators did not operate in isolation from their society; on the contrary, they adopted an interpretive approach deeply rooted in addressing the practical problems of their time. With its profound scholarly accumulation and influential authors, al-Andalus remains a vital field, inviting further research and examination for anyone interested in the rich history of Qur'anic interpretation.

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THE HERITAGE OF MUSIC IN AL-ANDALUS: FROM THE EAST TO THE WEST

By Aliye YILMAZ

Music has always been an essential part of human life, as human nature inherently seeks and explores beauty. Throughout history, humans have sought to discover beautiful sounds and melodies to express their emotions, dreams, and hopes. In this article, we will explore Andalusian music and the profound impact of Ziryāb's influence upon it.

During the Middle Ages, al-Andalus influenced other nations in various fields, including architecture, literature, science, and music. It served as an example for other countries and communities, particularly Jews and Christians living together during that period. The history of this influence began with the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula by the Arabs in 711. Following the conquest, although the production and performance of music were initially limited, this did not hinder society's love for art. Eventually, music became an essential part of life in al-Andalus. In addition, the foundations of professional musical theory in al-Andalus were established in the 9th century, largely influenced by the musical traditions arriving from the East (*Mashriq*), which had deep Persian and Abbasid roots.

As previously mentioned, different communities coexisted in the Iberian Peninsula. For instance, the ethnic Arabs formed a small but aristocratic elite. On the other hand, the *Mozarabs* were Christians who adopted Arabic culture and language while maintaining their faith. Moreover, the Sephardim (*Sefardíes*), Jews who lived in Spain, were producing Sephardic music, and this musical genre exhibits distinct influences from the Islamic era.





Following this, the first professional musicians arrived from the East, bringing with them Middle Eastern songs, such as *Aṣfā*, to al-Andalus. During this era, Córdoba became a focal point for intercultural exchange, and the Umayyad rulers provided significant patronage to musicians. To illustrate, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I hosted renowned singers in his palace, a tradition of royal support that was continued by al-Ḥakam I and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II.



When we analyze the music of al-Andalus, we find two distinct vocal forms: *Muwashshaḥ* and *Zajal*. This music was popular among Muslims, Christians and Jews, who together produced songs in both Arabic and Hebrew. Furthermore, this musical tradition significantly influenced Europe and North Africa, though it had a less pronounced effect on Ottoman and Persian music.

Firstly, I would like to introduce the *muwashshaḥ*. It covers a wide range of themes, including love, lamentation, and social criticism. The *muwashshaḥ* emerged at the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th centuries; it is structured with five *tetrastichs* called *aghṣān*, each with its own rhyme scheme. Additionally, between these *tetrastichs*, there is a refrain, and the poem typically concludes with a *kharja*, which holds as much importance as the opening *maṭla’*. Notably, while the main body of the poem is usually written in classical Arabic, the *kharja* is written in Andalusian Arabic.

The other vocal type is *zajal*, a vernacular poetic style. In this form, poets do not strictly adhere to formal grammatical rules, instead utilizing a simpler, more colloquial Arabic in their compositions. Additionally, people who perform *zajal* are called *zajjāl*. Furthermore, *zajal* is the result of interaction between the local people and the Arabs; thus, it represents an adaptation of local musical traditions. Usually, it consists of five or six *tetrastichs* and includes some Spanish words in its *kharja*. Moreover, these poems were typically composed for oral performance. What is more, the first vocal ensemble style in the Islamic world was performed through *zajal*.

Moreover, during the Umayyad era, the rulers paid significant attention to music and supported professional musicians. The first musicians came to al-Andalus during the Umayyad period, and their art became so popular that it helped to spread these musical traditions throughout Iberia. Besides, the foundations of Andalusian music were laid by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I upon his arrival on the peninsula. Another example of the importance of music in al-Andalus was the dedicated musical circles established by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II within the palace.



Another pivotal figure in Andalusian music is Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Nāfi’, famously known as Ziryāb. He was a student and a *mawlā* (freed slave) of Ishāq al-Mawṣilī in Baghdad and emerged as one of the most important and talented *oud* (lute) players of his time. Born in Iraq in 789, he was nicknamed Ziryāb (meaning “blackbird”) due to his dark complexion and remarkable vocal eloquence. There were three significant sources about Ziryāb’s profound knowledge: the mentorship of Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī and his son, Ishāq; his interactions with other contemporary masters, and the rich cultural and intellectual heritage of Baghdad.

Furthermore, Ziryāb possessed a natural genius for music. His teacher, Ishāq al-Mawṣilī, introduced him to the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, who was impressed by his capabilities. According to historical sources, when Ishāq realised the Caliph’s immense satisfaction, he felt threatened by his student’s rising star and gave Ziryāb an ultimatum to leave Baghdad. Consequently, Ziryāb departed for the West, traveling through Syria and then Qayrawan. During this journey, he corresponded with Emir al-Ḥakam I, who invited him to al-Andalus. However, by the time Ziryāb arrived, the Emir had passed away, and his son ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II, whose reign is celebrated in history as *Ayyām al-‘Arūs* (The Days of the Bride) for its peace and prosperity, had ascended the throne. Hence, Ziryāb initially wanted to go back, but the new Emir asked to see him; thus, he went to al-Andalus with his family. Upon his arrival, Emir ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II received Ziryāb and his family with great honors and arranged a house, the Sidonia Palace, and a salary for them.

In addition, Ziryāb made many innovations in al-Andalus across various fields, such as geography, astronomy, gastronomy and fashion. Specifically in music, he used different methods in teaching music and playing the *oud*. Besides, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II established a music school in Córdoba for him, where he began to teach. His approach differed from conventional music education methods because Ziryāb separated instruction into three parts: the first, teaching rhythm, measure and singing lyrics with instruments; the second, teaching tunes in a basic style; and finally, teaching musical nuances. According to sources, his legacy is preserved in a work titled *Kitāb Akhbār Ziryāb*.

Moreover, Ziryāb was a dedicated educator; he developed innovative pedagogical methods to cultivate his students' talents, ensuring they achieved mastery in singing. Beyond his teaching, he introduced groundbreaking innovations to the *oud*. Most notably, he added a fifth string, dyed red to symbolize the soul in the middle of the *oud*'s string. While he was playing the *oud*, he used a plectrum made from a vulture or eagle feather instead of a wooden one. Similarly, he used light materials and made the *oud*'s strings from gut (traditionally attributed to young lions' bowels) to achieve a more resonant and delicate sound.

In the final analysis, throughout history, humankind has found a way to express emotions and beauty with music. People have danced and cried to different melodies. Undoubtedly, Andalusian music has its own unique characteristics, and Ziryāb contributed to Eastern and Western musical traditions, creating a lasting cultural legacy in al-Andalus.

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LIFE OF THE MOST PEACEFUL PEOPLE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

By Muhammet Furkan KARAKAŞ



Al-Andalus stands as a jewel of the Islamic world, representing a “union of the four books.” For almost eight hundred years, Jews, Muslims and Christians lived together in relative peace. In this text, we will examine the lives of the citizens of al-Andalus. Regarding the ethnicity of the population, the majority were indigenous to the Iberian Peninsula. While the society was initially composed mostly of Christians with a Jewish minority, the arrival of Arabs and Berbers after the conquest transformed it. Over the centuries, Arab culture became dominant, significantly influencing the indigenous population.

There were also Sudanese people who served in the army and the postal system due to their physical endurance. Another important group, which may come as a surprise, was the Vikings. *Saqaliba* was the name of Slavic people in al-Andalus. They were taken as children, in a system somewhat comparable to the Ottoman *devshirme* system. These children were raised as Muslims and later assumed important responsibilities within society. Over time, they all became part of Andalusian society. Following the conquest, we can observe that different communities generally lived together peacefully. The reason for this can be linked both to Muslim attitudes toward non-Muslims and to the historical background of these communities.

For example, the position of Jewish people in society had previously been secondary because after the Romans destroyed al-Quds (Jerusalem) some Jewish communities migrated to the Iberian Peninsula. Many Christians viewed Jews negatively because of the death of Prophet Jesus. Therefore, many Jews welcomed the arrival of Muslims, whom they had heard described as comparatively peaceful people. Muslims granted them rights similar to those given to Christians. In fact, Jewish communities eventually became one of the most influential social groups in al-Andalus. Christians were also not completely against Muslim rule at first. If we examine the history of the conquest, we can see that some of the cities were taken peacefully through agreements. Muslims sometimes even trusted non-Muslims more than their fellow Muslims. For instance, during the reign of al-Ḥakam I, Ṭālūt ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbār hid in the house of his Jewish friend during the Rabad Rebellion. Although certain groups attempted to disrupt this coexistence, such as Christian militant movements that sought to provoke hostility against Muslims, most people did not support these efforts. These tensions continued for years but did not fundamentally destroy social coexistence.

Besides this, if we examine daily life, we can discuss houses, family structure, women, cleanliness, cuisine, clothing, special days, games, religion and language.

Houses



The houses were generally not ostentatious; instead, they were characterized by simplicity. Typically consisting of two floors, these dwellings featured latticed windows (*mashrabiyyah*) overlooking the street, designed to integrate women into social life while maintaining privacy. While the number of rooms varied, there was a clear distinction between social classes; wealthy families resided in spacious homes with numerous rooms, whereas the poorer families lived in much smaller spaces.

Interestingly, larger houses employed an ancient version of central heating. These systems featured a furnace area in the basement used to heat water, which was then circulated through a network of pipes. Additionally, summer houses were a common luxury for the elite class, providing seasonal retreats.

Family



The family structure was typically extended, with grandparents, parents, and children living together. Under Islamic law, men were permitted to marry up to four wives. While this was more common among the wealthy, it also began to gain popularity among Christians. Despite opposition from the clergy, this cultural influence persisted. Marriages between Muslim men and Christian women were common, with many women eventually converting to Islam. Conversely, marriage to concubines was less common; generally, only those facing financial or social difficulties opted for such unions in order to avoid the high costs associated with traditional marriage ceremonies.

Women



Muslim women had more rights than many of their contemporaries and their family background played an important role in shaping their opportunities. For instance, women from scholarly families had greater access to education than others. Women also had a notable influence on politics; for example, the wife of al-Ḥakam II assisted the vizier al-Manṣūr and his son in securing the throne. Women were therefore active participants in society and influenced many aspects of the administration of the country.

Cleanliness



As al-Andalus was ruled by Muslims, cleanliness was considered a paramount social value. There were specific regulations aimed at keeping streets, places of worship and bazaars clean. This culture was further supported by bathhouses, which combined Roman and Arab bathing traditions. This bath culture played an important role in maintaining high standards of cleanliness throughout the cities.

Kitchen



There was a unique food culture that combined Eastern and Western kitchens. Wheat was the primary ingredient, used in different types to cook various foods, especially bread. The Andalusian kitchen featured many kinds of fruits, such as melon, watermelon, and figs. Frying food was also very popular; for example, they would add cinnamon to cheese and fry it. The cuisine also included butter cakes and desserts, often accompanied by fruit juice, milk or special drinks flavored with rose and other floral scents.

Clothes



Clothing styles changed over the centuries, but certain traditional forms of attire remained common. Most of the time, women and men wore similar garments; they dressed in shirts made of linen or cotton with long outer garments over them. Unlike men, women wore chadors. However, due to various cultural influences, clothing styles gradually changed according to both fashion and seasonal conditions.

Special Days and Games



In terms of special days, people celebrated religious festivals similar to those observed today, but they also celebrated three additional festivals. Firstly, *Nowruz* was celebrated for the arrival of spring. Secondly, *Mihrijan* was celebrated on 24 June, during which people exchanged gifts and held poetry competitions. The poems often focused on the beauty of the region. Finally, *Asir* was celebrated in connection with the grape harvest... Christmas was also celebrated and some Muslims even participated in these festivals.

Among many games played in al-Andalus, one of the most popular was “*Tabla*,” which resembled the Turkish game of jereed. In this game, a stick was placed in the middle and two teams attempted to strike it.

Religion



Religious life in al-Andalus was characterized by a strong religious structure in which the Mālikī school served as the dominant legal tradition. This strictness was maintained partly as a means of preserving unity against threats from the Christian north. For this reason, *salah* (prayer) held great importance, and most people regularly attended mosques, especially for Friday prayer. However, there was a sad side to their religious life: performing Hajj pilgrimage was not easy, particularly for rulers. Many people were highly devout and even continued fasting after Ramadan; scholars sometimes attempted to discourage this practice in order to preserve the special status of Ramadan itself.

Language



At first, the primary languages were Latin-based Iberian dialects, but after the conquest, Arabic gradually became the dominant language. Even Christian nobles attempted to learn Arabic. While the formal Arabic was used in palace for administration and writing, ordinary people developed a new colloquial form of Arabic (*'āmmiyyah*). Because people from different parts of the Arab world lived together in al-Andalus, this dialect emerged naturally. Although Persian occasionally exerted cultural influence, it never became dominant. Arabic remained superior to Latin-based and Berber languages for centuries, and even after the Reconquista, the decline of Arabic linguistic dominance took a considerable amount of time.

In conclusion, al-Andalus was a unique crossroads where different traditions, languages, and beliefs lived together, creating a rich cultural heritage that influenced both the East and the West for centuries.

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TRUTHS ENGRAVED IN STONE

By Selda ALUÇ



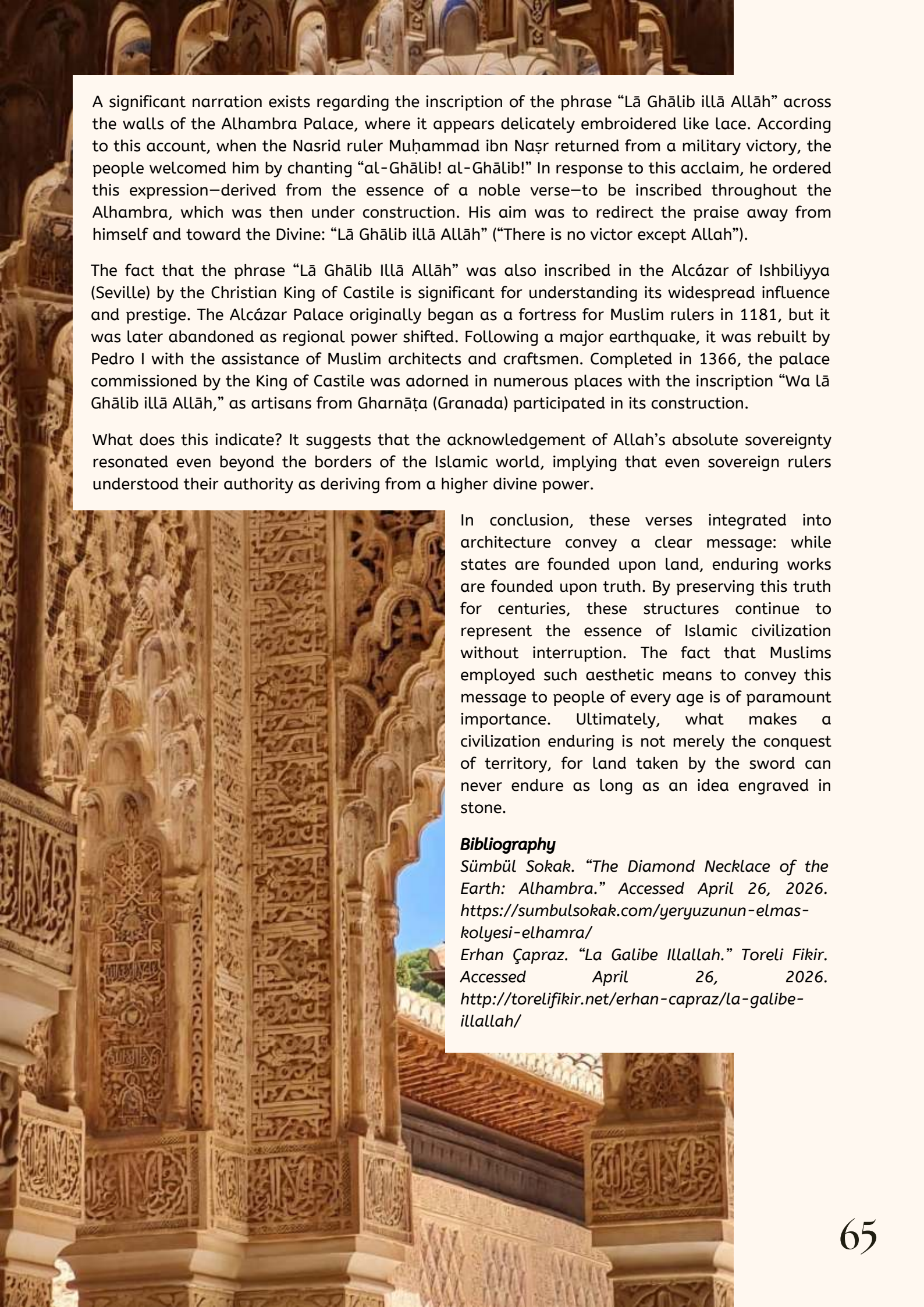
“The heroes of Islamic art are buildings.”

This sentence is significant because it expresses the central contribution of architecture to the Islamic tradition. Throughout history, many civilizations have sought to leave behind monumental works, and those that have survived to the present day offer valuable insight into their cultures. This feature is frequently encountered in Islamic architecture, where the integration of inscriptions into buildings became one of its most distinctive characteristics. In Islamic civilization, the use of Qur’anic verses adds both an artistic quality to the structure and reflects the fundamental beliefs of Islam in a concise and powerful manner.

Another important point to note is that the verses selected for architecture are generally short, eloquent, and carry clear messages that reflect the essence of the Qur’an. In fact, some of these verses not only convey a message but also become enduring symbols of the civilization that produced them. In the history of Islam, the phrase “Lā Ghālib illā Allāh,” inspired by Sūrah Yūsuf (12:21), stands out as a prime example of this symbolic role. This expression was inscribed throughout the Alhambra Palace, the distinguished architectural masterpiece of the Nasrid Dynasty in al-Andalus, conveying a timeless message to humanity: “There is no victor except Allah.”

Derived from the Arabic verb ghalaba (“to overcome” or “to prevail”), the word ghālib initially conveys the meaning of “one who prevails, overcomes, or is victorious.” From a theological perspective, human beings receive such qualities and attributes as a reflection of divine favor. However, because human beings are prone to forgetfulness (nisyān), they can easily lose sight of the source of these qualities and potentially fall into disobedience. For this reason, the inscription of this phrase in stone, displayed prominently for centuries, serves as a vital reminder to humanity that the ultimate and true Victor is Allah.





A significant narration exists regarding the inscription of the phrase “Lā Ghālib illā Allāh” across the walls of the Alhambra Palace, where it appears delicately embroidered like lace. According to this account, when the Nasrid ruler Muḥammad ibn Naṣr returned from a military victory, the people welcomed him by chanting “al-Ghālib! al-Ghālib!” In response to this acclaim, he ordered this expression—derived from the essence of a noble verse—to be inscribed throughout the Alhambra, which was then under construction. His aim was to redirect the praise away from himself and toward the Divine: “Lā Ghālib illā Allāh” (“There is no victor except Allah”).

The fact that the phrase “Lā Ghālib illā Allāh” was also inscribed in the Alcázar of Ishbiliyya (Seville) by the Christian King of Castile is significant for understanding its widespread influence and prestige. The Alcázar Palace originally began as a fortress for Muslim rulers in 1181, but it was later abandoned as regional power shifted. Following a major earthquake, it was rebuilt by Pedro I with the assistance of Muslim architects and craftsmen. Completed in 1366, the palace commissioned by the King of Castile was adorned in numerous places with the inscription “Wa lā Ghālib illā Allāh,” as artisans from Gharnāṭa (Granada) participated in its construction.

What does this indicate? It suggests that the acknowledgement of Allah’s absolute sovereignty resonated even beyond the borders of the Islamic world, implying that even sovereign rulers understood their authority as deriving from a higher divine power.

In conclusion, these verses integrated into architecture convey a clear message: while states are founded upon land, enduring works are founded upon truth. By preserving this truth for centuries, these structures continue to represent the essence of Islamic civilization without interruption. The fact that Muslims employed such aesthetic means to convey this message to people of every age is of paramount importance. Ultimately, what makes a civilization enduring is not merely the conquest of territory, for land taken by the sword can never endure as long as an idea engraved in stone.

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THE CRADLE OF ISLAMIC SCIENCE: A RE-EVALUATION OF BAYT AL-ḤIKMAH

By Bahar DUMLU

The history of intellectual development is often shaped by institutions that gather, preserve, and reinterpret knowledge across cultures. In the context of the Islamic Golden Age, *Bayt al-Ḥikmah*—commonly translated as the “House of Wisdom”—has come to symbolize this process. Traditionally associated with Abbasid Baghdad in the ninth century, it is frequently described as a major center of translation and scholarship.

While the precise nature and structure of *Bayt al-Ḥikmah* remain subjects of scholarly debate, there is broad agreement that it represents a significant phase in the consolidation and transmission of knowledge in the medieval Islamic world. This study re-examines its role, not as a singular or fully institutionalized “academy” in the modern sense, but as part of a wider intellectual movement that facilitated the integration of earlier scientific traditions into Islamic scholarship.



The Epistemological Status of Knowledge in Islam

Any attempt to understand the emergence of such intellectual activity must begin with the broader epistemological framework of Islamic thought. The Qur'ān contains numerous exhortations to reflect, observe, and reason about the natural world, and later Islamic intellectual traditions often interpreted these passages as encouragements toward inquiry. Within theological discourse, the human intellect (*'aql*) is frequently regarded as a divine endowment that enables moral responsibility and comprehension



While it would be an overstatement to claim a universally binding “mandate” for scientific inquiry, many Muslim scholars historically framed the pursuit of knowledge as a virtuous and even religiously meaningful activity. This perspective contributed to an environment in which the study of disciplines such as astronomy, medicine, and mathematics could be integrated into a broader religious and cultural worldview. Consequently, the acquisition of knowledge from non-Islamic sources was not necessarily perceived as a threat, but rather as an extension of intellectual engagement with the created world.

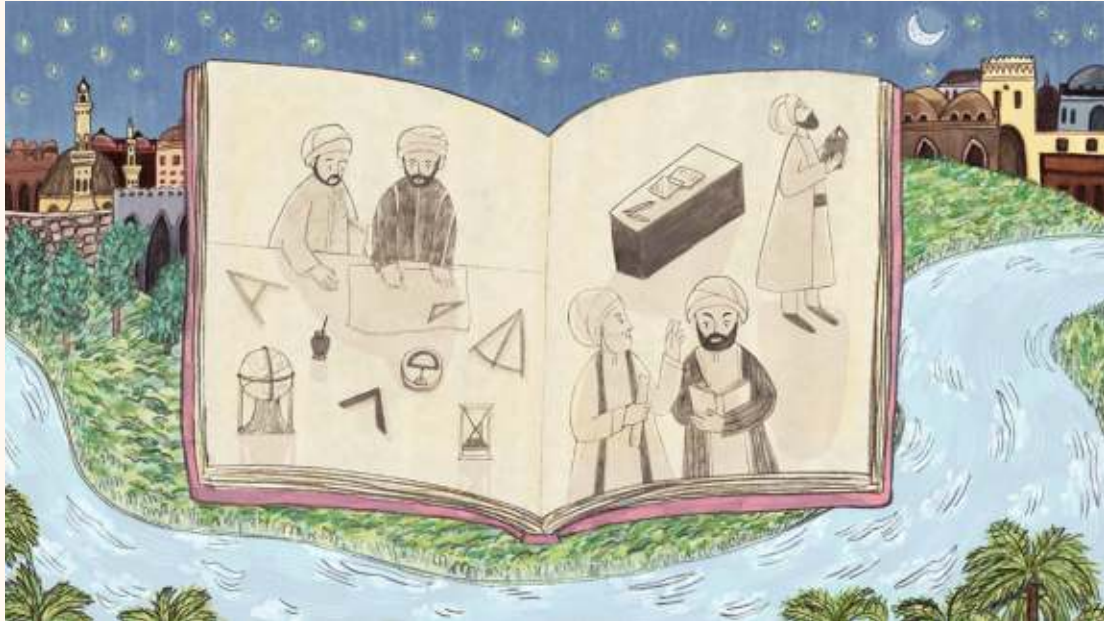
Scientific Antecedents and the Synthesis of Civilizations



Islamic civilization emerged within a region already rich in intellectual traditions. The rapid expansion of early Islamic polities brought Muslims into contact with the scientific and philosophical legacies of late antiquity, including Hellenistic, Sasanian, and Indian knowledge systems. These traditions were preserved and transmitted through a variety of channels, most notably through Syriac-speaking Christian scholars who played a central role in translating Greek works into Syriac and later into Arabic.

The academy of Gundeshapur in Sasanian Iran is often cited as an important antecedent. Associated with medical learning and the transmission of Greek and Persian knowledge, it illustrates that organized scholarly activity predated the Abbasid period. Similarly, Arab client kingdoms such as the Lakhmids and Ghassanids facilitated cultural exchange between the Byzantine and Sasanian worlds, though their role should not be overstated.

Rather than representing a sudden intellectual awakening, the Abbasid translation movement should be understood as the culmination of these earlier processes. It was characterized by the adaptation, reinterpretation, and expansion of inherited knowledge rather than its simple preservation.



The Genesis of the House of Wisdom

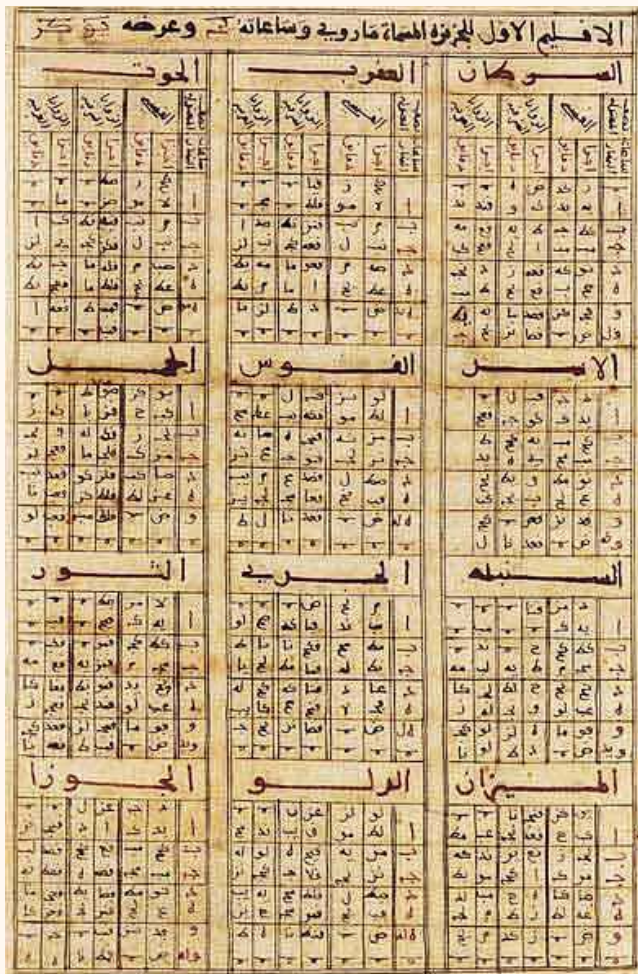
Early efforts to engage with foreign knowledge can be traced, albeit somewhat tentatively, to the Umayyad period. Figures such as Khālīd ibn Yazīd are traditionally credited with encouraging interest in alchemy and translation, though such accounts are often regarded as partly legendary and should be treated with caution.

More substantial developments occurred under the Abbasids, particularly during the reign of the Caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 754–775). Motivated in part by administrative and practical concerns—such as calendrical calculations, astrology, and medicine—al-Manṣūr is reported to have supported the translation of works from Middle Persian, Sanskrit, and Greek into Arabic. This patronage established an important precedent for state-supported intellectual activity.

During the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809), sources refer to the existence of a royal library sometimes called *Khizānat al-Ḥikmah* (Treasury of Wisdom). While details about its structure and function remain limited, it appears to have served as a repository for manuscripts acquired through diplomatic exchanges, scholarly networks, and broader intercultural contact with regions such as Byzantium.

Over time, this collection of texts became associated with scholarly activity. However, it is difficult to determine the extent to which it functioned as a formal institution, as later sources may project more developed structures onto earlier periods.

The Translation Movement and Scholarly Activity



The translation movement reached a particularly active phase during the early ninth century, especially under the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 813–833). Later historical accounts describe his patronage of scholars and his interest in rational inquiry, sometimes linking him to theological currents such as Mu'tazilism, which emphasized the role of reason.

During this period, translation became more systematic, with scholars working to render Greek, Syriac, and other texts into Arabic. Figures such as Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq are well known for their contributions, particularly in medicine. Ḥunayn and his circle developed careful translation techniques, often producing revised and annotated versions of earlier works.

It is important to note that translation in this context was not merely mechanical. Scholars frequently engaged critically with the material, introducing commentary, clarification, and in some cases, significant reinterpretation. This process contributed to the emergence of original scholarship in fields such as mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy.

Anecdotes describing lavish patronage—such as translators being paid the weight of their manuscripts in gold—appear in later sources and may reflect idealized portrayals of intellectual life rather than strictly verifiable practices. Nonetheless, they suggest the high cultural value attributed to scholarly activity.

Intellectual Life and Organization

Although *Bayt al-Ḥikmah* is often portrayed as a highly structured academy with departments and administrative hierarchies, the historical evidence for such an arrangement is limited. It is more accurate to understand it as a loosely organized center—or perhaps a network—of scholarly activity centered around the Abbasid court.



Baghdad itself, as the imperial capital, provided the broader setting for this intellectual flourishing. Scholars of diverse backgrounds, including Muslims, Christians, and others, participated in the translation and study of texts. This diversity contributed to a cosmopolitan intellectual environment in which different traditions could interact.

Debates and discussions (*munāẓara*) were an important feature of scholarly life, fostering critical engagement and the refinement of ideas. While it would be anachronistic to equate these practices directly with modern peer review, they nonetheless reflect a culture in which argumentation and evaluation played a central role.

Scholars such as al-Khwārizmī and al-Kindī are often associated with this milieu. Al-Khwārizmī's contributions to mathematics and geography, and al-Kindī's engagement with philosophy, exemplify the ways in which earlier traditions were not only preserved but also transformed.

Decline and Legacy

The Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258 is frequently cited as a turning point in the intellectual history of the region. Later chroniclers describe the destruction of libraries and the loss of countless manuscripts, sometimes in highly dramatic terms. While the extent of this destruction is difficult to quantify precisely, there is little doubt that it marked a significant disruption.



However, the intellectual legacy associated with *Bayt al-Hikmah* had already extended far beyond Baghdad. Through networks of translation and transmission, knowledge developed in the Islamic world reached other regions, including parts of Europe. In places such as al-Andalus and later in translation centers such as Tulaytula (Toledo), Arabic texts were rendered into Latin, contributing to the intellectual developments of medieval Europe.

Thus, rather than viewing *Bayt al-Hikmah* as an isolated institution whose influence ended abruptly, it is more appropriate to see it as part of a broader and ongoing process of knowledge transmission. Its significance lies not only in what it preserved, but also in how it transformed and disseminated earlier intellectual traditions.

Conclusion

Bayt al-Ḥikmah occupies an important, if sometimes idealized, place in the history of science and intellectual culture. While modern depictions often attribute to it the characteristics of a formal academy, the historical reality appears to have been more complex and less centralized. It functioned within a wider context of translation, patronage, and scholarly exchange that defined the Abbasid period.

By situating *Bayt al-Ḥikmah* within this broader framework, we gain a more nuanced understanding of its role. Rather than representing the origin of scientific thought or a direct precursor to modern institutions, it should be seen as a key moment in the long and interconnected history of human inquiry—one in which the knowledge of multiple civilizations was brought into dialogue, critically examined, and ultimately transformed.



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THE GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENTAL TRAJECTORY OF EVOLUTIONARY IDEAS IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

By Mehmet Emin MOL



Contrary to popular belief, the theory of evolution did not originate with Charles Darwin. Its conceptual roots extend back to Anaximander, the Ancient Greek philosopher who proposed that all animals emerged through gradual transformations, with humans representing a stage in this evolutionary chain. He even postulated that the earliest living organisms were aquatic, specifically fish.

In the history of Islamic thought, debates on creation reveal perspectives that bear striking similarities to evolutionary theory, articulated by Muslim scholars centuries before Darwin. Throughout history, many Muslim thinkers maintained that following the initial act of creation, God brought forth certain species from others. This is reflected in the Arabic verb *khalāqa* (to create), which, in addition to bringing something from non-existence, encompasses the meanings of “determining a measure” (*taqdīr*) and “originating one form of life from another.” Guided by the Qur’ān, Muslim scholars utilized philosophical methods to deepen their inquiries into the nature of existence.

By the late seventh century, the emergence of theological (kalām), philosophical, and scientific inquiry led Muslims to investigate questions surrounding the origin of the universe, particularly how and when creation occurred, while maintaining their belief in divine creation. However, although many verses of the Qurʾān provide information regarding the creation of the universe and humanity, it is difficult at first glance to find a definitive, systematic solution to the matter within the text, as this information is presented in a concise and scattered manner. The Prophet and his companions were not primarily concerned with such cosmological details, as their primary duty was to propagate the new religion and establish social order.

When examining Islamic literature, one encounters narratives regarding creation derived from the traditional Jewish corpus, termed *Isrāʾīliyyāt*, which entered the tradition through reports attributed to the Prophet. A significant reason for the rapid dissemination of these narratives is the shared Judeo-Christian depiction of the universe being created *ex nihilo* (from nothing). Another factor is that these accounts, similar to the Qurʾān, describe creation originating from elements such as water, soil, and clay. Consequently, as a reaction against folk beliefs rooted in these traditions and against cosmological thought based on Classical Greek and Hellenistic philosophy, evolutionary ideas in Islamic thought began to emerge more visibly in the 9th century. The earliest instance of this is found in al-Nazzām (d. 231/845) whose texts reflect this shift through his critiques of contemporary views on creation.



The foundational teaching of Islam is that God is the Creator of the universe. This is established in the very first revealed verses of the Qurʾān: “Read in the name of your God who created—created man from a clinging substance!” In addition to these initial verses from Sūrah al-ʿAlaq, (1-2), various other verses and certain ḥadīths affirm that humans, plants, the earth, and the heavens—in short, all existence—were created by God. Within the framework of these revelations, the early Muslims, alongside the Prophet, maintained the belief that the universe was created by God *ex nihilo*, a conviction that remains central to the faith today.



Professor John William Draper encountered evolutionary theory within the epistles of the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā* (Brethren of Purity) and the works of various other Muslim thinkers. In Draper's work, translated into Turkish as *Nizā'-ı İlm ü Dîn: İslâm ve Ulûm* (The History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science) with extensive commentary and additions by Ahmed Midhat Efendi, the author addressed the subject with the following observations: "We are sometimes surprised to find in their works ideas that we assume to have emerged in our own century. This is precisely the case with the modern doctrine of evolution and the development of living beings being taught in schools. Indeed, they took this doctrine much further than our own application by extending it even to inanimate matter and minerals."



In his article titled "Khalq el-Kā'ināt", Professor Muhammad Hamidullah notes that long before Lamarck, Darwin, or even Buffon, certain works containing ideas related to evolutionary ideas had already been translated from Arabic into various European languages.

In conclusion, these assessments by international scholars underscore that evolutionary ideas in the Islamic world were not mere precursors to modern science. Rather, they represented a sophisticated and independent tradition of cosmological inquiry that anticipated many later Western discussions on the subject by centuries. This historical trajectory reveals that the intellectual dynamism of the Islamic world provided a fertile ground for understanding the origins and development of life long before the modern era.

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FROM THE TYRANNY OF CRONOS TO THE KINGDOM OF ZEUS

By Uluç Kaan DEMİR

Following our introductory exploration of mythology in the previous issue, we now delve into the dramatic power struggles of the divine realm, beginning with the foundational myth of the Titans.

Tyranny of Cronos

Cronos married his sister Rhea and she became the Queen of the Cosmos. They had six children, but there was a problem: Cronos continuously remembered his father's prophecy, and feared, "What if these children do the same thing to me? What if my end becomes the same as my father's?" Then, he committed a desperate act: he swallowed his children one by one. First, his daughters: Hestia, Demeter and Hera. Then, his sons: Hades and Poseidon.

After he swallowed his five children, when his sixth child, Zeus, was born, Rhea decided to protect him child from Cronos. Rhea protected her last child, Zeus, with the help of Uranos and Gaia. They made a plan: Rhea gave Zeus to Gaia, and Gaia brought infant Zeus to the island of Crete, to a cave beneath Mount Ida. Zeus was raised in this cave. Meanwhile, Rhea wrapped a stone (the Omphalos Stone) in swaddling clothes to resemble Zeus and gave it to Cronos. Without looking at what it was, Cronos took the stone and swallowed it.

Thus, Zeus was saved, and as time passed, he grew up and went to his father, Cronos, to take revenge. Zeus prepared a drink and gave it to Cronos. Incidentally, Cronos did not recognise his son because he had already supposed that he had swallowed him. After Cronos drank the mixture, he vomited up his children. The siblings of Zeus survived because they were gods and goddesses and had the power of shape-shifting, so Zeus rescued them. After that, he also rescued the Cyclops and Hecatoncheires.



Titanomachy

Continuing the saga of the divine lineage, we now witness the epic confrontation known as the Titanomachy, a war that would ultimately decide the fate of the Cosmos.

There were two sides: The Titans and the Olympians (the Gods). Atlas, the strongest of the Titans and son of Iapetus, was the leader of the Titans in this war. The sons of Iapetus were split: Atlas and Menoetios supported the Titans, while Epimetheus and Prometheus aligned with the Olympians. The Titans fought from Mount Othrys, attempting to climb Mount Olympus by piling Mount Pelion upon Mount Ossa.

Zeus crushed them with the lightning bolts given to him by the Cyclopes as a gift for rescuing them from the prison where Cronos had held them. Not only Zeus, but also Poseidon and Hades received gifts from the Cyclopes: The Trident was given to Poseidon, and a helmet (which makes the wearer invisible) was given to Hades. Furthermore, Zeus released the Hecatoncheires, who joined the side of the Olympians, providing a great advantage.

The Hecatoncheires threw hundreds of rocks at the Titans. Since each of the three Hecatoncheires (Cottos, Briareos, and Gyges) had a hundred arms and fifty heads, three hundred rocks rained upon the Titans at once, resembling a literal meteor shower. Zeus empowered the Hecatoncheires with nectar and ambrosia, urging them to demonstrate their unbeatable strength. Cottos gave a loyalty oath to Zeus, and the Hecatoncheires began to fight.



When the clash began, the sea roared, and both the earth and sky shook. Zeus no longer held himself back, hurling his thunderbolts one after another. Fire reached the heavens, and all the chaos was burned with dazzling heat. The Hecatoncheires threw rocks at the Titans and pushed them into Tartaros. Afterwards, Poseidon surrounded Tartaros with bronze gates, and the Hecatoncheires became the loyal guardians of Tartaros.



Then came the punishment of the sons of Iapetus. First, Atlas, as the leader of the Titans, was punished by being forced to hold the pillars of the sky forever. Menoetios was struck by Zeus's thunderbolts and banished to the dark, deep Tartaros. The other two, Prometheus and Epimetheus, remained without punishment because they had not yet committed any wrongdoing.

The war lasted for ten years and finally ended. Zeus became the king of the gods and the ruler of the Cosmos. Divine missions were shared among the gods and goddesses, and everything seemed peaceful, but there was one more factor. Gaia grew furious because her children, the Titans, were imprisoned. Seeking revenge, she gave birth to Typhon...

Typhon vs Zeus

As Gaia sought revenge for her fallen children, she unleashed her most terrifying creation: Typhon. This final confrontation would decide if the newly established Olympian order could withstand the ultimate primordial threat.

Typhon was the most monstrous, terrible, and enormous creature ever known. As the son of Tartaros and Gaia, he was truly formidable. From his shoulders, hundreds of serpent heads rose; while the upper part of his body looked horrific, the lower part was entirely serpentine. His wings covered his massive body, his arms reached from the west to the east, and his height extended beyond the mountains; his heads even touched the stars.

When he appeared, mountains and seas shook. Because of his fiery breath, the sky was filled with fire. Zeus stood against him without fear and struck him with his thunderbolts. The moment they began to clash, the cosmic order broke, and chaos spread everywhere due to the violence. However, even Typhon could not endure the thunderbolts of Zeus. Zeus scorched and burned Typhon with his divine power. Finally, when Typhon was exhausted and stunned, Zeus cast him down beneath Mount Etna and imprisoned him deep within the mountain. Since then, Etna became a volcano due to the fiery breath of the imprisoned Typhon.



The heads sprouting from his shoulders let out various sounds: sometimes like a god, sometimes like an animal, and sometimes like a hunting howl.

After this struggle came to an end, the gods returned to their own affairs. Zeus, as the king of the gods, assigned them their duties: the seas to Poseidon, the underworld to Hades, and so forth. But to rule alongside him, a queen was needed for the gods...

Marriages of Zeus

Following the establishment of his reign, the king of the gods sought a queen to rule by his side. This pursuit led to a series of divine unions that shaped the celestial hierarchy and the various aspects of the Cosmos.

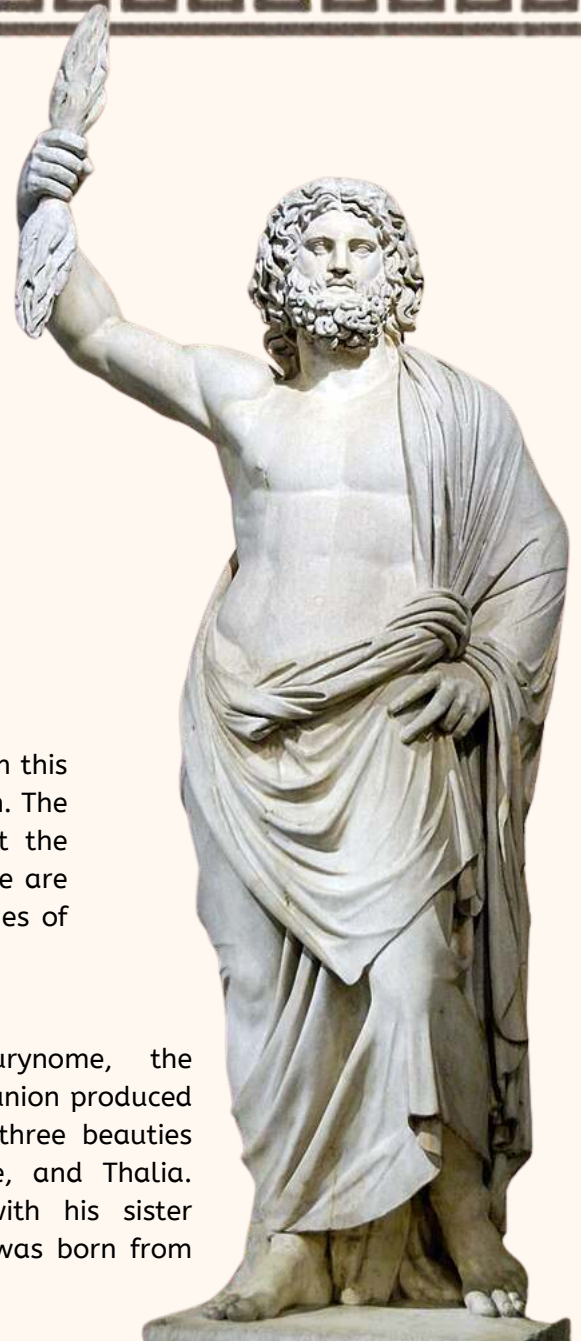
So, the womanizer Zeus sought a Queen for himself. His first wife was Metis, the goddess of wisdom. Metis became pregnant with the goddess Athena, but a prophecy loomed over them: "Her first child will be a girl, and her second will be a boy who will become greater than his father." To ensure that he remained the king of the gods, Zeus swallowed his first wife, the wise goddess Metis.

His second wife was Themis, the goddess of divine law. From this marriage, the Horae (Hours) and the Moirai (fates) were born. The Horae set the order of the Cosmos, while the Moirai set the destiny of everything and everyone. The names of the Horae are Eunomia (order), Dike (justice), and Eirene (peace). The names of the Moirai are Klotho, Lachesis, and Atropos.

Next, Zeus married Eurynome, the daughter of Oceanus. This union produced the Charites (Graces), the three beauties named Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia. Afterward, Zeus united with his sister Demeter, and Persephone was born from this marriage.

Then, Zeus lay with Mnemosyne, and the nine Muses were born. These nymphs serve as the sources of inspiration, each presiding over a different field: Calliope, head of the Muses, epic and lyric poetry; Clio, history; Polyhymnia, pantomime; Euterpe, choral poetry; Melpomene, tragedy; Thalia, comedy; Urania, astronomy.

Following this, Zeus and Leto produced Apollo and Artemis. Finally, Hera became the last and permanent wife of Zeus; Hebe, Ares and Eileithyia were born from this final marriage.



The Birth of Athena and the New Olympians

While the reign of Zeus was established through alliances, the birth of his children brought new powers and conflicts to Mount Olympos. When Zeus's head grew larger and his headaches became unbearable, he ordered his head to be split open with an axe. Once his command was fulfilled, Athena was born from his head, fully armed. Hera, the queen of the gods, witnessed this event and fueled by her anger and jealousy. He decided to give birth to a child of her own without a partner.

Unfortunately, the result was not at all pleasant. Hephaestus, the blacksmith god, was born from her. When she saw him, she realized he was very ugly; the ugliest among the gods. In her disappointment, she threw her own son from Mount Olympos. After a long fall (as mentioned in the myth, lasting nine days), he landed on the island of Lemnos. Sadly, the fall damaged his leg, leaving him lame for life. Hephaestus grew up on this island as a mighty blacksmith, forging many items for the gods and mortals alike, such as the winged sandals of Hermes.

One day, he crafted a golden throne for his mother, Hera. However, when she sat on it, a booby trap was triggered, and she was locked in. Hephaestus was called to rescue her, but he had conditions: He wanted Aphrodite, the most beautiful goddess, as his wife, and permanent permission to enter Olympos. Once his wishes were granted, he released his mother.



Meanwhile, when Leto became pregnant with Apollo and Artemis, she sought a place where Hera's wrath could not reach. After Artemis was born, Leto eventually found refuge on the island of Delos, where Apollo was born. Artemis, having witnessed her mother's suffering, made a vow of chastity and became the goddess of the Hunt, while Apollo became the god of the sun, music, and art. Later, Apollo reached Mt. Parnassos, killed the dragon Python, and established the famous temple at Delphi.

Lastly, we see the birth of Hermes, the son of Maia¹. Almost as soon as he was born, he performed two notable acts: He stole the cattle of Apollo and created the first Lyre from a tortoise shell. He gave the instrument to Apollo, who loved it so much that he forgave Hermes and even gifted him his staff, the caduceus.

To be continued in the next issue: The Story of Humankind...



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¹The month "may" comes from this name

FROM MIGRATION TO SETTLEMENT: OBSERVATIONS REGARDING TURKS IN THE NETHERLANDS



By Ahmet AKÇIL

Based on a ten-day field study conducted in the Netherlands, this article explores the evolving dynamics of Turkish immigrants through interviews with mosque community leaders, foundation representatives, and Turkish-Dutch citizens from different generations. My objective was not only to explore the socio-cultural landscape of a European country but also to analyze the organizations established by Turks who migrated from Anatolia in the 1960s and to assess their impact on subsequent generations. The phenomena that I will describe reflect a profound sociological transformation, as well as the traces of an ongoing struggle for identity that has evolved over time.

The most notable change I observed during the field interviews was that "returning to Türkiye permanently" is no longer a major consideration. The majority of the interviewees prefer to remain in the Netherlands in order to maintain the socio-economic stability they have established over decades. The Turkish community is now a settled society active in every field, ranging from teaching and engineering to local politics and business. However, this permanence also brings the risk of cultural erosion and assimilation.



During my observations, the most striking structural element was the multifunctional use of mosques. Mosques in the Netherlands extend beyond their classical functions, incorporating classrooms, libraries, and youth and women's branches. They function almost as social complexes. These activities, coordinated by institutions such as the Dutch Religious Affairs Foundation (Islamitische Stichting Nederland), serve as key institutional pillars for the Turkish and Muslim community abroad. However, another reality I observed in the region is that the Dutch government's removal of elective Turkish lessons from schools in 2004 has left the transmission of language, identity, and culture entirely in the hands of mosques and families. At the same time, other institutions are working to pass on the Turkish language and culture to new generations.

Institutions such as the Yunus Emre Institute and the Turkish Maarif Foundation serve both to connect local culture with universal values and to strengthen mutual understanding through educational and cultural initiatives promoting Turkish language, art, and civilization.

Together with the Dutch Religious Affairs Foundation, these institutions are the primary cornerstones of Turkish identity abroad.

This overall picture, which I had the opportunity to observe personally in the Netherlands, shows how the Turkish-Muslim community faces a dilemma between economic success and cultural preservation. In this context, mosques are not just buildings; they also constitute the spiritual and social core of this community. Unless these spaces are integrated with modern educational methodologies and well-structured social activities, the Turkish presence in Europe will remain vulnerable to the loss of cultural memory and assimilation.

The most significant discovery of my field research was the language attrition observed among the fourth and fifth generations. For many children, Turkish is no longer their first language but has instead become a second language. Although projects such as the International Theology Program aim to address the demand for locally trained religious officials, the reluctance of young people to return to the Netherlands after completing their education limits the program's overall effectiveness.



WHERE DO WE GO NOW

وهلاً لوين؟

By Şevval Beren ARSLANOĞLU



Where Do We Go Now is a Lebanese film, a collaborative production involving France, Lebanon, Egypt, and Italy. Nadine Labaki, who stars in the film, also serve as the director and one of the screenwriters. The film has received notable awards, including the People's Choice Award at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival in the Best Picture category.

Where Do We Go Now narrates its story in a realistic and tragic way; however, it does not forget to make the audience smile. The movie is about a Lebanese village where Muslims and Christians try to live together peacefully despite the religious tensions surrounding the village between certain groups. In the film, women play a significant and powerful role in maintaining peace within the community. For instance, the women sabotage the television and destroy newspapers so that the men remain unaware of the conflicts taking place in the surrounding areas. However, the tension gradually increases, and women make a plan as they always do.

The music and visuals are harmoniously aligned with the film, making the atmosphere feel even more realistic. The filming location, set design, and architecture of the houses are exquisite. In some scenes, the visuals symbolize the village's circumstances. For example, in the opening scene, the women are in a cemetery, and it can be seen that the cemetery is divided into two sides. One side belongs to Muslims, and the other side belongs to Christians. Also, the houses of worship (the church and the mosque) stand next to each other. The people of the village and their symbols stand side by side, yet they remain separated.

Regarding the strengths of the film, I believe a movie should be clear about its purpose, and this film successfully achieves that goal the storyline is easy to follow, making the movie accessible to everyone. Furthermore, the relationships between the characters are realistic and sincere, which the audience can truly feel. It is also quite unusual that a movie about regional conflict contains no fighting scenes; narrating such a strong story without relying on violence is truly remarkable.

On the critical side, the reasons behind certain critical events remain unclear to the audience. These events increase the tension between the two groups and lead to irreversible misunderstandings, yet the viewers are never fully informed about the truth behind them. This leaves viewers wondering, and ultimately, the ending of the film may not satisfy all viewers' expectations.

In conclusion, I would recommend this movie because it offers a realistic yet imaginative perspective on how people of different religions can or sometimes fail to live together peacefully. I wanted to introduce this film because it highlights how women's perspectives and solidarity can change the most complicated situations.



WOMEN AND WORKING LIFE IN AL-ANDALUS:

An Analysis of Fatma Merve Çınar's Work *"Endülüs'te Kadın"*

Fatma Merve Çınar. *Endülüs'te Kadın*. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2024. 404 sayfa.
ISBN:9786051367965

By Kader AYDIN

Fatma Merve Çınar, *"Endülüs'te Kadın"*, meticulously reconstructs the lives of woman by gathering clues scattered among the historical records of al-Andalus. Despite the limited sources available, she succeeds in presenting the lives of women as a holistic picture. Through the multilayered structure that Çınar has extracted from between the lines, we can trace women's place in the workforce and social life.

The author emphasises that although a vast amount of data exists on the social structure of al-Andalus, information about the position of women remains limited due to the historiographical approach of the period. Primary reasons for this silence include the patriarchal social structure and the fact that history was predominantly written from a perspective focused on political and military power.

In the framework presented in this work, examining how women were named is essential for understanding the broader social landscape before moving into a more in-depth analysis. Indeed, these names contain the most concrete clues regarding women's social roles. These naming conventions reflected in historical texts offer an extensive identity card, ranging from a woman's lineage, hometown, and marital status to her area of expertise, social status, her master (if she was an enslaved person), ethnic origin, and even her age or whether she had children.



In this terminology framework, the term *mar'ah* (*me're*) was typically used for married women, while the term *nisā* often referred to women within palace circles and the elite class. Historical texts suggest that the word *nisā* specifically designated the wives and concubines of high-ranking officials. Similarly, the expression *ḥarīm al-khalīfah* was preferred for the ruler's wives and concubines. While the adjective *karīmah* (pl. *karā'im*) could describe both daughters and wives of noble standing, the term *banāt/benatike* was specifically employed to denote daughters.

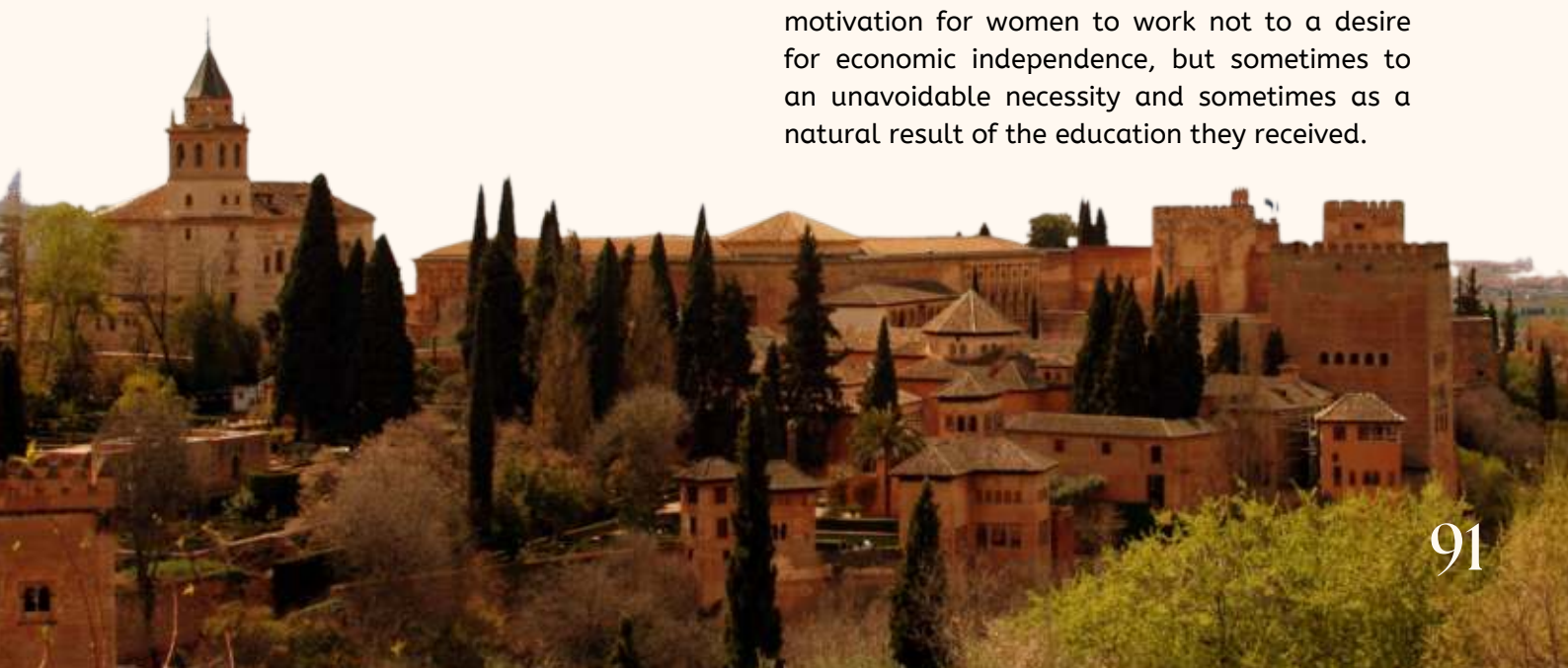
During this process, where Arabization and Islamization became widespread, it is noteworthy that the names of non-Muslim women continued to reflect their own cultures, while the adjective *ḥurrah* was used for free women who were not enslaved. The term *amah*, meaning female slave, replaced the title *'abd* used for men. For enslaved women, names representing flowers, precious stones, or physical and moral beauty were generally preferred; this contrasts with the tradition of derogatory naming found in regions like India, where class distinction was very sharp.

In a social structure where polygamous marriages existed, naming conventions that determined the status between wives were also included in the sources; for example, the title *nafīṣah*, meaning the favourite wife, points to a distinction among spouses.

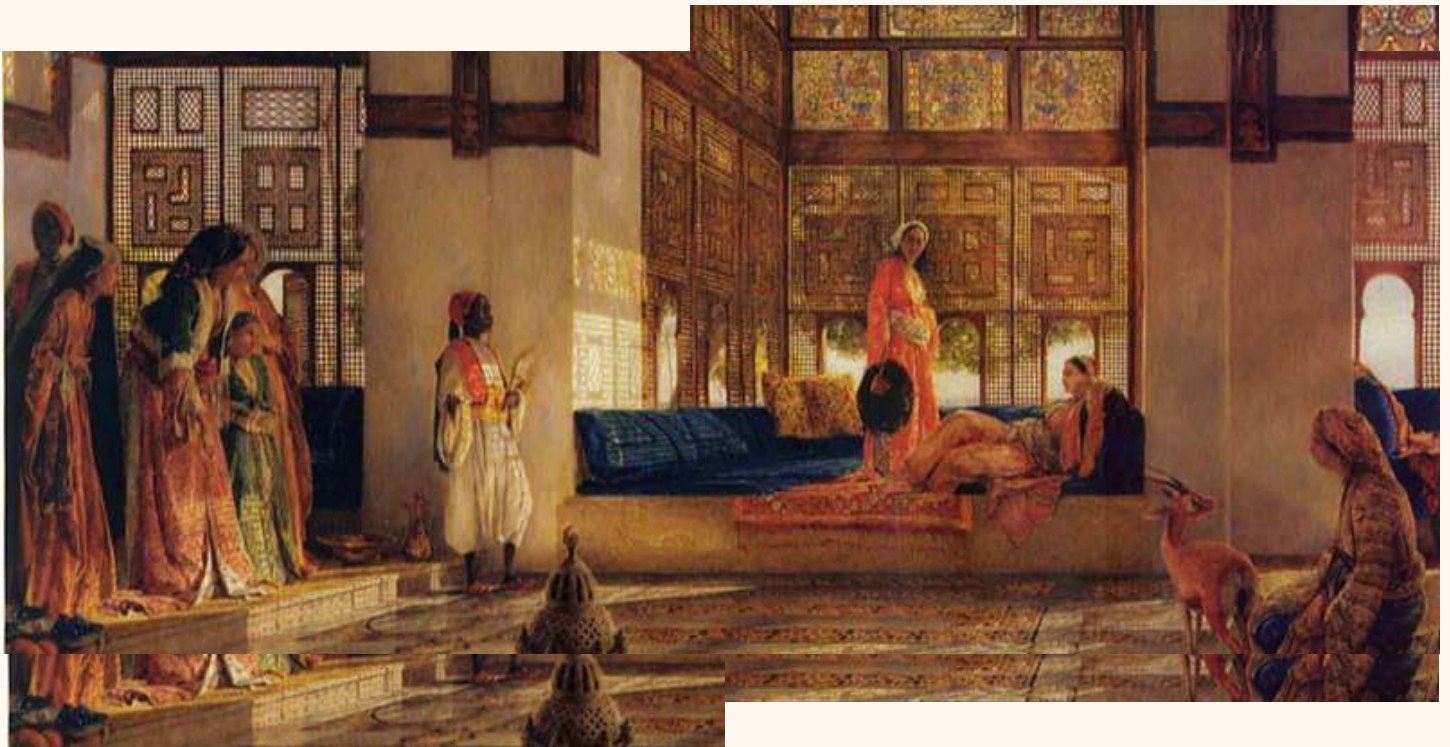


Following the conquests and marriages with Arabs, the names of non-Muslim women were preserved for a while so that their origins remained known; however, it was observed that the use of Arabic names became increasingly common in later periods. In light of all this data, it can be said that female names in al-Andalus are critical keys to reading the social, political, cultural, and religious fabric.

The visibility of women in working life has been meticulously categorized by the author according to their fields of activity. In rural areas, the role of women in agricultural production is described as more than just that of assistants; they personally carried out tasks such as silkworm breeding and the harvesting of flax and hemp. Compared to rural areas, there is much more detailed information regarding the professional lives of women living in cities. However, the participation of women in the workforce in al-Andalus was not uniform across every social class; women belonging to the elite class did not feel the need to work as they were free from financial concerns. Based on the data of the period, the author attributes the motivation for women to work not to a desire for economic independence, but sometimes to an unavoidable necessity and sometimes as a natural result of the education they received.



It is possible to say that the most common work environment for women throughout history has been the home. Women participated in economic life by marketing their home-based products or by providing services in the households of others. Citing Ibn Mughīth's work *al-Muqni'*, Çinar presents the existence of legal documents such as the "contract for hiring a woman for domestic service" (*wathīqat isti'jāri imra'ah li-khidmah al-bayt*) as the most concrete evidence of the presence of free women in this sector. Similarly, sources of the period emphasize that women also took on tasks such as carrying water and preparing food. Indeed, Ibn 'Idhārī drew attention to the physical risks faced by women performing these tasks in the Berber neighbourhoods of Córdoba during the reign of Caliph Hisham II. Narratives about a Black woman who died after falling while carrying food from the bakery to a house, and another woman who lost her life after losing her balance while carrying water from the river, reveal the vital risks these branches of work held for free women and that these jobs were areas of necessity. Although routine tasks like cooking and cleaning were traditionally carried out by the women of the household, it was frequently observed that these services turned into professional sectors in exchange for a fee.



One of the areas where female labor was most dominant in al-Andalus was textile production. Particularly the processing, spinning, and weaving of raw materials such as wool and cotton formed the backbone of women's economic activities within the household. These occupations not only met personal needs but also turned into a sustainable source of income. Another reason why these activities became so widespread among women was the fatwas issued within the framework of the jurisprudence of the period, which praised and encouraged women to work from home. On the other hand, women belonging to the elite class engaged in these fields as intellectual hobbies or distracting activities, perhaps because they had no financial necessity to join social life, or because their involvement in the outside world was not very well-received.

Women's economic activities moved beyond the boundaries of the home and spread to public areas such as markets and bazaars. Regulations found in the legal texts of the period prove that free women personally sold their own products in markets or were part of the trade network. However, this situation was kept under strict control by market inspectors (*muhtasib*) for the sake of maintaining social order. Although the boundaries of women's presence in the public sphere were drawn by male authority, records reflected in the works of authors like Ibn 'Abdurra'ūf show that rather than banning women from being in the bazaar, the focus was on disciplining this presence within the framework of social morality and order.

In al-Andalus, education stands out for free women not only as a status symbol but also as a professional area of expertise. Women who raised the children of the palace and elite families were defined in the literature as *mu'addibah* (educator/governess). These women not only conveyed basic religious knowledge; they also took on high-level pedagogical roles in fields such as literature, grammar, and palace protocol. In fact, the record that Ibn Hazm did not associate with men until his youth and instead received his Qur'an and calligraphy training from female teachers, while also memorizing poetry, reinforces this fact. The existence of these female educators proves how female labour in al-Andalus became institutionalized in the intellectual field and turned into a respected profession accepted by the upper classes of society.

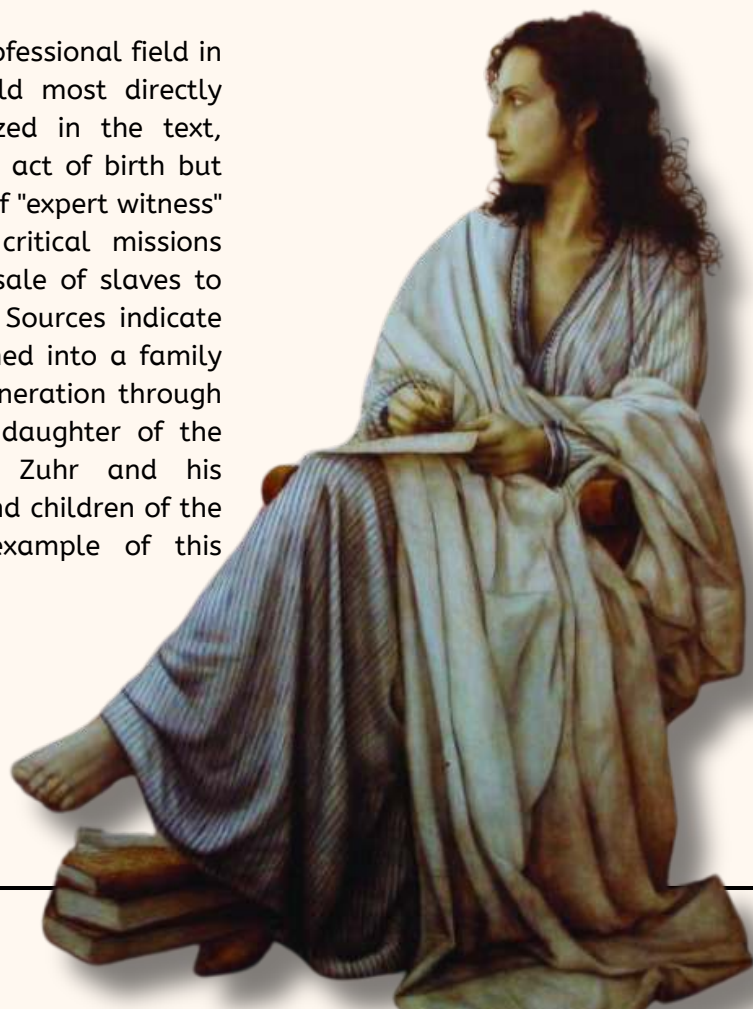
Another field of expertise directly linked to education is calligraphy and copying (*istinsākh*). Particularly in an intellectual center like Córdoba, the involvement of women in the processes of copying the Qur'an and literary works stands out as both an artistic and economic pursuit. The data reveal that women's skills in the art of writing were a natural result of the high-quality education they received, and this talent provided them with employment opportunities in libraries or educational institutions. This professional identity is one of the most concrete examples of how women in al-Andalus blended intellectual production with economic participation.





The data examined proves that free women in al-Andalus were not limited to domestic activities or physical labor in the markets; they existed as professional subjects in strategic state positions such as clerks (*kātibah*), library managers, and high-level educators. It is observed that female clerks, who managed official correspondence and displayed skill in calligraphy and the art of writing, were personally employed in the functioning of the palace bureaucracy and the construction of the state's diplomatic language. This picture shows that even in a social structure centuries ago—which was patriarchal and lacked modern legal privileges—women were able to penetrate the center of the political mechanism through their merit and intellectual equipment, even as biased approaches toward high-level female employment are still seen today. This effective presence at the level of "ruler's clerk," embodied by figures like Lubnā, who lived during the reign of al-Ḥakam II, confirms that working life in al-Andalus was shaped by a professional female workforce, even in the most private and critical points of the state.

The health sector in al-Andalus was another professional field in which women, whether free or enslaved, could most directly apply their scientific knowledge. As emphasized in the text, midwifery (*qābilah*) was not limited only to the act of birth but became an expert profession reaching the level of "expert witness" in legal processes. Midwives were assigned critical missions ranging from identifying hidden defects in the sale of slaves to confirming pregnancy status before the courts. Sources indicate that medical science in al-Andalus almost turned into a family profession, passed down from generation to generation through women. The professional appointment of the daughter of the famous medical scholar Abū Marwān ibn Zuhr and his granddaughter, Umm 'Amr, to treat the wives and children of the ruler at the palace is the most typical example of this institutionalized structure.





The defense of midwives' rights against the relatives of patients who did not pay treatment fees—as reflected in the works of authors like Ibn ‘Abdūn—or the discussions of "treatment costs" in court records, confirms that this occupation was a professional source of income. Furthermore, the fact that midwives were mentioned not only for their medical competence but also with adjectives such as "just, auspicious, and trustworthy" reveals how medical ethics were shaped through female workers during that period.

On the other hand, free women built an independent service sector by specializing in areas such as wedding planning, beauty expertise, and jewellery rental. The economic presence of women was not limited to technical services; as mentioned in the records of names like Ibn ‘Abdūn and Ibn Ḥayyān, an artistic depth was added to social life through educated women turning music and art performance into a professional occupation.

Considering all this data, it is clearly seen that the working lives of free women in al-Andalus went far beyond domestic activities, contrary to common belief, spreading across a wide range from textiles to palace bureaucracy, and from medical science to the professional entertainment sector. The fact that women served as legal experts in fields like midwifery or took part in the most private points of the state mechanism with merit as clerks and advisors proves that the intellectual and economic fabric of al-Andalus was woven with female labor. While high-level female employment continues to be discussed even today, this professional presence displayed under the challenging conditions of centuries ago shows that women—with determination and expertise—have been an indispensable force in the social structure in every period.





However, it must also be considered that this productive picture in al-Andalus was shaped by the period's traditional and social boundaries. The fact that women's achievements were often recorded as "special cases" in historical sources reflects the prevailing norms of the time. The regulation of women's presence in the public sphere within the framework of certain rules and discipline in the past can be read as a historical reflection of some social expectations that women face in modern business life today. These limitations, which we encounter in jurisprudential texts or in the traditional structures of the past, persist today, albeit in different forms. In this respect, the presence of the al-Andalus woman in working life is not just a success story; it is also a valuable reflection of the determined stance and labor that women have displayed throughout history on the path to becoming social subjects.

In conclusion, this work by Fatma Merve Çınar brings the silent subjects of history to light, adding a rich depth to the social heritage of al-Andalus. By gracefully blending many different sources—from jurisprudence texts to court records—the author makes visible the active roles of women in the construction of this ancient geography. This inclusive perspective offered by Çınar reminds us that women have excelled in every field of life, from science and art to management, and not just within the family. With this valuable study, Fatma Merve Çınar fills an important gap in the history of al-Andalus and provides us with a highly successful resource.





THE TORN KAFTAN:

Understanding al- Andalus
from Tuleytula (Toledo) to
the Present

An Interview with Prof. Dr.
Mehmet ÖZDEMİR on an
Academic Journey

By Muhammet Furkan KARAKAŞ

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Özdemir, known for his invaluable studies on the history, civilization, and culture of al-Andalus, is a pioneering figure in his field. In this interview, we had an insightful conversation starting from his journey into theology to the intellectual world of al-Andalus and its significance in Islamic history.





Dear Professor, first of all, thank you for welcoming us and taking the time for this interview. During my research on al-Andalus, I have frequently witnessed the pioneering nature of your work in this field. We are here to benefit from your extensive knowledge. With your permission, I would like to start with my first question:



Professor, if we go back to the beginning of your academic journey, how did your decision to choose the Faculty of Divinity unfold, and what was your primary motivation for selecting this field?

Actually, it is quite a long story, but I can summarize it as follows: I began my professional life at the age of 18 as a primary school teacher. I was among the last graduates of the teacher training schools of that era; after my cohort, these schools were converted into teacher high schools. While teaching in an old village room in Çatakbağçe, a village in the İspir district of Erzurum, I also began preparing for the University entrance exams.

Despite the challenges of teaching under village conditions, I manage to secure the official decision to build a school in village that previously had one. However, my true ideal was to pursue higher education. Several key factors influenced my move toward the field of Theology. My initial interest was sparked by the motivation of a graduate from the Higher Islamic Institute working in Erzurum, and a preacher who visited the village once a month, captivating us with his eloquence. While dealing with the village's problems, I studied for the exams using test books I had ordered from Ankara. Although History and Literature were at the top of my preference list, I was admitted to the Faculty of Divinity, my third choice, with a high score.

The background of this choice was shaped not only by those encounters but also by a heritage stemming from my family and the environment in which I was raised. I belong to a humble and conservative Anatolian family. My late father was a dignified man, known for his piety and high work ethic; he was essentially the “mentor” of the village. His religiosity was rooted in tradition and sincerity rather than technical knowledge. In fact, after entering the Faculty of Divinity, I realized that some of the prayers I had learned from my father as a child were technically “incorrect”. Yet, at that age, I also understood this: what mattered was not the linguistic accuracy of the words, but the *ikhlas* (sincerity) and devotion with which those prayers were offered.

Furthermore, my uncle used to embrace me during my primary school years, saying, “My son will be a mufti”. This was perhaps a foresight that was unconsciously etched into my mind. Even though I chose a boarding teacher training school over an Imam Hatip high school in those years, my conservative environment, combined with the religious sensitivity awakened by the figures I encountered, eventually evolved my path toward this field.

Thank you very much, Professor. You mentioned that History and Literature were at the top of your list. Based on this, it is clear that your curiosity for history goes back a long way. So, how did you turn this passion for history into a professional career during your education at the Faculty of Divinity? Furthermore, what were the main factors that drew you specifically to the History of al-Andalus, a field that is as ancient as it is fascinating?



Actually, both my orientation toward Islamic History and specialization in the History of al-Andalus occurred through events beyond my will; I could say it was entirely directed by the conditions of time.

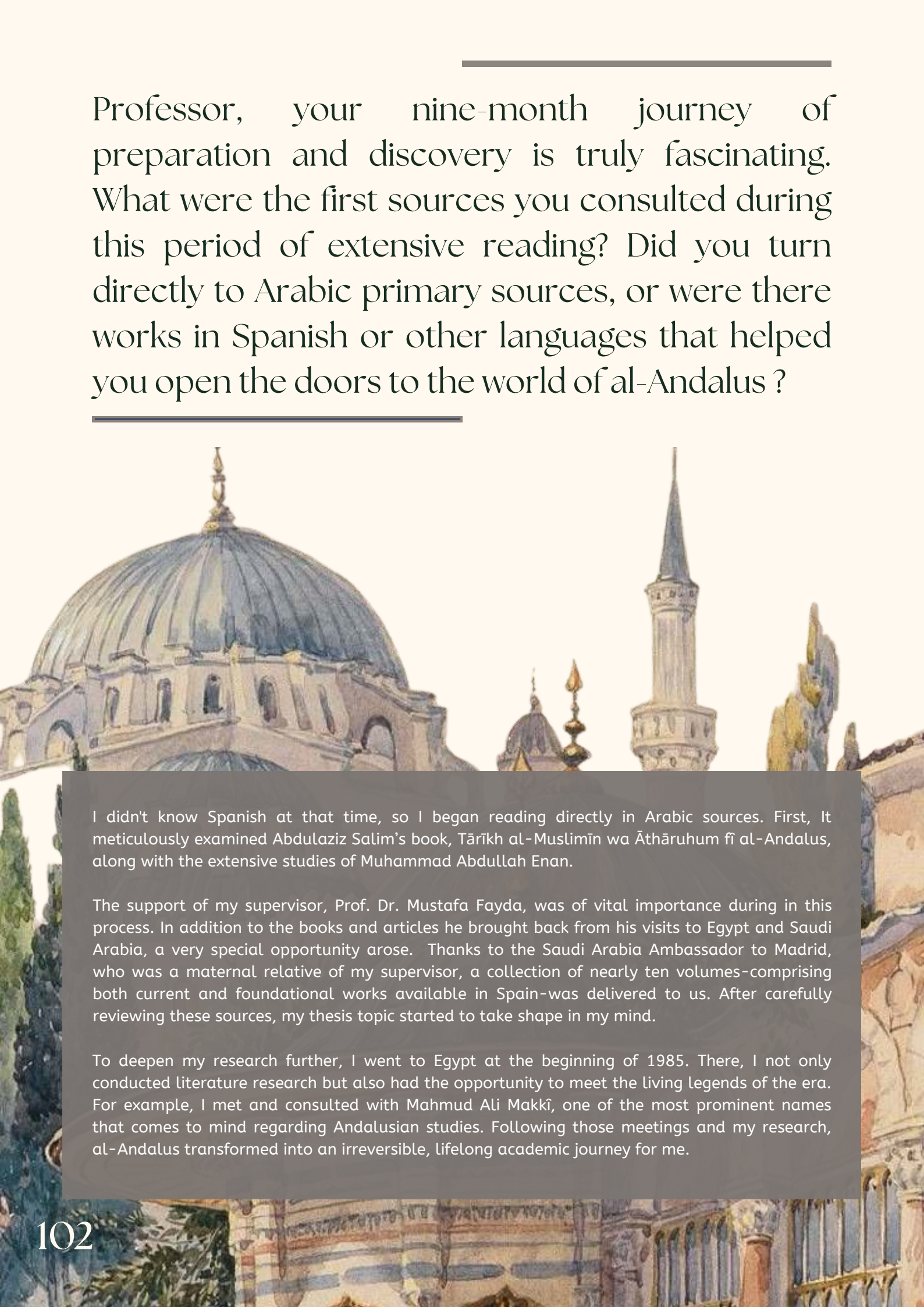
Initially, my goal from the very first day was to pursue academic studies in the field of Tafsir. However, at the time of graduation, no research assistant positions were opened in branches like tafsir, kalam, or religious education. Since we graduated from a five- year program, we were considered to have completed a master's degree automatically. The only available option was a program in Islamic History. I had to make a critical decision at that point. In fact, I had been appointed as a teacher to the Erenköy Vocational High School for Girls, but due to the extraordinary conditions of that period and bureaucratic barriers they brought, this appointment never materialized. Subsequently I took the exams to become a mufti. Yet, by a twist of fate, the oral examination for becoming mufti and the entrance exam for the Islamic history master's program coincided on the same day and at the same hour. I had to choose between a guaranteed path of civil service or an academic path filled with uncertainties, but driven by idealism. I exercised my choice in favor of academia.

I had even earned the right to attend the Diyanet Haseki Education Center, but I could not go because of civil service requirements. When I applied to the Ankara Mufti's Office for a position as an imam, I encountered a strange bureaucratic barrier of that period: "Divinity graduates cannot be imams; only Imam Hatip graduates can." In the end, I was left with a path in Islamic history that offered no financial certainty but was filled with determination.

Even though my academic adventure began this way, al-Andalus was still not on my hand. During my time as a research assistant, when I reached the thesis stage, my esteemed Prof. Mustafa Fayda - may Allah grant him a long life and perfect health- recommended that study al-Andalus. Mentally, I was focused on the Sira period, but with my supervisor's encouragement, I spent nine months doing extensive reading on al-Andalus. As I read, I discover a magnificent world I had never known. Ultimately, I prepared my PhD thesis on the "Muwalladun Movements", which focused on the native people of Spain who converted to Islam. Thus began my passionate journey into al-Andalus, which continues to present.



Professor, your nine-month journey of preparation and discovery is truly fascinating. What were the first sources you consulted during this period of extensive reading? Did you turn directly to Arabic primary sources, or were there works in Spanish or other languages that helped you open the doors to the world of al-Andalus?



I didn't know Spanish at that time, so I began reading directly in Arabic sources. First, I meticulously examined Abdulaziz Salim's book, *Tārīkh al-Muslimīn wa Āthāruhum fī al-Andalus*, along with the extensive studies of Muhammad Abdullah Enan.

The support of my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Mustafa Fayda, was of vital importance during in this process. In addition to the books and articles he brought back from his visits to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, a very special opportunity arose. Thanks to the Saudi Arabia Ambassador to Madrid, who was a maternal relative of my supervisor, a collection of nearly ten volumes-comprising both current and foundational works available in Spain-was delivered to us. After carefully reviewing these sources, my thesis topic started to take shape in my mind.

To deepen my research further, I went to Egypt at the beginning of 1985. There, I not only conducted literature research but also had the opportunity to meet the living legends of the era. For example, I met and consulted with Mahmud Ali Makkî, one of the most prominent names that comes to mind regarding Andalusian studies. Following those meetings and my research, al-Andalus transformed into an irreversible, lifelong academic journey for me.

Professor, it is clear from your account that external circumstances and “divine coincidence” have played a crucial role in shaping your academic journey. Looking back at this entire process-both in your academic career and personal life-is there a specific moment or even of which you can say, “This was the real turning point that changed my life completely”? What would you consider the “keystone” of your world in this journey?



Although it might seem from the outside that I have moved in a straight line, I have actually experienced very sharp junctions that completely changed the course of my life. The first major turning point occurred at the age of 18, while I was a primary school teacher. At that time, I was engaged, and our plan was to move to Austria. A different life with much better economic conditions was waiting for me. However, with a radical decision, I gave up both that future plan and that life; I dedicated myself entirely to the university entrance exams and an academic future. I do not think there could be a more significant rupture than.



The second major turning point coincided with the day that the master's entrance exam and the oral examination for becoming mufti were scheduled at the exact same hour. This was the most difficult decision for me, choosing between the “Diyanet Community” and “Academia”. I can never forget the tension I felt during that period. When the exam schedules conflicted, I went to our philosophy professor, Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Aydın, who had a Diyanet background, to ask if there was any possible solution. Professor Münir Koçtaş was also in the room. When I explained the situation, Prof. Koçtaş scolded me in a stern tone, saying: “This is unacceptable; choose one of them!”. At that moment, I did not like the scolding of Prof. Münir; the result was what he said.

In the end, I made that decision myself, and chose to go the faculty for the exam. If I had gone to the mufti exam that day, I would probably sitting before you today as a retired provincial mufti. By choosing academia, I completely redrew the entire direction of my life.



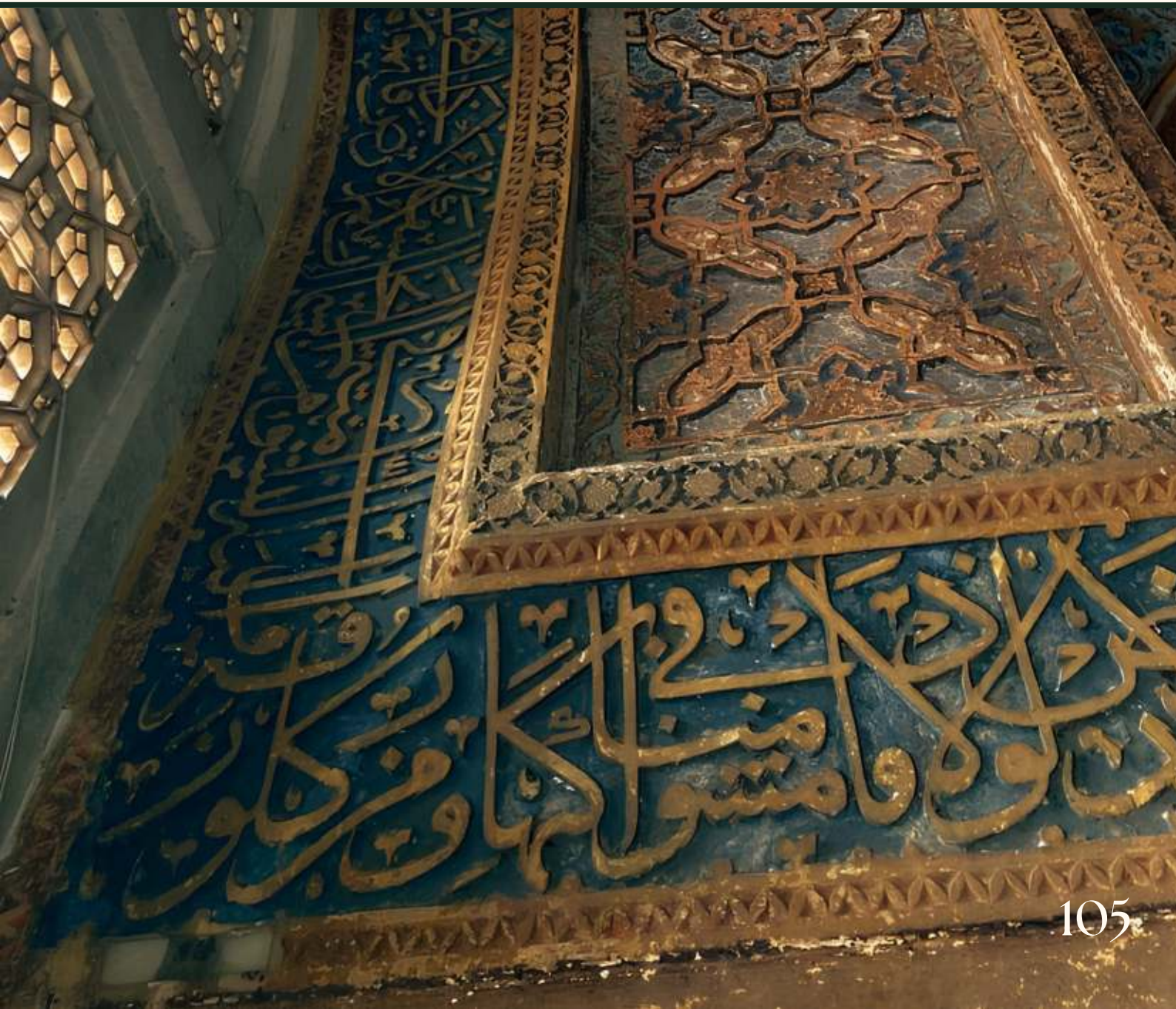
Professor, if you had the chance to bring someone from history of al-Andalus back to life and have a conversation with them today, who would that person be? What would be your reason for choosing them?

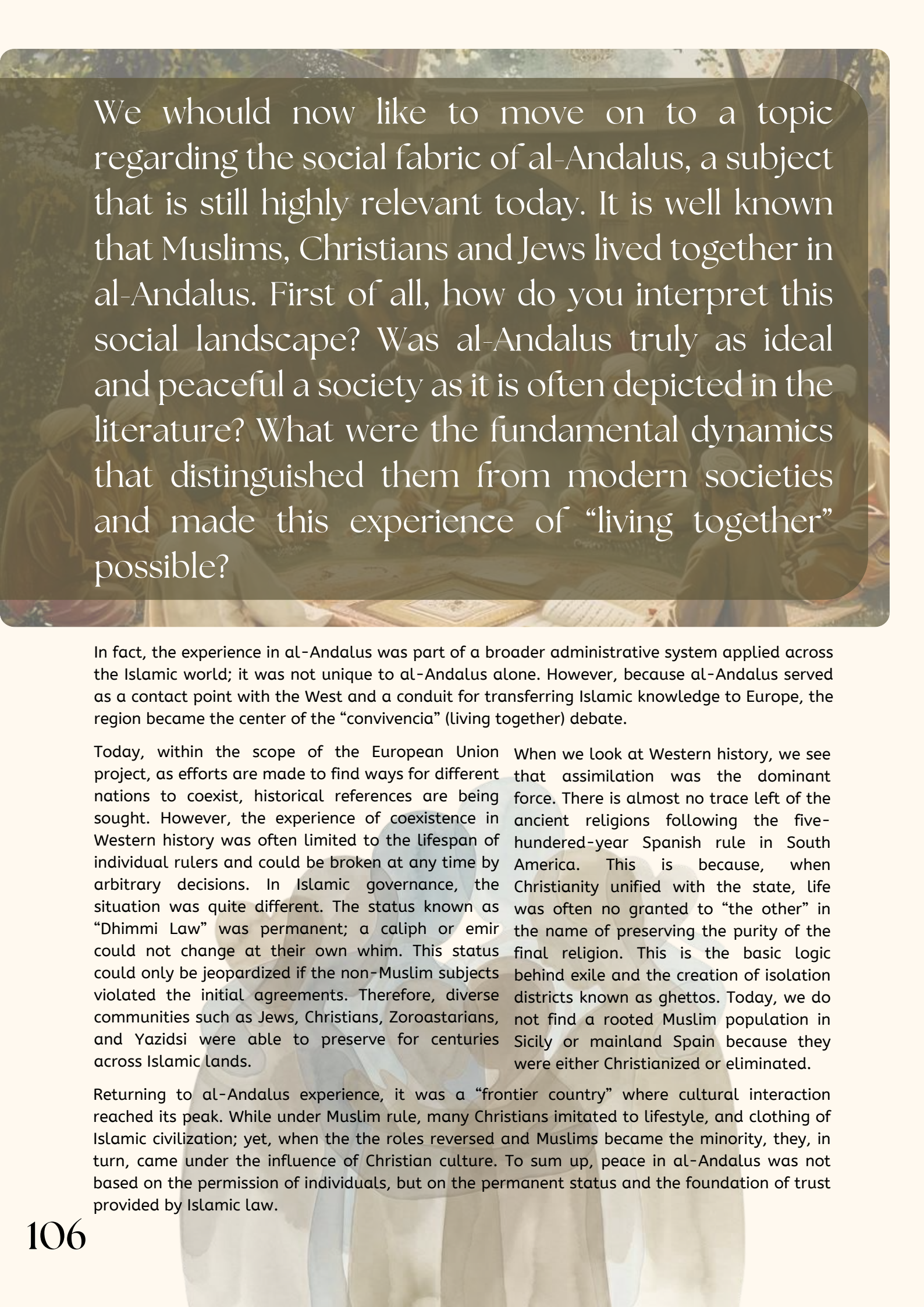
Actually, it is difficult to choose just one name; I would want to bring back two, or even three names together. Firstly, I would definitely choose Ibn Rushd. Even today, he could be pioneering figure in the field of fiqh (jurisprudence). Alongside him, I would add the architect of the maqasid idea, al-Shatibi. If I had the right to a third name, I would certainly choose Ibn Hazm. He was incredibly brilliant, but beyond that, he was a provocative figure. He brought intellectual dynamism to in every environment he entered. We are in great need of his sharp criticism, which keeps both society and ideas alive.



I see, Professor. Would you consider adding any other prominent names to this list from among the historians or thinker of that era? For instance, someone like Ibn Hayyan or Ibn Tufeyl?

Among historians, I would absolutely want Ibn Hayyan. The presence of such a historian could fundamentally change the way we understand the past. Ibn Tufayl is also a great name, of course; however, the philosophical tradition he presents is already embodied to some extent in the person of Ibn Rushd. Therefore, choosing Ibn Rushd would be sufficient, as he carries that same depth with him.





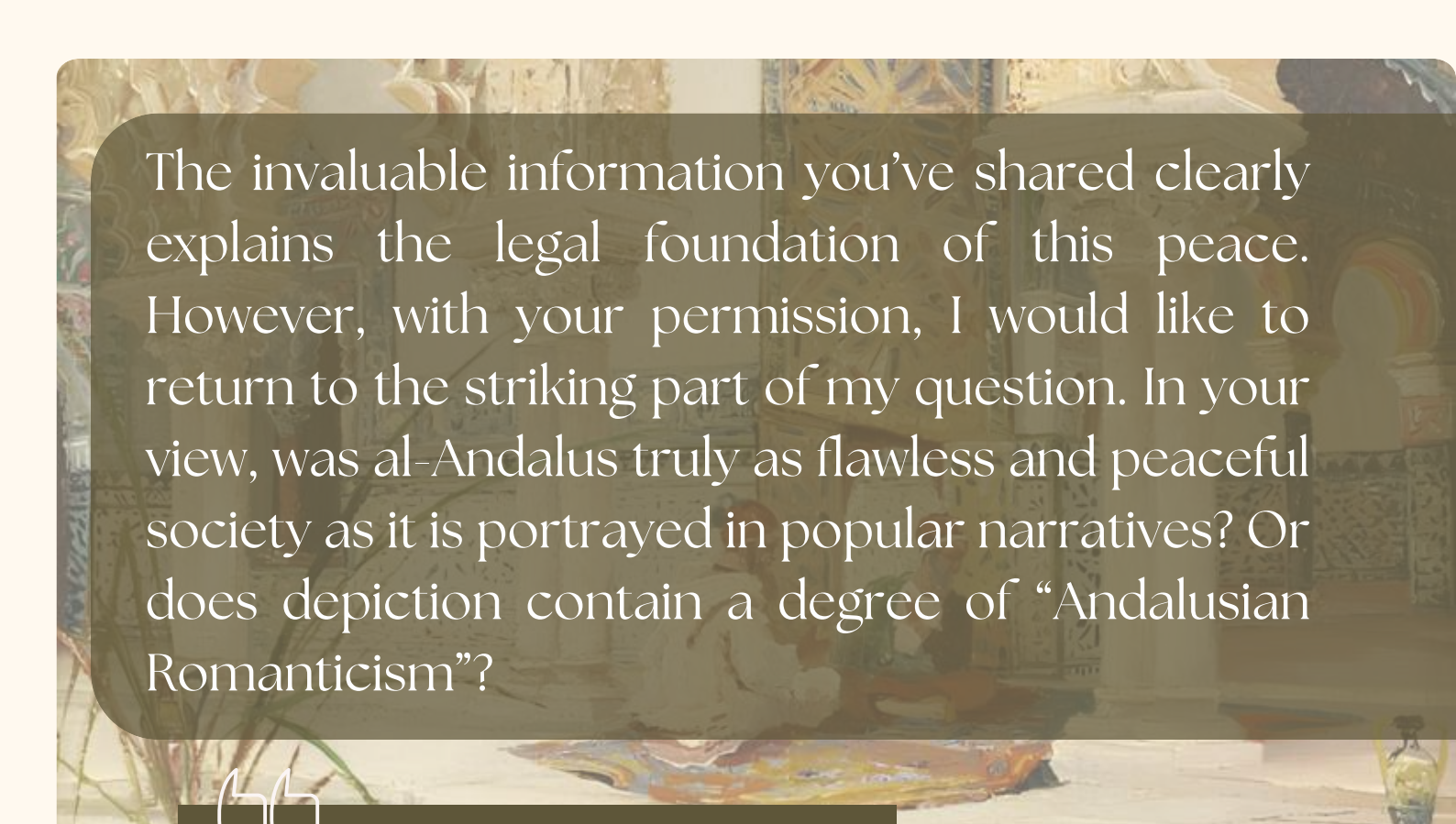
We would now like to move on to a topic regarding the social fabric of al-Andalus, a subject that is still highly relevant today. It is well known that Muslims, Christians and Jews lived together in al-Andalus. First of all, how do you interpret this social landscape? Was al-Andalus truly as ideal and peaceful a society as it is often depicted in the literature? What were the fundamental dynamics that distinguished them from modern societies and made this experience of “living together” possible?

In fact, the experience in al-Andalus was part of a broader administrative system applied across the Islamic world; it was not unique to al-Andalus alone. However, because al-Andalus served as a contact point with the West and a conduit for transferring Islamic knowledge to Europe, the region became the center of the “convivencia” (living together) debate.

Today, within the scope of the European Union project, as efforts are made to find ways for different nations to coexist, historical references are being sought. However, the experience of coexistence in Western history was often limited to the lifespan of individual rulers and could be broken at any time by arbitrary decisions. In Islamic governance, the situation was quite different. The status known as “Dhimmi Law” was permanent; a caliph or emir could not change at their own whim. This status could only be jeopardized if the non-Muslim subjects violated the initial agreements. Therefore, diverse communities such as Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Yazidsi were able to preserve for centuries across Islamic lands.

When we look at Western history, we see that assimilation was the dominant force. There is almost no trace left of the ancient religions following the five-hundred-year Spanish rule in South America. This is because, when Christianity unified with the state, life was often not granted to “the other” in the name of preserving the purity of the final religion. This is the basic logic behind exile and the creation of isolation districts known as ghettos. Today, we do not find a rooted Muslim population in Sicily or mainland Spain because they were either Christianized or eliminated.

Returning to al-Andalus experience, it was a “frontier country” where cultural interaction reached its peak. While under Muslim rule, many Christians imitated the lifestyle, and clothing of Islamic civilization; yet, when the roles reversed and Muslims became the minority, they, in turn, came under the influence of Christian culture. To sum up, peace in al-Andalus was not based on the permission of individuals, but on the permanent status and the foundation of trust provided by Islamic law.



The invaluable information you've shared clearly explains the legal foundation of this peace. However, with your permission, I would like to return to the striking part of my question. In your view, was al-Andalus truly as flawless and peaceful society as it is portrayed in popular narratives? Or does depiction contain a degree of "Andalusian Romanticism"?



Of course, no society is a structure inhabited by angels or devoid of problems; even within a family, arguments can arise from time to time. The important thing here is whether people can exercise their basic rights and freedoms when looking at society as a whole. When evaluated by the standards of that era, we see that fundamental elements such as the safety of life, property rights and freedom of religion were granted by the state. According to fiqh, unjustly taking the life of a non-Muslim is strictly forbidden in Islamic law, and such actions carried legal consequences in practice. Specifically in al-Andalus, the fact that conquest were largely achieved through peace treaties and agreements pave the way for preserving the ownership and religious rights of the native people.

We must pay attention to a very important point: theoretical discussions in fiqh books and historical reality do not always overlap exactly. For instance, while some fiqh works contain theoretical rulings against building churches in the cities founded by Muslims, history shows a much more flexible reality. Excavations in Madrid, a city established by Muslims, have proven the existence of a church and even a synagogue alongside the Jewish community. Therefore, a researcher who wishes to understand the Islamic approach to rights should look beyond theoretical drafts, and consult direct historical sources and lived experiences.



Naturally, there were frictions between communities in al-Andalus, but the state acted as an "organizer"; it did not permit these tensions to escalate into major conflicts and maintained public safety. Although a large part of the population embraced Islam over time, they maintained relationships with their former neighbours and Christians relatives, continued living in the same neighbourhoods, and sustained their humanitarian and commercial ties. In conclusion, while there were frictions in the details, we can say that the experience of coexistence and climate of trust prevailed in the general picture.

• Al-Andalus was a 'frontier region,' a geography where religious sensitivities were exceptionally high. In your research, you mention that the people of al-Andalus placed great importance on religious life—such as performing prayers in congregation—and that officials were even appointed to oversee it. However, we also encounter practices that seem quite radical, such as the burning of al-Ghazali's works. Based on this, is it possible to characterize the Andalusian understanding of Islam as 'radical' or 'rigid'? What were the fundamental motives behind such severe attitudes?

In fact, this attitude is an attempt to form a general judgment based on specific examples; unfortunately, it is often preferred by certain ideological circles in the West. Especially following Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' thesis, there has been a concerted effort to establish that Western culture is rooted solely in Judeo-Christian fundamentals and that Islam has no place in this structure. Accordingly, the thesis is advanced that past experiences of peaceful coexistence are merely a narrative. With the support of some Zionist and Orientalist writers, a history is being reconstructed based on the perception that Muslims historically oppressed non-Muslims.

Therefore, instead of focusing on selective examples, we need to look at the bigger picture. There were certainly radical and rigid elements in al-Andalus; however, alongside them, there was an entirely present moderate and tolerant population. Defining the general religious profile of a society based on a few harsh examples leads us to the wrong conclusions. It should not be forgotten that if we can speak of a great civilization in al-Andalus, the architect of this civilization was not the radical strain, but the 'moderate strain.'

We can identify two fundamental movements in the intellectual world of al-Andalus. The first is the 'Ahl al-Taqlid' (followers of tradition) strain, which was closed to new ideas and sought to preserve the heritage of past masters through imitation. The second is the 'Ahl al-Tahqiq' (seekers of truth) strain—the moderate and investigative path that built the civilization. Events such as the burning of al-Ghazali's books were exceptional incidents, mostly limited to the Almoravid (Murabitun) period when the struggle for existence had become particularly severe. Such events were very few during the eight-century-long history of al-Andalus. To sum up; both strains existed, but the civilization-building spirit that developed the region and carried its legacy to the present was the product of that moderate climate.

• We have discussed the rich cultural heritage and the long-standing Islamic rule in al-Andalus. However, at a certain point, this dominance began to decline, and with the process known as the 'Reconquista', Christian kingdoms came to rule the region. What we wonder is this: After living in a peaceful and pluralistic environment for centuries, what lay behind the exceptionally harsh attitude of the Christian kingdoms toward the Muslims? Furthermore, how would you interpret the 1609 exile decision and the tragedy of the Moriscos in this historical context?

First of all, we must clarify a concept, as this is one of the points I am most sensitive about. We use the term 'conquest' (*fath*) only for the movements of Muslims, as it has a specific religious foundation. For the movements of the Christians, it is more accurate to use their own terminology, 'Reconquista' or terms such as 'invasion' and 'occupation.'

The root of the Christian attitude toward Muslims lies in the fact that they viewed Muslims as invaders of their homeland from the very beginning. Until the eleventh century, this idea remained merely an 'ideal'; however, the fall of the Umayyad State of al-Andalus and the subsequent fragmentation (the *Mulūk al-Tawā'if* period) transformed this ideal into an action plan. Witnessing the internal conflicts among Muslims, the Christians began to ask: 'Can we truly take these lands back?'

The real turning point in this process was the occupation of Tulaytulah (Toledo) in 1085. Following this victory, Christian kingdoms began to openly tell Muslims to 'leave.' To them, even though Muslims had been there for three centuries, they were merely 'provisional guests.' The papacy and Christian chronicles of the time advanced this thesis, grounding the idea that not only al-Andalus but even North Africa was fundamentally a Christian land.

When the Muslims sought support from North African powers like the Almoravids (*Murabitun*) and the Almohads (*Muwahhidun*) to counter this pressure, the intensity and scope of the conflict widened. Battles were no longer confined to the borders; they transformed into a 'war culture' felt across all levels of society. The fundamental reason for the Christians' increasing severity was that they viewed al-Andalus as their rightful property, yet faced an incredible Muslim resistance that defended the land until the very last moment. This mutual resistance, combined with the ideological support of the papacy, turned the process into a significantly bloody and harsh struggle.

What can you tell us about the Moriscos, who represent the most sorrowful chapter of al-Andalus history that emerged at the end of these processes? What kind of identity challenges did the Moriscos endure on the path to the exile decision in 1609, and was this elimination movement merely a political decision or the consequence of a deep-seated societal hostility?

Moriscos refers to the segment of Andalusian Muslims living under Christian rule who were accepted as Christian only on paper. We must divide this process into two distinct periods: Until 1502, the community we call '*Mudejar*' (*Müdeccen*) could maintain their existence with certain rights. However, starting in 1502—first in Castile, then Aragon, and finally across all of Spain by 1524—this status was completely revoked. The state presented Muslims with a single ultimatum: Convert to Christianity or leave the country.

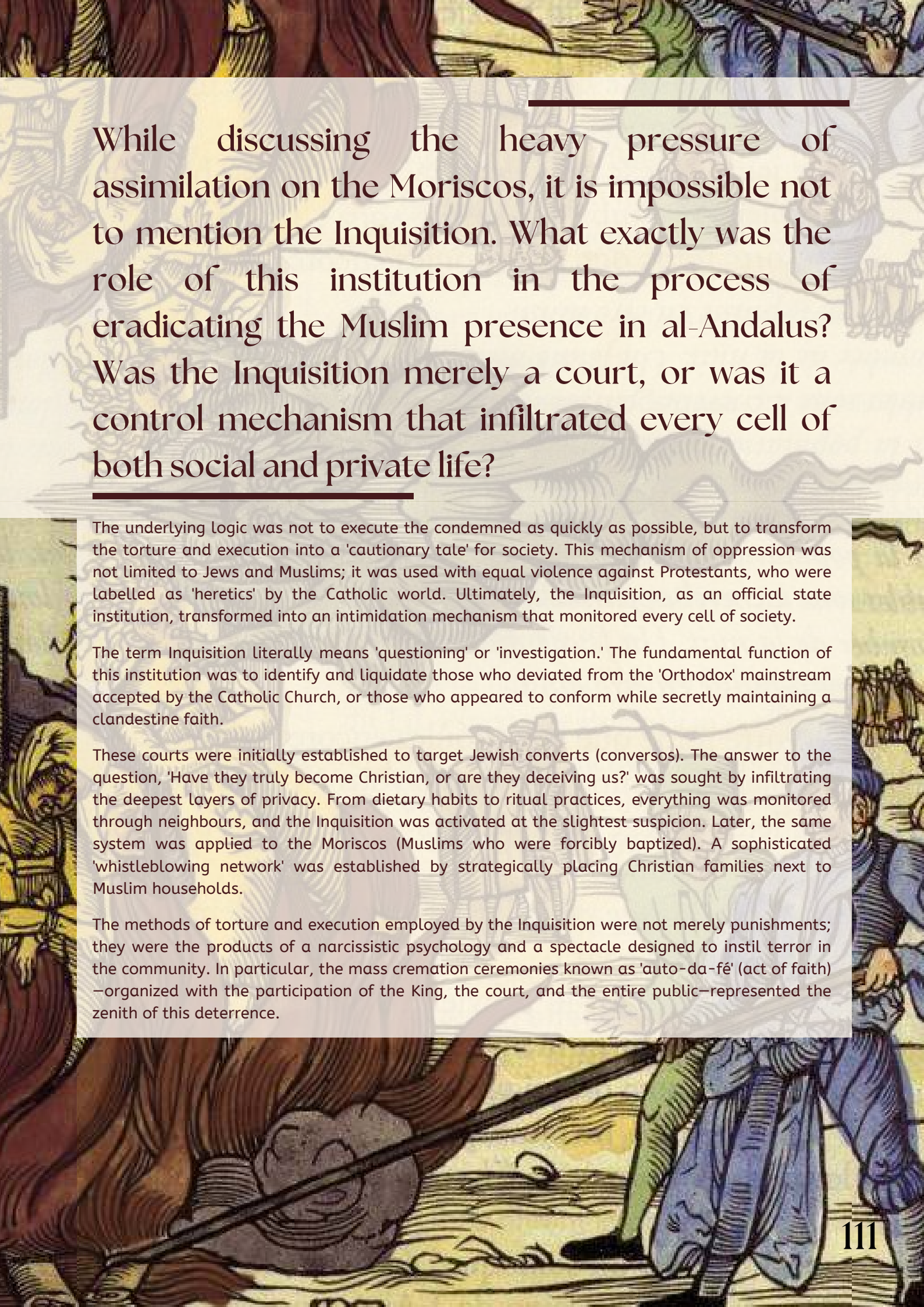
The Christian kingdoms followed a systematic policy of 'De-Islamization,' pioneered by figures such as Ramon Lull. We can examine this policy across three fundamental axes:

1.Spatial and Social Purification: When a city was captured, the first order of business was to immediately convert places of worship into churches and expel Muslims from the city centers. To impose a Christian identity upon the city, the Muslim presence was isolated, and the conversion of Christians to Islam was strictly prohibited under the harshest penalties, such as confiscation of property or death.

2.Severing of Cultural and Religious Ties: Muslims' access to religious sources was cut off, and the circulation of texts was blocked. By the fourteenth century, the people's connection to Islam had dwindled to a mere 'sense of belonging.' Furthermore, 'coercive sermons' were instituted to force conversions; a priest or monk would enter a mosque, and the entire Muslim congregation was compelled to listen.

3.Destruction of Ownership and Belonging: A narrative was established stating, 'this land was ours all along,' aimed at uprooting Muslims from their homeland. Here, the 'Hijrah' (migration) fatwas issued by Muslim jurists also accelerated the process. These fatwas, suggesting that Islam could only be practiced under Islamic rule, led to the rapid emigration of the ulema and the wealthy, leaving the poor leaderless and defenseless.

Ultimately, a heavy policy of assimilation was applied to those who remained. Any contact the Moriscos had with the Ottoman Empire or North African Muslim states was viewed by the Spanish Crown as an 'internal threat' or 'fifth column' activity. Following the expulsion of the Jews in 1492, the liquidation of the Muslim presence became state policy to achieve total religious unification. Once it was clear that assimilation had failed, the infamous exile decision was made, based on the idea of completely purging the land of its original inhabitants. The similarity between the policies applied in Gaza today and this historical process demonstrates how deeply rooted the strategy of 'de-humanizing' or 'depopulating' a land truly is.



While discussing the heavy pressure of assimilation on the Moriscos, it is impossible not to mention the Inquisition. What exactly was the role of this institution in the process of eradicating the Muslim presence in al-Andalus? Was the Inquisition merely a court, or was it a control mechanism that infiltrated every cell of both social and private life?

The underlying logic was not to execute the condemned as quickly as possible, but to transform the torture and execution into a 'cautionary tale' for society. This mechanism of oppression was not limited to Jews and Muslims; it was used with equal violence against Protestants, who were labelled as 'heretics' by the Catholic world. Ultimately, the Inquisition, as an official state institution, transformed into an intimidation mechanism that monitored every cell of society.

The term Inquisition literally means 'questioning' or 'investigation.' The fundamental function of this institution was to identify and liquidate those who deviated from the 'Orthodox' mainstream accepted by the Catholic Church, or those who appeared to conform while secretly maintaining a clandestine faith.

These courts were initially established to target Jewish converts (conversos). The answer to the question, 'Have they truly become Christian, or are they deceiving us?' was sought by infiltrating the deepest layers of privacy. From dietary habits to ritual practices, everything was monitored through neighbours, and the Inquisition was activated at the slightest suspicion. Later, the same system was applied to the Moriscos (Muslims who were forcibly baptized). A sophisticated 'whistleblowing network' was established by strategically placing Christian families next to Muslim households.

The methods of torture and execution employed by the Inquisition were not merely punishments; they were the products of a narcissistic psychology and a spectacle designed to instil terror in the community. In particular, the mass cremation ceremonies known as 'auto-da-fé' (act of faith) —organized with the participation of the King, the court, and the entire public—represented the zenith of this deterrence.

There is a striking observation regarding the intellectual and cultural heritage of al-Andalus: It is often said that the two greatest catastrophes to derail the scientific progress of humanity were the fall of Baghdad and the destruction of al-Andalus. The annihilation of massive libraries, the burning of books in public squares, and people hiding their volumes behind walls in the hope that they might be read again one day are among the most sorrowful scenes in history. In your view, to what extent did the systematic destruction of this immense scholarly heritage truly alter the course of human history?



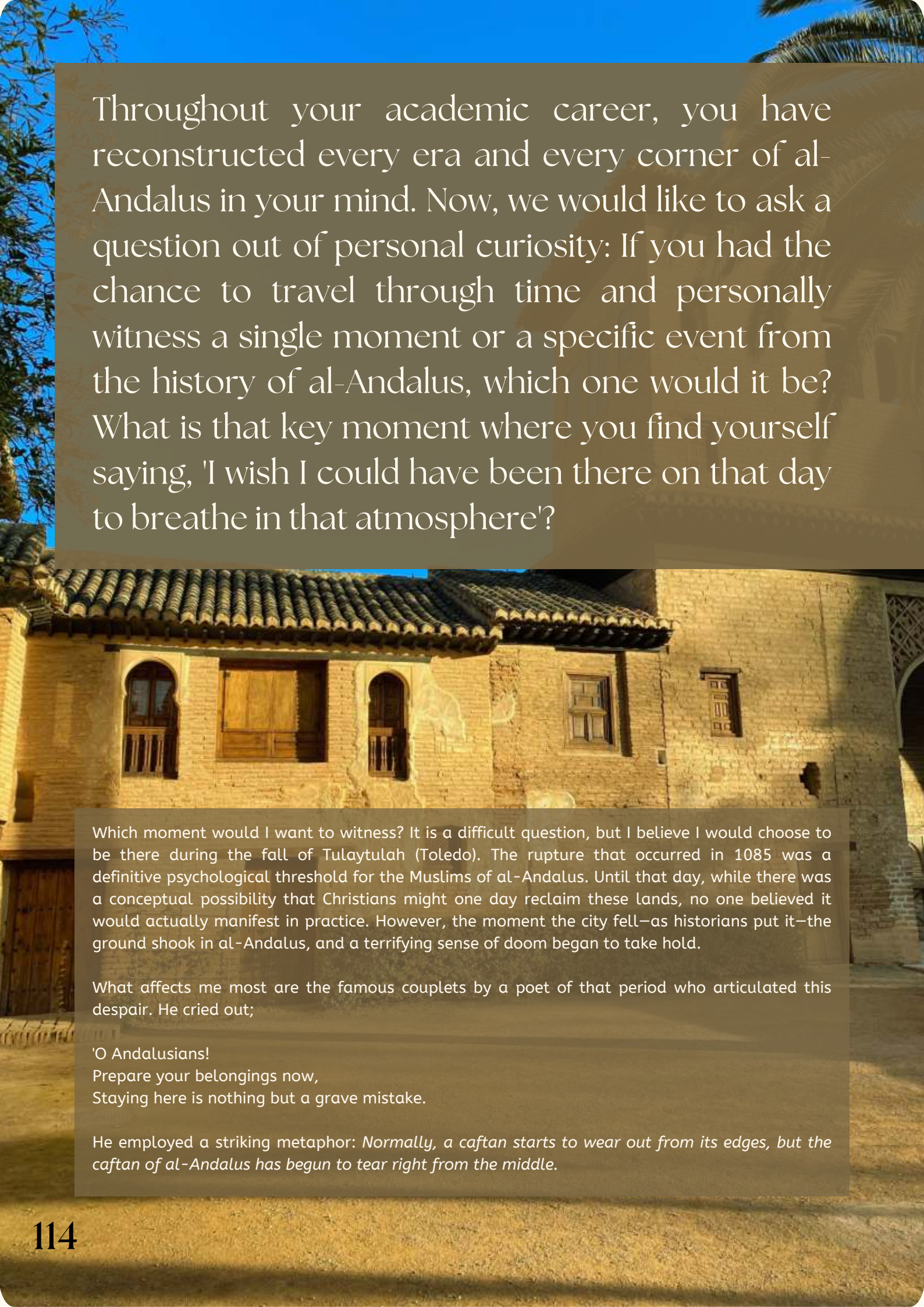
Historical judgments can sometimes be prone to exaggeration; therefore, we should analyze this issue with cold-blooded objectivity. Attributing the extermination of books solely to the Christian world would be an incomplete approach. Unfortunately, our own history contains similar painful examples. For instance, the renowned 400,000-volume library established by al-Hakam II was filtered by a commission for political reasons after his death; consequently, many works on philosophy, logic, and astrology were destroyed by Muslims themselves. The burning of al-Ghazali's books during the Almoravid period or the purging of the school of Ibn Masarra in the 10th century are further examples of this internal resistance.



When we examine the attitude of the Christian kingdoms, we see a specific approach: When they seized Muslim libraries, they chose to preserve works on medicine, mathematics, chemistry, and astrology because they found them 'useful.' They even translated these into Latin and utilized them for their own scientific advancement. However, they were far more destructive toward religious texts. When the Crusaders realized they could not easily convert Muslims to their own faith, they developed a new method: Disproving Islam using its own sources. To this end, the Qur'ān and Hadith collections were translated—not out of scholarly curiosity, but to write refutations and initiate an 'intellectual transformation.' While some religious books were preserved for this purpose, the vast majority were burned in public squares as symbols of an 'enemy religion.'

Today, the El Escorial Library near Madrid still houses a rich collection of Arabic manuscripts. At one point, there were over 20,000 works, but most were lost in an accidental fire. This fire should not be viewed as an act of conscious destruction.

In conclusion, while the scientific heritage of al-Andalus was systematically purged, it would be inaccurate to claim that everything was destroyed. Western civilization fed itself from this knowledge. However, it would also be unfair to suggest that the West reached its current level solely because of this heritage. They built today's technological civilization by adding their own research, the printing press, and new technologies onto that foundation, while also struggling through their own dark periods, the Inquisition, and the guillotine. This is how civilizations develop—cumulatively.



Throughout your academic career, you have reconstructed every era and every corner of al-Andalus in your mind. Now, we would like to ask a question out of personal curiosity: If you had the chance to travel through time and personally witness a single moment or a specific event from the history of al-Andalus, which one would it be? What is that key moment where you find yourself saying, 'I wish I could have been there on that day to breathe in that atmosphere'?

Which moment would I want to witness? It is a difficult question, but I believe I would choose to be there during the fall of Tulaytulah (Toledo). The rupture that occurred in 1085 was a definitive psychological threshold for the Muslims of al-Andalus. Until that day, while there was a conceptual possibility that Christians might one day reclaim these lands, no one believed it would actually manifest in practice. However, the moment the city fell—as historians put it—the ground shook in al-Andalus, and a terrifying sense of doom began to take hold.

What affects me most are the famous couplets by a poet of that period who articulated this despair. He cried out;

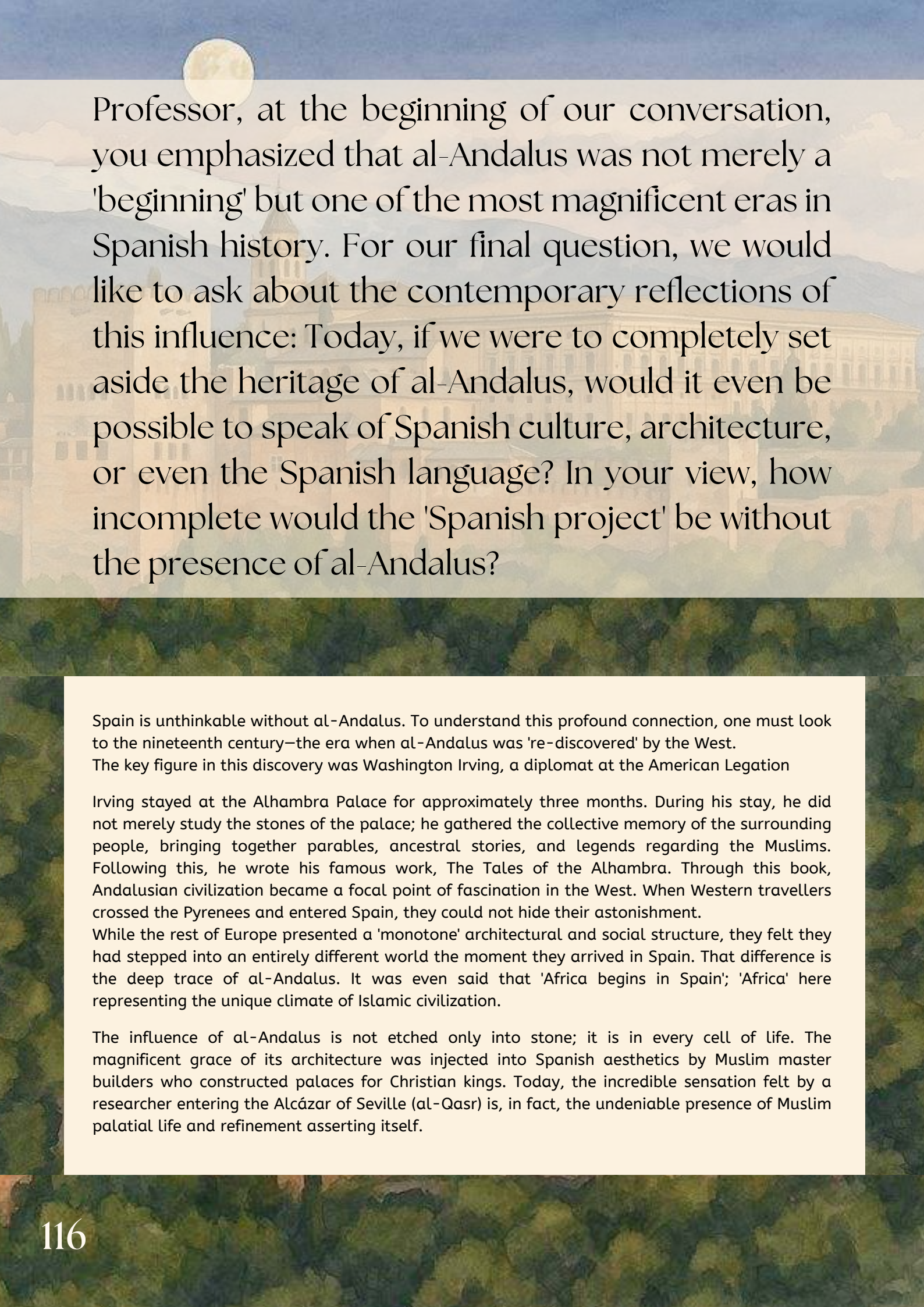
'O Andalusians!
Prepare your belongings now,
Staying here is nothing but a grave mistake.

He employed a striking metaphor: *Normally, a caftan starts to wear out from its edges, but the caftan of al-Andalus has begun to tear right from the middle.*

Tulaytulah was at the very heart of al-Andalus, acting as its torso. Once the body was broken, the limbs had nothing left to hold onto.

To experience such heavy psychology would, of course, be incredibly difficult, but I would want to witness it to see that historical lesson in situ. That moment whispers a timeless truth to us: If you cannot manage to consult one another and unite upon a common ground in time, you will have no choice but to weep and flee when catastrophe strikes. The fall of Tulaytulah was not merely the loss of a city for al-Andalus; it was the bankruptcy of the collective will to 'stay together'.





Professor, at the beginning of our conversation, you emphasized that al-Andalus was not merely a 'beginning' but one of the most magnificent eras in Spanish history. For our final question, we would like to ask about the contemporary reflections of this influence: Today, if we were to completely set aside the heritage of al-Andalus, would it even be possible to speak of Spanish culture, architecture, or even the Spanish language? In your view, how incomplete would the 'Spanish project' be without the presence of al-Andalus?

Spain is unthinkable without al-Andalus. To understand this profound connection, one must look to the nineteenth century—the era when al-Andalus was 're-discovered' by the West.

The key figure in this discovery was Washington Irving, a diplomat at the American Legation

Irving stayed at the Alhambra Palace for approximately three months. During his stay, he did not merely study the stones of the palace; he gathered the collective memory of the surrounding people, bringing together parables, ancestral stories, and legends regarding the Muslims. Following this, he wrote his famous work, *The Tales of the Alhambra*. Through this book, Andalusian civilization became a focal point of fascination in the West. When Western travellers crossed the Pyrenees and entered Spain, they could not hide their astonishment.

While the rest of Europe presented a 'monotone' architectural and social structure, they felt they had stepped into an entirely different world the moment they arrived in Spain. That difference is the deep trace of al-Andalus. It was even said that 'Africa begins in Spain'; 'Africa' here representing the unique climate of Islamic civilization.

The influence of al-Andalus is not etched only into stone; it is in every cell of life. The magnificent grace of its architecture was injected into Spanish aesthetics by Muslim master builders who constructed palaces for Christian kings. Today, the incredible sensation felt by a researcher entering the Alcázar of Seville (al-Qasr) is, in fact, the undeniable presence of Muslim palatial life and refinement asserting itself.

When we look at the language, thousands of Arabic-derived words remain alive in Spanish today. In social life, the warm nature of Mediterranean people, the tradition of the evening stroll (*paséo*), and even styles of dress were nourished by al-Andalus for centuries. Indeed, as the historian Ibn Hayyan notes, there were Christian kings who—were it not for the crowns on their heads—could easily have been mistaken for Muslim emirs.

This influence is not limited to aesthetics; we are talking about a technical heritage ranging from irrigation laws to medical literature. In my research on plague treatises, I observed that precautions suggested by Muslim physicians were translated directly into Spanish and Latin, becoming an integral part of European medicine. To sum up: If you extract al-Andalus from Spain, neither the modern Spanish identity nor that admirable civilizational depth would remain.



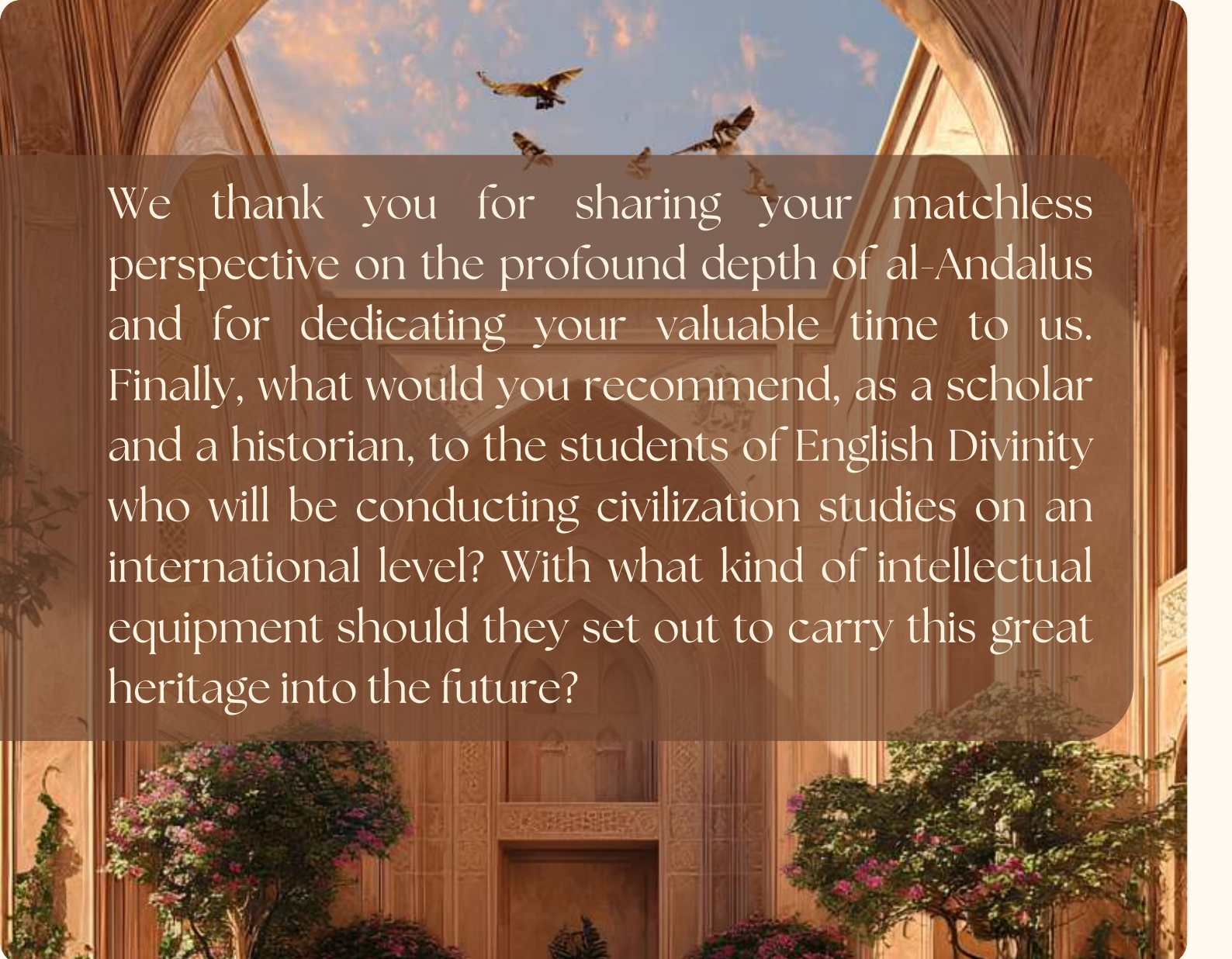
It is possible to speak of a 'denial' that has persisted for centuries in Spain—a tendency to ignore or refuse to accept the land's Islamic past. However, today, the tide seems to be turning. What are your thoughts on modern Spanish society and the state? Can we say that they are finally setting aside this deep-rooted rejection and beginning to make peace with their true history? Is the legacy of al-Andalus viewed today as a 'burden' or as a 'wealth' for the Spanish identity?



It is more accurate to interpret this situation through the lens of the two main currents in contemporary Spanish society and politics. For the left-wing, liberal, and socialist sectors, reconciling with and accepting Andalusian heritage as a natural component of Spanish identity is a much smoother process. These groups even advocate transferring the management of structures such as the Great Mosque of Córdoba from the Church to the local public, while fighting to preserve its original name, 'Mezquita'.

Conversely, the situation is more complex for the right-wing and conservative sectors. For them, al-Andalus is a 'yes' when viewed as a magnificent heritage that generates revenue and attracts tourists; however, it remains a 'no' when it comes to cultural and religious belonging. Within these circles, there is still an exaggerated security concern regarding the notion that 'Muslims want to take al-Andalus back.' As a consequence of this anxiety, even today, when you enter the Mosque of Córdoba, you are not permitted to even open your hands for prayer; you remain under strict surveillance. The ongoing debates over whether the site should be called 'Mezquita-Catedral' or simply 'Catedral' are, in fact, reflections of Spain's painful process of reconciliation with its own past.

In summary, Spain is a stage for the struggle between two different perspectives: One side embraces this heritage, while the other remains on guard, driven by a vestigial 'Reconquista' psychology. Al-Andalus continues to be the grandest mirror through which the Spanish soul debates and ultimately defines itself.



We thank you for sharing your matchless perspective on the profound depth of al-Andalus and for dedicating your valuable time to us. Finally, what would you recommend, as a scholar and a historian, to the students of English Divinity who will be conducting civilization studies on an international level? With what kind of intellectual equipment should they set out to carry this great heritage into the future?

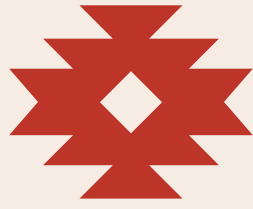
My dear students, first and foremost, you must master your language. However, do not forget this: The greatest disadvantage of the English Divinity program is the neglect of core field courses during the language-learning process. If you follow fundamental disciplines like history or tafsir only through simplified English texts, you will fail to grasp the deep-rooted mission of Ankara Divinity and graduate with only a middle-school level of knowledge. You must fill this void in your major field courses.

If you aim for an academic future, you must act with a clear plan and program from this moment on. Language alone is not enough; you must begin learning the methodology of your chosen field—be it *kalam*, *tafsir*, *hadith*, or history. Establish contact with your professors, request additional readings, and master the concepts and fundamental problems early on. Our biggest handicap is the assumption that we become historians the moment we complete the history curriculum; however, that process is far more arduous. To expedite this journey, decide on your path by your first or second year and 'frequent the doors' of your senior professors. No professor at Ankara Divinity will ever turn away someone who comes to them seeking knowledge; benefit from their experience.

Most importantly, being a scholar of Divinity is not just a profession; it is a mission. You are the representatives of this mission within society. The reason for the existence of the English Divinity program is to convey the immense accumulation of Ankara Divinity to the world. For this, both your language skills and your field knowledge must possess 'steely' strength. There is much more to be said, of course, but I suppose this is enough to express my intent.







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