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Moors in Mesoamerica: The Impact of Al-Andalus in the New World

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DISSERTATION

Moors in Mesoamerica: The Impact of Al-Andalus
in the New World

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Moors in Mesoamerica: The Impact of Al-Andalus in the New World

Introduction

The pluri-religious history of medieval Spain distinguishes her from other Christian nations and has been a defining factor in her social and cultural evolution. Iberia was invaded by Muslims in the eighth century and was subjected to heavy Islamic influence until the Catholic reconquest, known as the *reconquista*, culminated in the surrender of Granada in 1492. In the same year, Christopher Columbus' ships landed in the Bahamas and the first of many Spaniards set foot in the Americas. The temporal proximity and similarities of the conquests in Spain and Mexico have caused many to see the two wars as a continuous episode.¹ The 'crusading zeal', the 'frontier mentality' and the sense of superiority that the conquistadors took with them to the New World have been correctly identified as products of the *reconquista* by historians such as Edwin Sylvester.² What has not been examined, and is the focus of this study, is the cultural and eschatological impact of Al-Andalus (Islamic Spain) on the Spanish in America and the 'ideological and metaphorical baggage' that they carried with them to Mesoamerica as a consequence of their Muslim past.³ A more complete analysis of the significance of Iberia's multicultural background should provide a greater understanding of late medieval Spanish society, their reactions to the unknown and their motivations for conquest and Christianization. This essay will utilize sources largely drawn from the period between the Muslim invasion of 711 A.D and the Council of Trent in 1554 in order to explore the significance of Spain's seven hundred and seventy year experience with

¹ F. Graziano, *The Millennial New World* (Oxford, 1999), pp.5-9; S.Greenblatt (ed.), *New World Encounters* (Los Angeles, 1993),pp.50-55; D C. West 'Christopher Columbus, Lost Biblical sites, and the last Crusade' *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. LXXVIII, No. IV (Oct., 1992), p.535; C.Gibson, 'Conquest, Capitulation, and Indian Treaties': *The American Historical Review*, Vol. LXXXIII, No. I (Feb., 1978), pp.2-3;H. Kamen, *Spain's Road to Empire, 1492-1763* (Michigan, 2002)pp.5-15

²E.E. Sylvester, *Motifs of the Franciscan Mission Theory in Sixteenth Century New Spain Province of the Holy Gospel* (Austin, 1975), p.10; Second quote from A.Mackay, *Spain in the Middle Ages: from Frontier to Empire, 1000-1500* (San Francisco, 1977), p.199

³ J.Lara, *City, Temple, Stage: Eschatological Architecture and Liturgical Theatrics in New Spain* (Notre Dame, 2004), p.6. Al-Andalus was the name given to Spain by the conquering Arabs. It translates as 'the land of the vandals'. Although the lasting Muslim presence in the south gave modern day Andalucía its name, for the purposes of this essay Al-Andalus will refer to all former Muslim occupied areas of Spain.

the Moors.⁴ To inform the analysis of Spanish behaviour in the Americas, this thesis is concerned with Spanish religious conviction and the effect of Islam on her Christianization project; the growing body of scholarship detailing native reactions to the conquest of their continent will largely be omitted in favour of the European voices that reveal so much of their eschatology and cultural conceptions.

The *reconquista* has been linked to providence and national identity by Spanish historians from virtually the moment that the country's last Muslim stronghold fell. Francisco López de Gómara, in 1554, claimed that 'the conquest of the Indies began as the fight against the Moors ended so that Spaniards would always fight against infidels'.⁵ Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo's nineteenth century view of early modern Spain as 'the hammer of heretics' was later endorsed by a Franco regime keen to identify itself with the Catholic Church.⁶ More recently two of Spain's most illustrious historians, Claudio Sánchez - Albornoz and Américo Castro, in a much-publicized polemic, agreed that the formation of Spanish national identity came from the bilateral adjustment of two distinct cultures during the period of Christian and Muslim coexistence.⁷ Scholars attending the *Second International Congress of Historians of the US and Mexico* in 1958 agreed that the two related concepts of 'reconquest' and frontier were 'fundamental to Spanish historical development'.⁸ Subsequently the conquest and Christianization of America has consistently been seen as the offspring of the crusade against the Muslims in Spain. For historians such as Frank Graziano, the migration of St James across the Atlantic accurately embodied this translation of values in his association of slaying Moors and reconquest.⁹ Even to this day, historians such as Patricia

⁴ The *reconquista* has been given various start and end points by historians. In this thesis, the battle of Covadonga in 722 A.D will be regarded as the commencement, and the fall of Granada in 1492 as the end of hostilities. For all Spanish technical words, see the Glossary attached.

⁵ F. López De Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias y Vida de Hernán Cortés* (Bilbao, 1979), p.8. N.B-All translations in this dissertation are the authors unless otherwise stated.

⁶ X. Rego, *Iglesia y franquismo: 40 años de nacional-catolicismo* (Madrid, 2007), p.127. More information can also be found in H. Kamen, *Imagining Spain: Historical Myth & National Identity* (New Haven, 2008). Since the end of the dictatorship in Spain many have commented on how Franco used Spain's sixteenth century past in order to try and inspire the nation to greatness once more.

⁷ T. Glick and O. Pi-Sunyer, 'Acculturation as an Explanatory Concept in Spanish History': *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Apr., 1969), pp.138-145

⁸ This conference was attended by a range of European and American historians. Its main conclusion was that the frontier mentality of Spanish pioneers in the Americas had devolved directly from Spanish exploits in pushing the Moors out of Iberia. See: Mackay, *Spain in the Middle Ages*, p.1; T.M Bader, 'A Second Field for Historians of Latin America: An Application of the Theories of Bolton, Turner, and Webb' *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. XII, No.I (Jan., 1970), p. 48.

⁹ Graziano, *The Millennial New World*, pp.24-26; J. D. García, 'Santiago Mataindios: la continuación de un discurso medieval en la Nueva España', *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, Vol.LIV, No. I (2006), pp. 33-56

de Fuentes have discussed the *reconquista*'s effect on making the Spanish 'religious to the point of fanaticism'.¹⁰ Talking broadly about attitudes and approaches to military campaigns does not do justice to the subject. This essay will emphasize the impact of Al-Andalus on the Spanish attitudes and actions in the Americas using a more focussed approach. A proper evaluation of the wide range of sources available to us from the initial stages of New World conquest and missionary activity reveal that Spanish reactions to the unfamiliar were heavily and unambiguously affected by their exposure to Muslim culture and religion. Additionally, the links between the *reconquista* and medieval prophetic tradition have been neglected by historians such as Margaret Reeves and Bernard McGinn, who prefer to consider Spanish apocalyptic writings as a part of a wider European movement and fail to identify Islam as the primary catalyst for such works.¹¹ A closer look at the Spanish context of these works can tell us much about the preoccupations of late medieval Iberia. This essay seeks to explain more precisely how Al-Andalus gave Spain a wealth of tools and attitudes on which to fall back when cultural, legislative and theoretical challenges appeared in Mexico.

The writings of conquistadors and missionaries in the New World are littered with descriptions of Indians that allude to a familiar foe.¹² In the second of his letters addressed to the Spanish sovereign, Charles V, Hernán Cortés described the market place of Tenochtitlan as 'like the silk market at Granada'.¹³ Another conquistador was struck by the Indian's 'very beautiful Mosques',¹⁴ exemplifying the tendency to compare buildings in New Spain to those constructed by the Moors in Al-Andalus. In seeking to equate the people and architecture of Mesoamerica to those of Muslim Spain, these writers inadvertently emphasised the pagan nature of both Muslim and Indian. This 'discourse of similitude' reveals an awareness of difference between the Christian faith and that of the indigenous population and of similarities between Indian and Muslim.¹⁵ This awareness would be manifested in the construction of churches to house the pagans, the laws used to govern them and in the attempted justification of the conquest. The experiences, writings and views acquired from Al-Andalus meant there was no need to construct a new vocabulary in order to describe the

¹⁰ P. De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *The Conquistadors; First-Hand Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico* (Michigan, 1963) , p14

¹¹ M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: a Study in Joachimism* (Oxford, 1969); B. Mc Ginn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1979)

¹² H. Cortés, J. H. Elliott(ed.), and A. Pagden(trans. and ed.), *Letters From Mexico* (New Haven, 2001),pp.12-13

¹³ Cortés, Elliott, Pagden, *Letters from Mexico*, p.104

¹⁴ De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *Conquistadors*, p.168

¹⁵D. A Boruchoff, 'Beyond Utopia and Paradise: Cortés, Bernal Díaz and the Rhetoric of Consecration': *MLN*, Vol. 106, No. 2, Hispanic Issue (March, 1991), p.336

extraordinarily different sights and customs they encountered in the New World.¹⁶ The Spanish were already well aware that the natives had ‘no creed’ and were not circumcised.¹⁷ To them this signified that they did not subscribe to the Islamic faith and makes the Spanish persistence in describing the natives as Muslims puzzling. This essay will explore the possibility that the Spanish, faced with an entirely new race of beings and unable to comprehend a new continent which challenged their religious foundations, suffered an epistemological crisis that prevented ‘reliable reasoning and reasonable action’.¹⁸ Confronted with this challenge, the practice of representing the natives as Muslims reveals a way of dealing with the unfamiliar and defining their Christian faith against that of Islam. The role of Al-Andalus, in shaping this approach is, thus, intriguing. As late as 1572, a Jesuit explorer informed his ruler that the natives were ‘for the most part like the Moors of Granada’.¹⁹ The ambivalent nature of the comparisons between Muslim and Indian suggests a less aggressive stance towards non-Christians than the ‘black legend’ suggests, but also hints at a reluctance to make a distinction between pagans.²⁰

In order to fully understand the reason for such behaviour, it is necessary to consider the effect of the *reconquista* on the eschatology of those who were involved in the initial exploration process and missionary activity. The importance of the book of Revelation grew in the Middle Ages; in particular John’s idea of an antichrist emerging before the final battle against the infidel which was followed by the end of time. The impact on the mendicant friars of the ‘prophet extraordinaire’, Joachim de Fiore, is well-documented but has been emphasized at the cost of a unique Spanish prophetic tradition that was greatly influenced by Al-Andalus.²¹ Beatus of Liébana’s eighth century commentary on the apocalypse reflected an Iberian interest in Revelation as a response to the Muslim invasion. Beatus’ publication is of great importance to the modern historian as context for the eschatological reaction to the Islamic occupation and the influence on the mindset of later missionaries. Delno West’s

¹⁶Greenblatt (ed.), *New World Encounters*, p.107; J. Anadon (ed.), *Garcilaso Inca de la Vega: An American Humanist: A Tribute to Jose Durand* (Notre Dame, 1998), p. 125

¹⁷ C. Columbus and R. Penny (ed. and trans.), *Journal of the First Voyage* (New York, 1990), p.33; D. Abulafia, *The Discovery of Mankind: Atlantic Encounters in the age of Columbus* (New Haven, 2008), p.272

¹⁸A. C. Macintyre, *The Tasks of Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2006), p.3

¹⁹ J. H. Elliott, *Spain, Europe and the Wider World 1500-1800* (New Haven, 2009), p.199

²⁰ Julián Juderías coined the phrase ‘leyenda negra’ in his 1914 book *La leyenda negra y la verdad histórica* (Madrid, 1914). He was referring to what he considered the unjust ‘demonization’ of Spanish by historians who cited the Inquisition and the Colonization of the Americas as proof of Spain’s barbarity. Good examples of such demonization can be found in B.de las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (London, 2002) or A. Pérez *Relaciones* (Amsterdam, 1801)

²¹ Quote from Lara, *City, Temple, Stage*, p.53

belief that ‘Spain turned to prophetic texts to seek eschatological explanation for its success’ can be disproved through Beatus’ commentary on *Revelation* long before military triumph over the Muslims.²² Furthermore, it will be argued that these works helped foster a Spanish biblical interpretation of its struggle with the Moors and provided guidance in their role in the New World.²³ These largely ‘confused and unpublished’ prophetic sources merit further attention in the analysis of the theory that Spain’s distinctive past fostered a prophetic tradition that directly affected the eschatology of the mendicants in the New World and further influenced their attitudes towards Indians.²⁴ Christopher Columbus’ ‘Book of Prophecies’ is an anthology which has largely defied analysis due to its ‘composite and unfinished nature’ and, as with Beatus’ work, has been purported to be pseudonymous.²⁵ Nonetheless this essay will show that its views reflected the attitudes of their period and will scrutinize them for interpretations of Islamic influence on the thinking of these writers. These prophetic texts will be used to shed light on the social crisis that Islam caused in Spain by considering the texts as reflections of the ‘intense biases and hopes’ of the society within which they were written.²⁶ By following the flow of writing we can map how the use of the *Revelation* evolved from an expression of political and religious crisis in Spain after the invasion of Islam to an explicit explanation of the inevitability of the discovery of the New World by Spain. Christendom had engaged with Buddhism, Judaism and a host of other non-Christian religions through medieval exploration, yet the native Indians were linked almost exclusively to Islam. The events of the Middle Ages can reveal why the Spanish were particularly inclined to use Islam as a reference point for their judgement and action.

In order to represent and categorize Indians in Mesoamerica, the sources all have roots in the *reconquista* along with many of the mechanisms later used by the Spanish to govern the natives. The mid thirteenth century manuscript known as the *Siete Partidas* was produced by Alfonso X, a king who had overseen the recovery of much of Spain’s Christian heartland and stood as a champion of the Catholic faith. His works, written to advise and govern men who operated in the confusion and fervour of the *reconquista*, had become a

²² D. C. West, ‘Medieval Ideas of Apocalyptic Mission and the Early Franciscans in Mexico’: *The Americas*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Jan., 1989), pp.300-1

²³ A.Mackay ‘A Pluralistic Society: Medieval Spain’ in J. Elliott.(ed.) *The Spanish World: Civilization and Empire, Europe and the Americas, Past and Present* (New York, 1991),p.19

²⁴ J. Nieto, ‘The Franciscan Alumbrados and the Prophetic-Apocalyptic Tradition’: *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. VIII, No. III (Oct., 1977),p.3

²⁵ L. I. Sweet, ‘Christopher Columbus and the Millennial Vision of the New World’: *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. LXXII, No. III (Jul., 1986), p.373

²⁶ R. Lerner, ‘Medieval Prophecy and Religious Dissent’: *Past & Present*, No. XXII (Aug., 1976), p.17

byword for law in the minds of men such as Hernán Cortés and sources such as his *Letters from Mexico* need to be scanned for political and juridical ideas embedded in Alfonso's text.²⁷ For example, the passage stating 'he who will build a church must meet its costs, be interested in all his needs, and protect it after he built it...when the church is vacant, he is entitled to present the priest for it' was used as a form of justification for empire in the New World.²⁸ Alfonso's concept of 'patronage' certainly influenced the *Patronato Real* in the New World whilst the medieval Spanish 'social system erected upon the privileges of conquest', of which the document was a product, may have also nurtured the idea of the *encomienda* labour system.²⁹ The context of the *Siete Partidas* suggests that Christian conquest of Muslim lands directly affected its publication and the significance of this will be dealt with at length in this dissertation by linking laws and attitudes contained in the document to events in the New World. The justification of sovereignty and war used in Mexico known as the *requerimiento* appears also to have its origins, not in America, as would appear obvious, but in the early Muslim expansion that engulfed Spain in the eighth century.³⁰ This has been overlooked by historians who have traditionally assigned authorship to Juan López de Palacios Rubios and justifies further evaluation.³¹ Charles Gibson has cited differences in the way the Spanish dealt with defeated Muslims in Iberia and how vanquished Amerindians were treated.³² This thesis argues that letters and diaries from the New World suggest a more empathetic approach and will challenge Gibson's belief by supporting Cortés' trusted biographer, de Gómara, in his assertion that 'Cortés endeavoured to treat these barbarians with every civility, as is right and as is laid down in the instructions issued by the monarchs of Castile'.³³ Thus, it can be shown that the devices used to justify and systematize the conquest of Mexico were heavily influenced by the Christian struggle with the Muslims and that the use of a ready-made framework of legal processes and political tools derived from experiences with the Moors was not only the logical approach to building an

²⁷ J.H. Elliott, 'The Mental world of Hernan Cortés': *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, Vol. XVII, (1967), pp.41-50

²⁸ R., Burns (ed.) A. Rey de Castilla, S. Scott(trans.) *Las Siete Partidas Vol. I (The Medieval Church)* (Philadelphia, 2001), p.196

²⁹ L.Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain: the Beginning of Spanish Mexico*(Los Angeles, 1982) , p.8; R. Keith, 'Encomienda, Hacienda and Corregimiento in Spanish America: a Structural Analysis' *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. LI, No. III (Aug., 1971), pp. 431-446

³⁰ J. Francis, *Iberia and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History : a Multidisciplinary Encyclopaedia, Volume 1*.(Santa Barbara, 2006) , p.903; Peters R., *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton, 1996), p.37

³¹ J. Francis, *Iberia and the Americas, Volume 1*, p.903; A. Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: the American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge 1986), p.268

³²Gibson, *Conquest, Capitulation*, p.3

³³F. López De Gomara, *Cortés* (Los Angeles, 1964), pp.40-41

infrastructure for the Amerindians but also a consequence of failing to distinguish between the two peoples.

The diaries and letters of soldiers and friars were not the only cultural products from the New World that reveal the lasting impact of the *reconquista* on the Spanish. The influence of Islamic architecture is evident in the Spanish constructions which sprung up in Mesoamerica during the sixteenth century. The similarity of the Capilla Real de Cholula to a mosque is inescapable and a far from isolated example.³⁴ The twentieth century saw an explosion in interest in religious architecture and Jaime Lara's suggestion that the friars may have been inspired by Muslim architecture has been well supported by modern scholars³⁵. However, Lara's explanation is limited to the practicality of the Mosque's raised worship spaces for mass evangelization and denies the friars were influenced by Islam. Such a view, in isolation, is insufficient when considering design aspects of some New World churches derived specifically from the Great Mosque at Córdoba.³⁶ Only recently receiving close attention from historians, none have yet found a satisfactory explanation for the appearance of these particular buildings. This thesis will explore the possibility that the mendicant friars, many of whom had first hand experience of Muslims in Spain, were deeply affected by cultural products of Al-Andalus and prophetic works connected to the *reconquista*. They sought Old World antecedents for solutions to the New World phenomenon in the same way as those recording events on paper. As architecture can be seen as a 'a genuine expression of a society' a more detailed analysis of the Islamic aspects of the churches can tell us about the effect of the Muslim occupation of Spain and the mindset of the Franciscan Friars who sought to build an idealized Christian society in the Americas.³⁷ These hybrid churches are a further example of how, despite being 'diametrically opposed' to one another, Muslim and

³⁴ J. Lara's *City, Temple, Stage and Christian Texts for Aztecs: Art and Liturgy in colonial Mexico* (Notre Dame, 2008) are particularly rich sources for anyone interested in colonial Mexican architecture. Lara has skilfully collated work from famous Mexican architectural historians such as CC.Olmos and G. Kubler. Lara's argument that the Friars determination to build a New Jerusalem in the Americas is the only serious thesis put forward for motivations behind the Islamic form of some Mexican Churches. See also M. Asin, 'La Capilla Real de Cholula y su Mudéjarismo' *Al-Andalus : revista de las Escuelas de Estudios Árabes de Madrid y Granada*, Vol. XXVI, No. I(1961), pp. 219-252

³⁵ Lara, *City, Temple, Stage*, p.21.

³⁶ J. McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels and other Studies* (Austin, 1965), p.380

³⁷ C.C. Olmos, *Historia de la Arquitectura y el Urbanismo Mexicanos*, Vols. I-II (Austin, 1997) p.91

Christian histories were intermingled and how their respective cultures bore similarities;³⁸ this paper seeks to explain this New World fusion of ideas.

The blurring of Indian and Moor was not limited to architectural expression but also arose in dramaturgy. A play entitled 'The Conquest of Jerusalem', organized by the mendicant orders in Tlaxcala in 1539, saw a re-enactment of an epic battle between Christian and Muslim in which Fray Motolinía informs us 'troops from Castilla y León made up the vanguard, with real weapons and standards' alongside Indians.³⁹ In also casting the natives as Moors, the Spanish reveal much of how Islam continued to affect them in the New World. This popular genre of play has been analyzed by historians as mere cultural hangovers from Spain's Islamic past; however it can also provide further insights into the preoccupations of the Franciscans through their casting of actors and plot, as well as emphasising the need to assess Spanish behaviour in the context of their experiences with Muslims. The continuing tendency for Christians to evoke their Moorish rivals in a range of mediums in the New World reveals the importance of Al-Andalus in the struggle to interpret the nature of the Indians as well as their primary goal of liberating Jerusalem.⁴⁰ Clearly, the 'discourse of similitude', favoured by both missionary and soldier alike, is a theme that is not confined to the writings of the Spanish but to a wider range of cultural products than historians have so far admitted. Thus, dramaturgy and architecture can be used to highlight the way in which the Spanish treated Moors and Indians as the same race.

Alejo Fernández' painting 'The Virgin of the Seafarers' has been identified as a guide to Spain's self-image at the time of its conception in 1531 and tells us much of what mattered to the early modern Spanish.⁴¹ The prominence of St James and St John, and their adjacency, reveals the importance of and linkages between the *reconquista* and apocalyptic thinking. In Part I of this dissertation will be the suggestion that descriptions of Indian clothes and buildings 'decorated in a Moorish fashion' along with comparisons linking Indian to Moor reflected an inability to rationalise new surroundings and experiences and highlighted the deep rooted impact of the *reconquista* and Al-Andalus on Spanish epistemology.⁴² Part II will argue that the practice of using Moorish Spain as a reference point for depicting the

³⁸ B. Bevan, *History of Spanish Architecture* (San Francisco, 1938), p.7

³⁹ T. De Benavente, *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España* (Madrid, 1985), p.107

⁴⁰ J. Lara, *Christian Texts for Aztecs*, pp 3-15

⁴¹ C. Phillips, 'Visualizing Imperium: 'The Virgin of the Seafarers' and Spain's Self-Image in the Early Sixteenth Century': *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. LVIII, No. III (Fall, 2005), p.814

⁴² Cortés, Elliott(ed.), Pagden(ed and trans.), *Letters from Mexico*, p.30

natives was a direct consequence of a unique medieval and early modern prophetic tradition that emphasized the importance of Islam in Spanish aspirations. Part III considers whether the Spanish amended extant legal tools, previously employed on the Moors, to govern the natives because this provided the most practical solution for the task, or, because of an inability or reluctance to make distinction between the two. It will propose that the natural conclusion of Islamic influence on Spanish attitudes and behaviour towards the natives was the preponderance of treating them like Muslims. Constructing churches similar to Mosques and using the Indians as actors in a play depicting mendicant hopes for the future are evidence that Muslims and Indians were only stepping stones for the Spanish to achieve their millennial desires. This was the key legacy of Islamic Spain; it did not simply condition the Spanish for the military challenges ahead and instil in them a hatred for all other religions, it dictated how they would interpret and treat everything they found.

I

'The soul never thinks without a phantasm'⁴³-Aristotle

The first explorers to reach the shores of the New World were spectacularly wide of the mark in their assertions about the location of the lands on which they had stumbled. Christopher Columbus, landing at Hispaniola, claimed to be on 'the island of Cipangu, of which marvellous things are recounted'.⁴⁴ His conviction that 'the ships of the great Khan come there' was developed from his careful readings of Marco Polo's *Il Milone* and other fanciful medieval travel writing.⁴⁵ Both Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci had read Sir John Mandeville *Travels* and were convinced that their voyages had taken them close to his lucidly described earthly paradise 'where rivers run milk and honey'.⁴⁶ The real significance and nature of their discoveries, which was initially opaque to the navigators, was also lost on the

⁴³ R. Pasnau, *T. Aquinas on Human Nature: a Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae* (Cambridge, 2002) p.284

⁴⁴ C. Columbus and R. Penny (ed. and trans.), *Journal of the First Voyage* (New York, 1990), p.46. Although Columbus was in all likelihood a Genoese by birth, his commitment to the Spanish cause is beyond doubt. He spent much time in Southern Spain and his attitudes and past experiences were in reality little different to those of any other conquistador. He is therefore appropriate to include in an essay about Spain in the New World.

⁴⁵ Columbus and Penny (ed. and trans.), *Journal of the First Voyage*, p.46

⁴⁶ J. Mandeville, *Travels*, <http://www.planetnana.co.il/mandeville/Travels_of_Sir_John_Mandeville-Chapter-xxx.htm> 10th March 2010

European society from which these explorers had escaped. Christendom saw greater potential in Portuguese exploitation of the Cape Verde Islands and was infinitely more interested in the voyages of da Gama and Cabral.⁴⁷ In Spain, the Valladolid chronicle failed even to record the death of Christopher Columbus when he passed away in that city in 1506.⁴⁸ Ignorance and uncertainty characterized attitudes towards the Americas right through to the end of the sixteenth century. The diaries and letters of the Spanish who travelled there prove that Columbus and Vespucci were not alone in failing to recognize that what they discovered was in fact a 'New' World.⁴⁹

Christian anxiety over the menace of Islam was also great in this period. Continuing Muslim occupation of Iberia and the Holy Land and Ottoman military successes were in the forefront of European minds. The Catholic Monarchs had breathed new life into the *reconquista* and re-affirmed Christian supremacy. Columbus himself witnessed Spanish 'royal banners placed by force of arms on the towers of the Alhambra' and was deeply affected by the experience.⁵⁰ Despite his fixation with obliterating 'the sect of Mohammed' and his ultimate goal of recovering Jerusalem by sailing west, Columbus was fully aware that the Indians he encountered on Hispaniola were not themselves Moors.⁵¹ The Genoese noted that they 'had no creed' and therefore could not be Muslim.⁵² Vespucci applied a similar logic:

Amongst those people we did not learn that they had any law, nor can they be called Moors nor Jews, and (they are) worse than pagans: because we did not observe that they offered any sacrifice: nor even had they a house of prayer: their manner of living I judge to be Epicurean.⁵³

⁴⁷ E. Dursteler, 'Reverberations of the Voyages of Discovery in Venice, ca. 1501: The Trevisan Manuscript in the Library of Congress', *Mediterranean Studies*, Vol.IX (2001), pp.43-46

⁴⁸ Dursteler, *Reverberations of the Voyages*, p.44

⁴⁹ J.H. Elliot's *The Old World and the New 1492-1650* (Cambridge, 1992), originally given as a lecture, represented a groundbreaking and piece of work on initial European reactions to the discovery of America; an area which until then had been deprived of serious scholarship. His views were recently supported in Pagden's, *European encounters with the New World* and have yet to be effectively challenged.

⁵⁰ Columbus and Penny (ed. and trans.), *Journal of the First Voyage*, p.3

⁵¹ Columbus and Penny (ed. and trans.), *Journal of the First Voyage*, p.3

⁵² Columbus and Penny (ed. and trans.), *Journal of the First Voyage*, p.24

⁵³ A. Vespucci, *Account of his First Voyage*,

<www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1497vespucci-america.html> 6th March 2010

The explorers' rapid recognition that the natives were not Muslims contradicts the later tendency of soldiers and missionaries to equate Amerindian with Moor, yet perfectly demonstrates the overwhelming impact of Al-Andalus on Spanish epistemology. This habit owed much to a lengthy co-existence with Islam, albeit late medieval Christians had become well accustomed to the characteristics of their neighbours' religious practice. Columbus and Vespucci's references to the earthly paradise mark the beginning of an inclination to apply old world knowledge and reason to events that had no precedent. Bernal Díaz, for example, could only describe the wonders of Tenochtitlan through recalling 'an enchanted vision from the tale of Amadis'.⁵⁴ His use of a late medieval chivalric romance to 'describe this first glimpse of things never heard of, never seen, and never dreamed of before' is but one instance of how the Spanish sought to transform the New World into a more recognizable place by drawing parallels with the Old World.⁵⁵ The first part of this thesis seeks to explore this penchant for the familiar, suggesting that lack of knowledge concerning Columbus' discovery was reflected in a custom of relaying experiences to works of popular literature.

By analysing the writings of those who travelled to the New World under the banner of Castile, it is evident that rather than providing an accurate reflection of what the Spanish saw, they heavily lean towards an account of what they thought they saw. It is recognized, for example, that the Spanish were quick to note the ethnic dissimilarities of the Muslim and Indian peoples. These texts will be used to explore the mindset of the writers and the influences on their writing in order to unravel their true provenance. This study is interested in antecedents on which the outlook and attitudes towards Mesoamerica were moulded and which can explain how New World sights and experiences were reflected. Their reactions will be of paramount importance in considering the impact of Al-Andalus in New Spain

For most Spanish embarking on a trip to the New World, the military and religious features of Indian existence were of paramount importance. From the outset, the primary theme in the diaries of these soldiers was the capacity of the Indians to make war. Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was struck by their Italian cunning and thought them 'the people most fit for war of all I have seen in the world'.⁵⁶ Even a reading of Persian, Roman and Greek histories could not prepare Francisco de Aguilar for 'such abominable forms of worship as

⁵⁴Díaz, *The Discovery and Conquest*, p.220

⁵⁵Díaz, *The Discovery and Conquest*, p.220

⁵⁶R. Adorno (ed.), A. Cabeza de Vaca, P.Pautz(trans.), *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca* (Lincoln, 1999), p.47

they offer to the Devil in this land'.⁵⁷ Such statements suggest that the religious and military propensity's of the natives were of interest but not comparable to those of the Moors. The native practices of sacrifice and idolatry were just two of many conspicuously non-Muslim tendencies which were a focus of much early comment. Nonetheless, many of those who fought in the New World had also shed blood ridding Spain of Islam and were deeply affected through this process. St James, nicknamed 'matamoros' because of his anti Islamic nature, was regularly induced against the Indians with shouts of 'Santiago'.⁵⁸ Pedro de Alvarado also assigned the Aztec warriors the title of 'infidel', a derogatory term that had become a byword on the Iberian Peninsula for 'Moor'.⁵⁹ Cortés' placing of an image of the 'Blessed Mother' at the top of a tower to inspire his troops echoed victorious Spanish soldiers entering the city of Granada in file behind an image of the Virgin Mary.⁶⁰ Such similarity in their military approaches and attitudes towards their opponents can partly account for a later blurring in distinctions made between Muslim and Indian.

The conquistador's lack of relevant vocabulary meant that for many, connecting their experience in the Americas to those of Iberia was the only method of rationalizing their thoughts. Shrubbery that was 'green, like the orchards of Valencia in March' was soon incorporated into a wider framework of interpretation.⁶¹ The great plaza of Salamanca became a benchmark for evaluating town squares across the Aztec Empire. One soldier noted that the Mesoamerican countryside was 'similar to Spain in that it has almost the same kind of mountains, valleys and fields'.⁶² His use of the word 'almost' belies an awareness of the clear shortcomings in such an assessment yet these Europeans could not help but draw such parallels. A land entirely unlike their own nation became 'New Spain' whilst many American cities were named after settlements in Spain such as Córdoba and Medellín.

⁵⁷ De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *The Conquistadors*, p.162

⁵⁸ De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *The Conquistadors*, p.196

⁵⁹ De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *The Conquistadors*, p.196

⁶⁰ First Quote from: T. Eckman and L. Hall, *Mary, Mother and Warrior: the Virgin in Spain and the Americas* (Austin, 2004), p.17; Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, p.134

⁶¹ C. Columbus, P.E Taviani, C.V Bueno, J.G Fernández, M.Conti (eds.) *Accounts and Letters of the Second, Third, and Fourth Voyages*, (Rome, 1997)p.69

⁶² De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *The Conquistadors*, p.167

Curiously, many of these reference points were taken from areas subjected to heavy Moorish influence.⁶³ Cortés, in describing the marketplace of the Aztec capital, compares it at different times to Córdoba, Seville and Granada.⁶⁴ For another conquistador, it was Tlaxcala that was ‘in some ways like Granada’ whilst Mexico’s ‘abundant foliage’ reminded some of Almería’s surrounding areas.⁶⁵ Awareness that these towns contained pagans may have provoked the Spanish to correlate them with cities that were once Muslim strongholds. Whilst the need to orient themselves through finding similarities to Spain is unsurprising, such an approach paved the way for the inhabitants of these urban areas to be referred to as Moors in many written documents. It can be argued that the Spanish insistence on converting the New World into a likeness of the Old and their inclination to associate Mexican rural and urban areas with former parts of Al-Andalus was part of a trend that would culminate in their correlation of Muslim with Indian.

At times, specific customs and appearance of the natives reminded the Spanish of their more familiar non-Christian foe. To Catholics, the Indian’s polygamy was reminiscent of Muslims and the hallmark of an infidel. One warrior exclaimed that ‘they have as many wives as they can support, like the Moors’.⁶⁶ For a Spaniard who was one of the first into the Aztec capital, the architecture of the two peoples appeared so similar that he momentarily forgot where he was. He counted ‘one hundred and ninety towers, including mosques’ and noticed that ‘inside the mosque there were fountains’.⁶⁷ His captain, Hernán Cortés, could have been describing the Sultan’s palace of the Alhambra in Granada when talking of Moctezuma’s ‘very beautiful house, with a large patio, laid with pretty tiles in the manner of a chessboard’.⁶⁸ Indeed it can be said that Cortés treated Moctezuma throughout his narrative as though he were a Muslim prince.⁶⁹ Correspondingly, the urban dwelling Aztec elite were frequently compared to the appearance of Muslim Kings. Fernández de Oviedo recalls an

⁶³ Boruchoff, *Beyond Utopia and Paradise*, p.336. For an alternative view see F. de Solano’s, *Documentos sobre política lingüística en Hispano-América (1492-1800)* (Madrid, 1991). His assertion that language and landscape were the only differences to the Spanish were faced with in the New World is interesting and well supported by a plethora of different sources.

⁶⁴ Cortés, Elliott(ed.), Pagden(ed and trans.), *Letters from Mexico*, pp.103-5

⁶⁵ De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *The Conquistadors*, p.13 and p.164

⁶⁶ De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *The Conquistadors*, p.181

⁶⁷ De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *The Conquistadors*, pp.177-180

⁶⁸ Cortés, Elliott(ed.), Pagden(ed and trans.), *Letters from Mexico*, p.12

⁶⁹ Cortés, Elliott(ed.), Pagden(ed and trans.), *Letters from Mexico*, p.12. A. Pagden noticed how Cortés used the word ‘mezquita’ on numerous occasions in the foreword to this book. S. MacCormack also noticed Spanish leaders doing so in ‘The Fall of the Incas. A Historiographical Dilemma’ *History of European Ideas* (6) (1985), pp. 421–445. It was not the intention of either author to suggest why or how this happened.

indigenous ruler whose headdress 'resembled an Almaizar.'⁷⁰ Juan Díaz also commented on the 'Moorish silks' that were worn by many amongst the Aztec leadership.⁷¹ Whilst there were a limited number of similarities in the practices of the Moors and Indians, the frequency of comparisons between the two is astonishing. These sources can be used to explore Spanish epistemological paradigms reflecting their determination to treat the New World in the same way that they treated events in the Old World. Writings that contain passages alluding to Indians that resemble Muslims are part of a wider predisposition to failing to grasp the nature of the inhabitants of the Americas and the significance of Columbus' discovery.

The choice of vocabulary used in relation to Indians was not only derived from experiences with Muslims in Spain but also belied an inability to properly explain the origins of the pagans. Almost all Spanish encounters were passed through a 'conceptual grid'⁷² thus preventing them from assimilating new information in light of past experience. In a passage that wonderfully illustrates this conviction a conquistador demonstrates his complete misunderstanding of Indian religion in stating that 'in the Mosques of other cities they chant at night, as though saying matins'.⁷³ The unidentifiable nature of both Indian worship and architecture forces the soldier to describe the natives as reciting Christian prayers in a Muslim religious place. His lack of relevant vocabulary overrides his judgement and causes him to forget the improbability of such a scenario. The Spanish perceived native architecture, customs and clothes as pagan and infidel in nature and the pagans and infidels, par excellence, were Muslims. Therefore, it was natural for the Indians to provoke an association with Moor. Although Columbus quickly identified that the behaviour of the Native Americans was anything but Islamic, these sixteenth Spanish descriptions suggest that confusion and comparison was rife.

Explaining the origins of the Indians was one of the many problems faced by the mendicant orders in the New World. As their Christian forefathers had done previously, to clarify the emergence of Islam, these missionaries tried to use 'the framework posited by the

⁷⁰ G. Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *Historia General*, <www.ems.kcl.ac.uk/content/etext/e026.html> 5th March 2010

⁷¹ De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *The Conquistadors*, p.11

⁷² Elliott, *Spain, Europe*, p.194

⁷³ De Fuentes(ed.and trans.), *The Conquistadors*, p.180

bible' to account for another strange and seemingly pagan race.⁷⁴ Isidore of Seville, in the eighth century, identified Muslim raiders as: 'Ishmaelites, as the book of Genesis teaches, because they are descended from Ishmael'.⁷⁵ The Dominican friar, Diego Durán, wrote a letter to a friend in Spain describing the natives. He claimed he could 'positively affirm that they are Jews and Hebrews. The Holy Scriptures bear witness to this, and from them we draw proofs and reasons for holding this opinion to be true'.⁷⁶ His technique was unoriginal and, as with Isidore, his conclusion incorrect. As Conquistadors referred unforeseen wonders back to Old World novels and landmarks, so priests referred back to the bible for illumination. Their desire to explain the Indians to be of Jewish descent was almost unanimous. Gerónimo de Mendieta surmised that the Indians 'came from the land of Babel after the division of languages and the destruction of the city the sons of Noah had built'.⁷⁷ His allusion to *Genesis* signalled a determination to categorize Indians according to pre-existing models. That the Spanish sought to classify the Indian using the same technique used to classify the Moor might imply an initial inability to tell the difference between the two. According to Motolinía: 'some Spaniards, in view of some of the rites, customs and ceremonies of these natives, judge them to be the race of the Moors'.⁷⁸ Whilst the religious orders never explicitly endorsed this view, their processes of identification for Moor and Indian were indistinguishable. The Franciscans and Dominicans were clearly suffering from the same problems as the explorers and soldiers preceding them had faced in describing the natives. Through seeking these Old World antecedents they too were revealing their failure to comprehend their congregation and were subconsciously connecting Muslim with Indian.

These comparisons and connections can divulge much about the mindset of those travelling to the New World. Sources that overflow with details of blatantly non-Muslim practices such as sacrifice are surely evidence that the Spanish did not literally believe the Indians to be Moors. Spanish insistence on finding similarities between the Old and New Worlds, regardless of evidence suggesting the contrary, implies irrational behaviour. Jeremy Bruner and Leo Postman's psychological experiment involving a set of playing cards

⁷⁴J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (New Haven, 2007), p.111

⁷⁵R. A. Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Dramatic Story of the Earliest Encounters between Christians and Muslims* (London, 2004), p.10

⁷⁶D. Durán, *The History of the Indies of New Spain* (1994, Oklahoma City), p.3

⁷⁷De Mendieta and F. Jay(ed. and trans.) *Historia Ecclesiastica Indiana*, p.47

⁷⁸De Benavente, *Historia de los Indios*, p.34

containing a reversed colour of suit show how perceptual organization is ‘powerfully determined by expectations built upon past commerce with the environment.’⁷⁹ The participants’ resistance to recognition of unconventional playing cards was also displayed by the Spanish who at first refused to see anything unfamiliar in Mesoamerica. Such actions suggest that the Spanish were suffering an epistemological crisis. It can be argued that this crisis was caused by an overwhelming deluge of information which contradicted their previous worldview. The centuries-old belief that the word ‘Moor’ was synonymous with that of ‘other’ was now seriously challenged by the millions of souls that required saving in Mesoamerica. Alasdair Macintyre uses the example of Hamlet returning from Wittenberg as an individual with ‘too many schemata available’ who became ‘trapped in an epistemological circularity’ yet he could easily have chosen Hernán Cortés to illustrate his point.⁸⁰ The knowledge structures of the Spanish, carefully formulated over centuries alongside the Islamic and Jewish religions, simply could not incorporate the radically different characteristics of New Spain. The writings considered in this section prove that their response involved the construction of a new narrative that often treated new subjects as though they neatly fitted into pre-existing conceptions. This reinvention of old models can account for the choice of vocabulary and reliance on a ‘discourse of similitude’ which allowed the Spanish to minimize the paralysing affects of their discovery and to rationalize their programme of conquest, colonization and conversion.

The practice of finding similarity and precedents between the two worlds meant it was a relatively small leap to describe the pagan ways of the Indians in Muslim terms. This thesis will not argue that the Christians considered the natives to be Moors. Instead it will be shown that a Spanish psyche had evolved, which was both a reflection of an inability to account for the New World and a deep attachment to attitudes, prophecies and practices; this mindset was innate in the *reconquista*. An epistemological crisis and fondness for the familiar can only partly explain the discourses produced by the Spanish. Part II of this dissertation will explore the prophetic works that made the destinies of Christianity and Islam interlinked. An apocalyptic tradition was what distinguished Moors from other non-Christian races in the Spanish psyche prior to the discovery of the New World and was the reason for the choice of Al-Andalus as a reference point for describing differences in the New World ahead of, say,

⁷⁹ J. Bruner and L. Postman, ‘On the Perception of Incongruity: A Paradigm’: *Journal of Personality*, Vol.XVIII (1949), pp.222-223

⁸⁰ Quote from Macintyre, *The Tasks of Philosophy*, p.4

former Judaic Spain. The final section of this essay will show that colonial architecture, methods of government and legal approaches were derived directly from Spanish experiences in Al-Andalus and argue that this was the logical conclusion to first defining themselves against Islam and then using old vocabulary to describe the new. The buildings that were built to house the neophytes and some of the ways which the mendicants interacted with the natives also reveal that the Spanish continued to have problems convincing themselves that the Indians were something new. Descriptions reminiscent of Muslim Spain were a part of a broader tradition of relating the unfamiliar to the familiar, however, as the rest of this essay will show, Al-Andalus' impact in the New World was far greater than just that.

II

*'Many agree that it was prophesized in holy writings how a New World would be converted to Christ's faith, and that it would be the Spanish people who would do this'*⁸¹ José de Acosta

The protracted Muslim presence in Iberia is best regarded as an occupation of Spanish mental space rather than the more conventional concept of territorial occupation. This section will demonstrate how the Spanish mindset was deeply affected by Islam and argue the psychological and eschatological impacts of Al-Andalus were manifested in the early accounts and descriptions of the New World. It will be shown that Spain, initially interpreting her Muslim presence as punishment for the behaviour of past rulers, would later regard the very existence of Al-Andalus as proof of the unique role allocated to her by God and thus the reason for being the nation chosen to discover the Americas. An Iberian prophetic tradition, born as a reflex to Tariq's invasion and evolving intensively in the Middle Ages, wove together the futures of Christianity and Islam and remained popular well into the sixteenth century. Christopher Columbus' *Book of Prophecies* of 1501 offers an insight into the eschatology of those departing for the New World and describes the older prophetic works that retained relevance in his age. His perception of Spain's providential destiny and the importance of her struggle with the Muslims had been shaped through a distinctly Spanish interpretation of the *Book of Revelation*. No book had so 'gripped the imagination' of medieval and early modern Spaniards who utilized it to popularize ideas

⁸¹ J. de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*
<www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/09252730874681169643379/p0000001.htm#I_5_> 16th April 2010.

about a Spanish last world emperor and a messianic age ushered in only once Islam was defeated.⁸² It is proposed that the eschatological and social concerns caused by the Islamic invasion of the Iberian peninsular motivated a convention of using prophetic texts to interpret Spain's future, beginning with the writings of Beatus of Liébana in the eighth century. Between the writings of Beatus and Columbus, we can track an evolving yet consistent Spanish mindset that inspired them to success in the *reconquista* and infused them with the theological importance of the struggle. By analysing and following this development in the Spanish apocalyptic literature, we can make more sense of the willingness of the explorers to equate Moor with Indian in the New World. Historians have long commented on how Spanish identity was forged in the period of coexistence since Américo Castro popularized the term *convivencia* in 1948. However few have properly considered the 'Islamic effect' on the expectations and aspirations of fifteenth century Spaniards.⁸³ The associations between Moors and Indians reflect the desires expressed in Iberian apocalyptic writings from the eighth century onwards.

The *Book of Revelation* tells of a time of great tribulation after which the forces of evil are destroyed and Christianity is presented with a new heaven.⁸⁴ The shattered landscapes it describes and 'the depths of Satan' that its author claimed to have experienced probably seemed familiar to Spanish Christians coming to terms with their military defeat.⁸⁵ A renowned Italian mystic considered the book 'the key of things past and the knowledge of things to come' and he was not alone in using it as a guide to the future.⁸⁶ Beatus of Liébana wrote his commentary on the *Apocalypse* just half a century after the Moors completed their subjection of Christian Spain and his work can be seen as a vehicle for expressing a sense of religious crisis caused by the invasion. The appearance of an illustration depicting an Islamic rider to represent Herod in the Girona manuscript of the commentary hints at a degree of Muslim influence over the writing of the book and an association with previous persecutors

⁸² Mackay, *A Pluralistic Society*, p.211

⁸³ de Solano in *Documentos sobre política lingüística* proposes that the colonisation of the Americas as an amplification of what had been occurring in the Iberian peninsular for centuries. C. Gibson has also explored the evolution of *reconquista* apparatus and their application in the New World. See particularly *Conquest, Capitulation, and Indian Treaties*. Neither historian has attempted to evaluate the Muslim impact on the Spanish mindset. For more on 'convivencia' see A.Castro *España en su historia: ensayos sobre historia y literatura* (Michigan, 2004)

⁸⁴ Revelation 1:1-22:20. The Bible used in this study is E. Henley (ed.), *The English Bible: Authorized King James Version* (London, 1904). The *Book of Revelation* is also known by some as *The Book of the Apocalypse*.

⁸⁵ Revelation 2:7

⁸⁶ Quote from W.D. Wixom and M. Lawson, 'Picturing the Apocalypse: Illustrated Leaves from a Medieval Spanish Manuscript' *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol. LIX, No. III (Winter, 2002), p.3

of Christians.⁸⁷ All significant Beatus manuscripts contain pictures depicting the ‘Whore of Babylon’ who wandered ‘drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus’.⁸⁸ Whilst the original author of the *Apocalypse* probably used this figure to represent the violently anti-Christian Roman Empire, it seems reasonable to assume that Beatus saw Babylon as an excellent metaphor for the Islamic hordes.⁸⁹ His anti-Christian enemy was not Nero or Herod, but Mohammed. Thus, Beatus was the first to consciously relate the Islamic religion to the ‘beast’ of Revelation which had to be defeated in order to bring about the longed-for millennial kingdom. In effect, the Moors had triggered a prophetic tradition in Spain. The extracts and illustrations in Beatus’ commentary divulge a pronounced and hostile Christian eschatological reaction to Islam that would develop over centuries.

As of yet, however, historiography has failed to understand Beatus’ commentary as a reaction to the arrival of Islam. John Williams, for example, correctly observes that the work contains no explicit reference to the Moors and suggests that Beatus was writing in a ‘period when political and military conflict with Muslims was minimal’.⁹⁰ Such a literal reading of the work is too dismissive of a rapidly developing anti-Islamic sentiment within Christendom and the potential repercussions of openly criticizing Muslim rule. A Spanish chronicle of the early eighth century chastised Mohammed as a ‘son of darkness’ whilst all Muslims had been condemned as heretics and ‘forerunners of the antichrist’ by John of Damascus.⁹¹ The numerous historians who argue that Beatus’s commentary was primarily a response to the growth of adoptionism amongst Spanish Christians are not only ignoring these sentiments, but overlooking Islam’s probable influence in provoking this controversy.⁹² Islam’s strict monotheism meant that Jesus was considered a prophet and not the son of God. Christian bishops such as Elandipus, who conceded that Jesus was human, were clearly seeking to

⁸⁷ O. Werckmeister, ‘The Islamic Rider in the Beatus of Girona’, *Gesta*, Vol. XXXVI, No. II, (1997), p.103.

John Williams rejected Werckmeister’s thesis and claiming it was impossible to regard the work as reflections of hostility between Christians and Muslims. Since Williams completed *The Illustrated Beatus: a Corpus of the Illustrations of the Commentary on the Apocalypse Vols I.-V* (Michigan, 2004. in 2003, Beatus’ work has been virtually ignored by scholars.

⁸⁸ Revelation 17:6

⁸⁹ The Babylonian Empire had destroyed the city of Jerusalem and persecuted a great number of Jews during the so-called ‘Babylonian Captivity’ of 587 B.C. This is the most likely connection between it and the Roman Empire.

⁹⁰ Williams(trans. and ed.), *The Illustrated Beatus*, Vol. I, p.130; K. B. Steinhauser, ‘Narrative and Illumination in the Beatus Manuscript’ *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 81, No. 2 (Apr., 1995), pp. 186-188

⁹¹ Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent*, p.28; Quote from J. Damascene, ‘Writings’, in F. Chase(ed. and trans.), *The Fathers of the Church: a New Translation* (Washington D.C, 1958)p.106

⁹² Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus*, Vol.I, p.130; Wixom and Lawson, *Picturing the Apocalypse*, p.7

appease their Muslim political overlords on whom the continuing practice of their Catholic faith depended. Beatus, an educated and pious man, would surely have been aware of who posed the real danger to his religion. The adoptionist controversy reflected simple dissonance within the Catholic Church. The Islamic invaders were seen as ‘mutilators of God’ and a real threat to the Christian religion in Iberia.⁹³ It therefore seems far more likely that Mohammed, not Elandipus, was represented as the ‘beast’. Beatus’ commentary was an immediate reaction to the Moorish invasion, portraying the Moors and the Christians as combatants in a battle between the forces of good and the antichrist and offering hope of a bright future for the Catholic faith.

Shortly after Beatus completed his commentary, the *Crónica Mozárabe* bemoaned that Spain’s misfortunes were ‘as many as Jerusalem suffered...as (many as) Babylon endured’.⁹⁴ Using places described in the Apocalypse, the writings clearly complemented Beatus’ work. The biblicization of Iberian history continued in a series of other chronicles that appeared during the reign of Alfonso III which sought to portray the Muslim invasion as retribution from God for the offences of their ancestors. For example, the military defeat inflicted on the Goths was ascribed to ‘the weight of their sins’ which prevented them from fleeing in one of a number of Asturian texts.⁹⁵ The *Crónica Profética* of 883 set a date for the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, but also explained how the invasion of Spain had been predicted by Ezekiel, who had supposedly told the Moors: ‘I have bolstered you and have put in your right hand a sword and in your left arrows, that you might subdue people.... you will fell Gog with your sword’.⁹⁶ The *Crónica Albendense* echoed these sentiments and sought to place the incident within a strict Biblical chronology that began with the Garden of Eden.⁹⁷ Many other medieval Spaniards believed that their land was due to be restored by a Christian king who would bring about a new age and, often quoting Isidore of Seville’s famous

⁹³ Damascene, *Writings*, p.103

⁹⁴ J.E López Pereira(ed.) *Crónica Mozárabe*

<www.cervantesvirtual.com/historia/textos/medieval/alta_edad_media3.shtml>17th April 2010

⁹⁵ J. De la Peña, J. Fernández and J. Moralejo(eds.), *Crónicas Asturianas* (Oviedo 1985), p.20.All were written during an atmosphere of increased Christian desperation. This was reflected through the actions of the Córdoba martyrs in the middle of the ninth century The ‘Córdoban Martyrs’ were a collection of Christians executed for violating Muslim Law. Their actions are generally regarded as being indicative of the nation’s desperation over the erosion of Christian culture in Spain. For a good introduction to their plight see R. A. Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Dramatic Story of the Earliest Encounters between Christians and Muslims* (London, 2004)

⁹⁶ Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus Vol.I*, pp.131-2 .Present in the *Book of Revelation*, Gog here is meant to represent Spain.

⁹⁷ De la Peña, Fernández and Moralejo (eds.), *Crónicas Asturianas*, p.226

description of Spain as a ‘paradise of God’.⁹⁸ These chronicles were followed by the association of St James the Apostle with the fortunes of the *reconquista* after a French Traveller recorded how his ‘most holy remains were translated from Jerusalem to Spain’.⁹⁹ Described in Mark as a ‘son of thunder’ and martyred by his execution at the hands of Agrippa, James epitomized the Judeo Christian warrior found in the *Book of Revelation* and complemented Beatus’ association of the book with Iberia.¹⁰⁰ By connecting Spain with tales from the Bible and re-interpreting her history, these authors sought to build upon Beatus’ work and allocate scriptural meaning to the conquest. Some historians have even regarded these works as predictions of future military successes against the Moor.¹⁰¹ Although it seems premature to consider these types of sources as such, they undoubtedly paved the way for later writers to create a sophisticated and positive prophetic destiny for the nation.¹⁰² The medieval tendency to attach providential importance to Iberia made it possible for full-blown prophecies regarding its future to circulate freely throughout the country in later years.

It was the high middle ages when Spain’s Muslim presence began to be seen as proof of her favoured status among Christian nations. As military successes in the *reconquista* increased, prophetic statements regarding Spain’s future grew bolder. In 1184 the *Toledo Letter* circulated telling of the impending end of the world and the conversion of all Muslims to Christianity.¹⁰³ Shortly afterwards the *Crónica Adefonsi Imperatoris* spoke of the Moors as ‘evil people about to perish’.¹⁰⁴ A decisive victory at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 turned the course of the *reconquista* irreversibly in favour of the Christians and coincided with the publishing of Joachim de Fiore’s ‘three ages’ theory which identified different statuses of Jerusalem, culminating in the rebuilding of its temple.¹⁰⁵ Arnold of Villanova’s commentary on the work of de Fiore recognized the King of Aragon as a ‘New David’ who would

⁹⁸ Alfonso X claimed he was quoting Isidore when using this expression. There appears to be no written record of the Bishop ever saying such a thing. Quote from Mackay, *A Pluralistic Society*, p.19; G. La Serna, *Cartas a mi hijo* (Madrid, 1965), p.333

⁹⁹ R. A. Fletcher, *Saint James’ Catapult*, <www.libro.uca.edu/sjc/sjc3.htm> 22nd March 2010

¹⁰⁰ Quote from Mark 3:17; Graziano, *The Millennial New World*, p.25

¹⁰¹ R. Devereux, ‘Royal Genealogy and the Gothic Thesis in Medieval Iberian Historiography’ *Foundations Vol.II, No.I* (2006),p.17

¹⁰² Devereux, *Royal Genealogy*, p.10; Williams, *The Illustrated Beatus* pp.130-135

¹⁰³ M. Gaster *The Letter of Toledo, Folklore*, Vol.XXIII, No. II (Jun. 24, 1902), pp. 115-120

¹⁰⁴ Barton, S. and R. A. Fletcher (eds. and trans.) *The World of El Cid: Chronicle of the Spanish Reconquest* (Manchester, 1998), p.153

¹⁰⁵ Lara, *City Temple, Stage*, p.54; Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages*, pp.7-10

reconstruct Mt Zion in Jerusalem.¹⁰⁶ His work is particularly significant as he manipulated the celebrated monk's text to make it a narrative with particular relevance to Spain. Villanova's assertion that it was the ruler of Aragon who would recapture Jerusalem, initiate fifteen years of peace and then defeat the Antichrist was a masterstroke.¹⁰⁷ His actions tapped into the prestige and popularity of the Calabrian theologian and Christianity's preoccupations regarding Saracens, whilst ensuring the Spanish quest to rid the Muslims from Iberia was not overshadowed by Christian crusades in the Holy Land. He had successfully singled out Spain as a nation with a special mission and built on the work of Beatus and the medieval chroniclers. When the Catholic Monarchs re-ignited the military campaign against the Moors in the fifteenth century, similar prophecies emerged with regards to Africa. By regurgitating ancient Visigothic claims to North African territories, Alvaro Pelayo could explain to Ferdinand and Isabella that the continent 'belongs to you by right. The Kings of the Goths, from whom you descend, subjected Africa to the faith...take it'.¹⁰⁸ Cardinal Cisneros was so heavily influenced by mysticism that he was even prepared to finance and lead an expedition to Oran in order to accelerate the destruction of Islam and begin preparations for the end of time.¹⁰⁹ Significantly, by the eve of the discovery of the New World, the reconquest of Spain and the reconquest of the Holy Land had been moulded through prophecy into a homogenized struggle to reconstruct the Christendom of the Apostles. Thus, in the fifteenth century Spanish subconscious, Spain was a nation 'chosen by God' to spearhead this campaign.¹¹⁰ Her Muslim presence was, therefore, not so much punishment from their maker, but opportunity to lead Christendom into the third age.

The fall of Granada in 1492 marked the conclusion of the *reconquista* and the vindication of these medieval Spanish prophecies. At the turn of the fifteenth century, Beatus' commentary was being reproduced in great numbers and the chronicler Andrés Bernáldez believed himself to be living in the final days.¹¹¹ Martín Martínez de Ampiés, in compiling his *Libro del Anticristo* shortly after the end of Al-Andalus, predicted that the death of the Antichrist meant that the 'time was now ripe for Helias and Enoch to return to

¹⁰⁶G. Magnier, 'Millenarian Prophecy and the Mythification of Philip III at the Time of the Expulsion of the Moriscos' *Sharq al-Andalus*, No.XVI-XVII (1999-2002) p.192

¹⁰⁷ West, *Medieval Ideas of Apocalyptic Mission*, p. 293

¹⁰⁸ Devereux, *Royal Genealogy*, p.20

¹⁰⁹ E. Rummel, *Jiménez de Cisneros: on the Threshold of Spain's Golden Age* (Michigan, 1999), pp.33-42

¹¹⁰ Kamen, *Imagining Spain*, p.5; Rego, *Iglesia y franquismo*, p.127

¹¹¹ A. Bernáldez, 'Recollections of the Reign of the Catholic Kings' in L. Homza (ed. and trans.), *The Spanish Inquisition, 1478-1614: an Anthology of Sources* (London, 2006) p.4

preach the faith of Christ and convert all the world'.¹¹² Anthologies of prophecies were enormously popular and it seemed that forecasts about Christianity defeating the forces of evil had been fulfilled and the time of the New Jerusalem approaching. The eschatological importance of the successful conclusion of the war against the Moors was not lost on Christopher Columbus, a man saturated with crusade propaganda since childhood in Italy and whose deep Catholic faith had been nurtured against a backdrop of Christian-Muslim hostility.¹¹³ In the journal of his first voyage he proudly recalled how: 'I saw the Moorish king come out to the city gates and kiss your Highnesses royal hands'.¹¹⁴ Columbus subscribed to the same beliefs as Spaniards who had consistently seen their victories against the Muslims as the sign of better things to come.

The best source for understanding how the fall of Granada became irreversibly linked in Columbus' mind to the discovery of America is his infamous *Book of Prophecies*. Only put into modern print in 1892, and translated into English a hundred years later, the book has been ignored for centuries by historians who have treated it as a product of a disturbed and unbalanced mind or an embarrassing attempt to win back favour at court.¹¹⁵ Although the manuscript has been altered by up to eight different hands, it is of particular importance to this study. The choice of extracts echoes popular prophetic writings of the Middle Ages and proves their enduring relevance and their use to explain the discovery of the New World. Columbus recorded how 'most of the prophecies of holy scripture have already been fulfilled' and saw 'the end of the religion of Mohammed' as the precursor to his discovery of the Americas.¹¹⁶ The obliteration of Al-Andalus was regarded as a significant step forward in this objective. His book was a 'collection of auctoritates, sayings, opinions, and prophecies concerning the need to recover the holy city and Mt Zion'.¹¹⁷ His many citations of *Revelation* parodied Beatus' method whilst repeating his theme of Christian triumph.¹¹⁸ Columbus acknowledged his use of the Old Testament in presenting his 'argument for the restitution of the holy temple to the holy church' and his reliance on 'certain holy persons

¹¹² M. Ampíes and F. Gilbert (ed.) *Libro del Anticristo* (Pamplona, 1999), p.182

¹¹³ West, *Christopher Columbus, Lost Biblical sites*, p.537

¹¹⁴ Columbus and Penny (ed. and trans.), *Journal of the First Voyage*, p.3

¹¹⁵ D. C West, 'Wallowing in a Theological Stupor or a Steadfast and Consuming Faith: Scholarly Encounters with Columbus' 'Libro de las Profecias' <www.millersville.edu/~columbus/data/art/west-02.art> 10th March 2010 ; J. Thacher, *Christopher Columbus: His Life, His Work, His Remains* (New York, 1904), p.566

¹¹⁶ Quote from C. Columbus, R. Rusconi(ed.) and B. Sullivan(trans.), *The Book of Prophecies: Edited by Christopher Columbus* (Los Angeles, 1997),p.77

¹¹⁷ Columbus, Rusconi(ed.) and Sullivan (trans.), *The Book of Prophecies*, p.59

¹¹⁸ Philips, *Visualizing Imperium*, p.847

who through divine revelation have spoken on this subject'.¹¹⁹ His admission of dependence on prophetic texts, in understanding his actions, is, therefore, proof of their importance in understanding the New World. Although the book was written after he had landed in the Americas, his attempt to make Spain's tribulations relevant to the discovery reflected not only his wish to please his royal patrons but a genuine interpretation of events of the *reconquista* as part of the same events that Beatus had envisioned. His belief that 'Jerusalem and Mt Zion must be rebuilt by the hands of Christians' was a variation on popular medieval prophecies and fitted in well with broader Christian crusade ideology.¹²⁰ His interest in apocalyptic texts was not new and neither were his millenarian views. His statement, however, that 'Abbot Joachim said this person would be from Spain' can be considered a hijacking of popular prophecy and appointing his adopted country as leader of Christian nations.¹²¹ Although evidence of de Fiore ever recording such a prediction does not appear to exist, Columbus' understanding that Spain was a chosen nation is clear. Regular citations of Beatus, Isidore and Arnold of Villanova prove his conviction owed much to the prophetic tradition that had developed in Spain thanks to the Muslim invasion, whilst Al-Andalus' continuing eschatological importance to Columbus was also made obvious in his writings.

This section has demonstrated the considerable influence of the Muslim occupation in shaping the Spanish view of their history which, in turn, conditioned their aspirations and mindset in their exploration of the New World. Not only did conditions caused by Islam turn *The Book of Revelation* into something of an Iberian fetish, it gave the country optimism, a sense of purpose and lent meaning to almost everything in their history. This conditioning was the foundation for a wide range of prophecies regarding world renewal. Al-Andalus' impact on eschatological developments was so significant it became applicable to other pagan religions which translated to experiences in the Americas. The discovery of the New World, although providing theologians with a series of unprecedented and unanswerable questions, was neatly shoehorned into a pre-conceived Spanish Christian universe, dominated by conquest against Islam. That Columbus and others were consistent in their use of the newly established paradigm show how deeply rooted such ideas were and their preponderance in

¹¹⁹ Columbus, Rusconi,(ed.) and Sullivan(trans.), *The Book of Prophecies*, p.69

¹²⁰Columbus, Rusconi,(ed.) and Sullivan(trans.), *The Book of Prophecies*, p.431

¹²¹ Columbus, Rusconi,(ed.) and Sullivan(trans.), *The Book of Prophecies*, p.431;Joachim de Fiore's 'Three Ages' theory was a millennial prophecy based on the Book of Revelation. It suggested that there would be three stages at the end of time, culminating in the age of the Holy Spirit in which the 'Order of the Just' would rule. For a more detailed account see Magnier, *Millenarian Prophecy*, pp.187-209

Christian ideology. The mainstream nature of Columbus' predictions and the popularity of all prophetic anthologies add weight to the use of his writings in a wider context and support the argument that his views were shared across a broad spectrum of Spanish society. His admiration for Isaiah, 'not just a prophet, but also an evangelist' must be considered against the backdrop of late and post *reconquista* Spain, an epoch of hurried conversion and prophetic writings.¹²² Only within this environment could his views be nurtured or indeed whispered. His belief that he was living in a time of 'the acceleration of our Lord's activities' can only have come from a man who had seen the tears of Boabdil and embraced the prophetic works that flooded late medieval Spain.¹²³ Whilst the recovery of Jerusalem was urgent, Spain had already gone through much of what was outlined in the *Apocalypse*. This apocalyptic literary tradition and unalterable mindset was evoked in the Spanish response to the challenges of the New World. Oviedo used a providentialist concept of history to understand the purchase of the Canary Islands in 1448 as recovery of territory that had 'belonged to the crown of Spain since the they were known as the Hesperes' and Columbus too followed in this tradition by looking in the Bible for evidence that his discovery had been predicted and that it was relevant to the struggle with Muslims.¹²⁴

The propensity to see Indians as Muslims and Temples as Mosques reveals more than a simple inability to characterize pagan variations or a reluctance to construct new terms for new discoveries. Muslims had evolved from a troubling foe into a defining factor in Spain's destiny. Islam quickly became thought of as the 'beast' of *Revelation* that needed to be defeated and Spain became a 'paradise of God' whose duty it was to do this.¹²⁵ To men like Columbus, success against Muslims was the very reason Spain had been chosen to discover the Americas. It is therefore unremarkable that Muslims sprang to mind when the Spanish encountered Mesoamerica's pagan inhabitants. Prophetic texts provided a doctrinal backbone to explain the discovery of the Americas as they had been in explaining the appearance of the Muslims in years previously. By falling back on the sentiments running through these works, the significance of Al-Andalus in the Spanish mind was accentuated. Historians have traditionally regarded these Spanish prophecies as part of a tradition of western mysticism

¹²² Columbus, Rusconi,(ed.) and Sullivan(trans.), *The Book of Prophecies*, p.73

¹²³ Quote from Columbus, Rusconi,(ed.) and Sullivan(trans.), *The Book of Prophecies*, p.77

¹²⁴ Oviedo y Valdés, *Historia General*, <<http://www.ems.kcl.ac.uk/content/etext/e026.html>> 5th March, 2010

¹²⁵ C. Docampo, 'Esta España que Decimos' <www.lacomunidad.elpais.com/latabernadelosmares/2009/11/24/-esta-espanna-decimos-> 24th January 2010; Mackay, *A Pluralistic Society*, p.211

and often discuss them alongside German or French prophecies.¹²⁶ This section has **shown** that Spain's unique Islamic presence differentiated her from other Christian nations and allowed her to form an exclusive interpretation of her own past and future. No other Christian nation's eschatology was so influenced by Islam. The written sources that include references to Muslims in Chapter I highlight their continued eschatological, theological and cultural significance to Spanish Christians as the repeated theme of martyrdom gave the *reconquista* special emphasis. Whether the association was so strong that they treated the natives as Muslims will be considered in the final section of this work.

III

*'The way you see people is the way you treat them'*¹²⁷ Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

The use of Al-Andalus as a reference point for describing Indian customs and landscapes was, to a large extent, derived from the Spanish prophetic tradition that laid such importance on Islam. Spanish visual representations of Islamic culture in architectural and dramaturgical forms were products of both their apocalyptic mindsets and of the 'discourse of similitude' which relied on references to Islam to explain extraordinary occurrences in the New World. The Europeans went so far as to treat Indians in much the same way they had treated their Muslim adversaries of old, employing administrative tools previously used to declare and justify war during the *reconquista*. Alfonso X's *Siete Partidas* was an important statutory code compiled in the thirteenth century that provided Christians with a blueprint for conduct in an era of military success against the Muslims. The source will be used in order to demonstrate how Alfonso's ideas endured in another period of Christian expansion on a different continent and against a new pagan enemy. The discovery of the New World heightened millennial expectations and so increased the urgency of the Christian fight against Islam. It also challenged the Spanish to find pre-existing models for what they found there. The relevance of Al-Andalus in Mesoamerica does not reflect so much a nostalgia vis-à-vis the Moors, but, instead, highlights a key facet in Spain's self-perception and is a direct consequence of epistemological links made between the natives and Muslims. Although in many ways, America was treated as no more than a new arena for an older battle, its material

¹²⁶ See Lerner, *Medieval Prophecy*, pp. 3-24; Reeves *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp.8-13

¹²⁷ M. E. Agnes(ed.) *People: Websters Quotations, Facts and Phrases* (San Diego, 2008), p.6

and spiritual import to Spanish Christians was still huge. The ‘floods of treasure’ that Francis Bacon saw pouring into Cádiz were matched in magnitude only by the millions of souls whose conversion to Catholicism acted as a counterbalance to those lost to Martin Luther and Protestantism¹²⁸. At first the significance of the Discovery of America was lost on the Spanish. However, they eventually understood it as a space in which they could activate the millennial kingdom of their dreams. Islam continued to provide the means by which the Christians could reach this paradise and, although the Indians soon assumed a specific role in Spanish eschatology, the final part of this study will contend that their apocalyptic purpose was sometimes confused with that of the Muslims.

An important reason for the reliance on a ‘discourse of similitude’ was that the Papacy, on whose behalf the Spanish were colonizing the new lands, was unable to see anything new in Spain’s New World enterprise. This led to laws and documents being issued which confirmed that America was a continuation of the Old World. The Spanish Pope, Alexander VI, bestowed on Isabella and Ferdinand the title of ‘Catholic Monarchs’ and issued them with a series of papal bulls that legitimized their claims to American territories. The *Inter Caetara* was Alexander’s creation, permitting Spain to take land in the Americas on the condition that ‘the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread’.¹²⁹ Praising Spain as a nation worthy of the task, the Pope referred back to the ‘glory to the Divine Name in your recovery of the kingdom of Granada from the yoke of the Saracens’¹³⁰ and, although he noted the ‘remote and unknown’ nature of the countries discovered by Columbus, Alexander regarded Spain’s success in battling Muslims in the Old World as sufficient qualification for the job of Christianizing the Americas.¹³¹ Evolving unerringly from Alfonso X’s definition of patronage in the *Siete Partidas* and recognition of the *reconquista* as a crusade was the *Patronato Real*, a document outlining the general body of rights given to the Spanish monarch by the Roman Pontiff.¹³² Although Robert Keith

¹²⁸ Elliott, *The Old World*, p.87

¹²⁹ R. De Borja, *Inter Caetara*

<www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pope0214a.htm> 31st February 2010

¹³⁰ De Borja, *Inter Caetara*

<www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pope0214a.htm> 31st February 2010

¹³¹ De Borja, *Inter Caetara*

<www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pope0214a.htm> 31st February 2010

¹³² These views are best expressed in W. Shiels, *King and Church: the Rise and Fall of the Patronato Real* (Austin, 1961) and J. Mecham, ‘The Origins of Real Patronato de Indias’ *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. XIV, No. II (Jul., 1928), pp. 205-227. In 1064 Pope Alexander II granted crusade indulgences to those defending Barbastro from Muslims. For more on this see R. Fletcher ‘Reconquest and Crusade in Spain’. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (Fifth Series), No.XXXVII(1992) pp. 31-46

claims that the *encomienda*, an appliance used by the crown in the New World to extract what had been given to her by the Papacy, had ‘little if any specific connection with the institution called the *encomienda* in Spain’, he can hardly doubt it had its roots in Alfonso’s belief that leaders had the power to enforce laws on defeated foes if they had permission from their King to do so.¹³³ With the very justification for Spain’s ‘enterprise of the Indies’ coming from her Moor-combating credentials and the methods of governance used to suppress the American natives borne from the courts of medieval Spanish Kings, the parallels between the *reconquista* and the conquest of the Americas are evident. For the Papacy, the Spanish government and for individual soldiers alike, this was yet another battle in a worldwide war against infidel races, accordingly, conventions should be maintained. This was a license and a pre-conditioning to treat Indians as Moors. It was also a direct consequence and **extension** of the *reconquista* style language that was detailed in Chapter I.

The *requerimiento* was a curious and much-maligned Spanish document read to the natives before battle. This ultimatum was intended to compel natives to acknowledge the Christian church as ‘ruler and superior of the whole world’ or to suffer ‘all the mischief and damage’ that could be mustered against them.¹³⁴ Although the document was in part a product of a confident and powerful Spanish brand of Catholicism which had rid itself only recently of its non-Christian neighbours, its origins were in fact Islamic.¹³⁵ Tearing through the Middle East, North Africa and much of Southern Europe in the eighth century, Muslim generals on the battlefield had used counsel dispensed by Mohammed to deal with the infidels they encountered. Mohammed’s advice was for Muslims to: ‘summon them to conversion to Islam. If they consent to that, accept it and refrain from attacking them’.¹³⁶ Used against Spanish Visigoth Christians during the Muslim conquest of Iberia, the similarity of the messages used in the New World and the oral format of delivery, suggests Islamic influence over the *requerimiento*.¹³⁷ In Mesoamerica, however, the command often fell on deaf ears and the Spanish were forced to use other more practical techniques to subdue enemies who refused to convert. These approaches also had precedents in Christian-Islamic conflict. Hernán Cortés’ desire to make ‘loyal vassals’ of Mexican tribes from Tascalteca,

¹³³ Quote from Burns (ed.), *Rey de Castilla*, Scott(trans.) *Las Siete Partidas Vol. I*, p.8; Keith, *Encomienda, Hacienda and Corregimiento*, p.433. Simpson counters this view in *The Encomienda in New Spain*, pp.8-10

¹³⁴ Quotes from J. Palacios Rubios, *Requerimiento*

<<http://users.dickinson.edu/~borges/Resources-Requerimiento.htm> > 20th March 2010

¹³⁵ Francis, *Iberia and the Americas*, p.903; Peters, *Jihad in Classical*, p.37

¹³⁶ R. Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton, 1996), p.37

¹³⁷ Peters, *Jihad in Classical*, p.37; Francis, *Iberia and the Americas*, p.903

Churutecal and Guasucingo, who sought defence from the powerful and bellicose Aztec empire, mirrored the approach of Spanish military commanders from years gone by.¹³⁸ James I's technique of demanding the Muslim 'people of Xativa...who had made a precious treaty with me....to pay yearly a hundred thousand bezants' in return for protection against other Islamic armies was an ideal precedent for the likes of Cortés and common practice during the *reconquista*.¹³⁹ These protocols and other pieces of advice had been compiled by Alfonso X in the *Siete Partidas* and were seen as equally applicable to Mexican militia. For example, the duty to 'deliver the fifth' of all bounty to the King was continued in the New World whilst Cortés' fondness for ambushes surely derived from Alfonso's certainty of their effectiveness.¹⁴⁰ The very foundation of Cortés' enterprise was to be found in volume II of the *Siete Partidas* which stated that a just war's mission was to 'expand the religion of the people, and to destroy those who wish to oppose it'.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, Alfonso's belief that Christianity 'and no other is the true Faith' provided great comfort to conquistadors who suffered greatly in their quest to expand the boundaries of Christendom.¹⁴² That the *Siete Partidas*, a document written largely to deal with the complications of the *reconquista*, still seemed relevant to the Spanish indicates that they, like the Papacy, didn't see much new in the campaigns that they fought in the Americas. Whether Islamic or Christian in origin, many techniques and approaches were copied from the *reconquista* and applied to military campaigns in Mesoamerica; what has yet to be acknowledged is that this was the start of Christians treating Indians in the same way as they had treated Muslims in the past.

The mimicking of old attitudes and sentiments also occurred during festivities in Tlaxcala in 1536. Cabeza de Vaca, a visitor to the city, remembered that 'the day of Santiago was celebrated with a fiesta', the highlight of which was a play performed by natives under supervision of the mendicant orders.¹⁴³ The plot of the 'Conquest of Jerusalem' reflected the innermost desires of the apocalyptically-minded friars. An army of Spaniards, supported by troops from Italy, Germany and New Mexico, after much fighting and many losses, wrestled

¹³⁸ Cortés, Elliott(ed.), Pagden(ed and trans.), *Letters from Mexico*, p.14

¹³⁹ J. Lipskey (ed. and trans.), *Chronica Adefonsi imperatoris*
<www.libro.uca.edu/chronicleofjames/chronicle.htm> 30th March 2010; Barton and Fletcher(eds.and trans.), *The World of El Cid*, pp.131-135

¹⁴⁰ R. Burns (ed.) A. Rey de Castilla, S. Scott(trans.) *Las Siete Partidas Vol. II (Medieval Government: the World of Warriors and Kings)* (Philadelphia, 2001), p.78

¹⁴¹ Burns (ed.), Rey de Castilla, Scott(trans.) *Las Siete Partidas Vol. II*, p.440

¹⁴² Burns (ed.), Rey de Castilla, Scott (trans.) *Las Siete Partidas Vol. I*, p.44

¹⁴³ A. Cabeza de Vaca, *La Relación*

<<http://alkek.library.txstate.edu/swwc/cdv/book/103.html>> 31st March 2010

control of the Holy City from the Islamic hordes after receiving help from Santiago. The identification as the leader of the infidels as ‘the sultan of Babylon’ once again evoked the book of Revelation.¹⁴⁴ However, Friar Motolinía was at pains to emphasize that the character was modelled on the ‘Marques del Valle, Hernán Cortés.’¹⁴⁵ This was reminiscent of another Spanish icon, El Cid, who, although a medieval Christian hero, was a mercenary prepared to ‘fight with Moors’ for financial gain.¹⁴⁶ Such a connection again shows continuing linkage between the *reconquista*, prophecy and events in the New World. The scene containing Indians dressed as Muslims and ‘wearing turbans such as the Moors use’ is verification that the Spanish at times, consciously or subconsciously, saw similarities between the Muslim and Indian peoples and associated them heavily with their Islamic foe.¹⁴⁷ That said, the fantasy of sailing newly-converted Indians across the sea as reinforcements for Charles V’s final crusade against Islam reflected an acute desire of many Spaniards of the period, thus, the casting of neophytes as Muslims shows a degree of confusion and ambivalence regarding the perception of New World converts.¹⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the play is a useful indicator of continuing millennial ideals, the enduring relevance of Islam and the Spanish tendency to juxtapose or even confuse representations of Christians, Muslims and Indians.

Some early Spanish constructions in Mesoamerica stand as physical monuments to the wider and older struggle between Christianity and Islam.¹⁴⁹ Most prominent of these are the Capilla Real at Cholula and the church of San José de los Naturales in Mexico City, both built by Franciscans.¹⁵⁰ These two buildings bear an uncanny resemblance to specific Islamic places of worship. A contemporary observer noted how the latter had ‘high ceilings and is open in the front and how the stone arches are low and serve more for ornament than for shelter or support’.¹⁵¹ This description may have surprised many readers in that it would also have been apt for a report on the Mezquita in the Andalusian city of Córdoba. Standing proudly in the middle of New Spain’s largest city, this Franciscan church is testimony to her

¹⁴⁴ De Benavente, *Historia de los indios*, p.161

¹⁴⁵ De Benavente, *Historia de los indios*, p.161

¹⁴⁶ P.Abbad, *Cantar de Mío Cid*, <<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/cid/main/folio.php?f=14v&v=eng>> 5th April 2010

¹⁴⁷ De Benavente, *Historia de los indios*, p.111

¹⁴⁸ M. Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians: festivals of reconquest in Mexico and Spain* (Austin, 2000), p.123; M. Harris, ‘Muhammed and the Virgin: Folk Dramatizations of Battles between Moors and Christians in Modern Spain’: *TDR* (1988-), Vol. XXXVIII, No. I (Spring, 1994), pp. 45-61

¹⁴⁹ See Appendix for images of the interior of the Mosque at Córdoba and the inside of the Capilla Real.

¹⁵⁰ G. Kubler, ‘Architects and Builders in Mexico 1521-1550’ *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. VII, (1944), pp.11-12; Mc Andrew, *The Open-Air Churches*, p.388

¹⁵¹ J. Moffitt, *The Islamic Design Module: Proportionality and the Techniques of neo-Mudéjar Architecture* (London, 2004), p.147

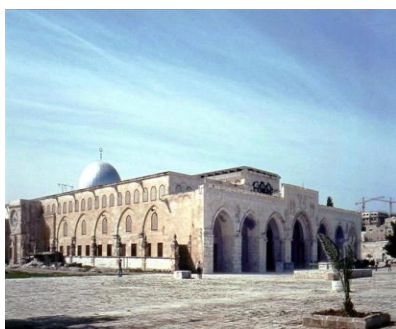
mother country's multicultural past, with a cupola that would have fitted perfectly on top of the World's oldest known Islamic building, the Dome of the Rock. The Capilla Real's Muslim form is even more striking. Its interior, with arches supported by columns and a vaulted ceiling, also has an extremely similar constitution to the Córdoba landmark. In addition, its open courtyard has drawn parallels with that of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.¹⁵² The use of mudéjar architecture in the New World, despite being a fairly popular style in early modern Iberia, is odd given these churches were constructed in order to facilitate the spread of Christianity to a nation whose understanding of its new religion was fragile. It was not, however, without precedent. Alfonso X, a man careful never to 'neglect the command of God', had used a mudéjar design in renovating the Muslim Alcazár palace at Seville in a display of triumphalism after victory over a local Islamic coalition.¹⁵³ By this logic one might be satisfied with Diarmaid MacCulloch's observation that Christians were actually celebrating 'victory in the same way' as they had during the *reconquista*.¹⁵⁴ However, if as MacCulloch claims, the similarities between a Mosque from the Middle East and the Capilla Real reflected the mendicant attempts to build a 'New Jerusalem' in the Americas, then they would have surely been better advised to construct the church in a likeness of the Holy Sepulchre, a building whose destruction had inspired thousands of Christians to arms in the crusades.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, these buildings were made from scratch and, thus, entirely removed from the popular *reconquista* tradition amongst Christians and Muslims of converting captured enemy worship places to their own. Although much Christian architecture in the New World demonstrated the mendicant's apocalyptic views, the Capilla Real and San José, whose architects are unknown, are more accurately regarded as products of Spanish association between Indian and Moor.

¹⁵² D. MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity, the first Three Thousand Years* (London, 2009), p.699; Lara, *City, Temple, Stage*, pp.17-26; Mc Andrew, *The Open-Air Churches*, p.388

¹⁵³ Burns (ed.) Rey de Castilla, Scott(trans.) *Las Siete Partidas Vol. II*, p.415; D. Ruggles, 'The Alcazár of Seville and Mudéjar Architecture' *Gesta*, Vol. XLIII, No. II (2004), p.88

¹⁵⁴ MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, p.699

¹⁵⁵ MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, p.699



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Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem

San José, Mexico D.F

Capilla Real, Cholula

There is no better example of this association than the church of Ocotlán in Tlaxcala, built by Fray Martín de Valencia.¹⁵⁹ The simplicity of the bell tower's design is undoubtedly taken from that of the church of Santos Juanes in his hometown of Valencia, a Mosque that had been converted after the Christians retook the city in 1238.¹⁶⁰ Both of these towers have lower tiers larger than their upper tiers and a clear division between the two, similar to the former minaret in Seville known as 'la Giralda'. This thesis insists that this approach, as with the two churches discussed above, was not simple imitation of the *reconquista* method of converting Mosques into Churches. Instead, these designs sprung from their Spanish builder's awareness that the Indians, like the Muslims, were not Christian and therefore required buildings of a similar style. As their homeland was littered with beautiful landmarks reminding Spaniards of their Muslim past, it is not inconceivable that it was simply the magnificence of the structures that they sought to recreate. However, like Córtes and his companions using adjectives and comparisons taken largely from parts of former Muslim Spain to depict Mexican countryside and architecture, de Valencia and other architects were also taking their inspiration from that particular section of Spanish society and thus subscribing to the same 'discourse of similitude' found in the writings of the conquistadors and other explorers. Nothing better illustrates the considerable impact of Al-Andalus in New Spain as well as these churches. By turning fictitious descriptions of Mesoamerican mosques

¹⁵⁶ Image found at <www.earthdocumentary.com/.../al-aqsa-mosque.jpg> 10th April 2010

¹⁵⁷ Image found at <www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?p=46387567> 10th April 2010

¹⁵⁸ Image found at <www.picasaweb.google.com/.../Zaqbo55kEY-GvNBurvV78Q> 09th April 2010

¹⁵⁹ Leader of the initial 'doce' of Franciscan friars, de Valencia was an influential and respected figure in the initial missionary push. A good introduction to his life can be found in C. Tescaroli, 'Fray Martín de Valencia. Al frente de la Misión de los Doce', in R. Ballán(ed.), *Misioneros de la primera hora. Grandes evangelizadores del Nuevo Mundo* (Lima 1991), pp. 91-93

¹⁶⁰ J. Forster (trans.), P. Gavangos (ed.) *The Chronicle of James I* <<http://libro.uca.edu/chronicleofjames/chronicle.htm>> 12th March 2010. There are many other examples of similar tactics to be found in a range of different Medieval chronicles. See S. Barton. and R. A Fletcher (eds. and trans.) *The World of El Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest* (Manchester, 1998)

into a reality the Spanish were physically recreating Al-Andalus and continuing to deny that the Americas were anything but an extension of the Old World.



Iglesia de Santos Juanes, Valencia



Iglesia de Ocotlán, Tlaxcala



La Giralda, Seville

Conclusion

The stimulations behind the play that took place in Tlaxcala and the church built by de Valencia in that same city are very different, but together are a dichotomy of how Islam continued to affect the Spanish in the New World. Undoubtedly *The Conquest of Jerusalem*, portraying the final defeat of Islam and the conversion of the entire world to Christianity, was to a large extent motivated by the Friars' millennial hopes of bringing about the final coming of Christ, a sentiment keenly felt in Spain as a result of the prophetic tradition incorporating Islam. The building of churches that resembled Islamic places of worship have been seen as products of that same tendency but are better regarded as deriving from the Christian's awareness of the pagan nature that defined both Indians and Muslims. Therefore, both Islam's important status within Spanish prophetic tradition and the epistemological crisis that hindered them in properly identifying the natives are accountable for the Spanish treating Indians as though they were Moors. The Spanish jihads on enemies of the Christian faith and their construction of Mosque-like structures to provide places of worship for neophytes

¹⁶¹Image found at <www.canal-valencia.es/Valencia_Ciudad/Imagenes/> 06th April 2010

¹⁶² Image found at <www.mexico99.com/Ocotlan_Church_Iglesia.html>06th April 2010

¹⁶³ Image found at <www.sacred-destinations.com>05th April 2010

perfectly reveal their readiness to find old world solutions for New World problems. Moreover, it also demonstrates their flexibility in making use of religious, cultural and administrative products of Muslim civilization. Their willingness to use apparatus designed for the *reconquista* in order to conquer and convert in the Americas prove that they were disinclined to make distinctions between non-Christians. The uncertainty and conservatism of the early Spanish arrivals in the New World detailed in Chapter I are therefore responsible for the unorthodox designs of some Mexican churches built by the mendicants. This would not have happened, however, were it not for Islam's importance in Spanish eschatology. Part II showed how Islam was conceived as the beginning and the end of an apocalyptic timeline, and its preponderance in the minds of Spanish in the New World. This also contributed directly to Spanish treatment of the natives. The play entitled 'The Conquest of Jerusalem' is a visual manifestation of these desires and allocates a role for the Indians in their old world struggle but also portrays them as Muslims. Casting Cortés in the role of a Muslim sultan is consistent with other evocations of their Islamic past and shows a more flexible approach to non-Christian faiths that inquisition-based historiography has tended to admit. Although the *Second International Congress of Historians of the US and Mexico* of 1958 only identified the 'pattern of metropolis and frontier' as Muslim Spain's legacy for the New World, Al-Andalus affected far more than attitudes and movements within a military campaign.¹⁶⁴



The Virgin of the Seafarers- Alejo Fernández

¹⁶⁴Bader, *A "Second Field"*, p. 48

Alejo Fernández' *The Virgin of the Seafarers* is an illuminating guide to the nature of Spain's occupation of the Indies and to matters of significance to a 16th century Spaniard. The figure of the Virgin is central, larger than all others, protecting the scores of ships departing for the New World and symbolizing an all-conquering Catholic religion. Spain's prevailing confidence is conveyed through the painting's inscription 'here reigns Charles over the entire globe, and with reason he has subjected the world'.¹⁶⁵ The two figures most responsible for this self belief, St John and St James, are also prominent in the picture, synthesising this thesis' conviction that the twin developments of prophecy and Moor-slaying underpinned the Spanish outlook in the Americas. These two figures operate in tandem with the more mundane practices of trading and piety. Columbus is also in the painting, whose *Book of Prophecies* was the culmination of an apocalyptic tradition begun by John but inspired by the Muslim invasion and developed in the time of Al-Andalus. In the background, the faint outlines of native Indians can be made out, although their dark and barely visible makeup emphasises their relative unimportance. The absence of Muslims in the artwork is representative of the fact that they were expelled from the country in 1492, making their physical presence negligible to Iberians. However, as this study has indicated, their existence in the Spanish subconscious was evident in the New World, extending influence throughout Mexico. Moors reappeared whenever the Spanish tried to describe their surroundings or rationalize the practices of the natives. In invoking Santiago, declaring war on the natives and creating policies to govern them, they were recreating events of the *reconquista* and inadvertently fighting the same enemy as their forefathers. The logical outcome was a failure to differentiate between Muslim and Indian which extended as far as treating the natives as Moors.

Today, the discussion rages over the extent of atrocities committed in the Americas and the nature of the Spanish empire. Historiography focuses on how religious fervour, embodied by the inquisition, was fostered in Iberia and transferred to the Americas. However, this study hints at a more complex attitude towards non-Christians. Inquisitions had taken place in England and France long before their arrival in Iberia and Felipe de Meneses found 'more inclination to liberty' in early modern Spain than in any other Christian nation of the time.¹⁶⁶ Even Columbus believed the Holy Spirit was present in Moors.¹⁶⁷ Spanish

¹⁶⁵ Phillips, *Visualizing Imperium*, p.824

¹⁶⁶ H. Kamen, 'Toleration and Dissent in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alternative Tradition':

evocations of Islam in the New World prove that Muslims were far more than a simple enemy of Christianity and Spanish attitudes towards Islam were more complicated than those of mere military rivals. Thus, it can be seen that the impact of Islam in the New World was as surprising as it was diverse.

As the quincentennial of the conquest of Mexico approaches, the debate regarding the morality of the event will inevitably intensify. In particular, it will be intriguing to observe how men such as Cortés are reappraised during this heightened reflection of the period. The question of whether Cortés was ‘an individual completely lacking in morals’ or an honest soldier with ‘little hope of a peaceful accommodation’, is too simplistic. The dynamics and deep-rooted effects of the Spanish Moorish history and influence go some way to explain behaviours. It is hoped that in 2019, scholars attempting to interpret motivations and actions, look beyond the traditional paradigms and consider older sources from the European side of the Atlantic.¹⁶⁸ Mesoamerica was not just the battleground for what historians are fond of describing as the ‘last crusade’.¹⁶⁹ Al-Andalus affected how the Spanish behaved in the New World from the minute they disembarked their ships. It would do so for many years and in many ways. The call to prayer still reverberated around southern Spain during the childhood of Cortés and others; only by listening carefully to the echo of that sound can the mindset and priorities of the Spanish in America be truly understood.

The Sixteenth Century Journal, Vol. XIX, No. I (Spring, 1988), p.4; See S. B Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven, 2009) for a book packed full of evidence that supports this view.

¹⁶⁷ Columbus, Rusconi(ed.) and Sullivan (trans.), *The Book of Prophecies*, p.71

¹⁶⁸ Quote from E. Guzmán. ‘Relaciones de Hernán Cortés a Carlos V sobre la invasión de Anahuac’ *Tlamatini*, Vol. I, No.IV (Nov 1988), p.86. Her violently anti Spanish polemic has been superseded by historians keen to uncover native accounts of the conquest and colonization. Nahuatl scholars such as James Lockhart, Louise Burkhart and Miguel León-Portilla now dominate Mexican colonial history and tend not to be complementary about the personalities or intentions of the Spanish Conquistadors. Second quote from W. H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (New York, 1922), p. 363. Pro Spanish sentiments were a common feature of nineteenth century North American historiography and are also to be found in W. Irving’s *Voyages and discoveries of the companions of Columbus, Vol V.*(Lansing, 1835)

¹⁶⁹ West, *Christopher Columbus*, p. 519

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Appendix



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Interior of the Mezquita, Córdoba



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Interior of the Capilla Real, Cholula

¹⁷⁰ Photo Taken by Author

¹⁷¹ Image found at <www.flickr.com/photos/57453294@N00/2597303254> 8th January 2010

Glossary

Al-Andalus-Name given to the country of Spain by the Muslims. Translates literally as 'the land of the vandals'. Also used, as in this essay, as a general term for Moorish Spain.

Almaizar-Moorish headdress.

Convivencia-A term coined by the Spanish historian Américo Castro which refers to the 'coexistence' between Christians, Muslims and Jews in medieval and early modern Spain.

Encomiando-A labour system employed in the New World with its roots in the Iberian feudal system.

Mozarabic-General term that relates to of Iberian Christians who had been greatly effected by Islamic culture and language during the Muslim Occupation.

Mudéjar-Name given to those of Moorish descent who remained in Iberia after the expulsion of all Muslims.

Patronato Real- An arrangement between the Spanish church and crown that gave colonial officers powers over the appointment of clergy.

Reconquista- A term used to describe the battle between Christians and Mulsims in Spain between 722 and 1492

Requerimiento- An announcement of Spanish sovereignty read to the natives.

