An Islamicate History of the Alcazar of Seville: Mudejar Architecture and Andalusi Shared Culture (1252-1369 CE)

John Sullivan

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AN ISLAMICATE HISTORY OF THE ALCAZAR OF SEVILLE: 
MUDÉJAR ARCHITECTURE AND SHARED ANDALUSI CULTURE (1252-1369 CE)

by

JOHN F. SULLIVAN

Under the Direction of Allen Fromherz, PhD

ABSTRACT

At the height of the Reconquista c. 1340 CE, Christian King Alfonso XI of Castile-León constructed a new throne room to commemorate his victory over Muslim forces from neighboring Granada and North Africa. The throne room called the Sala de la Justicia (Hall of Justice) was built almost entirely in the Mudéjar style, a style that looked Islamic in nature and included inscriptions in Arabic, several referencing the Qur’an, but predominantly intended for non-Muslims. The construction of this throne room in the Alcazar of Seville, a palace built by the Muslims and later used as the royal residence for the conquering Christians, has puzzled scholars due to its clearly Islamicate design being used in a new construction by a Christian ruler against a backdrop of the Crusades and the Reconquista in Spain. Raising further questions was
the construction of the Alcazar’s Mudéjar palace by Alfonso XI’s son Pedro I between 1364-1366 CE. This new construction mirrored designs in the neighboring Alhambra of Granada, a territory still controlled by Muslims, which even employed some of the same artisans. Attempts to interpret the Mudéjar designs utilized by Christians was further exacerbated by the same design style appearing in new buildings and additions by non-ruling Christians, Muslims, and Jews across al-Andalus, among them residential and religious buildings including churches and synagogues. This project re-examines these constructions through the lens of a cultural history reveal a shared culture and visual language that existed between the Castilian Christians, their Muslim antagonists and the minority populations of Christians, Muslims, and Jews living in al-Andalus over the course of several hundred years, reaching its apex in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Participation in this shared culture by members of the three confessional communities was enabled because it existed separately from any specific political or religious affiliations which would otherwise be prohibitive. In this proposed re-interpretation, a cosmopolitan Islamicate culture coexisted among residents in al-Andalus, including ruling Christians, minority Muslim or Jewish subjects, and neighboring political and religious antagonists. Ultimately, it is this shared Islamicate culture that best explains the Christian constructions in the Alcazar of Seville.

INDEX WORDS: Islamicate, Cosmopolitanism, Alcazar, Seville, Mudéjar, al-Andalus
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DEDICATION

To Marshall G. S. Hodgson, I couldn’t have done it without you.
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1 INTRODUCTION

On November 23, 1248 CE, following a sixteen month siege, the Muslim-ruled city of Seville capitulated to the forces of Fernando III of Castile and León. A month later on December 22, Fernando and his son, who would become Alfonso X in less than four years, entered the city in triumph and established themselves at the Alcazar of Seville, the palatial residence and former capital of the Muslim Almohads. With the capture of Seville, the Castilians secured a major port city and trade hub, leaving only the kingdom of Granada for the Muslims who had ruled the better part of the Iberian Peninsula from the eighth century. The conquest of Seville and the occupation of the Alcazar represented one of the greatest achievements of the so-called Reconquista, the reconquest of Spain, and the focal point of a burgeoning cultural relationship between the conquering Christians and their Muslim and Jewish subjects. Despite a clear Christian victory backed by Pope Innocent IV (c. 1195-1254 CE), the capture of Seville intensified a growing shared culture that had already existed between the three confessional communities in al-Andalus under Muslim rule and would continue to evolve as it incorporated the new Christian rulers into it.

The Alcazar of Seville had served as the royal residence and seat of power for Muslim rulers extending back to the 11th century. In addition, the city was home to several distinctive buildings constructed by the previous Muslim polities, but predominantly by the Almohads whose architecture, already influenced by their tenure in al-Andalus, formed something of a signature style or design for the region and would serve as the foundation for much of the material culture constructed in the ensuing century and a half following their defeat. These constructions and their continued prominence within the city signify the presence of an architectural and cultural relationship that crossed multiple boundaries.
While the religious and political distinctions between the Christians and Muslims were clear, their concurrent cultural interactions and building projects have confounded some. In spite of their differences in other areas, the conquering Christians and their Muslim and Jewish populations continued to express themselves architecturally in a very similar way. This architectural expression, which came to include other forms of material culture, was later termed “Mudéjar” and was reflected in projects across the conquered territory, as well as in Granada, Iberia’s last remaining Muslim stronghold. This design style, which appears Islamic in nature, was popular amongst these same communities during the period of Almohad rule and seems to have extended on an inspirational level back to earlier periods of Muslim rule on the peninsula as well as appearing in earlier Christian conquests in places like Toledo. Despite associations with the Almohads and other Muslim polities, this Mudéjar style, or permutations of it, would continue for more than a century after these territories came under Christian rule. These early constructions and their appreciation by the conquering Christians also continued in varying forms for many centuries as evidenced by an 18th century map of Seville (fig. 1) that still listed prominent Islamic architecture including the Torre del Oro, Torre de la Plata, the Alcazar and the Giralda among the featured elements of the city. This appreciation for Islamic architecture and the power and grandeur it represented prompted the emulation and protection of these buildings by the early Christian rulers of Seville, beginning with Alfonso X el Sabio (r. 1252-1284 CE) and likely fueled their future adoption and patronage of Mudéjar designs and building projects.
The Mudéjar design aesthetic would eventually be applied to royal throne rooms, private residences, churches, synagogues, mosques, and palaces. These constructions occurred with such frequency among Christians that scholars have sought to explain the continued presence of the Mudéjar style and its prominent applications at the highest levels of society in light of its visual and epigraphic associations with Muslims and Islam. The conundrum later prompted noted art historian Oleg Grabar to comment that, “it is strange that a land which had invested so much physical and psychic energy in reclaiming from an allegedly alien power what was presumed to be its own would, for several centuries, maintain and carefully nurture the artistic forms of the enemy.”

Grabar synthesized one of the key difficulties presented by Christians

2 Grabar described the interactions between the Christian Kings of Castile and Leon and Mudéjar culture as a paradox, as well as this particular question in Oleg Grabar, “Two Paradoxes in the Islamic Art of the Spanish Peninsula,” in The Legacy of Muslim Spain, Salma Jayyusi ed. (Boston: Brill, 1994), 2: 589.
building in a seemingly Islamic style, but his presentation of the conundrum posed by Mudéjar aesthetics also contains the keys to solving it.

Art historians like Grabar, who make up the better part of the scholars analyzing the material and architectural history of Seville and al-Andalus, have tended to focus on Mudéjar expressions in places like the Alcazar, the Alhambra, the Sinagoga del Tránsito in Toledo, or the Real Monasterio de Santa Clara at Tordesillas as independent constructions. This individualized approach could have been limiting as it may have led to interpretations made without closely examining the relational sociohistorical context of these constructions by considering them in concert. The same model of independent analysis was also often applied to examinations of rulers and patrons of Mudéjar material like Alfonso X, Alfonso XI, Pedro I, Yusuf I, and Muhammad V, further setting up the perception of individual cases and eliding the potential cooperative aspects of the greater cultural milieu. Alongside these potential interpretive challenges was the issue of associating particular design styles with individual groups and tying them in with social, political, and religious affiliations and influences that may or may not have held sway. The result, on one hand, was the perception that Mudéjar constructions and their patrons were often considered in isolation, rather than as part of a larger cultural expression, while on the other hand, Mudéjar designs and similar expressions were frequently viewed as the province of one particular group or other, rather than conjointly forming a shared visual language.

This project will seek to examine the Alcazar of Seville and several expressions of Mudéjar design in al-Andalus to argue that these architectural and material culture projects were part of an Islamicate shared culture and visual language that crossed confessional communities and existed separately from the political and religious affiliations of the patrons. While theories have
been put forth to explain the seeming incongruity of these designs within a Christian framework, each attempt has provided an answer for some aspects of some of the constructions, however few have provided theories that could be applied to the majority, if not all of such manifestations in al-Andalus. In an effort to suggest such a theory, which will be built around the idea of a shared visual language and material culture, this project will explore prominent constructions by contemporary Christians, Muslims, and Jews who often experienced conflicting political and religious realities. Through this analysis, this dissertation will reveal an Islamicate shared culture in which each confessional community participated, but also made their own through patron choice and customization applied to shared foundational elements and a shared visual language.

The following chapters will discuss interpretations of key terminology like Convivencia, Islamicate, and Mudéjar before discussing shared culture as it occurred across al-Andalus to conclude that the Alcazar of Seville, and the Mudéjar designs contained within it, reflect the history of a shared culture, or an Islamicate history, that describes architecture and material culture that is neither Muslim, Christian, nor Jewish, but something unique to al-Andalus.
2 COMING TO TERMS

Any theory of shared culture in al-Andalus must allow for participation across confessional communities while also acknowledging that some theoretical construct existed that enabled participation in the shared culture while maintaining any existing political and religious affiliations. With this in mind, an Islamicate history would be predicated on two interpretive understandings. The first would be the presence of a shared culture, along with some form of affiliative identity, which enabled a distinction between cultural identities and political, social, or religious identities. Secondly, an Islamicate history would also describe an environment where those identities could coexist, even if they were in conflict. To enable such explorations and interpretations, an Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville will therefore require the understanding and specific application of several key terms and ideas which historically have either been in dispute, or in some cases, rarely used. Beyond comprehending the context and elucidation of the titular term Islamicate, several related terms such as convivencia and Mudéjar will also need definition and interpretation. Before unpacking these terms and ideas however, an overarching concept, hereafter described as “monolithization,” must be defined and addressed since it weighs heavily on interpretations of this history.

2.1 Monolithization

The concept of monolithization is evident in Oleg Graber’s earlier quotation. “It is strange that a land which had invested so much physical and psychic energy in reclaiming from an allegedly alien power what was presumed to be its own would, for several centuries, maintain and carefully nurture the artistic forms of the enemy.”3 At the heart of Graber’s comment, and the perceived independence of groups and designs in medieval Iberia, is the spectre of

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monolithization. Monolithization involves unintentionally creating a standardized or even normative amalgamation or conceptual formation that elides distinctions within the “monolith” that might be more historically or interpretively valuable. Monolithization also frequently manifests as an exclusive affiliation or attribution of qualities to one group to the exclusion of others. In this case, Grabar’s attribution of the “artistic forms” to the “enemy,” suggests that those forms were exclusive to that “enemy,” which in this case would be the Muslims. This monolithization therefore ascribes these forms as the province of the Muslims, tacitly suggesting that any flirtation with such forms creates an uncomfortable association with Islam, which would indeed have been a problem for a Christian ruler, and especially one financed by the Pope and under the larger umbrella of the Crusades and Reconquista. The implicit difficulty therefore exists in needing to explain why a Christian is directly engaging with something Islamic, a predicament that several scholars, including Grabar, have found themselves addressing.

In contrast to this monolithic construct, this study will argue that Castilian engagement with what will be described as Islamicate (as opposed to Islamic) material and Mudéjar aesthetics was not the case of Christians adopting or participating in an exclusively Muslim or Islamic culture, but rather a case of the conquering Castilians gradually participating in an existing Andalusi culture of which they had then become part. In this Andalusi context, cultural elements such as Mudéjar aesthetics, were already separate and distinct from religious or political affiliations. In other words, the Castilians could participate in aspects of Islamicate/Mudéjar culture such as architecture, while maintaining their Catholicism and continuing to fight what amounts to a Crusade during the Reconquista.4 The Andalusi context of this cultural interaction is particularly

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4 This is not to say that this affiliation with the Islamicate culture of Al-Andalus did not carry political or religious consequences. In one particular example, Pedro’s Trastámara rival used his association with Pedro’s diverse citizens and court to great effect in his criticism of Pedro as an “enobler of Jews and Moors” reflecting among others, Pedro’s relationships with Muhammad V of Granada and his Jewish minister Samuel ha-Levi Abulafia. See
important since the separation of the cultural aspects of Islamicate culture had already begun by virtue of the Jews and Christians participating in what was then Islamic culture as non-Muslims. This multicultural interaction then formed the basis for the Islamicate/Mudéjar culture that continued in the Castilian and Nasrid periods. How Andalusi culture functioned and operated separately from the religious and political contexts of the early Castilian period is directly tied to the shared culture of al-Andalus being Islamicate. Furthermore, evidence from the Castilians’ own chronicles suggests that the cultural/architectural elements of the conquered Muslim polities were already understood to be worthy of praise and likely represented a form of high culture, grandeur, and political power that the Castilians themselves wanted to reflect.

On the whole, scholarship on medieval al-Andalus has tended toward monolithization. From this perspective, discussions often involve monolithic entities such as “Jews,” “Christians,” and “Muslims,” which are frequently presented as hegemonic categories and not as collections of people whose experiences, orientations and relationships changed depending on numerous variables in their specific contexts. A monolithic perspective also tends to discuss medieval periods, as well as rulers and dynasties, without specific distinctions. In this project, for example, there is a distinct difference between the orientations of the early rulers of Castile-León from those coming after the death of Pedro I in 1369 CE, as well as distinctions between the

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5 In one specific example, an analysis of ceramic production and consumption in Seville showed a surprising consistency in the material record from The Almoravid period through the conquest of 1248 and into late 13th century under Christian rule suggesting that despite the religious and political upheaval over an extended period of time, the interaction with this socio-cultural product remained consistent. See Rebecca Bridgman with Pina Lopez Torres and Manuel Vera Reina, “Crossing the Cultural Divide? Continuity in Ceramic Production and Consumption between the Almoravid and Mudéjar Periods in Seville,” *Al-Masāq*, 21, no. 1 (2009): 13-29.

rulers of Castile-León and their contemporaries in Aragon and Navarre. Similar distinctions would also hold true for Muslims in Granada and those in North Africa who frequently worked both for and against each other depending on their interests and circumstances. Thus, any discussion based on a coexistence or conflict between Christians, Muslims, or Jews without indicating which ones, at what time, and in what context are potentially flawed. Fully understanding medieval Seville is therefore impossible without recognizing the distinctiveness of the populations involved and their changing orientations and affiliations. For example, those studying relationships between Christians and Jews writ monolithically, might cite the dictates of the Fourth Lateran Council (1213-1215 CE) as evidence of troubling, exclusivist relations between those two confessional groups. Engaging this relationship from that perspective however would hit a substantial roadblock when discussing Iberia, where all evidence points to the Fourth Lateran Council being largely, if not wholly, ignored on the peninsula and at least within the confines of Castilian-led al-Andalus. Rather than serving as evidence of negative relations between “Christians” and “Jews,” the application of the Fourth Lateran Council canons, or failure to do so in al-Andalus, is instead evidence of a distinction between one set of Christians in a particular context operating differently from other Christians in a different context. This distinction in turn holds true for their respective Jewish populations who also responded differently. Thus, any discussion of what “Christians” or “Jews” writ monolithically were doing in different places and times, or even concurrently, requires a discussion or at least acknowledgement of those distinctions, especially if they yield a counter-narrative to the

generally accepted one, as is the case in medieval al-Andalus and Seville. By examining the people, communities, and material culture of Seville during the reign of the early Castilian Kings (c. 1248-1369 CE), one such distinction is revealed. It is in this and other distinctions and contextual varieties running in opposition to monolithization that expressions of an Islamicate shared culture reside.

Moving forward, one of the keys to understanding an Islamicate history is the ability to see cultural interactions at work despite their seeming contradiction with the religious and political sensibilities of the players involved; this includes a crusader king building an arguably Muslim throne room, a Jewish minister adorning his synagogue with Arabic alongside Hebrew and decorating it in a style contemporary with a Christian King and a Muslim Sultan. And finally, a Christian King building an entire palace and private residence featuring Arabic inscriptions, including the motto of a sometimes rival Muslim polity, featuring Islamic references, and sharing numerous design elements and with the same Muslim polity. Arguably the only way for any of this to make practical sense is if these constructions and designs were the product of a shared culture that was separate and distinct from any associations with the religious or political affiliations that their outward appearance and content might suggest, especially to a modern eye.

One of the consequences of monolithization is the imagination of a medieval Iberia as an idyllic time in which the three confessional communities lived and thrived together. Meanwhile others have looked at medieval Iberia and seen a time of continual conflict, punctuated by pogroms, crusades, conquests, palace intrigue, and murder. The reality is that elements of both of these perspectives were present in medieval Iberia. What made the region and period unique was the high level of tolerance and cooperation between communities coexisting alongside equally prominent levels of conflict. What this examination will reveal is that conflict and
cooperation often took place in different segments of society – in some cases having political and religious conflict while simultaneously cooperating in the context of culture.

What enabled such a society to function was largely due to a phenomenon that could be described as cosmopolitanism. Ultimately, an Islamicate history is a cosmopolitan history, as are gestures toward the Ibero-centric phenomenon of *convivencia* and the descriptive concept of Mudéjar. This cosmopolitanism will be described and analyzed as the foundation of these other terms and because of its own long and varied history as a term and concept has its own issues that stray beyond the boundaries of this project. Because the discussion will focus on other terms specifically relevant to cosmopolitan manifestations in al-Andalus and Iberia, those will be the primary terms discussed. As a general definition however, *cosmopolitan* and *cosmopolitanism* refers to those ideas and institutions that allow for cooperation in the face of conflict, often resulting from pluralism and diversity within a society. The ability to cooperate and coexist in the face of conflict is the definition of medieval Iberia and al-Andalus and the environment which enabled the development of a shared culture that manifested in a cosmopolitan Islamicate history.

### 2.2 Convivencia

More than other terms, *convivencia* rises above in notoriety and importance, but also serves as a cautionary discussion of the problem of monolithization. Perhaps no other term is more intrinsically linked to medieval Iberia and al-Andalus than *convivencia*. Nearly every discussion of the history of Spain, or al-Andalus in particular, invokes the term in their discussion of either the Islamic or the early post-*Reconquista* period. Typically, *convivencia* is referenced in discussions of a medieval Iberia in which the three confessional communities, Muslims,
Christians, and Jews managed to coexist. Once *convivencia* as a descriptive term is deployed however, its definitions and applications begin to diverge, in some cases substantially.

*Convivencia*, or as it is most commonly translated, “coexistence” or “living together” has produced a plethora of discussions regarding its translation, its definition, and its application to medieval Iberia and medieval Iberian history. The term is most often used to describe and explain the curious case of a multicultural al-Andalus in which there was a coexistence of the three faiths, which might not otherwise have been able to coexist together due to a perceived (usually modern) belief that those three faiths were ultimately incompatible. Thus, the mere fact of their living together for an extended period of time and seeming to flourish is interesting to modern scholars and a frequent subject for analysis. Why *convivencia* is important to the discussion of Islamicate share culture rests in its role as a cosmopolitan institution. Without some form of cosmopolitanism, a shared culture could not have developed in the way that it had.

The term *convivencia*, was originally coined by Spanish historian Ramón Menéndez Pidal who used it as the Spanish word for “coexistence,” but not in a manner related to its most common usage. *Convivencia* as a term applied to relations in medieval al-Andalus, was ultimately developed by his student Américo Castro for a discussion about cultural interaction and Spanish history. Whereas Menéndez Pidal simply used the term to mean coexistence, what Castro meant in relation to culture and history is of particular interest as it has become the

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modern standard usage of the term. Castro, like Menéndez Pidal, equated cultural change with contact and interaction between cultures, but the nature of that contact and the environment in which it occurred differed for Castro. For one, Castro conceived of *convivencia* as being less competitive in nature than Menéndez Pidal, imagining a far more idealistic and conceptual model which may not have been representative of its lived experience. Castro also viewed *convivencia* through a teleological lens, per Glick,¹⁰ and for purposes of this project, also tended to view the three confessional communities with a degree of both fixity and monolithization. In his landmark text, *España en su Historia: Christianos, Moros y Judios* (translated as *The Spaniards* in English), Castro imagined Spain and the Spanish people as a product of extensive interaction between Muslims, Christians, and Jews over its long history. Castro has been frequently criticized for presenting an “idealized, romanticized, and idyllic” form of *convivencia*.¹¹ In contrast and opposition to Castro’s imagination of Spain, Claudio Sanchez Albornoz countered in *Espana: Un Enigma Historico* that “Spain” and the Spanish people were instead a product of conflict between arguably incompatible and non-cooperative entities.¹² Whereas the context of Castro’s *convivencia* is arguably too positive and broad, Albornoz’s presentation and interpretation of *convivencia* is certainly agonistic, but closer to antagonistic, leading Thomas Glick to link it to “antibiosis.”¹³ It is interesting that later discussions of *convivencia* and Islamic and Islamicate history in Spain tended to follow a similar Castro/Albornoz binary debate.

Moving from Menéndez Pidal, Castro, and Albornoz, most scholars conceive of *convivencia* in

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¹⁰ As in a goal-oriented and achievable state. Glick, *Convivencia*, 2.
¹¹ Ibid.
¹³ Antibiosis is a biological term used to describe an antagonistic and usually detrimental interaction between two or more organisms. Glick is taking the term from Albornoz’s own description. Glick, *Convivencia*, 7.
terms of “living together” – although how that conceptualization is interpreted has become contentious and challenging over time as well.

One of the difficulties with an interpretation of convivencia as “living together” or “coexistence” from an interpretive or analytical standpoint is that on their own, neither of these interpretations inherently leads to anything actionable or explanatory with regard to understanding the sociocultural context of convivencia in medieval al-Andalus. “Living together” or “coexisting” does not imply any necessary interaction between those living together or coexisting, nor does it convey the nature or tenor of that coexistence. However, it is precisely the context and spheres of interaction and the matrices of exchange that resulted from convivencia that needs to be explored. As Thomas Glick pointed out, “in Castro’s usage, convivencia became a catch-all mechanism used to explain all phenomena of cultural exchange contingent on the contact of cultures.”14 With such a broad-based understanding of convivencia, the possibility of contextual subtlety in its expression may be lost, and several intriguing analytical possibilities along with it.

Convivencia as an analytical term has two distinct challenges associated with it: the most prominent being its definition, but the more immediate being its translation. A common translator’s trope, “every translation is an interpretation,” would be particularly applicable here. Thus, how convivencia is translated can have a profound interpretive impact on how the concepts behind that term are understood, and how it manifested in an analysis of al-Andalus. Also at stake is the criteria for determining how, when, and under what conditions a state of convivencia would be achieved. As a Spanish term, the translation problems began almost immediately with Castro himself. As Glick pointed out, “Castro’s cultural terminology [namely convivencia],

14 Glick, Islamic Spain, 281.
which was not clearly defined in Spanish, became distorted in English. In *The Spaniards*, translated by Williard F. King and Selma Margarettten, *convivencia* was rendered as ‘living togetherness’.”¹⁵ The difficulty in this translation of *convivencia* is that “living togetherness” seems to suggest an overly rosy or largely positive state of coexistence; an orientation that would eventually pose perception and historical difficulties for Castro and others who interpreted *convivencia* in this way. On this point, as Thomas Glick noted, “recent historians of ethnic relations in medieval Spain have preferred the term ‘coexistence’, rather than *convivencia*.“¹⁶ That being said, the concept of *convivencia* as coexistence is likewise problematized by those who would read coexistence as “peaceful” coexistence or something similar – a sentiment that possibly motivated King and Margaretten in their translation of Castro.¹⁷

In *Communities of Violence*, David Niremberg instigated a necessary intervention into the consideration of *convivencia* as “peaceful” coexistence or the idea that living togetherness or tolerance implied only positive outcomes. This is an important contrast to Castro and Maria Rosa Menocal, author of *The Ornament of the World*, who tended to focus on either imaginary or “golden age” type of experiences.¹⁸ While Niremberg provided a necessary correction to the discussion about *convivencia*, he also described a cautionary example of the monolithization and hegemonic thinking common to this discussion. This Islamicate history of the Alcazar is exploring *convivencia* and Islamicate shared culture in Seville, primarily in the 14ᵗʰ century. While Niremberg operated in a similar time frame, his evidence is not the same. Much of his material evidence occurred outside of Castile-controlled al-Andalus and was instead set in places

¹⁵ Glick, *Convivencia*, n2, 8.
¹⁶ Glick, *Convivencia*, 2.
¹⁷ The “peaceful” aspect of coexistence vis-à-vis *convivencia* has been attributed to Castro’s interpretation by several authors including Mark Meyerson (Muslims of Valencia, 1) and Castro’s primary critic Claudio Sanchez Albornoz (in Novikoff, 23). It is also reasonable to include Maria Rosa Menocal who based her “culture of tolerance” in part on Castro’s interpretation of *convivencia*.
¹⁸ See Kenneth Baxter Wolf, “*Convivencia* and the Ornament of the World” in Revisiting *Convivencia*, 41-61.
like Aragon and France. In some of his cases, events that occurred in Spain took place after the
death of Pedro I of Castile in 1369 CE, which serves as a temporal bookend to the Islamicate
history being discussed. Again, while there may be corollaries to the situation in al-Andalus, the
particularities are different enough to be a separate consideration – i.e. what may have been the
case in France was not necessarily the case in Seville. In much the same way, as discussed
earlier, the Fourth Lateran Council dictates held sway in many areas in Europe with regard to the
minority Jewish population, but did not impact the Jewish population in Castile-controlled al-
Andalus to the same extent, or at all. Thus, while examples of Jewish persecution abound in the
same time frame and “general” area, they did not similarly impact al-Andalus – making a
hegemonic presentation of “Jewish” persecution or the “Jewish” experience “under the crown”
problematic and clearly reliant on which “crown” is under consideration and what “Jews” and in
what context. As will become evident, the mitigating factor might not have been about religion,
politics, or the law, but rather a shared culture present in Castilian-controlled al-Andalus that was
not present in other locations and municipalities.

One of the more cogent descriptions of convivencia came from Lucy Pick, who contended
that convivencia is a term “understood and used by historians [to] describe something far more
problematic and interesting than simple tolerance between different groups sharing the same
space.”19 She continued, “[convivencia] describes a cultural situation in which potential
cooperation and interdependence in economic, social, cultural, and intellectual spheres coexist
with the continual threat of conflict and violence.”20 What this description helps to illustrate is
the idea that convivencia is neither descriptive of an exclusivity of peace and tolerance nor is it
descriptive of a continuous state of violence and disharmony. Instead, convivencia describes a

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19 Pick, Conflict and Coexistence, 1.
20 Ibid.
scenario in which some form of cooperation existed amidst conflict – thereby making it a form of cosmopolitanism. As an expression of cosmopolitanism therefore, *convivencia* exists within a context of pluralism and diversity where multiple religions and multiple social, ethnic, cultural or other affiliations “coexist.” While “ethnic” is a loaded term, in this context it is merely meant to describe forms of familial, ethno-racial, location, or origin-based affiliations that are not specifically social, vocational, political, or religious in nature.

The Castro/Albornoz spectrum of approaching *convivencia*, like many other aspects of the discussion surrounding of *convivencia* has tended toward a monolithic and in some cases hegemonic outlook on the term and the society that it reflects. While Glick and other current thinkers on *convivencia* acknowledge the limitations in both Castro and Albornoz’s approaches, the reality is that *convivencia* is not in need of a more clarifying definition, but rather a re-imagination. Glick alludes to this re-imagination noting that *convivencia* as currently understood “carries connotations of mutual interpenetration and creative influence,” seemingly coexisting with “mutual friction, rivalry and suspicion.”  

Glick also referenced Mark Meyerson’s discussion of assimilation and integration, and like Glick’s own position with regard to acculturation, got closer to an actionable understanding of *convivencia*, but not necessarily a re-imagination. Being mindful of how minority groups and the dominant group interacted, and whether there was assimilation or integration, leaves open the question of what was being assimilated into or integrated. And again considering monolithization, Meyerson was discussing Valencia which was circumstantially different in enough ways to bother between the nature of

21 Glick, *Convivencia*, 1.
assimilation, integration, interpenetration, and influence in that context as opposed to what might have been occurring in Seville at the same time.

Alex Novikoff provided an overview of the discussion about convivencia and its manifestation among historians and scholars of medieval Spain in “Beyond Tolerance and Intolerance in Medieval Spain: An Historical Enigma.” In his article, Novikoff compared discussions by pairs of scholars from different time periods on the subject of tolerance and intolerance. Novikoff rightly concluded that “the ambiguous and largely undefined categories of tolerance and intolerance have proved to be of little help in explaining the complexities of a historical period that has received such diverse appraisals from historians and literary scholars.”

The final scholarly pairing in his discussion was Menocal and Niremberg who appeared on opposite sides of the tolerance/intolerance divide. As Novikoff pointed out, the presentation of medieval Spain from Menocal’s perspective differed remarkably from that of Niremberg, and rightly so. The problem of comparing these factors between scholars, and also between Américo Castro and Claudio Sanchez Albornoz and others, is that each pair was viewing tolerance and intolerance through different prisms. Once again the difficulty that arises is a result of monolithization. Tolerance and intolerance as monoliths are likely unusable as analytical categories in medieval Iberia due to the need for clarity and contextual separation and distinction between cultural, political, and religious categories. In this way Menocal may have been presenting a solid argument in favor of “tolerance” from the perspective of culture, while Niremberg also had a viable argument in favor of “intolerance” from the perspective of religion. In both cases however, the distinctiveness of each respective case is key and any monolithic

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24 Novikoff, “Beyond tolerance,” 34.
presentation of tolerance or intolerance would likely not apply in both cases or in other pairings of scholars. Also impacting the discussion are the geographical and temporal differences which only add to the cornucopia of categories that could not really be made sense of entirely through the lens of either tolerance or intolerance writ large.

In her introduction to *Revisiting Convivencia*, Connie Scarborough explained *convivencia* as a term used “to specifically denote cultural exchanges that occurred between Christians, Muslims, and Jews without any ethno-religious group assimilating the other but rather as a result of living in an integrated fashion that allowed for reciprocal influence.”\(^{25}\) While this presentation of the term mirrors the cosmopolitan context for *convivencia* as it will be used herein, her definition or application of *convivencia* is more useful because it is significantly more specific and nuanced than merely “coexistence” or “living together.” The wide range of definitions, interpretations, and applications of *convivencia* result from the fact that *convivencia* is, in the end, not a term that specifically needs a definition, but rather recognition that *convivencia* is merely a description of cosmopolitanism manifesting in a particular way at a particular time among a particular diverse and pluralistic group in Iberia. In each case, *convivencia* ultimately describes societies that are experiencing a cosmopolitan flourishing. And how that flourishing manifested is going to be determined by a host of factors which will differ from case to case, time to time, and place to place. Thus, any attempt to monolithicize *convivencia* is likely doomed to failure and ultimately moves away from, rather than toward, any descriptive or interpretive value associated with the term. Without understanding the context and particularities of each case of *convivencia*, it would be difficult to discern its value or its interpretation and whether it is in line with Menocal or Castro’s positive *convivencia*, Nirenberg

or Albornoz’s negative *convivencia* or a combination of those positions similar to that presented by Pick, Glick, and Scarborough.

One way to move *convivencia* from coexistence to cosmopolitanism is to re-examine its origins. By walking *convivencia* back to its Latin roots in the word *conviventia*,

26 it may provide a helpful way forward. According to Latdict

27 *conviventia*(conviventiae) is defined as “1. Cooperation and 2. Living and working together.”

28 This Latin root includes two additional perspectives that may provide that clarity – “working” and “cooperation.” As a general rule, “coexisting” does not require any particular interaction, whereas working and cooperating do. There is nothing peaceful or pleasant implicit in cooperation, but rather those ideas suggest an affiliation or coming together for a joint purpose or shared endeavor. Other translations related to the Latin origins of *convivencia* echo this interpretation. The Spanish word *Convivencia* is often associated with the Latin words *convivium*, *convivo* and *convivor* – all of which describe “living with,” which again feels somewhat more cooperative and intentional than simply living together. However, each of these terms also refers to “banquets,” “feasts,” and in the case of *convivor*, “to eat and drink in company.”

29 These references associated with the Latin roots of *convivencia* all point to an experience in which participants come together, not simply to coexist, but to engage cooperatively, which in each case involves some form of sharing, compromise, or accommodation to be successful. Thus, the cooperation and affiliation associated with the Latin roots of *convivencia*, may lead to a more effective understanding of the term, and especially its link the larger concept of cosmopolitanism. It is this understanding of *convivencia* as

26 Edward A. Roberts, A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Spanish Language (Xlibris), 422.

27 http://www.latin-dictionary.net/.


cosmopolitanism that will enable these terms to be utilized analytically in the broader Islamicate history being suggested.

Toward this interpretation Glick argued, “Convivencia under any kind of operational definition, must encompass the ability of persons of different ethnic groups to step out of their ethnically bound roles to interact on par with members of the competing group.”30 In other words, a matrix of exchange must exist in which members of these groups can interact with some parity despite their competing categories of identity. Glick went on to note that “the ability of medieval people to assume [non-ethnically bound social roles] was limited. Nonetheless one person can play multiple roles, some of which are more ethnically bound than others.”31 This interpretation and understanding opens the possibility for separate categories or roles in which a person might simultaneously hold one confessional identity while coexisting within a cultural identity that was shared – even among those who may be competing or in conflict on a religious level with other members of that cultural identity or affiliation. Glick and others, in their examination of minority groups in Iberia, however, continued to make these groups hegemonic – i.e. Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Spain rather than recognizing them separately as Castilian, Aragonian, or Valencian Christians and their respective minority populations. Doing so once again disallows the examination of these interactions within a smaller regional universe and thus eliminates the key regional and temporal distinctions that might have existed between these groups and their experiences.

In an effort to understand these regional particularities and distinctions it is essential to understand the categorical or identity-based differences between these groups and regions. First among these distinctions is the separate consideration of the categories of culture, religion, and

30 Glick, Convivencia, 4.
31 Ibid.
politics. Avoiding monolithization and accurately understanding medieval al-Andalus in context requires recognition that what might have occurred in the religious or political sphere may have been altogether different from what occurred in the cultural or social spheres. Further complicating these distinctions and their interpretation is the presence of religious and political rhetoric and its frequent contrast with social or cultural reality. In several cases language, rhetoric, and polemic may have been utilized for political, religious, or legal reasons with an eye toward public perception or the appeasement of outside interests like the Church. In a general example, what might be deemed Crusader rhetoric, reflective of the outward or projected desire to protect Iberia for Christianity by controlling or curtailing Muslims and Jews, abound in the contemporary laws, religion, and polemic literature. Based on the language of the laws, cortes, religious councils, and other public records, it is evident, at least outwardly, that the Christians and the Reconquista were tied to the ongoing Crusades taking place in Europe and the “Holy Land.” While the direct links between the Reconquista and the Crusades were tenuous, potentially symbolic, and possibly politically or economically motivated, there was clearly some interest in presenting the Reconquista and other military, legal, and religious activities in a Christianity-favorable light. What stands in contrast are the interactions with and support for the cultural/architectural/economic enterprises of the Muslims as early as the 11th century conquest of Toledo and to a larger extent with the Castilians beginning with Fernando III/Alfonso X and clearly continuing through the reigns of Alfonso XI and Pedro I. In spite of any imagined or real conflict between Christians, Muslims, and Jews during the Reconquista period along political and religious lines, it is evident that the cultural and economic interactions between these same groups were operating within a separate framework or sphere, both conceptually and actually.
Glick recognized the possible distinction or separation of the political/religious and cultural/economic spheres suggesting, “in both al-Andalus and Christian Spain the dominant caste wanted to isolate minorities religiously but not economically, creating an inevitable tension in intergroup relations. This tension, however, opened up avenues for cultural interchange by making the market a place where ethnic distinctions mattered less than in other walks of life.”

Here Glick was ultimately describing cosmopolitanism or its equivalent – i.e. a medium, “the market” that allowed for cooperation in the face of conflict. Inherent to this discussion is also the idea that there may have been distinct realities that existed outside the bounds of religion. In other words, there were likely religious realities that were “coexisting” with cultural, social, or political realities simultaneously. As Glick also noted with regard to Castro’s presentation of *convivencia*, “He [Castro] conveys no sense of the social dynamics of contact and conflict among the three groups…and he fails to understand that those processes are shaped by a social dynamic.”

Recognizing that *convivencia* manifested in multiple spheres also supports the separate consideration of those spheres for the purpose of analysis. As an example, in *Conflict and Coexistence*, Lucy Pick focused on Archbishop Rodrigo of Toledo and his seemingly paradoxical relationship with the Jews of Toledo. Because hers was an examination of relationships between confessional communities, the religious sphere was understandably privileged in her discussion. But the questions she asked about these religious relationships, combined with her seemingly cosmopolitan understanding of *convivencia* is illuminating. As she questioned, “why would seemingly “tolerant” to local Jews [Archbishop Rodrigo], write a polemical text against their religion? Why bother to have the Qur’an translated when your goal

32 Glick, *Convivencia*, 5.
33 Glick, *Convivencia*, 2.
is to place all of Spain under Christian rule?" Questions like these will occur repeatedly in the exploration of the Islamicate history of Seville and affect most rulers and populations accordingly. Indeed many aspects of this history does indeed appear paradoxical when viewed from different viewpoints – especially those that are monolithic or hegemonic in nature and/or viewed from a post facto position through the lens of crusade, inquisition, or expulsion. In this way, historical analysis often proceeds from these end points and is arguably reverse engineered to explain the ultimate outcome. Conversely, when religious, political, economic, or social spheres are considered separately and possibly independent of each other in context, then some of these paradoxes tend to dissipate. Case in point, as Chapter 4 will make clear, the political, religious, and rhetorical realities of leaders like Archbishop Rodrigo in Toledo sat alongside a cosmopolitan and Islamicate cultural interaction in places like the church of Cristo de la Luz that make assigning a religious or political interpretation to those cultural exchanges incredibly difficult to square.

One key distinction, and one that speaks directly to the issue of separate spheres is the concept of association – i.e. what individuals and groups were “associated” with different conceptual identities or spheres in medieval Iberia and al-Andalus. For example, was the Arabic language associated with the religion of Islam, Muslim political rule, or Arab culture? What constitutes the realm of culture and what constitutes the realms of religion or politics? And what identities, affiliations, and associations derive from or point to one or more of these categories? The answers to these questions is going to dramatically impact those spheres and the interactions that occur within them. Based on these distinctions, any “mis-association” can have challenging consequences for any potential interpretation.

34 Pick, Conflict and Coexistence, 7.
First and foremost among potential “mis-associations” is the privileging of religious identity. While it is certainly significant that the three confessional groups were able to coexist in the same space, the defining of these groups primarily by their religious affiliation creates a religion-first orientation which elides cultural and social affiliations which may have held equal influence. The religion-first perspective also presents the religious identity as the dominant identity, which may not have been the case. The secondary problem created is the idea that there were three distinctive religious communities that could be identified as such and given umbrella terms like Christian, Muslim, or Jewish and also possessed separate and distinct cultures, which were in turn somehow associated with their religious identity. The idea that cultural spaces that could be clearly and exclusively defined as Muslim, Christian, or Jewish is nearly impossible to imagine, based on the evidence – especially given the high amount of sharing that existed between these communities in the material cultural sphere. Any presumed exclusivity or distinctiveness between entities largely eliminates the possibility of a shared culture that was not only evident members of the three confessional groups but was collectively participated in and arguably built together. Likely at no point after the Muslims had established themselves in Iberia did the minority Jewish population exist as a separate and distinct cultural or social entity, but rather was a willing participant in a shared culture that grew from the interaction of these two groups. Just as whatever might be considered “Muslim” culture was likely itself a product of Arab, Persian, and even Byzantine elements, not to mention local influences upon their arrival in al-Andalus. Much in the same way, “Jewish” culture in Iberia, was comprised of Roman, earlier Jewish, and Visigothic/Germanic influences. Thus, it was not a case of one distinct thing meeting with another distinct thing and blending together, but rather was a case of one combination of elements joining another combination of elements and together creating the
foundation for something entirely new. As Glick noted, “Any notion that borrowing across cultural boundaries is merely superficial is wishful thinking. The image of a sealed pristine, pure and uncontaminated culture that ethnic groups typically ascribe to themselves is contrary not only to all the evidence but everyday experience. There are no cultural isolates, not in remote jungles, and much less in the cosmopolitan towns of Medieval Spain.”35 Thus, it is incumbent on scholars analyzing this material to locate and examine the cultural sphere and the possibility of a shared cosmopolitan space that existed independently from the religious or political spheres in which a cooperative and interactive culture could have flourished. It is this cooperative and interactive space and the culture that derived from it that is described as “Islamicate.”

2.3 Islamicate

An Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville is the culmination of this project. And while exploring that Islamicate history will ultimately involve unpacking a cosmopolitan history and shared culture, the specific descriptive term used to reflect this culture and history is “Islamicate.” In general, terms “Islamicate” and an “Islamicate history” are both references to a specific flourishing of a cosmopolitan culture as it occurred in al-Andalus. An Islamicate history is in part a cultural history, but its close association with cosmopolitanism and convivencia make it something more than that. Put simply, an Islamicate history examines the history of Islamicate culture that occurred in and around a particular place, material, or other cultural expression over a designated period of time. In this case, the Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville will explore manifestations of Islamicate culture in and related to that building complex to describe its larger cultural/historical context. “Islamicate” will also be used to describe specific material and architecture associated with the shared culture which evolved in and around Seville and

35 Glick, Convivencia, 2.
greater al-Andalus following the Christian conquest of the region in the 13th-14th century. This shared culture that occurred specifically in al-Andalus will be later described as “Mudéjar.” This particular exploration of Islamicate history in al-Andalus will occur across the next several chapters, but understanding “Islamicate” as a conceptual term is key to that exploration and must be engaged beforehand.

The term of “Islamicate” was coined by historian Marshall Hodgson and by his definition refers “not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims.”36 One of the challenges in using a term like “Islamicate” is its relative obscurity and lack of wide adoption by scholars. There is a certain inherent understanding of “Islamicate” based on the components of the name, but wider hermeneutical usage has not occurred with enough regularity for the term to be recognized and understood en todo conceptually by the larger body of scholars. Part of the difficulty in establishing any widespread cognizance of something deemed “Islamicate” lies in the general misunderstanding of the term. Like convivencia and subsequently Mudéjar, “Islamicate” is an expression or manifestation of cosmopolitanism. In this case, the term reflects a shared culture and arguably a shared cultural identity for Andalusis, regardless of their political or religious affiliations. To a large extent, describing something as “Islamicate” is essentially describing something as cosmopolitan – in this regard, describing a cosmopolitanism that on some level incorporated a culture associated with Islam, where Islam is or had been dominant politically, religiously, or otherwise. The specificity provided by the term Islamicate, therefore, is meant to evoke a cosmopolitan flourishing that has associations with Islam rather than one that does not. Thus, cosmopolitanism

can and has existed outside of any association with Islam, but “Islamicate” is the cosmopolitanism that includes it. As will be discussed later, some have used “Islamicate” to describe a cosmopolitanism among diverse Muslim communities typically to define something Muslim, but not specifically Arab, but this application has further added to the confusion with the term. What distinguishes the term Islamicate from Islam or Islamic is its specific separation from religion. In this way, aspects of culture can be Islamicate even if they do not possess an explicit association with the religion of Islam (as will be the case with Mudéjar architecture and material culture). This being said, there is no expression of Islamicate that is divorced from the sphere of culture, so culture is the key to understanding the term and any subsequent applications of it.

With this in mind, “Islamicate” describes the cultural by-products of a pluralistic and diverse society that incorporates elements from a predominantly Islamic society with cultural elements of minority populations that exist in a broader cosmopolitan matrix. From this collusion of cultures two things must remain relatively constant. First, the cultural aspect of the Islamicate culture must be perceived as separate from contemporary associations with religion or politics and second, the cultural amalgam described as Islamicate must be discernible to those who might choose to participate in it. Both of these aspects of Islamicate culture thereby allow it to be participated in or affiliated with by social members across other religious, political, or cultural spectrums. And due to its non-attachment to any particular political, cultural, or religious group, “Islamicate” culture could survive and continue beyond its initial context of a multicultural Islamic rule to, at least initially, a multicultural Christian-Spanish rule, particularly as found among the early Castilians in al-Andalus.
One of the difficulties in using a descriptor with limited understanding and an unclear definition is that it may be used in ways that muddy the waters and inhibit the ultimate value of the term. Unfortunately, this is a fate that has befallen “Islamicate.” The term has received the widest and most prominent use among Art Historians, many of whom essentially captured the cultural and potentially cosmopolitan aspects of the term as it will be used in this project. From a historical perspective, and one that has been a theoretical and methodological challenge between the fields of history and art history, is the focus by art history predominantly on the art and less so on the broader historical and sociocultural context, placing many situated objects of material culture (like architecture) outside of their contextual environment. Historians, conversely, when they have used “Islamicate” at all, have often laid aside the cultural associations that Hodgson intended and in some cases have used the term as an alternate for “Islamic” in an effort to mitigate the religious primacy of that term, but still utilizing “Islamicate” to refer to existing or historical Islamic communities (esp. the Ottoman Empire) as a differentiator from the West – i.e. The Western World vs. the Islamicate World. For example, in his review of the works of three Muslim historians of religion, Judaic Studies scholar Steven Wasserstrom titled his combined review, “Islamicate History of Religion?” Wasserstrom discusses the contribution of these Muslim historians of religion as part of the larger history of religion field, using the term “Islamicate” to designate scholars from the Islamic world rather than scholars from the “western” tradition. In this case, “Islamicate” was used as a classification denoting “not western,” but still largely synonymous with Islamic. In another example,

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37 This concern will be revisited in the discussion related to the “theory of styles” commentary on the term “Mudéjar” highlighted by Art Historian J.C. Ruiz Souza.

38 This usage of Islamicate echoes Hodgson’s own attempt to create a contrasting term pitting his neologism “Islamdom” against the western term “Christendom.” Hodgson, Venture of Islam, 57-60.

39 The use of the term “Islamicate History” is likewise problematic as it will in no way mirror the application of this term in this dissertation. Wasserstrom, Steven M. “Islamicate History of Religions?” History of Religions 27, no. 4 (1988): 405-11.
Architect Noha Nasser in an article on historic cities of the Islamicate world, limited Hodgson’s definition of the term to “the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and Muslims.” By excerpting the definition in a way that removes the non-religion and the non-Muslim components of Hodgson’s definition, it is difficult to read or understand in any way other than as a synonym for “Islamic.”

While “Islamicate” in the broadest sense is always associated with culture, its use is not always clearly applied in that context and has sometimes been deployed for political reasons as well. One such instance is when “Islamicate” is used in opposition to Orientalism or Orientalist thought. Nasser likewise utilized “Islamicate” in this context pitting the term against a typical Orientalist categorization of Islamic cities or urban environments, but also as an inclusive term intended to describe the multicultural (in this case not exclusively Arab) composition of the larger Islamic (or Islamicate) world. More recently D. Fairchild Ruggles and others in the Art History field have used “Islamicate” to describe material culture in al-Andalus, which they see as having developed in a multicultural and descriptively cosmopolitan hybrid culture in which Islam has been a participant. This is largely the specific context in which the term will be used in this project

Where “Islamicate” serves in the manner most in line with Hodgson’s intent, and most closely resembles the application of the term used in this project, comes from the field of Religious Studies, where scholars like Bruce Lawrence have employed the appellation

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successfully including its inherent cultural and cosmopolitan orientation. In their edited volume, *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia*, David Gilmartin and Bruce Lawrence utilize “Islamicate” as a cultural descriptor for the shared experience of Hindus and Muslims in South Asia. They specifically chose “Islamicate” for their discussion about religious identity and culture due to the common belief in Islam and Hinduism as “competitive and irreconcilable [religious worldviews]” By viewing societal diversity and pluralism through the lens of shared experience and culture they were able to decentralize religion as the primary interactive focus. They further noted that those who held this religious-primary orientation may have “overweighted differences in belief as determinative of all other patterns of exchange between Muslims and Hindus.” They also warned that a religion-first view tends to see “every instance of Muslim political rule or military victory or architectural creation as evidence of a long struggle between fixed Muslim and Hindu groups.” It seems clear that Gilmartin and Lawrence observed the same situation occurring in perceptions and interpretations of a cosmopolitan South Asia between Muslims and Hindus that will be highlighted in medieval al-Andalus with Christians, Muslims, and Jews - including the problematic aspects of identity and its association with shared culture and subsequent architecture and material culture.

On some level, “Islamicate” may simply be the more broad term used to describe cosmopolitanism in social and material culture that appears in an Islamic-affiliated or relational

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43 Lawrence has also explored instances of Muslim cosmopolitanism in his work with Islamicate South Asia. See “Muslim Cosmopolitanism,” *Critical Muslim* No. 2 2011, 18-38 and “Rethinking Muslim Cosmopolitanism: Civilizational Moorings/Cosmopolitan Options,” Plenary address from the British Association of Islamic Studies (BRAIS), April 10, 2014.


45 Gilmartin and Lawrence *Turk and Hindu*, 1.

46 This is not dissimilar to the presentation of Islamicate material in al-Andalus by Christians as an inverted expression of victory that will be discussed in Chapter 3. Gilmartin and Lawrence *Turk and Hindu*, 3.
context. As these “Islamicate” occurrences would not be limited to al-Andalus but could occur in any multicultural context in which Islam has been or is currently involved (which is exactly the case of Muslims and Hindus described by Gilmartin and Lawrence), further terminological distinction for Islamicate material culture as it occurs in al-Andalus are necessary. Thus, for al-Andalus, the term which best describes this specific case is “Mudéjar.”

2.4 Mudéjar

“Mudéjar,” as it will be used in this exploration, is a subcategory of Islamicate and refers to the specific expression of cosmopolitan Islamicate culture (primarily in architecture and other material) that occurred in al-Andalus. While designs and styles deemed Mudéjar will eventually spread beyond the boundaries of al-Andalus, even as far as the New World, what exactly constitutes a Mudéjar design or the Mudéjar style is subject to question and also a source of confusion and consternation for many wishing to discuss this cultural expression and its associated material. The largest challenge associated with the term “Mudéjar” is its own historiography. Whereas “Islamicate” exists as a term with a limited and unclear history, “Mudéjar” does not. The term is older than “Islamicate,” but as a result has also had more time to attract wider and varied definitions and applications which make its history as a term complicated and difficult to utilize without serious and careful consideration. The application of the term “Mudéjar” has neither been consistent nor reflective over time, and is further complicated given that it was not a term used descriptively in an architectural or art historical context contemporarily in medieval al-Andalus at all.

“Mudéjar,” as a descriptor for architecture or design, was first used by José Amador de los Ríos in his 1859 inaugural speech following his entry into the Real Academia de las Tres Nobles
“Mudéjar” therefore is a comparatively modern term that has come to describe as Art Historian Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza notes, any design which “[has] a perceived ‘Islamic influence’,” or more simply “look[s] Islamic.” The application or use of the term “Mudéjar” has been viewed with some skepticism by scholars like Ruiz Souza and Cynthia Robinson who, among others, are concerned that the term is too loosely or indiscriminately applied – especially to visual culture that appears later (primarily in the 15th century and beyond), or has a very weak connection to a wide variety of Mudéjar elements.

One reason Ruiz Souza wanted to problematize the term Mudéjar was due to its frequently misleading and misapplied nature, or as part of what he refers to as the “theory of styles” approach to examining medieval Iberian material. Ruiz Souza believed that scholars often mischaracterized things using the Mudéjar label assuming that it held some universally descriptive value, when arguably it does not – especially considering that the term has often been used to denote almost anything that is believed to have or express an “Islamic influence” of some sort. As he stated, “the appearance of a single Muslim name among a list of artisans, the presence of a single decorative element traditionally associated with the memory of al-Andalus, or the use of wood, adobe, stucco, or brick is enough for a building to be labeled definitively as Mudéjar.” Ruiz Souza continued, “many specialists, particularly archaeologists, employ the term [Mudéjar] in a

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47 The term first appears in the title of his presentation, “El estilo mudéjar en la arquitectura.”
49 Ruiz Souza suggests that the name of a single Muslim craftsman or use of wood or stucco has been enough to earn the label Mudéjar in some cases – Ruiz Souza, “Architectural Languages,” 361.
50 The “theory of styles” approach is one often applied by Art Historians and largely consists of examining material culture, architecture in particular, and discussing it comparatively based on its perceived style of design. In this way, it creates a categorization of material culture based on its perceived “style” of design. However, once that material is ascribed to that “style” it typically ceases to be examined for distinctions or differences. Ruiz Souza, “Architectural Languages,” 361.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
temporal sense, simply to differentiate the period of Muslim hegemony in a particular region from a moment immediately following the Christian conquest when that region becomes Mudéjar.”

What Ruiz Souza was concerned with, especially considering his problematizing of the “theory of styles,” was that the use of “Mudéjar” as a descriptive term created a bounded category – suggesting that a thing was Mudéjar either stylistically or temporally in comparison to something that was not. In this way, Mudéjar would fall into similarly distinct categories like Islamic or Gothic, which also tended to situate architectural expressions in religious and politically associated contexts. More troubling is that a descriptive term like “Mudéjar,” which is bounded both as an expression and time, begs the question of when a thing ceased to be one expression, like Islamic, and began to become Mudéjar. Further complicating matters, the term “Mudéjar” has at least two definitions. The first being a sociocultural category used to describe Muslims living under Christian rule (as in post-Reconquista al-Andalus and Seville) but also the term later adopted by Amador de los Ríos to describe a particular style of art and architecture. This later definition exacerbated the problem of the term Mudéjar due to its tacit support for the assumption that designs labelled Mudéjar were the work or conception of the Muslims living under Christian rule. And while this was certainly the case in many instances, it elides, by the same assumption, any participation or use of the Mudéjar style by non-Mudéjars (i.e. something Islamicate). As Ruiz Souza pointed out, just as the presence of one Muslim artisan’s name does not equate the presence of a Mudéjar design, nor does the lack of a Muslim patron or artisan exclude it.

As with any definition or categorization, the boundaries of the term often obscure

54 In some cases artisans of Muslim descent who converted to Christianity after staying would be termed Moriscos, but with the real possibility that some Moriscos were also “Mudéjar” artisans, it clouds the clarity of Mudéjar in the theory of styles even further. See Ruiz Souza, “Architectural Languages” and L. P. Harvey, Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
key understandings which could be far more descriptive or illuminative. While these difficulties
do not induce a need to abandon the term Mudéjar, it does require some clear definition as to its
use. As this dissertation will argue, the term more accurately refers to a cultural expression and
is descriptive of a cultural engagement and application that is a specifically an Andalusi
manifestation of “Islamicate.”

The term itself is no less complicated than its definition. “Mudéjar” was a largely created
word.\textsuperscript{55} Most scholars agree that the term was a Spanish adoption of the Arabic term mudajjan,
which historian L.P. Harvey suggested derived from an Arabic phrase ahl al-dajn ("people who
stayed") with mudajjan having a roughly equivalent meaning.\textsuperscript{56} Harvey also indicated that there
are some translations or permutations of mudajjan that suggest it is related to Arabic cognates
mudajin and dawajin which indicate concepts of “domestication” or “taming” which would have
a far more pejorative connotation than simply describing those who stayed after the Christian
conquest.\textsuperscript{57} Harvey further suggested that this understanding of mudajjan likely derived from
other Muslims negatively referring to those who stayed behind.\textsuperscript{58} It is likely, in the context of al-
Andalus, that a religious and political distinction would result in terms like Mudéjar in the same
way that terms like Mozarab (Christians living under Muslim rule) or Morisco (Christians who
converted to Islam) emerged during the Islamic period. Thus, a “Muslim” (or the equivalent)
would refer to someone of that faith and political affiliation that was not a subject of the
Christian ruler, whereas a “Mudéjar” would be a Muslim who was a political subject of the
Christian ruler – in this way, clear religious and political distinctions were made, something that
would have been important regardless of whatever cultural associations the term Mudéjar would

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} See Harvey, \textit{Islamic Spain}, 2–4.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Harvey, \textit{Islamic Spain}, 4.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
later include. It is the later inclusion of a cultural association, however, that is the definitional problem. If Mudéjar art and design are automatically associated with the religio-political definition of Mudéjar and its description of Muslims living under Christian rule, then assessing its value as a cultural descriptor and any attending shared cultural implications becomes problematic. If instead, the use of “Mudéjar” as an art historical term is understood to be an unfortunate appellation that bred religio-political assumptions about the nature and origin of material culture, then it clears the way for a re-imagination of the term. Thus, “Mudéjar” could be interpreted and understood in the art historical sense as describing an expression of Islamicate culture that is no more limited to Muslims living under Christian rule than it was to any other group living in a cosmopolitan al-Andalus both before and after the Christian conquest. In this way, “Mudéjar” can be used to describe the Islamicate shared culture present in al-Andalus that counted Muslims, Christians, and Jews among its artisans and patrons regardless of their religious or political affiliations.

It is also important to recognize that even though there was evidence of patron choice and a shared visual language present among the material and architecture described with this term, “Mudéjar,” as a descriptor of the aesthetic was applied by modern art historians. Likely at no point did patrons think that they were choosing a design style associated with Muslims or the former Islamic polities in Iberia, but rather were choosing a style common to their home and region of al-Andalus. If, as this dissertation will argue, the visual language and aesthetic was shared across borders and intellectual, political, social, and religious boundaries it can only have existed conceptually as a shared, but otherwise unaffiliated style.

Armed with an understanding of cosmopolitanism and its manifestation in *convivencia* and specific expressions like Islamicate and Mudéjar this interpretive framework can be put to use in
analyzing specific cases in al-Andalus with an eye toward revealing a shared Islamicate culture which existed separately from the political or religious affiliations with the Muslim religion or rule. To begin this exploration, a journey to the Alcazar of Seville and an examination of a descriptively Mudéjar construction that has been a focus of ongoing debate will be illuminative.


3 A STRANGE TRIUMPH

On the morning of October 30, 1340 CE, Alfonso XI (r. 1313-1350 CE) of Castile-Leon engaged Marinid Sultan Abu ‘l Hasan of Morocco (r.1331-1348 CE) and Nasrid Sultan Yusuf I of Granada (r. 1333-1354 CE) at the battle of Rio Salado, northwest of Tarifa in southern Spain (al-Andalus). The battle was part of the ongoing Reconquista of Spain by the Christians.\textsuperscript{59} The campaign against the Marinid Berber Dynasty of Morocco and other Muslims in al-Andalus, were also part of a larger “Crusade” ultimately sanctioned by the Pope [Benedict XII] and joined by Crusader knights as well as the king of Portugal, Alfonso IV.\textsuperscript{60} During the battle, cries of “Santiago and Castile” were used by Alfonso XI to rally his troops during a particularly treacherous advance.\textsuperscript{61} This cry was likely meant to reference either the prominent relic and pilgrimage site of Santiago de Compostela or the sack of the shrine of the same name by Muslims under Al Mansur in the 10\textsuperscript{th} century, both symbols present in the crusader/Reconquista sentimental imagination.

Upon securing victory and routing the Marinid and Nasrid (Granadan) forces, Alfonso returned home in triumph carrying spoils of his victory, including one of the original Uthmani Qur’ans, several banners, and a complement of prisoners, including the Marinid Emir’s son.\textsuperscript{62}

News of the victory was sent to the Pope along with a request for additional funds to carry on the

\textsuperscript{59} The term “Reconquista” has been problematized by several scholars and has an unclear meaning and usage. The term itself has been continually evolving since at least the late 9\textsuperscript{th} century and has been associated with a rhetorical or imagined history as opposed to a factual reflection. In this project, “Reconquista” will refer to the concepts of reconquest and continuity with earlier rule in Iberia as they appear in the collective memory or collective imagination of the Christian Spanish. See Joseph O’Callaghan, Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 1-22; Hamza Yusuf, “900 Years: Reviving the Spirit of Al-Andalus,” Lecture Reviving the Islamic Spirit Conference, Toronto, December, 2005; Xenia Bonch-Bruevich, “Ideologies of the Spanish Reconquest and Isidore’s Political Thought,” Mediterranean Studies 17, no. 1 (2008): 27-45.

\textsuperscript{60} Joseph O’Callaghan, A History of Medieval Spain (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 413.


\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 184-85.
Crusade to reclaim Algeciras (captured in 1344 CE) and ultimately Gibraltar and control of the Strait.⁶³

Sometime after returning to Seville, Alfonso XI commissioned the construction of a throne room and salon, ostensibly to commemorate his victory at Rio Salado within his palace complex, the Alcazar in Seville – this was the result:

*Figure 2: The Sala de la Justicia*

The *Sala de la Justicia* (Hall of Justice) served as a monument commemorating Alfonso’s victory over the Muslims as part of the larger *Reconquista* and Crusade. The relationship between the victory at Rio Salado, the construction of the *Sala*, and the ongoing Crusade to reclaim Gibraltar and the Strait seems clear. The timing of the construction as well as the

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⁶³ Gibraltar was not successfully conquered by the Spanish until the mid-15th century. See O’Callaghan, *Gibraltar Crusade*.
inclusion of symbols of Castile and León and the crest of Alfonso’s military order La Banda suggest a direct connection between the construction of this room and his victories in the south.

Figure 3: Ceiling detail, Sala de la Justicia

Apart from the royal and military symbols, the entire salon was appointed and designed in the Mudéjar style, a style comprised of seemingly Islamic forms. The Sala was built on the Islamic gubba (mausoleum) model, including arches, stucco ataurique scrollwork, a wooden lattice ceiling.\(^{66}\) and joined by a number of Arabic inscriptions, including “Allah is the refuge,” “Bliss,” “Happiness,” “Continued Prosperity,” “Praise to Allah for his Benefits” and the running inscription “Praise exalt the noble Lord of this incomparable house.”\(^{67}\) The construction of this throne room where Alfonso would ultimately receive visitors, publicly rule, and stand as his most prominent palatial construction in the Mudéjar style - a style still in use by the remaining

\(^{65}\) The symbols of Castile and Leon and La Banda repeat in the lower band of the upper register. Courtesy of Viajes Al Alcance http://viajesalalcancedetodos.es/2014/11/28/el-real-alcazar-de-sevilla/.


\(^{67}\) Translated from the Spanish in Rodrigo Amador De Los Rios, Inscripciones Árabes de Sevilla (Madrid: T. Fortanet, 1875), 210-214.
Muslim stronghold in Granada seems a particularly odd choice – especially against the backdrop of the _Reconquista_ and the Crusades.

The paradox of Alfonso XI’s construction of the _Sala de la Justicia_ involves the rationale behind a Christian Crusader-King commissioning and constructing his throne room in a clearly Islamicate style which, after the fact, has been termed Mudéjar. The difficulty associated with this Mudéjar construction involves the timing of its construction (following the victory at Rio Salado), the product and purpose of the construction (the King’s throne room), the public message a throne room in this particular style and decoration might convey, and the King’s role in the Crusades/Reconquista including his relationship to the Pope and the Catholic Church – all of which complicate any easy explanation for the design and construction of this particular room with this particular purpose in this particular context. Art Historian D. Fairchild Ruggles would pose a critical interpretive question in her own analysis of the _Sala de la Justicia_ asking “why would a Christian King choose an Islamicate Mudéjar style for [an] expression of self,” an expression of self that she noted “contained him, mirrored him, and served as the physical extension of his body and his identity?”\(^{68}\) The short answer proposed here is that he would not. Explaining why he would not and re-contextualizing the _Sala de la Justicia_ in a way that makes sense of the Mudéjar design while still reflecting a victorious ruler who is involved in _Reconquista_ and Crusade has bothered scholars for some time. By reimagining the _Sala de la Justicia_ as a product of a shared culture that existed in al-Andalus between the three confessional communities of Christians, Muslims, and Jews and understanding the _Sala_ within its contemporary, traditional, and historical milieu, an interpretation of Alfonso XI’s throne room that better reflects that ruler’s social, political and cultural context can be gleaned.

Relatively little interpretive work has been done on the Alcazar of Seville or the *Sala de la Justicia*. The most prominent rationale for Alfonso XI’s construction in the existing literature is triumphalism – clearly referencing the King’s victory at Rio Salado. While the construction is certainly meant to commemorate Alfonso’s triumph, the ensuing interpretation is heavily complicated by a host of conflicting contemporary and modern definitions and understandings. The nature of the triumphalism proposed for Alfonso XI and the *Sala de la Justicia* by some scholars is largely based on expressions of identity that may be anachronistic, chief among them interpretations related to concepts of *Reconquista* and Crusade. The exploration of these two ideas and their potential influence on Alfonso and the larger religious, socio-cultural, and political environments in which the *Sala de la Justicia* would exist are critical and go beyond the form of “triumphalism” proposed by scholars. Modern conceptions of identity and the subsequent identity-based interpretations of the *Reconquista* and Crusades are not adequate to examine these concepts, their influence, and their interpretive value. These interpretations tend to place too much emphasis on religious difference, conflict, and identity which can occlude alternative interpretations.

### 3.1 *Reconquista* and Crusade

One of the keys to understanding and eventually interpreting the predominance of Mudéjar design in the *Sala de la Justicia* is Alfonso XI’s association with the so-called *Reconquista* and the Crusades. How his association with these two conceptual ideas and events is understood will greatly influence the interpretation of the *Sala* and any affiliation that its design may have had with any contemporary political and religious context. There were a number of actual and metaphorical conflicts transpiring during the period influencing the *Sala*’s construction beginning with the Christian expansion from the Kingdom of Asturias in the eighth century to
the mid-14th century. The reality and rhetoric surrounding these conflicts likely influenced Alfonso, but may not have done so in an expected or arguably identity-based “modern” way.\(^6^9\)

How these conceptual conflicts affected Alfonso’s decision making vis-à-vis the Sala de la Justicia depend largely on how they were imagined by him and his contemporaries. As it stands, both “Reconquista” and “Crusade” are nebulous terms that have a long history of debate over their meaning and conceptual reality, but both concepts, regardless of any associated rhetoric, ultimately reflect and represent a struggle between Christians and Muslims over territorial control.

The Crusades are often understood as a series of conflicts between several European monarchies and various Muslim-led armies over control of the Holy Land and, in particular, the city of Jerusalem.\(^7^0\) For the monarchs of Iberia, however, the activities in the Holy Land were far less immediate than the “Muslim” threat within their own borders. The conflict between the northern Christian Spanish and the Muslims in al-Andalus had been ongoing for more than two centuries before Pope Urban II’s speech at Clermont in 1095 CE, the seminal event that is considered to be the call and justification for war that led to the First Crusade and the capture of the city of Jerusalem c. 1099 CE. For the Christians of Spain, the military activities within their territory were often imagined as a Reconquista. The context of this reconquest, and the consideration of territory that needed to be “re-conquered,” relied on a perceived connection between the current Christian rulers in Asturias and the Visigoths who had previously held power in Iberia prior to the Muslim invasion following the raid by Tariq ibn Ziyad in 711 CE.

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\(^6^9\) This is meant to counter “modern” identity-based conceptions of Reconquista or Crusade that echo a monolithicized Christianity vs. Islam or other version of the “clash of civilizations” orientation. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster hardcover ed (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011).

\(^7^0\) The “Holy Land” is typically considered to be the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding territory, but due to various crusader activities also came to include large portions of the Levant.
Thus, the *Reconquista* was meant to restore the Visigothic kingdom to its rightful inheritors, the kingdom of Asturias.\(^71\) As such, for Alfonso XI and the Christian Spanish, the Crusades and what came to be known as the *Reconquista* were initially two separate events, with one occurring in the Levant (the Crusades) and one occurring on the Iberian Peninsula (the *Reconquista*). Once the last Crusader kingdom in the Holy Land fell c. 1291 CE and the papal schism which sent the Pope to Avignon from 1309 to 1377\(^72\) had occurred, the Crusades and crusaders would turn their attention to Spain where the concept and understanding of the Crusades and the *Reconquista* took on new significance. It is at this stage that the two events became mixed and the distinction between Crusade and reconquest became muddy. The reality is that any activity could be classified as either Crusade or reconquest depending on the perspective and intent of the participants. For example, a crusader knight fighting alongside Alfonso XI could believe they were part of a Crusade, as would the Pope who provided financing and indulgences for the battle or campaign. At the same time, Alfonso and his Spanish contemporaries may have believed that they were engaged in a continuation of the *Reconquista* but were happy to call it a Crusade in exchange for soldiers and funding. Determining which activities constituted Crusade and which constituted reconquest may have been a matter of practicality more than anything else, especially where financing and military and political support were concerned. Where this distinction between *Reconquista* and Crusade takes on special significance is in its possible effect on the design of the *Sala de la Justicia* and any subsequent interpretation of that construction. If

\(^71\) The connection between Asturias and the Visigoths is arguably imaginary, but the claim and any attendant activities associated with it were very real. See Xenia Bonch-Bruevich, “Ideologies of the Spanish Reconquest and Isidore’s Political Thought.” *Mediterranean Studies* 17 (January 1, 2008): 27–45.

\(^72\) The Avignon Papacy, 1309-1377 involved the relocation of the Papacy from Rome to Avignon (now in France) beginning with Pope Clement V and concluding with Pope Gregory XI who returned the papacy to Rome, but which also coincided with the so-called Western Schism in 1378 and created a conflict within the Catholic church among different factions and papal claimants that lasted until 1417. The Iberians largely supported the Avignon popes and their leadership of the Church covered the majority of the reigns of both Alfonso XI and Pedro I. See Peter Linehan, *The Spanish Church and the Papacy in the Thirteenth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
Alfonso XI believed he was fighting a holy crusade on behalf of Christianity or the Church and was commemorating a victory over the enemies of Christendom, an interpretation of the dominant presence of Mudéjar designs, Arabic inscriptions, and a complete lack of Christian symbols in the Sala is critical and highly problematic. If on the other hand, Alfonso was celebrating a victory of conquest and reclamation against a territorial rival, then a greater meaning of the Mudéjar designs and the symbols of La Banda and Castile-Leon heraldry that are not specifically religious would make much more sense.

There is some evidence to suggest the latter interpretation, based not only on the design of the Sala de la Justicia itself, but also the discussion of Alfonso XI in the 14th century chronicles of his reign. While Reconquista and Crusade were a large part of the conceptual back story of Alfonso XI and the Sala, the terms and concepts do not appear to have been in widespread use at the time. They belong within the province of historians, not necessarily chroniclers. It may be that Alfonso was operating within the conceptual framework of Reconquista or Crusade depending on his audience, but these appear to have been largely practical considerations rather than ideological positions. In the Crónica de D. Alfonso el Onceno for example, the term “Reconquista” does not appear. As Historian Teofilo Ruiz noted, conflicts like the Reconquista were often characterized as “ida contra los Moros.” Indeed most of the activities discussed in the Crónica de Alfonso el Onceno were described as “contra los Moros” or simply as “conquista.” This interpretation of Alfonso’s military activities will go a long way toward presenting the Sala de la Justicia as a commemorative construction similar to a Roman Triumph

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73 Juan Núñez de Villaizan, Cronica de D. Alfonso el Onceno de este nombre, de los reyes que raynaron en Castilla y en Leon. 2. ed. conforme a un antiguo Ms. de la Real Biblioteca del Escorial, y otro de la Mayansiana: e ilustrada con appendices y varios documentos (Madrid Impr. de A. de Sancha, 1787), http://archive.org/details/cronicadedalfons00n.
rather than the “triumphalism” interpretation offered by some scholars, which was ultimately influenced by modern post-colonial and anti-orientalist thinking rather than a contextually appropriate and situated construction. And, while Alfonso clearly utilized the rhetoric and justification associated with the *Reconquista* or Crusades, it may have been for practical purposes more than ideology, especially in light of the *Sala* and its Islamicate design.

The association between the Crusades and religion is clear, even if that association was not always the focus of all of its participants. Crusades Historian Thomas Asbridge noted, “the Latins’ southward expansion [following the capture of Toledo in 1085 CE] seems to have been driven by political and economic stimuli and not religious ideology.”\(^75\) That the religious aspects of the Crusades played a dominant rhetorical role, however, is not in doubt and was present in each related papal request for war, even if a portion of the Crusaders responding to requests for aid heard “gold” and stopped listening after that. The symbolic and rhetorical context of the Crusades and its associations with holy war and apocalypse were clearly understood, however the same could not be said for the concept of *Reconquista* and what symbolic or rhetorical elements were at work in any of its associated activities.

The concept of *Reconquista* is as much about an early modern (emerging) Spanish identity as it is anything else – and perhaps more so if the concept of reconquest is little more than a trope or mythic history that imagined a restoration of the Visigothic lands by their Christian Spanish descendants. “The notion of continuity existing between the new kingdom of Asturias and the old Visigothic kingdom, whether actual or imagined, had a major influence on subsequent development of the idea of reconquest.”\(^76\) In this way, the concept of a reconquest or restoration

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\(^{75}\) Ample evidence suggests that many “Crusaders” were far more interested in plunder and fighting than in operating as holy warriors on behalf of the faith. See Thomas Asbridge, *The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011), 27.

\(^{76}\) O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade*, 6.
of an imagined “Spain” could be galvanizing for those living in an Iberia largely controlled Muslim conquerors. Likewise, the casting of any potential conflict or expansion in terms of a restoration of previously rightly-held lands would have the effect of legitimizing any territorial expansion by Asturias while eliminating individual claim conflicts between Spanish kingdoms, especially if Asturias was understood to be representing “Spain” at the time. In this way, the Christian Spanish could utilize Visigothic history, and their claim to it, to justify and endorse their military activities, even if such claims and connections might be seen as opportunistic or even spurious. What’s more, Spanish historians, and later religious figures, could then mold the Visigothic history and their affiliation with it to serve the aspirations and activities of the Spanish rulers as needed. Or, as Medieval Historian Peter Linehan put it, “by adjusting the history of the peninsula’s [Iberia’s] changing circumstances, members of Spain’s literate minority… responded to and articulated the dimly perceived needs of successive generations, continually reconcile[ed] the present to the past for the benefit of society at large.” With the “society at large” in this case being an emerging “Spain” and whomever assumed its mantle, which began with Asturias, but shifted to several different rulers and kingdoms in the ensuing centuries.

It is important to note that while the concept of Reconquista may have been constructed or fabricated, and arguably served as pretense for various military activities, it was largely a contemporary concept which began c. 880 CE according to Linehan. Thus, whatever the reality of the reconquest or its history, many rulers and kingdoms believed in their connection with the Visigoths and the formerly held territory. As O’Callaghan noted, “in time, the kings of Asturias-León-Castile, as the self-proclaimed heirs of the Visigoths, came to believe it was their

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77 Utilizing Visigothic history in the service of Spanish territorial activities would continue well into the future and long past any effect it might have on Alfonso XI and the Sala de la Justicia. Peter Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 3.

78 Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 103.
responsibility to recover all the land that had once belonged to the Visigothic kingdom.” Thus, if the concept of Reconquista was active in the imaginations of the Christian Spanish since the late 9th century it would have been firmly entrenched and influential long before any Crusader rhetoric entered the discussion. Interestingly, the adoption of this constructed history and context of the Reconquista seems to have been largely successful on the peninsula for both parties (Christians and Muslims) as this is also the same term the Muslims used to describe the ongoing conflict. According to Alan Verskin the term Reconquista in Arabic is istirdād which he noted is a direct translation of “Reconquista.”

What impact the rhetorical history of the Reconquista had on Alfonso XI and the Sala de la Justicia in contrast with that of the Crusades could radically alter the interpretation of that construction. For Alfonso XI and the Christians in Spain, the Crusades were a relatively new addition to their world. The pinnacle conflicts of the Crusades had already come and gone by the time Fernando III captured Seville in 1248 CE. And during the loss of the Kingdom of Jerusalem to the forces under Saladin in 1187 CE, the Christians in Spain were still struggling against Muslim forces in al-Andalus, then under control of the Almohads and still a generation before their historic victory at Las Navas de Toloso in 1212 CE. In the end, Spain was not a Crusader state at any point during the Crusader period in the Holy Land, and since the conflict in Iberia had been ongoing for centuries, it is likely that any conflict would have been cast in terms of Reconquista rather than Crusade. Thus, the idea of a restoration of the Visigothic kingdom and a reconquest of rightfully “Spanish” territory was the likely mindset of the Kingdom of Asturias and the several inheritors of this mandate leading up to Alfonso XI and the Kingdom of

79 O’Callaghan, Reconquest and Crusade, 3.
Castile-León, rather than a holy war attempting eradicate some cosmic other. And while the
Reconquista may have been the reality for Christians in Spain, the Crusades remained the
preferred orientation of the Church and many of the other European monarchies.

A closer examination of Alfonso XI and his orientation towards his military activities
suggests that they were indeed more in line with the concept of Reconquista than that of
Crusade. As O’Callaghan pointed out, “Alfonso XI (1312-1350), repeating the language of the
canonist Alvaro Pelayo, laid claim to the Canary Islands because, as part of Africa, the lands
were said to have once been subject to Gothic dominion.” Not only were the lands supposedly
part of the territories requiring restoration, but Alfonso XI himself could claim some ancestral
sovereignty going back to Fernando el Magno (Fernando I, Count of Castile and King of Leon r.
1035-1065). The assertion of both territorial and sovereign claim to these lands along with the
reference to Alvaro Pelayo (who was a close associate of the Pope in Avignon) could be meant
to justify military action, much in the same way Pope Urban II’s speech at Clermont in 1095 CE
sought to justify military action to recapture the Holy Land from the Muslims more than 450
years after the fact. Regardless of any relative reality or veracity to these claims, it is clear that
the concept of Reconquista, and its attendant justification, was at least rhetorically in play for
Alfonso XI, but also likely left open the possibility for it to be interpreted as part of a sanctioned
crusade if that suited someone’s purposes. The distinction between a reference to reconquest or
crusade might have varied depending on whom the rhetorical target may have been; clearly

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81 O’Callaghan, Reconquest and Crusade, 4.
82 The sovereign kinship extends back to the kingdom of Galicia recently ruled by the Visigoths, but before that by the
Seuvi and prior to that the Hispano-Romans per the history outlined in the Primiera Cronica General de Espana,
2:494, Capitolo 813.
83 Which of course had historically been in Byzantine (and therefore Roman) hands prior to the Muslim Conquest. As in Spain, the gesture to historic sovereignty was likely just as much a pretext for military action in the Holy Land as it was for the Christian Spanish in Iberia. See also Bonch-Bruevich, “Ideologies of the Spanish Reconquest.”
Reconquista rhetoric resonated with the Christian Spanish whereas Crusader rhetoric was more favored by the Pope, the Catholic Church and several other European monarchies.

Despite the fall of the last crusader state, the reduced Kingdom of Jerusalem in Acre c. 1291, O’Callaghan indicated that the Pope “persistently attempted to convince western European rulers to liberate the Holy Land.”\(^{84}\) In response to papal requests for Crusade, the Castilian kings contended that their activities on the peninsula were a more immediate threat which precluded their participation in any Crusades, but as O’Callaghan mentioned, “the kings of Castile suggested that, once they had overthrown peninsular Islam and gained a base in Morocco, they could participate in a general European crusade to rescue the Holy Land.”\(^{85}\) Thus, while the Christian kingdoms in Spain essentially bypassed the actual Crusades in the Holy Land, the concept of Crusade may have moved to Spain and the surrounding territories, once operations in the Holy Land came to a close. This action thereby left Spain as a potential site for the reignition of the Crusader conflict, at least from the perspective of the Church, which likely saw the conflict as a rivalry between Christianity and Islam that could be exploited, especially after the papal relocation to Avignon and their close association with Castile-Leon put European concerns at the forefront. Crusader rhetoric and papal involvement may have ramped up in Iberia thanks to the availability of papal financing and Crusader knights who could aid in the fight. Crusader rhetoric on the peninsula gained a focal point (like Jerusalem had done for the Holy Land) with a locally recognizable rallying cry around Santiago de Compostela,\(^{86}\) which

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\(^{84}\) O’Callaghan, *Gibraltar Crusade*, 1.

\(^{85}\) Ibid.

\(^{86}\) The pilgrimage route, *Camino de Santiago* (way of St. James) from France to Spain had been a Christian pilgrimage journey since the early days of the Kingdom of Asturias when relics attributed to St. James were claimed to have been discovered at the site. The route and the site took on rhetorical significance first after the Cathedral of Santiago was sacked by al-Mansur of Córdoba c. 997 and also in the continued struggles in the Holy Land, which increased the popularity of the European-based pilgrims’ route which could be better protected. See O’Callaghan, *History of Medieval Spain*. 
would add rhetorical elements of the Christian/Muslim antagonism from the Crusades to the ongoing Reconquista in Spain. This rhetoric surrounding Santiago de Compostela did play a role for fighters in Spain up to, and including Alfonso XI’s victory at Rio Salado.87

The connection between battle at Rio Salado and Santiago de Compostela also presents an interesting segue into the later discussion of the Sala de la Justicia. As Thomas Asbridge noted, the planned 12th century renovation of the Holy Sepulcher by the rulers of Outremer was meant to reflect the “western European ‘Romanesque’ style, which was also found in “Latin pilgrim churches in the West, including Santiago de Compostela.”88 While this may have been the case in Crusader-held Jerusalem, it was not the case in Spain. In the next chapter, an examination of the Islamicate constructions in Toledo, which Asbridge already cited as an early highlight of the burgeoning Reconquista in Iberia, included those by Crusaders such as the Knights Hospitaller, which did not conform to the Romanesque style. This point is especially interesting given that Santiago de Compostela was used specifically as a rallying cry for fighters at Rio Salado. The religious connection between Santiago de Compostela and the Holy Sepulchre did not seem to follow for the Sala, despite the historical connection between that church and the peninsula, which may further suggest a disconnect between the religious sphere and the cultural sphere which influenced Alfonso XI’s Mudéjar throne room.

If the opportunity to move the Crusader conflict from the Holy Land to Spain benefitted the Church, it also benefitted the monarchs of the Reconquista, including Alfonso XI. As part of his ongoing military campaign against the Muslims, Alfonso was in constant need of funds and soldiers to continue his campaign. Case in point, even after his victory at Rio Salado, Alfonso

87 O’Callaghan, Gibraltar Crusade, 182.
88 Asbridge, The Crusades, 185.
XI was forced to halt his advance on Algeciras due to a lack of sufficient resources.\(^8^9\) Thus, anything that would enable Alfonso to have continued his various campaigns would be of interest, and indeed the Crusades and the Church had enabled him to continue the \textit{Reconquista}, resulting in his victory at Rio Salado in the first place.

The Pope (then based in Avignon, France) had supported the Christian-Spanish rulers in the past as part of an ongoing struggle with Islam, beginning with the first Avignon pope Clement V, who granted crusader indulgences, or “bull of the Crusade” which typically involved religious exceptions for most sins and Church requirements while the knight was fighting on behalf of the Church. It had also previously included \textit{decima} and \textit{tercias} financing\(^9^0\) to Alfonso XI’s father Fernando IV. As Alfonso embarked on his own campaigns he likewise turned to the Pope (John XXII) for indulgences and financing for himself and his knights. The Pope ultimately refused the request citing previous rulers in Spain who had used papal financing for “other purposes.”\(^9^1\) But, after infighting between Christian Spanish rulers threatened to weaken Spain, opening the possibility of a Muslim resurgence, Pope John XXII acquiesced and granted the request.\(^9^2\) Armed with papal support, Alfonso XI was also able to recruit Crusader knights and nobles from the French and German territories.\(^9^3\)

Beginning c. 1330 CE, Alfonso resumed the \textit{Reconquista}/Crusade thanks to a treaty with his frequent antagonist Juan Manuel, assistance from Afonso IV of Portugal, and additional crusader knights including a handful from Scotland who were originally headed to the Holy Land.\(^9^4\) As

\(^8^9\) O’Callaghan, \textit{Gibraltar Crusade}, 183.
\(^9^0\) The \textit{decima} was “a tenth of the ecclesiastical revenues,” and the \textit{tercias} consisted of a “third of the tithe, of the archdioceses of Seville and Compostela [which] could be used to finance the crusade.” In O’Callaghan, \textit{Gibraltar Crusade}, 40, 15.
\(^9^1\) Which might call those rulers and Alfonso’s motivations and dedication to Crusade into question. O’Callaghan, \textit{Gibraltar Crusade}, 151.
\(^9^2\) O’Callaghan, \textit{Gibraltar Crusade} 153.
\(^9^3\) O’Callaghan, \textit{Gibraltar Crusade}, 155-56.
\(^9^4\) Ibid.
the conquest/crusade continued, Alfonso XI’s forces repeatedly stopped to secure booty from the
victories as well as solidify control of the newly acquired territories. These activities seem to
suggest a conqueror concerned with acquiring territory and control more than a holy warrior bent
on eradication of an enemy. But the need for treasure was constant and ultimately resulted in a
peace treaty between Alfonso XI and the Muslim-led Kingdom of Granada, which included
vassalage and the accompanying payments from Granada. In all regards, Alfonso XI seemed to
be prosecuting a campaign of conquest (or reconquest), including the establishment of his
military order La Banda. As O’Callaghan noted, La Banda was “an Order of Chivalry, quite
distinct from the older Military Religious Orders,” like the Knights Hospitaller or the Knights
Templar. This distinctiveness from typical Crusader orders may again suggest a greater
association with conquest than Crusade, which is significant given that it was heraldry for La
Banda which was prominently featured in the Sala de la Justicia along with the royal heraldry of
Castile-León.

Whether Alfonso XI was on a Crusade or a reconquest may have had as much to do with to
whom he was speaking and the context of his interests. Indeed, Alfonso may have been driven
far more by practicality than by anything else. In this way, if being a Crusader netted him
funding, support, and indulgences from the Pope, then he might have chosen to be, or portrayed
himself as a Crusader – but all of this sits precariously against the interpretive lens of the Spanish
themselves who had a vested interest in characterizing their activities in terms of restoration and
reconquest. The assertion of reconquest had appeal not only to the contemporary Spanish actors,

95 O’Callaghan, Gibraltar Crusade, 158-59.
96 O’Callaghan, Gibraltar Crusade, 160.
97 “The Band” or “The Scarf,” but most likely something akin to “The Sash” as the group was emblemized by a sash
worn across their garments. O’Callaghan, Gibraltar Crusade, 161.
98 Ibid.
but also served later Spanish historians and rhetoricians intent on framing Spanish history in a particular way.\(^9\) The frame of this history ultimately justified and authorized military activity in the name of restoration and sovereignty associated with the Christian Spanish and their Visigothic ancestors. The connection also had the rhetorical impact of disconnecting the Christian Spanish from any association with their Muslim invaders and linked them traditionally and historically to the pre-Muslim inhabitants of the peninsula. One possible consequence of gestures to a Visigothic heritage and the *Reconquista* is the link that it created between the Christian Spanish and Rome; not only to the Catholic Church, but the Roman Empire and its history of which the Visigoths (along with the earlier hispano-Romans) were inextricably linked. One of the likely consequences of that link, beyond the political and religious connections to the Romans, was a connection to certain sociocultural aspects of Roman imperial history that may have ultimately been behind Alfonso XI’s design of the Mudéjar *Sala de la Justicia* as his throne room. It is likely that the influence of an imperial Roman connection, especially as it related to Roman generals and conquerors, had an effect on Alfonso XI and his construction of the *Sala de la Justicia* and also how claims of “triumphalism” that are frequently presented as an explanation for its Mudéjar design are understood and interpreted. These claims of triumphalism as commonly presented, may ultimately depend on what manner of triumph is believed to have occurred and how it might be framed in the mind of the ruler, the subjects and any potential visitors. As will become clear, while celebratory triumphalism in an imperial Roman context may indeed have been at play, triumphalism as an identity-based form of appropriation or

\(^9\) This is of course not to mention any justification-based motivations to cover various military actions and activities. See also Bonch-Bruevich, “Ideologies of the Spanish Reconquest.”
inversion, as some will assert, may not have influenced the Mudéjar designed throne room or served as its intended purpose.100

3.2 Triumphantism and the Battle of Rio Salado (1340 CE)

As the foundational victory for which the Sala de la Justicia was likely constructed, understanding this battle and its place in the larger political and military state of affairs in Iberia and Al-Andalus is a necessity. As questions rise about the status of Alfonso XI as a Crusader as opposed to a conqueror, the context of his signature military victory will likely dictate the interpretive reality of the Sala de la Justicia and the implications and explanations for its Mudéjar design, inscriptions, decorations, and any inclusions or omissions associated with it.

Despite the complications presented by the many Islamicate aspects of the Sala, its construction, and its context, the accepted scholarly interpretation for the Mudéjar designs in Alfonso XI’s throne room is triumphalism. While “triumphalism” may seem like a reasonable explanation for a throne room commemorating a triumph, what “triumphalism” as a concept might mean to a modern scholar, may be very different from what it might have meant to Alfonso XI or his contemporaries. From the Oxford Dictionaries, “triumphalism” is defined as “excessive exultation over one's success or achievements (used especially in a political context).”101 A review of several modern definitions of the term in reference sources reveal it is predominantly considered a pejorative term and meant to reflect celebration that is disproportionate, excessive, and prideful with regard to others. How the triumphalism of

100 In part, identity-based activities such as those suggested for the Sala, rely heavily on a perceived separation of Muslim things from Christian or Jewish things and monolithic conceptions therein – which do not appear to be the case – thus, the inverted triumphalism suggested by Jerrilynn Dodds would likely not have made sense to any of them at the time. See Jerrilynn Dodds, Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990.
Alfonso XI is presented by scholars in their discussions of the *Sala de la Justicia* is certainly reflective of this definition.

The most prominent proponent of the “triumphalism” interpretation for the *Sala* comes from renowned art historian, Jerrilynn Dodds, who describes and interprets several Mudéjar-designed structures that developed in post-Reconquista cities like Toledo and Seville as examples of triumphalism and triumphal construction. Dodds has historically presented the paradoxical use of clearly Islamic material culture, typically associated with the Umayyad rule in al-Andalus, by Christians and the Catholic Church as triumphalism. Discussing the presence of Caliph Hisham II’s (r. 976-1013 CE) silver casket in the treasury of the Girona Cathedral, for example, Dodds suggested that it “surely became a symbol of Christian victory over Islam.” Indeed, Hisham’s casket along with other Islamic material culture that was later used in Christian contexts, for Dodds, represented “the victory of the faith and [an] appropriation of what is most precious of al-Andalus.” Whether or not Dodds’s interpretation of the material in the Islamic and pre-Reconquista period is more or less likely, neither necessarily informs the interpretation of Mudéjar designs, such as those found in the *Sala de la Justicia* and the Alcazar of Seville. There is a clear distinction between the appropriation, use, or display of existing Islamic material culture by a conqueror and that which was commissioned and constructed by a non-Muslim, which describes the majority of the Mudéjar-designed material. As Ruggles noted, “triumphalism does not explain the phenomenon of the Mudéjar style, in which Christian patrons did not simply appropriate and convert existing Islamic objects, but actually commissioned new

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102 The casket may have made its way to the treasury of Girona by way of Catalan mercenaries fighting in Córdoba as part of an internal power struggle between Muslims who took the casket as part of their spoils (a concept to be explored shortly). Jerrilynn Dodds, “Islam, Christianity, and the Problem of Religious Art.” In *The Art of Medieval Spain a.d. 500-1200*, 73–109. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993.
103 Ibid.
art in the Islamic style.”

For Dodds, however, the context of appropriation as victory undergirds the majority of her interpretations of Islamic and Mudéjar material culture. As she indicated, “the case of Mudéjar art is interesting, for it represents a moment of Christian control: Islamic culture no longer posed a threat to Christian identity and existence.” She continued, “the word Mudéjar suggests an art of subjected Muslims… [and] a relaxation of the cultural defensiveness which had characterized the Christian attitude towards Islamic arts in the earlier period.”

Dodds continued in her assessment of the Bab al-Mardum mosque in Toledo, converted to the Church of Cristo de la Luz in Toledo noting the Christians’ “desire to appropriate some of the power and validity of the indigenous tradition established during Toledo’s Muslim domination.” And finally, “it was the dilemma of a new Christian hegemony which [found] itself ruling a population including strong vestiges of an enemy culture which the Christians nevertheless held in some awe.” What is interesting to note, and where this characterization of styles will ultimately problematize triumphalism, is the language that Dodds uses to describe the activities of the Christians. By gesturing to ideas like “Christian identity,” “cultural defensiveness,” “enemy culture,” “Christian hegemony,” “appropriation,” and multiple references to “domination,” be they suggestions of Muslim domination or Christian domination, the Christian/Muslim binary and the likely anachronistic presentation of monolithic categories of identity propose a polarized socio-cultural climate that either may not have existed or was not as clearly imagined or understood at the time as it is presented.

104 Ruggles, “The Alcazar of Seville,” 90.
105 Jerrilynn Dodds, “The Mudéjar Tradition in Architecture.” In Jayyusi, Legacy of Muslim Spain, 592.
106 The earlier period Dodds is referring to likely involves the post-conquest Christians living under Muslim rule (Mozarabs) and their resistance to all things Islamic – but this “cultural defensiveness” may not have been shared by all subjugated populations. Ibid.
107 While there is disagreement with the context and characterization Dodds was using here, the sentiment of evoking (perhaps rather than appropriating) the previous Muslim rulers’ “power and validity” is important, especially in the broader discussion of post-Reconquista cities and towns. Dodds, “Mudéjar Tradition,” 593.
108 Ibid.
Following the logic of the triumphalism theory, Ruggles indicated that triumphalism as an interpretation for Alfonso XI’s Sala de la Justicia would suggest that Alfonso “chose the Mudéjar style for his victory monument because it allowed him seize and appropriate Islamic culture in much the same way as he had seized and appropriated Islamic territory.” While triumphalism can have a number of meanings, to describe or interpret the Sala or any other constructions closely associated with a military victory as “a victory monument” or anything similar could be potentially misleading and problematic depending on the manner in which such a description was presented. The difficulty with phrases like “victory monument” or any similar characterization is that they evoke or elicit a particular understanding from the modern perspective that may not have been present in medieval al-Andalus. Hearkening back to the grand melee that ensued over the proposed Park 51 Complex in New York City, the language of “victory monument” was used in clear identity-based arguments that cast the proposed Islamic community center as the “Ground Zero Mosque” and cited crusader history as evidence. This particular characterization, placed within a “clash of civilizations” context has a very specific imaginary history. Thus, to present the Sala, or indeed any monumental architecture from the medieval period in such a context, runs the risk of being at least anachronistic or at most offers a distorted view of the likely rationale and intent of the constructions. Unfortunately this context of presentation for the Sala de la Justicia is exacerbated in Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale’s The

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112 Referring to the general concept that the confessional communities of Christianity and Islam or “western” and “eastern” cultures are unable to coexist due to systemic differences. See Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations.*
Arts of Intimacy, where they argued that “Alfonso XI had appropriated and inverted the forms of Muhammad [V]’s father Yusuf I [then King of Granada] into a victory celebration in the Alcazar of Seville. Part of the challenge that this characterization of the Sala presents is the distorted picture of the society of 14th century Seville. Because the language used to describe and interpret the history surrounding these constructions seems to be focused on a post-enlightenment conception of identity, complete with language typical of post-colonial analysis, when combined with the monolithization already discussed, leaves little room for alternative analysis. To solidify this trajectory of analysis, Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale describe the intent behind Muhammad V’s (King of Granada and associate of Alfonso XI’s son Pedro I of Castile) when building his own throne room in the Palacio de Comares in the Alhambra as likewise being constructed as a victory monument meant to recall his victory at Algeciras which they argued was “represent[ed] in cosmic terms…[and] was thus transformed into the eternal battle between the faithful and the infidel, precisely the thematic structure in which the battle of Salado had been advertised, and fought by Alfonso XI.” Here again the clash of civilizations and “cosmic war” presentations are straight out of modern religious identity politics and rhetoric. Such a perspective seems perfectly reasonable in modern sociopolitical parlance, but dubious in a medieval context such that it is doubtful that a similar sentiment or personal or global conception existed as such for anyone at that time. Thus, an effort to re-interpret the Sala de la Justicia, which would also affect interpretations for the majority post-Islamic Mudéjar constructions,

114 Part of the analysis of the Sala will involve unpacking Alfonso XI’s “advertisement” for the battle, which was directed at the Pope who ultimately provided funding and crusader indulgences for the campaign. Dodds, Menocal, Balbale, Arts of Intimacy, 253.
115 “Cosmic War” is a term coined by Mark Juergensmeyer in Terror in the Mind of God, to describe the eternal cosmic struggle between Islam and Christianity. Mark Juergensmeyer, Terror in the Mind of God. (Berkeley, California University Press, 2003).
requires a lens and interpretation that enables Seville and Granada to be viewed from a perspective that also understands cultural developments as separate and distinct from religious or political considerations. In this way, what a particular ruler’s religious or political orientation may have been, did not always intersect with their cultural orientations, especially in cosmopolitan environments like those found in al-Andalus.

Circumstantially, a triumphalism interpretation for the Sala de la Justicia is expected, and from one perspective it seems valid. As Ruggles noted, “the triumphalist explanation works perfectly well for Alfonso XI and the Hall of Justice [Sala de la Justicia].” The commissioning and construction of the Sala de la Justicia seems directly related to Alfonso’s victory at Rio Salado and the presence of the Castilian heraldry and the symbols of a military order (La Banda) do suggest a connection. And in truth, the timing and historical context of the Sala’s construction leaves little doubt that the victory at Rio Salado did influence and/or inspire the construction of the Sala de la Justicia; and considering the prominent presence of the heraldry of Castile-Leon and La Banda, a military victory likewise seems clear.

One of the core challenges to the “triumphalism” theory or any similar interpretation is intention, and by extension, reception. If Alfonso XI commissioned the Sala in the Mudéjar style for the purposes of triumphalism as previously described, then he would have needed the intention to do so and also the expectation that his triumphalist construction would be recognized as such with the corresponding impact on his subjects and his enemies. Thus, for Alfonso’s proposed triumphalism to have any viability, it must have been reflected and experienced by court members and visitors alike, since the Sala de la Justicia served as Alfonso XI’s throne.

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117 However, the presence and specific relativity of Castilian heraldry and military symbols are yet again complicated by their prominent use by Pedro I in his very public façade (among other places) of his own construction of the later Mudéjar Palace inside the Alcazar complex, See Chapter 5, this document.
room and court reception space for visitors and dignitaries including, presumably visitors from Granada or other Muslim polities. An interpretation the Sala de la Justicia as a triumphalist victory monument should therefore be determinable; unfortunately, there does not seem to be any corroboration for this from contemporary sources.

One of the most glaring counter arguments to the triumphalism theory is the lack of mention, discussion, or reaction to the Sala’s design by visitors who would be in the best position to respond to it, comment on it, or in some way recognize the inverted form of triumph as such. Likewise, the message presented by the throne room and its decoration would, regardless of reception, reflect some form of visual language and such language would be expected to “speak” on behalf of or for the ruler it represented. It then follows that one of the important aspects of triumphalism is the message that it disseminated. Presumably, any impact a triumphal monument or other commemorative architecture conveyed would be recognizable and understood as such to potential viewers/visitors. It is likely for this reason that so many triumphal constructions are accompanied by inscriptions and other symbolic material. If anyone was the intended target of a triumphal construction, especially one believed to be a product of an inverted form of the conquered enemy, it would be those associated with the conquered enemy – either other Muslim dignitaries or those affiliated with the Marinids or other North African polities. Thus, if any visitor to the Sala would be most impacted by the triumphal aspects of Alfonso XI’s throne room, it would be the Muslim, North African Historian and Statesman Ibn Khaldun.

Ibn Khaldun represents an interesting interlude in the larger discussion of the Alcazar of Seville, and to a lesser extent, the Sala de al Justicia. Ibn Khaldun’s family, originally from
Seville themselves, left when the city fell to Fernando III in 1248 CE. Ibn Khaldun also served both the Marinid Dynasty in North Africa and the Nasrid Dynasty in Granada, both of whom were opposing combatants in the Battle of Rio Salado in which Alfonso XI was the victor and the very victory for which the Sala de la Justicia was built. Therefore, Ibn Khaldun’s knowledge of the history of these groups would put him in the best position to comment or reflect on them, but oddly he did not.

In 1363 CE, Ibn Khaldun was sent as ambassador by Muhammad V of Granada to Pedro I in Seville. While the ties between Muhammad V and Pedro I are well established, this particular visit by Ibn Khaldun is significant on two levels; namely his experiences in Seville and the Alcazar as well as the larger context and interpretation of his visit. Ibn Khaldun’s visit is a minor occurrence in the Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville, but it directly speaks to the presentation of the Sala as a triumphalism born of inversion. More than many visitors to Pedro I’s court, Ibn Khaldun was not only in a position to be intimately familiar with the architecture in question, having spent significant time within it, but also the nature of his visit and failure to discuss the triumphalism of the Sala suggests an orientation toward Mudéjar architecture that will figure prominently in the contextuality of the Sala and the Christian constructions in the Alcazar as a whole.

When Ibn Khaldun was in Seville as a guest of Pedro I in 1363, Pedro’s Mudéjar Palace was still under construction. During this period, Pedro would have held court in the existing Alcazar complex, which included the Sala de la Justicia. Despite his extended exposure to the

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120 Dodds, Menocal, Balbale, *Arts of Intimacy*, 254.
121 This is also a likely meeting area for Pedro and his court when Muhammad V was living in Seville during his exile from Granada. Dodds, Menocal, Balbale, *Arts of Intimacy*, 253.
Mudéjar architecture in the Alcazar (and presumably that currently under construction at the time of his visit), Ibn Khaldun did not seem to remark upon it, certainly failing to acknowledge the inversion of Islamic architecture or the triumphalism, which is surprising given his knowledge of history and his own family history in the region, suggesting that the Mudéjar constructions may have had a different contemporary interpretation. In addition, Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale suggested that the Sala de la Justicia may have inspired Muhammad V in his own constructions in the Alhambra. 122 Muhammad V’s throne room in the Alhambra (the Cuarto Dorado) may have been influenced by both the Sala de la Justicia and the façade of Pedro’s Mudéjar Palace. 123 If true, neither Muhammad V nor Ibn Khaldun seemed to have been impacted by Alfonso’s purported triumphalism, which suggests either that he was unsuccessful in communicating it, or that there was an entirely different interpretation and understanding of the construction that did not trigger any identity-based conflict or response.

Both Ibn Khaldun’s and Muhammad V’s relationship to Castile and the Christians may be instructive in the interpretation of the Alcazar and its reception. As Ibn Khaldun had worked with various rulers and courts in both North Africa and al-Andalus and Muhammad V and the Nasrids were likewise both a friend and an antagonist with Seville, it seems that all of their interactions and contact were largely political. In this way, each of these groups, along with any shifting alliances tended to fracture along political lines. Likewise any conflict, Reconquista or otherwise, were likely cast in political terms as well (at least from the perspective of the Andalusis and North Africans). Thus outside of the church, conflicts in al-Andalus and North Africa were largely considered in the political realm and arguably understood as such. Therefore, it might be inappropriate to consider Mudéjar architecture in the realm of religion as

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122 Dodds, Menocal, Balbale, *Arts of Intimacy*, 253.
123 Ruggles, “Alcazar of Seville,” 92.
facts on the ground seem to dispute that, especially in the discussion of shared culture that will come in the next chapter.

If triumphalism through inversion is the less likely interpretation of the Sala de la Justicia it remains to understand this construction in relationship to the battle at Rio Salado and the celebration or commemoration of the victory by Alfonso XI. Given the dominant presence of Mudéjar designs, it is possible that Alfonso was utilizing an Islamic style of victory commemoration. In his analysis of Medieval Islamic “victory monuments,” Thomas Leisten indicated “the idea of commemorating historical or military events can be found in all kinds of structures or objects, but they all employed a system for conveying information that everyone could understand.”¹²⁴ He further asserted that these commemorated victories involved “celebrating the king and his victory over the enemy by a combination of a narrative depiction and explanatory inscription.”¹²⁵ Unfortunately, no sense of a narrative depiction or explanatory inscription is present in the Sala’s design or decoration and is limited to heraldry of the crown and military order combined with generic Arabic/Qur’anic phrases and a general blessing for Alfonso. Leisten also offered that “another kind of victory memorial served purposes of propaganda…by summarizing and celebrating the achievements of the ruler in a report of activities…set up in a place that would be seen by many people.”¹²⁶ The Sala likewise does not follow this model either. Using Leisten as a guide, the Sala de la Justicia does not seem to follow the accepted historical patterns for Islamic “victory monuments.” Furthermore, none of the Islamic examples seem to have included any form of inversion of the enemies’ material culture as an element. The closest possible example of enemy material culture used in

¹²⁵ Ibid.
¹²⁶ Ibid.
decoration would be the depiction of “artistic allusions to Byzantine and Sassanian jewelry and crowns” in the interior decoration of the Dome of the Rock (Qubbat al-Sakhrah) in Jerusalem built by Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik.\textsuperscript{127} As far as this being an inversion, it does not seem appropriate since it was intended to represent actual material related to the conquered enemies, the originals of which Leisten indicated were likely displayed in the Ka’ba in Mecca.\textsuperscript{128} Leisten also pointed out that if the Dome of the Rock had been intended as a victory monument the message was likely “too complex” to be “readily understood by the beholder.”\textsuperscript{129} As this project will suggest, the form of decoration found in the Dome of the Rock is actually indicative of another form of celebration and commemoration, and one that is likely similar to that of Alfonso XI in his decoration of the Sala de la Justicia.

The situation that Leisten described for victory monuments in a medieval Islamic context is directly relevant to the Sala de la Justicia on a number of levels. If the Sala was meant as an inversion of something Islamic, then some precedent among Muslim victory celebrations would need to be present. Leisten does suggest that the qubba model, the same model on which the Sala de la Justicia is built, had been used to commemorate Muslim victories, however those victories or events were typically commemorated on the sites of their occurrence.\textsuperscript{130} It is not readily knowable if Alfonso XI would have enough familiarity with Muslim commemoration to have used such a design for such a purpose, and given that the only matching element was the general design model and nothing else, it seems more likely that this was simply an iconic style.

\textsuperscript{127} Leisten, “Mashad Al-Nasr,” 15.
\textsuperscript{128} In this case the artistic representations might reflect something more akin to spoils or trophies from the victory, much in the same way Caliph Hisham’s casket was kept in Girona Cathedral. Likewise, the depiction of victory spoils is a form also known from Roman Triumphs and may be indicative of that form of commemoration. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{130} Leisten, “Mashad Al-Nasr,” 19-20.
choice – especially considering other elements of the Sala do not match such commemorations in other ways.

If the Sala de la Justicia was meant to, at least partially, celebrate or commemorate the victory at Rio Salado, but a modern identity-based explanation of triumphalism or the earlier Islamic model seem unlikely, then how is this triumph being celebrated or represented in a context that fits Alfonso XI historically? Fortunately, there is a form of “triumphalism” that suits a conqueror or Reconquista king celebrating a military victory and one that is not anachronistic for a 14th century Christian monarch. A monument-based form of triumphal celebration already existed in the minds and reality of medieval Europeans in the form of the Roman Triumph. The Romans, whose history and architecture were well known had popularized the monumental military victory celebration in several forms, from columns and arches to buildings and complexes. Monumental forms of triumph typically followed the official granting of a Triumph or celebratory procession. The Roman “Triumph,” was granted to successful military commanders as a way to commemorate and celebrate their victories. As noted Roman historian Mary Beard indicated, “To be awarded a triumph was the most outstanding honor a Roman General could hope for.”131 Beard described the victorious General returning in triumph to Rome “accompanied by the booty he had won, the prisoners he had taken captive, and his no doubt rowdy and raucous troops in their battle gear.”132 It is this Roman form of triumph that was more likely being reflected in the Sala de la Justicia.

The Roman Triumph was a prominent celebratory feature for much of the early Imperial period (c. 27 CE – 395 CE), but continued sporadically in different forms until the so-named last Roman Triumph c. 534 CE when General Belisarius was granted a triumph during the reign of

132 Ibid.
Justinian in Constantinople after his victory over the Vandals in North Africa. Based on a report from 6th century Roman historian Procopius, Beard noted the many differences between the traditional Triumphs of Rome at its height and this much later Triumph in Constantinople, however the general content and processional format remained consistent. It is likely that this later period Roman triumphal model was known to residents of Iberia, given their early connections to the Romans and continued connections, be they imagined or otherwise, to the Visigoths. As Beard noted, “Roman triumphs have provided a model for the celebration of military successes for centuries. Through the last two millennia, there has been hardly a monarch, dynast, or autocrat in the West who has not looked back to Rome for a lesson in how to mark victory in war and to assert his own personal power.”

While it is unclear if Alfonso XI was overtly and intentionally gesturing to Roman tradition or if it was simply a tradition familiar to Iberians, it is clear that he and others were knowledgeable of the symbolism and representation associated with these forms and gestures to suggest that they were an ingrained and recognizable expression of power and grandeur. By way of example, Alfonso XI’s initial entry into the city of Seville as King in 1327 CE bore many of the hallmarks of the Roman triumphal procession and spectacle, including a ceremonial route with trumpets and other instruments, accompanied by knights and nobles clothed in gold and silver and personally accompanied by a retinue of Moorish knights. Alongside the route, ships in the Guadalquivir offered a mock battle re-enacting the 1248 conquest of the city, another common feature of Roman triumphal celebration.

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133 Beard, Roman Triumph, 318-319.
134 Beard, Roman Triumph, 2.
135 Cayetano Rosell et al., Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla. (Madrid: Atlas, 1953), 204.
If Alfonso XI was familiar with the Roman Triumph, which presumably he was based on his celebratory activities following his victory, then he was at least marginally familiar with its form. Historically, many Roman Triumphs (the procession) were followed by commemorative construction projects, often arches, but also other building projects such as temples and monuments, and in the early days of Imperial Rome, entire forums. Given the predominance of Roman monumental architecture extant in Spain and surrounding areas, Alfonso XI must have been familiar with this material and its history. One of the most well-known Triumphs was granted to General Titus Flavius Vespasianus (later Emperor, r. 79-81 CE) after his victory in Judea and the successful repression of the revolt and subsequent siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Upon his return, Titus was granted a Triumph and his triumphal procession was commemorated on the Arch of Titus constructed and dedicated by his brother Domitian c. 82 CE.
While the *Sala de la Justicia* arguably reflected the monumental construction related to Roman-style Triumph, an analysis of the Arch of Titus will be instructive in disassociating the *Sala* from modern identity-based conceptions of triumphalism and specifically the suggestion of inversion. The Arch of Titus, neither in the general view depicted above nor in the detail images below, features the culture or architectural style of the conquered Jews depicted or utilized in any way other than the specific representation of spoils which were intended to record actual

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137 *Arch of Titus; General View*, 81AD. Concrete and white marble, height 50 feet (15 m.), 81AD. [Image] http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.gsu.edu/library/secure/ViewImages?id=%%2FThWdC8hlywtPygxFTx5TnQkVnoseg%3D%3D&userId=gDhPej0l&zoomparams=&fs=true.
events. The images depicted below show two reliefs located on the Arch of Titus intended to commemorate his triumphal procession following his victory.

Figure 5: Arch of Titus, North side inner face

Figure 6: Arch of Titus, South side inner face

As is clear, the depictions reflect the actual triumphal procession with the victorious general and his soldiers followed by prominent captured combatants, representative banners and
emblems of the enemy, and spoils taken after the victory, which in this case included religious material, such as a menorah and the temple’s Torah. The commemoration of the Triumph of Titus as depicted on the arch, bears striking resemblance to the procession and material that was included in Alfonso XI’s display for Pope Benedict XIII following his victory at Rio Salado. Both as a result of triumphal depictions such as this Arch and the well-known tradition of the Roman Triumph, the form and function of such celebratory events and their symbolism were known both traditionally and historically. Therefore, putting Alfonso XI’s victory activities into this context may offer a more comprehensive framework for the interpretation of the Sala de la Justicia.

Alfonso XI engaged in a Roman-style triumphal procession following his victory at Rio Salado featuring all the typical trappings of such an event, as noted above. Because this battle was fought as part of a Crusade, at least superficially, the procession was for the church rather than the senate and the people of Rome. “On their return [from Rio Salado] the kings of Castile and Portugal made a pilgrimage to El Puerto de Santa Maria. The [Muslim military] banners seized in that [battle] were carried into the city on the necks of captured Moors. Among the most precious items was a copy of the Koran written by Caliph ‘Uthman b. Affan (644-56 CE).

Bound with ropes and penned in a corral near the Alcazar of Seville were many captives from the Marinid royal house, including the emir’s son…many captured banners were placed in the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[138] The representation of actual captured material on this arch may be similar to representations of the actual material featured in the reliefs inside the Dome of the Rock mentioned previously – suggesting at least a conceptual connection in form or depiction. See Leisten, “Mashad Al-Nasr: Monuments of War and Victory in Medieval Islamic Art.”
\item[139] Arch of Titus: “Triumph of the Emperor Titus,” Detail of Relief from Inner Face of Arch on North Side, ca. 81, marble, http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.gsu.edu/library/secure/ViewImages?id=8DIKaF4jKzQ3KA%3D%3D&userId=gDhPej0l&zoomparams=&fs=true.
\item[140] “Spoils of the Temple in Jerusalem,” Relief Panel from Inner Facing of the Arch of Titus, Rome, 81, 81, http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.gsu.edu/library/secure/ViewImages?id=8DIKaF0jKDQyLw%3D%3D&userId=gDhPej0l&zoomparams=&fs=true.
\end{footnotes}
cathedral of Seville [then still a converted mosque] where they remained for many years.”

This procession, featuring spoils, booty, banners, and captives is typical of a Roman Triumph and mirrors the Triumph of Titus in a nearly textbook fashion, arguably confirming that Roman-style triumphalism was known to Alfonso and his contemporaries. To further cement the comparison, “news of the victory had…been sent to the pope [Benedict XIII in Avignon, who] established a liturgical commemoration of the victory…[followed by] another procession celebrat[ing] the Christian triumph.” The Christian Triumph followed the typical pattern of the Roman Triumph in both form and function and in a manner similar to Belisarius’s presentation to Justinian.

Sometime concurrent with or following Alfonso XI’s triumphal processions the Sala de la Justicia was commissioned and constructed. Here again, following a triumphal procession with a commemorative construction was typical for a triumphant Roman general and Alfonso seems to have followed a similar model. Commemorative monumental constructions associated with the Triumph were predominantly public structures that could be viewed by visitors. While Alfonso XI’s throne room is not necessarily public in the same way that an arch might be, it was public enough to be seen by visitors, courtiers, and subjects alike. The images (both literal and figurative) that were projected by the monuments were meaningful and specific. As Maggie Popkin noted in her recent examination of the Roman Triumph, “because the triumph was such a quintessential Roman institution…the monuments…invited shared remembering, [and] it seems almost inevitable that a relationship would exist between triumphs, monuments, memories and

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141 O’Callaghan, The Gibraltar Crusade, 184.
142 O’Callaghan, The Gibraltar Crusade, 185.
143 Beard, Roman Triumph, 318-321.
Roman identities.” She continued, “the [triumphal] monuments…shaped how Romans remembered [the triumph, and] played a critical role in forming the collective memories that served as a basis for the self-identity of the group.” In al-Andalus, the context and meaning of any form of triumph would likely differ from that of the Romans, but if the Roman model was the inspiration for future celebrations, some similarity would need to be present or the established model would be unrecognizable and as such lose its intended purpose. Inversion is not really a known form of triumphalism in the Roman context. At no point did Roman generals or Emperors create their triumphal monuments in the style of the conquered group. This is especially true in an ancient or medieval context and assertions to the contrary may reflect a misunderstanding of medieval forms of identity. To use inversion, as has been suggested for the triumphalism associated with the Sala de la Justicia, several concepts and ideas would need to have been in place. Most prominent among these concepts would be the context in which a relationship between the Mudéjar style and the people of al-Andalus was contemporarily understood. Specifically, the Mudéjar style used by Alfonso XI in the Sala de la Justicia could only be used as inversion if the Mudéjar style was commonly known as exclusive to the Muslims – otherwise what exactly would be inverted? Oddly, Dodds indicated that Christians as early as 10th century Northern Spain exhibited “a marked taste for certain characteristically Islamic forms

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146 There is an influence of Greek architectural style and design on many triumphal constructions, and the Greeks were conquered by the Romans in 146 BCE, however the presence of a Hellenic design style in Roman monumental architecture had been an ongoing aspect of the larger Hellenization of the Empire and culture of the Romans that influenced all aspects of society and is not linked to any event or battle in a way that would mirror the assertion for Alfonso XI’s construction of the Sala. Over time, Hellenic style commingled so frequently with Roman style that a new hybrid style could be said to have emerged from the combination. See J. R. W. Prag, and Josephine Crawley Quinn, eds. *The Hellenistic West: Rethinking the Ancient Mediterranean* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
of articulation and ornamentation in church building.\textsuperscript{147} While it is clear that nothing in the Mudéjar style would be so prominent at the time as it would be in 14\textsuperscript{th} century Seville, it does suggests that there was already a separation between architectural or cultural elements and those directly associated with the religion of Islam – especially if those designs were being used in a religious context such as church decoration. Architectural evidence from Seville and other communities confirmed that the use of Mudéjar designs in religious settings was in no way limited or isolated as several contemporary church buildings as well as several Jewish synagogues were similarly constructed during the same period. Thus, if there had been dabbling in Islamicate forms as early as the 10\textsuperscript{th} century and such practices continued for the intervening centuries in al-Andalus, it doesn’t seem possible that triumphalism as inversion would have been a visual language intelligible to any intended audience. If the triumphal monument had any connection to Castilian or even Andalusi identity, as Popkin suggested for the Romans,\textsuperscript{148} then the Islamicate design choices would on some level be reflective of the identity of the patron (Alfonso XI) whose identity in turn would be reflected in his construction and design choices and likewise understood by subjects and potential visitors. As it stands, the recognition of the Sala de la Justicia as any form of modern identity-based triumphalism seems to have escaped the notice of the entirety of Alfonso’s contemporaries and future visitors. Considering both Ibn Khaldun and Muhammad V failed to notice the inversion, and as the Sala de la Justicia seems to have been more successful at inspiring other constructions, the inversion explanation doesn’t feel contextually appropriate.

One of the difficulties in processing the distinctions related to the discussion of Triumphs and “triumphalism” is the similarity of terms but with a significant divergence of definition. Why the

\textsuperscript{147} Dodds, \textit{Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain}, 84.

\textsuperscript{148} Popkin, \textit{Roman Triumph}, 18.
triumphalism explanation presented by Dodds and others is problematic is that it grants a particular interpretation of the Sala de la Justicia and Alfonso XI’s motivation which was arguably not present. Alfonso, both in his procession into the city in 1327 CE and his subsequent triumphalism following the victory at Rio Salado are evident and in not in dispute. What will ultimately differentiate Alfonso’s proposed form of triumphalism however, is its similarity to known Roman and later Iberian forms and representations of triumph that are more aptly described in terms of celebration and commemoration. The triumphalism of inversion presented by Dodds and others suggests not only an overarching intention to slight the Muslims but also one that is subject to the same problems of monolithization already discussed. Furthermore, since Alfonso XI may have been mirroring known Roman commemoration models with the various triumphal processions that would follow his victory, it is more likely that he would then follow similar inspirations and models in his commemorative constructions. Also, given the widespread familiarity of the population with what would become Mudéjar aesthetics, it is equally unlikely that a triumphalism of inversion would actually convey any the message Dodds is intending to attribute to such a move. Thus, it is far more likely that the inclusion of Mudéjar aesthetics in the Sala would not be seen as an inversion by anyone, but rather an expression of a style already familiar to the population from generations of exposure under the previous Muslim rulers and abundantly extant in Seville and the surrounding communities in al-Andalus.

Speaking directly to the use of Mudéjar design elements, the tradition of the Roman Triumph helps to explain the decoration of the Sala de la Justicia. According Spanish art historian Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, “it was common to place explanatory inscriptions on the façades and entrances of buildings, religious and civil, as had been the custom in the Roman world.”

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Souza suggested that Muslims and Christians alike were well familiar with this Roman tradition which had been adopted by the Ummayads and other Muslim polities in al-Andalus.\textsuperscript{150} He also indicated that “beginning in the fourteenth century, heraldry faithfully accompanied façade inscriptions.”\textsuperscript{151} Ruiz Souza also noted that this practice was common among both Muslim and Christian rulers in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, specifically with Alfonso XI, Yusuf I, Pedro I and Muhammad V before becoming more widespread in Spain in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{152} As he suggested, “In almost all cases, the primary goal [of the inscriptions and heraldry] was to leave evidence of their fame in the inscriptions placed on the entrances of emblematic buildings, as though they were ancient triumphal arches.”\textsuperscript{153} Though, a similar frame will be part of the discussion for Pedro’s Mudéjar Palace as well as the constructions by Nasrid Muslim leaders Yusuf I and Muhammad V of Granada, this explanation would seem to contextualize Alfonso’s inclusion of the Castile-León coat of arms and emblem of La Banda in the Sala de la Justicia. Rather than being evidence of triumphalism in the modern identity-based context, the inclusion of these symbols, along with the accompanying inscriptions would seem to signify a Roman-style triumphal construction more than anything else. The rationale for Alfonso’s choice to construct his throne room using the Mudéjar style is not necessarily explained by the Sala’s connection to the Roman-style Triumph, however, and requires some further investigation.

It is clear from Ruiz Souza’s observations that Alfonso XI and his contemporaries in Al-Andalus were familiar with and had some understanding of Roman Triumphs and monumental architecture along with their intended purpose and value. The oddity with the Sala de la Justicia

\textsuperscript{150} Ruiz Souza, “Architectural Languages,” 368.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} All of Ruiz Souza’s patrons are the very same ones who feature prominently either directly or indirectly in the Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville, and who likewise influenced each other. It is also noteworthy that the progression of material culture and its role in Andalusi society would follow a similar progression from the 14\textsuperscript{th} Century to the 15\textsuperscript{th} as will be clear in Chapter 4. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
is the presence of predominantly Mudéjar designs and the almost exclusively Islamicate model of the throne room. Even if the premise that the Sala de la Justicia was intended as a non-religious celebration or Triumph to honor Alfonso XI and commemorate his victory at Rio Salado is accepted, it still leaves the curious predominance of Mudéjar architecture and design as the primary decorative style of the Sala. As both throne room and Triumph, the Sala de la Justicia remains a representation and embodiment of Alfonso XI, his victory, and his reign and must be interpreted as such.

If the room’s decoration suggests something akin to the Roman Triumph rather than a modern identity-based form of inversion as has been suggested, the rationale behind the design choice remains unclear. This interpretation therefore argues that Alfonso XI’s design choices in the Sala de la Justicia were never meant to promote Christianity, the Crusades, or any religious connection, including Islam. Evidence suggests that the Mudéjar design along with any Islamicate material culture used in the Sala de la Justicia, in conjunction with any associated visual language were instead part of a shared culture that existed between Christians, Muslims, and Jews in al-Andalus and that this shared culture was not bound by modern categories of identity and operated independently from the political or religious affiliations of those who employed it. In this way, Alfonso was not deploying an Islamic style, nor was he conspicuously ignoring Christianity, but instead was utilizing an Andalusi style (a shared cultural and visual language) to reflect and represent his victory and majesty, both publicly and privately on display. Thus, visitors and the King alike would recognize the design as part of an Islamicate Andalusi culture, a culture that had been in place in Seville and elsewhere in al-Andalus for more than 200 years before Alfonso’s victory at Rio Salado. While this theory will be examined in detail in the next chapter, some visual clues are already present in the Sala and point to such an idea.
While the early Castilian rulers have a history of interacting with and utilizing Islamicate culture extending back to Alfonso X *el Sabio*, the Sala contains some additional design aspects that further suggest this cultural connection.

*Figure 7: Sala de la Justicia*

The Sala de la Justicia features a prominent central fountain. While this is yet another feature common to Islamicate design, its prominent central location and connection to the adjacent room are significant features.

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As Ruggles pointed out, “the fountain’s intricate stucco with vegetal (*ataurique*) motifs (fig. 8) and the arrangement of three arches framed by bands of Arabic inscriptions (fig. 9) were clearly drawn from an Islamicate repertoire and would have been read as such by all who visited Alfonso in his throne room.” The lack of mention by previous visitors like Ibn Khaldun and the inspiration provided to Muhammad V of Granada would seem to confirm Ruggles’s point. The fountain feature of the *Sala de la Justicia* is even more curious in its specific connection to the adjacent *Patio del Yeso*. How this connection is understood is critical to interpreting the Mudéjar designs in the *Sala*, especially given that the *Patio del Yeso*, at least in the period after the construction of the Mudéjar Palace by Pedro I, was the only remaining construction in the

157 Ruggles, “Alcazar of Seville,” 89.
Alcazar attributed to the Almohads. This connection, which must be intentional, could signal both a symbolic and physical connection to the previous rulers of Seville and provide crucial context for interpreting the Sala beyond a triumphalism of inversion or even a triumphalism of celebration and commemoration.

Figure 10: Central fountain and basin, Sala de la Justicia

The rivulet of the fountain and its water flow directly from the Sala de la Justicia into the pool of the Patio del Yeso (figs. 10 & 11). The water connection joins these two chambers both

159 The pool of the Patio del Yeso fed by the connecting channel from the Sala. Alcazar of Seville, J.F. Sullivan, own work, 5/2016
physically and figuratively. In addition, the symbolic characteristics of water and its connections would be familiar to visitors, offering some intriguing interpretive information.

Fountains and water features are common elements in Islamic architecture, and it is not surprising that such a feature turns up in the Sala de la Justicia. The implications of this design element however, does pose a new set of questions given that the Patio del Yeso was originally constructed by the Almohads (whom the Castilians had displaced upon conquering the city in 1248 CE). In this case, water connects a central feature of Alfonso’s throne room to a larger pool within the adjacent Almohad construction.

Traditionally, water had a host of different practical and symbolic meanings ranging from the functional (irrigation, ablution, drinking) to the symbolic. Since the purpose of the fountain in the Sala and the adjacent pool in the Patio del Yeso are not functional for the purposes of drinking, ablution, or irrigation, the intention appears largely symbolic. Fountains, basins, and flowing water can symbolize distinction or separation, power (control of the environment, design excellence), as well as provide aesthetic value via pleasing sounds and visual movement. Above all, flowing water and channels can provide connections: between humans and the Divine (the source of water), inside to outside or simply room to room. The water, in this case, bubbles from the basin in the center of the Sala de la Justicia and flows through a channel to the Patio del Yeso where it empties into a large pool. This linkage forever connects the Sala de la Justicia to the adjacent Patio del Yeso and symbolically connects its leader (Alfonso XI) with the previous Muslim rulers. As historian of Islamic Art and Architecture Yasser Tabbaa indicated in his study of water in Islamic courtyards and gardens, fountains with channels ending in pools had become “by the twelfth century a common feature in the courtyards of medieval palaces.”160

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fountain in the Sala de la Justicia may also have reflected a much larger tradition. Tabbaa suggested that such fountain features, especially in palaces, could be read as part of a “princely aesthetic, a common language of forms which…designated its users as men of eminence and taste.” Tabbaa specifically cited Palermo, Sicily as an example “where numerous Islamic forms, including the [fountain], were used by Christian dynasts.” Tabbaa also offered that borrowing such forms as “fountains or muqarnas domes [were little] more than the desire among newly established dynasties to emulate the forms of the capital.” Tabbaa concluded, suggesting that “since no liturgical function was attached to the [fountain] it could therefore be used in both secular and religious contexts.” He also noted, that when such features appeared in palaces, they were likely meant for aesthetic reasons.

While Tabbaa’s assessment was likely reflective of much of the motivation behind many of the features or overall design aesthetic in the Sala de la Justicia, it arguably downplays any specific intentionality on the part of the patron, in this case Alfonso XI. While there is ample evidence to suggest that the Sala was a product of a common visual language and shared culture, it was also likely the product of several meaningful choices that potentially carried much more profound symbolism than simply familiarity and aesthetics. The channel connecting the Sala de la Justicia with the Almohad Patio del Yeso is important on many levels, however an additional architectural aspect of this connection may also be symbolic. Tabbaa indicated that the flow of water from a fountain through a channel and into a connecting pool was often, as is

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161 This is likely a similar motivation to that of Alfonso XI, which is supported by orientation toward Islamic architecture noted in the Primera Cronica General de España. Tabbaa, “Islamic Courtyards,” 217.
162 Ibid.
163 Tabbaa is referring to new Islamic dynasties emulating Baghdad, but given the long history of emulation in Seville to the architecture and culture in Baghdad, Damascus and Medinat al-Zahara outside Córdoba, such emulation could be seen as part of the aesthetic language of al-Andalus, and likely shared by the three confessional communities, as we will see. Ibid.
164 Tabbaa, “Islamic Courtyards,” 218.
165 Ibid.
the case of the fountain in the Courtyard of the Lions at the Alhambra, fed back to the source fountain. Symbolically, this water loop would provide a continuous flow, maintaining the aesthetically pleasing aspects of the water, but in the specific case of the Sala de la Justicia and the Patio del Yeso, it would continually connect and intermingle the reigns of Alfonso XI and the Almohads, who were well represented architecturally throughout Seville. This connection would suggest, not one of dominance or triumph, but rather connection and sharing. Certainly it could be seen as a ruler emulating the culture and taste of a regarded predecessor, but given the clear connections between this style and several other architectural features in al-Andalus and especially with those in the Alhambra, the connection appears intentional.

Art historian Jonas Lehrman argued that “water is employed as an element of continuity.” He noted, “frequently, a channel of water forms a string on which tanks, fountains and platforms are strung like beads [with] a long straight channel of water in the Islamic context possibly symbolizing infinity.” This interpretation would suggest both a figurative and literal connection between the Almohads (or Muslims in general) and the rule of Alfonso XI and the Castilians. On the one hand, it could suggest a continuity between Muslim and Christian rule with a shared reflection of excellence, grandeur, and high culture; on the other hand, it could suggest an exchange or flow between the two cultures across time and space, feeding each other. And, depending on the water source for the basin and fountain in the Sala and the pool in the Patio, the flow might be thought to originate with God and flow through each. There is no doubt that whatever symbolism the basin, channel, and pool held for Muslims, it would be recognizable

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166 Tabbaa, “Islamic Courtyards,” 211.
167 Most notably the Torre del Oro and the Giralda, both prominent and extant Almohad constructions in Seville.
169 Ibid.
as such by both the builders and any potential visitors to the Alcazar of Seville – including dignitaries like Muhammad V and Ibn Khaḍḍun. Cynthia Robinson suggested that the connection between the channel, fountain, and pool may have held some symbolic significance for Jews as well, indicating the Kabbalistic imagery of pool and flowing water reflecting a connection to the divine. Robinson and Ruiz Souza noted that similar water features occurred both at Santa Clara de Tordesillas (archaeologically) and the Alhambra, indicating the pool, basin, channel, and their inherent connection were part of a common visual and design language, likely recognizable to members of each confessional community. But more importantly, these features and connections were not linked to religion and were instead part of a shared visual language and culture. If true, this evidence further supports the lack of commentary on the Castilian use of Islamicate designs by contemporary visitors and would also allow the Sala de la Justicia to serve as inspiration for future constructions, even among Andalusi Muslims in Granada or the Jews in Seville, Toledo, or Córdoba without any modern identity-based conflict.

If the Sala de la Justicia was not an example of a triumphalism of inversion and was instead the representative product of a shared culture with connections across the three confessional communities, possibly extending back to the Almohads and earlier, then a full interpretation of the Sala cannot end with an understanding of the context and likely motivation behind the construction of this one throne room, but is instead likely part of a far more expansive corpus of material across multiple regions, periods, and polities. As such, the Sala can only be properly contextualized by placing it within the Islamicate history of the Alcazar, which is in turn part of a

171 This feature is not presently visible, but it was noted in archaeological analyses of the structure. See Tabales, El Alcázar de Sevilla.
cosmopolitan shared culture in al-Andalus that provided a common visual language that came to be called Mudéjar, but which crossed political and religious boundaries because it existed separately and distinctly from such ideological confines or affiliations. It is only by examining this shared culture as it occurred across these ideological boundaries that the Islamicate context of the Alcazar of Seville and any related material can be fully understood.

If the Sala de la Justicia was meant to serve as a symbolic representation of power and grandeur for its patron Alfonso XI, connected both to the previous Almohad rulers as well as a shared visual language and shared culture of al-Andalus, then it was also an important waypoint in the Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville. Moving forward, the shared culture and visual language that appears to be present in the Sala, also occurred across confessional communities and the region of al-Andalus in other forms of architecture and material culture. An examination of the widespread presence of the shared visual language and culture in al-Andalus will help to contextualize the Sala de la Justicia as well as set the stage for the continued examination of the Alcazar of Seville and the broader Islamicate history of the region.
3.3 The Curious Case of Santa Clara de Tordesillas

Figure 12: Entrance, Real Convento de Santa Clara

The Palace at Tordesillas (Valladolid) later converted to the Real Convento de Santa Clara under Pedro I presents an interesting case that may bear on the larger interpretation of the Sala de la Justicia and the suggestion of a shared culture operating in al-Andalus and the Castilian controlled territory. Based on several inscriptions that appear on or near the Palace’s entrance, the Palace at Tordesillas is typically attributed to Alfonso XI, also credited as a commemoration for his victory at Rio Salado.\(^\text{174}\) While the subsequent renovation by Pedro I will serve as a much more prominent example of Islamicate shared culture and discussed in Chapter 5, the connection between the early Palace and Alfonso XI poses some interesting possibilities. Historian Carmen Checa acknowledged that there is some question about the attribution of the palace to Alfonso XI, despite the evidence presented by the stone inscriptions, suggesting that “the absence of any


documented connection with [Alfonso XI] means that it is possible that these commemorative stones may have been placed here during the major alterations to the building carried out by…Pedro I, with the intention of honouring his father.” While there is nothing documentary apart from the stones to corroborate an attribution to Alfonso XI, there is also nothing specifically disputing it. Tordesillas was “part of the patrimony of Leonor de Guzman,” Alfonso XI’s mistress, giving it a preferential status for Alfonso, but some architectural elements present in the Palace also suggest a connection to Alfonso, which follow a similar logic as the Sala de la Justicia and the preservation of and connection to the Patio del Yeso.

The only remaining remnant of the original palace (prior to Pedro’s renovation) is the present room known as the Gilded Chapel.

175 Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 7.
176 Ibid.
The original chapel is a 12th century Almohad design, which may have been directly constructed by the Almohads or inspired by Almohad designs.179 The chapel and its decoration were retained

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179  Like the entry stones suggesting the Palace construction for Alfonso, the Gilded Chapel’s original design is indeterminate between it being an Almohad construction or Almohad-inspired. Checa notes that the design and features of the original structure also appear in two Sevillian Mudéjar chapels, Saint Pablo and Saint Marina, along with another structure in Valladolid, suggesting that either the Gilded Chapel itself or a shared Islamicate style influenced other area constructions. Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 27-28.
even after Pedro I’s renovations, and were clearly in place throughout the reign of Alfonso XI and the tenure of Leonor de Guzman. Like the *Patio del Yeso* and the Giralda in Seville, the retention of the Almohad chamber may further reflect the desire for a connection between the reigning Castilians and their Almohad predecessors. Whether *Santa Clara de Tordesillas* represents a construction by Alfonso remains unclear, but given its connection to Leonor de Guzman it is likely that he spent time in Tordesillas and the palace influenced similar constructions in the same way the *Sala de la Justicia* had also served as inspiration. While this dissertation will argue that both Pedro I’s Mudéjar Palace constructed in the Alcazar of Seville, and his renovation of *Santa Clara de Tordesillas* are clear examples of a shared Islamicate culture present in al-Andalus, it will also argue that while Pedro, along with Muhammad V in Granada and Samuel ha-Levi in Toledo are the pinnacle of Islamicate shared culture in al-Andalus, the development and participation in this shared culture can be seen much earlier, likely extending back to the Almohads themselves and certainly through the Castilians in the *Reconquista* and Alfonso XI. If the Palace at Tordesillas was indeed part of the patronage of Alfonso XI, then the connections between this construction, the Almohads, and Islamicate shared culture seem even that much more likely, especially given the clear connections it will later produce as part of a larger case study during the reigns of Pedro I and Muhammad V. Since Islamicate shared culture and visual language is the foundation of the Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville, an examination of the breadth and history of this shared culture in al-Andalus and the Castilian territory is critical.
4 TOWARD A SHARED CULTURE

The historical mystery of the Islamicate designs in Alfonso XI’s Sala de la Justicia results from a lack of clarity regarding the context and milieu in which it was commissioned and built to reside. Understanding that context and milieu involves tracing their development to the point where the seeming contradictions and their explanations not only make sense for the throne room itself, but also for a multitude of similarly confusing and boundary-crossing constructions and creations that would surface across al-Andalus nearly from the moment the Reconquista began. What answers the questions and solves the mysteries related to the “paradox of Islamic art in Spain” as described earlier by Oleg Grabar, is the presence of some form of shared culture in which members of all three confessional communities, Christians, Muslims, and Jews, could participate, but also a culture that could exist separately and distinctly from any conflicting affiliations in political, religious, or social realms which might otherwise prevent such cosmopolitan cooperation. It is this cosmopolitan cooperation in the form of shared culture that is being described as Islamicate.

The shared Islamicate culture relied upon an understanding of the city of Seville and the region of al-Andalus as a cosmopolitan realm in which members of different confessional communities cooperated and coexisted despite their differences. However, the true nature of Islamicate society must extend beyond tolerance, coexistence, or convivencia, and instead involve active and intentional participation in cultural aspects of society that are shared, hybrid, or “built together,” such that something different is created that is not associated with any specific group, but rather represents a shared experience and dynamic in which all social members not only participate, but actively innovate and grow within.\(^\text{180}\) In this context, if the

\(^{180}\) Despite not being directly associated with the religion of Islam, the shared culture is still considered Islamicate with regard to its origins in the shared cultural space which developed under Muslim rule in al-Andalus, but also due
Islamicate culture of al-Andalus, and Seville in particular, is understood as being part of a shared experience that existed from the period of Islamic rule, but which continued in varying degrees and manifestations through the *Reconquista* and the subsequent period of Christian rule in the region, then this Islamicate culture should be traceable. And in fact, it is.

One of the difficulties in recognizing, let alone understanding, the concept of the shared culture being proposed lies in a predisposition toward binary thinking and a hegemonic concept of culture vs. one that has multiple facets that may have been operating independently or at least separately from each other.\(^{181}\) In her contribution to Jeffrey Cohen’s *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, Suzanne Conklin Akbari argued that the modern conceptual binary between East and West or Occident and Orient as she classified it began to fracture or at least decay when viewed in a medieval context.\(^{182}\) Where there did appear to be some binary polarization was between Christians and Muslims that appeared in the form of polemic and other writings by church figures, and some Muslim writers as well, especially during the Crusader period of 11\(^{th}\)-14\(^{th}\) centuries.\(^{183}\) As discussed previously, religious distinction and religious polemic abound, but in the face of cosmopolitanism and separation between the realms of religion, politics, and culture, conflict and binary thinking in the religious realm does not equate with positions in the cultural to material appearances and aesthetics that likewise developed under Muslim rule and continued to reflect Islamic material influence, resulting in non-Muslim design styles like Mudéjar. See Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. I and Ruiz Souza “Architectural Languages.”

\(^{181}\) This is largely referring to the idea that cultural elements and ideas may have been understood separately from social, religious, or political elements as described by Glick in *Convivencia* and Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale in *Arts of Intimacy* as well as Chapter 2 of this dissertation.


\(^{183}\) Akbari, “From Due East to True North,” 20.
realm. Or as Akbari noted, “it would be a mistake to…conflate a binary overtly based on religious difference with the binary of Orient and Occident.”

What stems from Akbari’s comment is the critical interpretive understanding of the nature of the religious and/or political differences as they existed in the context of medieval Seville or Andalusi society in general. The interpretation that is proposed in this dissertation is that realms of religion and religious commentary existed as separate and distinct from realms of culture, especially with regard to architecture and material culture. This distinction is necessary to understand and square many of the contradictory aspects of Andalusi material cultural and architectural history. As was the case with Alfonso XI’s throne room, it would seem inconceivable in a binary-oriented or monolithicized system for Alfonso XI to have constructed such a room in the Mudéjar style if that style had any recognized association with Islam. This is the imperative second aspect of the separation of culture and religion; without the religious affiliation, Islamicate cultural elements, which would include anything designated as Mudéjar, could exist in a separate cognitive space where they were not understood to be religious in nature.

4.1 “Mudéjar” and Mudéjarismo (Mudéjarism)

One of the most vexing terminological challenges in this analysis is associated with the term “Mudéjar.” Because “Mudéjar” appears repeatedly throughout this Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville, recognizing it in its proper context and milieu is equally vital. As discussed in the last chapter, incorporating both demographic and material cultural definitions of the term is consistently required. Much of the Islamicate history of Seville is rooted in this concept and

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184 Where Orient and Occident in this case represent hegemonic concepts of reality and unity like those seen in binaries like the clash of civilizations. Akbari, “From Due East to True North,” 20.
both of its attendant definitions, the material culture definition in particular, however the
demographic descriptor is also centrally important. The simple fact of Muslims living under
Christian (or any non-Muslim rule) is significant. The historian L.P. Harvey is clear to point out
that for whatever their reasons, Mudéjars living under Christian rule in Toledo, Córdoba, Seville
or elsewhere in al-Andalus in the post-conquest period, largely did so by choice. “The essence
of Mudéjarism was that the subject Muslim accepted non-Muslim rule.”185 This choice to stay
under non-Muslim rule was considered by Muslims outside al-Andalus to be extremely
inappropriate and disdainful. Harvey cites Ibn Khaldun and “the disdain he felt for his co-
religionists when he met them in Peter the Cruel’s Seville.”186 Harvey notes that Ibn Khaldun’s
comment on the Mudéjars of Seville “is rather an exception in that he mentions the Mudéjars at
all: for most Muslims authors the Mudéjars were an embarrassing anomaly, to be passed over
with tactful silence.”187 Harvey was quick to point out however, that the Mudéjars likely did not
stay in al-Andalus due to any decline or abandonment of Islam or religiosity. On the contrary, he
indicated that they remained highly dedicated and involved in their religion.188 That said,
Jocelyn Hendrickson’s analysis of fatwās issued by jurists regarding trade or other mercantile
interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims in contested territories, is clearly prohibited by
multiple fatwās and precedents.189 From this perspective, Mudéjars in Christian al-Andalus,
regardless of their situation, would be in violation of Islamic law despite the circumstances or

185 In other words, these are not captives or people living in occupied territory, but rather chose to stay on after the
Christian conquest for some reason or other. L. P. Harvey, “The Mudéjars,” in The Legacy of Muslim Spain, vol. 1,
Salma Jayyusi ed. (Leiden u.a.: Brill, 1994), 176.
186 This is particularly interesting and poignant given that Ibn Khaldun’s own ancestors had left Seville themselves
following the conquest of the city by Fernando III in 1248 CE. Harvey, “The Mudéjars,” 177.
187 Ibid.
189 The contested territories Hendrickson notes through the fatwās are specifically post-conquest Christian Sicily and
possible trade between Granada and Christian al-Andalus. Jocelyn Hendrickson, “Is Al-Andalus Different?:
Continuity as Contested, Constructed, and Performed across Three Mālikī Fatwās,” Islamic Law and Society 20, no.
particularities, including necessity. Hendrickson does concede that these fatwas, while establishing a long-standing precedent were not definitive in that other jurists within the Maliki madhab, which predominated in Islamic al-Andalus would typically allow such transactions based on necessity.

Despite reactions from external jurists or general perceptions or disdain held by non-Andalusi Muslims, the Mudéjars of al-Andalus, and especially those in Castilian territory, did experience a different relationship with the Christian rulers than that of Muslims living in Muslim controlled territories like Granada. Muslims living under Christian rule in Castilian territory held a “protected tributary status (da'ijn)” or ahl ad-dajn. Harvey noted that “there is an obvious close resemblance between the status of the ahl al-dajn within Christian society and that of the ahl al-dhimma [dhimmi], or protected peoples, Jewish and Christian, within Islam.”

The fact that the conquering Christians continued what seems like a version of the Islamic dhimmijizya system is particularly telling and might suggest a rationale for why many Muslims remained under Christian rule despite the negative reaction of other Muslims. Harvey indicated that “the Muslims whom Christians encountered on a daily basis were their Mudéjar neighbors: cultivators, craftsmen, a skilled farrier perhaps, or a trusted doctor.” In short, the Mudéjars were a part of Andalusi society. And, in consideration of the contribution and participation of Mudéjars in the cultural and material cultural realms within Andalusi society, it may be that they identified as both Muslims and Andalusis and their role in an Islamicate society, in which the Christians and Jews were also participating, was their shared cultural experience. And more to

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190 Hendrickson cites Granadan jurist al-Shatibi’s fatwa on selling weapons to non-Muslims, even out of necessity for food. Violations of Islamic law based on necessity (typically for survival) are frequently deemed allowable if there is no other recompense. Hendrickson, “Is Al-Andalus Different?” 382–83.
191 Hendrickson, “Is Al-Andalus Different?” 382.
193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
the point, al-Andalus was their home suggesting that it could be re-imagined as a *dar al-ta‘awun* (abode of cooperation)\(^{195}\) as opposed to the traditional *dar al-Islam/dar al-harb* (abode of Islam or peace/abode of war or conflict) paradigm, from the perspective of these residents.\(^{196}\) Extending back to Hendrickson, it is possible that because of their Andalusian connection and being outside the *dar al-Islam* proper, Mudéjars may have seen themselves as having a different relationship to Islamic law than their coreligionists in the *dar al-Islam*, even if they continued to practice their religion in the same way.

If the challenge of assessing the social context of Mudéjars is problematic, the cultural context of Mudéjars and Mudéjar designs or material culture is even more so. One of the most difficult impediments to assessing a design as “Mudéjar,” as with many other aspects of this study, is the tendency to monolithicize that term, but also to make it exclusive. As Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza noted previously, “the appearance of a single Muslim name among a list of artisans…is enough for a building to be definitively labelled as Mudéjar.”\(^{197}\) While his is a warning about being too quick to assert a Mudéjar designation to some objects of material culture, it also indicates the tendency to understand something Mudéjar as particularly associated with Muslims rather than a manifestation of a broader Islamicate culture in al-Andalus. The entire purpose of the shared culture hypothesis is that Mudéjar designs or other Islamicate manifestations were not limited to a particular group, and the creation and decoration of such manifestations could be patronized or realized by any combination of artisans who happened to

\(^{195}\) The Arabic term *ta‘awun* (cooperation) is being used here to reflect the possibility of a shared culture from the Muslim perspective. Munif Ba‘labakkī and Rūhī Ba‘labakkī, *al-Mawrid dictionary: English-Arabic, Arabic-English* (Beirut: Dar el-Ilm lil-Malayēn, 2007), 216.

\(^{196}\) The *dar al-Islam/dar al-harb* paradigm is often considered along the same lines as the clash of civilizations perspective, but while the translated terminology does suggest such a dichotomy, the concept in general refers to areas under Islamic rule (and by extension Islamic law) and areas which are under non-Muslim rule – which would include al-Andalus in the post-Reconquista period.

specialize in the requested design. As Ruiz Souza indicated, “specialization was an…important component of the construction industry throughout the Iberian Peninsula.”¹⁹⁸ He continued, “rich documentary sources point to a hierarchization and specialization of labor in all phases of a building’s conception and construction. These include planning, stone quarrying, terrain preparation, construction, revetment, ornamentation, the addition of stairs or walkways or other points of access, and even specialization according to the building materials to be employed for a particular task.”¹⁹⁹ Thus, any suggestion that a patron of a building, room, or objet d’art was merely employing the convenient local artisans is likely unrealistic and contraindicated by the far more likely careful selection and choice involved in all aspects of these projects. In this way, the Sala de la Justicia, or any other Mudéjar or Islamicate designed structure, looks the way it does by design, not by chance or convenience. As Ruiz Souza confirmed, “the ethnic origin of the workforce cannot be a determining factor in the appearance of a finished product, since artisans of different religions worked on the same construction site.”²⁰⁰ Furthermore, he suggested that with regard to the Mudéjar style being the product of Muslim artisans and craftspeople, “it also appears highly unlikely that the contribution of a clearly marginal segment of the population established the aesthetic criteria for all of Iberia during the entire later Middle Ages.”²⁰¹ From this perspective, it must be concluded that other motivations and interests influenced the use Mudéjar designs which appear in al-Andalus. Furthermore, it seems imperative that the term “Mudéjar” be recognized as something of a misnomer and again should be understood as

²⁰¹ Here Ruiz Souza is referring the prolific and widespread use of “Mudéjar” designs across Al-Andalus and beyond by all three confessional communities over the course of several hundred years. Ibid.
referring to something Islamicate and not something Muslim, especially as it often refers to the
cultural products created by or patronized by non-Muslims.

With regard to the idea of shared culture in Seville and al-Andalus, Ruiz Souza offered
support for such a concept found in contemporary sources. “Christian literary sources always use
the term Morisco to classify everything related to al-Andalus, as is the case with textiles, musical
instruments, painted scrollwork, muqarnas, domes and so on. [Noting that] certain decorative
elements, such as the horseshoe or polylobed arch, were commonly used in Christian buildings
[even outside al-Andalus] as a result of their popularity in al-Andalus.”

If Ruiz Souza’s suggestion of Mudéjar designs being widely employed by non-Muslims is correct, and ample
evidence confirms that they were, then it may precipitate a need to re-evaluate the use of the term
Mudéjar and its implications. Based on multicultural participation in what appears to be an
Islamicate shared culture, it may be necessary to reconsider the concept of Mudéjar, not as
exclusively referring to a style of art and design or a particular group of people, but rather may
indicate a reflection or manifestation of this shared culture. Thus, the appellation of “Mudéjar”
may better serve as a signal for a likely manifestation of Islamicate shared culture rather than
simply a definitional catchall for things that “look Islamic.” In this way, noting Ruiz Souza’s
concern that the mere presence of a Muslim name on a list could signal something Mudéjar
(referring to material culture or people), “Mudéjar” might instead be seen as a marker for some
sort of Andalusi connection, either through artisans or patrons as well as other social, political, or
cultural affiliations.

4.2 Religion, Law, and Shared Culture in al-Andalus

The essence of cosmopolitanism reflected in this study involves cooperation in the face of conflict, where the conflict on various fronts was often defined by religious affiliation and practice. Religion, as it turns out, was indeed an interactive realm with clear lines and orientations, especially after the dictates of the Fourth Lateran Council were issued and released in 1215 CE. This council, along with various contemporary papal decrees and positions, established clear theological lines between the Christians and their minority populations, the Jews and Muslims. The curious case of religion and culture in Seville and al-Andalus is that frequently these religious positions were in conflict with sociocultural positions, establishing other lines and break points which seemed to have operated differently in Spain than in other parts of Christendom. The likely mitigating factor that created the difference is that the shared culture in al-Andalus was already established under the previous period of Muslim rule and already held sway over the populations in the territories that would eventually be captured by the Castilians and other Spanish Christian kingdoms. As a result, the Castilians in particular, were inserting themselves into an environment that was already participating in a shared culture where the religious and cultural lines may have already been separated and in which the Castilians may have been predisposed to participate, especially under the rule of Alfonso X *el Sabio* who may have been most keenly instrumental in the continuation of the shared culture and the inclusion of the Castilians into it.

In the Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 CE, Saracens (Muslims) and Jews in particular, were singled out, predominantly in Canons 67-70. The Fourth Lateran Council attempted to restrict or curtail certain business and commercial practices between Jews and

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204 Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils*, 289–96.
Christians; designated specifically identifiable dress for Jews and Saracens, presumably in the hope of curtailing relations between these groups and Christians, and also sought to curtail participation in public offices, especially by Jews, where they might hold positions of authority over Christians. Muslims received little mention, likely due to their general lack of presence outside of Iberia. While similar rules appeared in other Spanish legal documents, likely as a gesture to the Church, all evidence indicates that these dictates were not put into practice. Clearly these Church Canons were created to address an ongoing situation across Christendom, but the cooperation between Jews, Muslims, and Christians was nowhere more frequent and pronounced than in al-Andalus, which may have directly impacted their application and use in that territory. Not only were Christians, Muslims, and Jews involved in cooperative commercial and mercantile ventures, but Jews in particular held various roles of prominence and power throughout the period of early Castilian rule in Seville and al-Andalus.\textsuperscript{205} Or, as Chris Lowney observed, the acceptance of this diversity was largely out of practicality where Jews and Muslims reflected a sizable portion of the population of al-Andalus. In contrast, “England and France could better afford to pin badges on Jews, [who were] tiny minorities bearing scant impact on their overall economies.”\textsuperscript{206} As such, there were stark differences between the acceptance of Jews and Muslims within the Christian communities in Spain and the dictates of legal and ecumenical councils.\textsuperscript{207} As the scholar J.N. Hillgarth noted “none of these decrees was

\textsuperscript{205} Alfonso X, Alfonso XI and Pedro I in particular all had Jewish advisors, officials and administrators in their court. In addition all appear to have employed Muslim workers, craftspeople and artisans for various projects – indicating that the three confessional communities were interwoven to a significant degree. See Ruiz Souza, “Architectural Languages” and Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, \textit{The Arts of Intimacy}.


\textsuperscript{207} Specifically in the legal context of the \textit{Siete Partidas} legal code and the dictates of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 which had stark prescriptions for minority religious community members living under Christian rule, especially Jews. See Scott \textit{et al.}, \textit{Las Siete Partidas} and Schroeder, \textit{Disciplinary Decrees}.
strictly enforced in Spain.” The rationale for failing to implement church decrees in Spain was arguably a result of a shared society and shared culture. The context of such a shared society and culture, especially if the Castilians and other polities in al-Andalus would have varying degrees of participation in it, would create certain problems or roadblocks for the implementation of laws that would impact a large segment of the population as well as numerous critical or popular industries and institutions within it. In 1219, “Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain…had [the Church’s] decrees suspended as regarded the Jews of Castile since they provided the greater part of the royal revenue.” Hillgarth also indicated that “the Fourth Council’s decrees were also suspended in Aragon at the request of Jaume I.” Hillgarth also noted that “Royalty set the example in disregarding the decrees of Cortes and church councils.” And, “many Jews connected with the court received exemptions.” While the legal context and penalties outlined in the *Siete Partidas*, a foundational legal code promulgated by Alfonso X, did seem to reflect the Fourth Lateran Council in many ways, it is unclear what the intent of the legal code may have been since it appears not to have been enforced in any demonstrable way. As L.P. Harvey noted, “As is well known, the *Partidas* were not a code actually in force either in Alfonso’s day or later; rather they were an ideal compilation of laws Alfonso would have liked to see in existence, so the code had an exhortatory function.” Harvey also warned, “we must not fall into the trap of supposing that Alfonso’s ideas were put into practice…[noting] some mosques continued to exist in Castilian towns in spite of the [legal] ban on them.” Other political and cultural realities in place in al-Andalus at the time would

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209 Ibid.
210 Ibid.
214 Ibid.
likely push Harvey’s interpretation even further. In the early days of his reign, Alfonso X pursued the position and title of Holy Roman Emperor. Given the clear affiliation between this position and the Church and Bishop of Rome, the appearance of compliance with canon law seems obvious. Thus, presenting legal codes that were similar to legal proscriptions proposed by papal councils, even if they were never implemented, would likely serve this function. Based on material that appears in the cortes and fueros of the time, it appears that this may have been the case. If Alfonso X’s legal presentations occurred or were perceived in a manner similar to his requests for crusader funding from the Church, then it may be that the legal, religious, and political contexts of Castilian-led al-Andalus existed in one perceived reality for the Pope and the Church, while an entirely different reality occurred between the Castilians and their minority populations on the ground, especially in the realm of culture and convivencia.

The presence of a Muslim community and its relationship to the post-conquest economy can be seen in Brian Catlos’s extensive research on the Crown of Aragon. Catlos spent considerable time studying Christian and Muslim relations and interactions in the medieval Kingdom of Aragon. While his observations on intercultural relations during conquest (or reconquest) and rule during the thirteenth century and beyond do not directly translate to similar experiences between Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Castilian-ruled al-Andalus, they nonetheless provide some correlative support for similar interactions in that polity. Some key differences did exist between the Crown of Aragon and Castile, at least from a cultural perspective, which specifically included a lack of Almoravid and Almohad influenced developments. Also, the Ebro Valley,

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215 Specifically the Especulo and Fuero Real that appear in the Cortes of Toledo (1254), which helped to form the later Siete Partidas compilation along with subsequent legal writing over several years were composed during the period Alfonso X sought the Imperium. S. P. Scott, Robert Ignatius Burns, and Alfonso, eds., Las Siete Partidas, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), xxxiii–xxxv.

216 See discussion in Chapter 3 of this document.
while clearly home to a defined and active Muslim community was nonetheless not equivalent to cultural centers and capitals in Córdoba and Seville from which Muslim and Jewish populations in the later Christian Castilian kingdom emerged. The milieu of cultural interaction in both Aragon and Castile were similar in some ways. Both polities included Christians ruling over a previously Muslim-ruled populace, while some of the cultural interactions, especially regarding material culture, were also similar. In each case, the conquering Christians and pre-existing Muslim and Jewish populations coexisted within the new Christian controlled territory, however there was not an imposition or eradication of the conquered people or culture in either case. As Catlos indicated, “the Islamic society of the region [Ebro Valley] was not destroyed by the conquest, but had re-emerged as a mudéjar society by the thirteenth century.”217 One of the key factors that Catlos considered is the established culture that already existed in areas captured during the Reconquista, which led to certain interactive realities during the period of initial conquest and rule. As he observed, despite the seeming incompatibilities that existed between the ruling Christian culture and the social-political system and that was previously controlled by the Muslims, compromise took place.218 Catlos argued that on one hand, “the stable socio-economic situation of the Muslims encouraged certain compromises on the part of the conquerors.”219 On the other, he suggested that the now subject Muslim population, which comprised the Mudéjar population, “may have enjoyed an early advantage due to the Christians’ relative underdevelopment.”220 In this context, while clearly under Christian domination and

219 Catlos, *The Victors and the Vanquished*, 391.
220 The Aragonian conquest of the Ebro valley, like the Castilian conquest of Toledo both occurred in their early histories after their development in the early 11th century. In both cases, these recently autonomous kingdoms were relatively new and still removed from the cooperative period that would lead to the combined military victory at *Las Navas de Tolos* in the 13th century. Catlos, *The Victors and the Vanquished*, 391.
rule, the Mudéjar community not only survived but thrived. As Catlos described it, “The process of social, cultural, and institutional (in effect, ethnic) evolution from which the mudéjar society of the thirteenth-century Ebro emerged was stable and self-perpetuating: stable because of reposturing and negotiation between the victors and the vanquished was ongoing and did not provoke extra-institutional reactions (rebellions or pogroms), and self-perpetuating because the social and administrative institutions were self-reinforcing and able to ‘mold the behaviour of [their] members.’”

Catlos concluded, “Mudéjar institutions ranged from adopted or imposed Christian structures, through hybrids, to surviving Islamic ones. Maintaining their own culture and identity, Ebro mudéjares can be described as a distinct ethnic group.”

Gestures toward ethnicity in this medieval context may be more reflective of distinctiveness vs. the identity-centered ethnicity of the modern understanding. As Catlos indicated, the distinctiveness between the Ebro mudéjares and the dominant Christian society was predominantly along religious lines, but did not create “absolutely insurmountable barriers to mutually profitable interaction.”

Thus, in the context of the Ebro Mudéjar community under Aragonian rule, the interaction between the conquering Christians and the established Islamicate population resulted in a cooperative culture that on some level was co-built or shared. As a result, Catlos’ argument for Mudéjar ethnicity even further complicates that term by adding a third possible categorical definition alongside the social/demographic and material cultural options. While Catlos’ primary interest is in economic and administrative interactions and does not focus on the cultural interactions or sharing very much, it is still suggestive of a cooperative endeavor. Catlos discussed multi-lingual administration and documentation that occurred within the society along

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221 Catlos, The Victors and the Vanquished, 405.
222 Ibid.
223 Catlos, The Victors and the Vanquished, 406.
with active roles for Jews as royal scribes and Muslims as notaries, roles that were both previously held under the former Islamic rule.\textsuperscript{224} With institutions and practices flowing from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim sources and the hybrid systems that likely developed from these interactions, it is clear that a shared economic and administrative culture existed in the diverse and plural regions of Aragon in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

Catlos also identified another point of comparison between the realities of multicultural Aragon and neighboring Castile, namely the dictates of the Fourth Lateran Council. In the Crown of Aragon, the “sumptuary or vestimentary laws for minorities…do not seem to have been brought into practice with any degree of uniformity in the thirteenth century.”\textsuperscript{225} Catlos indicated that on the occasions where any gestures to the canons of Lateran IV were present, they were most likely directed at Jews, but even in these cases the concerns were largely documentary, i.e. appearing in pronouncements or ordinances, but likely with little enforcement.\textsuperscript{226} As Catlos noted, “there are no records of violations of such laws in the thirteenth century.”\textsuperscript{227} He also indicated that it is not until the late 14\textsuperscript{th} century that complaints about enforcement began to arise.\textsuperscript{228}

The reality of the multicultural and pluralistic populations and societies that existed in areas of Aragon and Castile which led to the general abandonment of dictates like Lateran IV, the cosmopolitan nature of these societies also challenged marital relations, which in turn likely influenced cross-cultural adoptions along with the development of hybrid cultural practices including the broader Islamicate shared culture proposed for Seville and the Alcazar. Given the

\textsuperscript{224} Catlos, \textit{The Victors and the Vanquished}, 239–47.
\textsuperscript{225} Catlos, \textit{The Victors and the Vanquished}, 300.
\textsuperscript{226} Catlos, \textit{The Victors and the Vanquished}, 301.
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{228} Catlos noted complaints by Mudéjars in Tortosa in the 1380s. This time frame also coincides with similar social changes in interfaith relations that occurred across Iberia in the Trastamarian period (post-1369 CE) in Castile along with the incidents detailed in David Niremberg’s \textit{Communities of Violence}. Ibid.
demographics, residents of cosmopolitan centers in al-Andalus were the most likely to become involved in interfaith relationships. These “relations” between Christians, Muslims, and Jews, as with the evolving shared culture, had been ongoing since the early Muslim conquest period. According to the Qur’an and Shari’a law, Muslim men may marry virtuous Muslim women and virtuous women from the ahl al-kitab (People of the Book – Muslims, Christians, and Jews). 229

As a result, children of Muslim fathers and Christian or Jewish mothers would have been fairly common and acceptable during the period of Islamic rule in Spain. Thus, generations of interfaith children being raised in interfaith environments and an interfaith culture carried on for several hundred years prior to the Christian reconquest. In her article “Mothers of a Hybrid Dynasty,” D. Fairchild Ruggles argued that acculturation among Muslims in al-Andalus was the product of the multi-ethnic mothers of the children of the Umayyads who were themselves of multiple confessional origins and ethnicities – Berbers, Basques, Hispano-Romans etc. 230 As a result, “the presence of women whose ethnic difference introduced alternative cultural habits, [which] manifested in religion, speech, music, dress, and a wide spectrum of social behaviors.” 231 The resultant culture produced by these hybrid families, as Ruggles suggested, was “neither Muslim nor Christian, Arab nor Basque, male nor female.” 232 Due to its hybrid origins and development, such a culture existed alongside the religious, ethnic, familial, social, or political affiliations of the family members, even if there would be potential conflicts between them otherwise. If such a hybrid culture was developing and operating under Umayyad rule in al-Andalus, then it had multiple generations to germinate throughout the Muslims’ tenure in the

229 Sura al-Mai’dah, Qur’an 5:5.
region. As such, any likely acculturation would involve this hybrid culture to the extent that it would be well established and in place long before Las Navas de Toloso and the *Reconquista* brought dynamic change to the peninsula. As Ruggles noted, “just as goods and practices arrived in Al-Andalus from elsewhere, Andalusian art and cultural practices also went northward.” As a result, Andalusian influences, especially in the cultural realm, preceded the Christian conquests in the South and likely produced early appreciation for this hybrid culture, now being described as Islamicate (developed cooperatively, but not necessarily religiously). Thus, when the Christians captured Toledo from the Muslims in 1085 CE, they were already familiar with and likely peripherally participating in or engaging with the hybrid Islamicate culture they found there.

As Brian Catlos argued, it was the fact of Christian conquest and dominance over a Muslim population that gave rise to *mudejarismo*. At the same time, the change from dominance during Islamic rule to subordination under Christian rule suggests that whatever cultural elements were present for the Muslim community while in control, likely continued, albeit in an altered form under subjugation. It is also likely the case that the same pre-existing socio-cultural milieu that gave rise to the Mudéjars was also a component of Jewish culture, as well as Mozarabs and other Christians living under Islamic rule. In this way, it is imperative to examine Mudéjar culture as an Islamicate culture and not simply as an ethnicity *per se* or a descriptor of Muslims living under Christian rule. If it is the case that the shared culture, which this study argues was instrumental in the Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville, began to develop from the beginning of the *Reconquista* and the control of previously held Muslim territory and formerly

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233 By “northward,” Ruggles is referring to Asturias and other northern regions that were not conquered by Muslims. Ruggles, “Mothers of a Hybrid Dynasty,” 86.
Muslim dominated populations in al-Andalus, then some evidence of this should appear in one of the first major Castilian conquests, the city of Toledo in 1085 CE.

4.3 Toledo and the Beginning of Shared Islamicate Culture

In May of 1085 CE, after an extended siege and blockade, Emir Yahya al-Qadir surrendered the city and *ta’ifa* of Toledo to Alfonso VI of Castile, ending a more than 350-year period of Islamic rule. The capture of Toledo, while not the first Christian success against the Muslims in Iberia, was the first major city that was captured and held. While the military advantages and optics of such a victory would play a major role in the ongoing *Reconquista*, the capture of Toledo also marks the first instance where the Christians found themselves in command of a diverse and pluralistic population which had lived under Muslim rule for an extended period of time. The population of Toledo, which included Muslims, Mozarabs, and Jews along with the incoming Castilians and the new influx of outside settlers and visitors, represented a new sociocultural dynamic for the conquering Christians and one that would ultimately establish an early interactive matrix between the Christian rulers and their multicultural subject populations, which in turn would define Islamicate culture in the centuries to come.

In the period of Islamic rule in Toledo, which fell to the Muslims during Tariq ibn Ziyad’s initial conquest of Visigothic Iberia in the early years of the 8th century, the new Muslim rulers would eventually establish the *dhimmi/jizya* construct for the non-Muslims in Toledo, namely the Mozarab and Jewish populations. After the Christian conquest, Alfonso VI implemented a similar system. “The Muslims who remained in [Toledo] were granted the right to worship freely and to retain possession of the chief mosque.”234 O’Callaghan indicated that Alfonso’s

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Queen, Costanza, and the newly installed archbishop of Toledo, Bernard de Sauvetot, both of whom were French Catholics, seized the Mosque and consecrated it as a cathedral. In turn, Alfonso VI who had been out of the city at the time, was outraged at the breaking of his promise to the resident Muslim population.\textsuperscript{235} Olivia Constable suggested that this story and Alfonso’s outrage were probably fictional, given that it would be unlikely that the Queen and Archbishop could have accomplished this without the knowledge of the King and especially given that the consecration of the central Mosque as a cathedral became a regular practice in subsequent conquests of Muslim territory.\textsuperscript{236} O’Callaghan proffered that it was the local Muslim population itself that convinced Alfonso not to take action against the Queen and Archbishop for their transgression, lest the Muslims suffer consequences in the future.\textsuperscript{237} Either way, the interaction between the resident Muslim population and the ruling Christians over the mosque would be only one of many such architectural interactions in the new multi-confessional community in Toledo which would play a highly influential role not only in the future of Islamicate/Mudéjar culture and design, but also likely influenced Alfonso VI’s descendent, Alfonso X \textit{el Sabio}, who would himself play a key role in the ongoing Islamicate history of the region.

Regardless of the relative veracity of the Toledo mosque controversy, that architectural interaction between the ruling Christians and these buildings was largely one of conversion. In most cases, the “new” cathedral was not constructed on top of the mosque, rather the mosque was simply repurposed and consecrated for Christianity. The repurposing of former Muslim-built structures would become the standard for the \textit{Reconquista} as conversion without reconstruction (but possibly addition) occurred in both Córdoba and Seville. For example, while

\textsuperscript{235} O’Callaghan, \textit{A History of Medieval Spain}, 206.
\textsuperscript{236} Olivia Remie Constable and Damian Zurro, eds., \textit{Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources}, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 134.
\textsuperscript{237} O’Callaghan, \textit{A History of Medieval Spain}, 206.
the great mosque in Seville was eventually replaced by the newly constructed Cathedral of Seville, except for the Giralda and some other features like the *Puerta del Lagarto* (Lizard Door), the commissioning of that project did not occur until the early 15th century, a generation after the death of Pedro I and the beginning of the Trastamara dynasty. For the entirety of the period encompassing the Islamic history of the Alcazar of Seville, the Cathedral, including the former minaret, was a repurposed mosque.

As the examination of the *Sala de la Justicia* made clear, it is one thing to repurpose a structure, it is another thing entirely to construct something new. New constructions (including new additions) are significant because they are typically commissioned and patronized by clients who request or suggest particular features, materials, or designs. Thus, any new constructions or additions that took place in post-*Reconquista* Toledo, especially those involving the Christians, would be significant.

### 4.4 Cristo de la Luz

One of the many Toledo precedents for the Islamic architecture seen in the Alcazar of Seville was the basilican church of Santa Cruz. The basilican church of Santa Cruz or *Mezquita Cristo de la Luz* in Toledo, Spain was formerly known as the *Bab al-Mardum* Mosque due to its proximity to the *Bab al-Mardum* Gate (fig. 15).

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Figure 15: Bab al-Mardum

Figure 16: Exterior, Cristo de la Luz

Jerrilynn Dodds noted, “Although religious difference was often galvanized by political difference in the Middle Ages, religious ideology did not control all aspects of cultural interaction, attitude and production in Spain.” As such, Cristo de la Luz represents one of the first examples of Islamicate architecture that was commissioned by Christians in al-Andalus. This Islamicate style would go on to be part of the corpus of architecture and material culture commonly referred to as Mudéjar. What is intriguing about Cristo de la Luz is that it resides in Toledo, which, in 1085 CE, was one of the first Muslim cities to fall to the Christians during the Reconquista. The original mosque is believed to have been constructed c. 999 CE in what was then Muslim-controlled Toledo. About one hundred years after the conquest, the Bab al-Mardum mosque was put under the control of Knights Hospitaller and dedicated to Santa Cruz.

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241 Front face of Cristo de la Luz, Toledo, Spain. PMR Maeyaert, own work, creative commons 3.0 license.
244 Originally under the control of the Umayyads of al-Andalus, the city fell to the Christians during the ta’ifa period and more than 150 years before the capture of Seville in 1248 CE. Ibid.
245 The Knights Hospitaller or Order of Knights of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem were a Catholic military order active during the Crusades, based initially in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, but relocated largely to Malta after
in 1186 CE. Subsequent to this dedication, a semicircular apse was added to the building and decorated with frescos.

Figure 18: Interior Apse, Cristo de la Luz

Figure 19: Fresco detail, Cristo de la Luz


Detail of semicircular apse featuring matching brick and stone work, Mezquita del Cristo de la Luz, Toledo, Spain. J.F. Sullivan, own work, 2016.

The addition was constructed following the design aesthetic of the original mosque and became an early example of Islamicate architecture constructed during the period of Christian rule. Apart from the art historical origins that *Cristo de la Luz* may represent in terms of Mudéjar architecture, the Islamicate designs stand out for another reason. This addition, with the new Islamicate designs, was installed in a converted Christian church following the Christian capture of the city and under the watch of an order of crusader knights with the blessing of Archbishop González Pérez. What’s more, the remainder of al-Andalus was still under the control of the Muslims, including the city of Córdoba, the great mosque of which was the inspiration for aspects of the original *Bab al-Mardum* mosque. Also still under Islamic rule was Seville, where the Almohads had recently completed the Giralda, originally the minaret of the Great Mosque of Seville, which would go on to inspire several other Mudéjar constructions in the future.

David Raizman indicated that the existing *Bab al-Mardum* mosque and the newly constructed apse were intended to provide a seamless experience for the viewer despite being “separated by more than two centuries, [which] are unified by construction materials, [and] by the decorative vocabulary of the architecture.” He also observed that several new constructions in post-conquest Toledo mirrored the shared visual language found in *Cristo de la Luz*, which he noted “reveal a similar mingling and integration of Islamic and Christian artistic traditions.” Raizman was careful to point out that the newly constructed Islamicate material in other constructions in Toledo “is not based upon the copying of any particular precedent, but upon extrapolation from the decorative vocabulary seen at *Bab al-Mardum* [mosque].”

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251 Ibid.
essence, the Islamicate Mudéjar design aesthetic had to have been understood in such a way that it was a living style that could be molded and adapted to various constructions. In addition, it must also have been a part of a shared visual language that was acceptable and employed by members of all three confessional communities to the extent that it represented a characteristic Andalusi style and culture.\textsuperscript{252}

“The basilican church of Santa Cruz shows visual continuity with Islamic urban architecture from before 1085. Conspicuous in Toledo is the persistence of the local traditions of brick building established in the time of the caliphate, and the ease with which they adapted to the liturgical requirements of a large and diverse Christian population.”\textsuperscript{253} Raizman also noted that “in Toledo…[the use of] brick marked a continuity with the existing Islamic architecture seen not only in the \textit{Bab al-Mardum} mosque, but also in such civil and military structures as towers, gates, walls, and baths.”\textsuperscript{254} In Santa Cruz, as well as in these other iterations mentioned above, the employment of previously Islamic materials and design aesthetics in not only civil, but religious architecture by Christians seems to substantiate the idea that however Islamicate or Mudéjar designs were considered by the patrons, builders, or intended consumers, they were likely not understood in terms of religion. Further, the affiliation with Islamicate material by the Christians seems to likewise confirm the medieval understanding of identity, especially if the Islamicate designs were more seen as representative of culture. As Raizman noted, “new structures created an apparently seamless visual transition in the city, despite dramatic changes in

\textsuperscript{252} The situation that Raizman describes for Toledo is similar to that of Seville as reported in the \textit{Primera Cronica de España} for stylistic appreciation of Almohad architecture and construction, which would likewise be reflected in new constructions by that city’s residents following the conquest. Raizman, 133 and Ramon Menendez Pidal, \textit{Primera Cronica General de España}, vol. 2 (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1955), \textit{Capítulo} 1128, pp. 768-769; Pidal, \textit{Primera Cronica General de España}.

\textsuperscript{253} Raizman, “The Church of Santa Cruz and the Beginnings of Mudéjar Architecture in Toledo,” 129.

\textsuperscript{254} Ibid.
the demography as well as in religious and political hierarchies after 1086.”

Raizmen pointed out that these were new constructions, much in the same way that the Alcazar of Seville’s Sala de la Justicia and Mudéjar Palace, the Sinagoga del Tránsito, and Santa Clara de Tordesillas were all new constructions completed by Christians or Jews in the Islamicate Mudéjar style.

Raizman also suggested that “[Cristo de la Luz] and other post-conquest Christian buildings presented an architectural aesthetic characterized by the integration or modification of materials and techniques of Islamic art in the construction of churches and basilican plans. This unique and hybrid architecture…and the incorporation or integration of Islamic forms could be seen as the visible counterpart to the image of a cosmopolitan Christian capital.”

Raizman’s understanding of Islamicate architecture in post-conquest Toledo is in line with similar experiences seen in later post-Reconquista cities in al-Andalus. Two ideas emerge from Raizman’s exploration: first the clear presence and wide participation in an emerging Islamicate visual culture in a Christian, post-conquest context, and second, the idea of a cosmopolitan capital or the relationship between the Islamic culture and the identity of the ruler and their subjects. Or more directly, that the idea for a cosmopolitan capital had to come from somewhere and it increasingly appears to have come from the appreciation and interpretation of Islamic courtly culture and aesthetics that can be seen across Spain and Europe. Also, while culturally the Reconquista Christians and their subjects appear to have been participating in the shared Islamicate culture with regard to material and design, language usage and legal codes, which may have been more reflective of religious affiliation, the Christians may have been operating along different lines. It is likely that language usage, especially among Christians and Mozarabs, may have been more keenly tied to religious identity than any cultural affiliations. As such,

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distinctions between language, religion, and culture would further suggest a cognitive
differentiation between these spheres. While languages such as Arabic, Latin, or Hebrew may
have been more linked to religion, given the association of those languages with their respective
sacred texts, there may have been a shared language of culture that served all three confessional
communities in a way that could be collectively communicated and understood. That said,
Cristo de la Luz, like many Mudéjar constructions that would follow, also employed some
Arabic inscriptions that further complicate its interpretation. A painted inscription in Arabic
(below) was included on the apsidal arch, which reads “Allah. There is no god but he, the
eternal, the self-subsistent.”

Figure 20: Arabic inscription, Cristo de la Luz

257 From the Qur’an, Sura al-Baqara, 255. Raizman, “The Church of Santa Cruz and the Beginnings of Mudéjar
Architecture in Toledo,” 130.
258 Segment of Arabic inscription on the apsical arch, Mezquita del Cristo de la Luz, Toledo, Spain. J.F. Sullivan,
own work, 2016.
The inclusion of the Arabic inscription troubled Raizman, who pondered if it was included as a form of triumphalism similar to what Jerrilynn Dodds would suggest or if it was “intended as an effort to convert Muslims.” Counter to these suggestions, it is more likely that the inscription followed a pattern that would occur in numerous Mudéjar constructions serving as part of a shared Islamicate visual language and culture. In addition to inscriptions, many other design features would be seen in al-Andalus that were prominent in Toledo, including brickwork as well as design features like the interlocking arch decoration (fig. 21) seen here at the Alcazar of Seville, but featured prominently on buildings in Seville.

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259 Exterior wall decoration from the Alcazar of Seville featuring the same interlocking arch feature as seen on both the Bab al-Mardum gate and mosque (aka Cristo de la Luz), Seville Spain. J.F. Sullivan, own work, 2013.

4.5 Shared Visual Language and Shared Culture

Mudéjar design and decoration is often described as being part of a shared visual language. As with the Sala de la Justicia in the Alcazar of Seville, the idea or presence of any form of visual language in design or architecture, must communicate something and must be received by someone who is presumably able to understand or comprehend the message that the language is communicating. In the case that such a visual language is shared, especially when it is shared across political and religious lines, the presumption is that the language is such that it “speaks” to the recipients outside of those contexts. Cultural products like architecture and other material, while reflective of the milieu at the time of their construction, historically tend to include models and influences from earlier periods or groups, which are presumed to be part of a visual language that would be understood by multiple individuals and communities. Much in the same way that Alfonso XI seems to have incorporated concepts and ideas from both the Romans and the previously ruling Muslims in the construction of his throne room, the patrons and “communicators” of post-conquest Toledo may have conceptually done the same.

Since visual language is used to communicate, what exactly is being communicated? Traditionally, language can confer information, tell stories and histories, and inspire thoughts and feelings and a host of other ideas. Mudéjar designs and decoration, along with any attendant communication, ultimately developed within the cosmopolitan matrix of al-Andalus across three confessional communities and two religiously-affiliated polities over time, or more if the previous Visigothic and Roman sociocultural complexes are also considered. Thus, the visual communication associated with material culture, despite patronage by various religious groups, social groups, or political entities, involves a language that could be understood by residents and visitors to 12th century Toledo, 13th and 14th century Seville and 13th and 14th century Granada.
Up to this point there have been multiple clues for what this shared visual language was communicating and the message was largely one of grandeur, power, success, and high culture. The shared visual language arguably began communicating on a wide scale during the period of Almohad rule in al-Andalus (12th Century CE), but likely drew on numerous influences extending back to the early Muslim conquest period. While Christians had been in control of formerly Muslim-controlled Toledo for roughly a century before the first noteworthy examples of Islamicate designs which would be come to be described as Mudéjar emerged, the Mudéjar designs, specifically those created by Muslims and non-Muslims, seem to have been most prominent in the late 12th century, which is concurrent with new Almohad constructions in Seville. These new constructions followed the conquest of the Almoravids in Spain by the Almohads who in turn relocated their Andalusi capitol from Córdoba, which had also been the capitol under the Umayyads until the 10th century, to Seville.

It is likely that residents of al-Andalus began interacting with Islamic culture on some level almost immediately after the initial conquests on the peninsula in the eighth century. It was not only the conquering Christians in Toledo and other places that reflected Islamicate culture in their designs and building projects. These constructions were largely the result of the culture that was already present there. Regarding the Mozarabs of Toledo, those remnants of Christians from the Visigoths and Hispano-Romans who lived under Muslim rule from the 8th century conquest and subsequent Umayyad and later ta’ifa leadership, Margarita López-Gómez argued that “one cannot posit a generally homogeneous character for the community [of Arabized Christians] known as Mozarabs. Although they preserved their Hispano-Gothic roots on the

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261 The 10th century palace Medinat al-Zahra, for example, seems to have been one prominent source of inspiration for Muslim artisans that continued to influence Mudéjar, Jewish, and Christian artisans going forward. See Dodds, Mencocal and Balabale, Arts of Intimacy.

262 See Raizman, “The Church of Santa Cruz and the Beginnings of Mudéjar Architecture in Toledo.”
ritual and institutional level, the circumstances under which they lived differed, and [involved] distinct social and even cultural traditions.”263 López-Gómez discussed the Mozarabic use of “Islamic” design and architectural elements in buildings, manuscripts and material culture,264 and suggested that the “syncretism” present was the result of Mozarabs being part of a “frontier culture” which she also compares to later Mudéjar culture.265 The concept of “frontier culture” would involve any circumstance where participants were in a mixed cultural milieu that was also further away from the prominent cultural centers of the participants, resulting in a blending or cosmopolitan amalgam likely due to the diversity and pluralism of the participants combined with the lack of a regulating authority to require adherence to any particular meta culture.266 The point at which Islamicate culture moved from being a foreign culture associated with a foreign power and religion to something shared is a bit harder to pinpoint. At some point, likely in a slow organic process over an extended period of time, the foreign Islamic culture, which included art and design, influenced and to some extent melded with other aspects of local culture to become something Islamicate that became a shared cultural experience for all residents regardless of their religious, social or political affiliations.

Jerrilyn Dodds alluded to what might have been the conceptual inspiration behind the Mudéjar constructions in the Alcazar in a discussion about the Visigoths and their early tenure in Spain. “When the Visigoths began their rule of a large Hispano-Roman population on the Iberian Peninsula, these new minority [architectural] patrons reached far afield for grandiose symbols of sovereignty and religion.”267 What this conceptual idea suggests is that a ruler and patron might

266 See also Oleg Grabar, “Two Paradoxes,” 583–91.
267 Dodds, Art of Islamic Spain, 28.
select a design style that they felt reflected the idea of sovereignty and religion, even if that representation was drawn from another source. As Raizman pointed out, per Archbishop Jimenez de Rada in the *Historia de rebus Hispaniae*, Alfonso VI “occupied the residence of the city’s [tai’fal] ruler, [which included] a palace and garden celebrated in Muslim sources for their luxury and magnificence.” This orientation is important in that it establishes an orientation toward the grandeur and authority associated with the formerly Islamic architecture and culture. Raizman confirms this orientation having suggested, “the splendor of [Toledo’s] Muslim palaces and their courts was a fitting projection of royal authority, and this made their appropriation seem both practical and politically advantageous.” Seemingly confirming the association of Islamic culture and society with high culture and grandeur Raizman noted, “the occupation of existing architecture resembles the display of Reconquest booty or *spolia*, visible expressions of the power and wealth of victorious rulers which confer upon their new possessors princely status.” The architectural interactions and associations in Toledo likely foreshadowed similar associations and constructions in Seville and al-Andalus as Raizman also noted, “It is not surprising that later Castilian kings and nobles continued to model their residences on Muslim palaces, for example at Tordesillas and in Seville.” It stands to reason that over time the commingling or *convivencia* of styles and visual language would not only be understood by the populace collectively, but may also have been transformed and personalized in a way that created a new visual language from the combination. As Dodds pointed out, “When speaking

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269 While Raizman’s use of “appropriation” bears the same triumphalist orientation as that which Dodds suggested, it also alludes to a similar orientation described in the *Primera Cronica General de España* which reflected Fernando III’s occupation of Seville and the Alcazar. Ibid.
270 While the distinction between *spolia*, repurposed architecture, and new constructions will be problematized in the next section, the association with previous polity’s status and majesty seems clear. Ibid.
271 While there is some monolithization present in this characterization, it helps to establish the constructions in Seville as a continuation of a practice which arguably began in Toledo. Ibid.
about cultural interaction, there is always a coexistence of an official cultural attitude and the kind of contact that grows from more habitual social interaction.”272 It is this form of shared culture that likely developed in al-Andalus.

The Islamicate Mudéjar culture, and whatever shared Andalusi culture was imagined to be, was ultimately not a product of the Christian conquest of Muslim lands, but rather that which developed under prior Islamic rule on the peninsula and then continued in a different form under the Christians. For example, the Bab al-Mardum gate and accompanying mosque were constructed by the Umayyads during their tenure in Toledo and reflected some of the early cultural cooperation between conqueror and conquered. Of this early cultural interaction Dodds argued, “[The Umayyad’s] reuse [of] native [Andalusi] traditions and indigenous architectural morphemes carried no other meaning than necessity and the Muslims’ desire to be integrated into the life and culture of the rich frontier peninsula they had appropriated.”273 In this case the pre-existing culture was that of the Visigoths which was itself a conglomeration of Gothic, Roman, Greek, Carthaginian, and indigenous Iberian cultures.

The interaction between the Muslims and their subordinate populations created an environment where the shared intellectual, cultural and religious spaces were occupied by members of differing backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, cultures, and politics but needed to mitigate these differences in order to build a successful society. It is the same scenario in which the Christians found themselves after taking Toledo in 1085. For the Umayyads, they eventually implemented the dhimmi/jizya system allowing for some form religious coexistence. This tenuous coexistence also afforded other realms of cultural cooperation, however contentious, still enabled a degree of cosmopolitanism. As Dodds pointed out, “it is important to remember that

272 Dodds, Art of Islamic Spain, 28.
273 Ibid.
while Christians were voicing antagonism toward Muslims [during the Umayyad period in Spain] as representatives of an opposing political power, they could still admire and feel comfortable with the material and literary culture of al-Andalus.  Dodds is essentially calling for a separate consideration of the cultural sphere from the conflictual religious and political spheres. Thus, the sphere of cultural cosmopolitanism was operating independently from the religious or political spheres, which themselves led to years of polemical bickering, all while a shared culture was emerging.

The nascent shared culture likely flourished by incorporating themes and concepts that were already familiar in some form and spoke to the members of the community regardless of their other affiliations. It is important to recognize, however, that such a shared culture could not develop if the cultural products were considered exclusively representative of one particular group. One example of this shared material culture involves decorative boxes, which in turn also serves to establish a perception about Islamic and later Islamicate/Mudéjar material culture that helps to explain many of the seeming contradictions and strange relationships between Christian rulers and Mudéjar art. Jerrilynn Dodds indicates that “the Umayyads of al-Andalus used precious boxes of ivory and silver to create an image of themselves as a refined and prosperous elite.” While the intent might have been for the public representation of power and wealth for the Muslim elite, these objet d’art found their way into northern church treasuries and in the Christian Spanish courtly culture as highly prized gifts. As she stated, “while church chronicles posited a deep alienation between Christian and Muslim populations, church treasuries reveal admiration for and understanding of Islamic artistic culture.”

274 Dodds, *Art of Islamic Spain*, 30.
275 Ibid.
276 Dodds, *Art of Islamic Spain*, 30-31.
277 Dodds, *Art of Islamic Spain*, 31.
may not adequately describe the situation however, as these treasures were not only appreciated for their luxury but held enough perceived quality to be used as reliquaries to hold sacred Christian religious material. The placement of sacred Christian material inside an Islamic designed box suggests either a complete separation of culture from religion or a vastly different concept of religious identity than is presently understood, especially given the antagonistic and polemical religious relationships that already existed between Christians and Muslims in this early period. It could be argued that by their use as reliquaries or treasured objects by the church, it cannot be that these boxes held any perceived connection to Islam, but instead likely reflected a form of power and representative grandeur that the box owners could display and which would grant them a certain majesty and high cultural status.\textsuperscript{278} Or as Dodds observed, “It appears that, for many northern Christians, the sumptuous quality of the material culture of al-Andalus superseded[ed] any undermining political or religious associations with Islam.”\textsuperscript{279} Apart from the separation aspect, the fact that these boxes were prominent courtly gifts and were renowned for their luxury and elegance bolsters the idea that whatever their religion or politics, the Muslims were seen as possessors of high culture and luxury; something for Christians to acquire, likely for the same reasons as their original constructions, which were meant to reflect opulence, elitism, and power for the Muslims themselves. Thus, the possession of such objects seems to indicate that the owner would be granted a certain amount of perceivable benefit. If that message was understood across religious and political lines, it again suggests the presence of

\textsuperscript{278} This scenario and perception is not without precedent – the Roman interaction and incorporation of Greek culture is one such example. The relationship between the perceived Greek high culture and Symbols of power extended through the Christian control of the Empire to the Vatican which for hundreds of years held one of the largest collections of Greek and Roman non-Christian religious monumental architecture and statuary. Louis A. Ruprecht, \textit{Winckelmann and the Vatican’s First Profane Museum} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

\textsuperscript{279} Dodds, \textit{Art of Islamic Spain}, 32.
a shared visual language that could certainly be applied to architecture and other expressions of material culture that would continue to develop.

The appreciation for Islamicate material culture by northern Christians extended beyond ivory and silver boxes, however, and also included architecture. Regarding Islamicate constructions in the city of Sahagún in the province of León, Dodds posits the question, “why…at the height of the development of the Romanesque style in the Christian north, would the important churches of Sahagún be constructed entirely in an imported, brick-based Mudéjar style?” Dodds’s question about the churches of Sahagún echoes Ruggles question about Alfonso XI and the Sala de la Justicia. Dodds herself seems to struggle with the implications suggesting that “the position of [the Mudéjar] style, and its subordination to Christian projects, might have been coded reference to the progress of the Reconquest.” As discussed previously, the key to unraveling these paradoxes is in recognizing that their strangeness or difficulty is a result of their presentation and imagination. If Toledo, Sahagún, or Seville are imagined as locations involving monolithic Christians and monolithic Muslims each in possession of a separate and distinct style exclusive to them as part of an equally monolithic identity that combined the social, political, religious and cultural categories, then indeed these paradoxes would be confounding and strange. As a result, the explanation that Dodds presents above is reasonable and more likely. Such a monolithic interpretation would also have made her interpretation of the Sala de la Justicia as an inverted victory monument more reasonable on the surface, which ultimately seems less likely after the closer analysis in the previous chapter. At the same time, if the monolithic forms of identity and their respective social, political, religious

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280 Dodds in Jayyusi, *Legacy of Muslim Spain*, 593.
281 Ibid.
and cultural subcategories are uncoupled from their monolithic presentation, then the alternative
shared cultural interpretation takes shape and is one that Dodds herself suggested.

Considering the construction of Christian churches like *Cristo de la Luz* and San Roman in
Toledo, Dodds noted their seemingly comfortable blend of Mudéjar and Islamicate elements
including Arabic inscriptions and decorative elements like red and white voussoirs\(^{282}\) that evoke
constructions like the Mezquita (Great Mosque) in Córdoba, which to Dodds indicated “a deeper
connection between the builders and users of the church and their context.”\(^{283}\) Of this connection
she argued that “there is a suggestion here of a shared culture: certainly…a shared spoken or
written language by means of which the city [Toledo] had been administered for years, and a
shared language of forms which saw much that began as identifiably Islamic becoming part of a
local visual culture, a decoration that witnessed a history and culture belonging to all
Toledans.”\(^{284}\) To this Dodds also indicated that Jews, including their own synagogue designs,
were likewise participating in this culture by including Mudéjar material and construction as
well.\(^{285}\) As will be suggested, Dodds’s suggestion of a shared culture reflects an interpretation
that this dissertation will argue applies to the entirety of al-Andalus and is the very context that
properly situates the three confessional communities, their representative religious structures,
and their respective rulers and community leaders as participants in a shared culture.
Furthermore, this shared culture was separate and distinct from associations with religious or
political affiliations that provides a cosmopolitan interpretive framework for Andalusi, Mudéjar
designs, and Islamicate culture to coexist. Case in point, Dodds suggested that the cross-cultural
appreciation deteriorated in the North in the 11\(^{th}\) and 12\(^{th}\) centuries CE, especially with the rise of

\(^{282}\) Dodds in Jayyusi, *Legacy of Muslim Spain*, 594.
\(^{283}\) Ibid.
\(^{284}\) Dodds in Jayyusi, *Legacy of Muslim Spain*, 594-595.
\(^{285}\) Dodds in Jayyusi, *Legacy of Muslim Spain*, 595.
the Crusades and the veneration of Santiago de Compostela and Santiago Matamoros. She, however, does not indicate that these changes and shifts were felt in al-Andalus proper, which was still being ruled by Muslims and had been participants in the shared culture uninterrupted. Cristo de la Luz also seems to stand as a testament to this, as its dominant addition, the Mudéjar apse, was built by Crusaders (The Knights Hospitaller) in 1186, while the Christians still held Jerusalem. It is also likely that the cosmopolitan culture in Toledo was more diverse and pluralistic than in the North as the legal and polemical situation previously discussed seems to corroborate.

4.6 The Conquest of Seville and Alfonso X

On November 23, 1248, after an extended siege, Seville capitulated to the Castilians who moved into the city and immediately occupied the Alcazar. Over the next month, Muslims left the city for refuge in Morocco, Granada, Tunis, and other parts of al-Andalus. In December of 1248, Fernando III entered Seville and began the process of converting it to a Castilian city, installing a new bishop in the recently consecrated cathedral (formerly the central Mosque) and beginning the repartimiento which would alter the population and demographics of the city. The capture of Seville, while not the completion of the Reconquista, was nonetheless essential to the progress of the campaign, but more importantly represented a key port connected to the Mediterranean as well as the political and cultural capital of the Almohads and by extension, al-Andalus. By capturing Seville, the Castilians also took control of the populations and culture of the bulk of al-Andalus outside of Granadan control. The interactions between the Castilian Christians and the post-conquest minority Muslim and Jewish populations would be a cultural

turning point for the region and the subsequent Islamicate history of the city and its central facility and royal residence, the Alcazar.

It is evident that Seville already possessed a shared culture when the Castilians arrived, and it was likely down to Alfonso X for the Castilians’ inclusion in this shared culture. Islamicate Andalusi shared culture likely represented a form of high culture for the Castilians, and to some extent was also considered a “royal” culture that the Castilians already had an appreciation for and desired to be seen on a similar level. There is perhaps no better support for both the positive perception of Islamicate culture and the distinction between the realm of culture and the realm of politics and religion than the author’s commentary on Fernando III’s conquest of Seville in 1248 CE found in the Castilian’s own chronicle of the Conquest.287

The blessed King Fernando had the noble city of Seville besieged for sixteen months, and he did not do so for any other reason than to strive hard for it, for it was noble. It is a greater city besieged than any other to be found or seen this side of the ocean or overseas, since it is so harmonious…even the Tower of Gold [Torre del Oro], how it was built in the sea and so evenly constructed and by hard work made so delicate and so marvelous. Then all the glories of the Tower of St. Mary [The Giralda], and how great are its beauty and height and nobility…on top of this there are four spheres placed one on top of the other; they are made so large and with such great labor and with such great nobility that in the whole world there cannot be any so noble, or any equal. It [Seville] has many other great splendors, quite apart from those we have mentioned; there is no such well-situated and harmonious city in the world. For how can a city so finished and so complete, and which has such an abundance of goods, as there are here, not be very fine and very precious?288

Much of the above language is reminiscent of Hroswitha von Gandersheim’s exhortation on Córdoba as the “Ornament of the World.”289 The idea that Christians, even in far off places,

289 Maria Menocal attributes the phrase “ornament of the world” and the title of her work on cosmopolitan al-Andalus to 10th Century Saxon nun, Hroswitha von Gandersheim who used the phrase to describe the then Muslim
considered a Muslim city in this way suggests an intellectual orientation toward Islamicate culture that places it in the category of high culture. Thus, even in Hroswitha’s 10th century consideration of Córdoba, which occurred prior the conquest of Toledo, and long before the conquest of Seville and the composition of the *Primera Crónica*, a catholic nun was describing a Muslim capitol with admiration. In a similar fashion, the *Crónica*’s author, despite writing on behalf of the Christian conquerors, repeatedly refers to Seville as harmonious and well put together and references the nobility and excellence of the architecture, including specific references to the *Torre del Oro* and *La Giralda* (*al Alminar*), both of which were creations of the previous Muslim Almohad regime. In all likelihood, much of the architecture and organization that the Castilians would have been familiar with upon taking the city were Almohad creations or those influenced by their style in the various quarters of the city including the Alcazar in the city center, which Fernando immediately occupied, along with other constructions and designs in the *Juderia* and surrounding community. What remains clear is that in both cases, Islamicate architecture and culture held a particular status outside of the Islamic dominion and seems to have been held in such regard for significant amount of time.

Fernando III died just a few years later in 1252 turning Seville and the burgeoning Castilian Empire over to his son Alfonso X, who would come to be known as *el Sabio* or “the Wise or Learned.” It is difficult to assess the extent to which the continuation of Islamicate culture in Seville and the Castilian kingdom was influenced by Fernando III, as the chronicle of his conquest (featured in the *Primera Crónica de España* noted above) was written during the reign of Alfonso X and Fernando’s relationship to or perception of the culture of al-Andalus is unclear.

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It is worth noting that upon his death, Fernando III was buried in a cloak “woven of silk and gold-thread by Mudéjar workmen.”\(^{290}\) It might be tempting to assume that since the adornment was post-mortem it would be Alfonso who made this burial choice, however it may also have been a recent royal custom that corroborates the status of Islamicate culture as a royal or “high” culture prior to the capture of Seville. Contextualizing Fernando III’s burial cloak, his sister, Leonor of Aragon (d. 1244) and his mother, Queen Berenguela (d. 1246) both “reposed on cushions covered with Islamic invocations.”\(^{291}\) These burial and display elements for three members of the Castilian royal family are indicative of the perceived luxury or “royalty” of these designs and material. It seems clear that the application of Islamicate material and designs were included for their luxury and a presentation preferred by the royal family, but clearly they were not seen as religious, despite their Islamicate context, as it would certainly have been a significant problem – especially for someone laid to rest in a cathedral. While his participation or support for Islamicate shared culture may be indeterminate, it seems likely that Islamicate material writ large already held an elevated position in the eyes of the Castilians and might help to explain Alfonso X’s easy adoption of the shared culture. Fernando III was also a patron of learning, a trait that his son would share in abundance. Fernando III supported both “the Universities of Salamanca and Palencia and encouraged the use of Castilian, rather than Latin, as the official language of government and administration.”\(^{292}\) How the multicultural and cosmopolitan society of Seville may have developed had Fernando lived remains unknown, but given Alfonso X’s near immediate participation in the shared culture in Seville, it suggests he

\(^{290}\) Hillgarth, The Spanish Kingdoms, 1250-1516, 169.  
\(^{291}\) Ibid.  
was already predisposed toward it. Additional intercultural relations in al-Andalus further support these pre-existing shared cultural leanings.

Responding to a series of papal *decretals* and their commentators beginning with Johannes Teutonicus (c. 1217) and his discussion of the decrees of Gratian and Innocent III, Spanish canonist Vincentius Hispanus began reacting to a growing sense of Germanic exceptionalism and sovereignty by countering with praise for the uniqueness of Spain. Vincentius noted that Spain would be exempt from these German assertions of exceptionalism by virtue of the peninsula’s own inherent excellence and superiority. While this exchange between a Spanish canonist and his counterparts in Germany is interesting, his commentary contains a sentiment and language that is germane to the discussion about shared culture. In singing the praises of Spain, Vincentius not only invoked the Visigoths and the Spanish connection them, but went on to praise the virtues of Spain and its culture indicating, “The Spanish alone have, by their valor, obtained an [empire].” Vincentius went on to suggest that the glory of Spain was recognized “in France, in England, in Germany and in Constantinople.” He concluded his response by asking “Who indeed, Spain, can recon thy glories? – Spain, wealthy in horses, celebrated for food and shining with gold; steadfast and wise, the envy of all; skilled in the laws and standing high on sublime pillars.” It is worth noting that Vincentius was celebrating elements of “Spain” typically associated with Islamicate culture, and also curiously similar to the comments

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293 Vincentius took exception to assertions by the Popes and their commentators which suggested that Germanic virtues and exceptionalism were responsible for their empire and victory as well as their purported inheritance of the glory of the Roman Empire. Gaines Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought: Public Law and the State, 1100-1322*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 486–88.


295 In contrast to the Germans who Vincentius suggests gained theirs through non-virtuous means and subsequently lost it due to their own stupidity (he is writing after the original German comments and also after the excommunication of Frederick II [1239 CE]). Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 489.

296 Ibid.

297 Vincentius would seem to be echoing sentiments similar to Hroswitha and those which would later appear in the *Primera Crónica*. Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 490.
about Seville made in the *Primera Crónica*, even though Vincentius is certainly writing prior to the 1248 capture of that city. The last line “standing high on sublime pillars” also gives the sense of something being built upon some other foundation. While it might be presumed that the foundation to which Vincentius is referring is the Visigoths, the referencing of Islamicate sociocultural elements makes it less clear.

Further clouding the interpretation, similar imagery is presented in the famous lament by al-Rundi regarding the Muslim loss of Seville and other cities in al-Andalus to the Christians.

> Therefore ask Valencia what is the state of Murcia; and where is Játiva, and where is Jaén?  
> Where is Córdoba, the home of the sciences, and many a scholar whose rank was lofty in it?  
> Where is Seville and the pleasures it contains, as well as its sweet river overflowing and brimming full?  
> [They are] capitals which were the pillars of the land, yet when the pillars are gone it may no longer endure!  

The references to ‘pillars’ by both Vincentius and al-Rundi is intriguing. The Arabic reference by al-Rundi appears in the past tense, while the Christian reference is in the present tense – possibly suggesting a connectivity between the sentiments. It is doubtful that al-Rundi is referencing Vincentius, but rather employing a common metaphor.

The source of this reference aside, the sentiment does seem to suggest a form of inheritance and connection between the two groups and their respective ownership of these cities. If al-Rundi is referencing Islamic capitals and their culture as the pillars of the land, while Vincentius

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298 Post believes this was written prior to 1245. Vincentius died in 1248. Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 489 n.185.
299 Post suggests this a quote from verse, but it would also likely be understood as an architectural metaphor given the Spanish familiarity with Greco-Roman architecture. Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 490 n.190.
302 It is possible that al-Rundi is using the same source as Vincentius. Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 490 n.190.
is suggesting the newly won Christian cities are built on similar pillars, might these pillars (i.e. the cities and culture of Islamicate al-Andalus) be one and the same? In any event, the theme of inheritance and connection between Islamicate and Christian societies echoes a similar suggestion made for Alfonso XI in the Sala de la Justicia regarding the incorporation of shared elements and connections between the Sala and the Almohad Patio del Yeso. A similar theme of inheritance, connection, and high culture will also arise in the relations between Islamicate and Christian culture in Seville under Alfonso X el Sabio. On another level, Vincentius and Johannes Teutonicus also propose a consideration of “Spain” which includes these Islamicate elements as part. Such inclusion might indicate a perception of “Spain” as being comprised of these elements, and if those elements had been in place for some time, it would go a long way toward contextualizing the strange cultural interplay between Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the midst of the Reconquista.

As with virtually every other change in ownership between the conquering Christians and the former Muslim owners, there does not seem to have been any real intention or orientation on behalf of the early Castilians toward the eradication or elimination of anything associated with the previous rulers or groups. In fact, those elements may have been intentionally retained to paint the new owners in a favorable light, both with their new subjects and also with the perception of high culture and authority that was previously held by the Muslims. Case in point, after successfully capturing Seville, Fernando and Alfonso were faced with a diverse and pluralistic population that would need to be incorporated into the new Castilian Empire. L.P. Harvey noted that during the reign of Alfonso X, “For Christians…there was no theoretical presumption that a Christian state ought to be exclusively Christian or Christian-dominated.”

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303 See discussion of Sala de la Justicia’s Almohad/Christian connectivity in Chapter 3 of this document.
304 Harvey, Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500, 64.
He went on to remark that there was neither a gospel nor a successful legal model for dealing with non-Christians under Christian rule. Harvey, however, pointed out that “there were considerable variations between one Christian kingdom and another where the treatment of subject Muslims was concerned.” Harvey cited a particular case involving the Muslim residents of Morón, who were relocated to Siliébar following the conquest of the city by the Castilians under Alfonso X. With regard to this relocation, Harvey indicated that “Royal permission is given for the construction in the new village [Siliébar] of baths, shops, bakehouses, mills, and merchants’ quarters, all ‘according to the custom of the Moors,’ and this grant is made ‘for all time.’” Harvey suggested that there was an “acceptance of cultural and religious differences as a permanent feature of the new society.” Arguably, this acceptance or lack thereof would also vary from kingdom to kingdom, manifesting in different ways depending on the rulers and legal systems of each. Other factors would likely include minority population density as well as prior multicultural interaction and exposure. It is these differences that likely account for the wide variability between kingdoms like Valencia, Aragon, and Castile, which each had distinct experiences with their respective Muslim and Jewish populations. In Seville and the Kingdom of Castile and León, the predominant manager of this transition to Christian rule was Alfonso X el Sabio.

305 Harvey indicates that the issue of Jews living under Christian rule had never been completely sorted out either legally or ecumenically so there wasn’t a clear means for managing the Jewish or Muslim minority populations in Reconquista Spain. Ibid.
306 Harvey’s suggestion is that the Castilians, who ruled Toledo, Córdoba and Seville may have approached their minority populations differently and this seems to be borne out by the evidence. Ibid.
307 It seems that Alfonso X is following a similar program to his father who initially expelled or relocated Muslims following the initial conquest, although many eventually returned in various capacities. Harvey, Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500, 65.
308 Ibid.
309 Ibid.
4.7 Alfonso X el Sabio: Patron of Shared Culture

Alfonso X el Sabio was born in 1221 CE in post-Reconquista Toledo. Like his descendants Alfonso XI and Pedro I, his upbringing in al-Andalus may have influenced his orientation toward and participation in Islamicate culture. Alfonso X grew up amidst the conquest of the Almohads and al-Andalus including several prominent Islamicate cities like Córdoba and ultimately Seville where he would ascend to the throne after the death of Fernando III in 1252 CE.

Dodds, Menocal and Balbale suggest that Alfonso X was born in a palace belonging to al-Mamun, ruler of the ta'ifa of Toledo. Given the clear influence the former Islamicate culture had on the development of Toledo’s architecture and material culture, it is likely that Alfonso X was exposed to this same culture over time, a culture which would have been well established by the time of his birth in 1221 CE (more than 125 years past the city’s conquest in 1085 CE and at least a generation removed from the prominent Islamicate constructions in Cristo de la Luz and other buildings). Alfonso X el Sabio is also named after Alfonso VIII of Castile and Toledo, a hero from the battle of Las Navas de Toloso and “the founder of several of Castile’s most prominent cultural institutions,” including the convent of Las Huelgas and the University of Palencia, the same university later patronized by Alfonso’s father.

It is unclear how much time Alfonso X spent in Toledo between his birth and his ascent to the throne following the capture of the Almohad capitol, Ishbiliya (Seville) in 1248 CE. But given that Fernando III’s campaigns took him throughout al-Andalus, especially in the later years when he would have been of an age able to participate, it is likely that Alfonso X was consistently exposed to the shared Islamicate culture already present in much of the region. It is

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310 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 191.
311 The Islamicate associations of Las Huelgas will be discussed in Chapter 5.
312 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 192.
therefore not at all surprising that he would embrace this culture in a familiar way and foreshadow some of his later descendants like Alfonso XI and especially Pedro I who would be its greatest proponent.

Alfonso X’s cultural interaction with Islamicate Seville cannot be overstated. Almost from the beginning, his cosmopolitan orientation toward the city and its people is evident. In an early example, Fernando III was entombed, not in Castile, but in Seville, inside the Mosque of Seville, recently consecrated as a cathedral. The sepulcher includes an epitaph for Fernando III with four separate inscriptions: Latin, Arabic, Hebrew, and Castilian. The inclusion of the four languages is significant in itself, given the inclusiveness that such a gesture suggests, but the truly cosmopolitan aspects of the epitaphs are reflected in the language used for each. The four epitaphs include language and phrasing that is common to each community, including “may Allah be pleased with him,” and other common honorifics, along with the place name for the region used by each language group, Hispanie, al-Andalus, Sepharad, and España respectively. The epitaphs also include the calendric date related to each community, such as First Rabia of the year 550 of the Hijra included on the Arabic inscription. By choosing these inscriptions Alfonso X is not only recognizing the language of the different communities under his rule, but also their dominant religion. It is an astonishing gesture from a conqueror to his new subjects, however, this was only one of several inclusive cultural gestures that Alfonso X would engage in.

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313 Consecrated, but not rebuilt. The great Cathedral of Seville would not be constructed for another 150 years and not completed until 1506, so during the lifetimes of the early Castilian monarchs, through Pedro I, the cathedral remained a converted Mosque. Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 196.
314 Ibid.
315 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 200–201.
316 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 199–201.
The first point of multicultural contact in Seville would be with the architecture, much as it
had been in Toledo. Upon their initial capture of the city, Fernando III established himself at the
Alcazar, the palace complex that was the seat of power for the Almohads who made Seville their
capital and would serve as the residence for the new Castilian rulers, including Alfonso XI and
Pedro I, whose constructions inside the palace complex are the focus of this study. The Alcazar
would be home to Alfonso X and remains an active residence for the Spanish royal family to this
day. That the Castilians adopted, maintained, and built within the formerly Muslim ruling palace
can be seen as purposeful, especially in light of other interactions between the early Castilian
rulers and the Islamicate architecture present in the city.

As previously mentioned, the Mosque of Seville continued to stand and remained largely a
Mosque (aesthetically) for the entirety of the early Castilians’ reign, right down to the minaret
known as the Alminar or la Giralda. As Dodds et al. noted, “the Castilians had particular
admiration for the minaret of the Great Mosque [la Giralda], which ‘could not be matched in all
the world’.”317 Specifically, “Alfonso [X] so valued it that he threatened with death anyone who
would destroy ‘even one brick’.”318 While there is more than likely some hyperbole involved in
these statements, they echo an appreciation for Almohad architecture and culture in a way
similar to that seen in the Primera Crónica, which, while a history of Castilian rulers up to
Fernando III was most assuredly composed during the reign of Alfonso X and likely reflects his
views more than Fernando III’s.319 Alfonso X’s support and appreciation for the cultural

317 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 196.
318 Ibid.
319 It is worth noting that this history was likely composed as an homage or tribute to his father, the form of which
could also be construed as a form of triumphal monument to his father, again echoing a Roman practice of a new
Emperor honoring his predecessor as seen with the Arch of Titus discussed in Chapter 3.
products of Muslims and Jews was significant, even if the same could not be said for their respective religions.

In her study centered on the *Mezquita de la Juderia*, Heather Ecker noted that in 1252, following the conquest of Seville and subsequent death of Fernando III, Alfonso X designated “all of the urban mosques [in Seville, which] were given as an endowment to the church, apart from a few notable exceptions, [which included] the donation of three mosques to be converted into the synagogues of the newly established Juderia.”320 As mentioned previously, the relationship between the minority Jewish and Muslim populations under Castilian rule in Seville and greater al-Andalus was ongoing and symbiotic. Just as later rulers continued to rely on Jewish merchants and specialists to perform numerous mercantile and courtly functions, so too were Muslims relied upon for other specialty contributions to both craftsmanship and culture. In essence, the Castilians and their minority populations existed within a matrix of exchange or a cosmopolitan milieu in which cooperation and coexistence operated alongside political and religious bickering, which from all appearances occupied different cognitive and social spaces from each other.

To typify the nature of cultural support versus religious support, in her art historical study of Jews in post-Reconquista Spain, Pamela Patton shares a quotation from a poem by Castilian poet Gonzalo de Berceo:

> A little Jewish boy, native of the town, came for the pleasure of playing with the children; the others welcomed him, they caused him no grief; they all took delight in playing with him.321

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As Patton noted, de Berceo’s depiction of Jewish and Christian children playing together seemingly without the issue of religious conflict “depended on a social factor that was far more concrete: the willingness of a medieval Iberian audience to accept the boy’s carefree disregard for religious and cultural difference as not merely possible, but normative.” At the same time, the poem goes on to see the Jewish boy taking communion and becoming enamored with St. Mary. After returning home he is confronted by his father, who in a fit of rage throws him in the oven, Mary protects the boy and when the townspeople, Jews and Christians, arrive to help the boy, who is miraculously uninjured, they in turn throw the father, who is referred to as “treacherous dog,” “false disbeliever,” and “false disloyal one,” into the oven and kill him instead. The poem is an exemplar of the odd sociocultural landscape of medieval Spain. On the one hand, as Patton indicates, the interaction between Jews and Christians, especially in cosmopolitan environs like al-Andalus was a fact of life. On the other hand, the polemical sniping between religious communities was also a constant factor of medieval Spanish society. The clear animosity toward non-Christian religions, at least in a polemical context, would seem to disqualify any hint of such religions from the Christian purview – again bolstering the assertion that Islamicate material culture could not have been understood contemporarily as having anything to do with the religions of Islam or Judaism despite its influences, origins, or employment by members of those communities. Patton detailed other “moments of cultural porousness” in literary materials such as Alfonso X’s Cantigas de Santa Maria. She noted that in addition to their literary interactions, “actual Jews and Christians in medieval Iberia found

322 Patton, Art of Estrangement, 2
324 To this I would also add Alfonso’s Libro de Ajedrez, Dados, y Tablas, which likewise features a cooperative multicultural and pluralistic society. Patton, Art of Estrangement, 2.
abundant and varied opportunities for interaction in nearly every sphere of medieval life, from agriculture and business deals to festivals and folk dancing.”325

In a counterpoint to Gonzalo de Berceo’s poem, Patton offers a quote from Vincent Ferrar, “He who is neighbor to a Jew will never be a good Christian.”326 While likely intended to reflect an opposing viewpoint to the *convivencia* of de Berceo’s poem, it is arguably far more telling. Ferrar’s quote derives from “a sermon delivered in the Valencian town of Onda on 6 May 1416.”327 Whether Ferrar’s sermon serves as exhortation or polemic, the context of it reveals much about the nature of medieval Iberian society. The distinction between de Berceo and Ferrar highlights the Islamicate history of early Castilian Seville in comparison to other polities in Spain. First among these distinctions is geographic – de Berceo is Castilian, writing during the *Reconquista* period and likely continuing to do so under the reign of Alfonso X *el Sabio*.328 He was also educated at the *Estudio General de Palencia*, the same university supported by Fernando III,329 and likely subject to the same cultural influences as those described in the *Primera Crónica General de España*. Another important factor distinguishing these two quotations is temporal. De Bracero is likely writing c. mid-13th century, whereas Ferrar is writing in the early 15th century, which is significant in that the cosmopolitan kings of Castile and Leon were replaced by the exclusivist Trastamarans after the 1369 murder of Pedro I. Additionally, in the intervening years between de Berceo and Ferrar, significant changes in Jewish/Christian relations occurred following the outbreak of the Black Death in the mid-14th

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328 De Berceo’s dates are not fully known, but a contemporary mention of him in 1264 and the generally accepted consensus puts his death between 1252 and 1264 placing his later years within the reign of Alfonso X. Berceo, Mount, and Cash, *Miracles of Our Lady*, 3.
329 De Bracero supposedly attended Palencia between 1223 and 1236. Ibid.
century and the subsequent anti-Jewish violence that occurred in 1391 and beyond.\footnote{Which included the destruction of the 
\textit{Juderia} in Seville. Also see David Nirenberg, \textit{Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).} Not only does the Ferrar quotation reflect the social, religious, and political changes that occurred in the post-Pedro I (or Trastamaran) period, but also differentiates cosmopolitan Castile and Leon from other areas in al-Andalus.

Alfonso X \textit{el Sabio}'s cultural engagement is widely known and a hallmark of his reign. Some of his efforts included the patronage of art and cultural projects, among them a substantial translation program based in Toledo and built on previous translation projects taking place in that city following the Castilian conquest.\footnote{See Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, \textit{The Arts of Intimacy}, 202--28.} As Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale noted, “for Alfonso [X]…cultural projects were not about integrating knowledge but about creating a culture of empire, language and literature as the handmaiden of a political idea.”\footnote{Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, \textit{The Arts of Intimacy}, 229.} This comment is significant in that it puts Alfonso’s cultural projects into a particular context. If the bulk of his cultural projects were meant to project a culture of empire, then it seems likely that the intended projection, much in the same way that there was an intentional public projection of the \textit{Sala de la Justicia} under Alfonso XI, had an intended audience and an intended message that in turn could be readily understood. Taking the cultural milieu of Alfonso X \textit{el Sabio} into consideration, and noting the numerous attitudes and interactions between Alfonso and the shared Islamicate culture in al-Andalus, it is likely that Alfonso was incorporating the already accepted high culture and majesty fomented under the Almohads into his own public image. Alfonso’s participation in the shared culture, which now incorporated the Castilians as partners and participants, absorbed aspects of Islamicate culture but also expanded it by adding Castilian elements including the emerging Castilian language to the polyglot pool that already existed in al-Andalus.
One of the specific Castilian institutions and contributions developed by Alfonso X which bears all the hallmarks of their inclusion into the larger Islamicate shared culture is the “school” translators that emerged during his reign. The Escuela de Traductores de Toledo (Toledo School of Translators) had existed in various forms prior to Alfonso’s reign. The primary focus of the group was to translate Arabic texts into Latin. The school had been established and patronized by the Archbishops of Toledo. L.P. Harvey indicated that Alfonso attempted to establish a similar school in Seville which failed, likely due to the strength of the Toledo school. Alfonso then moved in a different direction, translating Arabic texts into Castilian rather than Latin. This move would have the unintended consequence of establishing and promulgating Castilian as a major language, but the need for Arabic/Castilian translators would also plug the school into Islamicate shared culture both in terms of the professionals needed and also in the texts chosen to translate. As Robert Burns noted, Alfonso X’s cultural activities, including the Castilian translation project, were intended “to reshape society, to bring Castile itself into the mainstream of high civilization and to set afoot a process that would produce a united, educated, artistic, and religious people.” He continued, “Alfonso did see the need to create and stimulate high culture for his newly aggrandized people, to elevate them as proper colleagues for their Mediterranean Christian neighbors. And from a long tradition he appreciated both the necessity of some borrowing from the Islamic high culture at hand and the special opportunity of doing so at this moment of conquest-conjecture.”

335 Burns, Emperor of Culture, 12.
Burns’s commentary on Alfonso’s interaction with high culture comes across as perhaps too intentional compared to the more likely reality that Alfonso sought to join an existing shared culture and fold the Castilians into it, rather than forging something new with any type of strategic optics, other than presenting a regal appearance and trading off of the existing perceptions already present, both in al-Andalus and among the “Mediterranean Christian neighbors.” A brief examination of Alfonso’s school of translation would seem to corroborate a Castilian inclusion into an existing multicultural matrix. Burns indicated that the staff of Alfonso’s school of translation were “largely trilingual Jews,” a fact that would support the idea that the Jews of al-Andalus were already involved in a multi-cultural and multi-lingual capacity within the region. Dodds et al. indicated that the first book translated by Alfonso X into Castilian was the *kitab al-jawarih*, a well-known book on falconry. Anna Akasoy indicated that the *kitab al-jawarih* incorporates material from the long tradition of Arab falconry including seminal texts from “the work of Adham and Ghitrif” as well as the *kitab al-mutawakkili*, “dedicated to Abbasid Caliph Mutawakkil (r. 847-861).” As with other high cultural and “royal” traditions, falconry has long been associated with monarchs and princes, especially among the Arabs, and became a part of medieval courts throughout Europe. That Alfonso X chose this as his first translation suggests that this Arab cultural practice, which could be

337 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 230.
339 Frederick II (r. 1220-1250 CE), Holy Roman Emperor and King of Sicily (formerly under Islamic Rule until the late 11th century) himself composed a Latin treatise on falconry, *De arte venandi cum avibus* (the art of hunting with birds), which itself was based earlier Arab falconry texts, which along with the Arab cultural influences in Sicily helped inspire his own association with Falconry and aided its adoption into Medieval European courts. Akasoy, *Islamic Crosspollinations*, 55.
construed as Islamicate given its feature in the Qur’an,\textsuperscript{340} was held in high regard, but was also a practice associated with rulers, and Islamic rulers in particular, that Alfonso wanted to emulate. Much like his inclusion of architecture and the trappings of royal and high culture, falconry was just one more way that Alfonso and the Castilians were assuming the mantle of the great Muslim rulers that preceded them. As the first translation, it seems to suggest the importance of projecting a recognizable regal persona, and by choosing a known Islamicate practice like falconry, Alfonso is using a practice that would be understood and recognized by his subject population. Again, it is unclear, and likely unknowable whether Alfonso’s decision to translate the *kitab al-jawarih* was part of some grand strategy, as Burns suggested, or simply a reflection of the Islamicate courtly culture that Alfonso wanted to be part of. Some of his other Islamicate cultural interactions suggest the latter. Alfonso’s *Escuela de Traductores* also translated Islamic scientific works, especially astronomy and astrology, but also various literary works and an Islamic devotional work, *Kitab al-Miraj* (about Muhammad’s night journey, sometimes referred to as *Muhammad’s Ladder*).\textsuperscript{341}

Alfonso X’s incorporation and adoption of the practices and culture of Islamic rulers was not limited to falconry, great learning, translation, and architecture; Alfonso X also engaged in the composition of poetry and the playing of games like chess (another Islamicate courtly import). Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale indicated that Christian participation in the cultural products of the previously Muslim rulers, like falconry, was a manifestation of the Arabic concept of *adab*. Given its Arabic root, *adab* in some form deals with culture, refinement, and education.\textsuperscript{342} Dodds

\textsuperscript{340} See Qur’an, *Sura al-Ma’ida* 5:4.
\textsuperscript{341} Harvey also notes that one text that was not translated was the Qur’an, which he suggests may have been intentional on the part of Spanish Muslims, but also suggests that there was indeed a distinction between the realms of religion and culture. Harvey, “The Alfonsine School of Translators,” 114.
\textsuperscript{342} Ba’labakkī, *al-Mawrid*, 64.
*et al.* described it as “a term meaning, in both the heathen and the Islamic times, the noble and humane tendency of the character and its manifestation in the conduct of life and social intercourse.”³⁴³ Dodds *et al.* pointed out that “*adab* was not a meditation between two essentially alien cultures but rather between already overlapping and entangled peoples.”³⁴⁴ They continued, “this kind of cultural traffic marks moments of historical passages, when one empire aspires to replace another, in part through the naturalization of older communities, and of at least some parts of their cultures.”³⁴⁵ While this interpretation of *adab* and its manifestation in Alfonso X’s al-Andalus is both instructive and important, the characterization still reflects a monolithization of categories and may likely elide aspects of culture that were co-built or developed organically between participants. For example, Marshall Hodgson in his landmark work the *Venture of Islam*, suggested that the Persian influence on the early Muslim empire was so significant that what might be imagined as an Arab empire, would better be understood as “Irano-Semitic.”³⁴⁶ In this context, the influence of the Persians, in this case the conquered people and culture, inspired their conquerors on many societal levels including arts and culture. In describing the process of adoption in the cultural aspects of such a pairing, Hodgson indicated, “At first, the life patterns of the less cultivated classes, the folk traditions of [the] area, were the immediate source of the learned high traditions of the Irano-Semitic culture, which were scarcely to be distinguished from them. As [their sphere of control] expanded, high-cultural traditions were carried widely from [the point of contact and combined with influences] stemming from distant origins, notably from the northern shores of the Mediterranean, [which] were

³⁴³ Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 229.
³⁴⁴ Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 231.
³⁴⁵ Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 231–32.
incorporated in the high traditions. What is more, these traditions came to be shared among people of diverse local conditions [in which] all these peoples contributed to the further development of the traditions.”

Hodgson concluded, suggesting that these new cultural forms became less and less identifiable with their Persian origins and more reflective of the now merged and shared society. In fact, the concept of adab and its relationship to high culture has overlap with Persian culture, which itself influenced the Muslims, but also incorporated them a la Hodgson’s Irano-Semitic shared culture. “Persian influence on adab is reflected in the following maxim of the vizier al-Hasan b. Sahl: ‘The arts (al-adab) belonging to fine culture are ten: Three Shahradjanic (playing lute, chess, and with the javelin), three Nushirwanic (medicine, mathematics and equestrian art), three Arabic (poetry, genealogy and knowledge of history); but the tenth excels all: the knowledge of the stories which people put forward in friendly gatherings.” As al-Hasan suggests, conceptually adab can manifest as anything from falconry and chess to poetry and knowledge of history.

In essence, adab reflects courtly culture or high culture of the variety that Castilian aristocrats were trying to attain in emulation of those qualities in Islamic society. Near the end of his reign and life, in 1283, Alfonso X commissioned a book of games, Libro de Ajedrez, Dados, y Tablas (Book of Chess, Dice, and Tables). Not only did the book feature popular courtly games such as chess and backgammon, but also presented the images of the games being played by Christians, Muslims, Jews, men, and women, and featured depictions of Arabic and Hebrew manuscripts that were consulted by players. Alfonso’s Book of Games, as it is also

349 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 229.
350 The translation of these Arabic and Hebrew texts likely occurring at the Escuela de Traductores de Toledo. Patton, Art of Estrangement, 3.
called, embodied many aspects of al-Hasan’s commentary on *adab* and signals the Castilians adoption of it and to some extent incorporation into it. The book also featured visual representations of falconry, food and drink (and their accoutrements) along with other aspects of Islamicate shared culture.

*Figure 22: Chess players from the Book of Chess, Dice, and Tables*

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351 Alfonso X el Sabio, *Libro de Ajedrez, Dados y Tablas (Book of Chess, Dice, and Tables)* (El Escorial, Madrid, 1283).
Figure 23: Muslim chess players from the Book of Chess, Dice, and Tables

Figure 24: Female chess players from the Book of Chess, Dice, and Tables

352 Alfonso X, *Libro de Ajedrez, Dados y Tablas.*
353 Ibid.
Alfonso X el Sabio’s interactions with Islamicate culture over the course of his reign were so substantial that Mirabel Fierro pondered the question of Alfonso being imagined as the last Almohad caliph. What is interesting about Fierro’s question is that while it clearly derived from Alfonso’s extensive interaction with what she termed “Almohad culture,” it also presupposes some clear distinction between what is Almohad and what is not with enough clarity to pose the question. There is indeed evidence of ample cultural interaction between the Castilians and their subject populations and the reign of Alfonso X el Sabio is likely the watershed moment. However the framing of Fierro’s question, while appropriate and relevant in its scope, reinforces a monolithic consideration of culture that is problematic. For example, when Fierro referred to “Almohad culture,” what does she mean? Is it some culture distinct from other forms of culture, Islamic or otherwise, or is it another means of describing Islamicate culture that occurs within the period of Almohad rule?

Fierro argued that the influence of Almohad culture on the 12th century Andalusi philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (1126-1198 CE) is plainly evident, but that scholars tend to overlook any Almohad contribution in favor of the earlier culture seen under the Umayyad caliphate in al-Andalus. In light of this observation, Fierro noted, “The disregard for the Almohad context seems to be symptomatic of the ignorance mentioned above, for the intellectual work of Averroes can only be explained within the framework of the cultural and religious policies promoted by the Almohad caliphs.” By consistently referencing “Almohad culture” however, it gives the impression that there is some distinctive culture within Islam that was identifiable as

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355 Fierro suggests that the references to and the lauding of Andalusi culture is typically that of the Umayyads, specifically that which produced references to Córdoba, the Umayyad capitol as the “ornament of the world” similar to Menocal. Fierro, “Alfonso X ‘The Wise’,” 177.
356 Ibid.
such and not a permutation or expression of the existing Islamicate culture already present in al-
Andalus or itself already a conglomerate as seen in Hodgson’s Irano-Semitic culture.

Ultimately, Fierro’s is a bizarre analysis. On the one hand she recognized Alfonso X *el Sabio* as existing within an Islamicate framework, but at the same time seems to have placed modern identity categorization within that framework, suggesting that Almohad culture was something specific, as was Christian culture, and also cast these as monolithic entities rather than delineating them as separate cultural and religious products. Overall, Fierro seems to suggest that Alfonso X was following a “political and cultural program” inspired by the Almohads. While there are parallels and similarities to be sure, it is unclear if Alfonso X was making an intellectual differentiation between “Almohad culture,” “Almoravid culture,” or “Umayyad culture” to the extent that he would have preferred one to the other. If, on the other hand, Islamicate culture was understood as a form of high culture that was worthy of emulation, then it could arguably have inspired Alfonso’s program. Judging by the presentation of Islamic culture and constructions in the *Primera Crónica General de España*, no mention is made of Almohads or any other specific Muslim polity, in fact Muslims don’t appear to be named at all in this section, merely referenced with regard to the qualities of the various constructions. It is in this context that one could ask how aware Alfonso X was of any philosophical, political, or cultural provenance related to these ideas and orientations. Coming from Toledo, where an Islamicate program was already well established culturally, even at the highest levels (religion and art), and having worked with Jews, Muslims, and Christians, would those distinctions be understood? As

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357 L.P. Harvey notes that several references to Islam, mostly to Muhammad specifically do occur within the *Primera Crónica*, however, they almost exclusively reflect the typical Christian polemical material promoted by the Church. The inclusion of this material may again reflect a distinction between the realms of religion and culture, but also likely occurs in a manner similar to the *Siete Partidas* or other gestures to church positions which may be influenced by Alfonso’s interest in the Holy Roman Emperorship. Harvey, “The Alfonsine School of Translators,” 114–17.
will be clear, shared Islamicate culture pervaded the material cultural realm, but could the same 
be said for the intellectual realm?

Fierro commented on the commingling of ideas, indicating “It has been said that natural 
philosophy offered an intellectual meeting point, a safe haven where Jews, Muslims, and 
Christians could interact and work together. An example is the translation enterprise in 
Alfonso’s court, with Jews and Christians working side by side.” As previously discussed, 
Alfonso X’s Escuela de Traductores was indeed an institution for shared intellectual 
collaboration. The “cultural synthesis” and collaboration with Jews and Muslims did not go 
unnoticed however, and garnered some pushback from the Church in which Fierro reported that 
Castilian bishops had sent to the Pope “a list of complaints against the king’s numerous 
violations of ecclesiastical rights. Among the allegations was that the presence of a group of 
natural philosophers in Alfonso’s court...[who] preferred to concern themselves with the 
physical rather than the spiritual world.” What is both interesting and ironic is that a similar 
disquiet with philosophical and cultural interaction was problematized by 11th century Muslim 
philosopher Abu Hamid al-Ghazali in his landmark work *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* or *The Incoherence 
of the Philosophers* and the subsequent rebuttal by Ibn Rushd (Averroes), himself a philosopher 
under the Almohads, in his own work *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* or *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*. 
Also interesting is that al-Ghazali’s concern is the result of translations of Greek philosophical 
texts and their use by Islamic philosophers. Given the similar issues that arose between the 
Almohad cultural program that Fierro describes and similar manifestation of the issue in Alfonso 
X’s cultural program in Seville, the issue may be one of location and context, specifically al-

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358 Here Fierro is referring to the Escuela de Traductores in Toledo. Fierro, “Alfonso X ‘The Wise’,” 188.
359 It is worth noting that the bishops were not from al-Andalus, but Castile, where Islamicate culture did not have 
Andalus. It seems likely that the cosmopolitan nature of al-Andalus and its population, along with the influence of the shared Islamicate culture that existed there was the likely source of the cultural and religious entanglements that vexed those outside of this context. This may be a result of the “frontier” nature of al-Andalus or the diverse and pluralistic population that resided there, but arguably it was due to the matrix of exchange fostered by shared culture that provided both the environment and impetus for such interactions. While Fierro may not have addressed shared culture or problematized the monolithization of cultures, she clearly recognized the unique environment that existed in Castilian-led al-Andalus under Alfonso X el Sabio. Fierro concluded her study by suggesting that scholars who “express their surprise or amazement at many of [Alfonso X’s] cultural or religious policies” need to recognize that “if Alfonso’s works are looked at from the Islamicate point of view, most of his policies are not surprising.”\(^{360}\) Here, this study will stand in agreement and also ultimately confirm that it was the result of shared culture, both intellectual and material, that was at the heart of these policies and manifestations among the three confessional communities in al-Andalus. Going forward, nowhere can shared Islamicate culture be better seen and examined than in the form of material culture, which in turn would include architecture and the structures and designs found in the Alcazar of Seville.

### 4.8 Islamicate Material Culture, Shared Culture, and Monolithization

As has already been discussed, one of the primary interpretive challenges to examining culture in medieval al-Andalus, and especially the suggestions of shared culture being argued, is monolithization. Monolithization, as a form of modern identity-based exclusivity, typically involves conceiving segments of culture as specifically and singularly Christian, Muslim, Arab, and Jewish, which then interact with other separate and distinct monolithic cultures. In this

monolithic context, hybridization or other forms of co-built, shared cultures become difficult to imagine and describe, especially with regard to attributions, influences, and origins. In another cultural example, ethnomusicologist Dwight Reynolds argued that Andalusian music was not the product of “unidirectional transmission from the ancients to the Arabs and then from the Arabs to Western Europe.”\textsuperscript{361} This view of Andalusian music, which might extend to discussions of culture and monolithization in general, tend to ignore or downplay “independent developments, cultural interactions, mutual influences, hybridization, and many other nonlinear processes.”\textsuperscript{362}

The extraordinary difficulty attached to any gesture toward cultural monolithization is that it is unlikely to apply to any group in Iberia regardless of their religious, political, or sociocultural affiliations. “Iberia” itself is one of the most profoundly cosmopolitan places extending back to the classical period. Whatever indigenous Iberians may have existed on the peninsula quickly coexisted with Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, and Jews before a series of Germanic groups ranging from the Alans, Seuvi, and Vandals to the later Visigothic rulers combined with a mixture of Basques and Hiberno-Saxons (Celts), and likely the remnants of Justinian’s abortive Byzantine reconquest, who all shared the peninsula and al-Andalus before the Muslims arrived in the 8\textsuperscript{th} century. The Muslims themselves were a diverse combination of groups from across the growing Islamic empire. Thus, any cultural development would have an overwhelming number of possible influences and connections to ever claim any form of monolithization or cultural exclusivity. It was the combining of the Iberian context with the Islamic context that likely birthed the cosmopolitan Islamicate culture that developed among the three confessional groups on the peninsula. Much like the cosmopolitan sociocultural, economic, and political interactions


\textsuperscript{362} Reynolds, \textit{Musical Exodus}, 1.
that took place in al-Andalus, which caused such consternation for the Church on other occasions, seems to have held true for musical interactions as well. Reynolds noted that during the reign of Sancho IV of Castile (r. 1284-1295 CE), the King (who was the son of Alfonso X el Sabio) employed “13 Arab musicians [likely Muslim vs. ethnically Arab per se] and one Jewish musician…among the twenty-seven [total] musicians in the household of [Sancho IV].” Reynolds concluded therefore, “more than half of the court’s professional musicians were Andalusians presumably paid to perform Andalusian music.” Reynolds reported that Andalusi musicians were in widespread use across al-Andalus and in the North including the royal courts and even within local church ceremonies where professional musicians including Muslims and Jews would perform. The practice was extensive enough to warrant a condemnation from the Council of Valladolid in 1322. The presence of Andalusi musicians including Muslims and Jews would continue well into the 15th century and remain part of ceremonies involving Christian royalty from several regions. Reynolds stated, “Over a period of nine centuries, from 711 to 1610, there is evidence of professional musicians from a variety of different ethnic, religious, and regional origins performing diverse musical traditions before patrons and audiences of diverse backgrounds.” In addition, “There is also good evidence for understanding the music itself (and not just the music makers) as a very cosmopolitan tradition that incorporated influences from multiple sources and developed innovative new forms by

363 Reynolds, Musical Exodus, 19.
364 Ibid.
365 Ibid.
366 A curious irony given that Tordesillas, a province of Valladolid, would house the Islamicate palace that would become the Real Monasterio de Santa Clara. Reynolds, Musical Exodus, 20.
367 Ibid.
368 The time frame Reynolds suggests would support other cultural traditions and the presence of shared culture as these temporal bookends incorporate the Islamic conquest period, the Andalusi Umayyad Caliphate, the ta’ifa period, the Reconquista period and emerging national and imperial periods. For a cultural tradition to continue through so many political and religious periods, it could not have been explicitly affiliated with any one of them. Reynolds, Musical Exodus, 21.
combining and hybridizing traditions.” As with many forms of Islamicate culture, it is clear that music and musical culture, were likewise considered in the realm of culture and thus separate and distinct from religious or political considerations, such that it could be included in religious, civil, and courtly ceremonies despite its multicultural players and Islamicate heritage, even if that distinction was not as clear or viable to the Church.

In a more direct comparative context to the Islamicate history of the Alcazar, a discussion regarding Mudéjar architecture in Seville given by Diego Angulo Iníguez in 1932 and 1933 typifies the problem of monolithization and a failure to recognize hybridity and shared culture. In his study, focused primarily on local churches and parishes in Seville from the 13th-15th centuries, Iníguez struggled to account for the variety of design elements present in these religious constructions. Iníguez identifies three styles of architecture and design present during this time period in Seville, which he defines as: Almohad (stemming from the original rulers of Seville prior to the Reconquista), Granadan (in which he includes both the Alcazar of Seville and Alhambra), and the influence of the Marinids of Morocco. Alongside these three primary influences, Iníguez also suggested Toledan Mudéjarismo and Northern Gothic architecture, especially in churches, that also impacted the umbrella of Mudéjar design in Seville. He went so far as to proclaim Mudéjar architecture in Seville as the child of two styles: Gothic and Almohad. By identifying at least five different influential styles that Iníguez seems to have imagined as distinct, he may have overlooked the possibility that it was this combination of influences and their permutations that actually reflect Islamicate shared culture rather than a

369 This comment is largely in response to those who imagine any form of cultural exclusivity or monolithization among any group in Al-Andalus. Reynolds, Musical Exodus, 21–22.
371 Angulo Iníguez and Universidad de Sevilla, Arquitectura mudéjar sevillana de los siglos XIII, XIV y XV, 5–6.
372 “El mudéjar sevillano es hijo de dos estilos: el gótico, importando por los castellanos y el almohade, vigoroso todavía entre los vencidos al tiempo de la Conquista.” Ibid.
hodge-podge of independent and exclusive styles. Either way, the continual appearance of
Islamicate designs in religious structures like local churches, parishes, or convents, whether they
stem from Almohad, Marinid, Toledan, or Granadan influences, further solidifies the assertion
that these styles, whatever their origin or influence, were not associated with religion specifically
and existed within larger hybrid cultural matrix.

Outside of shared participation in Islamicate architecture and design, several examples of
regional participation in other forms of Islamicate material culture provide further evidence of a
shared culture that was active across confessional communities in Seville and greater al-Andalus,
including the then extant Muslim-controlled region of Granada.

*Figure 25: Toledan dinar issued by Alfonso VIII*

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373 Dinar or Maravedi issued in Toledo by Alfonso VIII (dated 1251 (Castilian Calendar)).
http://www.baldwin.co.uk/spain-alfonso-viii-gold-dinar-or-maravedi.html.
Among the numerous examples of shared culture in Castilian al-Andalus and the surrounding territory is a coin from the reign of Alfonso VIII of Castile (fig. 25). The stamped date is 1251 of the Castilian Calendar, likely placing its issue as sometime before 1212 CE. Another Gold Dinar/Maravedi issued in Toledo in 1213 CE (fig. 26) reads in Arabic, “In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” and which Dodds et al. suggested was meant to mirror the Muslim *bismillah*. The text in between the central cross and the “ALF” inscription also identifies “the pope as the ‘imam’ of the Christian church.” In a seeming precursor to Alfonso X’s multicultural inscriptions for the tomb of Fernando III, Alfonso VIII also used the dominant language of the Toledan population as well as religio-cultural references to Islam, which on the one hand suggest a familiarity and intentional gesture toward a population and culture that were

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374 This example of a Toldedan dinar/maravedi is attributed to Alfonso X, but given the date, 1213 CE and the clear similarity to the earlier sample, this is likely from the reign of Alfonso VIII of Castile and Toledo as well. Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 190.
375 That Alfonso X was Alfonso VII’s namesake is an intriguing coincidence. Ibid.
376 The invocation, *bismillah al-rahman al-rahim* (In the name of God, the beneficent, the merciful) appears at the opening of nearly every surah of the Qur’an (all but the ninth). Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, 191.
377 Ibid.
still extant in Toledo, but also the commingling of Christianity and Islam in the numismatic context was clearly not problematic in either realm.\textsuperscript{378}

### 4.9 Ceramic Shared Culture

In addition to coins, Islamicate shared culture can be seen in numerous examples of ceramics which were produced in Seville (Triana) as well as in workshops across the region of al-Andalus. In her study of \textit{ataifor} ceramic bowls produced in Seville between the late 12\textsuperscript{th} century, during the Almoravid period, through the Almohad period, and into the \textit{Reconquista} period, Rebecca Bridgeman, found compelling evidence that despite the significant socio-political upheaval, there was “a degree of continuity in society in Seville [which] may have resulted in the relatively limited variation in pottery forms and fabrics.”\textsuperscript{379}

\textit{Figure 27: Tin-glazed Mudéjar bowl}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Tin-glazed-Mudejar-bowl.png}
\caption{Tin-glazed Mudéjar bowl}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{378} Much like Alfonso XI’s throne room, coins also serve as an extension of imperial identity and power, a sentiment which had been in practice since the classical period and certainly well-known and understood in the former Roman province of \textit{Hispanie}. See discussion in Chapter 3 of this document.

\textsuperscript{379} In this case the continuity refers to a cultural continuity which remained relatively stable in the case of these ceramic bowls across confessional communities despite the changes in political power. Rebecca Bridgman, Pina López Torres, and Manuel Vera Reina, “Crossing the Cultural Divide? Continuity in Ceramic Production and Consumption between the Almoravid and Mudéjar Periods in Seville,” \textit{Al-Masaq} 21, no. 1 (2009): 28.

\textsuperscript{380} Unknown, \textit{Tin-Glazed Earthenware Bowl (Mudéjar)}, Seville, Spain, c. 1470-1500, Victoria & Albert Museum.
As Bridgeman suggested, large *ataifor* bowls were typically used for shared table meals and "would have been particularly susceptible to any change in dining habits." As evidenced by the two contemporary ceramics from Seville (fig. 27) and Granada (fig. 28) depicted above, there appears to have been some consistency between dining materials in the Christian and Muslim territories in al-Andalus. The continuity that Bridgeman observed may again serve as evidence of a shared culture that pervaded in the region and was not particularly susceptible to changes in form, production, or use, even if there may have been changes in decoration.

4.9.1 Valencia: A Corollary Context

Due to the wealth of material cultural and other archaeological evidence, Valencia has been studied extensively and offers a window into the possibility of a shared culture that was part of the same one likely operating in Seville. Captured in 1238 CE from the Almohads by Jaume (James) I of Aragon, Valencia represents a similar scenario to Seville given its cosmopolitan population consisting of Mudéjars, Jews, and descendants of Romans and Goths. Several studies

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381 *Bowl with a Vegetal Arabesques*, likely 15th century, ceramic, ceramic glaze, likely 15th century, Granada, Museo Nacional de Arte Hispanomusulmán, http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.gsu.edu/library/secure/ViewImages?id=%2BCtfeTkICgoKjNUej5wRHEqWHQn&userId=gDhPej0l&zoomparams=&fs=true.

382 Bridgman, Torres, and Reina, "Crossing the Cultural Divide?," 17.
of the craft and use of pottery by the residents of Valencia help to illustrate the shared cultural context of the diverse region in a fashion similar to what would have been present in Seville.

Anna McSweeney observed that the Paterna region (Valencia, Spain) followed a similar pattern of production and use that highlights the ongoing interaction with Islamicate or Mudéjar designs and incorporated some similar elements. In these cases, the combination of Islamic and Christian forms, especially with regard to incorporating Christian or royal Christian themes into Islamicate or Mudéjar designs, were similar to those which appeared in the Alcazar of Seville and other examples of Andalusi architecture.

*Figure 29: 14th century Paternaware bowl*

“In Paterna, the Mudéjar potters decorated their ceramics with a lively mixture of figurative, epigraphic, vegetal and geometric motifs in a style that can be described as neither entirely Islamic nor entirely Christian.” What McSweeney described was Islamicate design – of which Mudéjar art is an exemplar. In this case, as in many others, the Islamicate Mudéjar design grew out of a pre-existing Islamic style that had developed over time and culminated in the post-Reconquista manifestation as a seeming hybrid of Islamic and Christian material culture and design. With regard to shared culture, the Paterna ceramics reflected a cultural form that was not specifically religious and thus could have included forms that were pleasing to commissioners. These forms may have included Islamic or Christian referential material (along with political or military symbolism in the case of both Pedro I and Alfonso XI) to suit the patron, but since they were not specifically religious in nature they would not cross any imagined boundaries and could have survived in various forms, despite a specifically religious conflict in the Crusades or

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384 14th century Paterna plate. This more explicit example of shared culture on a contemporary plate from the region also featured the Christian fish theme along with the central stylized Kufic decoration that would typify Islamicate Mudéjar designs, especially those coming out of studios in Valencia like Paterna and Manises. McSweeney, “Crossing Borders: Paterna Ceramics in Mudéjar Spain,” 60.

Reconquista, and alongside the ongoing agonistic environment of religious polemic and law. As McSweeney suggested, Muslims in Valencia who became Mudéjars, were often craftspeople and thus highly valued by the conquering Christians and invited by King Jaume I of Aragon in a 1267 edict to “remain under his protection and practice their crafts.”

Indeed, documentary evidence suggests that Mudéjar potters in Valencia were independent and maintained an industry for the production of Paternaware within the kingdom.

While of a somewhat different nature due to a combination of economics, taste, and access to resources, Paterna pottery had been produced during the caliphal and ta’ifa periods but took on a far larger role in the post-conquest period – again likely due to expanded taste (which might suggest an increased appreciation for Islamicate material due to its perceived association with the high culture of the previous Muslim rulers). Also, increased trade with other Christian lands who produced some of the raw materials like tin from England, provided larger and more consistent access which led to a marked increase in production and demand that expanded beyond Valencia. On this point, according to McSweeney, the Paternaware was part of an Andalusi tradition of decorated tin-glazed open forms that bears hallmarks of similar materials found at Madinat al-Zahra. This style of pottery, including the early Islamic motifs, originated in al-Andalus and were influenced by pre-existing models that appeared throughout the Mediterranean and are believed to have originated in Islamic polities like North Africa, Spain, and the Near East. “Unlike the Christian motifs used in ceramics made in Italy and southern France, Paternaware used Islamic images, mixing them with Christian themes, to create

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387 McSweeney cites contracts from the period in which Muslim (Mudéjar) potters signed their own contracts – suggesting their independence of operation from a Christian patron who would have contracted on their behalf if that had been the situation. McSweeney, “Crossing Borders: Paterna Ceramics in Mudéjar Spain,” 55.
388 In particular, the copper green and manganese brown glazes used for decoration. McSweeney, “Crossing Borders: Paterna Ceramics in Mudéjar Spain,” 58.
389 Ibid.
a uniquely hybrid style of ceramic decoration.” As McSweeney indicated, “the documentary evidence clearly shows that [the ceramics industry in Paterna] was an industry created and run by Mudéjar potters who worked with Christian merchants to market their lively ceramics.” McSweeney also noted that the techniques used by the potters of Paterna “were inherited directly from the Islamic world,” in a lineage that “reaches back through *ta’ifa* and caliphal al-Andalus.” And while the lineage may extend to the Islamic period in al-Andalus, the market and designs continued to evolve for the patrons over time and through changes in political and religious rule from the caliphal period, through the Almoravids and Almohads, to the Christians. The seemingly smooth cultural transition between those periods of upheaval suggests the material products of the region were able to maintain their desirability despite the parties in power as the markets likely remained consistent. That the new Christian patrons continued to want the same ceramics with the same style of designs suggests a similar appreciation that does not seem to be tied to the artisans that produced them or their cultural origins.

In the case of the pottery industry coming out of Manises in another region of Valencia, Spain, the relationship between Christians and Mudéjars may have been less cooperative and symbiotic, but no less reflective of shared Islamicate culture than in Paterna.

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390 The blending of Mudéjar designs with Christian and/or Gothic thematic elements appears throughout al-Andalus, up to and including both the *Sala de la Justicia* and the Mudéjar Palace in the Alcazar of Seville. McSweeney, “Crossing Borders: Paterna Ceramics in Mudéjar Spain,” 61.
391 Ibid.
392 Ibid.
The Brasero (Dish) depicted above is of the same use and manner as the ataífor, a serving plate meant for shared meals. The design is representative of the Valencian Mudéjar style and features a central heraldic symbol similar to the coat of arms of Leon. While it might be suggestive of a Christian patron, that definitive designation is likely not possible as Paola Chadwick noted, “such blazons were frequently used as decorative emblems of prestige and luxury rather than as identifiers.” Chadwick’s comments suggest that by the 15th century, even the Spanish

394 Side view of Brasero with Heraldic Lion, “Dish (Brasero) with Heraldic Lion | Spanish, Valencia | The Met.” Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.) and Maryam Ekhtiar, eds., Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York : New Haven [Conn.]: Metropolitan Museum of Art ; Distributed by Yale University Press, 2011), 76.
Christian heraldry had become part of the Islamicate design repertoire, much in the same way the previous Islamic designs had been for the Christians centuries before. At the same time, the combination of Christian and Muslim-associated designs which conglomerated in Islamicate Mudéjar material suggests not only that the styles had evolved to incorporate the contributions of successive communities, but that even heraldic designs had become symbolic and evidence of a style that was shared and representative of high culture, separated conceptually from affiliations with specific polities or religions. The Islamicate nature of such designs is suggested by the likelihood that luster painting “was probably first brought to Malaga and Murcia…by Fatimid potters from Egypt in the late twelfth century.” Chadwick also indicates that “the appearance of the heraldic device on so many examples affirms that luster-painted ceramics were regarded as precious luxury objects by the Valencian nobility in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and that they were highly coveted in, and exported to, places as far away as Egypt, Algeria, and Sicily.” The case of these luster-painted braseros and other material across confessional communities seems similar to the use of ivory boxes and other material noted in Toledo and the Northern Kingdoms, but here again suggests commissioning or at least patronage across political and religious spectra since the patrons were likely nobles and wealthy merchants as well as patrons from Egypt and Algeria, then both Muslim territories, along with Sicily, which had been ruled by the Muslim Emirate of Sicily from the mid-ninth century until their ouster by the Normans in the late eleventh century and had an Islamicate history of its own.

The Islamicate themes that pervaded Valencian and Sevillian material culture was widespread and incorporated design elements that echo the decoration in the Sala de la Justicia.

396 Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.) and Ekhtiar, Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art, 76.
397 Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.) and Ekhtiar, Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art, 77.
Serving plates from Valencia and Manises featuring Islamicate Mudéjar designs and “stylized kufic and pseudo-kufic script,” reflect the intricacy and intermingling of designs which Mark Meyerson suggested had become popular, even outside of al-Andalus.\textsuperscript{400}

\textsuperscript{400} “Plate,” \textit{The Metropolitan Museum of Art}. 
The broad use of Islamicate Mudéjar ceramics can be seen in numerous pieces, including what are described as Pharmacy Jars, which were meant to hold pharmaceutical components, concoctions and even spices.

*Figure 35: Valencian pharmacy jar with stylized script*

*Figure 36: Valencian pharmacy jar with stylized script*

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In the above samples, all coming from Valencia in the early to mid-15th century, the first two jars (figs. 35 & 36) feature stylized kufic script, while the third (fig. 37) features a stylized Latin inscription which is a permutation of the biblical phrase, “IN PRINCIPIO ERAT VERBUM (In the beginning was the Word)”\(^4\) While each possesses similar banded designs and Mudéjar decoration, the stylized Arabic and Latin inscriptions likely reflect patron preferences in the design or decoration, but the overall style of design remains Islamicate suggesting customized variation on the same shared cultural product. The blending of Christian and Islamicate themes on these ceramics mirrors the Paternaware plates that manifested the same hybridity.

In his own study of the Muslims of Valencia, Meyerson noted that Mudéjars in post-conquest Valencia were heavily involved as artisans across several industries from shoemaking to metalwork.\(^5\) Meyerson detailed an extensive legal program in 15th century Valencia which sought to curtail Mudéjar and Jewish artisans through prohibitions against work days, guild

\(^{404}\) "Pharmacy Jar | Spanish | The Met."  
formation and membership and in favor of Christian monopolization of some industries.\textsuperscript{406} Meyerson noted that these legal prohibitions and restrictions, like many such restrictions in other kingdoms with regard to Christians, Muslims, and Jews, may not have had the same real world impact that the imagined world of the law suggests. Meyerson contended that “Muslim and Christian [artisans] seem to have coexisted amicably enough,” often sharing workspaces, materials, and standing for each other as surety in business credit (predominantly with the Christians doing so for Muslim artisans).\textsuperscript{407} In the case of Mudéjar artisans in Valencia, it seems there was at least some mirror for the law vs. reality dichotomy that affected Seville interactions. Meyerson also indicated that “artisans were usually artisan-retailers, responsible for both manufacturing and selling their wares.”\textsuperscript{408} As a result, the Muslim and Jewish artisans were also selling their wares to the citizens of Valencia, likely across religious lines in some cases, but Meyerson also details artisans working and selling beyond Valencia.\textsuperscript{409}

The comparative examples taken from Valencia seem to mirror similar patronage and production in Seville and Triana. It is also likely that the material cultural situation in Seville may have been even more amenable than that in Valencia given the former city’s history of cosmopolitanism. On another level, the later dates of some of the material, suggest that appreciation and patronage of Islamicate ceramics was still ongoing after the transition to more exclusivist political and religious contexts that took place in the region. The ceramics, like architecture, both seem to have existed in a context that was separate and distinct from political

\textsuperscript{406} In some cases Mudéjars were prohibited from working in some industries for fear that they would transfer technologies like crossbow manufacture to their coreligionists in Muslim controlled territory. Meyerson, \textit{The Muslims of Valencia,} 128-134.

\textsuperscript{407} Meyerson reports considerable cooperation between Muslim and Christian artisans which would belie the legal constructs that suggest animosity and competition. Meyerson, \textit{The Muslims of Valencia,} 131.

\textsuperscript{408} Meyerson, \textit{The Muslims of Valencia,} 132.

\textsuperscript{409} As reflected in the markets for both Paternaware and Manises pottery. Ibid.
or religious affiliations, which is especially pronounced when the political and religious conflicts amplified and became more contentious.

4.10 Other Forms of Shared Culture

The purpose behind all of the gestures toward shared culture is to cement the concept of an interactive cosmopolitan Islamicate community that possessed a shared visual language and material culture that crossed political and religious boundaries in such a way that would make hybrid material culture, and especially architecture like the Alcazar of Seville reasonable and intelligible to the people of al-Andalus, even if that material appeared wildly inappropriate to those outside of its shared cultural context. To be clear, the participation was not merely in architecture and ceramic material culture, but rather that both of those genres of material were part of the larger shared cultural landscape. As the Sala de la Justicia revealed, an Islamicate building or structure was not merely a decoration, but reflected a symbolic connection to the past as well as a projection of power and authority imbued by that connection. The use of braseros and ataífors, while again useful for projecting connection, luxury, and refinement, also reflected a particular style of cuisine and manner of eating that seemed to be shared. Music, literature, entertainment, and intellectual pursuits also seem to be shared. Even clothing and its value as a cultural identifier, which was frequently the subject of Church decrees and Royal laws, seems to have been shared in the context of Castilian al-Andalus. On the one hand, J. N. Hillgarth indicated that “there was a tendency to imitate the appearance of the rival community.”

“Christians (Mozarabs)…in Toledo continued to dress very much [like the Muslims] as did the Mudéjars. Their women wore veils when they left the house.” On the other hand, Hillgarth

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411 Ibid.
reported a comment from Ibn Sa’id, who in the late thirteenth century noted that “Sultans and warriors [of Granada] imitate the dress of the Christians,”\textsuperscript{412} a situation corroborated by Ibn Khaldun, who later remarked that “Spanish Muslims ‘assimilate themselves to the [Christians] in their dress, their emblems, and most of their customs and conditions.’”\textsuperscript{413} Hillgarth noted that even “Christian liturgical vestments of this century [13\textsuperscript{th}] bear Arabic inscriptions.”\textsuperscript{414} While this last comment would again clearly draw a line between the consideration of cultural products within the framework of religion, the entire issue of dress coincides with all the other forms of shared culture discussed in this section. If Muslims in Granada, Mozarabs in Toledo, or Christian clerics in al-Andalus shared boundary crossing clothing styles, the idea that each also seemed to be reflecting styles of dress that were considered grand and possibly reflecting power and authority are likely and seem to mirror many other material interactions and motivations on the cultural level. However, like several other commentators, Hillgarth may have monolithicized and projected modern identity categorization backward in time. As would seem clear, it was likely not the case that Muslims, Christians, and Jews were imitating each other’s’ distinctive cultural products, but rather that they were all participating in customizable forms of shared culture similar to that seen in the plates, bowls, and pharmacy jars. Islamicate shared culture could therefore be seen at all levels of society and across confessional communities. It is this Islamicate shared culture that contextualizes and explains the cosmopolitan milieu of al-Andalus and the contextual framework in which post-Reconquista architecture and material culture was created.

\textsuperscript{412} Bermúdez López noted “Nasrid Granada had a large colony of merchants from Genoa and Venice who greatly influenced the court.” This influence also may have inspired some of the vault paintings in the Alhambra’s Sala de los Reyes. Jesús Bermúdez López, \textit{The Alhambra and the Generalife: Official Guide} (Madrid: TF, 2010), 140.

\textsuperscript{413} Hillgarth, \textit{The Spanish Kingdoms}, 168.

\textsuperscript{414} Which may in turn justify the burial cloaks and repose cushions noted for Fernando III and members of the Castilian Royal family in the same time period. Hillgarth, \textit{The Spanish Kingdoms}, 169.
5 THE SYNOPTIC CONSTRUCTIONS

The central argument of this dissertation is that there was an Islamicate shared culture which existed between the three confessional communities (Muslims, Christians, and Jews) in al-Andalus. This shared culture existed separately from affiliations with the respective religious and political spheres of the participants such that architectural designs and decorations, along with a host of other cultural permutations could coexist amidst ongoing antagonism and conflict in other spheres. As manifested in building constructions and material culture from all three communities, Islamicate shared culture also included a common visual language which could be customized to reflect the personal choices of the patrons. As a result, Islamicate shared culture permeated al-Andalus over the course of several centuries, but reached its height during the 14th century with several building projects commissioned by prominent rulers each community which incorporated the shared style and visual language into their projects.

The shared visual language and culture in al-Andalus being proposed influenced material production throughout the 13th and 14th centuries. This form of cosmopolitan culture, being referred to as Islamicate, can be most clearly seen in a series of elite and royal constructions from the mid to late 14th century. New building projects in the Royal Palace (and later convent) at Tordesillas, the Sinagoga del Tránsito in Toledo, the Mudéjar Palace at the Alcazar of Seville, and Muhammad V’s improvements and new constructions at the Alhambra of Granada were all products of the shared Islamicate culture that crossed religious, social, and political lines to produce some of the most representative constructions of the Mudéjar period in al-Andalus. Each of these projects, completed over a period of less than 15 years represented the penultimate expression of Mudéjar architecture and design as well as clear manifestations of Islamicate shared culture. Arguably, the continued production and patronization of Islamicate material
culture that carried on for more than a century after the demise of several of its most prominent patrons, Pedro I, Samuel ha-Levi, and Nasrid ruler, Muhammad V, served as the crowning achievements and lasting legacy of these patrons.

This chapter will examine four elite and royal building projects that incorporated many of the Mudéjar design elements that had been developing since the Almohad period in al-Andalus to illustrate the continued presence and influence of Islamicate shared culture that influenced palatial and religious construction projects at the highest level. A Castilian king, a Nasrid sultan and a Jewish minister all commissioned constructions during this period, in many cases sharing artisans and craftspeople and producing some of the most recognizable and influential examples of Mudéjar architecture and design. The cohesion in style and design, which while still reflecting customized elements relevant to each patron’s individual context, suggest a shared visual language and foundational design repertoire that could be molded to the needs and desires of each patron.

As seen with the Sala de la Justicia in the Alcazar of Seville and the constructions of Yusuf I in the Alhambra, a particular form of triumphalism was again suggested as a rationale for some of the designs (in this case with Muhammad V’s contribution to the Alhambra in Granada). At the same time, a new explanation, hereafter known as the “default theory,” was proposed as an explanation for the similarity of designs and styles as opposed to that of a shared culture and visual language being offered here. An examination of both of these theoretical explanations (triumphalism and default) reveals that while valid on some levels, they ultimately serve to cement Islamicate shared culture as the most likely explanation suitable for the long cosmopolitan history in medieval al-Andalus and the Islamicate cultural orientation of the patrons, regardless of their religious, political, or social affiliations.
5.1 The “Default Theory”

Much like the inverted triumphalism attributed to Alfonso XI and his construction of the Sala de la Justicia, Pedro I would also be subject to an alternative assertion regarding his commission and construction of the Mudéjar Palace and other Islamicate constructions in Castile and al-Andalus. Dubbed the “default theory” by Ruggles, the explanation argues that Mudéjar architecture and designs were largely the result of a “default” aesthetic prompted by the available “local” artisans (frequently Muslim) and materials that were readily available. A “default theory” had been proposed often enough with regard to the designation of the Mudéjar style that he directly addressed it in his article, “Architectural Languages, Functions, and Spaces: The Crown of Castile and al-Andalus.”

The “default theory” has also been promoted by Pedro I’s most recent biographer, historian Clara Estow. Estow argued that Pedro’s commission and selection of Mudéjar designs and aesthetics in his Mudéjar Palace at the Alcazar of Seville was not the result of a particular preference on the King’s part, but rather was due to the prevailing regional design style along with the availability of artisans and materials and their convenience. Estow also suggested that the decorative plaster common to Mudéjar designs were cheaper, concluding “Pedro’s alcazar, if a tribute [to anything] at all, is probably more to the king’s parsimony than to his presumed favoritism toward Muslims.” Estow was attempting to make a point about Pedro’s presumed favoritism toward both Muslims and Jews that had been attributed to him in the wake of charges by his rival and eventual murderer, Enrique de Trastamara. In a 1366 CE grievance

417 Estow, Pedro the Cruel of Castile, 174–75.
418 Estow, Pedro the Cruel of Castile, 176.
419 Ibid.
against Pedro I, issued in Burgos, Enrique referred to Pedro as “tiranno malo enemigo de Dios
(tyrannous evil enemy of God).” and accused him of “acreçentando e enriqueciendo los moros e los iudios e enseñorandolos e abaxando la fe catolica de nuestro Señor Jhesu Christo
(promoting and enriching Moors and Jews and ennobling them and abandoning the Catholic faith of our Lord Jesus Christ).” Estow contended that such charges, along with Pedro’s own activities have given him the false characterization of having what she described as “orientalist sympathies.” Unfortunately, Estow’s and others’ “default theory” runs up against the same difficulties as Dodds’ “triumphalism theory.” With regard to Pedro I’s renovations in the Alcazar, no matter how convenient or inexpensive Mudéjar designs and building techniques may have been it is unlikely that he would have been comfortable with phrases like the shahada of Islam, the Nasrid motto, and other Qur’anic references being inscribed on the walls of his palace by local artisans without his approval, regardless of his preferences or sympathies. Also, the Mudéjar designs featuring these and similar inscriptions, were not only used in the public areas of the Alcazar but in Pedro’s private quarters. Thus, similar to Alfonso XI’s throne room, Pedro’s private residence literally contained him and was not meant for the public, so the choice to maintain the Mudéjar design in his own chambers had to have been intentional. The idea of a “default” style is further complicated by the palace at Tordesillas, which pre-dates the Mudéjar Palace in the Alcazar of Seville. Pedro’s renovation of Tordesillas is also in the Mudéjar style – a structure that was later willed to the Church as a monastery and convent. The same Islamicate Mudéjar style was also employed by Samuel ha-Levi for the Sinagoga del Tránsito as

421 Estow, Pedro the Cruel of Castile, 1350-1369, 175.
422 Pedro I made two proclamations in 1363 regarding the Palace at Tordesillas being converted to a monastery and convent, later known as Santa Clara de Tordesillas. Luis Vicente Díaz Martín, Itinerario de Pedro I de Castilla: Estudio Y Regesta (Valladolid: Universidad, Secretariado de Publicaciones, 1975), 391, 396.
well as by Muhammad V of Granada for his own constructions within the Alhambra. Given the widespread prevalence of this particular style, there must have been more to the use of Mudéjar designs than simply convenience and economy.

Although potentially correct in some respects, a default style of design occurring on such a large and widespread scale is problematic and may suggest that Estow was making the same monolithization error as other scholars. The misinterpretation of Pedro I that she was attempting to correct, that Pedro was an orientalist, is again based on the idea that there was an understood Islamic style that was in turn associated with Islam writ large that would then be something Enrique de Trastamara could exploit. More succinctly, the only way for Pedro to have been perceived as an “orientalist” is if Mudéjar designs were seen as “oriental.” Perceptions of orientalism in this context, especially in the categorization of “oriental” as something foreign, other, or non-traditional, is anachronistic and factually inaccurate. If anything, the so-called “oriental” style would prove to be the norm for al-Andalus, regardless of political or religious affiliations. As a result, whatever style might be suggested in place of something Islamicate, like Gothic or Romanesque, had popularity outside of the region but were considerably underrepresented locally. Thus, these alternative styles would actually be more unfamiliar and uncommon in al-Andalus, possibly making non-Mudéjar styles non-traditional or “other,” not the other way around. As such, the suggestion of “orientalism” leads to the second issue. There is no contextual support for Enrique attacking Pedro over architecture or design. Enrique, having lived at various times in both Castilian and Aragonite territory, would be familiar with Mudéjar designs. Furthermore, upon murdering Pedro and taking his throne, Enrique did not destroy or otherwise eradicate Mudéjar material culture either in the palace or his new territory. In fact,
Mudéjar material and Islamicate culture remained popular throughout al-Andalus and the surrounding territory for generations after Pedro’s death.

In her analysis of *Santa Clara de Tordesillas*, Art Historian Cynthia Robinson pushed back against interpretations of Islamicate Mudéjar design and the triumphalism interpretations championed by scholars like Jerrilynn Dodds and other orientalist-style interpretations. She classified these interpretations as those seen through a “generalized ‘fascination’ lens,” which reflected more generous interpretations of orientalism. Robinson’s stated intent was to examine *Santa Clara de Tordesillas* as the product of a shared visual language. As she argued, this shared visual language “was generated not by the appropriation of a category of motifs, or of an aesthetic by one tradition from another entirely separate from it, but by the participation of specific groups from among the practitioners of all three traditions in the creation of a devotional language, literature, practice, and visual tradition.” Furthermore, she argued that the shared language was not a manifestation of the moment, but rather the product of long-term interactions between the three confessional communities. In other words, *Santa Clara de Tordesillas*, along with the other constructions in this time frame were all manifestations of Islamicate shared culture. Thus, far more than a default style or style of convenience or parsimony, Mudéjar designs, as reflections of Islamicate shared culture, also represented, majesty, grandeur and a reflection of power. Their adoption by a Catholic king, a Muslim Emir, and a Jewish minister; used respectively in religious, personal, and political contexts all suggest that the style was both intentional and meaningful. As Ruggles also contended, these designs were clearly choices made by patrons.

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Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, confirmed the arguments made by Ruggles regarding choice in the design decisions by royal patrons, and argued that the Palace at Tordesillas could not have been constructed in such a way without the blessing of the patron. Furthermore, due to the numerous relationships, sponsors, and close temporal proximity of the constructions, the Palace at Tordesillas, Muhammad V’s constructions in the Alhambra, Samuel ha-Levi’s Sinagoga del Tránsito and the Mudéjar Palace in the Alcazar of Seville should all be considered Andalusian architecture.

5.2 The Synoptic Constructions

As examples of Islamicate or Andalusian architecture, the Palace at Tordesillas, the Sinagoga del Tránsito, the Mudéjar Palace at the Alcazar of Seville, and Muhammad V’s building in the Alhambra of Granada reflect what might be considered synoptic constructions or constructions and building projects that are best read or viewed together. These correlated constructions are understood as cross-influential on each other as well as embodying a unity that reflects shared Islamicate culture. In addition to the projects themselves, their patrons Pedro I, Samuel ha-Levi, and Muhammad V are equally important in this context as their relationships with each other and their constructions were equally shared and intertwined, likely resulting in the wide dissemination of the Islamicate shared culture to their respective projects and communities.

With regard to explanations like the so-called “default theory” or other interpretations based on any socio-ethnic grouping of workers, Ruiz Souza confirmed that project-based constructions during the medieval period and into the early modern period were regularly the result of multiple

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427 “Ya que este palacio vallisoletano jamas hubiera sido posible sin los deseo de sus promotores, creemos justo que se estudie dentro de la arquitectura andalusi.” Ibid. Ruiz Souza, “Architectural Languages,” 330.
workshops working collectively on projects. As he stated, “the ethnic origin of the workforce cannot be the determining factor in the appearance of a finished product since artisans of different religions worked on the same construction site.” That said, it is likely that there were specialists used at Tordesillas and some of them may have been sent by or borrowed from Muhammad V of Granada. However, even if there were Mudéjar or Muslim artisans working on the Palace at Tordesillas or indeed every construction discussed in this chapter, it is doubtful that their stylistic influence was transcendent. Given the widespread appearance of Islamicate/Mudéjar stylistics in constructions across al-Andalus, Ruiz Souza indicated that it would have been “highly unlikely that the contribution of a clearly marginal segment of the population established the aesthetic criteria for all of Iberia during the entire later Middle Ages.” It is far more likely that design elements and stylistics that have been termed “Mudéjar” were not only separate from the ethno-religious group of the same name but were reflective of the shared cultural language and identity of al-Andalus and the greater Iberian community regardless of their religious affiliations.

Tordesillas, Toledo, Seville, and Granada contain synoptic constructions that are part of the Andalusi architectural canon. The idea that shared Islamicate culture developed and evolved over the course of several generations following the Castilian defeat of the Almohads is a testament to the popularity of these designs along with the likelihood that they represented ideas and identities that were commonly understood in al-Andalus and beyond. While palatial and religious constructions by the prominent members of the three confessional communities in al-

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429 This explanation stands in contrast to theories that suggests Mudéjar constructions were built by Mudéjars vs. a wide variety of specialized artisans. Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, “Architectural Languages,” 363.
431 Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 14.
Andalus served as inspiration and example for other constructions, Ruiz Souza indicated that the intricacy and delicacy of the designs had “become corrupted by less skilled workmanship,” leading to “a greatly simplified and repetitive formal language.” It is likely this same simplified and repetitive visual language that found its way into the ceramic workshops of Seville and Valencia so that the same inspirational and representative material could reach a wider audience, even if the specificity of the designs, symbols, or inscriptions were no longer coherent or representative.

The connectivity between the Islamicate designs in al-Andalus and their origins within the communities under Islamic rule prior to the Reconquista is clear. As Ruiz Souza observed, the façades that appeared on educational institutions built by Castilians in this time period resembled those in Granada and other Islamic polities. Ruiz Souza noted that “if a Muslim [from outside Iberia] had visited the finished structures of [Colegio de] San Gregorio in Valladolid or the University of Salamanca during the sixteenth century, he would have no doubt that he was standing in front of two educational institutions.” While the Islamicate heritage would have been evident to such a visitor, Ruiz Souza pointed out that “the formal [visual] vocabulary utilized in each specific instance [would have been] change[d] radically.” This case further exemplifies that while Islamicate shared culture confirms its Islamic heritage, it had become Iberianized and reflective of an Andalusi culture that was far more diverse with vastly different influences than its Muslim ancestry would provide.

For his part, Ruiz Souza is concerned about what he considered to be the false importance of the ethnic or confessional affiliation of the construction worker on the design of the projects they

435 Ibid.
436 Ibid.
were working on. Unfortunately, Ruiz Souza was likely responding to perceptions regarding Mudéjar “art” that existed within a monolithicized framework in which Mudéjars make Mudéjar art, Christians make Christian art, etc. The cosmopolitan context of al-Andalus, however, and the diverse and pluralistic nature of its communities, including its artisanal workshops, decries such categorization. In concluding, Ruiz Souza asked “Do we not distort reality by trying to identify the ethnic or confessional origins of any individual architectural element? And accompanying this question would be an even more difficult one. Specifically, the difficult question of just how often a patron or master would actually have been conscious of, or concerned about, the different origins of each and every element that constituted a local architectural tradition.”

In response to this question it could be suggested that the thought likely wouldn’t have occurred to them at all as the question would likely never have been asked or even considered in the first place. In al-Andalus and Iberia, these elements had likely lost any affiliation with religion, ethnicity, or politics, and would rather have been seen as Andalusi and thereby removing the need for questions about origins or affiliations. Once again, such identity-based monolithic conceptions of material or society would have been contemporarily anachronistic and thus such questions would be the product of a modern scholarly sensibility and not that of a medieval patron or master.

If it is indeed the case that the synoptic Andalusi constructions shared a visual language and reflected the contributions of Islamicate culture over time then a closer look at these constructions should reveal it.

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5.3 The Palace at Tordesillas

*Figure 38: Real Monasterio de Santa Clara*

The Royal Palace at Tordesillas (later the *Real Monasterio de Santa Clara*) is the first of the four synoptic 14\textsuperscript{th} century Islamicate constructions. The specific constructions related to Tordesillas in this comparison derive from Pedro I and his mistress Maria de Padilla and were built between 1354 – 1361 CE. The Palace and the subsequent monastery and convent are significant in that they likely represent the first of Pedro I’s patronage in the Mudéjar style and would provide a trajectory for the future Islamicate projects connected to it through artisans, designs, and materials. At the same time, despite its primary status in this group, the palace at Tordesillas was nonetheless already a part of the pre-existing Islamicate culture of al-Andalus.

The palace contains many familiar design elements and features that connect it to other constructions and traditions in the region, including references to Almohad designs as well as early post-Reconquista Islamicate designs from Toledo. Beyond these references, the evidence of shared visual language is apparent and construction analysis suggests there may even have

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been a specific building metric or measurement that linked Tordesillas with the other synoptic constructions in al-Andalus as well as to other Islamic and Islamicate projects outside of Iberia.

One of the critical links between Tordesillas, the synoptic constructions, and the larger visual canon of al-Andalus may be in this particular building metric. Art Historian Ángel González Hernández observed that the palace at Tordesillas, the Alhambra of Granada, the Mudéjar Palace in Seville, and the Sinagoga del Tránsito in Toledo share an architectural kinship through the use of a modular system built around what he termed the “Mamluk cubit” of 54 centimeters. This building metric, which was applied across the region, links these constructions together structurally, but also suggests the ongoing development of the Islamicate style. This Mamluk cubit based modular system was combined with the previous Almohad designs and influences in the ongoing evolution of the Mudéjar style. The combination of buildings with earlier design metrics alongside those with the newer Mamluk cubit system also occurred with the Alhambra, Alcazar, and palace at Tordesillas. At Tordesillas, for example, the Gilded Chapel, which extended in part to earlier Almohad or Almohad-influenced designs incorporated newer Mamluk cubit-based designs in Pedro’s later renovation. Similar combinations and exchanges were also evident in Moroccan buildings over the same stretch of time suggesting that the new modular system was a part of the shared culture that existed across polities and confessional communities.

Because the Mamluk cubit was in use among builders from Granada, González Hernández suggested that the Mudéjar style of Pedro I’s palace construction and his renovation at Tordesillas were more highly influenced by Nasrid design than the Almohad design that likely

439 “Mamluk” refers to the Egyptian Sultanate that ruled from Cairo c. 1250-1517 CE who were prominent builders during their reign. The modular system and its Mamluk cubit base were found in constructions across al-Andalus during Pedro’s reign, but also in the Marinid Magreb, where it also likely meshed with Almohad-influenced designs. Ángel González Hernández “De Nuevo Sobre el Palacio del Rey Don Pedro I en Tordesillas,” Reales Sitios, no. 171 (2007), 16.
influenced the construction of the earlier Gilded Chapel.\textsuperscript{440} As such, he believed that the designs in Pedro’s renovation of Tordesillas were better described as Nasrid, rather than Mudéjar, since the style, construction technique, and workers likely came from that point of origin. Based on his interpretation of José Amador de los Ríos who coined the term “Nasrid,” González Hernández contended that the term is therefore a more apt descriptor of the designs in Tordesillas, \textit{“ya que estimamos que «lo mudéjar» se debe referir, exclusivamente, a construcciones ejecutadas con técnicas y modos islámicos, pero siguiendo esquemas y plantas, o alzados, de origen cristiano en sus líneas generales.”}\textsuperscript{441}

While González Hernández identified a significant architectural link between these constructions, it may inspire a radically different interpretation in the Islamicate shared culture theory. Rather than requiring an alternative to the term “Mudéjar,” the presence of what he described as Nasrid influences should instead suggest a reimagining of the term Mudéjar itself. By so tightly defining the term Mudéjar, González Hernández created another exclusive monolithization where all these descriptors referenced one singular concept or designation. Alternatively, if Mudéjar is instead envisioned as a reference or signal of Islamicate shared culture, the interplay between Almohad, Mamluk, Mudéjar, and Nasrid elements makes much more sense. In this way, what Pedro was doing architecturally in Tordesillas was part of the same shared visual language and culture as that found among Muslims in Granada, Marinids in the Maghreb, and Christians and Jews in al-Andalus. And, when taken together with Ruiz Souza’s intervention into assertions about the ethnic or confessional affiliations of workers or workshops, it is far more likely that what González Hernández was seeing as exclusively Nasrid was simply part of a larger whole. Even if the Mamluk cubit model did derive from Nasrid

\textsuperscript{440} Ángel González Hernández, \textit{Reales Sitios}, 16.
\textsuperscript{441} Ángel González Hernández, \textit{Reales Sitios}, 20.
architectural techniques, the design elements and decorations being used across al-Andalus reflect the same patron-led customization and blending of styles endemic of Islamicate shared culture and far more likely represent the ongoing evolution of the shared style over time.

Figure 39: Patio del Vergel, Santa Clara de Tordesillas

As a case in point, in his analysis of the Patio del Vergel in the Real Monasterio de Santa Clara de Tordesillas (fig. 39), Ruiz Souza noted the similarities between aspects of the construction of this courtyard and monastery with the Patio de los Leones (Courtyard of the Lions) constructed by Muhammad V in the Alhambra. Ruiz Souza also observed that the construction of this patio as well as other aspects of the palace that once sat on this space were

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the product of multiple influences vs. the primarily Nasrid influences that González Hernández noted. As further evidence on this point, the “Nasrid” style was itself a product of multiple influences, including the earlier Islamicate styles in al-Andalus and the Maghreb. Ruiz Souza highlighted numerous influences on the Palace at Tordesillas in terms of the patio design ranging from “la casa de La Alberquilla de Madinat al-Zahra’ (siglo X), en el patio de crucero de la Casa de la Contratación de Sevilla (siglo XII) y en el Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos de Córdoba (siglo XIV).” And in the case of the crucero (transept) influences, those linkages extend back to Latin Church designs.

Figure 40: Patio Árabes, Santa Clara de Tordesillas

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While there are numerous commonalities between Pedro’s renovations to the palace at Tordesillas and the other synoptic constructions, perhaps the most significant is the *Patio Árabes* (Arab Courtyard). The *Patio Árabes* (fig. 41) featured poly-lobed arches, *ataurique* stucco decoration, planked wood overhangs, and *alicatados* mosaic (*dado*) designs, all of which were part of the shared Islamicate visual language. These elements, combined with the influence and patronage by Pedro I, would solidify them along with the Royal Palace at Tordesillas in general, as inspirations for future constructions including the other synoptic structures. While the palace at Tordesillas will be a major source of discussion going forward in relationship to Islamicate shared culture theory, the shared visual language is evident in the synoptic constructions and the breadth of these influences and language already appeared in the Royal Palaces’ “Arab baths.”

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5.3.1 The “Arab” Baths

Figure 42: Baños Árabes, Santa Clara de Tordesillas

The Baños Árabes (Arab Baths) located in the lower region of the present monastery/convent are largely an architectural palimpsest of the Palace’s history while also illustrating the far reaching influence and presence of shared Islamicate culture. The dating and origin of the baths themselves are unknown. Cynthia Robinson noted that there is a documented history of Juana Manual (1339-1381 CE), Queen Consort of Enrique de Trastamara, making improvements and renovations to the baths.\textsuperscript{448} And Carmen García-Frías Checa confirmed that a license was granted to Juana Manuel to connect the baths to the convent proper.\textsuperscript{449} Checa also argued that the “origin [of the heraldry depicted above] must be traced back to the great moment when the

\textsuperscript{447} Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 71.
\textsuperscript{448} While being unable to determine a specific date of origin for the specifics of the decorations in the baths, Robinson conceded that the fact that Juana Manual was restoring, rather than building, likely suggests that the bath and possibly some of their decoration was extant. Robinson, “Mudéjar Revisited,” 53–54.
\textsuperscript{449} The baths had been part of the original Palace built by Pedro I and had not been part of the monastery and convent after the 1363 gift. Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 75.
palace was built during the time of Pedro I in the 1350s. The painted designs on the ceiling are of the girih or lacería design that is a recurring theme across the synoptic constructions, but also a design feature that had been part of Islamic art for centuries. The eight-point stars carved out of the ceiling structure served a dual purpose, to act as skylights bringing light in, while also serving as vents to allow steam from the baths to escape. Like the girih designs, the star carvings were also a common feature of Islamic period baths in al-Andalus.

Figure 43: Baños Árabes de Ceuta

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450 Some dispute exists of the origin of the entire complex, with some evidence suggesting an earlier construction under Alfonso XI c. 1340 CE, so the ultimate dating of the baths is in flux, especially given the conflicting design elements present. Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 75.

In two examples from al-Andalus, the eight-point star carving appeared in both the baths in Ceuta (fig. 43) and the Alhambra of Granada (fig. 44). Both of these baths also featured the vaulted ceilings, brick work and horseshoe arches that were equally emblematic of Islamicate design.

Figure 45: Brick work detail, Santa Clara de Tordesillas

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The above images taken from Tordesillas (fig. 45) and Granada (fig. 46) further connect the baths of al-Andalus. Tordesillas featured the brick work and horseshoe arches common to these structures and the image from the Alhambra Hammam also holds remnants of the alicatados mosaic that served as the interior wall décor for the bath.

Figure 47: Tepidarium, Banos Árabes, Santa Clara de Tordesillas

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454 Interior with wall tile detail, Hammam Alhambra, J.F. Sullivan, own work, 05/21/2016.
455 Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 73.
In the above image (fig. 47), taken from the bayt al-wastani (tepidarium) of the Baños Árabes in the Palace at Tordesillas, several of these elements come together. The vaulted ceiling, star carvings, and horseshoe arches are all present. The alicatados mosaic also decorated the dado of the bath, but in this case was drawn rather than tiled. The room also features capitals, that Checa indicates are of Almohad origin “and are similar to those in the Arab Courtyard [of Santa Clara de Tordesillas].”\textsuperscript{457} The hammam at the Alhambra (fig. 48) also includes several similar elements including the capitals, arches, vaulted ceiling and alicatados mosaic on the dado. In just these few examples, one architectural space (a bath) stylistically, and arguably culturally, links a Christian palace and later monastery with a Muslim palace. And, as discussed previously, at least some of the renovations to the bath were completed by the Queen Consort of Enrique de Trastamara, the same individual who allegedly attacked Pedro I over his supposed “orientalism” per Estow.


\textsuperscript{457} The capitals themselves are not Almohad specifically, just the design. Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 74.
The *Baños Árabes* and the larger palace at Tordesillas also provide links to a Jewish synagogue in Toledo. The *Sinagoga del Tránsito*, parts of which may have been built concurrently or even before some elements of the palace at Tordesillas, share numerous similarities. Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale noted that *El Tránsito*’s patron Samuel ha-Levi used the same workshop (*atelier*) that had worked on Pedro’s palace at Tordesillas, so the presence of shared visual culture would be expected.\(^{458}\)

*Figure 49: Underground vault, Museo del Greco*

\(^{458}\) Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 244.

The underground vault (fig. 49), currently located beneath the Museo del Greco, used to connect El Tránsito to the museum property, when the current museum was the residence of ha-Levi, and served as his personal synagogue. The brickwork, arches, and building details are of the same style as those found in the Baños Árabes at Tordesillas and other “Arab baths” in al-Andalus. Likewise, the poly-lobed arches on the fenestration of the clerestory of El Tránsito (fig. 50), also mirror similar designs in Pedro’s vestibule of the old palace at Tordesillas (fig. 50).

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While the Palace at Tordesillas is the foundational building of the four synoptic constructions, its linkages to the other three constructions are abundant. The two connections between the palace and *El Tránsito* already noted are only a small part of the shared visual language and Islamicate culture that existed between these two buildings and arguably most of the material culture in 14th century al-Andalus. In addition, the mural paintings and figures depicted above reflect, according to Checa, religious subjects and saints, but which suggest earlier gothic and religious styles. The images are also reminiscent of the embedded saints and figures depicted in *Cristo de la Luz*.

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462 Ibid.
5.4 El Sinagoga del Tránsito

The second of the synoptic Mudéjar constructions is the synagogue of Samuel ha-Levi Abulafia in Toledo. Samuel ha-Levi was a member of the established Jewish Abulafia family in Toledo and a member of the sizable Jewish population in that city. Ha-Levi worked as an almojarife (tax collector) in Toledo before moving into the same position in Seville c. 1351 CE. Within a few years he was working as the Royal Treasurer (tesoro mayor del rey) for Pedro I. Ha-Levi worked as treasurer and advisor to Pedro for nearly ten years and in that time secured permission to construct a synagogue c. 1357 CE, which later became known as the Sinagoga del Tránsito. While not the largest synagogue in Toledo, El Tránsito is significant in its role as one of the four synoptic constructions. Following Pedro’s renovation of the palace

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464 Estow, Pedro the Cruel of Castile, 1350-1369, 169.
465 Estow, Pedro the Cruel of Castile, 1350-1369, 171.
466 The original name of the synagogue is unknown but later became known as El Tránsito which was derived from the name Tránsito de Nuestra Señora from the dedication of the building after its ceding to the Order of Calatrava in 1494 CE. Estow, 167–68 n.39.
at Tordesillas, the *Sinagoga del Tránsito* is the second chronological construction of the group. It is particularly important to the larger discussion of Islamicate shared culture in al-Andalus specifically because it pre-dates Pedro’s signature construction of the Mudéjar Palace at the Alcazar in Seville, but bears similar hallmarks and designs as the other buildings in this study. More intriguing, however, is the building’s function. Constructed as a synagogue, *El Tránsito*, like Alfonso XI’s *Sala de la Justicia*, is subject to the same questions about design and decoration. To borrow the orientation of Ruggles’s earlier question, why would a Jew build a synagogue adorned with Islamicate Mudéjar designs and featuring Arabic inscriptions alongside Hebrew inscriptions if those designs or inscriptions had any perceived connection to Islam? In the case of the *Sinagoga del Tránsito*, ha-Levi does not even have a triumphalism interpretation available, so explanations outside of those reflecting shared culture do not immediately present themselves. In the case of this structure, an argument could be made for the default theory, but that could be countered by the earlier constructions in Toledo like *Cristo de la Luz* and the nearby *Sinagoga de Santa María la Blanca*. Also clearly countermanding suggestions of a default theory is the unprecedented amount of patron choice and customization that went into the decoration of *El Tránsito*.

If there were indeed a default or shared set of artisans, designs, and workshops for these projects who produced similar styles or types of work, which there may indeed have been, it doesn’t certainly follow that they would be given free range to design a personal and private worship temple for a senior court official and prominent member of the Toledo community. Far more plausible is the existence of a shared style that offered patron customization from a common visual repertoire (i.e. shared visual language) – especially considering that any ethno-confessional homogeneity of workshops in Toledo, or anywhere else for that matter, are unlikely
as previously discussed. The familial characteristics of the Mudéjar décor, the likely use of Nasrid artisans, and the use of the Mamluk cubit base in both Tordesillas and *El Tránsito*, but with broad personalization and customization between the two suggest that both structures were built for their respective patrons, but drew from the visual and material culture that was shared by both. In the case of the *Sinagoga del Tránsito* in particular, given the specificity of the designs and inscriptions, along with the numerous hurdles necessary for the construction to even occur in the first place, it doesn’t seem at all likely that ha-Levi would turn over the design and construction of his personal temple to convenience.

To further this point, as Clara Estow noted, the fact that the structure is a synagogue meant for Jewish worship, combined with the content and nature of the Hebrew inscriptions, suggest that the intended audience of the synagogue were primarily Jews. More specifically, she argued that while public inscriptions honoring a patron were a common feature of Andalusi architecture, appearing in the *Sala* and all the other structures in this discussion, “*El Tránsito* was not a true public building.” Given the building’s purpose and the primarily Hebrew inscriptions, Estow contended that they “only served to celebrate and enhance [ha-Levi’s] reputation in his own community.” If so, this evidence would further suggest Islamicate shared culture as the most likely interpretation. If the primary consumer, beyond ha-Levi himself, was the Jewish community of Toledo, clearly the design of the synagogue as much as the inscriptions would be intended to reflect ha-Levi and potentially the greater community by extension. Thus, the inclusion of anything Islamic would be odd to say the least and realistically

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467 From *Las Siete Partidas*: Part VII, Title XXIV, Law IV - Jews were banned from erecting new synagogues anywhere in the Castilian domain without royal permission, and even with permission, such constructions come with height and external decoration limits and other requirements. S. P. Scott, Robert Ignatius Burns, and Alfonso, eds., *Las Siete Partidas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 1434.

468 Estow, *Pedro the Cruel of Castile, 1350-1369*, 168.

469 Ibid.

470 Ibid.
must have already been part of the visual language familiar to the residents of Toledo. This interpretation is further supported by the history of Toledo itself. As one of the early conquests by the Christians c. 1085 CE, it had been under Christian rule and influence for far longer than Seville had been. As such, if an alternative design style, more reflective of a Christian aesthetic, would have developed in al-Andalus, Toledo would have been the most likely nexus. However, returning to the discussion of Cristo de la Luz, it is clear that Islamicate shared culture was present and ongoing and therefore would be well-established when Samuel ha-Levi received permission to construct his synagogue in the city. Architectural evidence suggests that it was indeed the case that Islamicate shared culture continued throughout this period.

While El Tránsito shares many features with Pedro’s palace at Tordesillas and would in turn share Nasrid and other developing features with both the Alcazar’s Mudéjar Palace and the Alhambra of Granada. The synagogue also incorporates some visual elements that appear in earlier constructions in Toledo, further suggesting an ongoing and evolving Islamicate culture and visual language rather than something done by default. One site which suggests such an influence is the Sinagoga de Santa María la Blanca.
The Sinagoga de Santa María la Blanca predates El Tránsito and serves as evidence of the lengthy history of Islamicate shared culture in Toledo and connects El Tránsito architecturally to Cristo de la Luz and the earliest Mudéjar constructions in the city. The origins and patronage of

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*Santa Maria la Blanca* is, however, in question. Circumstantial epigraphic references suggest a construction date c. 1205 CE, a date which has been the working date for many scholars.\(^{473}\) Like its construction date, its patron is likewise unknown. Again, circumstantial evidence suggests Ibn Shoshan (Joseph ben Shoshan) as a possible patron. Ibn Shoshan died in 1205 CE and his epitaph mentions him having built a synagogue.\(^{474}\) Architectural historian Carol Herselle Krinsky suggested that the plan of *Santa Maria la Blanca* was unique among synagogues in Iberia and with its aisles, brickwork, and horseshoe arches more closely resembled a mosque or some synagogues found in North Africa.\(^{475}\) At the same time, the synagogue also bears several hallmarks of Islamicate Mudéjar architecture found in Toledo and al-Andalus. While it has a construction history that is difficult to pin down, *Santa Maria la Blanca* nonetheless offers some evidence of an ongoing shared culture and visual language and may reflect a way point between the early Islamicate constructions in Toledo and the more recent, like *El Tránsito*.

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\(^{473}\) A reference to the synagogues of Toledo with mention of a “new” synagogue being the greatest, is believed to be *Santa Maria la Blanca*. Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning*, Architectural History Foundation Books 9 (New York: Cambridge, MA: Architectural History Foundation ; MIT Press, 1985), 333.

\(^{474}\) Other biographical documents on Ibn Shoshan fail to mention a synagogue, so the attribution to him is questionable. Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe*, 334.

\(^{475}\) Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe*, 333.
While it is impossible to determine the specific influences on the *Sinagoga de Santa María la Blanca*, which may indeed include Almohad or other North African influences, there are direct correlates readily available in Toledo itself which also likely involved the same workshops that built these structures. The most obvious corollary is *Cristo de la Luz*. If the date of 1205 CE for *Santa María la Blanca* is accurate, then it was built not long after the dedication of *Cristo de la Luz*.

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Luz in 1186 CE which coincides with the construction of the apse.\textsuperscript{478} The interior of the former mosque (fig. 55) features capitaled columns with horseshoe arches in aisle form, much like the synagogue. It may be that \textit{Santa Maria la Blanca} had previously been a mosque, as Krinsky suggested.\textsuperscript{479} However, a more likely explanation, and one that Krinsky also offered as a possibility, would be one in line with Islamicate shared culture theory. As she noted, “styles mixing Islamic and Christian artistic ideas [i.e. Islamicate] were common at this time and even later in Spain.”\textsuperscript{480} As further evidence, the apse of \textit{Cristo del la Luz} (fig. 56) included poly-lobed arches in the second story which mirror those on the clerestory of \textit{Santa Maria la Blanca}.

The \textit{Sinagoga de Santa María la Blanca} is also significant because it seems highly likely that it was one of the influences on the \textit{Sinagoga del Tránsito}.

\textit{Figure 57: Ceiling detail, Sinagoga del Tránsito}


\textsuperscript{479} If Ibn Shoshan is indeed the patron, his father was the \textit{almoharife} to Alfonso VIII of Castile, the same position held by Samuel ha-Levi which may have influenced the synagogues design decisions, similar to the influence of Pedro on \textit{El Tránsito}. Krinsky, \textit{Synagogues of Europe}, 333–34.

\textsuperscript{480} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{481} Ibid.
The ceiling of the Sinagoga del Tránsito (fig. 57) seems to draw from Santa María la Blanca, featuring similar planking details and an *artesonado* (coffered) design as well as a poly-lobed clerestory on facing sides of the arcade.

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The ceiling of the *Sinagoga del Tránsito* also likely reflected an evolution of the feature that also incorporated elements from the Nasrid style, which were added into the Mudéjar corpus in the period between the two constructions. As previously noted, *Santa María la Blanca* more closely resembles its Islamicate contemporary in *Cristo de la Luz*, but clearly also included the evolving elements of the further developed shared visual language present at the time.

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The three buildings are even connected on some level by flooring. Beginning with Cristo de la Luz (fig. 61), the inlaid terracotta flooring appears in the main room of each structure, while also displaying various forms of refinement and customization. Indeed this style flooring was common across the region over several centuries and appears in this study at Cristo de la Luz in the 12th century at least through the 15th/16th century at the Casa de Pilatos, as well as in each of the synoptic constructions. The flooring is not a significant point but simply shows further evidence of a shared style in evidence across polities and confessional communities.

Moving forward, the Sinagoga del Tránsito is a non-traditional subject. While it was clearly constructed for a Jewish patron with clear socio-political forms of positioning for ha-Levi in the

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487 Flooring detail, Great Prayer Room Ceiling detail, Sinagoga del Tránsito, Toledo, Spain. Wikimedia commons, accessed 01/02/2018.
inscriptions, it may or may not have been intended for public consumption, as Estow previously mentioned. Jerrilynn Dodds noted that the Sinagoga del Tránsito was built as a private temple for ha-Levi including a private entrance from his residence.\textsuperscript{488} In particular, she suggested that the synagogue served much in the same way as the private chapels that were commissioned by Christian kings for their own use and by their immediate family and close courtiers.\textsuperscript{489} To this, Dodds’s proposed that El Tránsito may have functioned as a “‘micro-court’ for Samuel ha-Levi himself, setting him at the pinnacle of his own minority society, that of the Jews of Toledo.”\textsuperscript{490} Dodds’ suggestion would seem to follow, given the nature of the inscriptions and the connections between the synagogue, the Jews of Toledo, and ha-Levi’s role in the court of Pedro I. Proceeding from Dodds’s characterization of the synagogue, the structure does place it within the larger Andalusi corpus and the Islamicate Mudéjar context of the synoptic constructions.

Dodds noted that Arabic inscriptions join numerous Hebrew inscriptions in the synagogue some of which she indicated are Qur’anic in nature. For clarity, Dodds immediately addressed any suggestion of the default theory, citing Art Historian Rachael Wischnitzer, who among others put the Arabic inscriptions down to the Muslim craftsmen used on the project.\textsuperscript{491} While Ruiz Souza and others have largely debunked the Muslim craftsman explanation for Arabic inscriptions, Dodds explicitly stated that the suggestion that Muslim craftsmen somehow


\textsuperscript{489} Dodds, Convivencia, 128.

\textsuperscript{490} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{491} Architect and Art Historian Rachael Wischnitzer studied synagogue architecture in particular. Dodds, Convivencia, 125.
managed to “slip in” Arabic inscriptions without notice or consent is nonsensical, especially given how clearly intentional the epigraphic and decorative program in *El Tránsito* was.  

Dodds then spoke directly to Islamicate shared culture, suggesting that “the educated Jews of Toledo felt that much of Islamic culture was their culture as well. The Jews of Toledo had spoken Arabic for hundreds of years, and they had long come to understand the literary and scholarly culture of Islam and considered it something that they shared.” Dodds also corroborated the stylistic and sociopolitical connections between ha-Levi, Pedro I, and the Nasrids through Pedro and Muhammad V’s ongoing personal relationship. Dodds proposed that given the close connections between these patrons, along with the historical influences behind what became the Mudéjar style, the form of shared Islamicate culture being illustrating in the synoptic constructions might be construed as a court style of Pedro I. While this was likely the case, attributing the style to Pedro specifically diminishes the widespread use of the style by others, including Muhammad V who would construct new additions to the Alhambra after Pedro, but would likely not attribute them as Pedro’s court style. Such an attribution to Pedro also elides the ongoing and evolving Mudéjar style that arguably descended from the Almohads and earlier Muslim polities. The reality is that the Nasrid-influenced form of Mudéjar designs is not a new set of designs, but rather a continuous evolution and customization of the same shared Islamicate culture and visual language that had been ongoing from the early conquests and previous Muslim rule. Once again, there is a Roman analogue available for customized architectural decoration with shared elements. 

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492 The fact that *El Tránsito* was meant to be ha-Levi’s private temple, much like that which will appear in Pedro’s private residence in the Alcazar of Seville, makes such suggestions by Wischnitzer and others all but impossible. Dodds, *Convivencia*, 125.
493 Ibid.
494 Dodds, *Convivencia*, 126.
mosaics, which had been a staple of private and public structures across the empire, were typically built using standardized forms or patterns but with customized elements based on the interests of the patrons.\footnote{For example, Roman patrons in North Africa tended to incorporate local and regional symbols and references that did not appear in European contexts. Katherine Dunbabin, “The Triumph of Dionysus on Mosaics in North Africa,” \textit{Papers of the British School at Rome} 39 (1971): 64–65.}

Regarding another aspect of Islamicate shared culture, Dodds confirmed its role as a sociopolitical status symbol indicating, “Islamic developments in stucco ornament and even certain building types were viewed as emblematic of high court culture.”\footnote{Dodds, \textit{Convivencia}, 127.} As she argued, “the adoption of [the] Nasrid style was part of the appropriation of the mythic power of Islamic culture, which had come to mean wealth, power, refinement, and sophistication to all Spaniards.”\footnote{While the language of appropriation and power is likely tinged with too much orientalism and postcolonial theory, the sentiment is corroborated by the ongoing incorporation of Islamicate culture and the Castilians’ own characterization of it in the \textit{Primera Cronica} and other writings. Ibid.} Dodds pondered whether ha-Levi had the same sense of Islamicate culture as Pedro I. She seems to have characterized Pedro as appropriating an existing Islamicate culture, while simultaneously suggesting that ha-Levi deployed it because he saw it as his own.\footnote{Dodds, \textit{Convivencia}, 128.} Given the customization used in all manifestations of Mudéjar design, including the inclusion of Castilian-style heraldry in Pedro’s constructions as well as ha-Levi’s, it is likely that they were both expressing themselves through their shared visual culture, especially if it is recognized that both the Jews and Christians had been participating in it extending back to the reconquest of Toledo in the 11th century and the Islamicate building projects that followed. Samuel ha-Levi and Pedro I were contemporaries and their respective constructions were products of the then contemporary permutation of shared Islamicate culture in al-Andalus. And, given their synoptic qualities, any extended history or participation in the shared culture of one group, Jews, over that
of another, Christians, does not seem to have resulted in any distinctions between the respective applications or manifestations of the shared style.

Moving into the design and décor of the synagogue itself, the aesthetic and epigraphic program is a clear representation of both Islamicate shared culture as well as the customization of the larger foundational design style for a Jewish patron and largely Jewish audience. At the same time, the parallels and similarity between the Sinagoga del Tránsito and Santa Clara de Tordesillas confirm both the shared culture and synoptic context of these constructions.

Figure 64: Clerestory with girih detail, Sinagoga del Tránsito

With regard to the interior décor of the synagogue, the majority of the decoration mirrored designs that previously appeared at Tordesillas as well as several other buildings previously mentioned. Numerous poly-lobed arches appeared in both structures, matching both the Patio Árabes and external façade of Tordesillas with elements from the Great Prayer Room at El Tránsito. Both structures also featured poly-chromed plasterwork (largely with the same red, green, and black color washing scheme) which was a prominent feature of Islamicate Mudéjar designs as were various interlocking geometric patterns and the traditional girih and muqarnas designs.

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In the above example from the Great Prayer Room of the synagogue (fig. 66), the room was ringed by an attic band with a *muqarnas* design. The same style of design appears throughout the region and also in the same location in the nave of the Presbytery at the palace at Tordesillas.

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(fig. 67). The poly-lobed arches in the clerestory of El Tránsito also reflect those found in the Patio Árabe of Tordesillas as well as both Santa Maria la Blanca and Cristo de la Luz.

Figure 68: Great Prayer Room detail, Sinagoga del Tránsito

Figure 69: Old Façade, Santa Clara de Tordesillas

504 Old façade, Real Monasterio de Santa Clara de Tordesillas, Patrimonio Nacional in Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 21.
The niche of the Great Prayer Room employed the same columned, poly-lobed arch detail as the exterior of the old façade at Tordesillas which also included the *sebka* diamond motif in different forms with the polychrome wash on the interior of *El Tránsito* (fig. 68) and carved relief on the exterior of Santa Clara (fig. 69). Like many others, this particular design element appeared in all of the synoptic constructions illustrating both patron choice and customization and reflecting a foundational design element individually detailed for the building in question.

*Figure 70: East wall detail, Sinagoga del Tránsito*

*Figure 71: Polychrome tracery detail, Santa Clara de Tordesillas*

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The frieze décor in the great prayer room of the synagogue (fig. 70) was covered with an interwoven Islamicate vegetal tracery that Spanish historian and Hebraist Francisco Cantera Burgos indicated was popular at the time, also appearing on coins and other Spanish-Hebrew and Christian decorations. This vegetal scrollwork was also used at Tordesillas (fig. 71), as well as the *Patio de Machuca* in the Alhambra. It is also possible that the vegetal scrollwork that appears intertwined with the heraldry and Hebrew inscriptions at *El Tránsito* (fig. 70) may have also signified a connection kabbalah. The heraldry of Castile and Leon that appears on this frieze was, according to Cantera Burgos, likely the heraldry of ha-Levi. The specific attribution of the heraldry to ha-Levi is difficult to confirm and could be exacerbated by the same Castile and Leon heraldry appearing on the dedicatory inscription which praises both ha-Levi and Pedro I. Certainly the same symbolism also reflected the crown, so may simply reflect ha-Levi’s role in the court and connection to it, especially if part of the intent of the construction was to elevate his own status.

The largest section of epigraphic material appeared in the Great Prayer Room or Main Hall of the synagogue (fig. 72).

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507 While this common feature might support Gonzalez Hernandez’s argument in favor of a Nasrid designation for these designs, they may alternatively rather represent the evolving canon of shared visual language and Islamicate culture present among the synoptic constructions. Francisco Cantera Burgos, *Sinagogas de Toledo, Segovia y Córdoba* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto B. Arias Montano, 1973), 64.
509 The specificity of Levi’s heraldry is uncertain, especially given its similarity to Castile and Leon which is also represented. Cantera Burgos, *Sinagogas de Toledo, Segovia y Córdoba*, 64.
On either side of the eastern wall were dedicatory inscriptions, one dedicating the synagogue to God, with some praise for ha-Levi as its patron, and the other praising ha-Levi’s own patron.

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Pedro I. The dedicatory inscription for Pedro (fig. 73) is particularly relevant with regard to some of the language and imagery used.

He [Pedro I] has ruled over the country like an immense tamarisk, a powerful bulwark and turret. He has climbed the steps of the empire, according to his fame; the great and holy call it a right-hand column on which the house of Levi and the house of Israel are built, who, then, may enumerate his praises, qualities and prowess? Who could say and who managed to exhaust the loa Diadem of the empire, jewel of majesty which rises to the top of the category. Prince of the Princes of Leviatus, R. Samuel ha-Levi was placed on high, be his God with him and exalt him, has found grace and mercy in the eyes of the great eagle with huge wings [Pedro], a man of war and champion whose terror has invaded all peoples - great is his name among the nations, the great monarch, our lord and our master King Don Pedro: May God help him and increase his strength and glory and keep him as a shepherd his flock.

As the text indicates, it is similar to a loa serving as praise and dedication to Pedro, but also elevated ha-Levi by linking him with the praise, power, and majesty heaped on his King and patron. More informative are the references to local Spanish cultural elements like the loa and tamarisk along with honorifics for both ha-Levi and Pedro. The inscription also includes a blessing for Pedro I; “El Rey Don Pedro: sea Dios en su ayuda y acreciente su fuerza y su gloria y guárdelo cual un pastor su rebaño.” These honorifics and blessings; “be his God with him and exalt him” and “may God help him and increase his strength and glory and keep him as a shepherd to his flock,” sometimes referred to as salawat in Arabic, were a common feature of Islamic discourse and by the time of this inscription, were clearly part of the Islamicate

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512 A tamarisco or tamarisk is a flowering shrub that extends across a landscape. The plant genus derives from tamarix a Latin reference to the Tamaris River in Hispania Tarraconensis (Roman Spain). The use of this imagery would be a local reference likely understood by the local populace in al-Andalus. Umberto Quattrochi, CRC World Dictionary of Plant Names: Common Names, Scientific Names, Eponyms, Synonyms, and Etymology (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2000), 2628.
513 A loa is a reference to a theatrical prologue typified by laudatory praise.
514 Translated from the Spanish; originally translated from the Hebrew by Cantera Burgos. Cantera Burgos, Sinagogas de Toledo, Segovia Y Córdoba, 107.
515 “King Don Pedro: may God help him and increase his strength and glory and keep him as a shepherd to his flock.” translated from the original Hebrew by Cantera Burgos. Ibid.
epigraphic corpus and shared culture. The inscriptions throughout *El Tránsito* continue to reflect Islamicate shared culture as well as the customization indicative of Islamicate visual elements.

Further customization can be seen in several sections of the synagogue. In the Women’s Gallery of *El Tránsito*, which also includes Arabic and possibly pseudo-Arabic script alongside the Hebrew inscriptions (fig. 74) provides further local customization in some of the word choices.

*Figure 74: Women's Gallery inscription, Sinagoga del Tránsito*

![Image](image1)

*Figure 75: Hebrew and Arabic inscriptions, Sinagoga del Tránsito*

![Image](image2)

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Part of the Hebrew inscription is taken from the book of Exodus, and reads “Y salieron todas las mujeres en pos de ella con adufes y danzando en corro. Y María respondía a ellos [los israelitas] ‘Cantad a Yahveh, que soberanamente se ha glorificado.’” (And all the women came out after her [Aaron’s sister] with adufes518 and dancing in a circle. And Mary responded to them [the Israelites] ‘Sing to Yahweh, who has gloriously triumphed’.519 Especially interesting about this scriptural quote is the local flavor it includes. The inscription references an adufe, a frame drum/tambourine known in al-Andalus (and still in use in Portugal). Most English translations of the Bible use the term timbrel which is similar, but reflects the traditional Middle Eastern instrument, rather than its Andalusi relative. Like the references to the loa or tamarisco in the dedicatory inscription, ha-Levi was including concepts and terms that would be recognized in the local vernacular, which again suggests a shared cultural language since it was predominantly meant to speak to residents of Toledo. Recalling the multi-lingual inscriptions on the tomb of Fernando III, it is possible that these word choices also reflected the ongoing cosmopolitan interaction with language in al-Andalus that saw the development of numerous linguistic amalgams like Hispano-Arabic and Judeo-Arabic which blended the languages of the three confessional communities.

518 An adufe is frame drum or tambourine of Islamicate origin.
In the comparative depictions above, the *ataurique* scrollwork and medallion feature appears in both the decorative programs at Tordesillas and in Seville. In the detail from the *Patio Árabes* at Tordesillas (fig. 76), the Latin inscription follows a nearly identical design structure as the Hebrew inscription found in the Women’s Gallery in *El Tránsito*, again potentially indicating a shared stylistic template with patron-based customization. The Arabic medallion detail surrounded by *ataurique* from the Alcazar of Seville (fig. 77) again mirrors a similar design from

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El Tránsito, not only reflecting the shared visual language, but also connecting these synoptic constructions stylistically.

The larger epigraphic program in the Sinagoga del Tránsito is the most intriguing and is also the most representative of the customization of the synagogue by the patron, specifically for a local Jewish audience. Historian of Spanish synagogues Daniel Muñoz Garrido suggested that the interior decoration of the Sinagoga del Tránsito was the product of ha-Levi’s Andalusi acculturation.

Jewish architecture, like other aspects of the Hispano-Jewish culture, followed the same models that triumphed in the social and cultural contexts in which the communities lived. Continuing, he indicated "the synagogue of Samuel ha-Levi (or el Tránsito) enters into the patterns of Palatine architecture of Castile of the XIV century. In the Hispanic synagogues that have survived to this day, we can observe a predilection for the Hispano-Arabic aesthetic language, as something assimilated and made its own. The biblical inscriptions written in slender Hebrew characters that decorate the Hispanic synagogues emulate the Koranic verses that decorate the mosques.\textsuperscript{522}

Garrido described the aesthetic language as Hispano-Arabic and suggested the Hebrew inscriptions as an emulation of the Qur’anic inscriptions in Arabic that were a familiar feature of Islamicate Mudéjar design. Garrido stated as fact ha-Levi and the Jews of Toledo’s participation in a shared culture of which ha-Levi’s synagogue was also part. At the same time, ha-Levi’s choice to substitute Hebrew for Arabic in this instance is another example of customization – this time on the religious front, substituting inscriptions from the Torah in Hebrew rather than the Qur’an in Arabic. Even this substitution was the product of patron choice and customization. In particular, the Hebrew inscriptions that occurred throughout the synagogue appear to have served a particular function, directly related to ha-Levi.

The inscriptions that appear in the Great Prayer Room include several selections from the Psalms which are predominately focused on laments and requests for mercy. Other Psalms and inscriptions in the Great Prayer Room included those requesting protection from enemies. There is a strong likelihood that the plethora of Psalmic inscriptions in the *Sinagoga del Tránsito* served as a form of practical kabbalah given the connection between Psalms and these practices.

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also given that the *Zohar* and Kabbalah had strong affiliations with Spain and the Castilians through Kabbalist Moses de Leon (1240-1305 CE) and his work on the *Zohar*. The interwoven vegetal scrollwork which appeared throughout *El Tránsito*, and on the friezes surrounding the Hebrew inscriptions in particular, may further the connection to both Kabbalah and ha-Levi and his synagogue. Cynthia Robinson, in her exploration of the symbology of trees as a shared *topos* in cross-confessional Andalusi spirituality, indicated that “this efflorescence [of tree imagery] coincides with the flourishing of a style of architectural ornamentation which is characterized by strikingly naturalistic vegetation and is most often subsumed beneath the rubric of Mudéjar.” She argued that this shared tree imagery “appears in the 1350s in Toledo, probably first in the *Sinagoga del Tránsito* and then again at *Santa María de Tordesillas* (near Valladolid) shortly thereafter. She also noted that “a similar but not causally related vegetal naturalism also characterized the ornamental program of the Alhambra’s Palace of the Lions [*Palacio de los Leones*], built between 1359 and 1392.” The tree imagery and its deployment by the three confessional communities adds an additional element of support for its appearance in the *Sinagoga del Tránsito*. Robinson indicated that the tree imagery in the Kabbalah tradition is a feminized form of the tree of life and also connected to divine wisdom. She also confirmed the link between the Abulafia family and Kabbalah noting, “the family of the synagogue’s patron, Schlomo [Samuel] ha-Levi, had been connected for more than a century to Kabbalistic exegesis and practices and would certainly have been familiar with the tree- and plant-based

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528 This imagery appears in the Patio Mudéjar (or Arab Courtyard) in Tordesillas, as well as in the Great Prayer room at *El Tránsito*. Robinson, 395.
529 Robinson’s point about causality serves as further support for the shared culture thesis in that the Christians, Jews, and Muslims were employing similar foundational elements but contextualizing them in their own aesthetic visual programs. Robinson, “Trees of Love,” 395.
symbolism that characterizes such key texts as the Zohar. If ha-Levi was knowledgeable enough to include this form of Kabbalistic imagery, it certainly gives credence to the suggestion of the Kabbalistic nature of the broader epigraphic program in the synagogue. And while a great subject for study well outside the present exploration, the inclusion of Kabbalah in the synagogue certainly indicates patron-based customization, but also points to a well thought out visual program and should eliminate the possibility of a default theory or any suggestion that Islamicate designs in the Sinagoga del Tránsito were the product of the workers’ or workshop’s independent or unsolicited interests.

As synoptic constructions, both the palace at Tordesillas and the Sinagoga del Tránsito reflect the ongoing development and patronage of Islamicate shared culture. Before even including the other two structures, it is already evident that Tordesillas and El Tránsito were part of a developing visual language and architectural program that extended back to the earliest Castilian buildings in al-Andalus as well as the previous Muslim regimes. This shared culture and its long history continued prominently with the remaining two synoptic constructions, in the Alcazar of Seville and the Alhambra of Granada.

5.5 On the Origins of the Alcazar of Seville

By definition, what became known as the Alcazar of Seville, had always been an Islamicate building. While some archaeological evidence suggests the presence of Christian burials and possible religious structures during the Visigothic Period (c. 6th century CE), the then contemporary and current complex existed as a non-religious compound, but with significant

532 Evidence of Christian burials were discovered under the present Patio de Banderas. See Miguel Angel Tabales, El Alcázar de Sevilla: reflexiones sobre su origen y transformación durante la Edad Media: memoria de investigación Arqueológica 2000–2005. (Seville, Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura : Real Alcázar, 2010), 19.
cultural and political orientations and affiliations. Many scholars placed the construction of what would become the Alcazar complex in the early 10th century in the beginning of the reign of Abd al-Rahman III (r. 912-929/961 CE), then Emir and later Caliph of Córdoba. However, an extensive archaeological excavation, directed by Miguel Angel Tabales, indicated that the exterior wall (fig. 80, facing the Plaza del Triunfo), which contained the original entrance and is widely considered to be the oldest remaining structure from the pre-Almohad period (mid-12th century CE), was built in the mid-11th century around the time of Abbadid ruler al-Mu’tadid during the ta’ifa period in al-Andalus.

Figure 80: Exterior Wall c. 12th Century CE, Alcazar of Seville

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If Tabales’s analysis is accepted, then the Islamicate History of the Alcazar of Seville essentially began with the construction of the *Al Qasr al-Mubarak* by al-Mu’tadid in the 11th century. While al-Mu’tadid’s construction was primarily a fortified palace, it established the initial footprint for the future complex and reflected an early Islamicate construction. Where the Alcazar became a full-fledged Islamicate complex, and where the likely developmental origin of the shared Islamicate culture resides, is with the constructions of the Almohads who emerged as rulers of Seville following the demise of the Abbadids and later Almoravids. As will discussed later, it is with the Almohads that a distinctive cultural experience that operated apart from the religious and political orientation of that group may have emerged.

The Almohads were responsible for several signature constructions in Seville that were influential on what would emerge as the Mudéjar style, but also the post-*Reconquista* analysis of Christian constructions in the Alcazar complex. The Almohads built *La Giralda*, the bell tower which served as the minaret for the mosque, which existed prior to the present-day Cathedral of

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Seville. They also built the *Torre de Oro* (Tower of Gold), *Torre de la Plata* (Tower of Silver) and the *Patio del Yeso*, their only remaining construction inside the Alcazar.

*Figure 82: La Giralda, Seville*

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Figure 83: Torre de Oro, Seville

Figure 84: Torre de la Plata, Seville

538 Torre de Oro, Seville, Spain, Jebulon, own work, public domain, 2012.
539 Torre de la Plata, Seville, Spain. Lobillo, own work, public domain, 2007.
While each of these constructions are architecturally and historically significant in their own right, their collection as Islamicate structures (either contemporaneous or in later periods) is crucial for understanding the shared culture theory being proposed for al-Andalus and the Islamicate History for the Alcazar, which escalated after Seville transferred to the Christians in 1248 CE. Already in the transition from the Abaddid to Almohad regimes, there were elements of shared architecture between the two towers and the original wall of al-Mu’tadid’s Alcazar. And as already discussed, the Patio del Yeso, along with La Giralda, shared elements with Islamicate constructions produced by all three confessional communities in al-Andalus for years to come.

The Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville therefore reflects on the shared culture that existed between these three confessional communities in al-Andalus, which led to the development of a shared visual language and aesthetic born in Muslim Spain but adopted and adapted by succeeding generations of patrons, builders, and craftspeople from across confessional communities to produce Islamicate shared culture and its manifestation as the so-

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540 **Patio del Yeso, Alcazar of Seville, Spain, J.F. Sullivan, own work, 2013.**
called Mudéjar design aesthetic. The Mudéjar Palace at the Alcazar of Seville commissioned by Rey Don Pedro I (1364-1366 CE) arguably represented both the culmination and likely pinnacle of Islamicate shared culture in al-Andalus, although the Mudéjar design aesthetic would continue in al-Andalus for generations after Pedro and even travel to the New World.

As was seen with the first two structures of the synoptic construction group, Pedro I will also play a critical role in the remaining two, the Alcazar of Seville and the Alhambra of Granada. As the patron of the palace of Tordesillas and the ultimate patron of his treasurer’s construction of the Sinagoga del Tránsito, Pedro’s role has been both influential and crucial and is the glue which holds the four synoptic constructions together within the framework of Islamicate shared culture. Pedro’s constructions within the Alcazar of Seville are perhaps the most significant of the group in that they are the most extensive representation of the Islamicate Mudéjar aesthetic, but also because they contain both public palatial elements meant to reflect the grandeur and majesty of the Christian King, but also include a private residence (still in use by the Spanish Royal family today). The Alcazar complex was already home to Alfonso XI’s controversial Sala de la Justicia and was presumably still used as a throne room by Pedro himself. For all the questions raised by that Islamicate construction, the design of the private royal chambers in an evolved form of the same aesthetic pose even more. Going forward, Pedro’s Mudéjar palace, along with the Sala de la Justicia, likely influenced his friend Muhammad V’s own constructions in the Alhambra, so Pedro I’s interaction with Islamicate shared culture is pivotal.

5.6 Pedro I

Pedro I was born to Alfonso XI and Maria of Portugal in 1334 CE in Burgos, Spain. Pedro was the only legitimate heir of the King, a fact that would ultimately prove fatal when he was murdered by his half-brother Enrique de Trastamara in 1369 CE. Though Burgos is north of
Madrid, Pedro’s exposure to Islamicate material may have occurred early on. The Monasterio de las Huelgas in Burgos is home to some of the early Islamicate constructions completed by Alfonso X. As Dodds et al. indicated, “Alfonso X covered the oldest parts of Las Huelgas – those not completed in the Gothic Style – with a thrilling variety of fine stucco carvings. These include motifs that might be found at the Alcazar of Seville or the Nasrid kingdom of Granada.”

Figure 86: Assumption Chapel vault, Monasterio de las Huelgas

541 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 185.
542 Alfonso X and his selective use of Gothic architecture, which also occurred in the Alcazar of Seville, may have been related to his his association with the Church and his pursuit of the Holy Roman emperorship - where Gothic aesthetics were closely associated with contemporary church and kingdom architecture. Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 185.
543 Ribbed vault from the Assumption Chapel, Monasterio de las Huelgas, Burgos, Spain. Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 185.
Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale also indicated that a chapel at Las Huelgas was built in the *qubba* style, the same model as the *Sala de la Justicia*, and was “given a vault that was a reminder of Córdoba, taken by Ferdinand in 1236 (fig. 86).” Interestingly, in an 19th century artistic representation of the *Monasterio de las Huelgas* by Jenaro Pérez Villaamil and Léon Auguste Asselineau (fig. 87), Las Huelgas is depicted with poly-lobed arches, *ataurique* vegetal scrollwork and what appears to be a direct copy of the *mihrab* arch in the Mezquita at Córdoba (fig. 88). Given the artistic rendering is coming from the 19th century Orientalist period, it is likely that there has been borrowing and artistic license used in the rendering. However, the perceived connection between Las Huelgas and Islamicate shared culture was apparent even centuries after the fact.

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545 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 185.
In addition, Las Huelgas shares the *qubba* format and a familial resemblance to the Gilded Chapel in the palace at Tordesillas (fig. 89). What this suggests is that the Alfonso XI’s *Sala de la Justicia* was not an isolated design, but likely part of an emerging visual language that carried the shared Mudéjar aesthetic to the synoptic constructions in the future. All of these structures and designs were familiar to Pedro I and were part of his lived experience. Given the number of

Islamicate structures and the prevalence of the Mudéjar style during his youth and adulthood, Pedro I was likely the ruler with the most familiarity with these aesthetics and arguably the most comfortable. On this point, if any of the early Castilian rulers would have imagined the Mudéjar style as part of his own culture, it would be Pedro. Given the close relationship between Pedro I and Muhammad V of Granada and their respective interactions with shared Islamicate culture, it is little wonder that their signature royal constructions would seem to reflect it so clearly.

5.7 The Synoptic Constructions – The Alcazar and The Alhambra

Figure 90: The Alhambra of Granada

Like the Alcazar of Seville, *Al-Qal’at al-Hamra* (The Red Fort), more commonly known as the Alhambra, has a long history. Where the Alhambra intersects with the Islamicate history of the Alcazar largely begins with the rise of the Nasrid dynasty and the building of the palace-city complex. The Emirate of Granada, of which the Alhambra was the centerpiece, began with Muhammad ibn Nasr (Ibn al-Ahmar) when he split from the Almohads in 1232 CE. The majority

of the buildings and renovations in the Alhambra of Granada that are relevant to this study were commissioned by Yusuf I (r. 1333-1354) and Muhammad V (r. 1354-1359, 1362-1391). Yusuf I and Alfonso XI were contemporaries, as were Pedro I and Muhammad V. The later pair shared a particularly close relationship especially during the period where Muhammad V resided with Pedro in Seville and the Alcazar following his ouster from power in 1359 until his reinstatement in 1362. Many of Muhammad V’s constructions and renovations were completed concurrently or after those in the Alcazar of Seville, technically making it the fourth synoptic construction chronologically. However, due to the relationship between the constructions completed by Yusuf I and Muhammad V and their relationship to the Castilian monarchs, Alfonso XI and Pedro I, it will be more illuminative to discuss this structure in concert with the Pedro’s Mudéjar Palace in the Alcazar due to their numerous points of contact and similarity and connections with the other synoptic constructions, provide the strongest evidence of shared Islamicate culture.

5.7.1 Making Connections

The connections between the four synoptic constructions are evident in numerous features of the Alcazar and Alhambra, as well as their many connections to each other. One of the more prominent connections is likely the entry point to the Mudéjar Palace, which is reflected in its façade (below - based on its dedicatory inscription the façade was built in 1364 CE).\textsuperscript{549}

\textsuperscript{549} Paloma de los Santos Guerrero and José Barea, \textit{The Real Alcázar of Seville} (Madrid: Palacios y Museos, 2011), 87.
The façade of the Mudéjar Palace was the most public feature and the one that greeted visitors from its location on the grand courtyard of the *Patio de la Montería*. The façade is a representation of both the Mudéjar style and Islamicate shared culture combining poly-lobed arches, *sebka* and *ataurique* design panels, a *muqarnas* frieze, and several other features which

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appear in the synoptic constructions and several other buildings across al-Andalus and the three confessional communities.

Figure 93: Great Prayer Room, Sinagoga del Tránsito

Figure 94: Patio de los Leones, Alhambra of Granada

The upper section of the façade, along with the exterior second floor feature recurring triple and double arch segments similar to those found in the Sinagoga del Tránsito (fig. 93), as well as those seen in the Patio de los Leones at the Alhambra (fig. 94) and the palace at Tordesillas (fig. 95). Each also incorporated variations on the shared sebka decoration.

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554 Old façade, Real Monasterio de Santa Clara de Tordesillas, Patrimonio Nacional in Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 21.

The *muqarnas* frieze (fig. 96) is a feature of the façade and other rooms in the Mudéjar palace. It also appeared in several locations in the palace at Tordesillas as well as the Alhambra of Granada (fig. 97). The frieze on the Mudéjar Palace façade includes heraldry associated with Castile and León, which also appeared in the *Sinagoga del Tránsito* and the *Sala de la Justicia*. Further linking the façade with the *Sala de la Justicia* was the added presence of the *La Banda* military heraldry. Whereas the *Sala* was believed to be a victory monument commemorating a military triumph, the façade of the Mudéjar Palace does not coincide with a similar victory, especially since Pedro was far more likely to be engaged in fighting his own relatives, rather than Muslims. The appearance of the *La Banda* heraldry is probably meant to connect with Alfonso XI and the power and grandeur associated with him and the greater dynasty of Castile and León. While the Castilian heraldic symbols reflected a connection to that polity and Pedro in particular, ha-Levi’s use of similar heraldry in his synagogue was likely meant for the same effect, connecting him to Pedro, and in turn the grand legacy that went along with him. Outside of the

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*Figure 97: Muqarnas detail Sala de dos Hermanos, Alhambra of Granada*

connections specific to Castile and León, the façade as a whole also served as an inspiration for Muhammad V’s throne room in Granada, according to Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale.557

Figure 98: Façade of the Palacio de Comares, Alhambra of Granada

557 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 253.
The façade of the *Palacio de Comares* (fig. 98) was built by Muhammad V c. 1370 CE and served as his throne room. The throne room was meant to commemorate Muhammad’s victory at Algeciras in 1368 CE. There are also numerous similarities between Muhammad V’s throne room and various elements in the Alcazar of Seville. The overall design style is reminiscent of Pedro’s façade to the Mudéjar Palace including the planked overhang, columned upper fenestration, a *muqarnas* attic band accent, and intricate *ataurique* stucco work. Muhammad’s façade also featured the same *alicatados* mosaic (*dado*) tile work on the bottom story that was found at Tordesillas and *El Tránsito*, as well as in the Alcazar. Additionally, a relationship between the throne room at the Alhambra and Alfonso XI’s *Sala de la Justicia* exists both stylistically and metaphorically. Both throne rooms share a central fountain and both were commissioned to commemorate a military victory. Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale suggest the

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connection and inspiration between throne rooms stemmed from Muhammad V’s residence with Pedro at the Alcazar (c.1359-1362 CE), during his exile from Granada following a coup, before reclaiming his rule in 1362. The metaphorical connection between the Sala and Muhammad V’s throne room is more telling. In Chapter III, the analysis focused on the unlikely argument that the Sala served as a victory monument for Alfonso XI by inverting the design style of the defeated Muslims. In a counterpoint, a throne room *cum* victory monument by a Muslim ruler following his own victory over a Christian adversary was not constructed in a perceived Christian architectural style (Romanesque or Gothic being the likely options). Rather, Muhammad V built his own throne room, on some level inspired by the Islamicate designs of the Castilians, but also customized for his own commemoration, including an inscription of the *ayat al-kursi* “throne verse” from the Qur’an.

The two throne rooms therefore form something of a circle in the greater theme of Islamicate shared culture. Alfonso XI built his throne room in the Islamicate style in part to emulate the grandeur and high culture of the Muslims and connect his power to their legacy, while also incorporating personally significant symbolism. At the same time, Muhammad V built his own throne room based on this same connection to the Muslim legacy, but also drew inspiration from the Castilian expression of victory and grandeur displayed in the Sala and the Mudéjar façade, and likewise added personally significant elements. Thus, the final products suggest a shared visual language, reflecting a shared culture, with a shared application of customization to reveal what amounts to an ongoing cultural conversation over time that operated independently of religion and politics. Of course, this conversation was not limited to two throne rooms,

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560 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 253.
numerous other shared cultural and architectural connections and expressions existed in al-
Andalus that crossed religious and political boundaries.

Figure 100: Patio de los Leones, Alhambra of Granada

Figure 101: Hammam, Alhambra of Granada

Muhammad V was responsible for several constructions in the Alhambra, including the Cuarto Dorado in the Mexuar, which housed the Sultan’s throne room, the Palacio de los Leones (which included the signature Patio de los Leones (fig. 100), and the completion and improvement of the Palacio de Comares, which had begun under Yusuf I. The façade of the Palacio de Comares which leads from the Cuarto Dorado along with the Salón del Trono (fig. 102) contained within the Palacio de Comares provide numerous links to the Alcazar and Islamicate design. The Hammam (Baths) of the Palacio Comares (fig. 101, discussed earlier) in conjunction with the adjacent Patio de los Leones also provide design and elemental linkages to all of the synoptic constructions. The Palacio de los Leones was also home to the Sala de los Reyes, which, as noted earlier, may have been influenced by the Genoese and Venetian merchants at court and may have affected the vault paintings in that salon (fig. 103), but may have also been part of the ongoing use of décor to express grandeur and high culture.

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565 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, The Arts of Intimacy, 248.
Ruiz Souza suggested that the Sala de los Reyes may have been part of a zawiya or madrasa in the Palacio de los Leones and was possibly home to the school and palace’s library. He also pointed out that the design of the Palacio de los Leones was meant to “present the same

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566 Sala de los Reyes vault paintings: A Muslim and Christian joust (top), The Nasrid Kings (middle), and a hunt including falconry (bottom). Bermúdez López, The Alhambra and the Generalife, 141.
image of luxury as that of the contemporary buildings of Fez or Tlmecen.” When combined with the presentation of courtly grandeur, legacy, power, and history associated with the vault paintings, the design and presentation of the palace appears to have reflected shared elements connecting the Alhambra with the Alcazar, the Marinids, and other European polities.

The specific connections between the Alhambra and Alcazar, however, are numerous, as are those between the two structures and Tordesillas and *El Tránsito*. The shared visual language that permeates the synoptic constructions is clear and provides several points of display that confirm its presence.

### 5.7.2 *Poly-lobed Arches*

While a common feature of Islamicate designs that appeared in all of the synoptic constructions, the poly-lobed arch was another element that connected these constructions with earlier constructions by various groups, including the *Patio del Yeso* from the Almohad period in the Alcazar (fig. 104). In this example, the poly-lobed arch feature included the same *sebka* relief feature as Tordesillas (fig. 105). The commonality of this element is evident but the similarity between the manifestations among the Almohads and those seen in early constructions like Tordesillas shared a particular similarity as did later manifestations which occurred with Nasrid influence. The commonality of elements which changed over time further suggest an evolution of style based on contemporary aesthetics and patron choice. This evolution could also point to a shared corpus from which individual customization occurred.

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568 Then part of the Marinid Dynasty of the Maghreb. Translated from Spanish. Souza, 95.
These arches form a foundational part of the shared visual language of Islamicate al-Andalus, appearing across the region over several generations of rulers, both Muslim and Christian. They are a significant feature of *Patio de las Doncellas* (Doll’s Court) in the Alcazar of Seville (fig. 106) as well as in the *Patio de los Leones* in the Alhambra (fig. 107).

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They also appear prominently in the *Patio Árabes* in the palace at Tordesillas (fig. 108) and the *Sinagoga del Tránsito* (fig. 109).

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All four of these rooms/patios also feature variations on the planked overhang detail which was present on the façade of the Mudéjar palace and Muhammad V’s façade of the *Palacio de Comares*.

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5.7.3 Alicatados Mosaics (dado)

The alicatados mosaic (dado), sometimes referred to as azulejos (from the Arabic الزليج), were another common feature of the synoptic constructions and appeared in various locations and forms. Like other mosaic works, the dado was constructed by fitting small pieces of ceramic into a geometric pattern. While some alicatados mosaics were arranged in the girih style design, others followed different patterns with some sharing poly-lobed conical features and intermediary design bands, while others were composed of different designs, but still comprised of similar patterns which might suggest a bank of designs from which patron choice and customization could impose some distinctiveness.

Figure 110: Dormitorio de los Reyes Moros, Alcazar of Seville

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575 Dodds, Menocal, and Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy*, 249.
Like many of the features of the shared visual language of Islamicate material culture, the *alicatados* mosaic became a staple of the Mudéjar repertoire and a foundational element that appears to have become popular during the period of Nasrid influence. *Alicatados* mosaics specifically do not seem to appear in Islamicate decorations in al-Andalus prior to the Alfonso XI/Yusuf I period, where they appear in the Mexuar of the Alhambra and in a limited fashion in the *Sala de la Justicia* in Seville. Islamic mosaics however had been in use at least as early as the 7th century when they appeared on the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. These mosaics, likely

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inspired by Byzantine architecture, suggest yet another Roman connection with Islamicate material culture in Spain. The Byzantines and the earlier Roman architectural models pervaded the Levant as well as North African locales which became home to Islamic dynasties and polities. Art Historian Marilyn Jenkins, noted that there was a cultural unity in the Mediterranean region of which a Greco-Roman heritage was part. Based on this, she argued that “the material culture found in each of the many Islamic countries bordering the [Mediterranean] can only be understood when viewed from this perspective.” With regard to the Roman links to alicatados mosaics, Jenkins noted that Byzantine mosaicists were imported to decorate elements of the Mezquita in Córdoba as well as Madinat al-Zahra, both of which are established inspirations for later constructions in al-Andalus. Also likely influential were the extant Roman Mosaics in Mérida, Spain. Art Historian M. J. Sanz argued that there were similarities and influences between these Roman mosaics and those commissioned by Carlos V for his Pabellón in the gardens of the Alcazar of Seville. While the specific homage to Roman mosaics was likely due to Carlos V’s Renaissance sensibilities and its classical influences, the ongoing relationship between the relational power and grandeur associated with both the Romans and the earlier Islamic polities in Spain suggest another ongoing inspirational and representational association between architectural styles and perceptions of high culture and power, especially given their widespread use in the synoptic constructions.

580 Jenkins, The Art of Medieval Spain, 73.
5.7.4  Girih Designs

Figure 113: Ceiling detail, Sala de los Infantes, Alcazar of Seville

Another component of the shared visual language of Islamicate design is *girih* also known as *lacería*. *Girih* can refer to any interlocking geometric design pattern but most often manifests as the Mudéjar *lacería* also sometimes known as the Moorish knot (figs. 113-114). *Girih* appears in all of the synoptic constructions as well as numerous other buildings across al-Andalus. Like the *alicatados* mosaics, the *girih* design can be customized and personalized for

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582 Ceiling detail, Sala de los Infantes, Mudéjar Palace, Alcazar of Seville, Spain, J.F. Sullivan, own work, 2016.
583 Presbytery Tracery Detail, Real Monasterio de Santa Clara de Tordesillas, Patrimonio Nacional in Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 50.
the patron and their particular aesthetic. The *girih* or *lacería* design can also appear in wood, metal, stucco, or ceramic material and used on doors, ceilings, walls, windows, and several of the same *alicatados* mosaics.

*Figure 115: Girih window, Sinagoga del Tránsito*

*Figure 116: Salón del Trono, Alhambra of Granada*

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Figure 117: Girih detail, Santa María la Blanca

Figure 118: Girih detail, Salón de Embajadores, Alcazar of Seville

Figure 119: Girih detail, Palacio de los Leones, Alhambra of Granada

5.8 Further Connections

In addition to the shared design elements and visual language, several rooms in these respective constructions also illustrate a shared visual language and linkage between the synoptic constructions. One of the most illustrative is the Mudéjar façade/Palacio de Comares façade already discussed, but several other rooms and patios also share such similarities.

Figure 120: Patio de los Arrayanes, Alhambra of Granada

Figure 121: Alicatados Mosaic detail, Patio de los Arrayanes, Alhambra of Granada

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The *Patio de los Arrayanes* (Myrtles) located within the *Palacio de Comares* (fig. 120) incorporated features that appear in the Alcazar, but also connect across regimes. The Patio included a hedged central pool similar to that seen in the Almohad *Patio del Yeso* (fig. 122), a feature Muhammad V would have been familiar with from his tenure there. It also included a connecting feed from a fountain similar to the *Patio del Yeso*’s feed from the *Sala de la Justicia*. The *Patio de los Arrayanes* also included the columned *sebka* design element and tiled roof that appeared throughout both palaces. The *alicatados* mosaic of the *Patio de los Arrayanes* (fig. 121) is also of similar design to that found in the *Dormitorio de los Reyes Moros* (Bedroom of the Moorish Kings), although the latter featured the heraldry of Castile and León as well as the poly-lobed segment similar to that found in the Alcazar’s *Patio de las Doncellas* and the *Patio Árabes* in the palace at Tordesillas.

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The scrollwork accent detail from the *dado* of the Alhambra’s *Patio de los Arrayanes* (fig. 123) mirrors the Alcazar’s *Dormitorio de los Reyes Moros* (fig. 124) including the same triangular accents which appear in scrollwork vs. *alicatados*, and the Castilian heraldry is replaced by the Nasrid motto emblem in the same presentation space. In the above example, there is a veritable

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swapping of patron-specific elements in the same architectural feature. The variations that occurred with each of the *alicatados* mosaics suggests a basic design element that was customized for each manifestation, even within the same structure, further pointing to a shared visual language and repertoire favored by patrons and constructed by workshops, regardless of their political or religious affiliations.

5.8.1 *Salón de Embajadores*

*Figure 125: Salón de Embajadores, Alcazar of Seville*

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One of the many aspects of the Alcazar, and indeed most of the constructions during this period, is that they are definitionally Islamicate. The construction and design history surrounding many of these buildings reflect the ongoing conversation over time that is Islamicate Mudéjar architecture. The Salón de Embajadores in the Mudéjar Palace (fig. 125) for example, was built on the qubba (mausoleum) model, as was the Sala de la Justicia, as was the chapel at Las Huelgas, as was the Salón del Trono (also known as the Sala de Embajadores) in the Alhambra (fig. 126). The Salón de Embajadores in the Alcazar itself was originally constructed in the 11th century during the Abaddid dynasty (c. 1023-1095 CE) in Seville, likely during the reign of Muhammad ibn Abbad al-Mu’tamid (r. 1069-1091 CE). Hernández-Núñez and Morales also noted that many aspects of the original design incorporated a style and material first used at Abd al-Rahman III’s palace Medinat al-Zahra. The Salón was then remodeled and

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incorporated into Pedro’s Mudéjar Palace including the addition of Nasrid stylistics and the
doors created by artisans from a Mudéjar workshop in Toledo. Thus, the entire room was the
product of a long tradition of Islamicate design, blending several generations of styles, materials,
and influences that also link numerous constructions across al-Andalus and the three
confessional communities. Both Salóns included girih decorations and in the Alhambra (fig.
127), girih window tracery is similar to that seen in El Tránsito (fig. 128). This pairing
(Alhambra and El Tránsito) also share text framing bands in Arabic and Hebrew respectively. In
addition, the Salón in the Alcazar (fig. 125) featured a stylized opaque clerestory band similar to
that seen in Santa María la Blanca, but with added girih decoration in each panel.

Figure 127: Clerestory detail, Salón del Trono

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These *Salóns* in particular represent the essence of shared culture; each construction added and adapted familiar material and design to produce something new and meaningful for each patron while still remaining in the context of the foundational style.

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Based on an inscription discovered in the 19th century, the dome and muqarnas attic band of the Salón de Embajadores in the Alcazar (fig. 129) was rebuilt by Diego Ruiz in 1427 CE. While there is no specific record of the earlier material, given the use of similar designs like a muqarnas attic band in other parts of the Alcazar, as well as at Tordesillas (fig. 130), it is likely that original featured elements similar to those of the rebuild by Ruiz.

5.8.2 Written Connections

All of the synoptic constructions employed writing or script within the context of their designs, some for dedicatory or celebratory purposes and others for possibly far more complicated reasons. Inscriptions were used to offer generic blessings and expressions of glory and appeared in Arabic, Castilian Spanish, and Hebrew depending on their particular context and often included inscriptions in multiple languages as well as some amalgam expressions like hispano-arabic (Spanish written with Arabic characters).

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602 Nave of the Presbytery, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, Spain in Checa, Santa Clara de Tordesillas, 51.
603 Santos Guerrero and Barea, The Real Alcázar of Seville, 118.
While all the synoptic constructions included references to God in some form, one particular Arabic phrase that appeared in both the Alhambra and the Alcazar of Seville is "الله لا غالب إلا الله" ("and there is no victor, but God."). This phrase was known as the Nasrid motto; it appeared both in Muhammad V’s throne room in the Palacio de Comares as well as in the Alcazar on the mirror text of Pedro’s Mudéjar Palace façade, the Sala del Príncipe, the Salón del Techo de los Reyes Católicos, the Salón del Techo de Felipe II, the Salón del Techo de Carlos V, and the Patio de las Muñecas. Much like Qur’anic inscriptions and numerous references to God in

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Arabic throughout the Alcazar, there seems to have been a separation between the general religious substance of these inscriptions and any particular religious affiliation. In other words, God was God regardless of whether one was a Christian or Muslim, so the source of the quotation or sentiment was not at issue, at least in the context of the Alcazar.

Other forms of writing, as with those seen in the Sinagoga del Tránsito, may have had a deeper meaning and purpose. One interesting written connection was the recurrence of arguably mystical inscriptions appearing across structures associated with confessional communities in al-Andalus. The Kabbalistic inscriptions that seem to have appeared in the Sinagoga del Tránsito are not particularly unexpected given ha-Levi’s social and family connections within the Jewish community. Similar inscriptions with a similar intent may also have been included in the Alcazar of Seville and the Alhambra of Granada. The doors leading to the Salón de Embajadores (Hall of the Ambassadors) from the Patio de las Doncellas at the Alcazar of Seville bear two inscriptions – the external inscriptions (figs. 133-135) are in Arabic, while the internal ones on the reverse are in Castilian.
Figure 133: Doors to the Salón de Embajadores, Alcazar of Seville

Figure 134: Arabic inscription detail, doors to the Salón de Embajadores, Alcazar of Seville

607 Doors to the Salón de Embajadores from the Patio de las Doncellas, Alcazar of Seville, Spain. Santos Guerrero and Barea, The Real Alcázar of Seville, 100.

608 Detail of doors to the Salón de Embajadores from the Patio de las Doncellas, Alcazar of Seville, Spain. Santos Guerrero and Barea, The Real Alcázar of Seville, 100.
The inscription reads:

Our exalted high lord the Sultan, Don Pedro, King of Castile and León (may Allah give him eternal happiness, and may it remain with his architect) ordered that these carved wooden doors be made for this room of happiness which order was made for the honor and grandeur of his ennobled and fortunate ambassadors, from which springs forth and abundance of good fortune for this joyful city, in which palaces and Alcázares were raised; and these magnificent abodes [are] for my lord and only master, who gave life to its splendor, the pious, generous sultan who ordered it to be built in the City of Seville with the help of his intercessor with God the Father. In its dazzling construction and embellishment shone forth; in its adornment, craftsmen from Toledo [were used]; and this [was] in the exalted year 1404 [1366 CE]. Like the twilight at eventide and like the glow of dawn at morning a throne resplendent with brilliant colours and the intensity of its magnificence…Praise be to Allah.610

According to the inscription, the doors were built by craftsmen from Toledo, giving the doors another possible sociocultural connection to ha-Levi’s community. The inscription also bears resemblance to ha-Levi’s dedication to Pedro found in the Sinagoga del Tránsito, along with the

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610 The Arabic term used for “room” was qubba, which also reflects the design model for this hall as well as that of the Sala de a Justicia. Juan Carlos Hernández Núñez and Alfredo José Morales, The Royal Palace of Seville (London: Scala Publishers in association with Aldeasa S.A, 1999), 58, 62.
same Islamicate honorifics or salawat. The Castilian inscription on the opposite side of the doors also featured elements from Psalm 53, another connection to El Tránsito, as well as a further possible link to Kabbalah given that the doors were constructed by artisans in Toledo where Kabbalah had so many historical connections. The doors to the Salón de Embajadores/Patio de las Doncellas is not the only such inscription in the Alcazar, however.

**Figure 136: Dormitorio del Rey Don Pedro I, Alcazar of Seville**

![Image of Dormitorio del Rey Don Pedro I](image1)

**Figure 137: Inscription detail, Dormitorio del Rey Don Pedro I**

![Inscription detail](image2)

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612 Mudéjar wall detail, *Dormitorio del Rey Don Pedro I, Alcazar of Seville, Spain.* Ibid.
The *Dormitorio del Rey Don Pedro*, which continues to house the Spanish royal family on visits to Seville, included additional inscriptions and represent an even more compelling support for Islamicate shared culture as the interpretation for the Mudéjar Palace. The private residence of the King, in this case Pedro I, incorporated several elements of the shared Islamicate visual corpus including the *ataurique* vegetal scrollwork, red, green and black polychrome wash, and a variant of the *alicatados* mosaic (*dado*) found in other parts of the Alcazar as well as at Tordesillas. The royal quarters also included medallion symbols of Castile, León, and La Banda, also found on the palace façade and in the *Sala de la Justicia*. Thus, the private chambers of the King tied stylistically into the overall Mudéjar aesthetic of the palace and other sections of the Alcazar, as well as to the other synoptic constructions in the group. Inscriptions which appeared in the scrollwork also suggest a mystical connectivity.

One of the inscriptions identified by Amador de los Rios in the *Dormitorio del Rey Don Pedro* is \[ يا ثقتي يا املني انت الرجا انت الولي اختتم بخسير العملي \] that the inscription appears to be a combination of elements taken from the Psalms, Psalm 71 and 91 among others, along with a request for blessing. The representation of biblical passages in Arabic within the King’s private residence is intriguing on several levels. First, Pedro’s decision to include a biblical reference in Arabic rather than Latin may have been a design choice with the intention of keeping with the overall Mudéjar aesthetic, as opposed to some specific preference for Arabic over Latin. The Psalmic selections, however, are curious in that they reflect similar subjects as the Psalmic inscriptions in the *Sinagoga del Tránsito* and like the doors to the *Salón de Embajadores* may

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613 Amador de los Rios translated it as “Oh confianza mia, oh esperanza mia, tu eres mi esperanza: tu eres mi protector. Sella con la bondad mis obras,” roughly “Oh my trust, oh my hope; you are my hope, you are my protector (guardian). Seal my works with kindness.” This inscription also appeared in the *Gabinete llamado de Maria Padilla* in the Alcazar. Rodrigo Amador de los Rios, *Inscripciones Árabes de Sevilla* (Madrid: Imprenta de T. Fortanet, 1875), 207.
also reflect Pedro’s deployment of similar Kabbalistic protections for himself. Another
inscription on the frieze in the Dormitorio might also suggest the overall protection intent of the
inscriptions. The inscription reads حَسَبَ الْعَلِيِّ مَلِكَناُ السَّلَتَانَ أَنَّ بَدرٌ أَيْدَةٌ اللهٌ،[614] which appears to be another
blessing and also refers to Pedro as Sultan. In addition, the phrase [إِیْدَة] may be hispano-arabic
which could be read as “ayuda” further suggesting customization with a local dialectic
convention rather than formal Arabic or simply copying other inscriptions.

Putting this all together, the private chambers of the King were a full-fledged participant in
the Mudéjar Palace, which also inspire some difficult to counter conclusions. Any suggestion of
convenience over choice in the aesthetic program of the Mudéjar Palace would seem to be
countermanded by the Dormitorio. As ruler and patron, it is unreasonable to assume that Pedro
would not have his private chambers designed to his liking, especially since those chambers were
unlikely to be frequented by visitors or guests, and presumably not meant to serve as a public
extension of the ruler, per se. Also the connectivity between the greater Mudéjar Palace and the
private chambers and then the connectivity between the Islamicate material culture across the
synoptic constructions, each with individualized and community-specific customization, should
confirm the deployment of a shared Islamicate culture used by the majority of Andalusis.

The Alhambra is not immune to its own mystical connections, but again occurred in a
manner customized for a Muslim patron rather than a Christian or Jewish one.

\[614\] Amador de los Rios translates as “Gloria a nuestro señor el sultan Don Pedro! Protejale Allah!” roughly "Glory
to our Lord, Sultan Don Pedro, God protect (help) him. Amador de los Rios, 207."
The doors to Muhammad V’s own Sala de Embajadores (aka Salón del Trono) at the Alhambra may have served a similar function. The inscription that appeared on the doors leading into the Salón from the Sala de la Barca featured an inscription of Sura 113 of the Qur’an. Suras 113 and 114, the last two suras of the Qur’an, were regularly used in inscriptions, especially for protection (often to ward off evil and dark magic).\(^{616}\) If their use on these doors followed established tradition, then the Psalmic inscriptions at the Alcazar and in turn the Sinagoga del Tránsito may have had the same intended purpose. If true, this would further indicate a shared language with opportunities for patron-specific customization and choice.

5.8.3 A Last Over-arching Connection

A German traveler, Jerónimo Münzer who visited Granada in 1494-1495 CE, just after the surrender of the city to the Spanish, spent some time at the Alhambra and was taken by its magnificence.”


\(^{616}\) Michael Anthony Sells, Approaching the Qur’an: The Early Revelations, 2nd ed (Ashland, Or: White Cloud Press, 2007), 139.
Here, nearly 250 years after Fernando III marched into Seville, another Christian visitor was describing the architecture of the Muslims with a similar reverence. Like the chronicler of Alfonso X described Seville in the *Crónica General de España*, Münzer later remarked, when viewing Granada from a tower in the Alhambra, “I believe there is no greater city in the whole of Europe and Africa.”

Ruggles suggested that Münzer compared the Alcazar of Seville to “the Alhambra in style and size.” This comment cannot be confirmed by Münzer’s text specifically, since his text concludes as he is leaving Malaga for Seville, however Münzer did visit several royal palaces in the surrounding areas including Almeria and Guadix and discussed those palaces, which both used the term “alcazar” in the Spanish translation of the original Latin. Despite this possible translation question, Münzer’s observations are relevant on two levels. First, his clear fascination and aggrandizement of the Nazrids echoed the ongoing emulation of Islamicate material in the service of grandeur and high culture to the earliest days of the Reconquista. Secondly, Münzer, like so many other visitors, does not seem to see Dodds proposed form of triumphalism or other identity-based interpretations from his interaction with Islamicate material; neither associating them purely with Islam, nor problematizing their presence in a Christian royal context – suggesting that the orientalist or post-colonial aspersions related to this material were...
still years away. What is apparent from Münzer is the idea that Islamicate material continued to reflect high culture, power, and grandeur in a way that seems to have continued from the earliest days of the conquest, through its height during the reign of the early Castilians and maintaining through the Trastamaran upheaval to the dawn of Spain’s pending “golden age” following the unification of the country and the discovery of the New World.

5.9 Epilogue: The Casa de Pilatos

The presence of an Islamicate shared culture that influenced the Alcazar in Seville also inspired another construction in the city, the Casa de Pilatos. The site of the Casa de Pilatos was part of a parcel of properties sized by the Inquisition in the 15th century. The house was originally constructed by principal owners Don Pedro Enríquez, Adelantado Mayor (Chief Governor) of Andalucía and wife Catalina de Rivera beginning c. 1483 CE. The site was known as El Palacio de los Adelantados Mayores after Pedro Enríquez, but became known as The Casa de Pilatos (Pilate’s House) as named for the biblical Roman prefect following Pedro Enríquez’s son Fadrique Enríquez de Rivera’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land c. 1519 CE. Pedro Enríquez died following the Siege of Granada in 1492, so the layout and design of the Casa de Pilatos is mostly attributed to his wife Catalina de Rivera, her son Fadrique, and her grandson Pere Afán de Rivera. The Casa de Pilatos is an important piece of shared Islamicate culture specifically due to its many Mudéjar adornments, but also due to its founder. Pedro Enríquez was twin brother of Enrique de Trastamara, the murderer of Alcazar patron Pedro I and the same individual who charged Pedro as an “enricher and ennobler of Jews and Moors.”

Thus if the Casa de Pilatos was incorporating Islamicate designs and material culture into new constructions, it can only have been part of a shared visual language without affiliation to the

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621 See Serrano, Cartulario del Infantado de Covarrubias, 217.
Muslims, and likely without clear association to Pedro I who was its primary supporter in Seville. Most likely it was meant to recall the grand history of Seville and when combined with the associated high culture, power, and grandeur of these and other designs in the building, likely served to inspire the same associations that Münzer sought to invoke at the Alhambra. Also, much like other Islamicate material culture of the 15th and 16th century discussed earlier, may have grown beyond any early associations to simply reflect the style of Andalucía. That said, the prevalence of Mudéjar architecture and designs predominate the Casa de Pilatos and seem to have combined many aspects of the synoptic constructions while also incorporating contemporary manifestations of the style.

*Figure 139: Summer Palace patio, Casa de Pilatos*

The hub of the house, the main patio (fig. 139) featured a courtyard not dissimilar from other palatial courtyards seen at the Alcazar and Alhambra. The columned arches and *alicatados* mosaics bear more than a passing resemblance to the *Patio de las Doncellas*. In the columned arches themselves (fig. 140) *ataurique* and *sebka* style designs were featured on the capitals and arch interiors. The so-called Flagellation Room (fig. 141) further suggests a shared visual culture that existed without religious or political affiliation. Featuring a Christian theme, the flagellation of Christ and a Gothic ribbed ceiling with other Gothic elements, the room is also covered in *sebka* and *ataurique* wall adornment and *alicatados* mosaic on the *dado* and altar (which also contained the same canonical design element seen in the Alcazar and Tordesillas).

Conversely, the Ceremony Room (fig. 142) has numerous Mudéjar and Islamicate connections. The room was built on the *qubba* model similar to several rooms in the synoptic constructions. That model and the central fountain are also reminiscent of the *Sala de la Justicia*. The room also

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incorporated an *ataurique* attic band and door frame along with *alicatados* mosaics and “cuenca” tiles.

*Figure 141: Flagellation Room, Casa de Pilatos*

![Flagellation Room, Casa de Pilatos](image)

*Figure 142: Ceremony Room, Casa de Pilatos*

![Ceremony Room, Casa de Pilatos](image)

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The tiles appear in various styles throughout the Casa de Pilatos, including Mudéjar, Isabelline, and Renaissance. The tiles were produced in the ceramic shops in Triana that also produced the *ataifor* ceramic bowls discussed in Chapter IV. This particular Mudéjar tile (fig. 143), featured the *girih* design style. The ceiling from the Ceremony Room was also built on the *girih* design model matching other *girih* ceilings in the Alcazar and Santa Clara de Tordesillas. This particular ceiling also included golden *muqarnas* elements (fig. 144) also seen in the synoptic constructions and likely inspired by the Alcazar and Tordesillas specifically.

*Figure 143: Mudéjar Tile, Casa de Pilatos*

The Casa de Pilatos is further connected to the synoptic constructions and Islamicate shared culture in Seville through another ceiling. The *artesonado* ceiling from the Fresco Room, (fig. 145) is of the same design as those that appeared in both the *Sinagoga del Tránsito* and *Santa Maria la Blanca*. The Casa de Pilatos also included several inscriptions in Arabic which were also found in various rooms in the Alcazar.\textsuperscript{628} It is unclear if these inscriptions were included to match the Alcazar or if they were simply part of the evolved Mudéjar style at the time.

\textsuperscript{628} Amador de los Rios, \textit{Inscripciones Árabes de Sevilla}, 216–18.
Lastly, some connections are even more explicit. The heraldry of the House of Enriquez (fig. 146) appears in several locations and mediums throughout the Casa de Pilatos. This heraldic symbol contained the same elements that signify all the crests related to Castile and León, from Fernando III to Enrique de Trastamara to Samuel ha-Levi and then Pedro Enriquez and his descendants. While each was unique to its particular family and lineage, they all seem to have connected visually with the dynasty founded back in the 13th century. This may again have been

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intended to symbolically link to the power and grandeur of that history, in the same way that Islamicate architecture and material had done for the same groups culturally.

The Casa de Pilatos was largely the product of Islamicate shared culture that by its time had become the style of the region and contemporary with the later Islamicate ceramics discussed in Chapter IV. While continuing to be popular into the 16th century, wealth and prestige from Spain’s ventures in the New World likely ushered in a gradual change from Islamicate/Mudéjar aesthetics to Gothic and other European architectural styles like Renaissance, Baroque, and Plateresque. This transition in tastes included new constructions like the Great Gothic Cathedral of Seville completed c. 1506 CE, replacing the former mosque, Carlos V’s 16th century Renaissance palace in the Alhambra, and the 16th century Casa de la Contracción at the Alcazar of Seville. While Mudéjar designs would continue to be seen in some New World constructions, their pinnacle and the predominance of Islamicate shared culture had passed, ushering in what would come to be called El Siglo de Oro or the Spanish Golden Age.

The central argument of this dissertation is that there was an Islamicate shared culture which existed between the three confessional communities (Muslims, Christians, and Jews) in al-Andalus. This shared culture existed separately from affiliations with the respective religious and political spheres of the participants such that architectural designs and decorations, along with a host of other cultural permutations could coexist amidst ongoing antagonism and conflict in other spheres. As manifested in building constructions and material culture from all three communities, Islamicate shared culture also included a common visual language which could be customized to reflect the personal choices of the patrons. As a result, Islamicate shared culture permeated al-Andalus over the course of several centuries, but reached its height during the 14th
century with several building projects commissioned by prominent rulers of each community which incorporated the shared style and visual language into their projects.
6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 An Islamicate History of the Alcazar of Seville

Figure 147: Primary entrance, Alcazar of Seville

At the conclusion of this exploration and analysis it is clear that the Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville is not an architectural or cultural history of that complex but rather describes an exemplar of a shared culture with roots extending back to the earliest days of the Islamic empires in Iberia. This shared culture, which likely also incorporated traditions from the earlier Visigothic and Roman cultures on the peninsula, continued through the reigns of Alfonso X, Alfonso XI, and Pedro I of Castile and onto the Spanish holdings in the New World.

The Islamicate shared culture theory presented in this dissertation outlined the use of material and aesthetics that were utilized by patrons across the three confessional communities in al-Andalus (Muslims, Christians, and Jews). These groups in turn built, decorated, and created

material culture and architecture that reflected shared elements that appeared everywhere from
royal palaces and throne rooms, to churches and synagogues, to private residences and
dinnerware. This Islamicate culture in al-Andalus could be shared because it did not carry
associations with the religion of Islam, despite its origins, and existed as a cultural phenomenon
common to the region and adopted by its residents regardless of their political, religious, or
social affiliations. Because of its separation from these other spheres, Islamicate shared culture
could be employed in contexts where any overt affiliation with religion would likely have
prevented it. The shared culture present in al-Andalus was so widespread and popular because it
contained common recognizable elements that could be customized to create a shared style that
was nonetheless unique to each patron and reflective of their personal choices and representation.
This commonality of culture was also associated with expressions of power, grandeur, and
luxury first recognized in the ruling Muslim polities of Iberia but later adopted by many of the
Christian rulers who supplanted them, as well as by members of their respective minority Jewish
populations. Thus, inscriptions, symbols, and other personally identifiable markers and
references could sit in a shared matrix that could also be understood and appreciated by viewers
which in turn formed a shared visual language. As a result, these shared cultural and visual
elements initiated under Islamic rule, but also found among non-Muslims, cemented them as
something Islamicate, positioning the shared visual language and its components under the same
umbrella. This shared visual language was so prominent and evident throughout al-Andalus that
it was later recognized by scholars as its own style, but proved to be problematic as questions
arose regarding its attribution and associations.

This design style and aesthetic became more enigmatic when it was referred to as “Mudéjar”
by art historians and other scholars beginning in the 19th century. This appellation only added to
the confusing interpretive situation due to the term “Mudéjar” already being associated with Muslims who stayed as subjects of the Christians after the 13th century conquests. Because of the multiple definitions for the term, “Mudéjar” had the unintended consequence of associating the later described design aesthetic with the minority Muslim population, resulting in several interpretive difficulties. The analysis presented in this project sought to unpack those associations and argue that “Mudéjar” was likely not the best descriptor of this shared culture, but rather a marker for a manifestation of a larger Islamicate milieu that grew from the shared experience of participants, which not only included the residents of Seville and Castilian-led al-Andalus, but also other Christian kingdoms, the Muslim rulers in Granada, and their coreligionists in North Africa.

Ultimately what came to be known as Mudéjar art and design encompassed an extended history of Islamicate shared culture that permeated intellectual, political, social, and religious boundaries and were prominently displayed in the four synoptic constructions from the 14th century. These building projects and their patrons represented the pinnacle of the shared culture as well as the best examples of patron choice and customization that typified it.

Seville was at the heart of Islamicate shared culture, seeing manifestations over many generations that in turn influenced other patrons and polities in al-Andalus. Because of its central location, rulers, and multi-confessional population, Seville became the cosmopolitan matrix in which various aspects of shared culture could congeal. As the former capitol of the Muslim Almohads, seat of power for the Castilians, and eventual hub for the New World expeditions, Seville had a long history of Islamicate shared culture and served as one of its primary dissemination points. The Alcazar of Seville was not only the royal residence for the various rulers of the city but home to one of the best representations of Islamicate shared culture
in the Mudéjar Palace built by Pedro I. As the Alcazar was also home to the earlier *Sala de la Justicia* and the likely interaction point for dignitaries and visitors to the crown, the Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville is representative of the larger cosmopolitan history of medieval al-Andalus. Visitors such as Muhammad V of Granada as well as Pedro’s minister Samuel ha-Levi took inspiration from the Alcazar, which manifested in their own building projects in the Alhambra and the *Sinagoga del Tránsito* in Toledo respectively. The Alcazar and its recent constructions, however, sat atop a foundation formed and inspired by previous Islamicate constructions in Toledo, Tordesillas, and Córdoba, which in turn added to the foundation which supported the continuation of Islamicate constructions and material culture present in Mudéjar ceramics and buildings like the *Casa de Pilatos*.

Identifying a shared visual language and culture in al-Andalus is significant because it describes an environment that stood apart from other spheres in which there was conflict. On the one hand, this study has shown the value of examining cultural history through a cosmopolitan lens while on the other hand problematizing the misinterpretation and potentially anachronistic aspects of a backward-looking perspective. Moving forward, this study may inspire future examinations of shared or cosmopolitan cultures that occurred in other historically multicultural spaces in places like the Mediterranean and beyond. By focusing on spheres of cooperation coexisting amidst spheres of conflict, a nuanced and multilayered view of society and culture can emerge and produce a more discrete analysis of history that approaches involving monolithic constructs and actors may overlook. In the end, the Islamicate history of the Alcazar of Seville illustrates that the historical lens is as important as the historical information and equally responsible for the historical interpretation.
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