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## A Marriage of Convenience

The period in Spanish history beginning with the Muslim conquest in the eighth century is called by some the *convivencia*. The Spanish word literally means “living together.” It is used to refer to a time in Spain when Christians, Muslims, and Jews coexisted in unparalleled harmony. For more than half a millennium, under either Muslim or Christian political control, the three cultures lived together, worked together, and explored new and old ideas together.

The *convivencia* was popularized—both as term and concept—by Américo Castro, a great Spanish historian of the twentieth century. Castro’s work demonstrated the essential contributions of Muslims and Jews to Spanish culture, and he argued that these contributions played a pivotal role in forming the national character of Spain: “Between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries Spanish history was Christian-Islamic-Judaic; and during those centuries the definitive structure of Hispanic life was forged. It is not possible to break up this history into stagnant pools, or to divide it off into parallel, synchronous currents, because each one of the three groups was a part of the circumstances projected by the other two.”<sup>1</sup>

Castro’s *convivencia* has inspired numerous descriptions of a multi-cultural Spain. In her recent book *Ornament of the World*, María Rosa Menocal describes the *convivencia* as a multicultural Eden, and religious intolerance was the apple that brought exile from this paradise.<sup>2</sup> Islamic nationalists have cited the *convivencia* as proof that Islam is tolerant by nature, claiming that only Zionist distortions require Muslims to stray in self-defense from their natural tolerance of other faiths.

The *convivencia* provides a useful perspective on Jewish and Spanish history, highlighting the important contributions that Jews and Mus-

lims in Spain made to Spanish and European culture. It also explains the basis for the great cultural accomplishments of the Spanish Jews and their economic and political achievements.

The exclusive focus on the *convivencia* and tolerance, however, distorts Jewish and Spanish history. While Jews participated in the Muslim and Christian kingdoms of Spain, they also largely lived apart from the other religious groups and maintained their autonomous culture. A focus exclusively on tolerance also makes it difficult to understand the bouts of anti-Jewish violence and repression that periodically erupted in both the Muslim and the Christian kingdoms.

In fact, Spaniards have traditionally presented the history of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim relations as a story of conflict, not cooperation. The *convivencia* was only popularized in the latter half of the twentieth century, by Américo Castro. Spaniards traditionally have focused instead on the *reconquista*, the lengthy war to reverse the Islamic invasion of Spain. This traditional Spanish narrative emphasizes devotion to Catholicism, a faith that led the Spanish to victory against the Muslim invaders, and which culminated in the Spanish expulsion of Jews and Moors from Spain. Jews, as well as Muslims, were foreign cultures that needed to be purged from Iberia to maintain Spanish Christian cultural purity.

This is the history told by conservative intellectuals such as the influential nineteenth-century scholar Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, whose basic views have been summarized by the British historian Henry Kamen: “[Menéndez y Pelayo] maintained the view that since earliest times there had been a genuine nation called Spain that drew its strength from the eternal values of Catholicism alone. All other cultures, whether Jewish or Arabic, were passing phases that only contributed distortions (or ‘heresies’) of the true essence.”<sup>3</sup>

Castro’s work contradicted the traditional focus of conservative Spanish historians on the purity of Catholic Spain, an image that also lay at the heart of Franco’s nationalist ideology. As Isabelle Rohr notes in *The Spanish Right and the Jews*: “The myth of the *Reconquista* was not only central to Nationalist thinking [within Spain], it was also the lens through which [Nationalist Spain] perceived the external world. Thus,

Hitler's anti-Semitic campaign was labeled a crusade to save Christian Europe."<sup>4</sup> The victory of Franco's nationalists in 1939 forced Américo Castro, along with his liberal ideas, into exile.

Castro became extremely influential outside Spain, but Spanish scholars, at least during the Franco years, rejected the *convivencia* for the ideal of the reconquest and instead focused on religious conflict, not cooperation. For example, in his book *Understanding Spain*, the twentieth-century Spanish philosopher Julián Marías, who had supported the republic, at the end of the Franco period still criticized Castro and defended the idea of Catholic Spain: "To speak of 'Christians, Moors, and Jews' as homogenous and comparable elements means exercising very great violence on the reality of medieval Spain and disfiguring its structure; above all, its projective, that is to say, historical, character. What we understand by Spain . . . is the Christian Spain that did not accept its Islamization and struggled against it, with more or less success, with enthusiasm or with apathy, from early in the eighth century to the end of the fifteenth, without a single interruption of that constitutive project."<sup>5</sup>

### Tolerance or Conflict?

Was the history of the Spanish Jews a story of religious tolerance or of religious conflict? From the Jewish perspective the period of the *convivencia* has a mixed legacy. It was, in some ways, a golden age. During this period Jews enjoyed over five hundred years of relative stability. During much of this period, up until the fourteenth century, more Jews lived in Spain than in all the European countries combined.<sup>6</sup> And Jews prospered. Some Jews, rich and powerful, under both Muslim and Christian rulers even became governmental ministers. Intellectually, the period opened the Jews to new ideas: They tried to reconcile their religion with the Hellenistic ideas that they had struggled with since the Maccabean rebellion. They built on Muslim advances to become world leaders in philosophy, medicine, and science. They explored new forms of mystical spiritualism, creating the canon of religious works known collectively as the Kabbalah.

Yet even at the best of times, Jews never were fully safe and secure under the *convivencia*. This so-called golden age was marked by out-



tian rule. They were reluctantly tolerated, not out of principle but out of pragmatism: because they could be useful.”<sup>7</sup>

Even Américo Castro recognized the practical motivations for embracing the tolerant practices known as the *convivencia*. “That the three religions coexisted is due less to tolerance than to vital weakness.”<sup>8</sup>

This marriage of convenience was maintained by the Muslim and the Christian rulers only with difficulty, in the face of strong, popular anti-Jewish pressures. In Muslim Spain the Jews suffered from the religious intolerance of fundamentalist Muslim sects. In Christian Spain motives for intolerance included resentment against the Jewish moneylenders and tax collectors for the Crown. The Jews came under almost constant attack from the church, particularly from the mendicant friars who had taken up the mission of converting the Jews.

This underlying antagonism to the Jewish presence created inevitable tensions even in the best of times in the Jews’ relations with their Muslim and Christian neighbors. Strong, stable government could suppress anti-Jewish pressures. But when the government lacked the power or the will to protect the Jews, the result could be tragic—either for individuals or, on occasion, for entire communities. This happened repeatedly to Jews under both their Muslim and their Christian patrons. Significant anti-Jewish measures almost always came at periods of unusual political instability.

The expulsion decree of 1492 was an exception because it came at a time of both political stability and an exceptionally strong monarchy. But Ferdinand and Isabella could sign such a decree because, by 1492, the practical incentives for tolerance had largely disappeared. Converts from Judaism—controlled through the repressive apparatus of the Spanish Inquisition—could perform almost all the services that the Jews had provided in the past.

The end to the practical considerations that fostered tolerance in Spain would end the *convivencia* forever and lead to the eradication of Judaism from Iberia for nearly five hundred years.

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## The Visigoth Persecution of the Jews

It is not known when Jews first settled in Iberia. Medieval legends have it that the city of Toledo in central Spain was founded by Jews, following the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity.<sup>1</sup> Some Sephardic families claimed descent from the time of King David. Jews may have joined early Phoenician or Carthaginian trading settlements. It is known that Jews had accompanied the Romans into the area and had joined settlements in the Roman provinces of Hispania and Lusitania. The oldest known synagogue remains that have been discovered, in Elche (near the Mediterranean), date from between the third and the fifth century.

But before the turn of the first millennium, the Visigoths almost brought an end to the Jewish presence in Iberia. The Visigoths were Germanic mercenaries who, after sacking Rome, wandered west to pick off the remains of the defunct empire. By the end of the fifth century, they controlled most of the Iberian Peninsula. Theirs was a weak kind of control, a series of unstable reigns rocked by wars of succession and local revolts. The original royal line died out in 507 AD. Only eight of the twenty-three Visigoth kings succeeded their fathers, some of them only very briefly.<sup>2</sup> Religious differences stoked instability: the Visigoths initially were Arians, who believed that Jesus had an existence distinct from God, while most Iberians followed the Roman Catholic belief in the Trinity.

Culturally, the most prominent intellectual figure during the Visigoth period was Isidore of Seville, the archbishop of that city, who was later canonized by the Catholic Church. His *Etymologiae* was meant to be an exhaustive encyclopedia of all learning known to humankind. It demonstrated how much Greek and Roman knowledge was lost to Europe,



and why, given this loss of classical learning, these years would be called the “Dark Ages.” Isidore also wrote *De fide catholica ex Veteriet Novo Testamento, contra Judaeos*, which was to become one of the most popular anti-Jewish books of the Middle Ages.

At first the Jews were treated under the Visigoths much as they had been under Roman rule. They were permitted to hold senatorial rank and were recruited to important fortresses for garrison duty. Jews were permitted their own courts and allowed to perform their religious observances.<sup>3</sup> But the Visigoth king Reccared, who converted his people to the Roman faith in 589 to conform with Spanish practice, enacted a few laws unfavorable to the Jews. Serious troubles began with King Sisebut, who ascended to the throne in 612. He freed all Christian slaves owned by Jews and forbade Jews from hiring Christian workers. Violators had half of their property confiscated. Sisebut also instituted the death penalty for Jews convicted of proselytizing. Jews married to Christians had to convert or leave the kingdom, and Jews were prohibited from holding any office with power over Christians.

Either these laws proved ineffective, or King Sisebut lost patience with them. He subsequently instituted forced conversions, including the conversions of several prominent rabbis. Jews fled en masse into exile. Even Bishop Isidore, who had penned his great tract against the Jews, protested the severity of these measures.

Sisebut’s far-reaching measures were the first in a series of cycles of repression and tolerance. Kings favorable toward the Jews alternated with others who passed ever more repressive—even genocidal—anti-Jewish laws. Ultimately, the Visigoths promulgated some of the most repressive anti-Jewish laws in European history. As noted by the historian Norman Roth: “The Visigothic period produced the most vile polemic and the harshest legislation against Jews encountered at any time in medieval Europe.”<sup>4</sup>

King Chintila, whose reign began in 636, required all Jews to convert or to leave the Visigoth territory. Any convert deemed insincere was subject to death by stoning. Reccesuinth, who reigned from 649 to 672, made the practice of Jewish rites a capital offense. Erwig, king after 680, promulgated twenty-eight anti-Jewish laws, including a penalty of death

for refusal to eat pork. King Egica, Erwig’s successor, copied King Recesuinth’s description of the Jews as a “contagious pestilence” by coining the Latin phrase *judaeorum pestis*, or the “Jewish plague.”<sup>5</sup> Under Egica Jews were stripped of all they possessed and ordered into slavery.

Politics—rather than religious fanaticism—seem the most likely cause for these actions. Repressive measures of kings from Chintila to Egica were often suspended by succeeding monarchs like Wamba and Witiza. These changes of policy might have reflected efforts by successive kings to appease their most powerful bases of support. Anti-Jewish laws pleased the Spanish bishops (who held considerable secular power beyond their religious authority), while the more tolerant kings traditionally looked to the Jews and their aristocratic allies for support.

Bishop Julian of Toledo articulated the anti-Jewish opinion of clerics in the late 600s: the Jews “had to be cut off . . . like the cancerous part of the body, before this harmful disease could be passed on to the healthy parts.”<sup>6</sup> The royal anti-Jewish policies of the seventh century imply a reliance on the support of the bishops, since almost all the anti-Jewish legislation came from those kings (Reccared, Sisebut, Chintila, Recesuinth, Erwig, and Egica) in close alliance with—or under the thumb of—the clerical party.<sup>7</sup>

The fact that each new set of anti-Jewish laws remained valid for generations and became more draconian over time indicates that the rulers who imposed them were too weak to effectively implement them. Otherwise, it would not make sense to implement a law enslaving Jews a generation after all Jews faced an order of death or conversion. As noted by the historian Eliyah Ashtor: “The very severity of these enactments is proof that they were not fully executed, and despite the decrees of kings and councils many Jews remained in Spain. Indeed, from the decisions of the councils we learn that Jews bribed the nobles who held the reins of government, and even the clergy themselves, not to enforce these laws strictly. Nevertheless their plight worsened and they looked for a source of deliverance.”<sup>8</sup>

For Jews relief from Visigoth persecution would come with the Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. But the legacy of the Visigoths continued to poison the lives of the Jews. The Visigoth experiment in



### 3

## Muslim Rule

### Al-Andalus

The memory of al-Andalus—Muslim rule in Spain—which brought the greatest Muslim culture ever to flourish in what is now Christian Europe, still resonates in the modern world half a millennium after its disappearance. In the past few years, the dream of al-Andalus transformed into a nightmare, as al-Qaeda called for its restoration. Al-Qaeda leader Aymanal-Zawahiri called al-Andalus “a promised land that one day would revert to Islamic rule.”<sup>1</sup> After the 2004 al-Qaeda-inspired train bombings in Madrid, one Spanish parliamentarian pointed to allegiance to the memory of al-Andalus as a motivation for the attacks: “They have a grander vision, which is an obsession with the demise of al-Andalus. We hear this in the sermons of the militant Islamic sheikhs.”<sup>2</sup> One hundred and ninety-one people were killed in these attacks.

The memory of al-Andalus persists in part due to the striking physical legacy the Moors left in Spain. These architectural remnants include great Islamic structures such as the Córdoba Mosque, with its dark, indoor forest of striped marble arches—recycled stone from a Christian cathedral that in turn had been built on the ruins of a Roman temple; the Alcázar palace in Seville, refurbished by Pedro the Cruel in the fourteenth century in the Moorish style, and used as a residence by Queen Isabella at the beginning of her reign; and the most famous palatial complex in Spain, the Alhambra in Granada, finished in the fifteenth century shortly before the end of Muslim rule in Spain.

This physical legacy of al-Andalus extends throughout Spain. The builders and artisans of Islamic Spain, both *mudejar* (Islamic) and *mozárabe* (Christian and raised in the Moorish kingdoms), were valued throughout Iberia, and they erected buildings from Córdoba to

Toledo, including Moorish-style churches and synagogues. This architectural legacy is only a small portion of the extensive wealth and cultural achievements of al-Andalus at its height, which transformed Jewish life. Islamic intellectual discoveries and achievements exposed Jews to the most advanced scientific, mathematical, and philosophical ideas. Two of the greatest medieval Jewish works, Maimonides's *Guide for the Perplexed* and Halevi's *Book of the Kuzari*, were written during this period, and in Arabic, not in Hebrew. In exchange for Jewish support, Moorish leaders provided the Jews with unparalleled opportunities for wealth and power. The most successful Jews became courtiers, fully assimilated (except for religion) in the life of the Islamic court.

But for all its achievements and longevity—there was a Muslim state in Spain for over seven hundred years—al-Andalus began as an accidental kingdom and remained always fragile. Only the strongest leaders could cope with the great physical and cultural diversity that always threatened to fragment the kingdom. In the end these internal tensions, rather than external enemies, led to the shattering of the caliphate. The fragmentation of al-Andalus weakened the sponsorship that Jews received from the kingdom's leaders in exchange for Jewish support. Al-Andalus became vulnerable to invasion by tribes from North Africa that saw nothing to be gained by dealing with the Jews. Yet while life in al-Andalus became increasingly intolerable for Jews, the benefits they had received from the Moors in the form of wealth, administrative experience, and cultural knowledge made them valuable and welcome guests to their next “hosts,” the newly risen Christian kingdoms of the North.

### Invasion

The al-Andalus that sheltered and nourished the Spanish Jews for several centuries started as an accidental kingdom. In 710 a Berber tribesman named Tarif ibn Malik led four hundred men on a successful raiding party into southern Spain. The raid gave him immortality—he became the namesake of the city Tarifa—and encouraged a larger incursion. The very next year, in 711, an army of Moors from North Africa, led by the governor of Tangiers, Tariq ibn Ziyad, invaded southern Spain. According to legend, Julián, the Goth governor of Ceuta, incited the invasion

in order to avenge the rape of his daughter by Roderic, the Visigoth king. More likely Julián used the invasion to advance his own claims to the Visigoth throne.

Invasion expeditions crossing the narrow strait separating Africa from Spain were frequent. A common (although disputed) explanation for the origin of the Arab name for southern Spain, al-Andalus, is that it comes from the Vandals, a Germanic tribe that invaded North Africa after being pushed out from Iberia by the Visigoths. From the perspective of the North Africans, Spain was the land of the Vandals.

Tariq found little resistance: King Roderick was engaged in the north, fighting off a Basque revolt. He reinforced his raiding party with an army of seven thousand—mainly Berbers—and built a fortress called Jabal Tariq, which gave its name to the nearby rocky hill, Gibraltar.<sup>3</sup> Tariq then conquered Toledo, where he was joined by Musa ibn Nusayr, his superior as governor of North Africa, who took over the expedition. Musa eventually led his armies to the Picos de Europa, mountains near the Atlantic coast. There he was stopped by a resurgent Spanish force that had been able to take shelter in the mountains. Geography as much as military resistance preserved the north from Muslim rule.

Neither Musa nor Tariq in the end profited from this great conquest. Summoned by the caliph Walid ibn Abd al-Malik to report to Damascus, Musa left his son, Abd al-Aziz, in charge of the newly conquered territory. In Damascus Tariq found Walid on his deathbed. According to a different version of this legend, Walid's heir, Sulayman, ordered Musa and Tariq to delay their trip to Damascus until after Walid's death, so that Sulayman could claim all the booty himself. Instead, Musa brought his treasure to the ailing caliph.

Sulayman accused Musa of embezzling the treasure, fined him, and had him imprisoned and tortured until he could pay.<sup>4</sup> Tariq was thrashed and demoted; he died in obscurity.<sup>5</sup> Musa's son, Aziz, was assassinated by one of his own men at Sulayman's orders.<sup>6</sup> Sulayman, as an Arab ruling over a geographically vast and ethnically diverse caliphate, could not afford to encourage independence among his far-flung subjects, some of whom had only recently converted to Islam. He gave similar treatment to the conquerors of Turkestan and India.

## A Prince of Islam

The new Muslim province started out as unstable and provincial as its Visigothic predecessors. This large and ethnically diverse province, with a Christian majority, needed a strong leader to become a coherent and vibrant kingdom. It would receive one with the entry of Prince Abd al-Rahman ibn Mu'awiya ibn Hisham, the last surviving heir to the Umayyad kingdom. Abd al-Rahman came to Spain because of a revolt in the heart of the young Islamic caliphate. After the death of Muhammad, Islam was ruled by four successor caliphs, all contemporaries of the Prophet. The last, Ali, was assassinated in 661. His successor, Muawiyah I, claimed a common ancestor with the Prophet. Muawiyah I founded the Umayyad dynasty and moved the capital of Islam from Medina to Damascus.

The Umayyads were defeated in a revolt by the Abbasid clan, which claimed descent from one of Muhammad's uncles. The Abbasids proceeded to obliterate any trace of their predecessors. They searched out and killed every member of the Umayyad family, even destroying Umayyad grave sites. But one Umayyad escaped. Abd al-Rahman, grandson of Caliph Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik, fled as soldiers surrounded his house and murdered his family. From Syria he escaped first to Palestine, then Egypt and the Maghreb. There he found allies in Spain. With this support he defeated the Abbasid governor. Abd al-Rahman established himself as a semi-independent emir. As an aristocrat with a family connection to the Prophet, he had a royal claim to leadership. As the son of a Berber mother, he could exploit his ethnic connections to the North African tribesmen who had conquered al-Andalus. Abd al-Rahman ruled for thirty years, establishing a dynasty that would last for almost three hundred years. He and his successors built this emirate into one of the richest provinces in the world.

## The Caliphate

Only the strongest leader could fully unify Muslim Spain. The first to successfully meet this challenge was Abd al-Rahman III, who in the tenth century converted Spain to a fully independent caliphate. Up until

the tenth century, the Umayyad rulers had failed to establish a strong central government because the country’s diversity, both ethnically and geographically, worked against it. The Umayyad Arabs ruled over distinct ethnic groups, including Berbers, Spanish Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Slavs imported as slaves. Moreover, the widely dispersed cities and mountainous terrain had always made Spain a difficult land to control. Historian Richard Fletcher observes “that geography encouraged the political fragmentation of the peninsula; that Roman and Visigothic centralism had depended upon the active and benevolent role of local magnates; and that the imposition of Umayyad rule after the chaotic years of the mid-eighth century had been slow.”<sup>7</sup>

All this changed in the year 912, when Abd al-Rahman III assumed control of the emirate, a succession surrounded by violent political intrigue. Abd al-Rahman had been groomed for succession by his grandfather, after an uncle had beaten Abd al-Rahman’s father to death. Once in power Abd al-Rahman executed one of his own sons for disloyalty, after his son criticized his father’s cruelty. He is said to have cut his own grandfather’s throat during the Festival of the Sacrifice on the open-air oratory, where Muslims were slaughtering animals for the ritual sacrifice.<sup>8</sup>

These political struggles were exacerbated by the absence of clear rights to succeed by primogeniture. Multiple marriages—each emir was allowed four wives and unlimited concubines—created multiple claimants to the throne. Abd al-Rahman himself was the son of a Christian concubine. Due to frequent intermarriage, the Arab leaders were Arabs more by culture and tradition than by ethnic descent. Abd al-Rahman’s father was also born of a Christian concubine, and Abd al-Rahman was probably three-quarters native Iberian. He had blue eyes, light skin, and reddish hair and was said to have dyed his hair black in order to make himself look more like an Arab.<sup>9</sup>

The new leader immediately set about taking control of his country. From 912 to 929, he engaged in almost continuous warfare with rebellious regions. He also faced potential enemies in North Africa and on his northern border with the Christian kingdoms, but he focused on his own kingdom. The seventeen years it took him to consolidate control of



his country demonstrates the enormous diversity of interests that fractured Muslim society. On January 16, 929, al-Rahman felt secure enough to proclaim himself caliph, head of an independent caliphate no longer subordinate to Abbasid rule in Baghdad. This title has a religious as well as a political significance. As caliph (*khalifa*) he acted as God’s representative on earth through the inheritance of the Prophet Muhammad, since the Prophet had acted both as the religious and the political leader (imam) of the community of believers established by him in Medina.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to Abd al-Rahman’s domestic successes, foreign considerations may have prompted him to proclaim an independent caliphate in Spain. Abbasid rule was weak: al-Muqtadir, leader of the Abbasids in Baghdad from 908 until 932, was deposed twice during his reign by rival Abbasid candidates. His successors were little more than puppets in the hands of Turkish troops, and their reigns were short.<sup>11</sup>

Abd al-Rahman also had a new foreign rival to worry about. In Morocco a new dynasty called the Fatimids was founded, which claimed descent from Muhammad though the Prophet’s daughter, Fatima. Its ruler, Idris ibn Abd Allah, was Shiite (the Abbasids and the Umayyads were Sunni). In 909 Abd Allah named Morocco a caliphate and took on the messianic title of al-Mahdi. Abd al-Rahman may have claimed title to the caliphate to challenge the legitimacy of the Fatimids, his closest Muslim rivals. The Fatimid caliphate founded by al-Mahdi eventually moved into Egypt, where it founded Cairo as its capital and became the most powerful force in the Muslim world.

To commemorate the founding of his new kingdom, Abd al-Rahman began the construction of a huge palace outside Córdoba called Madinat al-Zahra, to serve both as his residence and the seat of government. It may have been meant to rival the Abbasid palace of Samarra. He spent as much as a third of the country’s annual income on the building.<sup>12</sup> When completed by his son Al-Hakem II, the Madinat was one of the most luxurious buildings in the world. According to possibly legendary descriptions, the magnificent throne rooms included the most important, the “Hall of the Caliphs.” It was constructed from thin sheets of variously tinted translucent marble. In the center of the room, a large bowl containing mercury acted as a mirror that could be tilted to shoot



of the caliphate while Hisham was still a child. In the West al-Ma'afari became known as Almanzor.<sup>19</sup> Like an evil *wazir* in the *Arabian Nights*, he deliberately pushed the young caliph toward a life of debauchery, so that Almanzor could remain in control of the state.

Almanzor's reign was marked by continuous warfare against his Christian neighbors. The constant battles were aimed less at territorial expansion than at loot. Profit from raids helped finance Almanzor's expenses, including the construction of his own palace complex outside Córdoba, called al-Madina al-Zahira. The raids, driven by Almanzor's greed, would in the future create two significant deleterious consequences for the Muslim kingdom. First, in order to maintain these expeditions, Almanzor imported manpower from northern Africa. Thousands of Berbers were ferried across the straits to al-Andalus, where, still in their tribal units under their own tribal commanders, they became the private armies of Almanzor and his son.<sup>20</sup> Al-Andalus always suffered from ethnic conflict, and the introduction of a large Berber military force introduced a threat to the Arab control of the government. These Berbers would play a major role in the destruction of the caliphate.

The second effect of the raids carried out under Almanzor, with Berber support, was to spread anger among Christians over the caliphate's deliberate symbolic attacks on the Christian religion. In 997 his troops invaded the town of Santiago de Compostela in far northwest Spain, the legendary resting place of the apostle James. His men carried the bells of the church dedicated to Saint James to Córdoba. News of this theft raised the renown of the town, helping to establish it as the principal pilgrimage site in Europe. The raid on Santiago prompted the transformation of the apostle into "Santiago Matamoros," or Saint James the Moor-Slayer. Santiago Matamoros became the patron saint of the *reconquista*, inspiring generations of Christians in battles against the Moors. When Córdoba finally fell to King Fernando of Castile in 1236, the bells were returned to the church.

While Almanzor controlled the caliphate, he ruled as *hajib*, or chamberlain, and maintained the fiction that the line of rule from the Umayyad founder remained unbroken. Almanzor's son and heir, Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Amir—known as Shanjul—was less discrete. He made the caliph,

