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**ANDALUSIA FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ORIENTALISTS**

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**Abstract**

The Spanish Orientalism and its tributary, which were not a sufficient subject for numerous scientific reviews. The aim of the study is explaining the role of Muslims in the development of Al-Andalus in the period (711–1492), and how it was characterized by Orientalism. We adopted the historical-systemic method for studying the necessary integral historical objects and phenomena of the Iberian Territory under Islamic administrations in the VIII–XV centuries. Spanish Orientalism was created in order to study the role of the Muslim capture and Islamic upbringing in this territory and its consequences. It turned out that there are three directions of Spanish Orientalism: positive, negative and neutral. In our opinion, we confirm that Al-Andalus, in fact, was characterized by a list of achievements that made a significant contribution to the development of different science in the West. Al-Andalus scholars also developed technological innovations such as windmills and new technologies in crafts such as metal processing, weaving and construction.

**Keywords**

Al-Andalus history – Arab Morocco – Islamic conquest – Spain Christianity – Orientalism

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## Introduction

In recent years, oriental studies have been an urgent question in Islamic history – in general, and Spain – in particular. The reasons for this are the relationship of East and West for a long time, but especially VII to XV in various sociocultural and sociohistorical positions; the influence of complex influential factors, such as immigrant Muslims, intercultural communication, religious attitude, which led to mixed results<sup>1</sup>. Oriental studies are a discipline that emerged in the West, which acquires an independent meaning and is put on a scientific basis in the XVIII – XIX centuries. Over time, however, the methodology of Orientalism proved to be highly controversial<sup>2</sup>.

The basic idea of Orientalism is generally simple: despite the general value of objective research, which is unconditionally proclaimed in any academic study of Western culture, there is a certain annoying exception with respect to the East. According to literary reviews, the tasks of orientalism from the very beginning were: the first is political, and the second is missionary<sup>3</sup>. These goals were created with the aim of studying the Arabic language and its literature, Islamic sciences, their principles and Muslim sociology to combat its spread and distortion, which became widespread, popular and reached the south of France and Constantinople<sup>4</sup>. And on the other hand, to prevent Christians from accepting Islam<sup>5</sup>.

The aim of the study is explaining the role of Muslims in the development of Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) in the period (711–1492), and how it was characterized by Orientalism.

## Materials and Methods

We studied a set of scientific works in the following directions: history and Al-Andalus – since the fall of the Kingdom of the Visigoths and the rapid conquest of the peninsula in the shortest period of 711–718 and the beginning of the Muslim rule of Iberia to the fall of Muslim Spain in 1492; Spanish Orientalism – the appearance, directions and types<sup>6</sup>.

The following methods were used: the historical-typological method – we took a deductive approach, that is, by theoretical understanding of the phenomenon and objects under consideration; The historical-systemic method is aimed at studying objects and phenomena of the past as integral historical systems: analysis of their structure and functions, internal and external relations, as well as dynamic changes<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Kees Versteegh, "The Arab Presence in France and Switzerland in the 10Th Century", *Arabica*, Vol: 37 num 3 (1990): 359–388.

<sup>2</sup> Mahmoud Hamdi Zaqqouq, *Alaistishraq walkhalfiat alfikriat lilsirae alhadarii* (Cairo: Darul Ma'arif, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> M.A. Assiari, *Islam in the perceptions of Spanish Orientalism from Raymondus Loulos to Asin Plathius* (Riyadh: King Abdul Aziz Public Library. Center for the Study of Andalusia, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Manfred W. Wenner, "The Arab/Muslim Presence in Medieval Central Europe", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol: 12 num 1 (1980): 59–79.

<sup>5</sup> Abbas Mahmoud Al-Akkad, *The Arab's Impact on European Civilisation*. by Al-Akkad, Abbas Mahmoud: (1961) (Cairo: S.O.P. Press (Ministry of Waqfs), 1961).

<sup>6</sup> José María Millás Vallicrosa, "Arab and Hebrew Contributions to Spanish Culture", in *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale*, vol. 6 (Neuchatel: Editions La Baconnière, 1960), 732–751.

<sup>7</sup> A. Sayeh, *Orientalism in the balance of criticism of Islamic thought* (Cairo: Egyptian Knowledge House, 1996).



## The Story of Al-Andalus

Throughout the history of the Mediterranean, one can observe the processes of synthesis and exchange not only material, but also cultural values. As a result of various forms of interaction, such as the political: wars, conflicts, conquests or social relocations, as well as economic – craft, trade, monetary system – areas arise in which peoples, not always ethnically related, acquire similar cultural features<sup>8</sup>.

The complexity and inconsistency of the culture of Muslim Spain lies in the fact that, its being in the European continent, yet it was still part of the Muslim world. At the same time, one cannot forget the fact that before the Arab conquest, a peculiar culture based on a synthesis of various ethnic groups had already been formed in the peninsula<sup>9</sup>.

There are namely three stages to development of the Arabic Spanish culture. The first stage begins with the reign of the Umayyad emir Abd ar-Rahman I (731–788), who founded the Cordoba Caliphate. During this stage, Al-Andalus gains independence from the eastern caliphate. This period is characterized by a strong influence of Arab culture (centered in Baghdad), in particular the predominance of Syrian traditions.

The flourishing of the X century Andalusian culture can also be associated with social factor, like the emergence of not only a specific society, but a new ethnic group. While forming a new Muslim civilization, since the Berbers invaded the territory of the peninsula together with the Arabs, the period from 756 to 976 witnessed changes that occur at the state level. Those changes were exemplified by new types of institutions and forms of power, economy was created there were also changes in the sphere of consciousness of both public and personal, which was associated with the emergence of a new ethnic group<sup>10</sup>.

The second stage can be considered the epoch of “specific princes”. It can be said that the “specific princes” were formed from three ethnic groups: Berbers, Saqaliba (Slavs) and Andalusians – Muslims of Arab and Iberian origin. The latter were represented by the Abbasid dynasty<sup>11</sup>. Arab-Andalusian culture had never been as flourishing and fruitful as during the period of political unrest, internecine wars and the advancement of the Christian Reconquest. In the XI century, marked the cultural rise in Al-Andalus. Each small ruler tried to attract as many artists, poets and scholars as possible. Thus, small courtyards were the “breeding ground” for the development of art. At this stage, there was a parallel development-flourishing of cities like: Toledo, Valencia, Almeria, Granada. The court of Seville at Al-Mu'tadid (892–902) and Al-Mu'tamid (1069–1091) were the most brilliant in Spain<sup>12</sup>.

The third stage should distinguish the time of the existence of the Berber empire of the Almoravids (1056–1147) and the Almohads (1121–1269). Unfortunately, this era is

<sup>8</sup> Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain*, 1 edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

<sup>9</sup> D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (University Park, Pa: Penn State University Press, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> F. Amdashou, “Spanish Orientalism and the Arab-Islamic Heritage in Andalusia (Miguel Asin Plathios),” *Journal of Oriental Studies*, Vol: 1 num 6 (2017): 1–26.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Covington, “Rediscovering Arabic Science”, *Saudi Aramco World*, Vol: 58 num 3 (2007): 2–16.

<sup>12</sup> M. Sbai, *Orientalism and Orientalists what they have and what they don't have* (Damascus: Dar Al Warraq - Islamic Office, 2011).

barely studied. It is known that in Spain itself there are no monuments of the Almoravid period, but its general character can be judged by various buildings in North Africa, since the architectural style of Muslim Spain was transferred there by Andalusian craftsmen. However, as E. Levi-Provence notes, the presence of Almoravidan troops on Muslim borders gave a sense of security to residents of Al-Andalus. Muslim Spain regained its cultural significance both in its native land and in the rest of the possessions of its new owners<sup>13</sup>.

### Features of Al-Andalus

Arab-Spanish culture has manifested itself in various spheres of society like: in language, literature and other forms of art in the Maghreb countries and on the Iberian Peninsula. The Arabian period had a great influence on the culture and way of life in Andalusia, and in general, of the whole Iberian Peninsula, since the territory of modern Portugal was also ruled by Muslims. The very name of Portugal comes from Porto Calais (the first word is the Romanesque “port”, and the second goes back to the Arabic “kala” - “castle”, “citadel”). The resulting Cordoba Caliphate become one of the largest economic and cultural centers of Europe<sup>14</sup>.

The majority of the population in this period know at least two languages – Roman and Arabic. Muslim Al-Andalus was characterized by tolerance towards the Gentiles to cultural exchanges with them. Christians could occupy any position, therefore communicating with Muslims in everyday life, contributed to the enrichment of the country, greater flexibility in its management<sup>15</sup>.

Active construction is underway, the most remarkable buildings still attract tourists from all over the world – like the mosque in Cordoba, the Alhambra Palace in Granada and the Giralda Tower in Seville<sup>16</sup>.

The first university in Andalusia was founded by Muslims, namely, Sultan Yusuf I in 1346 in Granada. The curriculum of students was diverse and included not only traditional theology, but also jurisprudence, medicine, astronomy, logic, mathematics, geometry, and mechanics. The university has been preserved and included in the complex of buildings of the University of Granada under the name “Palace of Madraza”<sup>17</sup>.

During the reign of Abd al-Rahman I (Al-Dakhil), the Umayyad state created by him in Andalusia has become famous for its numerous scientists, the development of culture and literature, as well as a strong army and technical progress. Meanwhile the people of Andalusia lived in peace and prosperity<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Andrew M. Watson, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World: The Diffusion of Crops and Farming Techniques, 700-1100*, 1 edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Annette Hagedorn, *Islamic Art*, ed. Norbert Wolf (Köln: Taschen GmbH, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Salah Zaimeche, “Agriculture in Muslim civilization: A Green Revolution in Pre-Modern Times”, *Muslim Heritage*, December 25, 2001.

<sup>16</sup> M. Zayadi, “Phenomenon of the spread of Islam and the position of Orientalists”, in *General Establishment for Publishing, Distribution and Advertising*, Vol. 1 (Tripoli, 1983), 55–60.

<sup>17</sup> Sh. Shawq, *Orientalism: The Most Critical Challenge to Islam*, vol. 3 (Chittagong: Studies of the International Islamic University, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism - Knowledge, Power, Creation*, trans. Kamal Abu Deeb (Beirut: Arab Research Foundation, 1981).

The rich Europeans have sent their children to study at schools and universities of Andalusia. And when they returned to their homeland, they have praised that they have been studying with Arab Muslim teachers. They deliberately have used Arabic words in their speech to emphasize their culture and education<sup>19</sup>.

The kings of the small Christian states, which at that time were located in the north of modern Spain, had resorted to the help of the Muslim Khakims to resolve the differences that had arisen between them. And the kings had to humbly agree with the decisions rendered by these judges. Sometimes it had been necessary to use the Muslim army to force one of the parties to execute decisions. Similarly, the authorities of Muslim Andalusia could change the ruler or the entire ruling elite of a Christian state in northern Spain<sup>20</sup>.

It should be noted that in Spanish language more than four thousand words are of Arabic origin. All of them are from the field of military and maritime terminology, legal and administrative concepts, names of household items, handicrafts and rural labor, construction, commercial, economic, scientific, cultural, artistic and other lexises<sup>21</sup>.

### **After Breakup of Al-Andalus**

The Muslim state in Andalusia weakened as a result its influence in Europe came to an end. Over time, the territory of the country decreased into one city – Granada. Meanwhile Europe experienced the “Middle Ages” from the fifth century to the end of the 1400, when their peoples lived under a tyrannical church.

However, the rapid spread of Islam in Levant and Morocco attracted Christian showed interest in Islam. Therefore, some Christian monks like Pope Sylvester II, Gerard of Cremona, Peter the Hon, and others, were striving to teach various sciences in their schools; philosophy, medicine, mathematics, etc., translated the Holy Quran and scientific literature into their languages and taught them in their schools<sup>22</sup>.

Western educational institutions that began to study and translate Arabic literatures in various fields of science into their own languages in order to develop their own socialism and civilization. Moreover, Western universities continued to rely on Arab books as original references to research for nearly six centuries (XV–XX)<sup>23</sup>.

In the second half of the XVIII century, Spain initiated attempts to reconstruct the Andalusian past and its Arab-Islamic studies by the European stream in the Enlightenment. The Spanish king (Carlos III) brought some of the Syrian and Lebanese Maronite monks to study Arabic literatures and manuscripts, which was found in the Escorial Library. The Lebanese father, Miguel Casiri, was the first to catalog the manuscripts of the Escorial, and

<sup>19</sup> S. Abu Khalil, *Al Isqat fi manahij al mustashriqeen wa al mbashireen* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> M. Qutb, *Orientalists and Islam*. Wahba Library, vol. 1 (Cairo: Wahba Library, 1999).

<sup>21</sup> Esperanza Alfonso, *Islamic Culture Through Jewish Eyes: Al-Andalus from the Tenth to Twelfth Century* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> F. U. Fawzī, *Al-Istishraq wa-al-tārīkh al-Islāmī: Al-qurūn al-Islāmīyah al-ūlā: dirāsah muqāranah bayna wijhat al-nazar al-Islāmīyah wa-wijhat al-nazar al-Ūrūbīyah* (Amman: Al Ahlia Publishing and Distribution, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> E. Michael Gerli, ed., *Medieval Iberia: An Encyclopedia*, Routledge Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages (Book 8) (New York: Routledge, 2003).

published them in two large volumes between 1760 and 1770. This scientific work initiated Arab studies in Spain once more<sup>24</sup>.

### **The Appearance of Spanish Orientalism**

The main reasons for the emergence of Orientalism in the Middle Ages were the desire of the Christian West to know Islam and the acquaintance with the factors that motivated Muslims to spread their science, religion, culture in the world<sup>25</sup>. However, Spanish Orientalism grew up in the arms of a hostile movement with the intent of contempt, revenge, distortion and restriction of Muslim Arabs. The collision between the two religions in Al-Andalus led to the birth of many blood wars<sup>26</sup>.

The objectives of the Christian government in the spread of Orientalism and in Al-Andalus were to achieve the refusal of Christian Arabists from Islam in Andalusia, the creation of an impenetrable dam before the Christians of the application of Islam. This plan was carried out by King Alfonso VI the Brave after he had united the kingdoms of Leon and Castile in 1072<sup>27</sup>.

### **Directions of Spanish Oriental Studies**

Ethnic analysis. Orientalists have shown in their work that the composition of the Arab population in Al-Andalus during the first Islamic conquests was not numerous, which could not have a great influence on Spanish socialism. Moreover, other Orientalists have noted that the foundations of social Andalusian development belongs to the Spanish scholars such as Ibn Hazm Andalusian theologian, polemicist and faqih, representative of the Zahirite madhhab, poet and historian which are Arabic<sup>28</sup>.

Spanish studies by Orientalists have spoken mainly about the despotism of the East and its independence<sup>29</sup>. The question of the abolition of personal and individual phenomena among the Christian nations were the causes of the obstacles to political unity, in some historical periods.

### **Views of the Spanish Orientalists**

#### **Neutral positive**

Many Spanish Orientalists like Pedro Montapata and others recognized the importance of the period of Islamic existence for Spain, both past and present, which

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<sup>24</sup> M. Al-Sharqawi, *Orientalism - Analytical Analytical Study* (Cairo: Dar Al-Uloom College of Cairo University, 1992).

<sup>25</sup> Kh. Al-Mahjoubi, *Orientalism and Islam: Criticisms of Orientalism* (Benghazi: National Library of Books, Academy of Public Thought, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Justin Stearns, "Representing and Remembering al-Andalus: Some Historical Considerations Regarding the End of Time and the Making of Nostalgia", *Medieval Encounters*, Vol: 15 num 2–4 (2009): 355–374.

<sup>27</sup> Heinz Halm, "Al-Andalus und Gothica Sors", *Der Islam*, Vol: 66 num 2 (1989): 252–263.

<sup>28</sup> Roger Collins, *The Arab conquest of Spain: 710 - 797, A history of Spain* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995).

<sup>29</sup> Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*, Reprint edition (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2003).

asserted that Spain would not have gone down in history without eight centuries living under an Islamic government whose civilization had spread to neighboring European countries<sup>30</sup>.

The Jesuit father (Juan Andrés Marvezzi) is the first to study Islamic manuscripts in Arabic in Andalusia and to create an eight-volume book, "The Origins of Literature and Its Current Events and Status" in Italian, which was translated into Spanish in 1784–1806. Juan Andrés praises the Arab Andalusian civilization in his book, and has written that the literary, intellectual and medical achievements, moreover, the creation of scientific creativity in Europe is credits to the culture<sup>31</sup>.

In Antonio Gala Velasco's work has been noted that the end of the last Islamic state on the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 was a painful loss and scientific and it caused cultural damage for Europe as a whole, which was the cause of backwardness, stagnation and retreat<sup>32</sup>.

James Burke – British science historian – in his book "The Day the Universe Has Changed" <sup>33</sup> writes:

"While London was only a tiny village that could not boast of a single street lamp."

"... in Cordoba there were half a million inhabitants, 113,000 houses, 700 mosques, 300 public baths throughout the city and its outskirts. The paved streets were lit at night."

"The houses had cool balconies for hot summer and hot air pipes for winter. The courtyards were decorated with gardens with artificial fountains."

"Paper, which remained a mystery to the West, was everywhere. There were bookstores and more than 17 libraries."

## Negative

Negative historically speaking that Scientists studied with Muslim teachers in Muslim Spain however they have not recognized that the basis of their research was Arab-Islamic

The studies of Roger Bacon (1214–1292) and Witelo (1220–1280) were based on objective works in the seventh part of the book "Optics" by the author Ibn al-Haytham. Fibonacci (Leonardo Bigollo) (1170–1250) visited Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Byzantium, Sicily, where he studied mathematics and familiarized himself with the achievements of ancient and Indian mathematicians in the Arabic translation, as a result of which he was able to write a number of mathematical treatises in his "Book of Abacus". He also translated Arabic algebra literature and distributed it in Europe. Arnold de Villa Nova (1235–1240), who studied Hebrew and Arabic, studied in Spain with Arab scholars and used their knowledge gained in medicine and chemistry in Europe. Pascual de Gayangos y Arce (1809–1897) was a Spanish historian, arabist and bibliographer, whose prolific works on arabistics as the

<sup>30</sup> S. Mazen, British Orientalists (London: Oriental Center for Oriental Studies and Research, 2005).

<sup>31</sup> Paolo Squatriti, "Of Seeds, Seasons, and Seas: Andrew Watson's Medieval Agrarian Revolution Forty Years Later", The Journal of Economic History, Vol: 74 num 4 (2014): 1205–1220.

<sup>32</sup> Rudi Paret, Al-Dirāsāt al-'Arabīyah wa-al-Islāmīyah fī al-Jāmi'āt al-Almānīyah: Al-Mustashriqūn al-Almān mundhu Tiyūdūr Nūldikih (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-'Arabī, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> James Burke, The day the universe changed (Boston: Little, Brown, 1985), 38.

“History of the Mahometan Dynasties” and the study of the Chronicles of Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi (887–955) are still relevant today<sup>34</sup>.

## Discussion

1. Al-Andalus, who gave the name of the southern region of Spain – many Orientalists exhaust its role in the rise of Western civilization and its development. However, it was confirmed that Andalusia in the period from 711 to 1492 became an example of the heyday of a magnificent and attractive civilization. This was a new ethnic group that arose in the zone of close contact of two completely different civilizations.

2. Unfortunately, many researchers have closed their view and opinion to the fact that Arabic at that time was the main and official language. Many famous scientists, writers, doctors and lawyers, etc. wrote their research works and achievements only in Arabic. Therefore, it is obvious from here that most orientalists used this point to hide their false and insufficient works. Who will verify the truth of the latter by reading the Arabic literature?

3. Many Western historians, including Spanish orientalists, not only deny the Muslim role in the period of the existence of medieval Al-Andalus (Spain) as one of the key factors in the development of the modern European revolution, but they also confirm that European Muslims are international terrorism and economic inequality, a point of development intercultural dialogue.

## Conclusion

1. Most studies that have studied the phenomenon of Oriental studies had a narrow vision that have not exceed the threshold of a descriptive and lexical totality of scholastic nature and did not correspond to the field of scientific analysis and criticism in order to fulfill their ambitions, purpose and goals (colonization and Christianization of Muslims).

2. Spanish Orientalism has been distinguished by two groups: the first is a group of Orientalists who have studied Andalusian Arab-Islamic civilization, trying to appreciate and accept it in the development of both Spain and European countries, which contributed to the spread of Arab Islamic culture in schools and universities in Europe. They have claimed that Spain would not have its mark history if it has not been for Al-Andalus, that has lived under Islam and their civilization for eight centuries. The second group – are the Orientalists that denied the role of Arabs and Islam in developing the political, social, construction, military, etc. both in Andalusia and in Europe.

3. Today, the penetration of Western legal and political-democratic theories into Orientalism has become one of the main reasons that Islam is in the headlines, and that many Westerners believe that Islam is the cause of a wide range of international unrest: suicide bombings, car bombs, military occupation, national resistance, riots, guerrilla warfare and threatening videos. For many Western intellectuals, Islamic fascism has become their enemy in the impending Third World War.

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<sup>34</sup> Justin Stearns, “The frontier of Gottfried Liedl: situating the origins of European modernity in Naşrid Granada”, *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, Vol: 3 num 2 (2011): 247–262.



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