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Pedagogical manual for the course of:

Relations between the Islamic West and the Christian World

Lectures for Second-Year Master's Students in the History of the Islamic West during the Medieval Period

Semester: 3 Credits: 5 Coefficient: 2 Assessment: Continuous Assessment + Examination

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Introduction:

Understanding Muslim-Christian Relations in the Western Mediterranean

The history of the western Mediterranean during the Middle Ages is defined by a complex web of interactions between Muslim polities in Iberia and North Africa and the Christian kingdoms of southern Europe. These interactions were not merely antagonistic; they encompassed diplomacy, commerce, cultural exchange, and intellectual dialogue. For students of medieval history, understanding this intricate dynamic is crucial, as it sheds light on the formation of political borders, the transmission of knowledge, and the evolution of societies that shaped the trajectory of Europe and the Maghreb.

From the establishment of the Umayyad emirate in al-Andalus to the fall of Granada in 1492, the Iberian Peninsula was a frontier of cross-cultural encounter. Muslim rulers developed administrative systems, legal frameworks, and economic institutions that interacted with, and sometimes influenced, neighboring Christian polities. At the same time, Christian kingdoms such as Castile, Aragon, and Portugal gradually expanded their territorial control, integrating political, military, and economic strategies to consolidate authority. This interplay of expansion and resistance forms a central theme in the study of medieval western Mediterranean history.

North African dynasties, including the Almoravids, Almohads, Marinids, and Hafsids, played a decisive role in shaping these interactions. They served as military allies, trading partners, and intellectual collaborators, linking the Maghreb to Iberia, Sicily, and southern Italy. Understanding the trans-Mediterranean dimension of Muslim power is essential for grasping how political and cultural influence transcended geographic boundaries, emphasizing the interconnectedness of medieval Mediterranean societies.

Economic relations were equally significant. Trade routes connecting ports in North Africa, Iberia, and southern Europe

facilitated the movement of goods, ideas, and people. Students should recognize that commerce often bridged religious and political divides, enabling cooperation even amid conflict. Mediterranean cities such as Granada, Palermo, Tunis, and Ceuta became hubs where cultural exchange and economic activity intersected, demonstrating the practical necessity of coexistence alongside ideological difference.

Cultural and intellectual transmission also defined Muslim-Christian relations. Scientific, philosophical, and artistic knowledge traveled across the Mediterranean, contributing to European developments in medicine, astronomy, architecture, and literature. For students, these exchanges illustrate that the Middle Ages were not a period of static isolation but of dynamic intellectual interaction. The Alhambra, the palaces of the Nasrids, and the madrasas of Fez exemplify the aesthetic and scholarly achievements that influenced Christian Europe, particularly in Sicily and southern Italy.

Military interactions, including campaigns, sieges, and frontier warfare, punctuated this period. While the Reconquista culminated in the fall of Granada, students should examine the nuanced strategies of resistance and negotiation employed by Muslim polities. Fortifications, alliances, and adaptive diplomacy reveal the complexity of medieval power relations, emphasizing that military history cannot be understood in isolation from economic, political, and cultural contexts.

Religious dynamics were deeply intertwined with political and social structures. Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities coexisted under varying degrees of tolerance and regulation. Understanding these social arrangements allows students to appreciate the multifaceted nature of medieval society, where coexistence, conflict, and conversion often occurred simultaneously. The study of legal frameworks, community organization, and interfaith engagement offers insights into how societies managed diversity in high-stakes political contexts.

The final centuries of Muslim presence in Iberia, coupled with continued North African influence in Sicily and southern Italy, demonstrate both continuity and transformation. The decline of political authority did not erase cultural or intellectual influence. Students should note the lasting legacies of Muslim governance, scholarship, and artistry in shaping European urban spaces, administrative practices, and educational systems, highlighting the enduring impact of these interactions on early modern Europe.

Methodologically, this course encourages students to integrate multiple perspectives—political, economic, social, and cultural—into a holistic understanding of medieval Mediterranean history. Primary sources, archaeological evidence, and comparative studies of Muslim and Christian polities provide a foundation for critical analysis. Students are invited to consider how historical narratives are constructed and how cross-cultural interactions challenge binary conceptions of "Muslim" versus "Christian" societies.

Ultimately, the study of Muslim-Christian relations in the western Mediterranean offers broader lessons about human interaction, resilience, and adaptation. By examining periods of conflict and cooperation, expansion and resistance, cultural transmission, and intellectual collaboration, students gain a nuanced appreciation for the complexity of medieval history. These lectures are designed to provide both depth and breadth, equipping students with the analytical tools to understand the Mediterranean not as a series of isolated regions, but as a vibrant, interconnected space where societies continuously shaped and reshaped one another.

I- Islamic-Christian Relations in the Iberian Peninsula

Lecture 1:

The Collapse of Visigothic Hegemony and the Umayyad Opening (711–756)

1. The Historiographical Problem: Beyond the "Conquest" Narrative

To understand the relations between the Islamic West and the Christian world, one must first deconstruct the traditional historiography of the year 711. For centuries, both Spanish nationalist and early Orientalist historians portrayed the arrival of Tariq ibn Ziyad as a sudden, cataclysmic "invasion" that destroyed a flourishing Christian civilization. However, modern scholarship, utilizing a comparative analysis of the *Chronicle of 754* and early Arabic *futuh* (conquest) narratives, suggests a more nuanced reality of **systemic transition** rather than mere external destruction[1].

The Visigothic Kingdom was not a unified nation-state in the modern sense; it was a fragile aristocratic confederation. The crisis of 711 was preceded by decades of "Gothic disease"—the endemic instability caused by the lack of a fixed hereditary succession[2]. When King Roderic seized the throne after the death of Wittiza, he triggered a civil war. The Wittizan faction, which included the metropolitan bishop of Toledo and various provincial dukes, did not view the North African forces as a religious existential threat, but as tactical allies (mercenaries) to be used against a domestic usurper[3]. Thus, the initial "opening" (*fath*) of al-Andalus was facilitated by a Christian internal collapse.

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[1] Collins, Roger. The Arab Conquest of Spain, 710–797. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, 28–35.

[2] Kennedy, Hugh. Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus. London: Routledge, 1996, 4–12.

[3] Wolf, Kenneth Baxter. Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain. 2nd ed. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999, 110–114.

2. Socio-Religious Foundations: The Jewish and Peasantry "Fifth Column"

The relationship between the incoming Muslims and the local population was shaped profoundly by the repressive legislative history of the Visigothic Councils of Toledo. By the late 7th century, the Visigothic state had become increasingly theocratic and exclusionary. The 17th Council of Toledo in 694 had effectively legalized the enslavement of the Jewish population and the confiscation of their property[1]. Consequently, when the Berber-Arab forces arrived, they were frequently welcomed by Jewish communities in cities like Seville and Granada, who saw the Muslims as liberators.

The Jews provided the new conquerors with vital urban intelligence and served as the first administrative bridge between the new governors and the local populace[2]. This created an immediate "triangular" relationship between the Muslim elite, the Jewish minority, and the Christian majority. Similarly, the Christian peasantry, burdened by the *latifundia* system where they were tied to the land as *coloni*, found the Muslim tax system—the *jizya* (poll tax) and *kharaj* (land tax)—to be more predictable and often lower than the previous Visigothic exactions[3]. This economic pragmatism ensured that there was no widespread "peasant crusade" against the Muslims in the first decades of their rule.

3. The Legal Framework of Coexistence: The *Sulh* and *Anwa* Dichotomy

As the Muslim forces advanced, the nature of their relationship with the Christian world was codified through two distinct legal methods: *Anwa* (conquest by force) and *Sulh* (conquest by treaty). This legal distinction is crucial for understanding the geography of later Christian-Muslim relations. In areas that resisted, such as parts

[1] Reilly, Bernard F. The Medieval Spains. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 52–55.
[2] Fletcher, Richard. Moorish Spain. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 18–24.
[3] Guichard, Pierre. Al-Andalus: Structure anthropologique d'une société islamique en Occident. Paris: Mouton, 1976, 112–118.

of the Ebro Valley, the land became state property. However, in much of the peninsula, the Muslims preferred the *Sulh* model[1].

The most illustrative document of this era is the **Treaty of Orihuela (713)**, signed between the Umayyad commander ‘Abd al-’Aziz ibn Musa and the Visigothic Count Theodemir (*Tudmir*). The text of this treaty, preserved in later Arabic geographical works, serves as a primary witness to the "contractual" nature of the early West Islamic state[2]. It granted the Christians of the region:

1. Physical security and freedom from religious persecution.
2. The right to retain their churches and properties.
3. Local administrative autonomy under their own nobles.

In exchange, the Christians agreed to pay a fixed annual tribute in money and kind (wheat, barley, honey, and oil) and to remain loyal to the Caliphate[3]. This established a precedent of "subordinate coexistence" that would define the status of the **Mozarabs** (Christians under Islamic rule) for centuries.

4. The Berber-Arab Dynamics and the Frontier Displacement

While the "West Islamic" world was establishing itself, internal ethnic tensions between the Arab elite and the Berber majority began to reshape the frontier. The Berbers, who provided the bulk of the military manpower, were often assigned to the harsh, mountainous regions of the Central Plateau and the North, while the Arab aristocracy claimed the fertile Guadalquivir valley[4].

This geographical distribution had long-term consequences for relations with the Christian North. The Berbers in the North were more susceptible to the Great Berber Revolt (740–743), which caused a vacuum of power in the Duero Valley. The Christian leader Pelagius (Pelayo) in Asturias exploited this internal Muslim strife. The Battle of Covadonga (c. 722), though historically a minor

[1] Lévi-Provençal, Évariste. Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane: Tome I, La Conquête et l'Émirat. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1950, 42–58.
[2] Sénac, Philippe. Les carolingiens et al-Andalus (VIIIe-IXe siècles). Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2002, 14–22.
[3] Aillet, Cyrille. Les Mozarabes: Christianisme, islamisation et arabisation en péninsule Ibérique (IXe-XIIe siècle). Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010, 33–40.
[4] Ibn ‘Idhari al-Marrakushi. Al-Bayan al-Mughrib fi Akhbar al-Maghrib. Edited by G.S. Colin and É. Lévi-Provençal. Vol. 2. Leiden: Brill, 1948, 12–25.

skirmish involving a few hundred men, became the foundational myth of the *Reconquista* because it occurred precisely when the Umayyad governors were distracted by internal tribalism and their expansionist interests in Gaul[1]. The Christian "West" at this stage was not a counter-empire, but a survivor state emerging in the gaps left by Islamic internal friction[2].

[1] Al-Maqqari, Ahmed ibn Mohammed. Nafh al-Tib min Ghusn al-Andalus al-Ratib. Edited by Ihsan Abbas. Vol. 1. Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1968, 250–268.

[2] Ibn al-Qutiyya. Tarikh Iftitah al-Andalus [History of the Opening of al-Andalus]. Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Misri, 1989, 35–42.

Lecture 2:

The Caliphal Zenith and the Christian Kingdoms (929–1031)

1. The Proclamation of the Caliphate: A Geopolitical Declaration

The tenth century represents the apogee of West Islamic political and cultural hegemony in the Iberian Peninsula. In 929, Abd al-Rahman III assumed the titles of *al-Nasir li-Din Allah* (The Defender of God's Religion) and *Amir al-Mu'minin* (Commander of the Faithful), formally elevating the Emirate of Cordoba to a Caliphate[1]. This was not a mere change in nomenclature; it was a profound geopolitical statement directed toward both the Christian world and the rival Fatimid Caliphate in North Africa. For the Christian kingdoms—Leon, Navarre, and the County of Barcelona—this declaration signaled that Cordoba was no longer a regional power, but the supreme arbiter of Western Mediterranean affairs[2].

The proclamation was rooted in a decade of internal consolidation. Abd al-Rahman III had successfully pacified the "fitna" (internal strife) that had plagued his predecessors, most notably the prolonged rebellion of Umar ibn Hafsun. By centralizing power, he was able to command a level of loyalty from the Christian North that was unprecedented. The relationship at this stage was essentially tributary: the Christian kings and counts were treated as "client-chiefs" rather than sovereign equals. They frequently appealed to the Caliph to mediate their internal dynastic disputes, effectively making the court at Cordoba the supreme court of the peninsula[3]. This era demonstrated a "hegemonic peace" where the West Islamic world maintained stability through overwhelming military superiority and sophisticated diplomatic maneuvering.

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[1] Kennedy, Hugh. Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus. London: Routledge, 1996, 82–95.

[2] Collins, Roger. Caliphs and Kings: Spain, 796–1031. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, 128–145.

[3] Fletcher, Richard. The Quest for El Cid. New York: Knopf, 1989, 32–38. (On the tributary relationship of Christian kings).

2. Diplomatic Magnificence: Madinat al-Zahra as a Political Stage

The construction of the palatine city of Madinat al-Zahra served as the physical manifestation of Caliphal authority. It was here that the West Islamic world engaged in its most elaborate diplomatic encounters with the Christian world. Envoys from the Holy Roman Emperor Otto I and the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII visited Cordoba, seeking alliances or trade agreements[1]. These interactions prove that the Caliphate was an integral part of the broader European and Mediterranean diplomatic network, rather than an isolated "Oriental" entity.

For the Iberian Christian rulers, visiting Madinat al-Zahra was an exercise in awe and humiliation. The Caliphal court utilized a complex protocol designed to emphasize the wealth and power of the Umayyads—rows of silent, uniformed guards, intricate water features, and the display of exotic goods from as far as China[2]. The Christian kings, such as Sancho I of Leon, were often forced to travel to Cordoba to seek medical aid or military support, acknowledging their subordinate status in exchange for the "Baraka" (blessing/protection) of the Caliph. This period saw the peak of "cultural diplomacy," where the Christian North adopted Andalusi fashions, titles, and administrative techniques, recognizing Cordoba as the ultimate source of prestige[3].

3. The Military Frontiers: From Defensive Buffer to Offensive Dominance

Under the Caliphate, the nature of the frontier (*Thughur*) changed. While the 8th and 9th centuries were characterized by defensive posturing, the 10th century saw the Caliphate taking the offensive. The professionalization of the army reached new heights with the massive importation of *Saqaliba* (Slavic mercenaries) and Berber tribesmen, who owed their loyalty directly to the Caliph

[1] Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, ed. The Legacy of Muslim Spain. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992, 110–125.
[2] Mann, Vivian, Thomas Glick, and Jerrilynn Dodds, eds. Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain. New York: George Braziller, 1992, 45–58.
[3] Scales, Peter C. The Fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba: Berbers and Andalusis in Conflict. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994, 12–28.

rather than to local Arab aristocrats[1]. This allowed for the execution of the *aceifa* (summer campaign) with devastating regularity.

The frontier was not a static line but a dynamic zone of transition. In the Middle March, centered around Toledo, and the Upper March, centered around Zaragoza, the local governors often acted as semi-independent march lords, engaging in local skirmishes and alliances with Christian counts. However, Abd al-Rahman III and his successor al-Hakam II enforced strict central control over these borderlands[2]. The Christian kingdoms of Leon and Navarre were frequently reduced to "buffer zones" that Cordoba would raid whenever tribute was delayed or whenever a show of force was required to deter Frankish or Ottonian influence from the North. The relationship was one of "asymmetrical warfare," where the Islamic West dictated the terms of engagement[3].

4. Al-Hakam II and the Intellectual Synthesis

The reign of al-Hakam II (961–976) represents the intellectual peak of the West Islamic-Christian encounter. Al-Hakam II was a bibliophile who amassed a library of over 400,000 volumes, making Cordoba the undisputed intellectual capital of Europe[4]. This was the era of "Mozarabic mediation" at its most refined. Christian scholars within the Caliphate were not just tolerated; they were active participants in the translation of Greek and Latin texts into Arabic, and vice versa.

One of the most significant figures of this era was Recemund (Rabi' ibn Zayd), a Christian bishop who served as al-Hakam II's ambassador to the court of Otto I. Recemund was a polymath who contributed to the *Calendar of Cordoba*, a work that synthesized Christian liturgical time with Islamic agricultural and astronomical knowledge . This demonstrates that the relationship between the two worlds was not purely military or religious; it was a deeply integrated

[1] Lévi-Provençal, Évariste. L'Espagne musulmane au Xe siècle: Institution et vie sociale. Paris: Larose, 1932, 55–80.
[2] Guichard, Pierre. Al-Andalus: Structure anthropologique d'une société islamique en Occident. Paris: Mouton, 1976, 250–275.
[3] Sénac, Philippe. La frontière et les hommes, VIIIe-XIIe siècle: Le peuplement musulman au nord de l'Ebre. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000, 115–130.
[4] Vallvé Bermejo, Joaquín. Le Califat de Cordoue. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1999, 180–205.

intellectual partnership. The Christian "West" in the North looked to the Islamic "West" in the South not just as a threat, but as the repository of ancient knowledge. This was the period when the first "Arabic numerals" (Hindu-Arabic) and astronomical tables began to filter through the Christian marches into the rest of Europe[1].

5. The Rise of al-Mansur and the Transition to Total War

The peaceful hegemony of the mid-10th century was shattered by the rise of Muhammad ibn Abi Amir, known as al-Mansur (*the Victorious*). Following the death of al-Hakam II, al-Mansur effectively usurped the power of the young Caliph Hisham II, establishing a military dictatorship (the Amirid regency)[2]. His approach to the Christian world was radically different from the diplomatic balance of the Umayyads. Al-Mansur abandoned the policy of "monitored coexistence" in favor of total military domination.

Between 977 and 1002, al-Mansur conducted over fifty successful campaigns against the Christian North. His most symbolic action was the raid on Santiago de Compostela in 997, where he razed the city and forced Christian captives to carry the bells of the cathedral back to Cordoba to be used as lamps in the Great Mosque[3]. This act was a psychological turning point; it transformed the border conflict from a political struggle for tribute into a religious war of symbols. For the Christian kingdoms, al-Mansur was the "scourge of God," and his brutality inadvertently catalyzed a new sense of Christian unity and militancy that would later fuel the *Reconquista* ideologies of the 11th century[4].

6. The Internal Collapse: The Fitna and the End of the Caliphate

The very military machine al-Mansur created ultimately destroyed the Caliphate. By flooding al-Andalus with new Berber

[1] Ibn Hayyan al-Qurtubi. Al-Muqtabis fi Akhbar Balad al-Andalus. Edited by Abd al-Rahman al-Hajji. Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafa, 1965, 45–78. (The definitive primary source for the Caliphal era).

[2] Ibn ‘Idhari al-Marrakushi. Al-Bayan al-Mughrib fi Akhbar al-Maghrib. Edited by G.S. Colin and É. Lévi-Provençal. Vol. 2. Leiden: Brill, 1948, 150–190.

[3] Al-Maqqari, Ahmed ibn Mohammed. Nafh al-Tib min Ghusn al-Andalus al-Ratib. Edited by Ihsan Abbas. Vol. 1. Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1968, 400–435.

[4] Ibn al-Khatib, Lisan al-Din. A'mal al-A'lam. Edited by Lévi-Provençal. Beirut: Dar al-Makshuf, 1956, 88–104.

recruits who lacked the traditional loyalty to the Umayyad house, he sowed the seeds of the *Fitna* (Civil War) of 1009–1031. The conflict was a multi-sided struggle between the Arab elites, the Slavic *Saqaliba* generals, and the newly arrived Berber tribes.

During this period of chaos, the relationship with the Christian world underwent a dramatic reversal. Christian rulers, such as the Count of Barcelona and the King of Navarre, were no longer subordinates but kingmakers. They were hired as mercenaries by various Muslim factions fighting for control of Cordoba. In 1010, a Christian army from Catalonia even sacked Cordoba, an event that would have been unthinkable just twenty years earlier. The Christian world watched as the West Islamic superpower fragmented into dozens of small principalities (*Taifas*). The age of the Caliphate ended not with a foreign invasion, but with a structural implosion that left the Islamic West vulnerable to the rising military and economic power of the Christian North.

Lecture 3:

The Fragmented West—The Taifa Period and the Christian Ascent (1031–1086)

1. The Anatomy of Fragmentation: The Birth of the *Tawa'if*

The formal abolition of the Umayyad Caliphate in 1031 was not a sudden event but the conclusion of a twenty-year *fitna* (civil war) that fundamentally restructured the power dynamics of the Iberian Peninsula. The resulting *Taifa* kingdoms were not merely smaller versions of the Caliphate; they were ethnically and politically distinct entities. We categorize them into three main groups: the **Andalusi-Arab Taifas** (like the Abbadids of Seville), who claimed legitimacy through lineage; the **Berber Taifas** (like the Zirids of Granada and the Aftasids of Badajoz), who relied on tribal military cohesion; and the **Saqaliba Taifas** (like those in Denia and Valencia), ruled by former Slavic slave-generals who had gained control of the eastern coastal marches[1].

This fragmentation created a "multi-polar" system in the West Islamic world. Each Taifa court attempted to outshine its rivals not through military conquest—which they were largely incapable of—but through "soft power." The courts of Seville and Zaragoza became magnets for poets, astronomers, and physicians. However, this cultural investment came at a steep political price. The lack of a unified central military meant that these states were perpetually insecure. Consequently, the relationship with the Christian world shifted from the Caliphal "monitored coexistence" to a state of **predatory intervention**. The Christian kings of the North, who had been mere subordinates decades earlier, now became the essential power-brokers in Muslim internal affairs[2].

2. The *Parias* Economy: A Structural Analysis of Dependency

One of the most profound aspects of the 11th-century relationship between the Islamic and Christian worlds was the **Paria**

[1] Kennedy, Hugh. Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus. London: Routledge, 1996, 130–154.

[2] Wasserstein, David. The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002–1086. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985, 120–165.

system. This was a sophisticated protection racket that functioned as a massive transfer of wealth from the urbanized South to the militarized North. To understand the depth of this, one must look at the fiscal crisis it caused within the West Islamic state. The *parias* were not paid from the traditional Islamic *zakat* (alms) but required the imposition of *magharim*—extra-canonical taxes that were technically illegal under Maliki Islamic law[1].

This created a "legitimacy gap." As the Taifa kings (like al-Mu'tamid of Seville or al-Qadir of Toledo) squeezed their populations to pay gold to Ferdinand I or Alfonso VI, they lost the moral support of the *ulama* (religious scholars) and the common people. Conversely, this gold fundamentally transformed the Christian world. It allowed the Christian kings to hire professional mercenaries, rebuild their cities, and—perhaps most significantly—fund the expansion of the **Cluniac monastic reform**. The gold of Islamic Cordoba and Seville was literally used to build the great cathedrals of Romanesque Europe[2]. Thus, the "West" was being integrated through a common gold currency even as it was being divided by religious warfare. This economic symbiosis meant that the Christian North had a vested interest in the *survival* of weak Muslim states rather than their immediate conquest—a policy that lasted until the demographic and religious pressures of the mid-11th century forced a move toward territorial annexation[3].

3. The Cultural Frontier: The "Mozarabic" Bridge and Latin Resurgence

During the Taifa period, the cultural relationship reached a level of unprecedented complexity. Despite the political friction, the **Mozarabs** (Arabic-speaking Christians) and the Jewish communities reached their intellectual peak. In cities like Toledo, these groups acted as the primary conduits for the transmission of knowledge. It was during this era that the first significant "translation movements" began to take shape. Christian scholars from the North began to

[1] Fletcher, Richard. The Quest for El Cid. New York: Knopf, 1989, 115–130.
[2] Reilly, Bernard F. The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VI, 1065–1109. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988, 180–210.
[3] Glick, Thomas F. Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 2005, 210–245.

realize that the "West Islamic" world was the custodian of the lost classical Greek heritage[1].

The intellectual relationship was not one-sided. While the Christian world began to adopt Islamic science, the Islamic world was forced to confront the growing organizational and military sophistication of the North. This led to a unique "frontier architecture" and literature. The *Kharjas* (the final verses of *Muwashshah* poetry), often written in Mozarabic (a Romance dialect) but using Arabic script, provide linguistic evidence of a society where the boundaries of identity were remarkably fluid[2]. The relationship was characterized by **admiring hostility**: a deep respect for the adversary's culture coupled with a religious conviction that their political system must be replaced. This dualism is essential to understanding why, when Toledo fell in 1085, Alfonso VI did not immediately destroy the Islamic infrastructure but rather attempted to "Caliphize" his own image to appeal to his new Muslim subjects[3].

4. The Fall of Toledo (1085): Geopolitical and Psychological Impact

The fall of Toledo to Alfonso VI in 1085 was the single most traumatic event in the history of the West Islamic world since the conquest of 711. Toledo was not just a city; it was the "High Center" (*al-Markaz al-'Ali*) of the peninsula, the former Visigothic capital, and a symbol of Islamic permanence[4]. Its loss shattered the illusion that the Christian North was satisfied with merely collecting *parias*.

The fall of Toledo fundamentally altered the legal relationship between the two worlds. Alfonso VI assumed the title of *Adefonsus Imperator Toletanus*, signaling his claim to be the legitimate heir to the entire peninsula. He initially implemented a policy of "Mudejarism," allowing the Muslims of Toledo to maintain their mosques and their chief judge (*Qadi al-Jama'a*). However, the

[1] Bishko, Charles Julian. Studies in Medieval Spanish Frontier History. London: Variorum, 1980, 45–72.
[2] Guichard, Pierre. Al-Andalus: Structure anthropologique d'une société islamique en Occident. Paris: Mouton, 1976, 290–330.
[3] Sénac, Philippe. La frontière et les hommes, VIIIe-XIIe siècle: Le peuplement musulman au nord de l'Ebre. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000, 160–185.
[4] Aillet, Cyrille. Les Mozarabes: Christianisme, islamisation et arabisation en péninsule Ibérique (IXe-XIIe siècle). Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010, 210–240

pressure from the Roman Papacy and the Cluniac monks, who arrived in the wake of the conquest, pushed for the "purification" of the city, leading to the forced conversion of the Great Mosque into a Cathedral in 1087[1]. This act of religious appropriation signaled to the rest of the West Islamic world that the era of "contractual coexistence" was ending, replaced by a "Crusader" ideology that originated in the Gregorian Reforms of Rome.

5. The Almoravid Revolution: The Response of the "Authentic" West

The shock of 1085 led to the "General Assembly of the Taifas," where the Muslim rulers faced a binary choice: total Christian subjugation or an alliance with the rising Almoravid power in the Maghreb. The Almoravids (*al-Murabitun*) represented a different kind of "West"—the Saharan, puritanical, and militantly Maliki West. Their leader, Yusuf ibn Tashufin, viewed the Taifa kings not as peers, but as decadent apostates who had betrayed Islam by paying tribute to "infidels"[2].

The Almoravid intervention at the **Battle of Sagrajas (al-Zallaqa)** in 1086 was the military response to the fall of Toledo. It was a clash of two centralized ideologies: the reformed Christian monarchy of Alfonso VI and the reformed Islamic empire of the Almoravids. The battle halted the *Reconquista* for generations, but it also ended the independence of the Taifas. The Almoravids systematically deposed the Taifa kings, arguing that they were unfit to rule because they had failed to defend the frontier[3]. The relationship between the two worlds thus became "totalized" and "religious." The fluid, mercenary-based warfare of the early 11th century was replaced by a more rigid, ideological struggle that would define the era of the Berber Empires.

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[1] Lévi-Provençal, Évariste. Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane: Tome III, Le siècle du califat de Cordoue. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1953, 410–445.

[2] Sénac, Philippe. L'image de l'autre: L'Occident médiéval face à l'Islam. Paris: Flammarion, 1983, 75–100.

[3] Ibn Bassam al-Shantarini. Al-Dhakhira fi Mahasin Ahl al-Jazira. Edited by Ihsan Abbas. Vol. 1. Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafa, 1979, 120–160.

6. Socio-Legal Dynamics: The Mudejar and the Frontier *Fueros*

Finally, we must examine the legal innovations that arose from this friction. As the Christian North expanded, it developed the **Fueros**—municipal charters designed to attract settlers to the dangerous "frontier of death" (*Extremadura*). These laws often granted Christians, Jews, and even Muslims specific rights to encourage the economic stability of the borderlands[1].

Conversely, the West Islamic legal response was the refinement of the **Dhimma** laws under Almoravid influence. The Almoravids enforced a stricter separation between the faiths, ending the era where a Christian bishop like Recemund could serve as a top-tier diplomat for an Islamic ruler. The "West" was becoming increasingly defined by its religious borders rather than its cultural similarities[2]. Yet, even in this era of tightening restrictions, the movement of people and ideas continued. The 11th century ended with the Islamic West politically stronger due to the Almoravids, but culturally more isolated from the North, setting the stage for the epic "clash of empires" in the 12th century[3].

[1] Ibn ‘Idhari al-Marrakushi. Al-Bayan al-Mughrib fi Akhbar al-Maghrib. Edited by Ihsan Abbas. Vol. 3. Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafa, 1983, 250–300.

[2] Al-Mu'tamid ibn Abbad. Diwan al-Mu'tamid ibn Abbad. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1951, 60–95.

[3] Ibn al-Khatib, Lisan al-Din. A'mal al-A'lam. Edited by Lévi-Provençal. Beirut: Dar al-Makshuf, 1956, 150–180.

Lecture 4:

The Berber Empires—Almoravid Fundamentalism and the Almohad Challenge (1086–1212)

1. The Transition to Transcontinental Hegemony: The Maghribi Intervention

The late 11th and 12th centuries represent a radical transformation in the relationship between the Islamic West and the Christian world. The era of the fragmented *Taifas* ended with the decisive intervention of the **Almoravids** (*al-Murabitun*), followed by the **Almohads** (*al-Muwahhidun*). This period shifted the center of gravity of the West Islamic world from the Iberian Peninsula to North Africa (Marrakesh). For the first time, al-Andalus was not an independent state but a province of a vast Berber empire spanning two continents[1].

The Almoravids, a Saharan movement of Sanhaja Berbers, introduced a rigorous, reformist Maliki legalism that had no patience for the fluid, "convivencia-based" diplomacy of the previous century. Their leader, Yusuf ibn Tashufin, viewed the Christian North through a strictly binary theological lens: *Dar al-Islam* versus *Dar al-Harb*. The relationship between the two worlds was thus "theocratized." The Almoravids ended the *Paria* system (tributes paid to Christians) by force, arguing that such payments were a humiliation to the Islamic faith[2]. This ideological rigidity forced the Christian kingdoms—Leon, Castile, and the nascent Portugal—to likewise consolidate their power and embrace a more militant "Crusader" identity, largely influenced by the Gregorian Reforms in Rome and the arrival of the military orders (Temple and Hospital)[3].

2. The Almohad Revolution: Philosophical Rigor and Total War

By the mid-12th century, the Almoravids were replaced by the **Almohads**, a Masmuda Berber movement founded on the strict

[1] Kennedy, Hugh. Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus. London: Routledge, 1996, 154–188. (Essential for the transition to Berber rule).

[2] Bennison, Amira K. The Almoravid and Almohad Empires. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, 65–92.

[3] Abulafia, David, ed. The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 4, c. 1024–c. 1198. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 595–615.

"Unicity of God" (*Tawhid*) as preached by Ibn Tumart. The Almohad era represents the most intense ideological confrontation between the Islamic West and the Christian North. The Almohads viewed even the Almoravids as "anthropomorphists" (polytheists in disguise), leading to an internal "purification" that paradoxically occurred alongside a massive intellectual flowering[1].

Despite their religious fundamentalism, the Almohad court in Marrakesh and Seville became the home of **Ibn Rushd** (Averroes) and **Ibn Tufayl**. The relationship with the Christian world during this era was defined by a paradox: total military conflict combined with a massive intellectual "leakage" of Almohad Aristotelianism into the Latin universities[2]. While the Almohad Caliphs, such as Ya'qub al-Mansur, were defeating Christian armies at battles like **Alarcos (1195)**, the works of their court philosophers were being translated in Toledo, providing the logic and metaphysics that would eventually underpin the works of Thomas Aquinas and the scholastic movement in the Christian West[3]. This demonstrates that even at the height of "Total War," the intellectual borders remained porous.

3. The Institutionalization of the Frontier: Ribats and Military Orders

The physical relationship between the two worlds during the Berber era was characterized by the institutionalization of the frontier. The Islamic West developed the **Ribat**—a fortified monastery where warriors (*Murabitun*) combined ascetic religious practice with military service. In response, the Christian North founded its own military orders, such as the **Order of Calatrava** (1158), **Santiago** (1170), and **Alcántara** (1176)[4].

These institutions were mirrors of each other. The frontier was no longer a zone of flexible alliances but a permanent theater of holy war. The Almohad Caliphate maintained a policy of regular *Jihad*,

[1] Fletcher, Richard. The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1998, 305–315.
[2] O'Callaghan, Joseph F. Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003, 55–78.
[3] Linehan, Peter. Spain: A Partible Inheritance, 1157–1300. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008, 22–45.
[4] Guichard, Pierre. Al-Andalus: Structure anthropologique d'une société islamique en Occident. Paris: Mouton, 1976, 350–385.

launching massive expeditions aimed at dismantling the Christian settlements in the Tagus and Guadiana valleys. Conversely, the Christian orders practiced a policy of *presura* (resettlement), turning the conquered lands into vast latifundia dedicated to sheep farming and border defense[1]. This era saw the demographic "cleansing" of the frontier zones; Mozarabs who were caught in the middle often fled to the Christian North, while Mudejars were increasingly viewed with suspicion by the Almohad authorities, leading to significant migrations of the Christian population away from Almohad-controlled territories[2].

4. The Diplomatic Stagnation and the Rise of "Crusade" Ideology

Under the Almoravids and Almohads, the sophisticated diplomatic language of the 10th-century Umayyads was largely lost. The Berber Caliphs often refused to recognize the Christian kings as sovereign equals, addressing them in letters as "vassals" or "misguided leaders" who must choose between conversion, tribute, or the sword[3]. This diplomatic intransigence provided the Christian kings with the perfect justification to appeal to the Papacy for "Crusade" status.

Pope Innocent III played a pivotal role in the early 13th century by framing the struggle against the Almohads not as a local Iberian war, but as an essential front of the universal Crusades. He granted indulgences to any knight who fought in Spain, which attracted warriors from France and the Holy Roman Empire[4]. The relationship had shifted from a localized political struggle for territory to a grand civilizational clash. This culminated in the **Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212)**, where a coalition of Christian kings (Castile, Aragon, and Navarre) broke the Almohad power. This battle was the beginning of the end for the "transcontinental" West Islamic world,

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[1] Sénac, Philippe. L'image de l'autre: L'Occident médiéval face à l'Islam. Paris: Flammarion, 1983, 112–140.

[2] Buresi, Pascal. La frontière entre chrétiens et musulmans dans la péninsule Ibérique. Paris: Publibook, 2004, 180–210. (On the institutionalization of the frontier).

[3] Aillet, Cyrille. Les Mozarabes: Christianisme, islamisation et arabisation en péninsule Ibérique. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010, 250–275.

[4] Lagardère, Vincent. Les Almoravides: Le djihâd saharien au XIe siècle. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998, 145–170.

as it shattered the Almohad army and opened the interior of al-Andalus to Christian conquest[1].

5. Socio-Economic Exchange: The Gold of the Almohads and Christian Currency

Even during this period of high-intensity warfare, the economic relationship between the two worlds was dictated by the superior gold coinage of the Almohads. The **Maravedí** (from *al-Murabitun*) became the standard of value throughout the Christian North. Christian kings, lacking their own gold sources, struck coins that were direct imitations of Almoravid and Almohad dinars, often retaining the Arabic script to ensure they would be accepted in international trade[2].

This economic dependency shows that the Christian world was still part of an "Islamic-centric" economic sphere. The Almohads controlled the trans-Saharan gold routes, making their empire the primary supplier of bullion to the West. The relationship was one of "hostile trade": the Christian North was militarily defeating the Islamic West while simultaneously depending on its currency and luxury goods to maintain its own nascent state structures[3]. This financial integration ensured that despite the religious rhetoric of Crusade and Jihad, the two civilizations remained inextricably linked through the flow of capital and the shared Mediterranean marketplace[4].

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[1] Ibn Sahib al-Salat. Al-Mann bi-l-Imama. Edited by Abd al-Hadi al-Tazi. Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1987, 88–115. (Primary source for Almohad administrative history).

[2] Ibn ‘Idhari al-Marrakushi. Al-Bayan al-Mughrib fi Akhbar al-Maghrib. Vol. 4 (The Almohad section). Edited by Muhammad Ibrahim al-Kattani. Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafa, 1985, 210–260.

[3] Al-Marrákushí, Abd al-Wahid. Al-Mu'jib fi Talkhis Akhbar al-Maghrib. Edited by Reinhart Dozy. Leiden: Brill, 1881, 145–190. (Essential for the Almohad perspective on Las Navas de Tolosa).

[4] Ibn al-Qattan. Nazm al-Juman. Edited by Mahmud Ali Makki. Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1990, 112–145.

Lecture 5:

The Great Contraction—The 13th-Century Reconquista and the Rise of the Nasrid Redoubt (1212–1250)

1. The Geopolitical Vacuum Post-Las Navas de Tolosa

The Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 did not result in an immediate Christian conquest of all al-Andalus, but it shattered the myth of Almohad invincibility and triggered a terminal political fragmentation within the West Islamic world. Following the death of Caliph al-Nasir, the Almohad Empire spiraled into a succession of civil wars and internal revolts across the Maghrib and Iberia[1]. This power vacuum led to the emergence of the "Third Taifa" period, where local strongmen attempted to carve out independent domains.

The relationship between the Islamic West and the Christian world during this transition was characterized by "aggressive opportunism." The Christian monarchs—James I of Aragon and Ferdinand III of Castile—recognized that the centralized Berber threat had been replaced by a collection of isolated cities. Consequently, the diplomacy of this era moved away from the "Total War" of the Almohad period back to a more refined, yet more lethal, system of vassalage and systematic annexation[2]. The Christian North was no longer fighting for tribute; it was fighting for the total territorial replacement of the Islamic West.

2. Ferdinand III and the Fall of the Heartland: Cordoba and Seville

The period between 1230 and 1248 represents the most significant territorial loss in the history of Western Islam. In 1236, Ferdinand III of Castile captured Cordoba, the former seat of the Umayyad Caliphate. The psychological impact of this loss cannot be

[1] O'Callaghan, Joseph F. The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, 150–175.

[2] Kennedy, Hugh. Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus. London: Routledge, 1996, 256–275.

overstated; the conversion of the Great Mosque of Cordoba into a cathedral signaled the symbolic end of the "Old West" of Islam[1].

The siege and fall of Seville in 1248 represented the final blow to the Almohad administrative infrastructure in Iberia. Unlike previous conquests, these were not merely military occupations but demographic shifts. Through the system of *Repartimiento* (the distribution of land), Ferdinand III systematically replaced the Muslim urban elite with Christian settlers from the North[2]. This forced a massive migration of the West Islamic population toward the Maghrib and the nascent Kingdom of Granada. The relationship between the two worlds was now one of "displacement." The *Mudejar* status (Muslims under Christian rule) became the primary legal framework for those who remained, but they were increasingly marginalized as a subaltern labor class, stripped of their political and military power[3].

3. The Rise of the Nasrids: The Strategy of the Redoubt

Amidst the collapse of the Guadalquivir valley, Muhammad ibn al-Ahmar emerged as the founder of the Nasrid Dynasty in Granada (1238). The survival of Granada for another two and a half centuries was not a military miracle but a masterpiece of diplomatic pragmatism. Ibn al-Ahmar recognized that Granada could not survive as an equal rival to the united Christian kingdoms[4].

The relationship between the Nasrid West and the Christian world was defined by the **Pact of Jaén (1246)**. In this treaty, Muhammad I declared himself a vassal of Ferdinand III, agreed to pay a massive annual tribute, and even provided military contingents to assist the Christians in their further conquests (including the siege of Muslim Seville)[5]. This "vassal-state" model allowed the West Islamic world to survive in a reduced, mountainous redoubt. Granada became a

[1] Harvey, L. P. Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990, 20–45. (The definitive work on the Nasrid-Mudéjar era).
[2] Fletcher, Richard. Moorish Spain. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 130–150.
[3] Macpherson, Ian, and Angus MacKay, eds. The Medieval Mind: Hispanic Studies in Honour of Alan Deyermond. London: Tamesis, 1997, 88–104.
[4] Reilly, Bernard F. The Medieval Spains. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 140–165.
[5] Guichard, Pierre. Al-Andalus: Structure anthropologique d'une société islamique en Occident. Paris: Mouton, 1976, 380–410.

"buffer state"—useful to the Castilian monarchy as a source of gold and a controllable frontier, yet isolated from the broader Islamic world. This era saw the birth of the Alhambra, not as a palace of an empire, but as the fortified refuge of a dynasty that survived through calculated submission[1].

4. The Mudéjar Condition: Legal Coexistence in a Christian Realm

As the 13th-century *Reconquista* concluded, a significant portion of the West Islamic population found themselves living as subjects of Christian kings. This created the **Mudéjar** phenomenon—a unique socio-legal relationship where Islamic law (*Sharia*) was permitted to operate within a Christian sovereign framework for private matters, while public and criminal law were dictated by the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X[2].

This relationship was one of "functional tolerance." The Christian kings valued Mudéjar labor, particularly in agriculture, irrigation, and construction (giving rise to Mudéjar architecture, a fusion of Islamic techniques and Christian forms). However, the religious relationship was increasingly strained by the "Inquisitorial" spirit emerging in Europe[3]. The West Islamic identity was being bifurcated: one part was the sovereign, tributary state of Granada, and the other was the fragmented, subordinated Mudéjar communities in the North. This duality is essential for understanding the late medieval Iberian "identity" as a site of constant negotiation between Islamic heritage and Christian dominance[4].

5. Alfonso X "The Wise" and the Intellectual Transfer

Paradoxically, the period of the greatest military defeats for the Islamic West was also the period of its greatest intellectual victory over the Christian mind. Alfonso X of Castile (reigned 1252–1284)

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[1] Sénac, Philippe. La frontière et les hommes, VIIIe-XIIe siècle. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000, 210–235.

[2] Aillet, Cyrille. Les Mozarabes: Christianisme, islamisation et arabisation en péninsule Ibérique. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010, 280–305.

[3] Buresi, Pascal. La frontière entre chrétiens et musulmans dans la péninsule Ibérique. Paris: Publibook, 2004, 220–250.

[4] Ibn al-Khatib, Lisan al-Din. Al-Ihata fi Akhbar Gharnata [The Complete Source on the History of Granada]. Edited by Mohamed Abdulla Enan. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanji, 1973, Vol 1, 110–145. (Essential for Nasrid diplomacy).

institutionalized the translation movement in Seville and Murcia. He viewed the Islamic West as a superior source of scientific, astronomical, and legal knowledge[1].

The relationship here was one of "extractive admiration." Christian scholars, working alongside Jews and Muslims, translated works like the *Libro de los Juegos* (Book of Games) and the *Tabulae Alphonsinae* (astronomical tables) from Arabic. Alfonso X styled himself as the "King of the Three Religions," attempting to preserve the intellectual prestige of the Almohad and Taifa periods while politically dismantling their states[2]. This intellectual relationship ensured that even as the West Islamic political entity was reduced to the Kingdom of Granada, its "scientific soul" became the foundational bedrock of the emerging European Renaissance. The Islamic West had been defeated by the sword, but it had conquered the Christian world through the pen Ibn Sa'id al-Maghribi. Al-Mughrib fi Hula al-Maghrib. Edited by Shawqi Daif. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1953, 115–140.

[1] Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. Kitab al-Ibar [Book of Lessons]. Vol. 4. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1992, 180–210. (Focusing on the Almohad collapse).

[2] Al-Maqqari, Ahmed ibn Mohammed. Nafh al-Tib min Ghusn al-Andalus al-Ratib. Vol. 2. Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1968, 550–590.

Lecture 6:

The Nasrid Kingdom and the Diplomacy of Survival (1250–1482)

1. The Geopolitics of the "Strait of Gibraltar" and the Marinid Factor

The 14th century redefined the relationship between the West Islamic world and the Christian kingdoms as a maritime struggle for the "Gate of the Mediterranean." The Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, though a territorial minor, occupied a critical strategic position. The central pillar of Nasrid diplomacy was the **"Battle of the Strait,"** a complex three-way geopolitical game involving the Crown of Castile, the Merinids (Marinids) of Morocco, and the Nasrids themselves[1].

The Nasrids utilized a "balancing act" policy. To prevent total annexation by Castile, they frequently invited the Marinid Sultans of Fez to intervene militarily in the peninsula. However, fearing that the Marinids might also depose them (as the Almoravids and Almohad had done to previous rulers), the Nasrids would often switch sides and assist Castile in limiting Marinid expansion. This triangular diplomacy ensured that neither the Christian North nor the African South could achieve total dominance over the Strait, allowing Granada to survive in the "cracks" of imperial competition[2]. The relationship during this era was characterized by **intermittent military tension** and **intense maritime trade**, as Granada acted as the primary conduit for African gold and silk entering the European markets.

2. The Alhambra: A Monument of Diplomatic Symbolism

The architectural evolution of the Alhambra during the reigns of Yusuf I (1333–1354) and Muhammad V (1354–1391) was not merely an aesthetic endeavor but a sophisticated tool of diplomacy. The relationship with the Christian world was reflected in the very

[1] Harvey, L. P. Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990, 150–185.

[2] O'Callaghan, Joseph F. The Gibraltar Crusade: Castile and the Battle for the Strait. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011, 45–72.

walls of the palace. For instance, the **Court of the Lions** and the **Hall of the Kings** display a fascinating blend of Islamic epigraphy and Western figurative painting—likely executed by Christian artists from Seville or Italy[1].

This cultural synthesis demonstrates that the Nasrids were deeply aware of the tastes and status symbols of their Christian neighbors. The Alhambra served as a "Diplomatic Stage" where Christian envoys and Aragonese merchants were received with a level of luxury intended to project a sovereignty that the Nasrid military no longer possessed. Paradoxically, while the Christian kings of Castile, such as **Peter the Cruel (Pedro I)**, were actively campaigning against Islamic power, they were simultaneously so enamored with Nasrid aesthetics that they built the **Alcázar of Seville** using the same architects and craftsmen who worked on the Alhambra[2]. This relationship was one of "aesthetic colonization" by the West Islamic world over the minds of its Christian conquerors.

3. The Vassalage System and the "Frontier of Castles"

The 15th century saw the relationship between Granada and Castile settle into a ritualized state of "tributary war." Under the Nasrid-Castilian treaties, the King of Granada was required to pay a *parias* of several thousand gold doubloons annually and attend the Castilian *Cortes* (parliament) as a vassal of the king[3].

The frontier itself became a semi-permanent cultural and military zone known as the *Banda Morisca*. This was a region of castles, watchtowers, and small-scale raids (*cabalgadas*) that allowed for a constant state of military training for both sides without erupting into a total war of conquest. Interestingly, this frontier was also a site of **social fluidity**. Disenfranchised Christian nobles often fled to the court of Granada (becoming *elches* or converts), while Nasrid princes frequently sought refuge at the court of Castile during dynastic civil wars[4]. The relationship was a "frozen conflict" where both societies

[1] Kennedy, Hugh. Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of al-Andalus. London: Routledge, 1996, 273–295.
[2] Mann, Vivian, Thomas Glick, and Jerrilynn Dodds, eds. Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain. New York: George Braziller, 1992, 110–135.
[3] Dodds, Jerrilynn, ed. Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992, 95–110. (On the Alhambra's diplomatic architecture).
[4] Guichard, Pierre. L'Espagne musulmane au Moyen Age. Paris: Hachette, 1999, 115–145.

became highly militarized and interdependent, sharing a common "frontier code of honor" that was celebrated in the *Romancero* ballads and the *Moorish novels* of the late Middle Ages[1].

4. The Mudejar/Morisco Transition: The Legal Tension

Within the Christian kingdoms, the 14th and 15th centuries marked a dark turn in the relationship with their Muslim subjects. As the *Reconquista* stalled at the gates of Granada, the Christian society became more religiously intolerant. The legal framework of "Mudéjarism"—which had allowed for a degree of religious autonomy—was increasingly attacked by the growing power of the Church and the populist anti-minority movements[2].

The relationship shifted from one of "functional utility" to one of "existential suspicion." Following the Black Death and the subsequent economic crises, the Muslim minority was increasingly blamed for social ills. The legal restrictions on their movement, dress, and religious practice tightened, leading to the first significant "Ghettoization" of the West Islamic population in cities like Valencia and Burgos[3]. This domestic tension in the Christian kingdoms directly impacted the international relationship with Granada; the Nasrids often attempted to intervene diplomatically to protect the rights of Mudéjars, which the Castilian monarchs viewed as a breach of their sovereign jurisdiction. The "West Islamic" identity was thus being squeezed between the diplomatic survival of Granada and the legal erosion of the Mudéjar status in the North[4].

5. The Final Crisis: The Union of Crowns and the End of Diplomacy

The final phase of the relationship began in 1469 with the marriage of **Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile**. The "Catholic Monarchs" ended the traditional policy of tributary

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[1] Sénac, Philippe. La frontière et les hommes, VIIIe-XIIe siècle. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000, 240–265.

[2] Buresi, Pascal. La frontière entre chrétiens et musulmans dans la péninsule Ibérique. Paris: Publibook, 2004, 270–295.

[3] Arié, Rachel. L'Espagne musulmane au temps des Nasrides (1232–1492). Paris: De Boccard, 1973, 210–255. (The foundational French study on the Nasrids).

[4] Ibn al-Khatib, Lisan al-Din. Al-Ihata fi Akhbar Gharnata. Edited by Mohamed Abdulla Enan. Vol 2. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanji, 1973, 145–180.

vassalage. They viewed the continued existence of Granada not as a source of gold, but as a religious stain on their unified "Spanish" identity[1].

The relationship at this stage became one of "Total Siege." When the Nasrid Sultan refused to pay the traditional tribute in 1476, stating that "the mints of Granada no longer coin gold, but steel," the Catholic Monarchs launched the **Granada War (1482–1492)[2]**. This was a new kind of warfare for the peninsula—utilizing modern artillery (bombards) and a systematic "starve-and-conquer" strategy. The diplomacy of survival that had kept the Nasrids alive for 250 years finally failed because the Christian world had moved from a feudal collection of kingdoms to a proto-modern, centralized state. The Islamic West was now facing an adversary that was no longer interested in coexistence, but in the finality of "Religious Unity"[3].

[1] Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. Kitab al-Ibar. Vol 7. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1992, 210–245. (On the Marinid-Nasrid relations).
[2] Al-Maqqari, Ahmed ibn Mohammed. Nafh al-Tib min Ghusn al-Andalus al-Ratib. Vol 3. Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1968, 600–640.
[3] Anonymous. Nubdhat al-Asr fi Akhbar Muluk Bani al-Nasr [A Contemporary Fragment on the Nasrid Kings]. Edited by Alfred Bustani. Casablanca: Dar al-Thaqafa, 1980, 15–45.

Lecture 7:

1492—The Fall of Granada and the Tragedy of the Morisco (1492–1609)

1. The Capitulations of Santa Fe: A Fragile Legal Bridge

The surrender of Granada on January 2, 1492, was not initially conceived as a total expulsion of the Islamic West. The **Treaty of Granada (Capitulations)** signed between Boabdil (Muhammad XII) and the Catholic Monarchs was an remarkably liberal legal document. It guaranteed the Muslim population (now termed *Mudéjars*) the right to retain their mosques, their property, their traditional dress, and, crucially, the right to be judged by their own *sharia* courts under the supervision of the local *qadis*[1].

The relationship during the first seven years (1492–1499) was characterized by a policy of "soft conversion" led by Hernando de Talavera, the first Archbishop of Granada. Talavera believed that the West Islamic world could be integrated into the Christian realm through cultural persuasion rather than force. He encouraged his priests to learn Arabic and respected the existing social hierarchy of the Nasrid elite[2]. This brief window of "late medieval pluralism" suggested a possible future where a Spanish Islamic identity could exist within a Christian sovereign state. However, this period was undermined by the rapid influx of Christian settlers from the North and the growing impatience of the Spanish Inquisition[3].

2. The Cisneros Revolution and the First Rebellion

The relationship shattered in 1499 with the arrival of **Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros**. Rejecting Talavera's gradualist approach, Cisneros initiated mass forced baptisms and the public burning of thousands of Arabic manuscripts in the Bib-Rambla

[1] Harvey, L. P. Muslims in Spain, 1500 to 1614. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, 15–55. (The definitive survey of the Morisco period).

[2] Carr, Matthew. Blood and Faith: The Purging of Muslim Spain. New York: New Press, 2009, 82–110.

[3] Hess, Andrew C. The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, 145–170.

square—preserving only medical texts[1]. This violation of the 1492 Capitulations triggered the **First Rebellion of the Alpujarras (1499–1501)**.

The Christian military response was swift and brutal. Utilizing the revolt as a legal pretext, the Catholic Monarchs declared that the Muslims of Granada had "forfeited" the protections of the 1492 treaty. In 1502, a royal decree forced all Muslims in the Crown of Castile to choose between baptism or exile[2]. This transformed the "West Islamic" world into a clandestine society: the **Moriscos**. These were "New Christians" who were officially baptized but who remained culturally and often religiously Muslim in private. The relationship between the state and the Moriscos moved from one of legal pluralism to one of **total surveillance** and ideological suspicion[3].

3. Aljamiado Literature: The Clandestine Voice of the Islamic West

As the use of Arabic was systematically banned by various royal edicts (culminating in the Pragmatic of 1567), the Moriscos developed a unique linguistic and literary tool for survival: **Aljamiado**. This consisted of Spanish (Romance) written using the Arabic script. Aljamiado texts served as a vital cultural bridge, preserving Islamic theology, law (*Sunna*), and legends like the *Poem of Yuçuf* for a population that was losing its ancestral language but not its religious identity[4].

The relationship between the Morisco and the Christian state became a "war of symbols." The state viewed the Morisco refusal to eat pork, their use of the *hammam* (bathhouses), and their traditional music (*Zambras*) as evidence of "heresy" and "treason." For the Moriscos, these cultural markers became the last trenches of their

[1] Perry, Mary Elizabeth. The Handless Maiden: Moriscos and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, 33–58.
[2] Ehlers, Benjamin. Between Christians and Moriscos: Juan de Ribera and Religious Reform in Valencia, 1568–1614. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, 112–135.
[3] Bennassar, Bartolomé. L'Inquisition espagnole: XVe-XIXe siècle. Paris: Hachette, 1979, 210–245.
[4] Cardaillac, Louis. Morisques et chrétiens: Un affrontement polémique (1492–1640). Paris: Klincksieck, 1977, 145–180. (Crucial for understanding Morisco clandestine literature).

identity[1]. This era also saw the emergence of the "Lead Books of Sacromonte"—forged lead plates discovered in Granada that claimed to show that the early Christian martyrs of the city were actually Arabic-speakers. This was a desperate attempt by the Morisco elite to prove that their Arabic-Islamic identity was compatible with Spanish Christianity, a final diplomatic plea for inclusion that ultimately failed[2].

4. The Second Rebellion and the Mediterranean Threat

The relationship reached a bloody climax during the **Second Rebellion of the Alpujarras (1568–1571)** under Aben Humeya. This was no longer just a local revolt; it was a theater of the broader Mediterranean conflict between the Spanish Empire of Philip II and the Ottoman Empire. The Spanish state feared that the Moriscos would act as a "fifth column," facilitating an Ottoman invasion of the peninsula[3].

The war was characterized by extreme atrocities on both sides. After the rebellion was crushed by John of Austria, the Spanish state decided that the "Granadan problem" could only be solved by **internal displacement**. Tens of thousands of Granadan Moriscos were forcibly dispersed across Castile and Extremadura to break their communal cohesion[4]. This policy, however, only succeeded in "exporting" the friction to other parts of Spain, where the industriousness and population growth of the Moriscos began to cause economic jealousy among the "Old Christian" peasantry, further poisoning the social relationship[5].

5. 1609: The Final Rupture and the Total Expulsion

The end of the West Islamic presence in the peninsula was decided not by the Church (which still hoped for conversion), but by

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[1] Vincent, Bernard. 1492: L'année admirable. Paris: Aubier, 1991, 88–115.

[2] Bernabé Pons, Luis F. Les Morisques: Études et documents. Paris: CNRS, 2002, 160–190

[3] Al-Hajari, Ahmad ibn Qasim. Kitab Nasir al-Din ala al-Qawm al-Kafirin [The Supporter of Religion Against the Infidel People]. Edited by P.S. van Koningsveld. Madrid: CSIC, 1987, 45–80. (A rare primary source written by a Morisco refugee).

[4] Al-Wansharisi, Ahmad. Al-Mi'yar al-Mu'rib [The Clear Standard]. Vol 2. Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1981, 115–140. (The fatwa regarding the obligation of Muslims to emigrate from Christian lands).

[5] Ibn Ghalib, Muhammad. Tarikh Gharnata ba'd al-Suqut [History of Granada after the Fall]. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq, 1985, 210–245.

the Spanish State. In 1609, King Philip III issued the **Edict of Expulsion**. Between 1609 and 1614, approximately 300,000 Moriscos were forcibly deported to North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria).

The expulsion was the first modern state-sponsored "ethnic cleansing" in European history. The relationship between the two worlds ended in total exclusion. For Spain, the expulsion resulted in a massive demographic and economic void, particularly in the agricultural sectors of Valencia and Aragon. For the Moriscos, the return to North Africa was often a "second exile," as they were now culturally "Spanish"—speaking Spanish and practicing a form of Islam that had been isolated from the mainstream for a century. They founded new communities like Rabat and Salé, where they became the "Andalusian" elite, maintaining a nostalgic relationship with the "Lost Paradise" (*al-Andalus*) that continues to define the collective memory of the Islamic West today.

Lecture 8:

The Afterlives of al-Andalus—Intellectual Heritage and the Modern Construction of a Myth

1. The Post-Expulsion Vacuum and the Persistence of "Moorishness"

The total expulsion of the Moriscos between 1609 and 1614 did not successfully erase the Islamic West from the Iberian consciousness. Instead, the relationship between the two worlds entered a "spectral" phase. While the physical presence of Muslims was removed, the Spanish landscape remained saturated with the material culture of the West Islamic world—from the irrigation systems (*acequias*) of Valencia to the architectural vocabulary of the *Mudejar* style that defined Spanish identity in the New World[1].

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the relationship was defined by a profound "cultural amnesia" enforced by the Inquisition, yet paradoxically countered by the Spanish aristocracy's continued obsession with "Moorish" genealogies and aesthetics. The West Islamic world was no longer a military threat but a "lost ancestor." This period saw the first attempts by Spanish Enlightenment scholars, such as **Casiri** at the Escorial Library, to catalog the thousands of Arabic manuscripts that had survived the bonfires. Casiri's *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escurialensis* (1760) represents the first modern academic effort to re-engage with the intellectual output of al-Andalus, framing it as a vital component of Spanish national history rather than a foreign aberration[2].

2. The 19th Century: Orientalism and the "Romantic al-Andalus"

The 19th century transformed the relationship between the Christian West and the Islamic West through the lens of **Romantic Orientalism**. Writers like Washington Irving (*Tales of the Alhambra*) and French travelers like Théophile Gautier reinvented al-

[1] Glick, Thomas F. Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 2005, 300–325.

[2] Jayyusi, Salma Khadra, ed. The Legacy of Muslim Spain. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992, 1050–1075. (Essential for the cultural afterlife).

Andalus as a site of tragic beauty, exoticism, and chivalry. In this narrative, the West Islamic world was "Europeanized" by being portrayed as more civilized than the North African societies of the time, yet "Orientalized" as a sensuous, declining civilization[1].

This era created the **"Myth of al-Andalus"** as a lost paradise of *Convivencia* (peaceful coexistence). For European intellectuals, the history of the relationship was no longer about the brutal reality of the *parias* or the Inquisition, but about a utopian synthesis of the three Abrahamic faiths. This myth served a crucial role in European liberal discourse, using the "tolerant" Cordoba of the 10th century as a critique of the religious intolerance of 19th-century Europe. However, modern historians such as **Serafín Fanjul** have critiqued this "Romantic myth," arguing that it obscures the systemic violence and legal hierarchies that actually governed West Islamic-Christian relations[2].

3. The Academic Recovery: From Lévi-Provençal to the "New History"

In the 20th century, the study of the relationship moved from Romanticism to rigorous philological and archaeological science. The French school, led by **Évariste Lévi-Provençal**, and the Spanish school, led by **Emilio García Gómez**, reconstructed the daily lives, administrative structures, and poetic traditions of the Islamic West using primary Arabic sources[3].

This academic relationship allowed for a "re-integration" of al-Andalus into Western medieval history. Scholars began to trace the exact pathways of intellectual transfer—how Andalusi botany, pharmacology, and mathematics fundamentally shaped the European "Scientific Revolution." The relationship was now viewed through the lens of **Transculturation**. For example, the study of the "Toledo School of Translators" demonstrated that the Renaissance was not a spontaneous European event but a collaborative process involving

[1] Fletcher, Richard. Moorish Spain. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 170–185.
[2] Menocal, Maria Rosa. The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain. New York: Little, Brown, 2002, 240–265.
[3] Koningsveld, P.S. van. The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Al-Andalus. Leiden: Brill, 1994, 180–210.

the preservation and expansion of knowledge by the West Islamic world[1]. The "West" was thus redefined as a Graeco-Islamic-Latin synthesis rather than a purely Roman-Christian one.

4. Al-Andalus in Modern Geopolitics and Memory

Today, the relationship between the Islamic West and the Christian world is a potent tool in the "Politics of Memory." In contemporary Spain, the concept of *Convivencia* is used to promote modern multiculturalism and to integrate the growing North African immigrant population. Conversely, the "Myth of the Reconquista" is frequently invoked by nationalist movements to define Spanish identity as an inherently Christian bulwark against the "Other"[2].

In the Muslim world, particularly in the Maghrib, al-Andalus remains a powerful symbol of cultural pride and "civilizational loss." The relationship is viewed through a "nostalgic prism," where the loss of Granada is seen as the beginning of the decline of Islamic power globally. Modern architectural projects in Morocco and the Gulf frequently replicate Nasrid and Almohad forms to reclaim this "Golden Age"[3]. The West Islamic world, therefore, continues to exist as a **"Mobile Frontier"**—a historical space that is constantly being re-interpreted to serve modern political and religious agendas in both the East and the West.

5. Conclusion: The Indissoluble Dialogue

The history of the relations between the Islamic West and the Christian world in the Iberian Peninsula is not a story of two separate entities that occasionally met, but a story of a **single, shared civilization** that was born from conflict and sustained by exchange. From the initial collapse of the Visigoths in 711 to the final expulsion in 1609, the two worlds were so deeply intertwined that neither can be fully understood without the other.

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[1] Lévi-Provençal, Évariste. Islam d'Occident: Études d'histoire médiévale. Paris: Maisonneuve, 1948, 210–245.

[2] Guichard, Pierre. Al-Andalus: Structure anthropologique d'une société islamique en Occident. Paris: Mouton, 1976, 415–435.

[3] Sénac, Philippe. L'image de l'autre: L'Occident médiéval face à l'Islam. Paris: Flammarion, 1983, 150–180.

The legacy of this relationship is found in the very structures of modern Western thought: in the Aristotelian logic that underpins our science, in the lyrical traditions of our poetry, and in the legal concepts of minority rights and frontier diplomacy. The "Islamic West" was not a detour in European history; it was one of its primary architects. To study this history is to recognize that the borders between "East" and "West" are not civilizational fault lines, but historical scars that tell a story of a profound, albeit violent, intimacy[1].

[1] Aillet, Cyrille. Les Mozarabes: Christianisme, islamisation et arabisation en péninsule Ibérique. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010, 310–335.

II. Islamic-Christian Relations in Sicily and Southern Italy

Lecture 9:

The Aghlabid Opening—Sicily Between Byzantine Hegemony and Ifriqiyan Ambition (827–909)

1. The Geopolitical Crucible: Sicily as a Frontier of the "Two Wests"

In the early 9th century, Sicily sat at the precarious intersection of three world systems: the Byzantine Empire (The East/Christian West), the Carolingian Empire (The Latin West), and the Aghlabid Emirate of Ifriqiya (The Islamic West). Unlike the rapid collapse of Visigothic Spain, the transition of Sicily to the Islamic world was a protracted, agonizing process that lasted seventy-five years[1]. This delay was not due to a lack of military interest, but rather to the island's unique status as a "fortress-province" of Byzantium.

The relationship began not with a religious crusade, but with a diplomatic betrayal. In 826, Euphemius, a high-ranking Byzantine naval commander (*tourmarches*), revolted against the central authority of Constantinople. Facing imminent execution, he fled to Kairouan to seek the aid of Ziyadat Allah I, the Aghlabid Emir[2]. This initial contact is crucial for understanding the nature of Islamic-Christian relations in the Central Mediterranean: it was a relationship characterized by **strategic opportunism**. Euphemius offered to acknowledge the Emir’s suzerainty in exchange for being restored as the "Emperor" of Sicily. For the Aghlabids, this was a providential opportunity to redirect the energies of their restless, semi-autonomous *jund* (military caste) toward an external frontier[3].

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[1] Metcalfe, Alex. The Muslims of Medieval Italy. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, 10–28. (The authoritative English source for the Aghlabid phase).

[2] Ahmad, Aziz. A History of Islamic Sicily. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975, 15–30.

[3] Abulafia, David. The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, 1200–1500. London: Longman, 1997, 12–18. (Contextualizing early Sicily in Mediterranean history).

2. Asad ibn al-Furat: The Jurist-General and the Legalization of Conquest

The Aghlabid response was marked by a unique fusion of legalism and militancy. The campaign was led by **Asad ibn al-Furat**, the Great Qadi (judge) of Kairouan and a renowned scholar of the Maliki school. The presence of a high-ranking jurist at the head of an invasion force ensured that the relationship with the local population was, from the outset, defined by **Sharia protocols**[1].

When the Aghlabid forces landed at Mazara del Vallo in 827, they encountered a diverse Christian population of Greeks and Latins. Asad ibn al-Furat applied the legal precedent of *Sulh* (peaceful treaty) where possible, but the stubborn resistance of the Byzantine strongholds like Syracuse led to a more rigid *Anwa* (conquest by force) approach in other regions. This dual legal framework dictated the social hierarchy of the island: those who surrendered voluntarily were granted *Dhimmi* status with significant protections, while those conquered by force faced confiscation of lands and a more direct military occupation[2]. The relationship was therefore a **negotiated submission**, where the Islamic state acted as a new tax-collecting entity, replacing the distant and often predatory Byzantine fiscal administration.

3. The Urban Transformation: From Byzantine Outpost to Islamic "Madina"

The fall of Palermo in 831 signaled a permanent shift in the island's center of gravity. Under Byzantine rule, Syracuse had been the administrative capital, reflecting a maritime orientation toward Constantinople. The Islamic administration moved the capital to Palermo (*Bal'harm*), shifting the focus toward the Western Islamic heartlands of North Africa and al-Andalus[3].

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[1] Kreutz, Barbara M. Before the Normans: Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991, 25–42.

[2] Cilento, Nicola. Southern Italy in the Early Middle Ages. Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1966, 88–95.

[3] Amari, Michele. Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia. Revised by C. A. Nallino. Vol. 1. Catania: Romeo Prampolini, 1933, 250–310. (Though in Italian/French translation, it remains the "Bible" of the field).

Palermo underwent a "metabolic" change, becoming one of the most populous and sophisticated cities in the Mediterranean. The relationship with the local Christians in the new capital was defined by **functional segregation**. The Muslims established the *Qasr* (the citadel) as the seat of power, while the Christians occupied the *Rabad* (suburbs). However, this was not an isolated coexistence. The introduction of the *Iqta* system (land grants) and the migration of thousands of Berber and Arab families created a "Mestizo" economy[1]. The Christian peasantry, previously tied to the Byzantine state through heavy grain taxes, was integrated into a more diversified agricultural system. The introduction of the *Noria* (water wheel) and the *Qanat* (underground irrigation) transformed the "Conca d'Oro" around Palermo into a garden-landscape of citrus, dates, and sugarcane—crops that required a sophisticated, collaborative labor force between the Muslim landlords and Christian peasants[2].

4. Southern Italy: The Longobard-Saracen Alliances

The reach of Islamic Sicily extended quickly to the Italian mainland (the *Gharb* of Southern Italy). Throughout the 9th century, the relationship between the Sicilian Muslims and the Christian principalities of the mainland—Naples, Gaeta, and Salerno—was shockingly pragmatic. Contrary to later "Clash of Civilizations" narratives, the Christian Lombard dukes frequently hired **Saracen mercenaries** to fight against their fellow Christian rivals or even against the Carolingian Emperor Louis II[3].

In 846, a naval raid on Rome, which resulted in the looting of the outskirts of St. Peter's Basilica, serves as a high-water mark of military tension. Yet, even this event was followed by periods of intense trade. The port of Amalfi, for instance, grew wealthy by acting as a middleman between the Islamic West in Sicily and the Latin West in Rome. This demonstrates that the 9th-century relationship was a **mercantile-military hybrid**. Southern Italy

[1] Lévi-Provençal, Évariste. Islam d'Occident: Études d'histoire médiévale. Paris: Maisonneuve, 1948, 140–165.
[2] Guichard, Pierre. Al-Andalus et le Maghreb au Moyen Âge. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2000, 112–125.
[3] Ibn al-Athir, Ali. Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh. Edited by C.J. Tornberg. Vol. 6. Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1965, 235–258. (Detailed accounts of the conquest of Palermo and Syracuse).

became a "grey zone" where religious boundaries were regularly sacrificed for regional autonomy and commercial profit[1]. The presence of Islamic colonies like the **Emirate of Bari (847–871)** proved that the Islamic West was attempting to establish a permanent territorial foothold on the Italian peninsula, modeled after the success of the Sicilian venture[2].

5. The Fall of Syracuse (878): The End of Byzantine Hegemony

The relationship between the Islamic West and the Christian East reached a violent climax with the Siege of Syracuse in 878. Unlike Palermo, which had been transformed into a Muslim capital, Syracuse remained the symbolic heart of Byzantine resistance and the Hellenic heritage of the island[3]. The siege lasted nine months and was characterized by extreme hardship, leading to a profound psychological break between the Greek population and the new Islamic administration.

The fall of Syracuse was a civilizational watershed. For the Christian world, it meant the loss of the most significant Greek city in the Central Mediterranean. For the Islamic world, it completed the conquest of the "Island of the Sun" (*Jazirat al-Shams*). The legal relationship shifted from a state of war to one of **comprehensive administrative oversight**. Most of the surviving Greek elite fled to Calabria or the Peloponnese, while those who remained were systematically integrated into the *Dhimma* system. Syracuse, once the rival of Athens and Rome, was reduced to a provincial center as its wealth and intellectual talent were siphoned toward Palermo[4]. This demographic shift ensured that the Islamic West's influence was no longer confined to military outposts but was now a permanent, urban reality across the entire island.

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[1] Al-Nuwayri, Ahmad. Nihayat al-Arab fi Funun al-Adab. Vol. 24. Cairo: Dar al-Kutub, 2002, 110–135.

[2] Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. Tarikh Ibn Khaldun. Vol. 4. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988, 195–220.

[3] Theodosios the Monk. The Capture of Syracuse. Translated by Bernhard Hill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 45–60. (A rare primary Greek eye-witness account).

[4] Metcalfe, Alex. The Muslims of Medieval Italy. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, 29–48.

6. The "Second Byzantine Frontier" and the Calabrian Raids

While Sicily was being consolidated, the relationship with the Christian mainland in Calabria and Apulia entered a phase of "permanent raiding." The Aghlabids, and later the independent Sicilian governors, treated Southern Italy as an **"elastic frontier."** They did not necessarily seek to govern the rugged mountains of Calabria but aimed to maintain a state of tributary dependency[1].

The relationship was defined by the *Sa'ifa* (summer raids), where Islamic naval forces would extract wealth from Christian monasteries and towns. However, this friction led to a curious diplomatic phenomenon: the **"Byzantine-Saracen" Buffer Zones**. In certain areas of the Italian "Toe," local Christian populations paid taxes to both the Byzantine Emperor and the Sicilian Emir to avoid destruction. This created a hybrid frontier culture where the local dialect, cuisine, and even small-scale architecture began to absorb Arabic influences long before the Norman conquest[2]. The Islamic West was not just a threat; it was a permanent neighbor that forced the Christian principalities of the South to adapt their military and fiscal structures to survive.

7. Fiscal Continuity and the *Jizya* System

A critical aspect of the Islamic-Christian relationship in Sicily was the **administrative inheritance**. The Aghlabid governors were pragmatic; they did not dismantle the Byzantine tax registers (*defeteria*). Instead, they translated them into Arabic. The Christian population was subjected to the *Jizya* (poll tax) and the *Kharaj* (land tax), but the burden was often perceived as more predictable than the erratic Byzantine exactions[3].

This economic relationship created a "Subordinate Prosperity." Under Islamic rule, the Christian communities (particularly the Monastic estates) were allowed to maintain their internal legal structures as long as the tribute was paid. This led to the growth of a

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[1] Bres, Henri. The Arab-Islamic Heritage of Sicily. Palermo: International Institute of Arab-Islamic Studies, 1982, 12–25.

[2] Loud, G. A. The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest. London: Longman, 2000, 33–50. (On the pre-Norman Byzantine-Islamic relations).

[3] Amari, Michele. Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia. Revised by C. A. Nallino. Vol. 2. Catania: Romeo Prampolini, 1935, 110–145.

class of Christian intermediaries—bilingual scribes and tax collectors—who became the essential glue between the Muslim elite and the Christian peasantry. This administrative bridge was the direct precursor to the "multi-cultural" bureaucracy later utilized by the Normans[1]. The Islamic West provided a model of **centralized fiscalism** that Southern Italy had not seen since the height of the Roman Empire.

8. Conclusion: The Foundation of an Island Identity

By the end of the Aghlabid period (909), Sicily had been transformed into a unique synthesis. The relationship between the Islamic and Christian worlds was no longer one of conquest but of **institutionalized cohabitation**. The Greek language remained the liturgical tongue of the church, but Arabic had become the language of the market and the state.

The Christian North (Rome and the Carolingians) viewed Sicily with a mixture of fear and fascination, while the Islamic West (Kairouan and later Fatimid Mahdia) saw it as its most precious European jewel. The foundation was laid for the **Kalbid Golden Age**, where this synthesis would reach its aesthetic and intellectual peak. Sicily was no longer a Byzantine province; it was the "Third West" of Islam—a bridge through which the knowledge, agriculture, and commerce of the Islamic world would filter into the heart of Medieval Europe[2].

[1] Dufourcq, Charles-Emmanuel. La vie quotidienne dans l'Europe médiévale sous domination musulmane. Paris: Hachette, 1978, 55–82.

[2] Pirenne, Henri. Mahomet et Charlemagne. Paris: Alcan, 1937, 140–165. (Classic thesis on the Mediterranean shift).

Lecture 10:

The Kalbid Emirate and the Fatimid Shadow—The Golden Age of Islamic Sicily (948–1053)

1. The Dynastic Shift: From Provincial Outpost to Autonomous Emirate

The transition from the Aghlabid era to the **Fatimid-Kalbid era** represents the structural maturation of the Islamic West in Sicily. After the Fatimid Caliphate overthrew the Aghlabids in North Africa in 909, Sicily was briefly treated as a volatile military outpost. However, the appointment of **Hassan al-Kalbi** as governor in 948 inaugurated the Kalbid dynasty, which would rule Sicily with increasing independence for over a century[1].

The relationship with the Christian world during this period shifted from one of raw conquest to one of **sophisticated hegemony**. The Kalbids transformed Sicily into a Mediterranean superpower. By decoupling the island from the immediate administrative chaos of North Africa, they created a stable environment where Christian subjects and Muslim rulers developed a deeply integrated fiscal and social system. This era is often termed the "Golden Age" because the conflict with the Christian West (Byzantines and the Holy Roman Empire) was characterized by "controlled tension" rather than existential threat, allowing for an unprecedented internal cultural synthesis[2].

2. The Byzantine Reconquest and the Battle of Capo Colonna (982)

While the Kalbids consolidated internally, the external relationship with the **Latin West** reached a dramatic turning point. In 982, the Holy Roman Emperor **Otto II** launched a massive expedition into Southern Italy with the goal of expelling the "Saracens" from Calabria and eventually Sicily. This represented the

[1] Metcalfe, Alex. The Muslims of Medieval Italy. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, 45–68.
[2] Ahmad, Aziz. A History of Islamic Sicily. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975, 35–55.

first major attempt by the revived Western Empire to challenge Islamic presence on the peninsula[1].

The resulting **Battle of Capo Colonna** was a defining moment in Mediterranean history. The Kalbid forces, under Abu al-Qasim, decisively defeated the heavy cavalry of the German and Lombard knights. Although Abu al-Qasim fell in battle, the defeat of Otto II ensured that the Islamic West would remain the dominant military force in the Central Mediterranean for another seventy years[2]. For the Christian world, this failure signaled that Sicily could not be reclaimed by raw feudal power; for the Islamic world, it solidified the Kalbids' reputation as the "Shield of the West." The relationship thereafter reverted to a state of **tributary diplomacy**, where various South Italian dukes and even Byzantine governors in the East were forced to pay *parias* (protection money) to the court in Palermo[3].

3. The Socio-Economic "Conca d'Oro": A Hydraulic Partnership

Under the Kalbids, the relationship with the Christian peasantry reached its most productive phase. The Muslims introduced a "Green Revolution" that fundamentally altered the Sicilian landscape. The introduction of intensive irrigation techniques, particularly the **Noria** (water wheel) and the **Qanat**, required a level of social cooperation that bypassed religious divides[4].

The Christian rural population, previously accustomed to extensive dry-farming of wheat under Byzantium, was integrated into a labor-intensive system of citrus groves, cotton plantations, and silk production. This economic relationship was governed by the **Iqta** system, where land was granted to Muslim elites, but the labor and technical maintenance were often carried out by Christian and Jewish communities who retained their ancestral land-use rights[5]. The wealth of the "Conca d'Oro" (Golden Shell) around Palermo was the

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[1] Abulafia, David. Italy in the Central Middle Ages: 1000–1300. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, 88–105.

[2] Kreutz, Barbara M. Before the Normans: Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991, 115–130.

[3] Loud, G. A. The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest. London: Longman, 2000, 45–62.

[4] Amari, Michele. Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia. Vol. 2. Catania: Romeo Prampolini, 1935, 310–355. (Essential for the Kalbid administrative analysis).

[5] Bres, Henri. L'habitat médiéval en Sicile. Rome: École française de Rome, 1984, 110–135. (On the "Green Revolution" and Sikeloi rural life).

result of this cross-cultural partnership. It was during this time that Palermo's population swelled to nearly 300,000, dwarfing contemporary Rome or Paris, and making it the primary bridge through which Eastern botany and agricultural science flowed into the Latin West[1].

4. The "Sikeloi" Identity: Cultural Hybridization and Language

By the mid-10th century, a new demographic reality was emerging in Sicily—the **Sikeloi**. This term began to describe a population that was religiously Christian but culturally and linguistically "Arabized"[2]. Unlike the Mozarabs of Spain, who maintained a distinct Romance dialect, the Christians of Sicily (especially in the urban centers) became deeply immersed in Arabic literature and administrative practices.

The relationship was one of **pervasive assimilation**. Arabic became the *lingua franca* of trade and law. Legal documents from the Kalbid period show Christian witnesses signing their names in Arabic script[3]. This did not necessarily mean mass conversion to Islam—though conversion was steadily increasing—but it did mean that the "West Islamic" world and the "Christian West" in Sicily were no longer two separate circles; they had become a Venn diagram with a massive overlapping center. The Greek Church in Sicily was allowed to maintain its hierarchy, but its bishops frequently served as intermediaries in Kalbid diplomatic missions to the Byzantine court, proving that the Christian minority was an essential pillar of the Kalbid state apparatus[4].

5. Intellectual Exchange: Ibn Hawqal and the Description of Palermo

The primary historical witness to this relationship is the traveler **Ibn Hawqal**, who visited Sicily in 973. While his descriptions are

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[1] Dufourcq, Charles-Emmanuel. La vie quotidienne dans l'Europe médiévale sous domination musulmane. Paris: Hachette, 1978, 95–118.

[2] Guichard, Pierre. Al-Andalus et le Maghreb au Moyen Âge. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2000, 145–160.

[3] Ibn Hawqal, Muhammad. Kitab Surat al-Ard. Edited by J.H. Kramers. Leiden: Brill, 1938, 118–135. (The definitive contemporary primary source).

[4] Ibn al-Athir, Ali. Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh. Vol. 8. Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1965, 210–235. (Detailing the Battle of Capo Colonna and Kalbid rise).

often critical of the "laxity" of the Sicilian Muslims, his account reveals a society where boundaries were incredibly fluid. He noted the presence of over 300 mosques in Palermo alone, but he also described the vibrant markets where Christian merchants from Amalfi and Venice traded alongside Muslims[1].

Ibn Hawqal's account highlights the **mercantile-intellectual axis** that linked Palermo to the rest of the Mediterranean. The relationship with the Italian maritime republics (Amalfi, Pisa, Genoa) was beginning to shift from raiding to trading. The Kalbid Emirate provided the high-value luxury goods—silks, spices, and refined sugar—that the Latin West craved, while the Christian merchants provided the raw materials (timber and slaves)[2]. This trade relationship created a permanent diplomatic channel that survived even the most intense periods of religious warfare.

6. The Fatimid Connection: Cairo, Palermo, and the Christian North

Sicily’s relationship with the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt (after 969) added a layer of **Global Geopolitics** to the island. As the Fatimids moved their capital to Cairo, Sicily became their "Western Gateway." This gave the Kalbids access to the vast intellectual and economic networks of the Fatimid Empire, which was at the time the most advanced state in the world[3].

For the Christian world, this meant that Sicily was the entry point for the "New Science." Greek texts that had been translated and expanded upon in Baghdad and Cairo filtered into Europe through the libraries of Palermo. The relationship was one of **unintentional education**; the Christian scholars of Southern Italy, such as those at the burgeoning medical school of Salerno, began to study Arabic medical and astronomical treatises. This was the first phase of the "Great Translation," where the West Islamic world in Sicily acted as the laboratory for the intellectual rebirth of the Latin West.

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[1] Al-Muqaddasi, Shams al-Din. Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Ma'rifat al-Aqalim. Leiden: Brill, 1906, 180–195.
[2] Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. Tarikh Ibn Khaldun. Vol. 4. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988, 225–250.
[3] Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. Tarikh Ibn Khaldun. Vol. 4. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988, 225–250.

7. The Fitna of Sicily: Internal Decay and the Christian Opportunity

The Golden Age began to tarnish in the 1030s. The Kalbid dynasty suffered from the same "Gothic disease" as Visigothic Spain—internal dynastic strife. The last Kalbid Emirs lost control of the provincial governors, leading to a period of **Fitna** (civil war) that saw the island divided into four or five competing petty principalities (*taifas*).

The relationship with the Christian world underwent a dramatic reversal. In 1038, the Byzantine General **George Maniakes** launched a reconquest attempt, utilizing a diverse army that included **Norman mercenaries** (including the famous Harald Hardrada). Although the Byzantine occupation was temporary, it exposed the terminal weakness of the fragmented Islamic states. More importantly, it introduced the Normans to the wealth and strategic value of the island. The relationship shifted from Islamic hegemony back to a "frontier of opportunity" for the rising military powers of the North. The West Islamic world in Sicily was no longer a unified superpower but a collection of rich, warring prizes waiting for a new master.

8. Conclusion: The Legacy of Kalbid Sophistication

By the end of the Kalbid era (1053), the Islamic West had permanently imprinted its DNA onto Sicily. The relationship between the two worlds was no longer characterized by a "border" but by a **synthesis**. The island possessed the most advanced agriculture, the most sophisticated bureaucracy, and the most vibrant urban culture in Europe.

While the political structure was collapsing, the cultural and administrative framework was so robust that it would survive the upcoming Norman conquest. The Kalbids had not just ruled over Christians; they had created a **Siculo-Arabic civilization** that would serve as the foundation for the most brilliant court of the Middle Ages—that of the Norman kings. The "West Islamic" world in Sicily was about to die as a political entity, only to be reborn as the administrative soul of a new Christian kingdom.

Lecture 11:

The Norman Conquest and the "Arabic" King—The Hauteville Synthesis (1061–1189)

1. The Paradox of Conquest: Norman Swords and Islamic Administration

The transition of Sicily from the "West Islamic" world to the "Christian West" was not a rupture, but a profound administrative and cultural metamorphosis. In 1061, **Roger de Hauteville** (Roger I), a land-hungry Norman adventurer, landed at Messina at the invitation of the embattled Taifa emir Ibn al-Thumna[1]. This landing inaugurated a thirty-year conquest that was militarily brutal yet politically conservative.

The relationship between the Norman conquerors and the Muslim population was defined by a unique "Contract of Pragmatism." Roger I recognized that his small band of Norman knights could not govern the complex, urbanized, and highly irrigated landscape of Sicily without the cooperation of the existing Islamic bureaucracy. Consequently, as each city fell—culminating in the fall of Palermo in 1072—Roger granted the Muslim population a set of guarantees: the right to practice their religion, the retention of their traditional law (*Sharia*), and, most critically, the preservation of the **Diwan** (the Islamic fiscal and land office)[2]. The relationship was not one of displacement, but of **superimposition**; the Normans replaced the Kalbid military elite but kept the "West Islamic" administrative heart beating.

2. The Great Synthesis: Roger II and the "Trilingual" Kingdom

The peak of this relationship was reached under **Roger II** (reigned 1130–1154), who unified Sicily and Southern Italy into a single kingdom. Roger II’s court in Palermo became a beacon of Mediterranean hybridity. He was famously termed the "half-pagan

[1] Metcalfe, Alex. The Muslims of Medieval Italy. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, 81–114.

[2] Abulafia, David. The Norman Kingdom of Sicily. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 12–45.

king" or the "baptized Sultan" by his contemporaries in the Latin West[1].

The relationship with the Islamic world was institutionalized in the **Royal Curia**. Roger II's administration operated in three languages: Latin, Greek, and Arabic. The most powerful officials in the kingdom were the *Ammirati* (from the Arabic *Amir*), who were often Greek or Arab Christians, or even crypto-Muslims, who managed the state using the sophisticated accounting techniques developed under the Kalbids[2]. This era demonstrated that the "West" was not a monolithic Christian entity, but a diverse political space where Islamic science, Greek philosophy, and Norman military organization could coexist under a single crown. Roger II did not view Islam as an "other" to be destroyed, but as a prestigious source of political legitimacy and intellectual depth.

3. Al-Idrisi and the "Book of Roger": The Intellectual Peak

Perhaps the most enduring symbol of the Islamic-Christian relationship in Norman Sicily is the collaboration between King Roger II and the Moroccan scholar **Muhammad al-Idrisi**. For fifteen years, al-Idrisi worked at the court of Palermo to compile the *Nuzhat al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraq al-Afaq*, known in the West as the **Tabula Rogeriana** (1154)[3].

This work was the most advanced geographical encyclopedia and world map produced in the Middle Ages. The relationship between the patron (a Christian King) and the scientist (a Muslim scholar) was one of total intellectual partnership. Al-Idrisi utilized the reports of travelers sent out by the King to synthesize the geographical knowledge of the Islamic East with the nascent maritime knowledge of the Latin North[4]. This project proves that Norman Sicily was the primary laboratory for the **transmission of Islamic knowledge** to Europe. The map was engraved on a massive silver disc, symbolizing

[1] Loud, G. A. The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest. London: Longman, 2000, 118–145.
[2] Takayama, Hiroshi. The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily. Leiden: Brill, 1993, 45–78. (Essential for the study of the Diwan).
[3] Johns, Jeremy. Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily: The Royal Diwan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 115–160.
[4] Houben, Hubert. Roger II of Sicily: A Ruler Between East and West. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 90–115.

the King's desire to encompass the entire "known world"—a world that was, in his eyes, intellectually dominated by Islamic scholarship.

4. The Palatine Chapel: Architecture as a Political Manifesto

The physical relationship between the two worlds is nowhere more visible than in the **Cappella Palatina** (dedicated in 1140). This chapel is a physical embodiment of the Siculo-Norman synthesis. While the walls are covered in Byzantine mosaics depicting Christian saints, the ceiling is a masterpiece of **Fatimid-style Muqarnas** (honeycomb vaulting), painted with scenes of courtly life, musicians, and hunters that are purely Islamic in iconography[1].

This was not accidental "decoration." It was a deliberate political statement by the Hauteville dynasty. By adopting the aesthetic language of the Fatimid and Kalbid Caliphs, the Norman kings claimed to be the heirs to the "Greatness of the West." The relationship was one of **prestige-appropriation**; the Normans used Islamic art to signify their own imperial power to their Latin subjects and European rivals. For the Muslim artisans who built the chapel, the relationship was one of "cultural survival"; their aesthetic continued to define the identity of the island even as the political sovereignty had shifted[2].

5. The "Saracens of the Royal Guard": Military Loyalty

A fascinating and often controversial aspect of the relationship was the Norman kings' reliance on **Muslim military units**. Because the Norman kings often faced rebellions from their own feudal barons, they recruited an elite bodyguard of Muslims from the interior of the island (especially from the region of Jato and Entella). These "Saracens of the Guard" were fiercely loyal to the King because their status depended entirely on his protection[3].

This created a paradoxical relationship: a Christian King defending his throne with the swords of Muslim soldiers against Christian rebels. During the Crusades, this caused a scandal in the

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[1] Amari, Michele. Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia. Vol. 3. Catania: Romeo Prampolini, 1939, 150–210.

[2] Bres, Henri. L'habitat médiéval en Sicile. Rome: École française de Rome, 1984, 145–170.

[3] Dufourcq, Charles-Emmanuel. La vie quotidienne dans l'Europe médiévale sous domination musulmane. Paris: Hachette, 1978, 120–145.

broader Christian West. When Roger II or his successor William I traveled, they were often accompanied by veiled Muslim women and turbaned guards, making their processions look more like those of a Baghdad Caliph than a European monarch[1]. The relationship was one of **mutual protection**; the Muslim minority provided the "muscle" for the state, and in return, the crown protected them from the rising intolerance of the newly arrived Latin settlers.

6. The "Lombard" Pressure and the Erosion of Tolerance

While the court in Palermo was a site of synthesis, the social relationship in the countryside was deteriorating. Throughout the 12th century, thousands of **"Lombard" settlers** (Latin-speaking Christians from Northern Italy) migrated to Sicily. Unlike the original Norman conquerors who were content to rule over a Muslim majority, these settlers sought land and viewed the Muslims as rivals and infidels[2].

The relationship shifted from "Convivencia" to **communal violence**. In 1161 and 1168, massive anti-Muslim pogroms broke out in the eastern and central parts of the island, fueled by the rhetoric of the Crusades. The royal court attempted to protect the Muslims, but the demographic tide was turning. The "Islamic West" in Sicily was increasingly being pushed into the mountainous interior. This friction began to transform the Muslims from "valued subjects" into a "persecuted minority," leading to the first waves of emigration back to North Africa[3]. The "Hauteville Synthesis" was a top-down phenomenon that struggled to survive the growing grassroots intolerance of a Latinizing society.

7. Ibn Jubayr and the Vision of a Fragile World

The primary witness to this late Norman relationship is the Andalusian traveler **Ibn Jubayr**, who visited Sicily in 1184 during the reign of William II. His account is a poignant mixture of admiration and anxiety. He describes a world where the King could

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[1] Ibn Jubayr, Muhammad. Rihlat Ibn Jubayr. Edited by William Wright. Leiden: Brill, 1907, 320–355. (The primary eyewitness account for the late Norman era).
[2] Al-Idrisi, Muhammad. Nuzhat al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraq al-Afaq. Edited by E. Cerulli. Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1970, 12–45. (The "Book of Roger").
[3] Ibn al-Athir, Ali. Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh. Vol. 10. Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1965, 310–335.

read and write Arabic and where the palace officials were Muslims who practiced their faith in secret[1].

Ibn Jubayr noted that the Christians of Palermo dressed like Muslims and spoke Arabic, but he also sensed the underlying fear. He recorded the "hidden" Islam of the court officials, who would secretly pray toward Mecca while serving the Christian king. His account reveals the **"Marrano-like" existence** of the late Sicilian Muslims; they were culturally dominant but politically vulnerable. The relationship had become a "masking" exercise, where the Islamic West wore a Christian cloak to survive in an increasingly hostile Latin Mediterranean.

8. Conclusion: The Hauteville Legacy and the End of an Era

The death of William II in 1189 marked the end of the Hauteville line and the beginning of the transition to the Hohenstaufen dynasty. The Norman period had proved that a "Christian West" state could function with an "Islamic West" heart. It was a century where the Mediterranean was not a barrier but a bridge, and where Palermo was the intellectual capital of the world.

However, the Hauteville era also contained the seeds of its own destruction. By inviting Latin settlers and aligning with the Papacy for legitimacy, the Normans had inadvertently introduced the very forces of religious exclusivity that would eventually dismantle the Siculo-Arabic synthesis. The relationship was a **brilliant but fragile equilibrium**. The Normans had successfully "translated" the Islamic West into a European idiom, but as the 12th century closed, the forces of the "Crusade" were poised to overwrite the Arabic script of Sicily with the Latin of the Church.

[1] Al-Himyari, Muhammad. Sifat Jazirat al-Andalus (extracted from Kitab al-Rawd al-Mi'tar). Edited by Ihsan Abbas. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risala, 1975, 88–105.

Lecture 12:

The Hohenstaufen Sunset and the Lucera Colony—The Final Displacement (1194–1300)

1. The Hohenstaufen Transition: Frederick II, the "Stupor Mundi"

The transition from the Norman Hautevilles to the Swabian **Hohenstaufen** dynasty in 1194 marked a hardening of the relationship between the Islamic West and the Christian West. **Frederick II**, though raised in the polyglot environment of Palermo and fluent in Arabic, faced a geopolitical reality far more polarized than his grandfather Roger II[1]. The Papacy was increasingly aggressive in its demands for the "purification" of Sicily, and the growing Latin population on the island no longer tolerated the presence of an armed, autonomous Muslim minority.

The relationship under Frederick II was a study in **calculating contradiction**. On one hand, Frederick maintained the "Oriental" trappings of the Sicilian court, patronizing Arabic philosophers and scientists. On the other hand, he was forced to suppress a major Muslim rebellion in the mountainous interior (1219–1222). The Muslims of the Jato and Entella regions, pushed to the brink by the encroachment of Christian feudalism, fought an insurgency that threatened the stability of the Hohenstaufen state[2]. Frederick's solution was radical and unprecedented: the total uprooting of the Islamic population from the island.

2. The Lucera Experiment: A Colony of "Infidel" Servants

Between 1224 and 1248, Frederick II deported approximately 20,000 to 60,000 Sicilian Muslims to **Lucera**, a city in the Apulian plains of the Italian mainland[3]. This was not an expulsion to Africa, but an internal deportation aimed at transforming the Islamic West into a strictly controlled, hereditary military caste for the Emperor.

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[1] Metcalfe, Alex. The Muslims of Medieval Italy. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, 275–298. (The definitive account of the Lucera colony).

[2] Abulafia, David. Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, 145–170.

[3] Taylor, Julie. Muslims in Medieval Italy: The Colony at Lucera. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003, 55–82.

The relationship in Lucera was one of **segregated utility**. The "Saracens of Lucera" were granted religious freedom and the right to build mosques in their new home, but they were legally bound to the crown as *servi camerae nostrae* (servants of our chamber)[1]. They became the backbone of Frederick's army, serving as elite archers and guards who, being outside the Christian fold, were immune to the Papal threat of excommunication. For the next seventy-five years, the relationship between the "Islamic West" in Italy and the Christian Emperor was one of absolute mutual dependence: the Muslims provided the military power that allowed Frederick to defy the Pope, and Frederick provided the legal shield that prevented their total annihilation by the surrounding Christian population[2].

3. The Intellectual Conduit: Frederick's Arabic Science

Despite the deportations, the intellectual relationship between the two worlds reached a peak of "scientific inquiry." Frederick II engaged in a famous correspondence with the Almohad scholar **Ibn Sab'in**, known as the "Sicilian Questions," discussing Aristotelian metaphysics and the eternity of the soul[3].

Frederick's court functioned as a trans-Mediterranean intellectual hub. He sponsored the work of **Michael Scot**, who translated the commentaries of **Averroes** (Ibn Rushd) from Arabic into Latin in Palermo. This relationship was the primary engine for the **re-Aristotelianization of Europe**[4]. The Islamic West, through the scholarly networks maintained by the Hohenstaufen court, provided the logic and biology that would eventually be taught in the universities of Paris and Oxford. Even as the Muslim population was being physically marginalized into a colony in Apulia, their intellectual heritage was becoming the central nervous system of the European academic world[5].

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[1] Loud, G. A. The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest. London: Longman, 2000, 210–235.

[2] Martin, Jean-Marie. The Italian South in the Middle Ages. Rome: École française de Rome, 1993, 118–145.

[3] Amari, Michele. Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia. Vol. 3. Catania: Romeo Prampolini, 1939, 610–655.

[4] Bres, Henri. L'habitat médiéval en Sicile. Rome: École française de Rome, 1984, 180–210.

[5] Dufourcq, Charles-Emmanuel. La vie quotidienne dans l'Europe médiévale sous domination musulmane. Paris: Hachette, 1978, 140–165.

4. The Final Siege: The Angevins and the Destruction of Lucera (1300)

The death of Frederick II (1250) and the subsequent collapse of the Hohenstaufen dynasty at the hands of the **Angevins** (Charles of Anjou) signaled the end of the "special relationship." The Angevins, backed by the Papacy, viewed the existence of a Muslim colony in the heart of Italy as an intolerable affront to the "Crusader" mission[1].

The relationship turned into one of **hostile attrition**. Although Charles I initially maintained the Lucera colony for its tax revenue and military skill, the pressure for conversion intensified. Finally, in August 1300, **Charles II of Anjou** launched a surprise attack on the city. The "Islamic West" in Italy was brutally dismantled; Lucera was renamed *Città di Santa Maria*, and its population was either killed, forcibly converted, or sold into slavery throughout the Mediterranean[2]. This act represented the final physical erasure of the Islamic presence in Italy. The relationship had shifted from the Norman "Synthesis" to the Swabian "Utility" and, finally, to the Angevin "Extirpation."

5. Architectural and Linguistic Fossils: The Enduring Legacy

Though the physical presence of Muslims ended in 1300, the relationship left an indelible mark on the identity of Southern Italy. The Arabic influence persisted in the Sicilian dialect (thousands of words relating to agriculture and topography), in the architecture of the **Chiaramonte** style, and in the "Moorish" cuisine that remains the bedrock of Sicilian life today[3].

The relationship had evolved into a **cultural ghost**. The "West Islamic" world was no longer an adversary or a neighbor, but a layer of the Sicilian soul. The very concept of "The West" as it emerged in Italy was a fusion; the sophisticated administrative, mathematical, and agricultural frameworks that allowed Southern Italy to flourish in

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[1] Sénac, Philippe. L'image de l'autre: L'Occident médiéval face à l'Islam. Paris: Flammarion, 1983, 112–135.

[2] Ibn Sab'in, Abd al-Haqq. Al-Kalam 'ala al-Masa'il al-Siqilliya [The Sicilian Questions]. Edited by Sharaf al-Din al-Baghdadi. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq, 1978, 12–45. (Primary source for Frederick II's intellectual exchange).

[3] Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. Tarikh Ibn Khaldun. Vol. 4. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988, 250–275. (Reflecting on the final fall of the Sicilian Muslims).

the Renaissance were the direct descendants of the Kalbid and Norman-Arabic systems[1]. The "destruction" of the Islamic West was never a total erasure, but a deep-seated assimilation that remains visible in the faces and the stones of the South.

[1] Al-Himyari, Muhammad. Kitab al-Rawd al-Mi'tar. Edited by Ihsan Abbas. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risala, 1975, 110–135.

III- Islamic-Christian Relations between North Africa and Latin West

Lecture 13:

The Emergence of the Maghreb-Latin Frontier (8th–10th Century)

1. Beyond the Conquest: Defining the "Sea of the Maghreb"

Following the Islamic conquest of North Africa, the Maghreb emerged not just as a province of the East, but as a distinct maritime power. The relationship with the Latin West began through the establishment of **Ribats** (fortified monasteries) along the coasts of Ifriqiya (Tunisia) and the Central Maghreb. These were the primary sites of contact—mostly military—with the Latin world[1].

The early relationship was defined by the **Aghlabid naval expansion**. From their capital in Kairouan, the Aghlabids dominated the Central Mediterranean, forcing the Latin West (the Carolingians and the Papacy) to view the Maghreb as the "Gate of Islam." However, this era also saw the birth of **"Necessity Diplomacy."** When the Pope or the Dukes of Naples faced internal threats, they frequently sent envoys to the Maghreb to negotiate truces or hire naval mercenaries, proving that the frontier was porous from its inception[2].

2. The Rustamid and Idrissid Trade Hubs

While the Aghlabids were military-focused, the **Rustamid Kingdom** (Tahert, Algeria) and the **Idrissid Sultanate** (Fez, Morocco) developed an economic relationship with the Latin West. Tahert became a terminal for the trans-Saharan gold trade, attracting the interest of Latin merchants long before the Crusades[3].

The relationship here was based on **mercantile magnetism**. Despite the absence of formal treaties, Latin traders from the

[1] Abulafia, David. The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 245–270.
[2] Bramoullé, David. The Fatimids and the Sea (909–1171). Leiden: Brill, 2019, 60–95.
[3] Metcalfe, Alex. The Muslims of Medieval Italy. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, 5–25. (Focusing on the Ifriqiyan-Italian connection).

Frankish realms sought African gold and slaves, while the Maghreb dynasties sought European metals and furs. This "silent trade" laid the groundwork for the more formal commercial consulates of the later Middle Ages. The Maghreb was the "bank" of the Mediterranean, and the Latin West was its emerging client[1].

3. The Fatimid Ambition and the Italian Republics

The rise of the **Fatimid Caliphate** in 909 transformed the Maghreb into a center of global imperial competition. The Fatimids aimed to conquer the East, but to do so, they needed a powerful navy. This required a complex relationship with the Latin maritime centers like **Amalfi** and **Pisa**[2].

The relationship was characterized by **"Hostile Trade."** While the Fatimid fleet raided the Italian coasts, they simultaneously allowed Amalfitan merchants to settle in Mahdia (Tunisia). This was the birth of the **Funduq** (the merchant enclave), a revolutionary institutional framework where Latin Christians lived under Islamic law in exchange for trade privileges. This proves that even during periods of high religious tension, the Maghreb and the Latin world were building a shared legal language for Mediterranean commerce[3].

4. The Legal Frontier: Fiqh and the "Harbi"

The primary barrier to Maghreb-Latin relations was the legal definition of the "Other." In the Maghreb, the Maliki school of law categorized Latin Christians as *Harbis* (those at war). However, the needs of the state led to the development of the **Aman** (safe conduct)[4].

This legal evolution allowed Latin envoys to visit the courts of Kairouan and Fez safely. It was the first step toward the international

[1] Wickham, Chris. Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
[2] Picard, Christophe. La Mer et les musulmans d'Occident au Moyen Âge. Paris: PUF, 1997, 45–80.
[3] Sénac, Philippe. Le monde musulman et l'Occident médiéval (VIIIe-XIIIe siècle). Paris: Armand Colin, 2014, 88–110.
[4] Guichard, Pierre. L'Espagne et la Sicile musulmanes aux XIe et XIIe siècles. Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2000.

law of the Mediterranean[1]. The relationship was no longer just about the sword; it was about the **contract[2]**. The Maghreb jurists began to draft specific fatwas regarding trade with Christians, allowing for the exchange of essential goods like grain and cloth, effectively creating a "Common Market" of the Middle Ages[3].

[1] Al-Bakri, Abu Ubayd. Kitab al-Masalik wa-l-Mamalik. Edited by Adrian van Leeuwen. Tunis: Al-Dar al-Arabiya lil-Kitab, 1992, 115–140.

[2] Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. Tarikh Ibn Khaldun. Vol. 4. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988, 180–210.

[3] Al-Nuwayri, Ahmad. Nihayat al-Arab fi Funun al-Adab. Vol. 24. Cairo: Dar al-Kutub, 2002.

Lecture 14:

The Almoravid Empire and the Mediterranean Polarization (1040–1147)

1. The Sanhaja Revolution: A New Maghrebi Power

The rise of the **Almoravid Empire** (*al-Murabitun*) under Yusuf ibn Tashufin transformed the Maghreb from a collection of fragmented principalities into a unified Berber superpower. This shift fundamentally altered the relationship with the Latin West. For the first time, the Latin kingdoms—particularly the burgeoning maritime powers of **Genoa** and **Pisa** and the expanding **Kingdom of France**—confronted a centralized authority that controlled the entire Western Maghreb and the trans-Saharan gold routes[1].

The Almoravid identity was rooted in a rigorous Maliki reformism. Their relationship with Latin Christendom was characterized by a **"Theological Hardening."** Unlike the pragmatic Aghlabids, the Almoravids viewed the Latin West through the strict lens of *Jihad*. This ideological clarity was a response to the nascent Crusading spirit in Europe. The Almoravids provided the military and economic weight that allowed the Maghreb to stand as a formidable counter-pole to the Roman Catholic expansionism of the late 11th century [2].

2. The Gold Monopoly and the Latin Monetary Crisis

The most critical dimension of the Almoravid-Latin relationship was **economic**. By controlling the "Road of Gold" (*Tariq al-Dhahab*) from West Africa to the Mediterranean ports like Ceuta and Oran, the Almoravids became the primary suppliers of bullion to a gold-starved Europe[3].

The relationship was one of **Extractive Dependency**. The Latin West, during the 11th-century commercial revolution, desperately

[1] Bennison, Amira K. The Almoravid and Almohad Empires. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, 22–54.
[2] Messier, Ronald A. The Almoravids and the Meanings of Jihad. Praeger, 2010, 85–110.
[3] Abulafia, David. The Two Italies: Economic Relations between the Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. (On the role of Maghrebi gold).

needed gold for coinage. The Almoravid **Dinar** (known as the *Marabotino* in Latin sources) became the "Dollar of the Middle Ages." Even in the midst of religious conflict, Latin merchants from Marseille and Genoa flocked to the Maghreb's ports. This created a profound paradox: the Latin Church was preaching Crusades against the "Saracens," while Latin monarchs were striking coins that were direct imitations of Almoravid gold dinars to ensure their economic survival[1].

3. Naval Hegemony and the Siege of Mahdia (1087)

The relationship at sea was one of escalating violence and institutionalized piracy. The Almoravid navy, supported by their allies in the Central Maghreb, challenged the Italian maritime republics for control of the Western Mediterranean. However, the **Mahdia Campaign of 1087**, where a coalition of Pisa and Genoa attacked the Ifriqiyan coast, signaled a shift in the balance of power[2].

This campaign was a precursor to the Crusades. It demonstrated that the Latin West was now capable of launching deep-strike naval expeditions against the Maghreb heartland. The relationship became a **"War of Attrition"** for coastal control. In response, the Almoravids fortified the Maghreb's "Frontier Ports" (*Thughur*), creating a permanent state of maritime mobilization. This era saw the institutionalization of the *Kursan* (Corsair), where privateering became a state-sanctioned method of both economic gain and territorial defense against Latin naval encroachment[3].

4. The "Mozarab" Migrations and Cultural Leakage

A fascinating social dimension of this period was the forced or voluntary migration of Arabic-speaking Christians (**Mozarabs**) from Almoravid-controlled lands to the Maghreb and back to Europe. These communities acted as unintended cultural ambassadors[4].

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[1] Levtzion, Nehemia. Ancient Ghana and Mali. London: Methuen, 1973, 135–150. (Focusing on Almoravid trade routes).

[2] Lagardère, Vincent. Les Almoravides : Le djihâd saharien au XIe siècle. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998, 145–180.

[3] Picard, Christophe. L'Océan Atlantique musulman : de la conquête arabe à l'époque almohade. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1997.

[4] Sénac, Philippe. Les frontières de l'Islam : VIIIe-XIIe siècle. Paris: Armand Colin, 2002.

The relationship was one of **Involuntary Synthesis**. While the Almoravids were often viewed as "fanatics" by Latin chroniclers, the presence of Christian mercenaries in the Almoravid guard—and the arrival of Maghrebi products (paper, citrus, and refined sugar) in the markets of Southern France—proved that the "Berber Wall" was porous. The Maghreb was not an isolated fortress; it was a sophisticated civilizational block that was simultaneously fighting and feeding the Latin West. The Almoravid era established the "Maghrebi Style" in architecture and administration that would eventually fascinate the Latin kings of the next century.

Lecture 15:

The Almohad Caliphate—Philosophical Rigor and Total War (1147–1212)

1. The Rise of the Almohad Caliphate: A Global Geopolitical Shift

The transition from the Almoravids to the **Almohad Caliphate** (*al-Muwahhidun*) represents the most ideologically intense period in Maghreb-Latin relations. Founded by Ibn Tumart, the Almohads unified the entire Maghreb—from the Atlantic coast of Morocco to the borders of Egypt—into a single, revolutionary state[1].

The relationship with the Latin West shifted from a struggle over trade routes to a **"Clash of Universalisms."** The Almohads did not merely claim to be local kings; they claimed the Caliphate, rejecting the religious legitimacy of both the Eastern Abbasids and the Western Latin Papacy. For the Latin kingdoms of France, Aragon, and the rising Italian maritime republics, the Almohad Caliphate was viewed as an existential "Monolithic Threat" that controlled the gateway to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic[2].

2. The Diplomacy of Force: The 1154 and 1160 Embassies

Despite the Almohad doctrine of absolute religious purity, the relationship was marked by a sophisticated **"Armed Diplomacy."** The Almohad Caliphs, particularly Abd al-Mu'min and Abu Yaqub Yusuf, recognized that the Latin maritime powers (Genoa and Pisa) were essential for technical naval expertise and as conduits for timber and iron[3].

The relationship was characterized by **Asymmetric Treaties**. In 1154 and 1160, Genoese and Pisan ambassadors arrived at the Almohad court in Marrakesh. The Caliphs dictated terms of trade that were highly favorable to the Maghreb, granting "Aman"

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[1] Bennison, Amira K. The Almoravid and Almohad Empires. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, 65–110.

[2] Abulafia, David. The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 280–310.

[3] Fromherz, Allen J. The Almohads: The Rise of an Islamic Empire. London: I.B. Tauris, 2010.

(protection) to merchants only if they agreed to provide raw materials necessary for the Almohad war machine. This proves that even during a period of "Holy War," the Maghreb functioned as a rational geopolitical actor that used its control over African gold to bend Latin economic interests to its strategic needs[1].

3. The Mediterranean Front: Total War and Naval Innovation

The Almohad era saw the development of a professionalized navy that briefly achieved **Maghrebi Naval Hegemony**. The Almohad fleet was organized into a centralized command, utilizing advanced shipbuilding techniques that influenced later Latin naval architecture[2].

The relationship at sea was one of **Total War**. The Almohads launched massive naval expeditions against the coasts of Southern Europe and the Balearic Islands. However, this pressure forced the Latin West to innovate. The Italian republics began to build larger, more stable vessels (galleys and cogs) to withstand Almohad attacks. The Mediterranean became a "Military Laboratory," where the constant friction between Maghrebi and Latin naval tactics led to the modernization of maritime warfare that would eventually characterize the later medieval period[3].

4. Intellectual Divergence: The Shadow of Averroes (Ibn Rushd)

While the military relationship was defined by conflict, the intellectual relationship was defined by a profound **"Extractive Curiosity"** from the Latin West. The Almohad court was the patron of **Ibn Rushd (Averroes)** and **Ibn Tufayl**, whose works revolutionized philosophy[4].

The relationship was one of **Intellectual Transfer through Conflict**. Even as Almohad armies faced Latin knights, Latin scholars in translation centers were desperately seeking the

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[1] Fletcher, Richard. Moorish Spain. University of California Press, 1993. (On the Almohad influence on the broader West).

[2] Picard, Christophe. Le monde musulman du XIe au XIIIe siècle : États, sociétés, économies. Paris: Sedes, 2000.

[3] Bresson, Anne-Marie. Les Almohades : Une dynastie berbère. Paris: Perrin, 2005.

[4] Urvoy, Dominique. Averroès : Les ambitions d'un intellectuel musulman. Paris: Flammarion, 1998. (Crucial for the intellectual link to the West).

philosophical commentaries produced in Marrakesh and Seville. The Almohad emphasis on *Tawhid* (divine unity) and rationalism inadvertently provided the intellectual tools that Latin theologians like Thomas Aquinas would later use to reconcile faith and reason. The Maghreb was the intellectual "Sun" of the 12th century, and the Latin West was its most eager student, even while it acted as its most determined enemy[1].

[1] Al-Marrakushi, Abd al-Wahid. Al-Mu'jib fi Talkhis Akhbar al-Maghrib. Edited by Reinhart Dozy. Leiden: Brill, 1847. (The primary contemporary Almohad chronicle).

Lecture 16:

The 1212 Watershed and the Rise of Successor States—The Marinids, Hafsids, and Zayyanids (1212–1300)

1. The Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa and the Fragmentation of Power

The crushing defeat of the Almohad army at the Battle of **Las Navas de Tolosa (1212)** acted as a seismic shift in the relationship between the Maghreb and the Latin West. While the battle took place in Iberia, its most profound consequence was the internal collapse of Almohad central authority in North Africa. This created a political vacuum that led to the rise of three distinct "Successor States": the **Marinids** in Morocco, the **Zayyanids** in Tlemcen (Central Maghreb), and the **Hafsids** in Ifriqiya (Tunisia)[1].

The relationship with the Latin West shifted from "Total War" to **"Strategic Multi-polarity."** For the first time, the Latin kingdoms of Aragon and France, and the Italian republics of Genoa and Venice, found they could play these Maghrebi states against one another. The Maghreb was no longer a monolithic caliphate but a collection of rival sultanates, each seeking Latin allies or trade to secure their own survival[2].

2. The Hafsid Sultanate: The Diplomatic Bridge to the Latin World

The **Hafsid Dynasty** (1229–1574) in Tunisia represented the most stable and diplomatically engaged of the successor states. Their relationship with the Latin West was defined by the **commercialization of peace**. The Hafsids established formal diplomatic ties with the Crown of Aragon and the Republic of Genoa, institutionalizing the system of permanent trade consulates[3].

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[1] Abulafia, David. The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, 1200–1500. London: Longman, 1997, 45–72.

[2] Bennison, Amira K. The Almoravid and Almohad Empires. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016. (Final chapters on the transition).

[3] Lowe, Alfonso. The Barbary Coast: Algeria under the Turks. London: Cassell, 1975. (Introductory history on the Hafsid-Zayyanid era).

The relationship was characterized by **Complex Vassalage**. Paradoxically, as the Hafsids claimed the title of Caliph for themselves, they simultaneously paid "protection money" to the Kings of Sicily (the Hohenstaufen and later Angevins) to prevent naval blockades. This demonstrates a transition toward a **"Pragmatic Mediterraneanism,"** where religious ideology was frequently subordinated to the economic benefits of the trans-Saharan trade routes ending in the ports of Tunis and Bona[1].

3. St. Louis and the Tunis Crusade (1270)

The relationship faced a critical test during the **Eighth Crusade (1270)**, led by King Louis IX of France (St. Louis). Unlike previous crusades directed at the Holy Land, this expedition targeted Tunis. The intent was to force the conversion of the Hafsid Sultan al-Mustansir or to seize the city as a strategic base[2].

The failure of the crusade—marked by the death of St. Louis from plague—resulted in a remarkable diplomatic reversal. The resulting **Treaty of Tunis (1270)** between the Hafsids and the European coalition led by Charles of Anjou was one of the most comprehensive trade agreements of the Middle Ages. It guaranteed the right of Christian monks to preach (though not convert) in Tunis and ensured that Latin merchants could travel safely throughout the kingdom. The relationship moved from a failed crusade to a **profitable coexistence**, cementing Tunisia's role as the primary Latin gateway to Africa[3].

4. The Marinids and the "War of the Strait" (1275–1300)

While the Hafsids traded, the **Marinids** (1244–1465) in Morocco maintained a more militaristic relationship with the Latin West. Their strategy focused on the **Control of the Strait of Gibraltar**. The Marinid Sultans viewed their interventions in al-

[1] Dufourcq, Charles-Emmanuel. L'Espagne catalane et le Maghreb aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles. Paris: PUF, 1966. (Essential for the Aragon-Hafsid trade relationship).
[2] Brunschvig, Robert. La Berbérie orientale sous les Hafsides. 2 Vols. Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1940–1947. (The definitive academic study of the Hafsids).
[3] Kably, Mohamed. Société, pouvoir et religion au Maroc à la fin du Moyen Âge. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1986.

Andalus as essential for the defense of the Maghreb from Latin (Castilian and Aragonese) naval expansion[1].

The relationship was defined by **Naval Containment**. The Marinids developed the "Strait Policy," utilizing their superior Berber cavalry to support the Nasrids of Granada while seeking to keep the Christian fleets at bay. However, this period also saw the rise of the **"Mercenary Exchange."** Thousands of Christian knights from the Latin West (known as *Elches*) served in the Marinid Royal Guard in Fez, while Marinid architects influenced the burgeoning Mudéjar styles of Iberia. The relationship was a violent but intimate cycle of raids and cultural borrowing, where the Strait acted more as a bridge than a barrier[2].

[1] Valérian, Dominique. Bougie, port du Maghreb (1067–1510). Rome: École française de Rome, 2006. (Crucial for the study of Latin trade in the Central Maghreb).

[2] Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. Tarikh Ibn Khaldun. Vol. 7. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988, 150–190. (The primary source for the rise of the successor states).

Lecture 17:

The Institutionalization of Trade—Funduqs, Consuls, and the Mediterranean Common Market (1300–1350)

1. The Era of the Commercial Treaty: From Piracy to Policy

By the turn of the 14th century, the relationship between the Maghreb states and the Latin West had matured into a highly codified system. The previous era of "Ad Hoc" truces was replaced by **Permanent Commercial Treaties** (*Mu'ahadat*). These documents, drafted in both Arabic and Latin (or Romance), regulated everything from customs duties (*Ushur*) to the legal status of shipwrecks[1].

The relationship was defined by **Economic Reciprocity**. The Maghreb was no longer just a source of gold; it was a vital market for European textiles (especially Flemish and Italian woolens) and a supplier of essential commodities like salt, hides, wax, and alum. This interdependence created a "Mediterranean Common Market" where the political elites of the Marinid, Zayyanid, and Hafsid sultanates derived a significant portion of their revenue from Christian trade, incentivizing them to protect Latin merchants even during periods of peripheral conflict[2].

2. The Funduq: The Micro-Cosmos of Coexistence

The central institution of this relationship was the **Funduq** (from the Greek *pandokeion*, often called *Fondaco* in Latin). These were fortified urban complexes granted to specific Latin nations (e.g., the Funduq of the Genoese in Tunis or the Funduq of the Catalans in Oran). Within these walls, a remarkable degree of **Extra-territorial Autonomy** was practiced[3].

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[1] Abulafia, David. The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, 1200–1500. London: Longman, 1997, 110–135.

[2] Valérian, Dominique. "The Pisan Consulate in Tunis in the 13th Century." In The Italian City-States as International Actors. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

[3] Constable, Olivia Remie. Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Religion in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 158–205.

The relationship within the Funduq was governed by a "dual legalism." While the exterior was under the jurisdiction of the Sultan's officials (the *Sahib al-Diwan*), the interior was governed by the **Consul**—an official appointed by the home city (like Pisa or Barcelona) to judge disputes among his own countrymen. This system allowed Latin Christians to live, pray, and trade in the heart of the Maghreb while maintaining their own communal laws, representing a sophisticated early form of diplomatic immunity and multicultural urbanism[1].

3. The Consul: The Diplomatic Pivot

The emergence of the **Latin Consul** in Maghrebi ports was a revolutionary development in international relations. Unlike a modern ambassador, the medieval consul was a merchant-judge. His primary duty was to maintain the "Aman" (Safe Conduct) and ensure that his nation's merchants did not violate local customs or the Sultan's monopolies[2].

The relationship was one of **Constant Negotiation**. Consuls were often the primary source of intelligence for Latin kings regarding Maghrebi political shifts. Conversely, the Sultan's court utilized the consuls as hostages or leverage during diplomatic disputes. This created a professional class of "Mediterranean Intermediaries"—often bilingual and culturally fluent—who smoothed over the friction between the Sharia-based legal system of the Maghreb and the Roman/Merchant law of the Latin West[3].

4. The Gold-Wool Exchange and the "Bullion Famine"

Economically, the 14th-century relationship was dominated by the **Gold-Textile Axis**. The Maghreb continued to be the primary conduit for Sudanese gold. In exchange, the Latin West exported mass-produced textiles and, controversially, weapons and timber—

[1] Lopez, Robert S., and Irving W. Raymond. Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, 75–98.

[2] Dufourcq, Charles-Emmanuel. L'Espagne catalane et le Maghreb aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles. Paris: PUF, 1966. (The definitive work on the Consular system).

[3] Brunschvig, Robert. La Berbérie orientale sous les Hafsides. Vol. 2. Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1947, 420–460.

despite frequent Papal prohibitions against trading "strategic goods" with Muslims[1].

This relationship saved the Latin West from a total "Bullion Famine" during the economic crises of the 14th century. The Maghreb states, in turn, became dependent on Latin imports to clothe their urban populations and equip their armies. This **Mutual Economic Capture** meant that even when the Marinids and the Crown of Aragon were at war in the Strait of Gibraltar, the merchants of Barcelona were often protected in the Funduqs of Morocco. The "Business of the Mediterranean" had become too big for any single monarch to shut down for purely religious reasons[2].

[1] Valérian, Dominique. Bougie, port du Maghreb (1067–1510). Rome: École française de Rome, 2006, 215–250.

[2] Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. Tarikh Ibn Khaldun. Vol. 6. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988, 310–345. (On the administrative role of the Diwan in managing foreign trade).

Lecture 18:

The Darker Exchange—Slavery, Privateering, and the Redemption of Captives (1350–1400)

1. The Economy of Violence: Privateering as a State Tool

By the mid-14th century, the relationship between the Maghreb and the Latin West was characterized by a profound duality: while official commerce flourished in the *Funduqs*, a parallel "Economy of Violence" dominated the sea. **Privateering** (*Kursan*) was not mere piracy; it was a state-sanctioned activity where the Marinid, Zayyanid, and Hafsid sultans—as well as Latin monarchs in Aragon and Italy—issued licenses to captains to seize the ships and subjects of enemy nations[1].

The relationship was defined by **"Calculated Insecurity."** For the Maghreb, privateering was a defensive response to Latin naval superiority and a means of capturing human capital. For the Latin West, it was a way to disrupt Maghrebi trade and secure labor. This created a cycle where the Mediterranean became a "Frontier of Capture," where every merchant ship was a potential prize and every passenger a potential slave[2].

2. The Human Commodity: Slavery and Social Integration

Captives were the most valuable "product" of this darker exchange. Thousands of Latin Christians—sailors, merchants, and coastal villagers—were taken to the slave markets of Tunis, Algiers, and Fez. Conversely, Maghrebi Muslims were seized and sold in the markets of Valencia, Barcelona, and Genoa[3].

The relationship was one of **Involuntary Social Penetration**. In the Maghreb, Christian slaves often served in the Sultan's palace or as specialized artisans, sometimes rising to positions of significant

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[1] Davis, Robert C. Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. (Contains essential background on the medieval origins of the trade).

[2] Brodman, James William. Ransoming Captives in Crusader Spain. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986. (Crucial for understanding the Mercedarian order).

[3] Friedman, Ellen G. Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.

influence as "Renegades" (converts to Islam). In the Latin West, Muslim slaves were primarily used in domestic service or agricultural labor. This created a paradoxical "intimacy" where the two cultures were deeply embedded within each other's households through the medium of bondage. The slave was both an "enemy" and a vital component of the domestic economy[1].

3. The Mercy Brokers: The Mercedarians and Trinitarians

The tragedy of captivity led to the institutionalization of the **Redemption of Captives**. Specialized Latin religious orders, such as the **Mercedarians** (Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy) and the **Trinitarians**, were founded specifically to negotiate the release of Christian prisoners in the Maghreb[2].

The relationship was mediated by these **"Mercy Brokers."** These friars were the only Latin Christians allowed to travel freely through the Maghreb interior. They acted as diplomatic couriers, carrying large sums of gold and letters of credit to the Sultan's court. This necessitated a high degree of trust between the Islamic authorities and the Christian religious orders. In the Maghreb, specialized officials known as the *Alfaqueques* (from the Arabic *al-fakkak*, the redeemer) worked with the friars to verify identities and negotiate prices, creating a professionalized legal framework for the "business of mercy"[3].

4. The Ransom Contract: Financial and Legal Synthesis

Ransoming was not a random act of charity but a strictly codified legal process. It required a **Ransom Contract**, which was often a complex financial instrument involving credit networks that stretched from Florence to Marrakesh[4].

The relationship was governed by the **Lex Mercatoria** (Merchant Law). Captives were often held as "collateral" in larger commercial

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[1] Abulafia, David. The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 350–380.

[2] Cipollone, Giulio. Christianisme et Islam : Le conflit et l'étreinte. Paris: Cerf, 1992. (On the Trinitarian missions in North Africa).

[3] Dufourcq, Charles-Emmanuel. L'Espagne catalane et le Maghreb aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles. Paris: PUF, 1966. (For the role of the Alfaqueques).

[4] Valérian, Dominique. Bougie, port du Maghreb (1067–1510). Rome: École française de Rome, 2006.

disputes between nations. If a Genoese merchant was cheated in Tunis, the Sultan might seize any Genoese sailors in port as compensation. This systemic "hostage-taking" meant that the legal status of an individual was tied to the diplomatic standing of their nation. It forced the Latin West and the Maghreb to maintain constant communication; the need to free captives was perhaps the most consistent driver of diplomatic correspondence during the late 14th century[1].

[1] Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman. Tarikh Ibn Khaldun. Vol. 6. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988. (Reflections on the rise of the corsairs).

Lecture 19:

Legacy and Memory—The Transition to the Modern Era (1492–1550)

1. 1492: The Global Re-alignment

The fall of Granada in 1492 was not just the end of Al-Andalus; it was a catalyst that fundamentally redefined the relationship between the Maghreb and the Latin West. The Maghreb became the primary refuge for hundreds of thousands of **Moriscos** and Jews. This demographic influx brought technical skills, administrative knowledge, and a deep-seated grievance against the Iberian powers[1].

The relationship shifted to one of **"Defensive Confrontation."** The Maghreb was no longer a collection of trade-oriented sultanates but a "Frontier of Resistance." The arrival of the refugees transformed Maghrebi cities like Rabat, Tetouan, and Tunis into centers of anti-Latin activity. The Latin West, now unified under the Spanish and Portuguese crowns, viewed the Maghreb as a "Nest of Pirates," while the Maghreb viewed the Latin world as an existential threat to the Islamic identity of North Africa[2].

2. The Spanish "Presidios" and the North African Reaction

Following 1492, Spain launched a series of campaigns to seize key North African ports. The capture of **Melilla (1497)**, **Mers el-Kébir (1505)**, **Oran (1509)**, and the **Peñón of Algiers (1510)** created a chain of Spanish enclaves known as *Presidios*[3].

The relationship became one of **"Mutual Entrenchment."** The Spanish strategy was to control the Maghreb from the coast without invading the interior. This "Presidio System" forced the Maghrebi tribes and religious leaders to seek new protectors. This search for a counter-weight led to the invitation of the **Barbarossa brothers** and the eventual Ottoman intervention in the Central and Eastern

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[1] Hess, Andrew C. The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010, pp. 55–82.

[2] Abulafia, David. The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 385–412.

[3] Bennison, Amira K. The Almoravid and Almohad Empires. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, pp. 290–315. (On the transition of power).

Maghreb. The relationship was no longer just bilateral (Maghreb-Latin); it became part of the "Great Game" between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburgs[1].

3. The Cultural "Ghost" in the Machine

Despite the intense military conflict, the 800-year relationship left a profound cultural legacy. The Maghreb and the Latin West had traded, fought, and lived together for so long that their identities were permanently intertwined. This is visible in the **"Lingua Franca"** (Sabir)—a pidgin language composed of Italian, Spanish, Arabic, and French that remained the primary language of Mediterranean trade and diplomacy until the 19th century[2].

The relationship survived as a **"Material Legacy."** The hydraulic systems, the culinary traditions (such as the use of North African spices in Italian cooking), and the architectural techniques (the influence of Maghrebi fortifications on Latin military engineering) prove that the "Islamic West" and the "Christian West" were never truly separate. Even as they became enemies, they remained "Civilizational Siblings" who shared a common Mediterranean vocabulary[3].

4. Conclusion: From Middle Ages to Modernity

The relationship between the Maghreb and the Latin West in the Middle Ages was a cycle of **Conflict, Commerce, and Communication**. It moved from the early naval raids of the Aghlabids to the sophisticated commercial consulates of the Hafsids, and finally to the colonial confrontations of the Portuguese and Spanish[4].

The Maghreb served as the essential "other" against which the Latin West defined itself. Simultaneously, the Latin West was the

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[1] Cipolla, Carlo M. Before the Industrial Revolution: European Society and Economy, 1000–1700. New York: Norton, 1994, pp. 210–235. (On the Sabir language and trade).

[2] Braudel, Fernand. La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II. Vol. 1. Paris: Armand Colin, 1949, pp. 450–510. (The classic study of the 16th-century transition).

[3] Valérian, Dominique. Bougie, port du Maghreb (1067–1510). Rome: École française de Rome, 2006, pp. 412–445.

[4] Boucheron, Patrick. Histoire mondiale de la France. Paris: Seuil, 2017, pp. 215–230. (On the French-North African early ties).

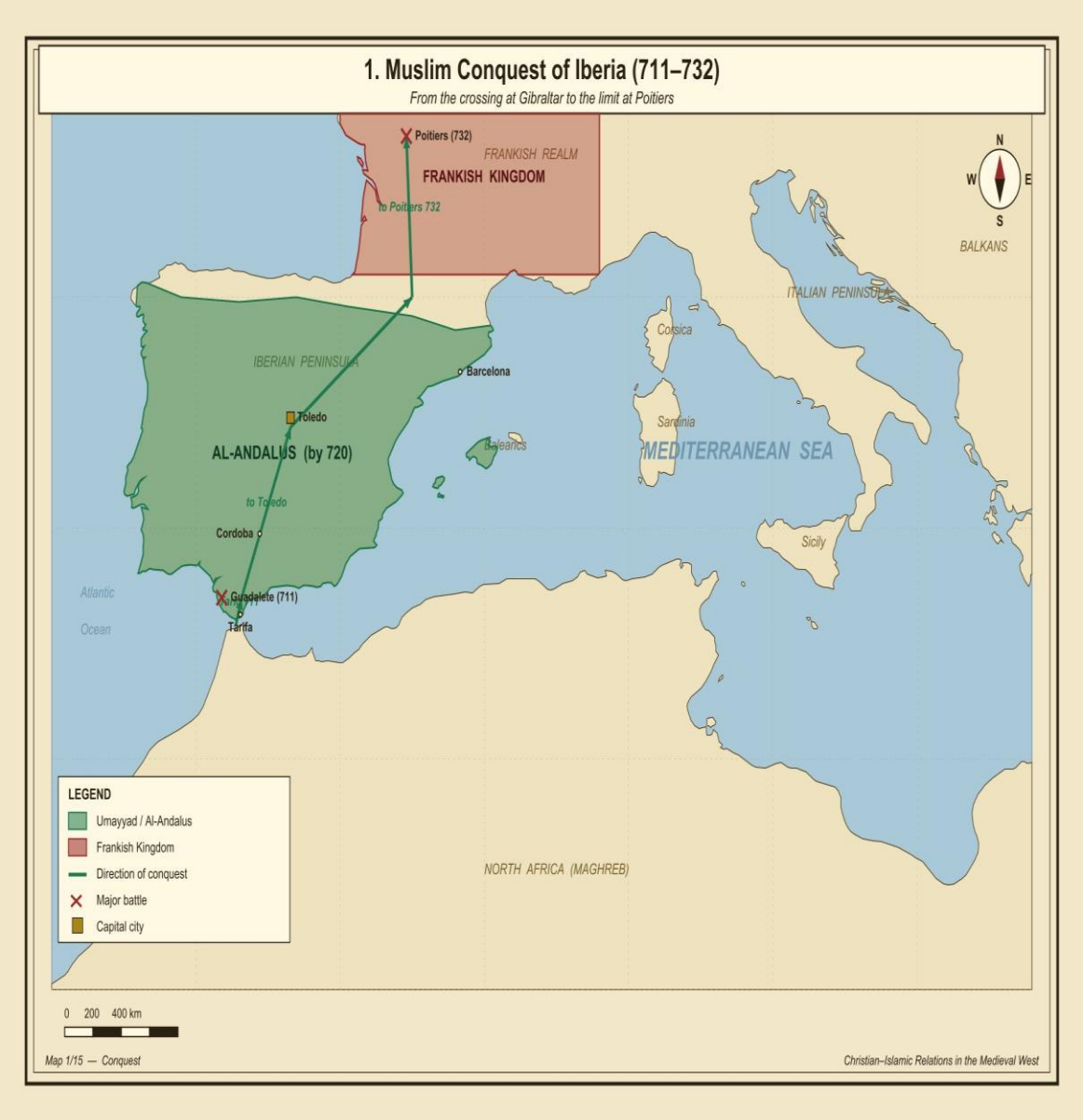
mirror in which the Maghreb viewed its own political and religious resilience. This shared history is the foundation of the modern Mediterranean world—a space that remains, to this day, a place of both intense friction and indispensable cooperation[1].

[1] Al-Nasiri, Ahmad. Al-Istiqsa li-Akhbar Duwal al-Maghrib al-Aqsa. Vol. 4. Casablanca: Dar al-Kitab, 1954, pp. 112–145. (Details of the Spanish fall of Oran).

Appendices

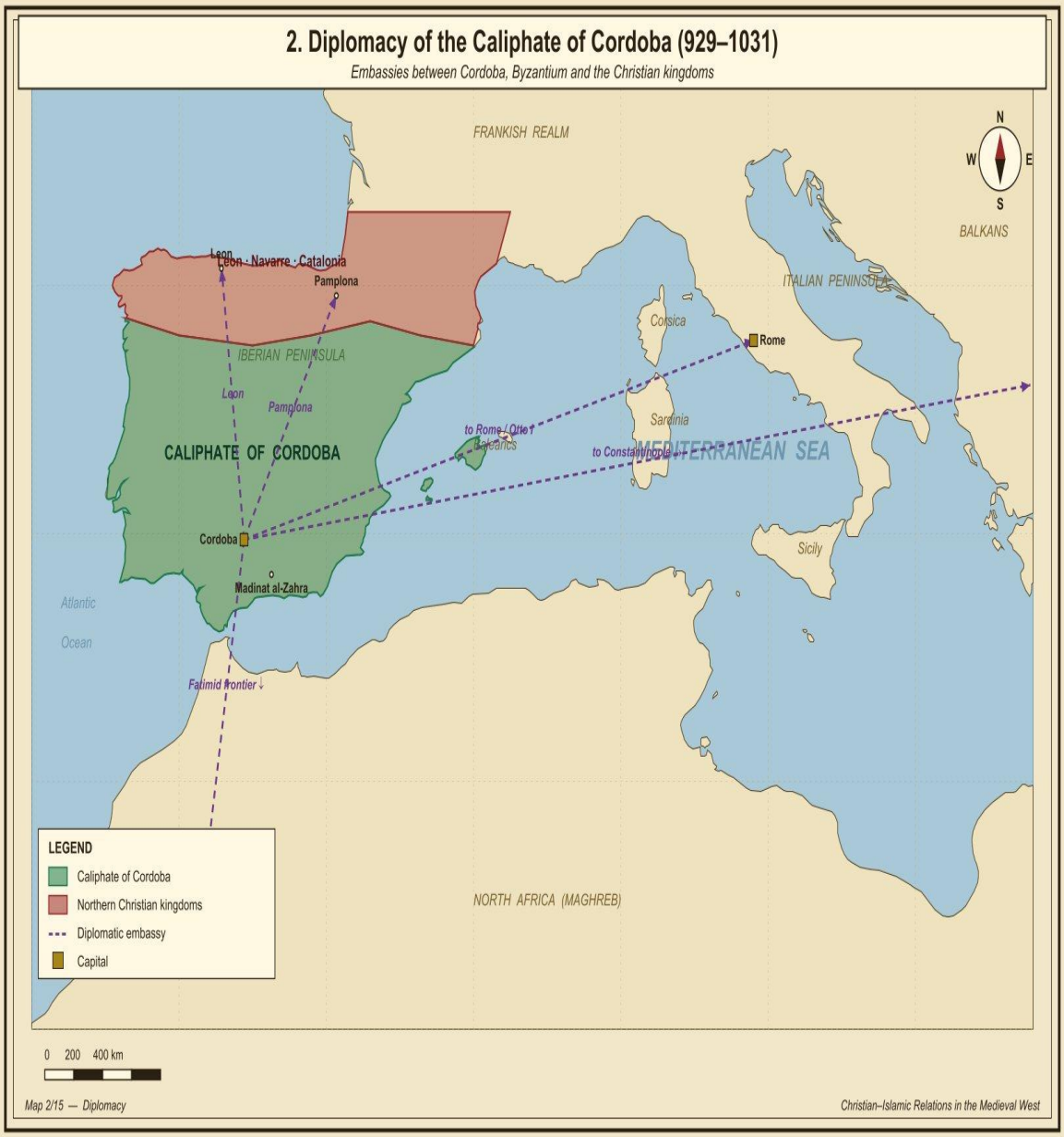
Appendix No. 01

The Muslim Conquest of Andalusia (711–732)



Appendix No. 02

Diplomacy of the Caliphate of Cordoba

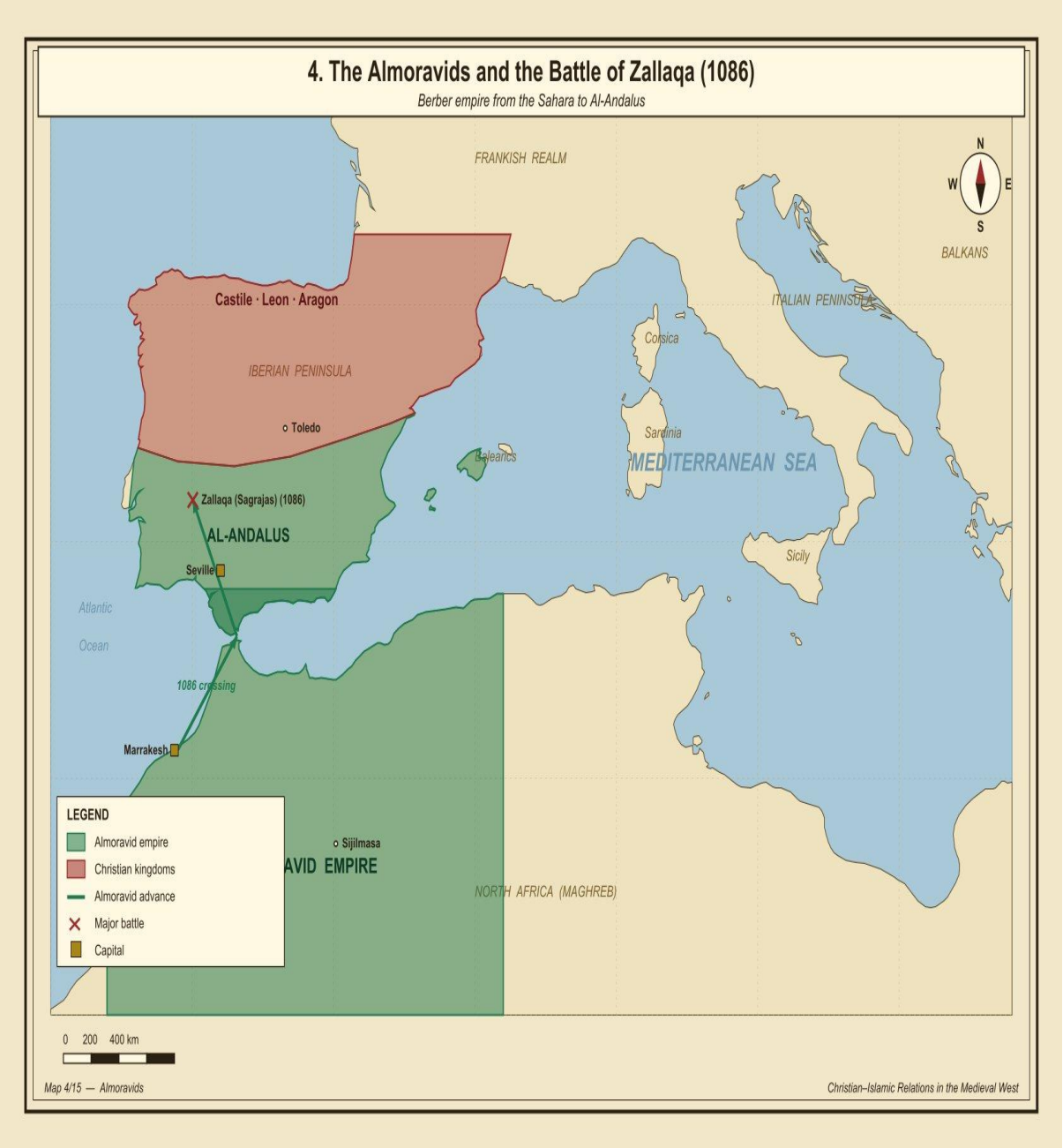


Appendix No. 03

The Taifa Kings and the Beginning of the Reconquista

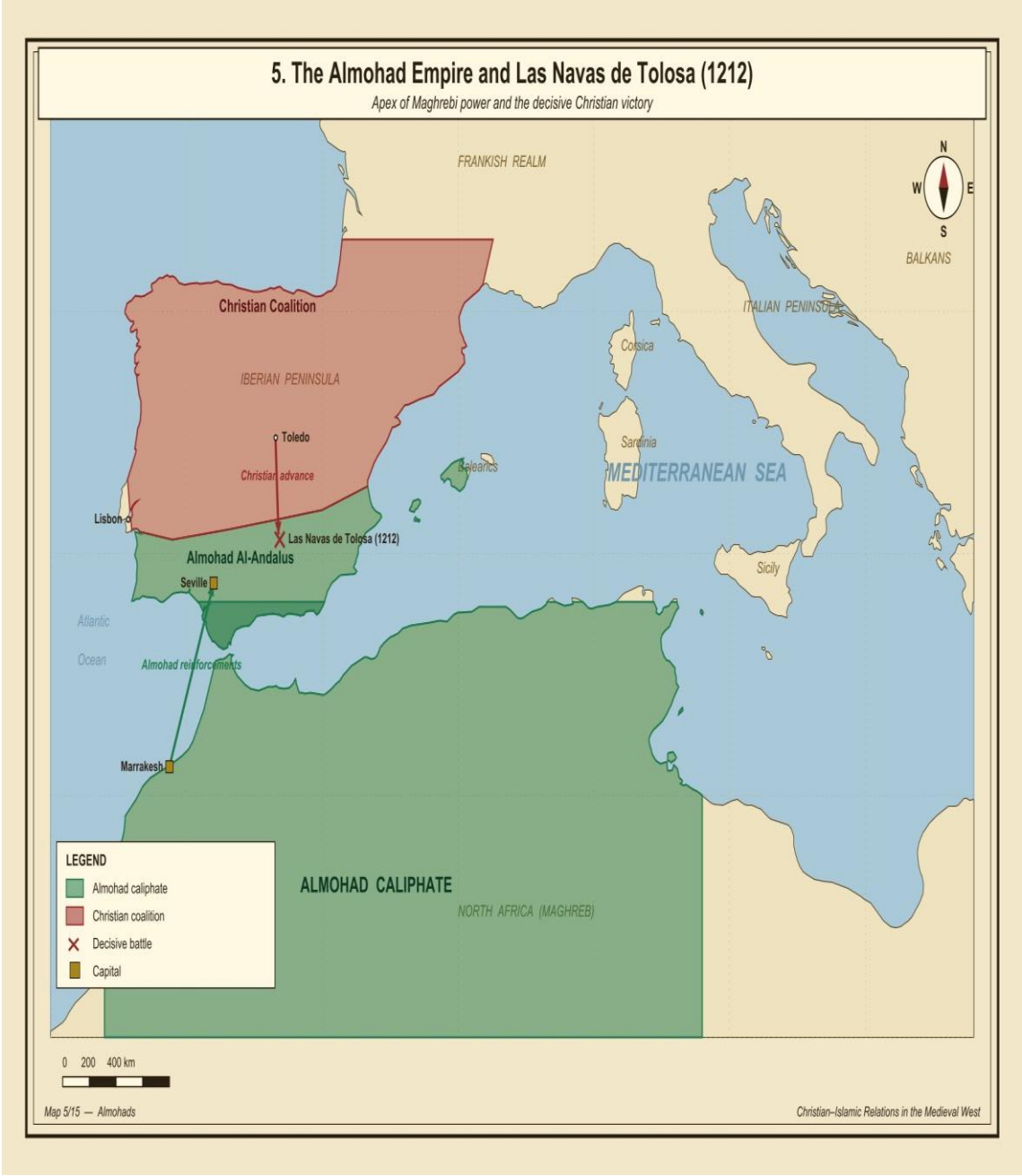
Appendix No. 04

The Almoravid Crossing and the Battle of Zallaqa



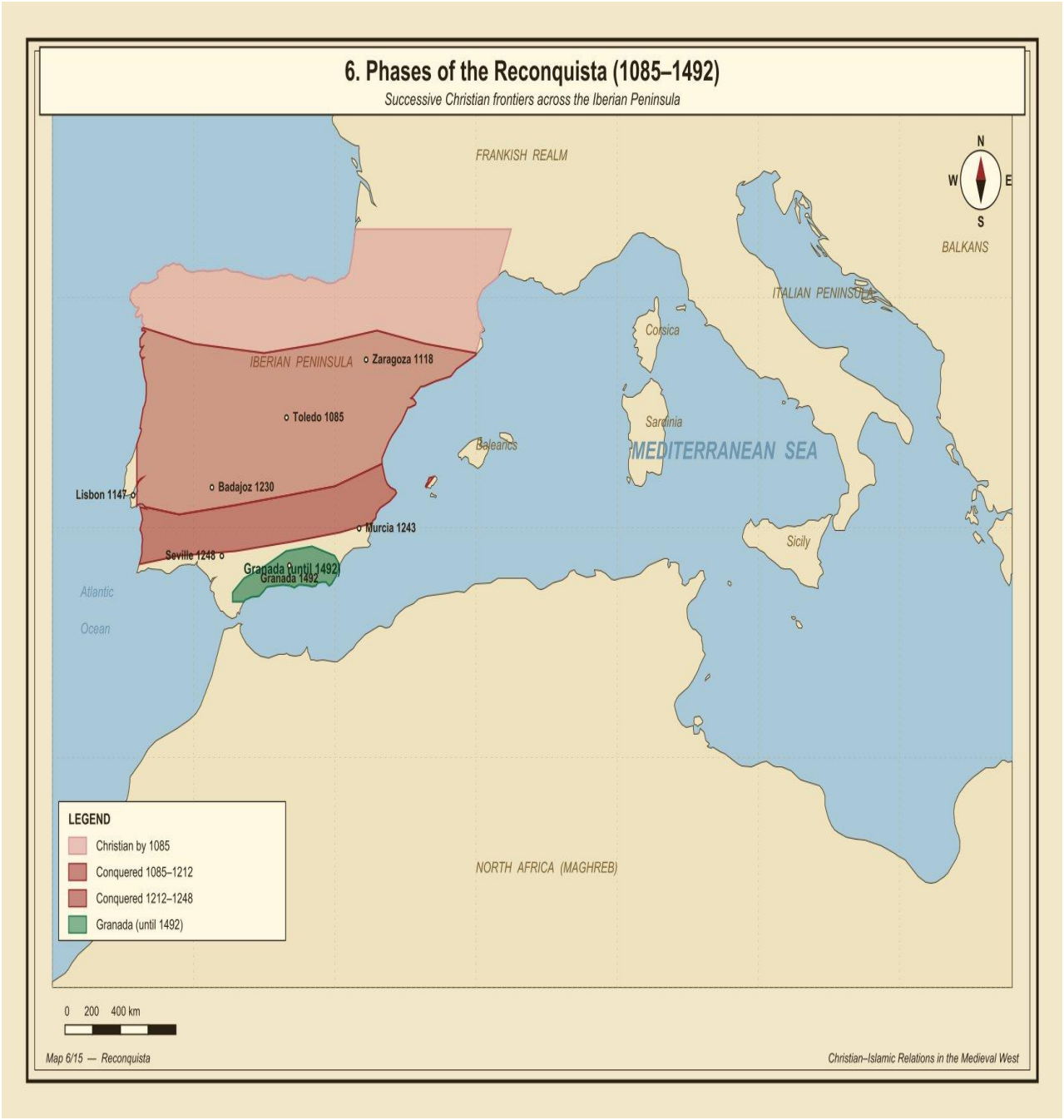
Appendix No. 05

The Almohad State and the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa



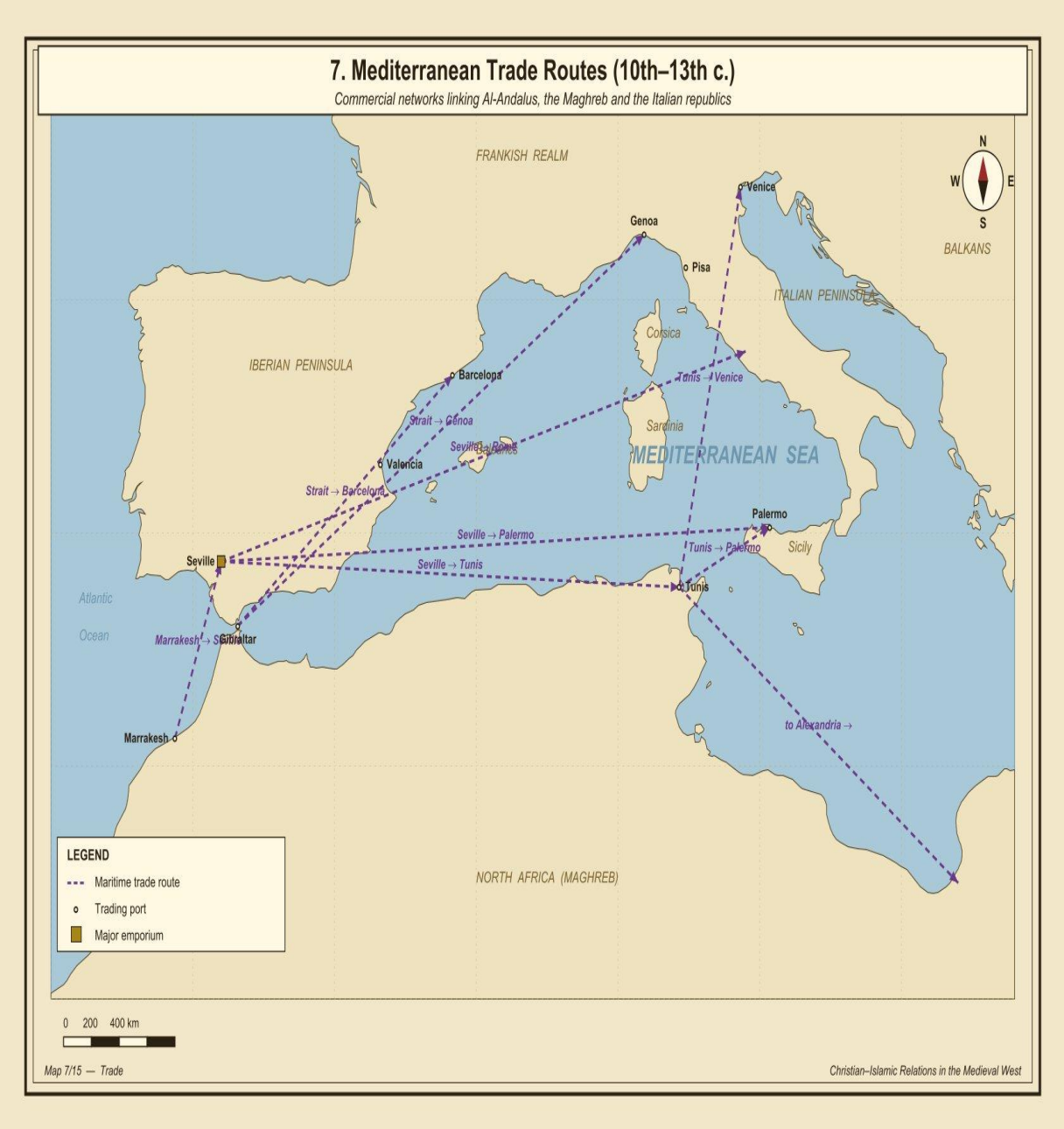
Appendix No. 06

Stages of the Christian Reconquista 1085–1492



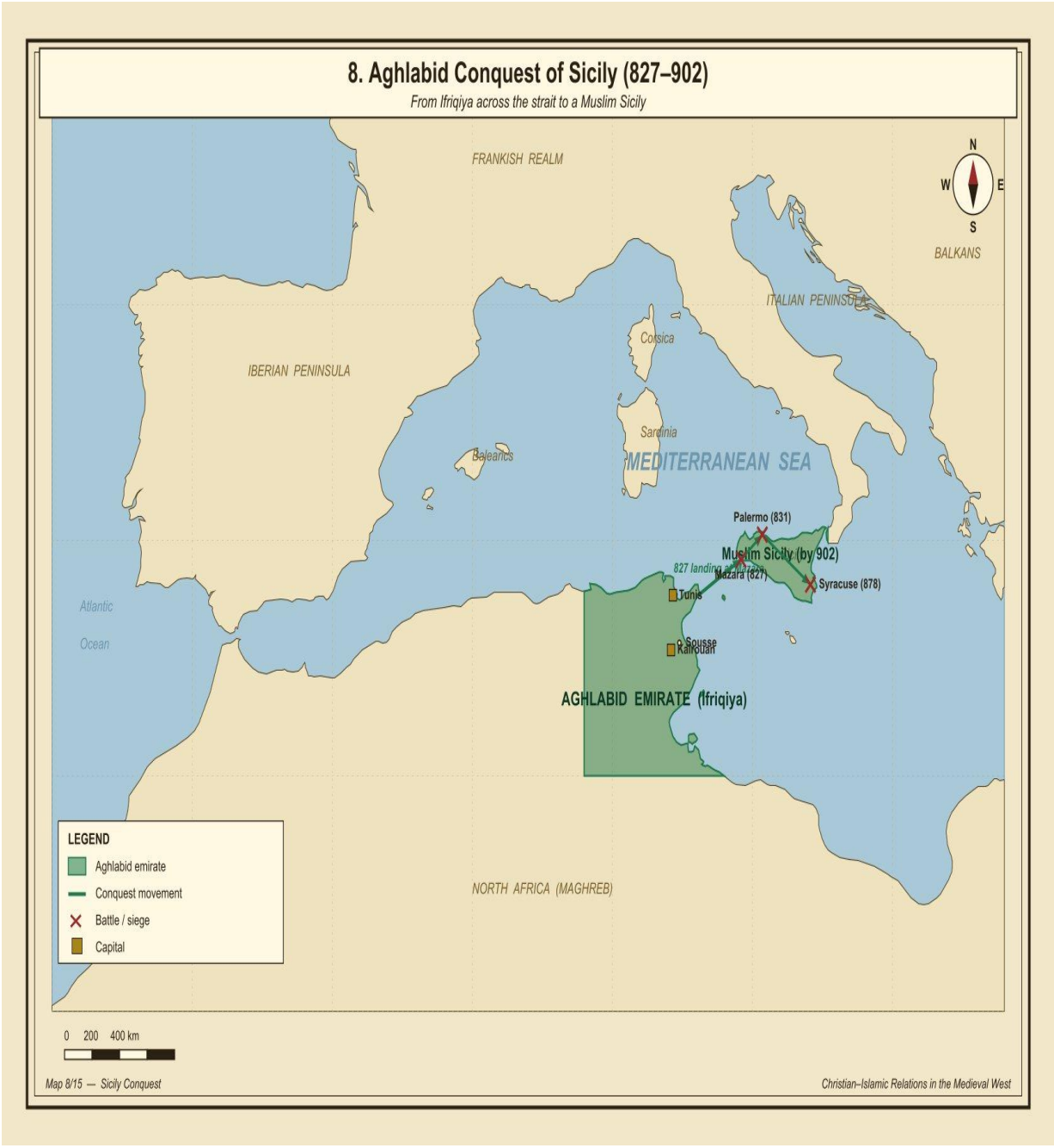
Appendix No. 07

Mediterranean Trade Routes



Appendix No. 08

The Aghlabid Conquest of Sicily

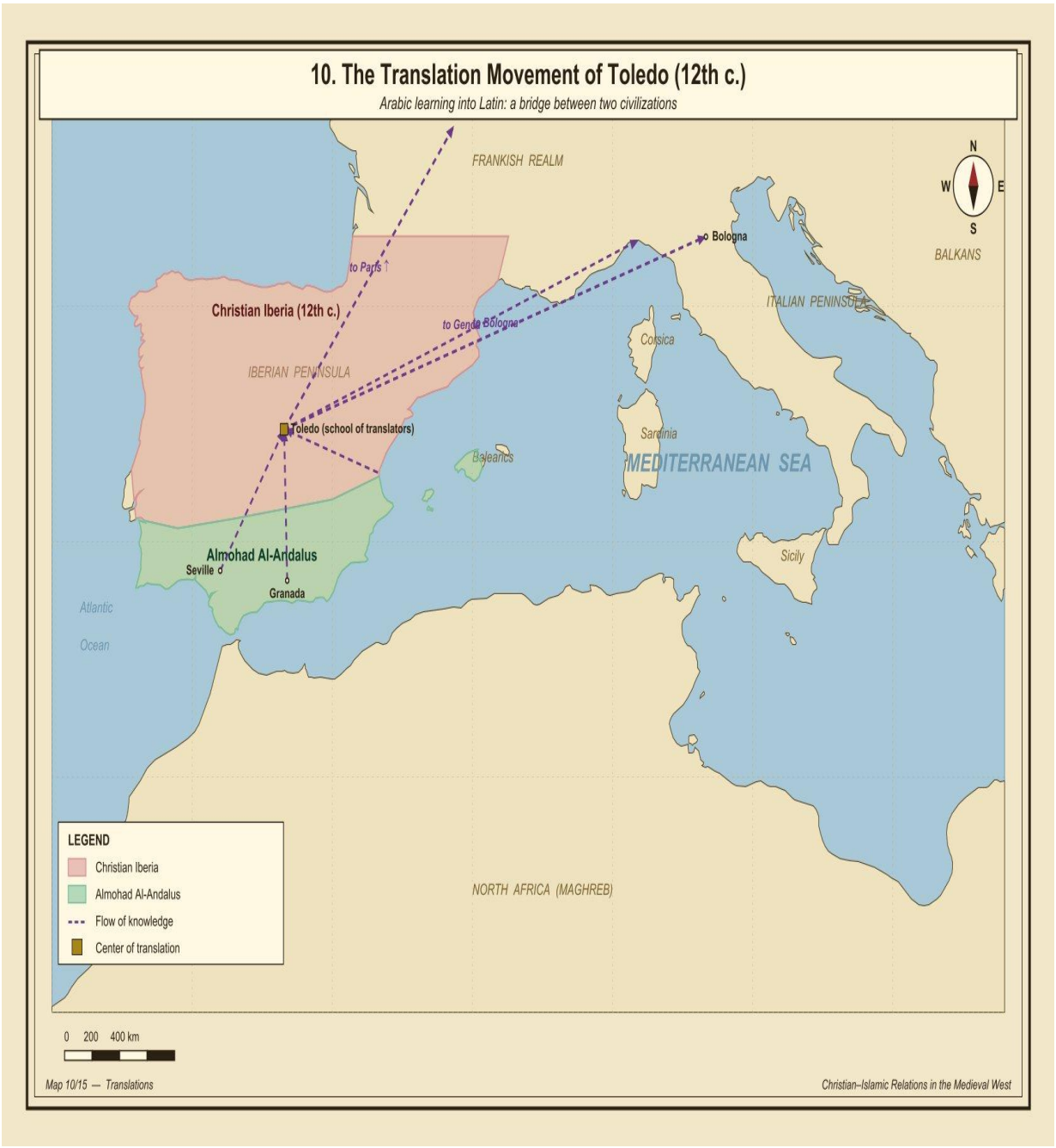


Appendix No. 09

Multicultural Norman Sicily

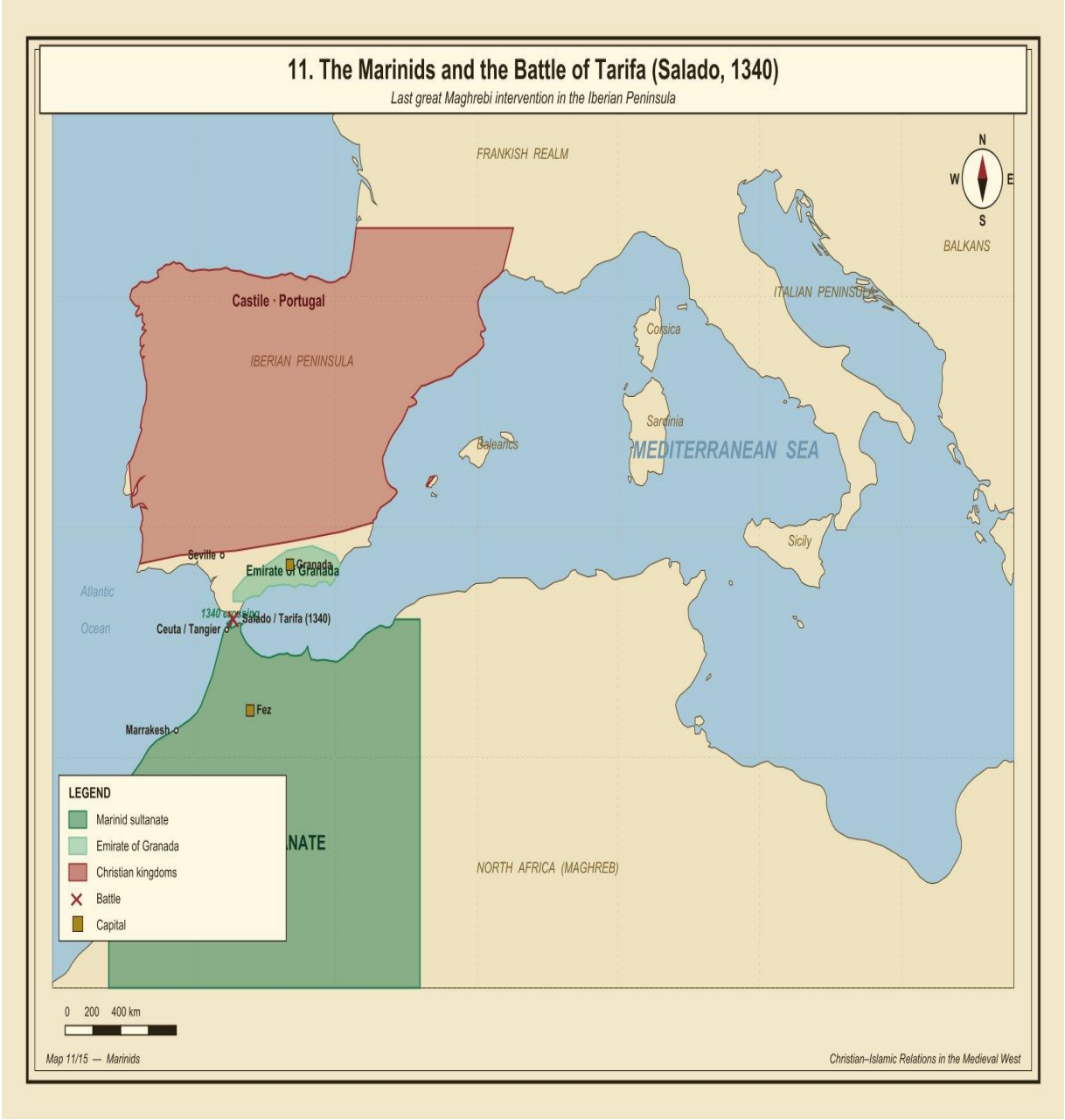
Appendix No. 10

The Translation Movement (The Toledo School)



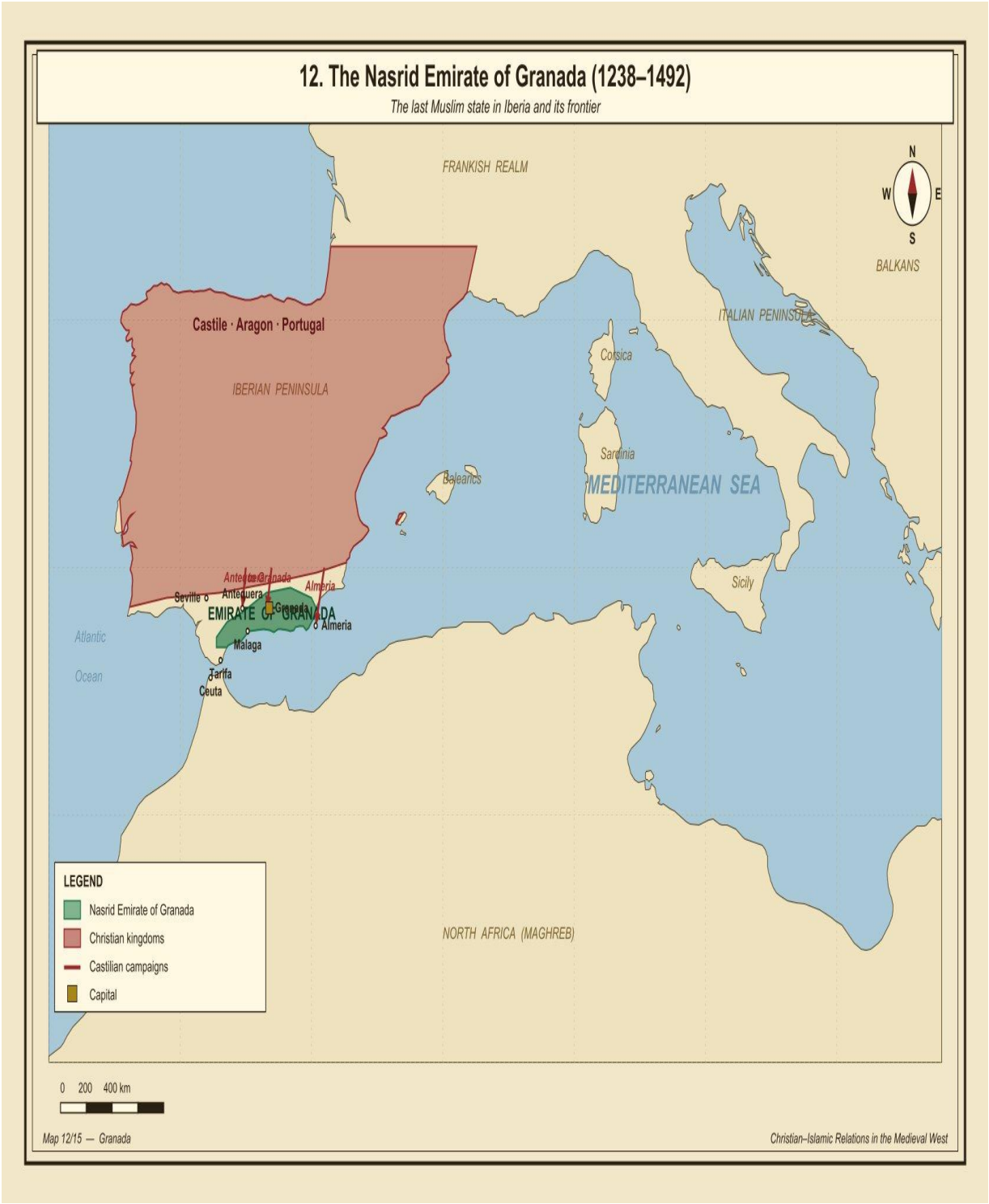
Appendix No. 11

The Marinids and the Battle of Tarifa



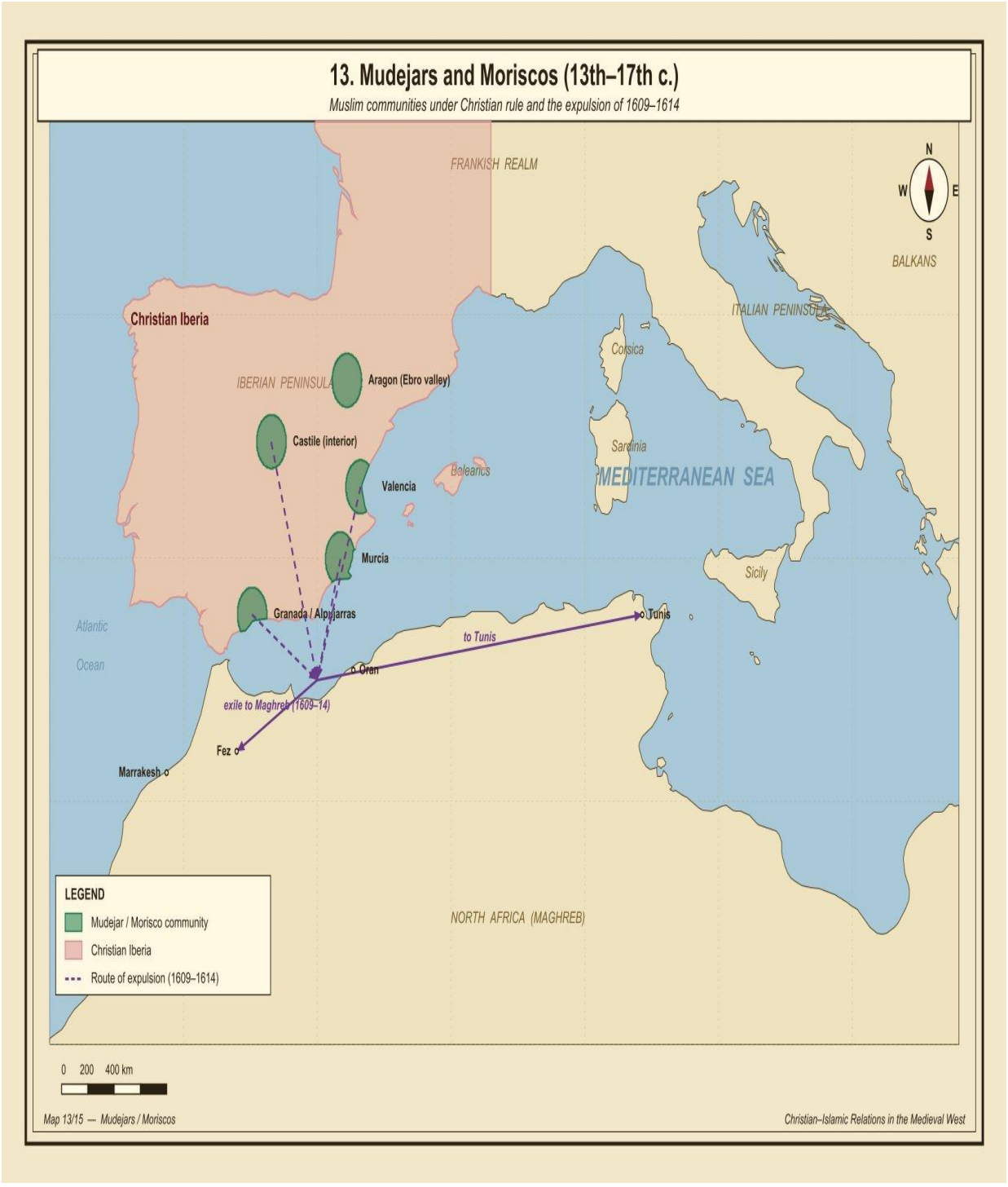
Appendix No. 12

The Nasrid Emirate of Granada



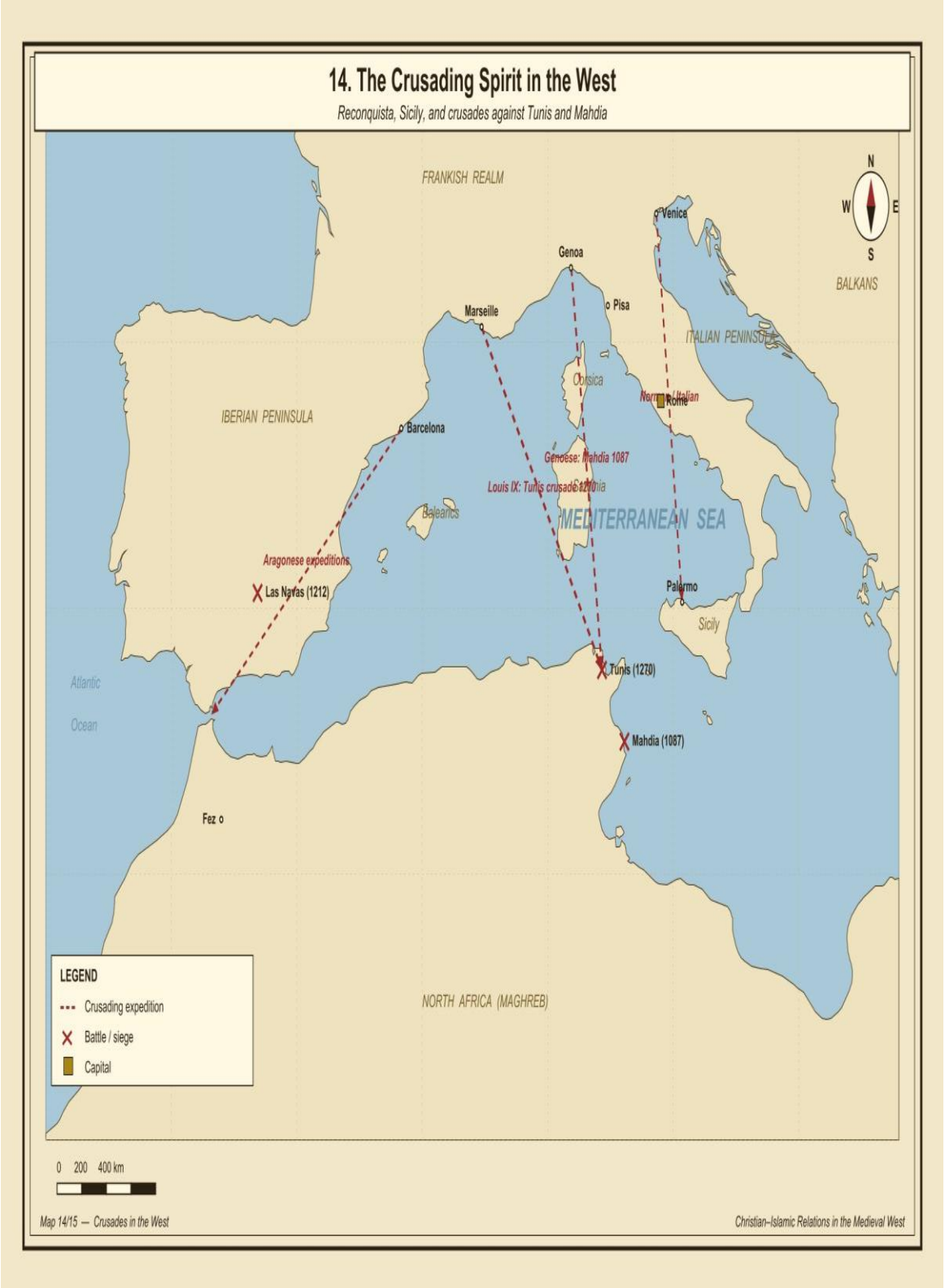
Appendix No. 13

The Mudéjars and Moriscos



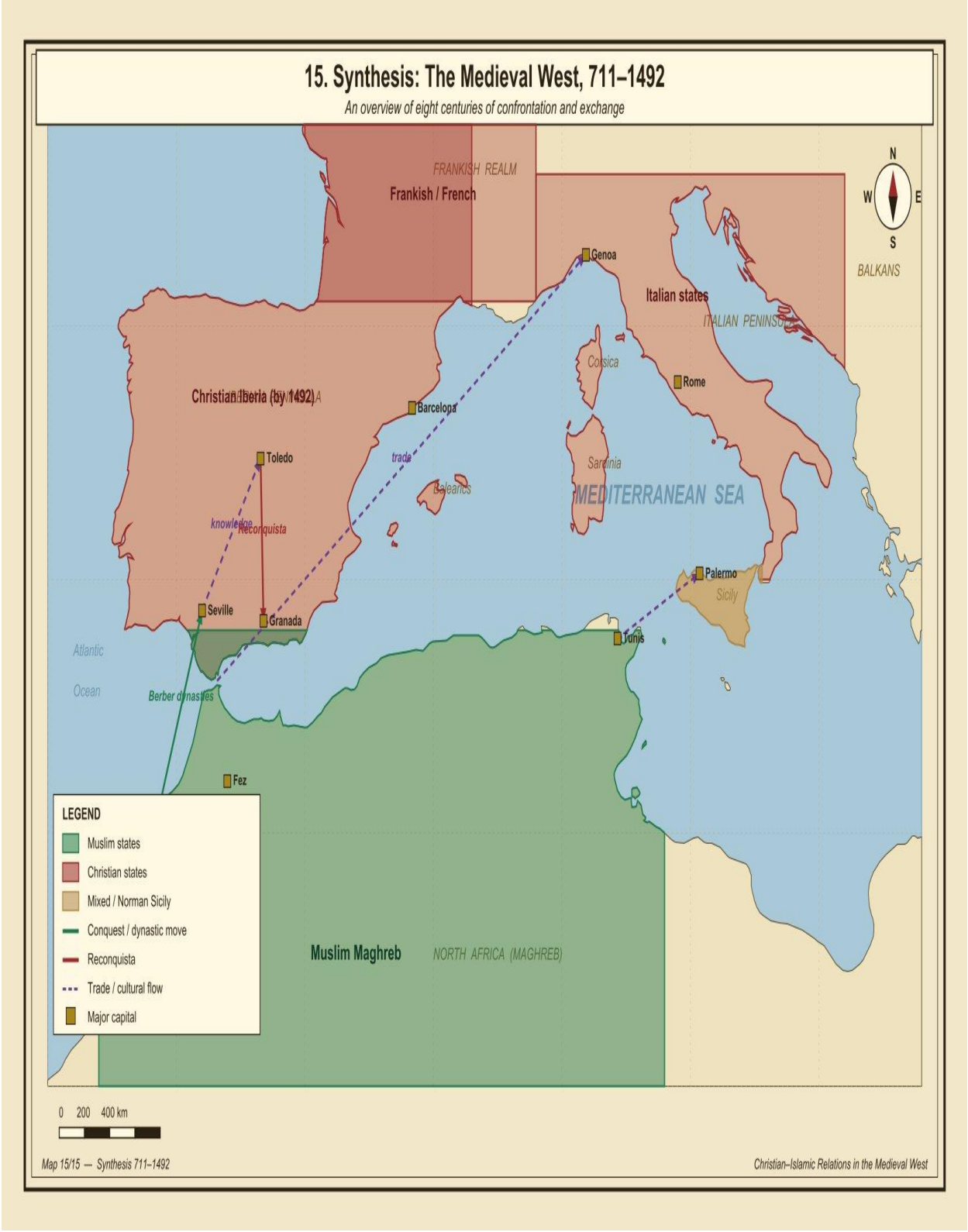
Appendix No. 14

Echoes of the Crusades



Appendix No. 15

A Synthetic Map of Eight Centuries



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- ابن الأثير، علي بن محمد .**الكامل في التاريخ** .تحقيق .C. J. Tornberg بيروت: دار صادر، 1965.
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- ابن صاحب الصلاة .**المنّ بالإمامة** .تحقيق عبد الهادي التازي. بيروت: دار الغرب الإسلامي، 1987.
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