

History of Islam

An encyclopedia of Islamic history

The Fall of Granada

Contributed by Prof. Dr. Nazeer Ahmed, PhD

It is said among Muslims that the hills of El Pujarra around Granada still weep for the sound of the *adhan* every morning and the mosque of Cordoba stays awake all night waiting for the *sajda* of a single *momin*. To this day Andalus evokes among Muslims nostalgia for a golden age when it resonated with the sound of prayer every morning and the name of Prophet Muhammed (p) was honored every day. No other country was contested between Muslims and Christians as bitterly as was Spain. The struggle went on for 500 years. When the battles had ended and the last *adhan* was said from the ramparts of Granada in 1492, Muslims had lost the crown jewel of the Maghrib. Soon, they would be tortured and expelled, along with the Jews, from a land they considered the garden of the west. Their monuments were razed, their mosques destroyed, their libraries burned and their women were sent as slaves to the courts of Europe. It was a turning point, a milestone and an event that profoundly and fundamentally changed the flow of global events.

Granada did not fall in a single day, nor did its collapse come with a sudden stroke. Rather, it was the last breath of a decaying society, which had lost the capacity to defend itself against a sustained offensive from Christian Europe. Long before church bells replaced the call of the *muezzin* and Boabdil (Abu Abdallah, the last emir of Granada) stood on the hills of El Pujarra, looked down on his lost capital and wept, Spain had spent itself politically, militarily and culturally. There was warfare between competing emirs, intrigues within each dynasty pitting father against son, tension between the religious establishment and corrupt administrators, murder, mayhem and external aggression. The surrender of Granada was only the final curtain in a drama that had played itself out.

The Maghrib was a vast area, which included the modern nations of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Sene-Gambia, Spain and Portugal. It was separated from Egypt and the Nile Delta by the Libyan Desert, from Europe by the Pyrenees Mountains and from the Sudan by the great Saharan desert. The high Atlas, which branched off into the Andalusian Peninsula, tied together the topography of the region. The hinge for this geographic entity lay in Morocco. Andalus (Spain) and Ifriqiya (Tunisia) served as its extremities.

This vast region was inhabited by a diverse group of people. Andalus was a composite of Hispano-Muslims, Christians, Arabs and immigrants from North Africa. The Atlas Mountains were home to the Berbers. A sedentary Arab layer, resident primarily in the coastal cities, existed side by side with the Berbers. To the south, the historically important tribes of the Sanhaja, Zanata and Nafzawa roamed the

pasturelands. Powerful tribes such as the Banu Hilal completed the landscape. The relative isolation of the Maghrib meant that this region had to face its political destiny on its own, more or less isolated from the rest of the Islamic world.

To understand the events of 1492, we must take an historical perspective of events dating back to the beginning of the 13th century. The Crusades in Palestine ended with the victory of Salahuddin at the Battle of Hittin (1186). This was also a period when Al Muhaddith power was at its zenith in the Maghrib. The Al Muhaddith Abu Yusuf won a major victory over the Crusaders at the Battle of Alarcos (1196). The Crusaders regrouped and came back with a vengeance. At the Battle of Las Novas de Tolosa (1212) a powerful army of the Crusaders overwhelmed the Al Muhaddith. The magnitude of this defeat can be understood from the sheer number of soldiers involved. Muslim chroniclers record that as many as 600,000 Al Muhaddith took part in the battle. Over 150,000 fell on the battlefield. When we consider that the entire population of the Maghrib at the time was about three million, it follows that practically every able-bodied man took part in the battle and one fourth of them lost their lives. The Al Muhaddith Emir al Nasir who had assumed the title of Emir ul Muslimeen, returned distraught from the battle, locked himself up in his palace in Marrakesh and died soon thereafter (1213). Sensing an historic opportunity, Castile, Aragon and Portugal carved up Muslim Spain for conquest. The major towns were overrun one by one. In 1236, Cordoba, the capital of the Omayyad Caliphate in Spain, fell. Seville was lost in 1248. Only Granada remained. Muhammad Ibn Ahmar of the Nasirid dynasty, who had captured Granada in 1238, managed to maintain his position by becoming a vassal of the Castilian monarch. Granada remained a vassal of Castile until 1333, when the Nasirid Emir Yusuf I, abrogated the annual tribute to Castile and made an attempt to carry the war into Christian territories.

In North Africa, the Al Muhaddith territories disintegrated into three emirates: the Merinides in Morocco, the Zayyanids in Algeria and the Hafsids in Tunisia. The Al Muhaddith capital of Marrakesh faded away and in its place sprang up three regional capitals-Meknes, capital of the Merinides; Tlemcen, capital of the Zayyanids; and Tunis, capital of the Hafsids. Nostalgia for the Al Muhaddith Empire was so great, that all three attempted at one time or the other to recreate an empire that included all of the Maghrib. The first to make an attempt were the Hafsids. In 1236, the Hafsid Emir Yahya I, claiming his descent from Omar ibn al Khattab (r), declared himself Emir ul Muslimeen. When he died, his son al Mustansir succeeded him.

Events in far away Baghdad presented an historic opportunity to al Mustansir. When Hulagu Khan occupied and destroyed Baghdad in 1258, the Islamic world looked to North Africa for leadership. For a brief period of one year, from 1260 to 1261, al Mustansir was recognized as the Caliph by the world of Islam. The *Khutba* was read in his name all over the Muslim world. The title was short lived because the Mamluke Sultan Baybars of Egypt resurrected the Abbasid Caliphate in Cairo in 1261, in part to provide an ideological boost to his troops who were on their way to Palestine in a desperate attempt to stop the Mongols at the Battle of Ayn Jalut (1261).

With the move of the Caliphate to Cairo, the center stage of Islamic history moved back east. Al Mustansir paid the price for his Caliphate of one year. In 1260, Louis IX of France, in the mistaken belief that defeating al Mustansir would deal a deathblow to all Islam, invaded and briefly occupied the city of Tunis. During this period, there existed a de-facto alliance between the Crusaders and the Mongols to conquer the Muslim world. However, the numerous attempts of Louis IX to conquer North Africa were repelled and he died during a siege of Tunis in 1270.

The defeat at Las Novas de Tolosa (1212) was a result of several interrelated political, religious and economic factors. There was deep distrust between the Spanish emirs and the Al Muhaddith of North Africa. This led to poor coordination on the battlefield. Within the Al Muhaddith court, there was

infighting between the religious establishment and the vizier. The Al Muhaddith *ulema* had a running quarrel with the Grand Vizier Jami and demanded his removal. The detrimental effect of this quarrel can be appreciated from the structure of the Al Muhaddith court. The emir was the head of state. In the discharge of his responsibilities, he delegated the administrative and military affairs to the grand vizier and the judiciary affairs to the chief *Kadi*. A fight between the administrative-military wing and the judiciary wing was a disaster. In modern terminology, it is like two senior vice presidents of a corporation fighting with each other before launching a new product line. The economic condition of the empire was precarious. Inflation was rampant, which in turn led to corruption. On his way to Spain to fight the Christians in 1210, the Al Muhaddith Emir Al Nasir stopped off in Fez and Ceuta and had the governors of the two provinces beheaded for corruption. Lastly, the Al Muhaddith doctrines, heavily influenced by the Mu'tazilites, were deeply suspect in the eyes of the *ulema*, who tolerated the Al Muhaddith as a shield against the aggression of the Crusaders, but otherwise offered them no support.

For the next eighty years (1248-1328), a political equilibrium developed in the western Mediterranean involving Castile, Aragon and Portugal on the Christian side and the Merinides, Zayyanids, Hafids and Granada on the Muslim side. The tribe of Banu Hilal in the south joined this fray from time to time. Political alliances shifted back and forth and it was not uncommon for a Muslim emir to side with a Christian king against another emir, or for a Christian chief to support a Muslim against a fellow Christian. Meanwhile, the power struggle between the Merinides, the Zayyanids and the Hafids continued. The Merinides gradually gained the upper hand over the other two. In 1269, the Merinide Yakub took Marrakesh and followed it up with the capture of Sijilmasa in 1274. Granada was under pressure from Castile and appealed to the Merinides for assistance. Yakub crossed over the Straits of Gibraltar and inflicted a defeat on the Christians at the Battle of Ecija in 1274. In 1279, the Merinide navy won a battle against a combined naval squadron of Castile and Portugal. While Yaqub was busy helping Granada, the Zayyanids were at the throat of the Hafids. The emir of Granada, in a thankless rebuff to the Merinides, joined forces with Castile and occupied the city of Tarifa in 1291. In 1295, the Granadans incited a revolt in Ceuta against the Merinides. Disgusted with the thankless emirs in Spain, the Merinide Yaqub turned his attention more towards North Africa. By 1307, he had conquered all of the Maghrib except the easternmost province of Ifriqiya (modern Tunisia).

The Merinides in Morocco reached their greatest strength under the Emirs Ali and Abu Inan (1331 to 1357). It was the Merinide Emir Abu Inan who was the patron of Ibn Batuta, the celebrated Muslim world traveler. There was a resurgence of Islamic solidarity in the Maghrib during this period. In 1340, the Moroccans (Merinides) defeated the Castilian navy and laid siege to Tarifa. For a change, there was close cooperation between Granada and the Merinides in Morocco. The Granadan Yusuf I cast off the Castilian yoke and turned to the Merinides across the Straits for support. However, in 1341, a Castilian force assisted by Crusaders from France, Italy and England defeated a combined force of Granadans and Merinides. This was an indication that the balance of power in the western Mediterranean had turned in favor of the Christians.

After the Crusades ended in Palestine (circa 1190), the balance of power in the Mediterranean moved counter clockwise, with the Turks advancing upon Anatolia and southeastern Europe while the Christians gained the upper hand in Spain and North Africa. The Spaniards, sensing blood, followed up their victory and captured Algeciras (in Morocco) in 1244. Emir Ali was hampered in his efforts at the consolidation of the Maghrib by two factors. The first was the Black Plague, which engulfed his kingdom much as it did West Asia and Europe (1346-1360), causing widespread death and economic dislocation and the second, the recurrent uprisings of the Banu Hilal tribe. Four year later, the Banu Hilal at the Battle of Kairouan defeated Emir Ali himself and his dream of a Maghribi Empire came to an end.

Events now flowed inexorably in favor of the Crusaders. In 1355, the Genoese briefly occupied Tripoli (Libya). In 1390, the French attacked Mahdiya (Tunisia). In 1399, Tetuan (Morocco) was sacked by Castile. In 1415, Ceuta (Morocco) was captured by Portugal. One may juxtapose these losses with the Ottoman victories in Europe where Bayazid I defeated the Serbs at the Battle of Kosova (1389), captured Serbia, Bosnia, Albania, Skopje and smashed a combined Crusader army at the Battle of Nicopolis (1396). With both Ceuta and Algeceras in the hands of the Christians, communications between Granada Morocco across the Straits of Gibraltar were cut. The noose around Granada tightened.

Historians have pondered over the decay and disintegration of the Maghrib in the 14th and 15th centuries. Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) lived through this period of instability in North Africa. Born in Tunis, which was at that time a part of the Hafsid Emirate known as Ifriqiya, Ibn Khaldun had an opportunity to travel widely in the Maghrib and witness first hand the mechanics of the rise and fall of local dynasties. Much of his youth was spent in North Africa. In later years, he migrated to Egypt, where he served as an ambassador and advisor to the Mamlukes. It was Ibn Khaldun who was given charge by the Mamlukes to negotiate the surrender of the city of Damascus to Timurlane in 1400.

Ibn Khaldun is justly regarded as the father of sociology and the philosophy of history. He was the first to advance a general theory of the rise and fall of civilizations, which he based on his observations of the Maghrib. According to him, there is always a state of tension between the nomads and the city dwellers. History moves forward in the resolution of this tension. The nomads possess in abundance the quality of *asabiyah*, which in a general sense means group feeling and group loyalty. By contrast, city life tends to dilute and destroy group feeling. According to Ibn Khaldun power is political. *Asabiyah* fosters political and military unity and enables the nomads to overcome the sedentary city dwellers. In time, the nomads themselves settle down and become city dwellers and in turn are overcome by a new wave of nomads. *Asabiyah* thus becomes the key to political power and the building block of nations and empires. It is the glue, the cement that binds people together and demands and obtains the sacrifice of individuals for monumental tasks. When *asabiyah* is diluted or destroyed, civilizations lose the glue that holds them together and they disintegrate.

This theory is widely used as a model to explain the rise and fall of civilizations. However, Ibn Khaldun's ideas present enormous difficulties from an Islamic perspective. Islam is against *asabiyah* based on race, color or national origin ("We made you into nations and tribes so that you may recognize and know each other-not that you may despise each other" Qur'an, 49:13). Islam seeks to create a global community "enjoining what is noble, forbidding what is wrong and believing only in Allah". Such a community transcends the *asabiyah* based on race, region or national origin and embraces all nations.

While it is true, as Ibn Khaldun maintains, that *asabiyah* enables common people to achieve uncommon results and build nations and empires, it is also true that nations built on *asabiyah* are by nature aggressive and expansive. They become predatory on their neighbors and foster feelings of superiority over other nations and tribes. Hitler's Germany offers an example. The Nazis built a nation-state based on German *asabiyah*-nationalism based on the superiority of the German race over other races. This enabled them, temporarily, to dominate Europe. But Nazi Germany collapsed, in part because other nation states would not accept German ascendancy. In a philosophical sense, *asabiyah* frees the individual from his or her ego and places the walls of egocentric exclusion at the national or racial boundary. The prison of race, tribe, or nation replaces the prison of the ego.

Islam, by contrast, liberates humankind not only from the individual ego, but also from the prison of racism, tribalism and nationalism. The outward limits of the Islamic civilization are set at the global community. All races, tribes and nations are included in this civilization. The most difficult issue with

the philosophy of Ibn Khaldun is that it offers no prospect of internal renewal. When a tribe or nation settles down and softens up, enjoying the pleasures of city life, must it necessarily yield to another group, which is sedentary and more rustic? This is contrary to observation.

The universal religions of the world provide the possibility of self-renewal. Islam provides for the renewal of individuals and nations from within. Individuals and nations do decay through their own folly and by Divine Grace they renew themselves and rise up once again. Islamic history is animated by this recurrent theme of renewal. The appearance of a reformer at the turn of each century is expected by a large majority of Muslims in the world. Century after century, from the Al Muhaddith of the Maghrib to Uthman dan Fuduye of Nigeria and the Mahdi of the Sudan, one sees this recurrent attempt at renewal of Islamic life and a regeneration of Islamic civilization. It is the possibility of renewal that animates the collective efforts of Muslims.

The reasons for the fall of Granada were demographic, economic, cultural, religious and ideological. The continuous wars in Andalus sapped the manpower of the entire Maghrib. The Crusades were a civilizational conflict wherein Europe hurled itself again and again at the Islamic world for almost five hundred years. The battle lines extended from the Andalusian peninsula across North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Anatolia and Sicily into southeastern Europe. Andalus provided a complex problem for Maghribi rulers. Any ruler, whether Merinide or Hafsids, who coveted the leadership of the Maghrib and desired the title of *Emir ul Muslimeen*, was duty bound to defend Andalus against the Christians. Andalus was like quicksand. The politics of the Iberian Peninsula was shifty. The Muslim Andalusians had lost the capacity to defend themselves and had come to depend upon soldiers from North Africa. Even after the defeat of Rio Solado (1341), when the North Africans finally turned their back on Andalus, the court of Granada continued to depend on soldiers from Africa. The Maghribi manhood bled. What was not lost on the battlefield was destroyed by disease. The Black Plague of 1346-1360 hit particularly hard. Entire villages were destroyed. Politics and culture both suffered. In 1360, most of the Crusader army led by Louis IX of France perished from the Black Plague at the gates of Tunis.

Agricultural production was a casualty of the drop in population. When food production dropped, many of the settled tribes became nomads. This in turn had an impact on state revenues. The drop in agricultural revenues and the cost of continuous wars in Andalus squeezed the treasuries of the Maghrib. Initially, during the Murabitun and Al Muhaddith periods (1050–1212), the accumulated wealth of Andalus had paid for the wars. But as the bulk of the Andalusian peninsula fell to the Christians (1085–1248), the source of this wealth also disappeared. A poorer Maghrib could not sustain a standing army. Political centralization requires capital, because capital is required to pay for a standing army, which provides cohesion for a large political entity. With the Maghrib in economic decline, fragmentation set in.

When the wealth of Andalus was exhausted, the emirs of the Maghrib turned to trade with the city-states of Italy for their tax revenues. The Al Muhaddith had signed a trade concession with Genoa in 1168. In 1236, the Hafsids entered into a treaty with Venice and Genoa. In 1265, al Mustansir of the Hafsids gave special privileges to the French and the Sicilians. Unfortunately, this trade, while it brought prosperity to a few rich merchants on the coast, further eroded the political authority of the emirs because they were now dependent on the merchant elite for their revenues. The Genoese often acted as spies for their fellow Christian Spaniards, providing them military, political and social intelligence, which was of enormous benefit to the Crusaders. The southerly trade routes across the Sahara to the Sudan were still active but they shifted between the western route through Sijilmasa and a more central route through Ghat and Kairouan, depending on the safety of the routes.

There was a silver lining to the dark clouds. The political fragmentation of the Maghrib and the emergence of competing emirates provided a haven for scholars and men of the arts. On the surface, culture flourished (1250-1350). But this was a culture borrowed from Andalus, sustained by the influx of refugees who were driven out by the Crusaders. Culture must have roots in the soil for it to provide the foundation of a civilization. A borrowed culture is like a tree without roots; a mere whiff of wind will knock it down. When Andalus fell, along with it disappeared the culture of North Africa. Furthermore, the influence of the Spanish refugees was not always positive. The Andalusians were more secular in their thinking than the North Africans. Perhaps, it was a result of their cosmopolitan culture wherein Muslims, Christians and Jews all participated. The immigrants tended to look upon politics as separate from its ethical foundation. They were often involved in the intrigues of the Merinide and Hafsids courts and tended to depend for their survival on playing off the North African courts against the powerful Banu Hilal tribe.

The most important reason for the fragmentation of the Maghrib-and the loss of Andalus-was the loss of legitimacy of rule. Legitimacy is a central issue that has haunted Islamic history since the assassinations of Uthman (r) and Ali (r). A ruler and a system of government that is accepted as legitimate elicits its support from the people. Such support is essential to building a civilization. Conversely, rule that is considered illegitimate is constantly challenged and can only be sustained by force. This was well understood by the Shi'a Fatimids, the Sunni Murabitun and the Mu'tazilite Al Muhaddith. Each of these dynasties packaged their appeal in religious terminology and sought their legitimacy in an Islamic framework. Thus the Fatimids claimed their descent from Ali ibn Abu Talib (r), the Murabitun claimed an orthodox reformation against the excesses of the Fatimids and Kharijites and the Al Muhaddith claimed a rational basis for rule based on reason and consensus.

The disappearance of a centralized empire in the Maghrib made the issue of political legitimacy particularly acute. The emirs were unsuccessful in expressing their legitimacy in religious terms, as had the Fatimids, the Murabitun and the Al Muhaddith. Politics became increasingly separated from religion. *The divergence of politics from religious ethics was at the core of the loss of Andalus.* The regional courts became a paradise for sycophants. Historians wrote and poets sang in glorious verse of their patron emirs whenever they won a small skirmish or built a minor monument. Gone was the grand idea of building a universal Islamic community in the Maghrib.

Great efforts spring forth from great ideas. Only faith as a super-ordinate idea can demand and obtain the willing sacrifice that is the basis of great efforts. Without an idea that transcends individual egos, great collective achievements are not possible. Without a super-ordinate vision, the masses are like wild fires that burn everything in front of them. But when they are held together by a common idea, they are like a powerful laser beam that inscribes its edict on the edifice of history. Ideas are the glue, the cement, the force and the power that hold people together. They form the ethical basis, the foundation of a civilization.

At the core of Islam is the idea of *Tawhid*, which liberates the individual from his egotistical prison and propels him into a universal mold. *Tawhid* implies a God-centered civilization, wherein culture, art, politics and sociology all spring from their focus on the omnipresence of God. The Muslims lost their bearing in history when they lost their focus on *Tawhid*. Legitimacy of rule then became an item of convenience, to be bestowed upon whoever held the big stick. The rulers, the soldiers, the merchants, the writers and the *ulema* all shared this guilt. The *kadis* and religious scholars in the Maghrib went along with the divestiture of religion from politics, preaching the Friday Khutba in the name of whoever was in power. Only after Al Muhaddith power had disintegrated did the orthodox vision of Islam find its place in the sun, but by then the center of gravity of world history had moved away from the Maghrib.

It is useful to compare the historical experience of the Maliki School, which is most widely practiced in the Maghrib, with the experience of the Hanafi School in Asia. The children of Islam constructed similar but different historical edifices using the spiritual and intellectual material left by Imam Abu Haneefa and Imam Malik. The comparative latitude provided by Imam Abu Haneefa in the school of Fiqh named after him provided the Muslims of Asia the tools to adapt and grow with the tides of history. The Turks adapted the Hanafi School and when Fatimid power challenged the Abbasids in the 10th century, the Turks became champions of the Abbasid Caliphate and its protectors. The Seljuks and the Ghaznavids alike fought the Fatimids to the blade, in places as far away as Multan (Pakistan) and Baghdad (Iraq). More importantly, the Hanafis showed a remarkable ability to assimilate great ideas as they emerged out of the ideological conflicts of the 9th and 10th centuries. Thus, when the Asharites carried the day against the Mu'tazilites (10th century), Asharite influence melted into Hanafi Asia. The ideas of Al Ghazzali (d. 1111) were absorbed with equal ease. When the Mongol eruption came (1219-1301) and much of Asia lay in ruins, Sufi ideas triumphed, Islam became more spiritual and Sufi ideas also became a part of the Hanafi milieu. Thus the Islam that emerged by the 16th century, when the Safavid and Moghul dynasties were founded and the Ottomans were at the zenith of their power, was an amalgam of the great ideas that had flowed from Madina, Kufa, Baghdad, Bukhara and Samarqand. Out of this amalgam came the giants of the ages, personages like al Ghazzali, Hafiz, Rumi, Abdul Qader Jeelani, Moeenuddin Chisti, Bahauddin Naqshband, Ahmed Sirhindi, Shah Waliulla and Muhammed Iqbal. And it is this amalgamated folk Islam that is practiced by Turks, Pakistanis, Iranis, Indians, Bengalis and Central Asians today.

The experience of the Maliki Maghrib was different. For three long centuries, the Maliki School took a back seat to Fatimid, Murabitun and Al Muhaddith ideologies. When it did express itself freely after 1230, political power had slipped from the Maghrib and the military-political initiative in that region had passed on to the Portuguese and the Spaniards and then after a brief interlude of Ottoman protection, to the French and the Italians. When the Maghribi Muslims did accept Sufi ideas in the 14th century, it was out of necessity to protect themselves against the onslaught of the Europeans. The Maliki Maghrib did not experience the amalgamation and evolution of ideas that was experienced by Asia. This explains why political, social and cultural fragmentation proceeded so rapidly in the Maghrib during the 14th and the 15th centuries.

Events in the Maghrib moved rapidly after the Turks captured Istanbul in 1453. Pope Nicholas V called for a new Crusade. On the eastern front, the rising tide of Turkish power was more than a match for the combined power of Europe. But in the west, it was a different story. In 1458, the Portuguese occupied the important fortress of Al Qasr and used it as a base to attack Morocco all across the Atlantic coast. In 1469, Tangier was lost to the Portuguese. By 1471, the Merinides had disappeared from Morocco and the region was in disarray. This general fragmentation explains the inability of the North Africans to come to the aid of Granada. In 1469, at the behest of the Pope, Isabella of Aragon married Ferdinand of Castile and the Spanish state was born. Abul Hassan Ali, a capable, brave and chivalrous emir, ruled Granada at the time. At other times, he might have left his imprint on Spanish history. But his court was ravaged by internal dissensions and intrigues so characteristic of the Maghrib of the time. In 1482, Ferdinand attacked Alhama, a city located about twenty miles from the city of Granada. Abul Hassan bravely defended the city, but had to abandon it when news reached him of the rebellion of his son Abu Abdullah, named Boabdil by the Spaniards. Abu Abdullah had none of the courage, stamina and integrity of his father. A battle between father and son left the forces of Granada weak and vulnerable. Malaga fell in 1483. As the Castilians approached the capital city, the brother of Abul Hassan Zagal, offered valiant and stout resistance, but was constantly thwarted by Boabdil. In 1489 the city of Safar fell.

Having destroyed the territories around Granada, Ferdinand retired to Cordoba, there to raise an army of 80,000 for a final assault on Granada. In 1490, he returned at the head of this host, built a city of siege called Santa Fe (Holy Faith) and cut all lines of communication between Granada and the outside world. Resistance was desperate, but faced with starvation Granada surrendered on January 3, 1492.

The cross displaced the crescent in the once mighty Omayyad province of Andalus. An Empire died and a new Empire was born. The terms of surrender guaranteed freedom of worship and the right to emigrate. But within six years, the treaty was abandoned and the Inquisition was unleashed with all its fury upon the hapless population under the direction of the cruel Bishop Jimenez. The Jews had already been expelled in 1492. It was now the turn of the Muslims. They were given the option of either converting to Christianity or being banished to North Africa. Those who were caught saying the shahada were hanged from their tongues. Water was cut off from Muslim homes so that they could not do their wudu before prayer. Children were forcibly inducted into Catholic schools. The wives of the believers were sold as slaves in Europe. Faced with this oppression, the Muslims of Granada offered what little resistance they could. There were a series of uprisings (1496, 1501, 1568, 1609), each of which was put down with ruthless cruelty. Finally, in 1609, the last of the Muslims boarded a decrepit boat and set sail for Morocco. The curtain fell on Muslim Andalusia. Some migrated to America. The roster of immigrants into America on board the early ships arriving from Seville contains the names of many Muslim men and women.

Comments are closed.

[Blog at WordPress.com.](#)