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Interreligious relationships in the Iberian
Peninsula during the Reconquista period (11th–
13th centuries)

Summary of doctoral dissertation thesis
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Pardubice 2024

Theme and focus of the thesis

When we set out to study the inter-religious relations between Muslims, Christians and Jews in "medieval Spain" (or rather, in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages), we usually come across three different kinds of claims. The first, and probably the most common view among authors dealing with the period and the locality, is the romantic notion of harmonious tolerant coexistence – 'exceptional tolerance' – between Muslims, Christians and Jews, commonly referred to by the term *convivencia*. Such coexistence was not to occur anywhere else, in any Christian or Muslim territory in the Middle Ages. The theory of *convivencia* is thus based on the exceptional coexistence and cooperation between Muslims, Christians and Jews, which gave rise to a unique Spanish society and a specific Spanish identity. *Convivencia* was thus first to exist for four hundred years in Muslim Al-Andalus, and for the next two centuries it was to be applied in the Christian kingdoms of the north, from where, however, it was to begin to disappear from the 14th century onwards. The history of Spain was thus to be unique because the followers of Islam were an integral part of the history of the Iberian Peninsula.

In contrast, the second, also very widespread view understands the medieval history of the Iberian Peninsula as a process of Christian reconquest and renewal of the Spanish nation, a process known as *reconquista*. The *reconquista* was to be a centuries-long continuous struggle for liberation against the usurpers and invaders, the Muslims, in which Castile, uninfluenced by Jewish and Islamic influences, played a central role. The *Reconquista* is presented as both a national and religious Christian struggle against the Muslims, with Castile at the forefront. Although the term *reconquista* is very often criticized by contemporary writers, some add that although the term is erroneous and inaccurate, it cannot be avoided. Both of these attitudes are still encountered in academic works as well as in political and ideological statements. And although the theories of *reconquista* and *convivencia* have long been criticized and often rejected in academic scholarship, both concepts still retain considerable influence in the understanding of medieval Iberian history and the history of interreligious relations.

The third approach is a critique of the two theories mentioned above. This is either authors, academic or non-academic, who criticize one theory, the other, or both, or proponents of one theory criticizing the other. Thus, in the works of these authors, we

can read that there could not have been tolerant coexistence between the three religious groups in the Iberian Peninsula because this period was marked by a great number of military conflicts from its beginning to its end,¹ or that we cannot talk about the liberation of the Spanish nation in the Middle Ages, because in fact it is a "*modern definition of national identity [that] has been transferred to the medieval past and the medieval past has been rewritten and re-imagined*".² These attitudes are often useful in deconstructing earlier erroneous attitudes, but they are rarely constructive anymore and provide an explanation of the true nature of interreligious relations in the Middle Ages. Thus, it is often the case that, by criticizing one theory, these writers come to accept - intentionally or unintentionally - the other. Mainly, however, even this third position (criticism of one, the other, or both theories) does not provide an explanation of how interreligious relations were conducted in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages and whether the situation differed from or coincided with interreligious relations taking place at the same time in, for example, southern Italy and Sicily, Egypt, Byzantium, or the Middle East. Thus, the conclusions of most of these works often only arrive at the vague assertion that there was (in)tolerant coexistence between the three religious groups in the Iberian Peninsula, and support this idea with (only) historical facts that coincide with their positions.

In modern and contemporary writers we still see a persistent conscious or unconscious clinging to misleading theories. A good example is the book *Spain in the Middle Ages: From Frontier to Empire, 1000–1500*, in the introduction to which the author Angus MacKay uses both theories to explain the history of interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages, calling the Christian conquest of Muslim territory a *reconquista* and the cultural exchange and coexistence of monotheistic traditions in the peninsula a *convivencia*.³ Both of these theories, although long criticized, continue to figure in academic works and subsequently enter the lay arena, where they influence the general view of medieval interreligious relations.

The main aim of the present dissertation is to thoroughly analyse, describe, contextualise and reinterpret medieval interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula without uncritically adopting the concepts of *reconquista* and *convivencia* theories.

¹ D. Fernández-Morera, *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise*.

² M. R. Menocal, "Why Iberia?," s. 7.

³ A. MacKay, *Spain in the Middle Ages*, s. 1–7.

Although the thesis assumes (thanks to the previously studied literature on interreligious relations and on each of the aforementioned theories) that both theories contain ideological preconceptions, misinformation and erroneous conclusions, it is not primarily developed as a polemic against these two theories. Thus, the origins of the research were not purposely directed at refuting the theories of *reconquista* and *convivencia*, but also accounted for the possibility that the theories might not (in some respects) be wrong. The primary research goal of the dissertation is to clarify the nature of interfaith relations as it can be reconstructed from the source texts (and with the help of scholarly secondary literature that has been devoted to analysing and contextualizing the source texts). In order to understand this, the nature of the territorial expansion of the Christian peninsular kingdoms will be analysed, as well as the nature of the domestic policies of Christian rulers towards their non-religious subjects and the interreligious interaction within the Christian kingdoms. The research therefore focused on the development and nature of interreligious relations in the Christian areas of the Iberian Peninsula between the 11th and 13th centuries and how these relations were influenced by political, social and economic factors.

Content and structure of the thesis

The primary aim of the thesis is to clarify the nature of interreligious relationships in the Iberian Peninsula as it can be reconstructed from the source texts and the scholarly literature that analyses the source texts. Furthermore, the thesis will explain on which erroneous claims and misunderstandings the aforementioned tendentious theories are based. First, the section of the thesis focusing on the concepts of reconquista and convivencia will describe both theories as well as their assumptions and stance towards the history of interreligious relations. In the analytical part, the research will focus on the transcriptions and translations of original source texts that contain individual references to interreligious interaction in the history of the Iberian Peninsula from the 11th to the 13th centuries, with a specific focus on the territory under Christian rule in the period. Subsequently, the comparative part of the thesis will compare the assumptions of both theories that still influence contemporary research with the conclusions of the analytical part of the thesis, which attempts to reconstruct the nature of the development of the history of interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula in the High Middle Ages, free from modern ideological influences. Thus, the thesis aims to identify the erroneous assumptions of the two theories mentioned and, by removing them, to obtain a more accurate picture of the medieval history of interreligious relations.

In order to clarify medieval interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula, the period of the 11th–13th centuries was deliberately chosen with a specific focus on the Christian-dominated parts of the peninsula. Although the proponents of the convivencia theory assume that this coexistence began under Muslim rule in the Muslim part of the peninsula as early as the 8th century, these authors also argue that this mode of coexistence began to gradually disappear from the Muslim part of the peninsula in the 11th century. Convivencia, however, was to continue to be practiced due to Muslim influences in the Christian-dominated territories in the north of the peninsula in the 11th to 13th centuries, from which it would only begin to recede in the 14th century. It is for this reason that these sites and this period were chosen as the subject of this dissertation. However, in order to shed light on the interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula applied both nationally and internationally, which is necessary to deconstruct the two theories mentioned above, part of the research had to focus on the development of

interreligious relations in the Muslim parts of the peninsula and also in the Maghreb, since the social changes that occurred in these areas had a major impact on the development of interreligious relations in the Christian kingdoms and counties of the peninsula throughout the period under study.

In the analytical part of the thesis, the subchapters are divided according to the individual periods and localities in which the development of interreligious relations differed. Further, the subchapters are also ordered according to whether the individual subchapters focused on the topic of international Christian relations, the territorial expansion of Christian kingdoms, and thus data that are also treated by the theory of reconquista, or domestic interreligious relations, whether in the relationship of the ruling class to conquered groups or vice versa, and thus data that are also treated by the theory of convivencia.

The hypothesis of the dissertation assumes that both theories - convivencia and reconquista - are mistaken in their understanding of the uniqueness of the history of Spain/Iberian Peninsula and that, on the contrary, interreligious relations on the peninsula, despite their specificity, correspond to the nature of interreligious relations in the Mediterranean areas during the (high) Middle Ages. The main research question is: What were the interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula in the 11th to 13th centuries? The secondary research questions are: How do theories of reconquista and convivencia describe medieval interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula? In what ways are the proponents of these theories wrong in their understandings of the history of interreligious relations? In order to understand this, the nature of the territorial expansion of the Christian peninsular kingdoms will be analysed, as well as the nature of the domestic policies of Christian rulers towards non-believing subjects and the interreligious interaction within Christian kingdoms.

The research method is textual analysis focused on medieval source texts and modern and contemporary literature that analyses the source texts. In the theoretical part of the thesis, the content analysis focused on authors and works elaborating the theories of reconquista and convivencia, through which the assumptions, characteristics, constructions and assumptions regarding medieval interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula as presented by the proponents of these two theories were reconstructed.

For the analytical part of the thesis, a textual analysis of sources and secondary literature on interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula in the 11th to 13th centuries was carried out. The source texts examined were mainly transcripts of original Latin, Spanish (various historical versions of Castilian and Catalan) and Portuguese chronicles, law codes, legal decrees, *fueros* – municipal charters⁴ or poetry originally dating mainly from the 11th century. to the 14th century, which in their content reflect in some way the interreligious interactions on the peninsula, or translations of source texts from Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Hebrew into modern Spanish, English and, to a small extent, Czech. Secondary literature included books and scholarly articles in Spanish, English, Portuguese, and to some extent Czech and French, which dealt with the interpretation of source texts and/or focused generally or specifically on the development of interreligious relations in the peninsula during the period in question.

In the comparative part of the thesis, the results of the theoretical and analytical chapters were compared, and erroneous but persistent constructions, preconceptions and stereotypes regarding medieval interreligious relations were demonstrated.

⁴ The fuero was a common community privilege granted by kings, counts, bishops and other lords to their burgesses. O. R. Constable & D. Zurro, *Medieval Iberia*, s. 162.

Conclusion

Contemporary accounts of the development of medieval interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula are still influenced by the theories of *reconquista* and *convivencia* and burdened by the disputation that arose between Américo Castro and Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, which some authors still continue to pursue. The reason why these concepts constantly resist successful and sustained refutation is their selective treatment of historical facts. Much of the data presented to confirm each theory has a largely real historical basis. The enduring success of these theories therefore lies not in the use of incorrect data, but in the arbitrary interpretation of historical facts and their subsequent interpretation without proper context. Thus, both theories first construct a concept of interreligious relations, and then, in order to confirm it, add as evidence those historical events that fit their theories or others that, out of context, they use to fit their constructs. Therefore, in order to establish a more accurate picture of the development of interreligious relations, free from the influence of idealised theories, it is necessary first to expose the various errors and incorrect and misleading statements contained in these theories, which are constantly repeated in attempts to characterise the history of interreligious relations in the Iberian Peninsula.

The concept of *reconquista*, widespread among eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars, assumes that Christian peninsular expansion at the expense of Muslim Al-Andalus represented the Christian reconquest of Spain, or rather of the formerly Christian Roman Hispania and the Christian Visigothic kingdom of Toledo. The central motif of *reconquista* is thus supposed to be the Christian reconquest of lost territories conquered by Muslims in previous centuries. If we stay with this concept, it would mean that the *reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula is not particularly different from the Byzantine reconquest of territories in Anatolia and northern Syria, which had previously been taken from Greek Orthodox Christians through Arab expansion, or from the Middle East Crusades, in which Western Latin "Catholic" Christians conquered from the Turks and Arabs areas once controlled by Christians. The case of the Iberian Peninsula, however, differs from these Christian conquest campaigns in several ways. Unlike the wars fought by the Byzantine emperors, areas of the Iberian Peninsula were being reclaimed for Christianity by Western Latin Christians, and unlike the Crusaders in the Middle East, the participants in the "Spanish Reconquista" were conquering territories

that had fallen within the sphere of Western Latin Christian influence before the Arab Muslim expansion. The crucial difference, however, lies in the fact that, unlike the Byzantine and Crusader expansions in the Middle East and Asia Minor, the "reconquista" of the Iberian Peninsula was completed by a permanent Christian (re)conquest.

In these factors, the "reconquista" differs from the Christian war campaigns in the eastern Mediterranean, but it is no different from the developments in Sicily and southern Italy. The south of the Apennine Peninsula and the island of Sicily also fell under the sphere of influence of Western Latin Christianity before they were conquered by the Muslims.⁵ In the centuries that followed, these originally Western Latin Christian territories were conquered by Western Latin Christians who reclaimed these areas from the Muslims for Christianity. The result of these Christian ventures is the same, for in the case of both the Iberian and the Apennine peninsulas, the areas acquired from the Muslims remained permanently under Christian rule, unlike the Middle East and Asia Minor.

This problem is to be addressed by Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz's modified concept of the reconquista, which works with the concept of the "eternal Spaniard" who is responsible for the centuries-long reconquest of Spain from the grip of foreign Muslim rule. Sánchez-Albornoz, with his persistent "Spanish temperament", adds a genetic or racial factor to the religious (Christian) phenomenon. Thus, his version of reconquista assumes that the Christian Spaniards - Iberians, Romans, Goths, Asturians, Galicians, Navarenes, Leóns, Castilians, Aragonese, and Mozarabs - who maintained the original "Spanish temperament", reconquered Spain from the "Non-Spanish", i.e., the Muslim Arabs and Berbers. The problem, however, lies in the characterisation of the 'Spanish temperament'. Sánchez-Albornoz argues that this is not (only) a cultural or religious phenomenon, as he states that the "Spaniards" retained this temperament despite Muslim domination, and he also says that the cultural maturity and superiority of Al-Andalus was not due to Arab (or Jewish) influences, but to the Spaniards,

⁵ Of course, we can talk about the fact that before the Muslim conquest, the southern Italian territories were ruled by Byzantium, but before the Arab expansion, some parts of the southern Iberian Peninsula were also under the rule of the Eastern Roman Empire. Moreover, it cannot be said that Sicily was completely Hellenized before the arrival of the Muslims and that Western Latin Christians had disappeared from it. Areas of Sicily and southern Italy were more religiously and linguistically pluralistic at the time of the Muslim conquest than was the case on the Iberian Peninsula.

regardless of whether they were Spanish converts to Islam or Arabized Christians. Sánchez-Albornoz thus acknowledges the specific and unique "Spanishness of the Spaniards" also present in Al-Andalus, and specifically in both the Mozarabs and the Muwallads. This "Spanish temperament" should therefore have been present in the inhabitants of the peninsula from time immemorial, and the incoming influences - Roman, Gothic, Arab-Muslim and Frankish - have altered it only in a superficial and slight form.

If we were to accept Sánchez-Albornoz's thesis, it would mean that the reconquista would represent not only a Christian reconquest of the peninsula, but also a Spanish reconquest, i.e. that the 'temperamental Spaniards' had regained control of the peninsula, which had been usurped for centuries by a foreign element - invaders who did not possess the 'Spanish temperament', i.e. Muslim Arabs and Berbers. The problem here, however, is that the ethnic composition of the population of Al-Andalus (and even of the northern Christian kingdoms) did not correspond to such a claim. The society of the Muslim part of the peninsula was made up in the first centuries mostly of Mozarabs and then of Muwallads, i.e. descendants of the original inhabitants of the peninsula, who, according to Sánchez-Albornoz's concept, were thus supposed to preserve the 'Spanish temperamental heritage'. The descendants of the invaders - the original Muslim Arabs, Syrians, Egyptians, or Berbers - mixed with the indigenous population over the generations, so they too, according to this theory, should carry this "temperamental heritage", stronger than the foreign influences introduced to the peninsula. This interpretation of the medieval history of the Iberian Peninsula would thus mean that some Spaniards - Romanised Christians with a 'Spanish temperamental heritage' - conquered the territory of other Spaniards - Arabised Muslims who also retained a 'Spanish temperament'.

It may be criticised here that the large number of Muslims who continuously flowed into Al-Andalus (for example, from the Maghreb, especially in the time of Almanzor, the Almoravids and the Almohads) did not mix with the indigenous population and thus did not represent the bearers of the 'temperamental heritage'. However, the similar was the case in the Christian parts of the peninsula. Settlers and crusaders from areas of France and from other countries of Western Christian Europe had been coming to the peninsula for centuries to fight the Muslims, and many of them

had already taken root there and integrated into the local society, which gradually integrated or assimilated their descendants. Thus, in the case of both Christian and Muslim peninsular societies, the population would include the majority descendants of the original bearers of the "Spanish temperament" – the Muwallads, Castilians, Mozarabs, Portuguese, Aragonese, etc. – and minority, unmixed with the "Spaniards" (yet), newcomers from other countries of Western Christian Europe and the Muslim Maghreb. This would then mean that the reconquista was a process of expansion of some "Spaniards" – Christians from the north of the peninsula – assisted by Frankish foreigners, at the expense of other "Spaniards" – Muslims from Al-Andalus, for generations connected to the "Spanish temperament", who collaborated with Maghrebi foreigners.

This whole concept of "temperamental inheritance" is unsustainable because the process of "reconquista" of Al-Andalus in the 11th to 13th centuries was not carried out for racial or ethnic reasons. Muslims who were conquered in the Christian expansion were expelled from towns and areas on the basis of their religious affiliation, not because of their Arab or Berber extra-islandic origins. Once we remove the religious element from Sánchez-Albornoz's theory, i.e., that Christians were conquering Muslim territories and expelling the followers of Islam from them, his concept of reconquista would cease to correspond to the idea of reconquest, since it would be (for the most part) a mere struggle of one "Spaniard" against another. The theory of reconquista is here served by the concept of the Almoravids and Almohads – barbaric, fanatical, intolerant foreigners against whom the reconquest had to be waged in order for Spain to be liberated.⁶ What is neglected, however (apart from the fact that the Almoravids and Almohads did not represent uncivilized barbarians), is that it was far from only Muslims of extra-islandic origin who were expelled.

The fundamental problem of reconquista theory is the selective reconstruction of Iberian history. Territorial struggles between the various peninsular factions were quite common during the 11th to 13th centuries, but these were not simply attempts by Christians to conquer Muslim territories, but equally, and sometimes more, involved Muslim incursions into Muslim territories, Christian incursions into Christian territories, or even Christian-Muslim allies into the territories of other Christians or Muslims. Thus,

⁶ F. J. Simonet, *Historia de los mozárabes de España*, s. 733–734; A. García-Sanjuán, "El fin de las comunidades cristianas de al-Andalus (siglos XI-XII)," s. 276–278.

in the history of the expansions of individual Christian kingdoms and counties, reconquista theory determines which seizures of foreign territory constituted part of the reconquest and which did not. The Portuguese conquest of the territories of Extremadura and the Algarve is thus seen as a matter corresponding to the 'Spanish reconquista', but the repeated Portuguese incursions northwards and the occupation of towns and areas in southern Galicia no longer correspond to the concept of reconquista. The same is true of the other kingdoms of the peninsula. As the Castilians and Aragonese increased their territories at the expense of the Kingdom of Navarre, there was no reconquista, unlike the situations in which these Christians conquered Toledo, Zaragoza, Córdoba and Valencia. Similarly, the Christians of Navarre were only to participate in the reconquista process when they took part in the outbreaks against the Muslims, but not when they expanded their kingdom into the areas of Christian Castile or Aragon. However, for example, Sancho III, the first of the great peninsular "reconquistadors", who united or incorporated Pamplona, Castile, Aragon and part of Leon under his rule, conquered and occupied in the absolute majority of cases Christian, not Muslim, territories. A number of Christian rulers tried to unite as much Christian territory as possible throughout the 11th to 13th centuries. The process of reconquista was thus meant to signify not only Christian reconquest, but also the reunification of the peninsula under one (Christian) government.

This ideal was present in the chronicles from the 9th century at the latest, when Christians from Asturias and other Christian areas were described as heirs of Roman Hispania and the Visigothic kingdom of Toledo, who were to seek the restoration of Christian rule over a united peninsula. This concept can be seen in the Asturian, Leonese and then especially Castilian rulers, who at least formally claimed dominion over the entire peninsula, its Christian and Muslim parts. A good example of this predominantly Castilian concept is the declaration of Alfonso VI and Alfonso VII as emperors of all Spain / all Hispania. In the eyes of these monarchs, all rulers of the peninsula, Christian and Muslim, and all inhabitants, whether Christian, Muslim, or Jewish, were to be subordinate in some form to the "emperor." An exception to this predominantly (León-)Castilian rule is the "emperor" Alfonso I of Aragon, who, after his marriage to Urraca I. Castile sought the same status for his own person. Reconquista as a process of reuniting the peninsula under a single Christian government also fails

because it did not occur in most cases. Galician, Asturian and Leonese nobles and subjects very often opposed reunification and rejoining Castile and under Castilian rule. The Navarrese and Pamplonians also repeatedly opposed Castilian and Aragonese rule, until in the 13th century they preferred to formally join France rather than to be de facto incorporated into the rule of the other peninsular rulers. The establishment of the Crown of Aragon also did not create one monolithic state entity, but a union of two distinct Christian dominions that maintained different cultures, laws, and interests regarding the conquest of Muslim Al-Andalus under a single ruler. While the Aragonese sought to expand southward to Valencia, Alicante and Játiva as far as Murcia, the Catalans retained their desire for the conquest of the Balearic Islands and further maritime expansion. The greatest difficulty in the concept of a "Spanish reconquista" for the reunification of Roman Hispania/Toledo is represented by Portugal, which managed to maintain its independence and separate itself from the rest of "Spain". Thus, in its persistent and successful efforts at Portuguese independence, the "Portuguese reconquista" would essentially work against the ideal of reunification. At the same time, the "Spanish reconquista" would have been unsuccessful in its intention, for because of the failure to incorporate Portugal under Spanish rule, there was never a restoration of unified rule over the peninsula, as there was to be under the Visigoths' rule of the Kingdom of Toledo. Thus, although the intention to reclaim the peninsula for Christianity was repeatedly presented throughout the Middle Ages, whether by peninsular rulers, church leaders, or the papacy, it was a very similar propaganda ideal to that of the crusades to the Middle East to reclaim the Holy Land for (Western) Christianity.

Even more problematic is the concept of convivencia. Indeed, in order to confirm a more tolerant interreligious coexistence in the peninsula, the proponents of this theory present cases which they claim took place only in 'Spain'. The Toledo translation schools, for example, are presented in this way, even though similar translation activities involving adherents of religious traditions other than Christianity took place in Sicily and southern France, for example. Mention is also made of the absence of massacres of Jews during individual crusades, although such attacks did not occur in the south of France, for example, so the Iberian Peninsula was not an isolated exception. On the contrary, the attacks that actually took place in the peninsula against

the followers of Judaism remain either unmentioned or justified by external culpability and foreign influences. Thus, once we strip "convivencia" of the idealized claims produced by its proponent authors, we are left with a picture of interreligious relations that largely overlaps with those Christian-Muslim-Jewish relations that took place in other Christian and Muslim countries. Some of what is presented in convivencia theory as a uniquely tolerant coexistence was in fact applied for a time even in England and France, for example, before the Jewish minorities were expelled from there.⁷ On the contrary, the restrictive regulations, negative policies of the rulers and hateful actions of the popular masses towards Jews (or religious minorities in general), which occurred, for example, in German countries or France, also occurred in the Iberian Peninsula with varying intensity. From this perspective, we could speak not of a unique and single convivencia in the Iberian Peninsula, but of individual medieval convivencia in Fatimid Egypt, in the south of France, in the Byzantine Empire, in the Abbasid Caliphate, in Muslim and Norman Sicily, in the Crusader states of the Middle East and, of course, in Muslim Al-Andalus and in the Christian kingdoms of the north of the peninsula, which would be characterised by their own specific characteristics.

The claims of the proponents of the theories of reconquista and convivencia are very often either wrong, misleading or inconclusive and therefore very often do not correspond to historical facts. Once research on the history of medieval interreligious relations between Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Iberian Peninsula is freed from the influence of ideologically loaded theories, we find that the historical development of interreligious interactions in the peninsula has been very different from the interpretations found in political claims, textbooks, popularization videos and articles, and numerous scholarly literature. On the contrary, this picture is very similar to the interreligious relations that took place in other medieval societies.

The Christian struggles against the Muslims on the peninsula were very similar in character to those between the Byzantines and the Arabs/Turks in Syria and Asia Minor, between the Normans and the Sicilian Muslims, and even those waged by the Crusaders against the Middle Eastern Muslims. Moreover, although some of the military clashes in Western Christian campaigns were attributed a sacred character and some were not, the Church, the papacy, and secular actors presented these wars consistently as

⁷ J. Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart*, s. 75–76.

reclaiming Christian territory from the pagans. The Reconquista was thus one of many conflicts between Muslims and Latin Christians in which interreligious communication, cooperation and collaboration very often figured alongside interfaith struggles.

Interreligious coexistence in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages was always based on a social hierarchy, at the top of which stood the followers of only one religion, while members of other religious groups were perceived as inferior and occupied a lower social status. This was the case both in Muslim-dominated al-Andalus and in the peninsular kingdoms ruled by Christians. The rights and freedoms enjoyed by subjugated non-believers in Muslim and Christian lands did not guarantee equality with the followers of the dominant religion. Non-believers had to face restrictive regulations, different or greater punishments for identical offences, and often contemptuous, hateful and even violent treatment from the ruling religious group. In this, inter-religious relations in the Iberian Peninsula were no different from other countries where Christians, Muslims and Jews, and sometimes only Christians and Jews, or Muslims and Jews, lived side by side in the Middle Ages. In all these localities, the specific situations and the emphasis on particular rules differed, rather than being a completely different character of interreligious relations. In the particular localities and at the particular times when such interreligious interactions took place, relations between the various religious groups were governed and influenced by a multitude of factors, including religious, power, social, economic and political factors, without knowledge of which it is impossible to reduce the nature of medieval interreligious relations in individual countries to a tolerant or intolerant one.

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