Chapter 11

The Making of Strangers

Muslims, Jews, and the Other 1492

As a child of the Arab world, I was given a touched-up version of the history of al-Andalus, a fabled time of Muslim splendor in the Iberian Peninsula. A brilliant Arab-Judeo culture had flowered there, Arab history taught. A poet of our time, the Syrian-born Nizar Qabbani who had written Arabic poetry's most moving verse, had once remarked that while on a visit to Granada he had roamed its streets while searching his pockets for the keys to its houses. A hill overlooking that enchanting city had summed up the Muslim grief over its loss: *EI Ultimo Sospiro del Moro* (The Moor's Last Sigh). On that ridge, the storytellers say, Boabdil, the last king of Granada, had paused to catch a final glimpse of his lost realm. Boabdil's unsentimental mother is said to have taunted him during his moment of grief. "You should weep like a woman for the land you could not defend like a man." The fall of the city had taken place on January 2, 1492.

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It was not in Granada, but farther north, in Madrid, in late 1991, that the cult of al-Andalus came back to me, a good many years after quitting Beirut, the city of my boyhood. I had come to Madrid with a television network to witness and comment on a grand diplomatic spectacle that American diplomacy had assembled in the aftermath of the first American-led campaign against Saddam Hussein. The occasion was scripted, and few things were left to chance. This was taking place amid the retrospectives, and the celebration and the rampant revisionism of the quincentennial of Christopher Columbus's voyage of discovery. It was a good "venue," the innocent said of Madrid, the right place for Muslims and Jews to come together. They had built a world of tolerance, it was said, and they had shared a similar fate—banishment and expulsion in the very same year, the year Columbus set sail for the New World. This history had its complications: a portrait of Charles V slaughtering the Moors was hurriedly removed from Madrid's Royal Palace, the conference's site. Then Yitzhak Shamir, the prime minister of Israel, a man with no eagerness to please, allowed himself a remembrance of what had happened in Spain: "In its two thousand years of wandering, the Jewish people paused here for several hundred years until they were expelled five hundred years ago. It was in Spain that the great Jewish poet and philosopher Yehuda Halevi expressed the yearning for Zion of all Jews, in the words, 'My heart is in the East while I am in the uttermost West.'"

This was an evocation of "the other 1492," which ran parallel to Columbus's voyage to the New World. If Granada had fallen on January 2, the "Edict of Expulsion" of Spain's Jews was issued on March 31. It gave the Jews a grace period of four months: they were ordered to quit their land by the end of July. By a twist

of fate, and due to the pleas of one of Iberian Jewry's most influential courtiers of Ferdinand and Isabella, Don Isaac Abravanel, they were given a reprieve of two days. Don Isaac had pleaded for his people's right to stay, but it was to no avail. The ships bearing them to exile left Spanish waters on the second of August. This "fleet of woe and misery," the historian Samuel Eliot Morison has written, was to sail parallel to a "fleet of high promise." Columbus's fleet was ready for sea on the second of August. The men received their communion at the Church of St. George in Palos on that day. The *Captain General* set sail in the dawn hours of the next day.

Three destinies were being forged: the expulsion of the Jews and the Muslims and Spain's high adventure in the New World. Those in Madrid, in 1991, had they known the history, could have heard both the Moor's Last Sigh and the pleading by Don Isaac to Ferdinand of Aragon and to Isabella of Castile, which fell on deaf ears. For those in the know, these two tales of banishment had been linked, seen as a bond between Muslims and Jews. It was in that vein that Yasir Arafat, four years after Madrid, in 1995, and then in the middle of a brief reconciliation with Israel, would evoke that history. "I understand that before the British Mandate, Arabs and Jews used to live together in peace. Remember, we were both expelled from Spain in the thirteenth century." The crafty chieftain had the wrong century of course, but he had fallen back on that fabled history. Men make of the past what they wish. What follows is another attempt to tell what was shared—and what wasn't—in an Iberian Peninsula that once was a venue where Christians, Jews, and Muslims together made a tangled history.

History is kind and generous to Abravanel; he had been a faithful courtier of the "most Catholic sovereigns." He had given

Ferdinand and Isabella eight years of distinguished service: he had organized the chaotic finances of Castile and Aragon; he had been helpful in the final push against the Muslims of Granada. The work of the *Reconquista* against Muslim Spain completed, Don Isaac was suddenly thrown into the supreme challenge of his life.

Don Isaac (1437–1508) hailed from the apex of Iberian Jewry. Born in Portugal, he had risen in the life of its court; he was treasurer and confidant of Portugal's ruler, Alfonso V, and a leader of the Jewish community of Lisbon. But fate, court intrigue, and the death of Alfonso in 1481, a conspiracy that earned Abravanel the enmity of the new Portuguese king, drove Abravanel across the border to Castile. The Holy Office of the Inquisition was busy at work grinding down its victims when Don Isaac had found his way into the court of the Spanish sovereigns. But the obsession of the Inquisition was with the *Conversos* (also known as the *Marranos*, or Jewish converts to Christianity). Jews like Don Isaac thought they were beyond the fire's reach.

Fragments survive of Abravanel's futile pleas to the Spanish sovereigns. There is the narrative by Don Isaac himself recorded in exile: "Thrice on my knees I besought the King. 'Regard us, King, use not thy subjects so cruelly.' But as the adder closes its ear with dust against the voice of the charmer, so the King hardened his heart against entreaties of his supplicants." Don Isaac and his fellow Jewish notables appealed to Ferdinand's greed, offered him vast sums of gold. The drawn-out war against Granada had run down the treasury. Ferdinand was sure to show some interest in the offer. But he brushed it aside at a later meeting. The Jews would give it one final desperate try: They would beseech Isabella. But there, too, they would fail. Where

Ferdinand had hinted to his courtiers that Isabella's religious piety had forced his hand, she was to shift the burden from herself. "Do you believe that this comes upon you from us? The Lord has put this thing into the heart of the King."

Ferdinand and Isabella offered Don Isaac and other Jewish notables in their service the chance to stay in Spain with their wealth and position intact. In return, they would of course have to undergo baptism and conversion. Abravanel chose dispossession and exile; the edict had prohibited the Jews from taking any gold, coins, or silver with them. The proud Jew had lived in the shadow of one forced conversion: his grandfather, Don Samuel Abravanel, had, under duress, converted to Christianity late in the preceding century during a terrible time for Castilian Jews. Some years later the grandfather had slipped across the border to Portugal and returned to Judaism.

The tale of the grandfather had only steeled the will of Don Isaac: he would leave the "land of persecution" behind him. There were lands where the life of the faith could be lived—the Italian city-states, the Netherlands, the Muslim domains of the Ottoman sultan, the Barbary states of Tunis, Algiers, and Tripoli—and there was a haven in Egypt. Don Isaac chose the city of Naples.

Boabdil would not fare so well with the Muslim historians: he had lost a kingdom. But in truth, there was not much that Boabdil could have done. Granada was living on borrowed time. The impetus behind the *Reconquista* was too tenacious for Granada to withstand. The Moorish chieftain cut the best possible deal: an estate for himself, a pledge of safety for the people of his city, safe passage for those who could not bear to live under Christian rule. The victors made yet another promise: Muslims who stayed behind were not to be molested; their religious rights

were to be honored. That pledge would be violated. The *Mudejares* (the remaining Muslims under Christian rule) would face, a decade hence, the same choice offered the Jews: conversion or exile. A century later the *Moriscos* (Moorish converts to Christianity) were expelled.

Spain was for the Spaniards: there was a mission of discovery at sea, and there was a mission of zeal at home. The bridges to Islam and to the Jews would be burned. Spain was awakening to a new sense of power. As Fernand Braudel put it in his great work, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Spain, an outpost of Christendom and an underdog in Europe's affairs, was recasting itself as the quintessential "Church Militant." The "two unwanted religions," Islam and Judaism, would be "pruned" like some excess growth. *Limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood): this was to be Spain's way of integrating itself with Europe. What had been a land of fluid and mixed identities, a Christian-Muslim-Judaic setting, now sought the comfort of purity.

The Pyrenees had been more of a barrier than the Strait of Gibraltar: North Africa had had a more formative influence on the Iberian Peninsula than did the societies of Europe to the north. The only way out of this cultural confusion, it seemed, was a violent extirpation of the cultural patterns of what had passed in the peninsula since its conquest by Islam early in the eighth century. Set the Jews aside and consider the Christian-Muslim relationship: cultural hybrids of every kind emerged in that tangled relationship. They are recounted for us by the historian Américo Castro in his celebrated book, *The Structure of Spanish History*. There were the *Mozarabs*, bilingual Christians who lived under Muslim rule; the *Mudejares*, Muslims who lived under the Christians; and the *Moriscos*, the Muslims who

had converted to Christianity. Then there were *Muladies*, Christians who turned Islamic, and the *Tornadizos*, Moors who turned Christian. To all these were added a special breed, the *Enaciados*, men and women who roved back and forth between the two religions and went wherever fear, ambition, or fate took them. When Fernando III of Castile declared himself, in 1236, "King of the Three Religions," he expressed the cultural diversity of a land at the crossroads. There came a time when Spain wanted to "resolve" all this cultural confusion, put an end to it. The way out was provided by militant Catholicism, a state religion, which brooked a relentless doctrine of blood purity and no compromise. That purity was, of course, delusional, as the sober among the Spaniards knew. Half a century after the establishment of the Inquisition, a luminary of the Spanish realm made the observation that speaking evil of the *Converso* "touches the majority of the Spanish nobility." But the drive for purity would be rendered more deadly and more neurotic by this kind of inheritance.

In the legend of Moorish Spain, the Jews of Toledo opened the gates of the city to the Muslim conquerors. They were eager to welcome the Muslim armies, which had overrun the Visigothic kingdom early in the eighth century. The legend is groundless. In the war between the Goths and the Muslim armies, the Jews were, for the most part, quiet spectators. To be sure, they were glad to see the defeat of the Goths. The same must have been true of the Ibero-Roman natives of the peninsula. The Goths had been severe rulers. They had not allowed the Jews to sing their psalms, to celebrate Passover, to testify in court against Christians, or to observe their dietary laws. Forced baptism of Jews was a recurring phenomenon under Visigothic rule. Centuries later Montesquieu was to observe that all the

laws of the Inquisition had been part of the "Visigothic code" that regulated the conduct of the Jews in seventh-century Spain.

It was a polyglot world that the Muslims came to rule in the Iberian Peninsula. There were Arabs, Berbers, Jews, and blacks, Muslims of native Spanish stock and native Christians. Islam was overextended in Spain; it thus made its accommodation with its habitat. The world of the Jews, turned on itself under the Visigoths, grew larger with the coming of Muslim rule. The peninsula had been opened up to the international order of Islam, to the culture of the Mediterranean basin and the commerce and the traffic. Islam stayed long in the peninsula: eight centuries separate the conquest from the fall of Granada. The Jews were there for all the changes of fortune. The romanticism about that golden age of Iberian Jewry under Islam should be kept in check. There were seasons of bliss, and there were calamitous times. The golden age was brief: several generations of Muslims, Jews, and *Mozarabs* (Arabized Christians) were its beneficiaries from the early years of the tenth century to the mid-eleventh century. At its zenith, Iberian Islam built an urban order of tranquility and brilliance. The cities thrived. Córdoba, on the banks of the Guadilquivir, then the seat of Muslim rule, with a self-styled caliph (successor to the Prophet) at its helm, had a population of a quarter-million people. It was unmatched by any European city at the time; its only rivals were Baghdad and Constantinople. It is principally from Córdoba's great moment that the romance of al-Andalus is drawn.

Romance aside, Jews did well by the onset of Muslim rule. They were favored by the rulers: they were loyal and useful subjects. The politics of the peninsula were a whirlwind: Berbers from North Africa versus Arabs, tribal Arabs who came with or after the conquest versus "neo-Arabs" keen to claim their share

of the spoils of the new dominion, Slavs who were soldiers and mercenaries striking when the occasion presented itself, and Christians with some ties of faith to their coreligionists in the lands to the north. The Jews were unique in this politics of factions. They needed the protection of central authority, and they paid it in the coin of loyalty. "They tied their destiny to Moslem dominion and stood by it in all areas of life as loyal aides," Eliyahu Ashtor tells us in his work, *The Jews of Moslem Spain*. Christians under Muslim rule had been defeated, but there were always monks and priests ready to fling themselves against the dominant faith. The proximity of Christian states to the north, Navarre and Castile, and the states in the Asturias and Galicia, provided the Christians with hope that revenge may yet be had against the Moors. The Jews wanted nothing to do with the past. The Muslim order was not fully theirs, but it afforded them protection. It was not long before the lands of Andalusia, now lands of immigration, attracted a Jewish migration from North Africa and from the eastern domains of Islam.

The economy of Muslim Spain, tied as it was to the larger economy of the Muslim world, boomed and provided the Jews with the material bases for a cultural awakening. Virtually all sectors of the Andalusian economy were open to the Jews. They were active in agriculture and tilled their own lands. They were fully present in the textile works of Andalusian cities, in the international commerce carried out between the lands of Islam and those of Christendom. The grandees of Jewish society, the men with wealth, emulated their Muslim counterparts: they subsidized poets and men of letters and nurtured a lively environment. Literacy spread. Jewish academies opened in Córdoba, Granada, Toledo, and Barcelona. A rich body of Judeo-Arabic philosophy was to become the distinctive gift of this age. By the

tenth century the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula who had looked to the Babylonian academies and the Talmudists of Iraq for guidance felt confident enough to stand on their own. Those old academies in the east had fallen on hard times, because the political center of the Islamic caliphate in Baghdad had eroded. Stability had done wonders for the Jews of Muslim Spain. Abdurrahman III, an enlightened ruler in Córdoba who had reigned for an incredibly long period of time (from 912 until his death in 962), had given the Jews, and his own people, a reprieve from political disorder, and they had made the most of it.

This was the age of the great Jewish courtiers, men who rose by their talents in the courts of Andalusia. For a good deal of his reign, Abdurrahman in Córdoba relied on Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, a learned and subtle Jew who had made his way on a familiar track from medicine to court life and politics and diplomacy. A patron of the arts, Shaprut sponsored studies of the Torah, acquired rare manuscripts of religious texts, and used the weight and the access he had as one of Córdoba's leading diplomats and emissaries to protect his own community and uphold its interests at court.

A secular political culture prevailed in Andalusia: the Muslim *ulama* and theologians railed against this attribute of court life, this nearly cavalier way toward the faith. This was what had enabled the Jews to succeed at court. "No office, except that of the ruler, seemed to be out of the reach of a talented and ambitious Jew," Norman Stillman has written of Andalusia in his historical survey, *The Jews of Arab Lands*. Success at court was not without its hazards, though. It called forth its steady companion—the wrath of the crowd. Courtiers rose, but the wise ones among them understood the fickle ways of fate. The life of Shmuel Ben Naghrela (993–1056), a figure of great accomplish-

ment in the Andalusian world as a poet and a courtier, spanned the possibilities and the hazards of Jewish life in that world: the author Hillel Halkin had described this poet and courtier of renown as the first "postancient Jew" in both the realms of politics and letters. At the apex of his fame and power, Naghrela had risen to the rank of chief minister of the court of Granada; he had become the first *nagid*, or governor of the Jews of the realm. This courtier had been born in the cosmopolitan world of Córdoba to a family of means and learning. He had been tutored by great Talmudists and had prospered in the spice trade. He was a "learned merchant," the backbone of Andalusian life. He had made his way to Granada after the fall of Córdoba to Berber forces in 1013. From tax collector he had risen to the peak of court life under two Berber kings of Granada, Habus ibn Maksan (ruled 1019–38) and his son Badis. Naghrela commanded the troops of Granada for nearly two decades.

The full irony of Naghrela's life, the precariousness of the journey that he had made, and the hazards of Jewish existence in Andalusia are given away by the fate of his son Joseph. Ten years after Naghrela's death, his son, the inheritor of his position as Nagid, was crucified by a mob on the city's main gate in an anti-Jewish riot. Joseph had taken success for granted. Where the father had lived in the Jewish quarter, the son had his residence built on a high hill in Granada where the Muslim nobility lived. Joseph was, says one chronicle, "proud to his own hurt and the Berber princes were jealous of him." This riot was the first massacre of Jews in Muslim Spain. The date was December 30, 1066. About fifteen hundred families perished in that riot.

More troubles were yet to come. The political unity of the Andalusian world had cracked. The authority of Córdoba had

slipped away. By the mid-eleventh century, it was the age of *muluk al-tawa 'if* (the Party Kings), the warlords and pretenders who carved up Muslim Spain into petty and warring turfs. The Party Kings were "men thrown up by the road." They were adventurers and mercenaries, Berbers from North Africa, soldiers of fortune who had overthrown their masters. There must have been about thirty ministates in Andalusia at the height of its fragmentation. Six of them were the leading states: Zaragoza in the north; Badajoz, Toledo, and Valencia in the center of the peninsula; Seville and Granada in the south. The fall of Toledo in 1085 to the armies of Alfonso VI of León-Castile put on cruel display the weakness of the Party Kings. Toledo had been the ecclesiastical seat of the old Visigothic kingdom: its return to Christian sovereignty was seen as evidence of divine favor. This was certainly the way Alfonso billed it as he claimed the city and sponsored the establishment there of Spain's largest archdiocese: "By the hidden judgment of God," a charter of his read, "this city was for 376 years in the hands of the Moors, blasphemers of the Christian faith. . . . Inspired by God's grace I moved an army against this city, where my ancestors once reigned in power and wealth."

Chastened by Toledo's fall, the Party Kings sought deliverance and help from the Muslims of North Africa. They appealed to *Almoravids*, Berber camel nomads who had subdued Morocco. The Party Kings knew the risks of bringing the *Almoravids*, a violent lot, into their midst. But they chanced it. The ruler of Granada justified the gamble by saying that he would rather end up as a camel driver in Morocco than a swineherd in Castile. The North Africans checked the Christians, but only temporarily. The Berbers could not arrest the chaos: they brought a fair measure of it with them, as they set out to extract from the

population what they believed was their due. Another Berber invasion, one of a wholly different nature, that of *Almohads*, a more religiously zealous and fanatic lot, was to take place nearly a century later. The men of this expedition (the Taliban of their time) were a tyrannical lot, intolerant of Jews and Christians and of the "free souls" within the Muslim population. No sooner had they swept into Spain than they began a ruthless assault against its old ways. Andalusia had fallen on hard times, but it was still light years ahead of the wilderness of Morocco. A ruler of this band of puritans found the relative freedom of the Jews difficult to countenance. He decreed that they were to wear distinctive dress, "because they had become so bold as to wear Muslim clothing and in their dress looked like the noblest among them, mingling with the Muslims in external affairs, without being distinguished from the servants of God." More important still, the North African zealots sought the conversion of the Christians and the Jews of their conquered realm.

The Jews scattered in every direction. Vast numbers of them migrated north into Christian lands. Some fled into the eastern provinces of Islam. Moses ben Maimon, better known as Maimonides (1131–1204), quit his native Córdoba for Morocco and then finally found a haven in Cairo, where he became a physician to the great Muslim ruler Saladin. The golden age of the Jews of Muslim Spain had drawn to a close.

No measure of zeal could keep the Andalusian world intact. In 1212 *Almohads* sustained a major military defeat against Christian forces; soon they quit the Iberian Peninsula and returned to North Africa. The Muslim states were defenseless. Córdoba fell in 1236, Valencia was conquered by the armies of Aragon in 1238, and Seville's turn came ten years later. By 1264,

all that remained of Islam's rule was the kingdom of Granada and its surroundings.

Luck and geography worked in Granada's favor. Historian L. P. Harvey's book *Islamic Spain: 1250–1500* sums up the reasons for Granada's longevity: "a mountainous situation facilitating defense, distance from centers of Christian population, and a long sea coast, through which could pass military aid from North Africa." Granada stayed the hand of fate for more than two centuries. It looked away as other Muslim strongholds fell to Castile. It may have participated—on the side of the Castilians—in the demise of Muslim rule in rival principalities. Granada's rulers stood idly by at a crucial time in 1264 when Muslim rebellions erupted in Lower Andalusia and in Murcia against Christian rule. The defeat of those rebellions left Granada as the sole stronghold of Andalusian Islam. The jurists rendered opinions that worked in Granada's favor. Muslims living under Christian rule were encouraged to migrate to Granada where the life of the faith could be lived. This proved to be a mixed blessing. Granada had the soldiers to withstand the warfare of siege and attrition. But hers was a divided and turbulent population. Once Christian Spain finally had a singular royal will at work as it did after 1474, the Granadan stronghold was marked for extinction.

Nor was Granada helped by what had transpired in 1453 in the great fight between Christendom and Islam, the loss of Constantinople to the Turks. There came to the societies of Europe a new politics of religious passion, a desire for revenge, and for a measure of absolution for what had not been done for Constantinople. (The loss of Constantinople was no small factor in the zeal and eschatological excitement with which the project of Christopher Columbus's came to be viewed; new

lands of the faith, new conquests had to replace what was lost to the Turks.) Constantinople, a doomed and dying city, had fought and fallen alone. Western Christendom had not cared much about the fate of Byzantium. The Venetian galleys that were supposed to come to the rescue of Constantinople never turned up. Venice had hedged her bets; her commerce with the domains of the Grand Turk was of greater importance than the struggle for Constantinople. A small contingent of Genoese quit the fight as the final push for the city was unfolding. France was recovering from the ravages of the Hundred Years' Wars; England was run down by her French wars, and, besides, Constantinople was a distant world.

Aragon was close to the fire, but her monarch, Alfonso V, was busy with his campaigns in Italy. The papacy had tried to rouse Europe to the defense of Constantinople. But it was too little and too late, for the papacy itself had waged a long campaign of its own against the schismatics of Byzantium. Men being what they are, Constantinople was ennobled by its fall and loss. Four decades later, the fall of Constantinople would be avenged in the fight for Granada—a doomed Muslim outpost in the West for a doomed Christian outpost lost to the Muslims.

The pressure on Granada had subsided prior to 1453. Castile, whose brash energy was to drive the politics of the peninsula and to fashion the new history of Spain, was to launch six minor expeditions against Granada between 1455 and 1457. A sly Castilian monarch undertook these expeditions, because they were genuinely popular and they were a good way of raising revenue, doing God's work under papal auspices. Nothing durable was to come of these expeditions. The final push against Granada would come later, after the union of the crowns of

Castile and Aragon: Granada now mattered. It stood in the way of a great cause. Its conquest would provide a heroic enterprise worthy of this new Spain and its sovereigns.

The *Reconquista* was above all, though, a true embodiment and reflection of Castile—of both its ideology and its material reality. J. H. Elliott's book, *Imperial Spain*, has given us a definitive portrait of Castilian society. A pastoral, nomadic society, Castile was aristocratic and religious and, by the end of the fifteenth century, overpopulated. Sheep farming was a mainstay of the Castilian economy. The push southward, into the agricultural Muslim lands of Andalusia, was the pushing outward of a religious and an economic frontier. *Reconquista* gave the *hidalgos* (the minor nobility of Castile) and its priests a calling and a project and an escape from the limitations of their harsh, barren soil. The "*Reconquista*," Elliott writes, "was not one but many things. It was at once a crusade against the infidel, a succession of military expeditions in search of plunder, and a popular migration." All three aspects of the *Reconquista* stamped themselves forcefully on the forms of Castilian life.

The Castilian advantages over Granada had become overwhelming by the end of the fifteenth century. There was, to begin with, a great demographic disparity. The figures for those years of the fifteenth century are admittedly unreliable, but they do give us a sense of scale: the population of Castile could have approximated five million then, Aragon around a million inhabitants, and Granada a mere 300,000 people. In the end, though, Granada was doomed because her agricultural hinterland had fallen to the Castilians. The land onto which the Granadans had been pushed back was of poor soil and could not produce the grain and foodstuffs they needed. True enough, there was treason in Granada and there were divisions: a bitter feud between Boabdil and his father, for all intents and pur-

poses a civil war, sapped the unity and the confidence of the Granadans. But the harsh balance of forces, those facts of demography and economy, had rendered the judgment that mattered. There were hopes in Granada (those echo the idle hopes of the defenders of Constantinople four decades earlier) that outside help would come to the rescue. But Granada stood alone. Its surrender came in a public ceremony, with Boabdil handing over the keys to the city to the Spanish monarchs. In his logbook, Columbus, who was there for the final permission to embark on his endeavor, recorded the scene:

> On January 2 in the year 1492, when your Highnesses had concluded their war with the Moors who reigned in Europe, I saw your Highnesses banners victoriously raised on the towers of the Alhambra, the citadel of that city, and the Moorish king come out of the city gates and kiss the hands of your Highnesses, and the prince, my Lord. And later in that same month . . . your Highnesses decided to send me, Christopher Columbus, to see those parts of India and the princes and peoples of these lands, and consider the best means for their conversion . . . I departed from the city of Granada on Saturday May 12 and went to the port of Palos, where I prepared three ships.

Hope had deluded the Jews in the domains of Ferdinand and Isabella. Faithful to the crown, they had done what they could for the final push of the *Reconquista*. While the military effort against the Moors went on, the public animus toward the Jews in Christian Spain seemed to subside. But this was deceptive. Spain no longer needed her Jews. The crown, traditionally the protector of the Jews against the church and the townsmen, would be more audacious and independent now. The Jews

would be dispossessed and fed to the mob in the service of royal absolutism. The great calamity of Spanish Jewry, the destruction of the Sephardic world, was unfolding like some play.

There was nothing the Jews could do to avert the wrath of those who sought their destruction. Pick up the trail a good century before the Inquisition and the "Edict of Expulsion": over the course of that pivotal century, the place of the Jews in Spain had become untenable. The Jews farmed the taxes of the state; they were the ideal scapegoat for all the disgruntled. The priests who led the mob in intermittent outbursts against the Jews saw a Jewish conspiracy behind every cruel turn of fate. Jewish physicians were carrying poison under their fingernails, Jewish sorcerers were everywhere, a Jewish cabal was out to undo Christianity. When the great plague, the black death, swept Europe in 1348–49, a rumor swept Spain and the lands beyond that a Jew from Toledo was the principal culprit: with the help of a rabbi from France the culprit had put together a deadly concoction of dried snakes, frogs, and scorpions, mixed with a consecrated host and the heart and liver of a slain Christian. The Holy See proclaimed the falsity of the charge, but it was to no avail: 15,000 Jews were killed by the mob in Toledo.

The Jewish world was hit with great ferocity in a wave of massacres that took place in 1391. The trouble began in Seville and spread to Córdoba, Valencia, and Barcelona. The economic life of the peninsula had stagnated, and the oppression of the nobility had impoverished the land. A fiery preacher, one Fernando Martinez, worked with this deadly material. Before the great terror subsided, some twenty-five thousand may have been killed. The crowd and its preachers offered the Jews of Spain the choice of baptism or death. More than half of the Jews of Castile may have chosen conversion. A new legislation

of great severity was passed in 1412: the so-called Ordinance on the Enclosure of the Jews and Moors at Valladolid. The Jews were now to wear a distinctive yellow garment; Jews and Moors were banned from serving as spice dealers, tax farmers, moneylenders, physicians, or surgeons; they were to live in separate enclosures locked and guarded at night. A massive wave of conversions was to take place from 1412 to 1415.

Baptism bought time for those who chose it. But the cruel century separating the great terror of 1391 and the "Edict of Expulsion" posed a new crisis for the Jews at every turn. Where they had been a people apart, the sin of the Jews was separation. Now it was their assimilation that agitated their enemies. The basic alliance at work against the Jews had been a coming together of the church and the burgher-class townsmen. Most of the clerical establishment had accepted the conversion of the majority of Spain's Jewry as the final word on the matter. But the burgher class had felt cheated by the willingness of the Jews to come into the fold. The enemy was now within.

The grand inquisitor doing his work in the 1480s would claim that he was hunting down crypto-Jews among the *Conversos*. We know better now, thanks to the massive research done by the Israeli historian Benzion Netanyahu. (Benjamin, a son of this historian, would become prime minister of Israel.) His huge book, published in 1995, *The Origins of the Inquisition,* turns that great story inside out. In the drama laid out for us by Netanyahu, conversion to Christianity had worked. It had depleted the Jewish world and increased the self-confidence of the *Conversos*. They were no longer a minority that had gone astray; they now outnumbered the Jews of the realm. Moreover, forced conversions had given way to voluntary ones. "The attachment to Judaism was weakening; the trend toward Christianity was intensified. The migration from Spain, which at first

was not inconsiderable, was, after a few years, reduced to insignificant proportions," Netanyahu writes. Here and there the grand inquisitor may have found a *Converso* who did not eat pork,who ate meat during Lent, or who observed the Sabbath; but the trend toward assimilation was unmistakable. And the Jews soon wrote off the *Conversos*; they were lost to Judaism, "Christianized beyond recovery."

Conversos now flocked into professions from which they had been excluded—the law, the army, the universities, the clerical establishment. By 1480, half the important offices in the court of Aragon were occupied by *Conversos* or their children. Spanish life now yielded a new breed: the *Conversos* bent on undoing the world of their erstwhile faith and kinsmen. The case of Solomon Halevi, once a chief rabbi of the city of Burgos who was christened Don Pablo de Santa Maria and rose to the rank of bishop of his city, and the more celebrated case of the Talmudist Joshua Halorqi, who became one of the great, merciless defenders of his new faith, illuminate this terrible force at work.

Halevi had gone over to Christianity during the great terror of 1391. His learning, talent, and ambition took him to the heights of power in his new faith: he served as an adviser and a tutor to two Castilian monarchs, and he was papal nuncio of Benedict XIII in the court of Castile. In his new incarnation, as Don Pablo de Santa Maria, this *Converso* was seized with a deadly animus toward the Jews. Writing in his old age, in 1434, in a document titled *Scrutinium Scripturarum*, he described the Jews as people of "diabolical persuasion . . . who had risen to high stations in the royal palaces and the palaces of the grandees," a people who posed a deadly menace to the souls of the Christians. He went as far as praising the massacres of 1391 as deeds stirred up by God. "The rabbi-bishop," the Spanish histo-

rian Américo Castro has observed, "was conjuring up, as he wrote, the ghosts of his own life—shouting down the voice of his own conscience."

Halorqi, christened as Jeronimo de Santa Fe, was to serve as the church's principal spokesman in a disputation convened by Benedict XIII in the city of Tortosa in 1413 between the church and the rabbinic establishment. The former Talmudist was unrelenting in his attitude toward the Jews. He, too, at the end of his career published a notoriously anti-Jewish work, *Hebraeomastix* (*the Scourge of the Hebrews*). A wicked sentiment had been unleashed: the politics of purity. A reign of terror, of informers preying on others in the hope that they themselves would be spared, had descended on the Jews and the *Conversos* alike. The Jews had been quick to understand the enmity of the *Conversos*. They were to dispense with the cherished notion that the *Conversos* were *anusim* (forced converts) who were destined to return to the faith.

The eagerness of the *Conversos* to belong to the new faith and to assimilate would bring them no relief. Their success backfired. Since the *Conversos* had been beneficiaries of monarchic power, they were caught in the unending struggle between the rulers and the cities of the realm attempting to defend their prerogatives and autonomy. The leaders of the cities, Netanyahu writes, had gotten rid of the Jews in high office only to see their descendants "in the very offices from which the Jews had been ousted, and in many others which they had never held. To the patricians of the cities it appeared as if history had played a cruel joke upon them."

Kings could pledge and provide protection when their power and interests dictated and made possible such protection, and the well-intentioned authorities of the church could welcome

the new converts. Yet, the patricians of the cities and the urban mob, the little people (*populo menudo)*, would not be reconciled to the gains made by the *Conversos*.

There was no way that this animus could be appeased. It drew on the old stereotypes of the Jew—worked them over to serve new socioeconomic and psychological resentments and extended them to the *Conversos*. Where the church had blessed the intermarriage of old and new Christians, the enemies of the *Conversos* saw this phenomenon as an evil sure to contaminate Spain and bring about its ruin. The racist agitators who grew increasingly shrill in the decades that led to the Inquisition convinced broad segments of the population that the *Conversos* had worked their guile and evil ways on nobility and court alike. If the Jews had slipped through the gates as converts, they had to be banished and destroyed. The line had to be redrawn.

This great new force of hatred for the *Conversos* was fully understood by the Catholic sovereigns when they set up the Holy Office of the Inquisition in 1481. It is said that Ferdinand of Aragon, the cold and unsentimental ruler who drove and manipulated the Inquisition, was the model on whom Niccolò Machiavelli fashioned his own ideal prince. Ferdinand was crafty, shrewd, and unwavering. For him, the Inquisition was an instrument of royal power: The wealth of the condemned would be his, and there would be renown and moral credit thrown into the bargain. The persecution of the *Conversos* was one sure way the commoners of the realm would be won over, convinced that they and their rulers were engaged in a common enterprise. Hitherto, sheltered by royal power, the *Conversos* would now become its helpless victims. The *Conversos* and those who remained true to the Jewish faith may have taken two separate paths. In one swift, terrible decade, they would be brought

together: the Inquisition in 1481 against the *Conversos* and the "Edict of Expulsion" of the Jews in 1492. The campaign to root out heresy among the Jewish converts led to the banishment of an entire people.

Don Isaac Abravanel was shrewd and wise enough to know that the animus and the spirit that seized the Iberian Peninsula would know no rest. He didn't think that those who opted for conversion could ever convince the old Christians that they were of them. In one of his commentaries on the *Conversos*, he wrote: "The indigenous people of the land will always call them 'Jews,' and they shall be designated 'Israel' against their will, and they would be accused of Judaizing secretly, and they will be burnt at the stake."

Spain had prevailed: She had cast out her Jews and subdued the Muslims. But she would remain brittle and insecure. The fear (partly real, partly a phantom called up by the state's functionaries and the diehards among the clergy) persisted of a Muslim invasion from North Africa or Turkey. Those generous terms offered the Muslims during Granada's capitulations ran counter to the spirit of the age. The first archbishop of Granada, Hernando de Talavera, a man of great civility and tolerance, did his best to preserve the dignity of the Moors, to reconcile them to the new order; he refrained from a policy of forced conversion to Christianity. But Talavera was overruled and pushed aside by Francisco Ximenez de Cisneros, the archbishop of Toledo, who came to Granada in 1499 bent on eradicating Islam from the newly conquered realm. The harshness of Cisneros's policy triggered a rebellion in Alpujarras, the slopes of the Sierra Nevada, in 1499. The rebellion was put down, and the Moors were given the choice that had been offered the Jews in 1492: conversion or exile. The Granadans had converted en masse, and

the new policy of forced conversion was extended throughout Castile.

The *Moriscos*, the new Christians, as they came to be called, clung to their labor, their agricultural work, and their crafts in the aftermath of their conversion. "They were diligent in the cultivation of gardens," one Spanish chronicler, Friar Alonso Fernandez, said. "They all paid their taxes and assessments willingly, and were moderate in their food and dress." They were a humble lot, he added, and lived apart from the society of old Christians, "preferring that their own life not be the object of gazing." The silk industry in Granada provided them with a decent living. In Valencia, where they formed a tight community, they were perhaps the mainstay of the economy and the feudal estates of the Christian landowners. The latter had a vested interest in protecting the *Moriscos*, in keeping religious and racial zeal in check. But there would be no easy way of staying the furies. The Holy Office of the Inquisition was anxious to do its work, to root out heresy from the land. And the rank and file among the old Christians resented the *Moriscos* for "spending too little, working too hard, breeding too fast." The *Moriscos* had submitted but had retained their customs, attire, and ancestral language. The Christianization had been skin-deep. It was an uneasy coexistence with the "new Christians" keeping to themselves. No Christian victory, though, could take from the *Moriscos* the memory of what had been theirs—the splendor and the power. Victor and vanquished knew that old history, were caught in its grip. Andalusian communities in the cities of North Africa dreamed of the restoration of their world. Spain was never sure that its Moorish nemesis had been slain once and for all.

The peace between Spain and its *Morisco* communities broke down between 1566 and 1567. The balance had ruptured at a

time of great difficulty for Spain. The Turks were on the move in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa; Protestant rebellions and agitations had hit the Netherlands and Flanders. Fear gripped Spain of a double encirclement: the Muslims from the South, the Protestants from the North. Keen to demonstrate its zeal in defending the faith, the court issued an edict prohibiting the use of Arabic, banning Moorish attire, and forcing *Morisco* women to unveil in public. At a ceremony in Granada, all artificial baths, those symbols of Moorish culture and "decadence," were destroyed. The bullying came during a troubled time for the silk industry. The result was a great rebellion, again in Alpujarras, in 1568. The rising was put down with great difficulty.

Troops had to be brought home from campaigns in Italy and Flanders in order to subdue the rebellion. For one fleeting moment, it seemed, the phantom that had stalked Spain since its victory over Granada came to life. "Don't you know that we are in Spain, and that we have owned this land for 900 years?" said the rebel *Morisco* leader Don Fernando de Valor (Ibn Humeja) as he summoned his followers. "We are no band of thieves, but a kingdom; nor is Spain less abandoned to vices than was Rome." The rebels had given it all but could not win. Spain would take no chances in the aftermath of this second uprising. The *Moriscos* were to be dispersed throughout the kingdom. The *Moriscos* of Granada were to be "thinned out," and thousands were dispatched to Castile to fend for themselves in hostile, new surroundings. The Turks were to be denied a "fifth column" in so vital and so exposed a location in the peninsula.

The experiment in assimilation had proven a failure. In 1590, the cardinal of Toledo described the *Moriscos* as "true Mohammedans like those of Algiers." Spain was done with assimilation. She had won renown in the Christian world by her expulsion of

the Jews, Braudel tells us. There was no price to be paid for her cruelty to the Moors. The fate of the *Conversos* was a preview of what would befall the *Moriscos*. In the years between 1609 and 1614, radical new legislation during the reign of Philip III would sweep the *Moriscos*, a community of some three hundred thousand people, out of the country. They were herded to the frontiers and shipped to North Africa.

No welcome mat was rolled out for the *Moriscos* in the cities of North Africa. Ahmed Ibn Mohammed al-Makkari, a North African historian who wrote an exhaustive and poignant history of Islam in Spain, described the cruel fate that awaited the evicted on the other shore: "Many thousands of the unfortunate emigrants went to Fez, thousands to Telemsan, from Oran; the greater part took to the road to Tunis. Few, however, reached the place of their destination for they were assailed on the road . . . and they were plundered and ill-treated, especially on the road to Fez and Telemsan. Those who directed their course to Tunis were more fortunate; they, for the most part, reached that place in safety, and peopled the desert towns and districts of the country. God, indeed, is the master of all lands and dominions, and gives them to whomsoever He pleases."

Spain now wanted to be done with everything Moorish: customs, architecture, attire, and public baths. All these were banned, along with Arabic, the language of the "proscribed race." J. H. Elliott illuminates in authoritative detail the context that nurtured this radical new spirit. Spain was a deeply troubled country by the beginning of the seventeenth century. The court needed a sideshow and a scapegoat, and the expulsion of the *Moriscos* provided it. The Spanish war against the forces of international Protestantism, the Dutch and the English, had ended in stalemate and frustration. The defeat of the armada

had been a blow to the nation's sense of itself. The Castilian economy, hitherto heated by the influx of gold and silver bullion from the New World, had run aground. The *hidalgos* were restless and embittered. The windfall society and its inflationary spiral had unsettled Castile; its confidence had cracked. The empire had been heady, extravagant, and costly, but its benefits were not easy to see. The world of the merchant families and beneficiaries of the Atlantic trade had grown larger with the new wealth: appetites had been whetted among the merchants for the ways and lifestyle of the nobility. Then that world had closed up again.

It was these second thoughts about empire and the new wealth from the Indies, which Miguel de Cervantes had immortalized in *Don Quixote*, the great literary work of this period of Castilian history. "Is it not better to stay peacefully at home instead of roaming the world in search of better bread than is made of wheat, not to mention that many who go for wool come home shorn?" Don Quixote's exasperated niece asked her uncle, the knight-errant and fantasist. A pastoral society had wandered far and now felt betrayed. Castile had come out of a cruel past, and after so much striving felt itself shortchanged and trapped: "Happy times and fortunate ages," said Don Quixote as he sat amid a group of goatherds, "were those that our ancestors called golden, not because gold (so prized in this our Iron Age) was gotten in that era without any labors, but because those who lived in it knew not those two words *thine* and *mine*. In that holy age all things were in common." Spain had begun to wail for itself. There was a sense that divine providence had been withdrawn. The assault on the *Moriscos* was good royal theater and, perhaps, a bow to the heavens and to the true church, a hope that the favor of divine providence would return.

Banished and cast out, the *Morisco* would now become a benign ghost: Cervantes gives the *Morisco*, once Hispanic through and through, a fleeting and furtive return to his old land. Ricote, an old *Morisco*, turns up in his ancestral land amid a band of German travelers. This Ricote, speaking pure Castilian, is a man who had found within himself some acceptance of the great banishment: it was not safe, he is made to say, "for Spain to nurse the serpent in its bosom." In exile he still retained the memory of home: "Wherever in the world we are, we weep for Spain, for after all, there we were born and it is our fatherland. Nowhere can we find the compassion that our misfortunes crave; in the Barbary and other parts of Africa, where we expected to be welcomed and cherished, it is there where they treat us with the greatest inhumanity. We did not know our happiness until we had lost it."

A tale of dubious authenticity has the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II (ruled 1481–1512) wondering about Ferdinand and the folly of his expulsion of the Jews: "Do they call this Ferdinand a wise Prince who impoverishes his kingdom and thereby enriches mine?" The tale aside, the lands of Islam provided safe havens for the Jews. The gates of many Muslim realms were opened before the Sephardim. They were a skilled people, and the new lands were eager to accommodate them. They brought with them new skills in the making of weaponry and gunpowder, in printing and medicine. They knew the languages of Europe. In the great struggle of the age between Islam and Christendom, the Jews found a reprieve. For the rulers of the Ottoman Empire the Jews were ideal subjects.

By the standards of Europe in the High Middle Ages, the world of Islam was, on the whole, a tolerant world. It was not an "interfaith utopia" (to borrow the words of the distinguished

historian of Islam, Bernard Lewis). The life the Jews led was circumscribed. It was a life without illusions. There was a clear division of labor; political power, careers in the bureaucracy and the military were off-limits. There was a body of discriminatory law: houses of worship could not be built higher than mosques; Jews and Christians were often required to wear distinctive garb. They could not bear arms or ride horses. They had to pay higher taxes than those paid by Muslims. And some Muslim realms were harder than others. Morocco stood out in the degradation it heaped upon the Jews. Here Islam was frontier Islam, embittered by wars against Portugal and Spain. The Jews were the only non-Muslim community in Morocco. The limits imposed upon them, enclosed ghettos, which functioned like the *juderias* of Aragon and Castile, recalled the degradations of Europe. The Jews of Morocco lived at the mercy of the elements; it was feast or famine. Merciful sultans alternated with cruel ones. What the sultans gave, the preachers and the mob frequently took away. The protection the rulers offered in this wild and anarchic realm could never withstand what one historian described as the three miseries of Morocco: plague, famine, and civil war.

It was easier in other Muslim lands. The private domain Islamic rule conceded the freedom from forced conversions must have seemed particularly generous when compared to what prevailed in Medieval Europe. A Jew writing to his coreligionists in Europe described Turkey as a land where "every man may dwell at peace under his own vine and fig tree." The Jews were a people on the run. The tolerance in the new surroundings seemed wondrous. A *Converso* who made a new life in Turkey and returned to the faith spoke of Turkey in nearly messianic terms, describing it as "a broad expansive sea which

our Lord has opened with the rod of his mercy. Here the gates of liberty are wide open for you that you may fully practice your Judaism."

Jewish centers of learning and commerce sprouted throughout the Muslim world. Salonika, conquered by the Turks early in the 1400s, was to become, for all practical purposes, a Jewish city. Jews became the city's overwhelming majority and dominated its public life until its loss to the Greeks in 1912. A substantial Jewish colony put down roots in Istanbul. The town of Safed, in Palestine, attracted Jewish textile makers and scholars and became a famous center of learning. Close by there was a protected niche for the Jews in the life of Egypt. Baghdad's Jewry was perhaps in a league by itself. It had its academies, a vigorous mercantile elite with far-flung commercial operations.

Then the world of the Jews of Islam closed up. It happened over a long period of time. The civilization of Islam itself went into eclipse; its Ottoman standard-bearers were overtaken by Europe in the seventeenth century. The Jews who had done well by a civilization in the midst of a surge were to suffer its demise. Increasingly the Christian European powers set the terms of the traffic with Islamic lands. For intermediaries these European powers preferred the local Christian communities—Greeks, Armenians, Arabs. And these local Christians were sworn enemies of the Jews, bent on cutting them out of international commerce and diplomacy. The knowledge of foreign languages, science, and medicine that Jews had brought with them from Europe had receded and been rendered obsolete. European missions were busy at work shoring up the skills and the privileges of the Christians of the east. On the defensive, the Islamic order itself was growing increasingly xenophobic and intolerant. The submission to Europe had to be hidden under

displays of chauvinism. The Jews of Islam headed into a long night. The center of the Jewish world had long shifted westward. Historian Bernard Lewis sums up the closing up of that Jewish world in the east in his book *The Jews of Islam*:

"The growing segregation, the dwindling tolerance, the diminished participation, the worsening poverty, both material and intellectual, of the Jewish communities under Muslim rule."

From this long slumber the Jews of the east were awakened by a movement fashioned by their kinsmen in the west: modern Zionism. It came calling on them and summoned them to a new undertaking. The Jews of Islam had been spared both the gift of modern European history (the enlightenment, the bourgeois age, the emancipation) and then the horrors visited on European Jewry. Zionism had been spun with European thread. But the Jews of the east took to it. To be sure, there were many who had wanted to sit out the fight between Arab and Jew in Palestine and to avert their gaze. Some of the leading figures of Egyptian Jewry—the Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum, the head of the community; a banker by the name of Joseph Aslan de Cattaoui Pasha, whose family had presided over the community since the mid-nineteenth century—were men devoted to "King and country" and had wanted nothing to do with Zionism. But the ground burned in Egypt. Fascist doctrines of nationalism and a new Islamic militancy were sweeping through the place. Palestine and the struggle between Arab and Jew were too close: The world of Egyptian Jewry couldn't withstand all of this.

It was now past living those circumscribed lives. Modern nationalism—in its Arab and Jewish variants—blew away the world of the Arab Jews. The braver and younger souls among the Jews of Arab lands didn't care to live the quiet and worried lives of their elders. When the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948

broke out, there were some eight hundred thousand Jews in the Arab world, some six percent of world Jewry. A decade or so later, *harat al-Yahud* (the Jewish quarter) in Muslim cities belonged to memory. The large Jewish communities in Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, and Iraq were banished. There was a new and altered geography of Jewish life. The center of gravity had shifted again, toward two poles: the New World and Israel.

Setting sail to the New World, Columbus had had little to say about that parallel "fleet of woe and misery" that carried the Jews out of Spain. He was careful to note, though, that he wanted the Jews excluded from the lands he would discover and claim for Spain. History outwitted him.

Chroniclers are forever writing the present into the past, working their will, and their needs, on it. Benzion Netanyahu wrote his big history of the *Conversos* as a cautionary tale against the follies of assimilation. Within the Zionist world, he belonged to the revisionist current of Vladimir Jabotinsky. You can see the *conversos* and their destruction as a statement by Netanyahu on those within Israel who would think that there was a "normal" world for Israel beyond the siege that has marked its history. For my part, I have told my small (derivative) history against the background of the passing of the world of Arab Jewry and of the rise, within Europe, of a militant Islamism. The world of the Arab Jews is familiar to me. I saw it in its twilight. There was a Jewish quarter in Beirut, Wadi Abu Jamil; there were synagogues and Jewish banks and schools. They were part of the city of my boyhood. Today the Jews are gone and Wadi Abu Jamil is a Hezbollah stronghold. The "return" of Islam to Europe is an altogether different matter. Madrid, London, Glasgow, and Amsterdam have had their encounters with this new politicized religion. This is not Eurabia and never will

be. A new history of Islam in Europe is in the making. The story of Iberian Islam twists and turns. It can be irony or precedent, it can be read as a tale of civilizations in conflict, or of neighbors who once knew the normalcy of quotidian life.

On March 11, 2004, there would befall Madrid a shattering event that overwhelmed all that had been said about Islam in the Iberian Peninsula. In the morning rush hour, ten bombs tore through four commuter trains, killing more than two hundred people, wounding some fifteen hundred, in the deadliest terror attack in Europe since the Second World War. The initial suspicion that this was a deed of Basque terrorists immediately gave way to the real verdict: this was the work of terrorists drawn from the ranks of Al Qaeda. "This is part of settling old accounts with Spain, the Crusader, and American ally in its war against Islam," read a letter sent to a London-based Arabic daily. Islam had returned to Spain, brought forth by young men from Arab and North African lands—drifters, jihadists on the run from their governments, desperate men driven by economic need. This was not an Islamic *reconquista*, though there were true believers given to such thoughts. It was the pressure of overpopulated lands with a "youth bulge"—shades of Castile, in earlier centuries, pushing southward into the Muslim principalities of the peninsula. Across the Strait of Gibraltar from Spain, the despair was deep. In Algeria there were young people who were called the *harragga,* those who burn their documents, figuratively burying the past to cross the strait into Spain and European destinations beyond. A circle was closed: in the history given Arab and Muslim children, there is a place of honor for the commander Tariq bin Ziyad, who led his Berber troops into the peninsula in the year 711. The history insists that he had burned his ships after he landed on the coast and exhorted

his men, saying that they had no choice but to fight for they had the sea to their back and the enemy to their front. (He would give his name to the place of his disembarkation, *Jabal Tariq*, the Mountain of Tariq or Gibraltar.) The strait, simultaneously dividing and beckoning people, had seen whole histories pass to and fro.

SOURCE NOTES:

The departure of the Jews from Spain and the role of Don Isaac Abravanel in the final futile pleas are the subjects of large body of writings. Jacob Minkin's *Abarbanel and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1938) is a storyteller's account. Benzion Netanyahu's *Don Isaac Abravanel: Statesman and Philosopher* (The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1953) is a more formidable scholarly treatment. J. B. Trend's edited book, *Isaac Abravanel: Six Lectures*, covers the scholarship and writings of Abravanel. Eliyahu Ashtor's three-volume *The Jews of Moslem Spain* (The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1992) is a reliable account of that subject. It is from Ashtor's book that the discussion of the Jewish courtiers is drawn.

Samuel Eliot Morison's *The Great Explorers* (Oxford University Press, 1978) juxtaposes the two departures from Spain: that of Christopher Columbus and the Jews.

For a historical perspective of the Jews in the Muslim world, see Norman Stillman's *The Jews of Arab Lands* (The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979).

Fernand Braudel's great work, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* (Harper & Row,

1966), tells us of the rise of the power of Spain in the world of Christendom.

The life of Shmuel Ben Naghrela is the subject of Peter Cole's *Selected Poems of Shmuel HaNagid* (Princeton University Press, 1996). The essayist Hillel Halkin takes up Naghrela's life in "First Post-Ancient Jew," *Commentary*, September, 1993.

Peter Cole's magnificent book, *The Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry from Muslim and Christian Spain 950–1492* (Princeton University Press, 2007), provides by far the most authoritative treatment of the Judeo-Arabic literary tradition in the Iberian Peninsula that I have seen.

The age of the "Party Kings" of Muslim Spain is covered by L. P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain* (University of Chicago Press, 1990), and by Thomas Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton University Press, 1979). The North African historian Ahmed Ibn Mohammed al-Makkari's traditional chronicle, *Nafhu-t-Tib Nim Ghosni-L-Andalusi-R-Rattib*, written in 1629, is available, abbreviated, in English under the title *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, translated in 1840 by the Spanish scholar Pascual De Gayangos (Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1964).

The account of Alfonso VI's conquest of Toledo and the establishment there of a bishopric is from Robert Bartlett's *The Making of Europe* (Princeton University Press, 1993).

J. H. Elliott's *Imperial Spain*: *1469–1716* (London: Penguin Books, 1990) provides both narrative and interpretation of Castilian history. It also touches on the resentment of the old Christians toward the *Moriscos* spending too little.

Benzion Netanyahu's *The Marranos of Spain* (American Academy for Jewish Research, 1966) is a revisionist account of the

Jewish converts to Christianity. It is superseded by Netanyahu's more recent work, *The Origins of the Inquisition* (Random House, 1995). The more conventional assessment that the *Conversos* or the *Marranos* were crypto-Jews is that of Cecil Roth's *History of the Marranos* (Hermon Press, 1974). Netanyahu's is by far the more profound and the more disturbing exploration.

On the *Conversos* at war with their old faith, and so much else of Spanish history, few if any books can rival that of Spanish historian Américo Castro's *The Structure of Spanish History*, English translation (Princeton University Press, 1954). It is from Castro's superb work that the tales of Solomon Halevi and Joshua Halorqi are drawn. Castro's work is also the source of the *Morisco* leader's remarks in summoning his followers to rebellion.

Don Isaac Abravanel's bleak prophesy about the difficulties of assimilation is from Jose Faur, *In the Shadow of History* (State University of New York Press, 1992).

Two accounts of the Jews in Turkey and the Muslim domains stand out: Norman Stillman's *The Jews of Arab Lands* (The Jewish Publication Society, 1979) and Bernard Lewis's *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton University Press, 1984).

Miguel de Cervantes' classic tale, *Don Quixote,* reprint edition (Signet Classics, 2011).

The Jews of Morocco are the subject of Jane S. Gerber's very good scholarly book, *Jewish Society in Fez: 1450–1700* (Brill, 1980).

Perhaps the best and most accessible single volume on the culture of medieval Spain is Maria Rosa Menocal's *The Ornament of the World* (Little, Brown, 2002).