

# STATE OF THE QUESTION AND NEW PERSPECTIVES IN THE TREATMENT OF THE PATRIMONIAL HERITAGE OF AL-ANDALUS IN CATALONIA

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## **ABSTRACT**

Talking about cultural heritage means discussing the material and immaterial inheritance from the cultural past of a society, but from the present. In Europe, all too often, the heritage is managed on an economic and ideological basis in line with what sells (tourism) and what is written in the memory and ideology to reinforce the bases of the Nation-State. In the Middle Ages, Islam as a civilisation reached far beyond the Pyrenees, although for a relatively short period. However, it consolidated itself in a good part of the Iberian Peninsula for at least four centuries. From a critical point of view, and that of research, here the treatment the medieval Islamic heritage has received in Catalonia is dealt with, while also seeking space for debate to improve the understanding of this enormous cultural heritage that has too often been forgotten or has been mythified.

## **KEY WORDS**

Heritage, Medieval Islam, Tourism, Historiography, Media.

## **CAPITALIA VERBA**

Patrimonium, Islam Mediaevalis, Periegesis, Historiographia, Media.

## 1. Introduction

In Europe, historical legacy in the form of cultural heritage is an appreciated asset for the societies. A clear reflection of this is the generalisation of ministerial organisms or public and private entities managing cultural heritage within the governments of the European states and the European Union. Moreover, from the point of view of legislation, governments continue to regulate the interaction between society and heritage or between research and heritage. Thus, government action responds to the social concerns or the dynamics in the research centres.

Perhaps, if one particular reason has to be highlighted to understand the intervention in cultural heritage by the governments of European nation-states this would be none other than the consolidation and prolongation of the memory and ideology that comprise national identity. The founding myths are understood as the basic essence of social cohesion and inclusion, far beyond knowledge of the historical periods from a rigorous scientific point of view, which always should be neutral and exempt from ideology.

Furthermore, society values the heritage elements where they are found, in a specific territory or country. Whatever the perspective from which the material and immaterial heritage is perceived, it is worth mentioning that European societies have a tradition of critical knowledge about this question and thus, the constant preservation and projection of their own cultural heritage. At the same time, this valuable inheritance is being opened up to the general public through cultural tourism, which all too often dresses up emblematic sites to attract visitors drawn by the scenarios rather than the historical or artistic contents.<sup>1</sup> To a certain extent, this affects the patrimonial policies, the investments behind these and especially which heritage sites receive optimal treatment and which do not. The perspective for analysis is very broad, so here I only focus on the patrimonial inheritance of al-Andalus in a specific territory, Catalonia.

## 2. The medieval Islamic heritage in Catalonia

From the Islamic conquest of the north-eastern territories of the dismembered Visigoth kingdom between 713 and 714 until the fall of the Islamic territories in the districts of Tortosa and Lleida in 1148 and 1149, Andalusian society forged an extensive and heterogeneous cultural heritage. This, stratified as the society that was building it gradually consolidated or changed, gives us the figure of no less than four and a half centuries during which the territory now known as Catalonia was Islamic. As an example, in the case in Islamic fortresses, like the tower of Ràpita (Vallfogona de Balaguer, Lleida), nowadays we note that reforms continuous were

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1. Sabaté, Flocel. "El patrimoni històric afaïçonat sota el criteri econòmic", *El gran valor de les lletres i les humanitats. Homenatge al Dr. Frederic Vilà i Tornos*, Ximo Company, Isidro Puig, Cristina Mongay, Sandro Machetti, eds. Lleida: Edicions i Publicacions de la Universitat de Lleida, 2015: 269-275.



carried out by the same Andalusian society to strengthen the walls. This allows us to affirm that according to the historical context, those walls received the treatment that the society asked for, and that the technology enabled its life and usefulness to be extended.

Undoubtedly, in the Islamic districts of Lleida and Tortosa, everyday life generated an immense quantity of heritage elements, many of which are clearly visible in the archaeological sites. One can highlight the 'Pla d'Almatà Archaeological Park' in Balaguer for the exceptional quality of the material identified. There are various archaeological sites with clearly Islamic artefacts on the surface and in the underlying strata, clearly showing how intensely this territory was settled. At the same time, the landscape also shows the effects of Andalusian culture, mainly in those areas that were on the frontier with Christian-held territories. In the Islamic areas where an intense occupation and exploitation of the lands is identified, as in the case of the so-called Pla del Mascançà,<sup>2</sup> or in the Tortosa area,<sup>3</sup> the landscape still registers this in such notable aspects as the extent of the irrigation network or the layout of the rural hamlets.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, in the frontier area of Aspres (Islamic district of Lleida), the toponymy appears devoid of Arabic names<sup>5</sup> and both defensive and productive infrastructures.

Thus, as a summary, in our times, we can corroborate the existence of a valuable patrimonial legacy of Islam in the Middle Ages but these tangible and intangible elements are also not very perceptible. Below, a series of casuistics are broken down into sub-sections that can explain the difficulty for visualising the Islamic legacy of al-Andalus in Catalonia.

## 2.1 The historiographic tradition of medievalism

Various medievalist researchers have published studies about the treatment of the Islamic period in present-day Catalonia.<sup>6</sup> The excellence of these works shows the notable interest in the current historiography for demystifying myths

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2. Modern Pla de Lleida.

3. Negre, Joan. "Poblamiento rural en el distrito islámico de ȚurȚușa: resultados de las campañas de prospección arqueológica en las 'Terres de l'Ebre' (2010-2011)," *Arqueologia Medieval. La Ciutat, Flacel Sabaté, Jesús Brufal*, eds. Lleida: Pagès Editors, 2014: 277-298.

4. Brufal, Jesús. *El món rural i urbà en la Lleida islàmica (s. XI-XII). Lleida i l'est del districte: Castellans i el Pla del Mascançà*. Lleida: Pagès Editors, 2013.

5. Corsà, Jesús. "Toponímia de Tartareu". *Societat d'Onomàstica: butlletí interior*, 119 (2010): 233-246.

6. Sabaté, Flacel. "Frontera speninsular e identidad (siglos IX-XII)", *Las Cinco Villas aragoneses en la Europa de los siglos XII y XIII*, Esteban Sarasa, ed. Saragossa: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-Excelentísima Diputación de Zaragoza, 2007: 47-94. Sabaté, Flacel. *L'expansió territorial de Catalunya (segles IX-XII): Conquesta o repoblació?* Lleida: Edicions de la Universitat de Lleida, 1996: 9-64. García Sanjuan, Alejandro. *La conquista islàmica de la península Ibérica y la tergiversación del pasado*. Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2013: 27-244. Fierro, Maribel. "Al-Andalus en el pensamiento fascista. La 'revolución islàmica en Occidente' de Ignacio Olagüe", *Al-Andalus/España. Historiografías en contraste, siglos XVII-XXI*, Manuela Marín, ed. Madrid: 2009: 325-349. Marín, Manuela. *Al-Ándalus y los andalusíes*. Barcelona: Icaria editorial, 2000: 8, 57-67.



and proposing analyses based on scientific methodology to clarify and propose new historical interpretations that shun religious and nationalist ideologies.<sup>7</sup> So, the lines of research they are developing are fed by new methodological tools<sup>8</sup> and historiographic currents<sup>9</sup> that clearly bring the researcher closer to a greater knowledge of the Islamic period in the north-east of the Iberian Peninsula and specifically, modern-day Catalonia.

Historically, Catalan medievalism has dedicated greater efforts to research into the late medieval period in detriment to the early medieval era. Specifically, if we take the geographic area of that study as a reference, we can see that the research in the Late Middle Ages mainly focuses on the so-called *Catalunya Vella* ("Old Catalonia"), while the *Catalunya Nova* ('New Catalonia') is studied as a conquest that was consolidated well into the twelfth century.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the lands of the centre-west and south-west of Catalonia is known through and with the process of conquest, while the internal idiosyncrasies of the Andalusian society were ignored until well into the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup>

For modern and contemporary authors, al-Andalus generated an interest mostly for claims for national and religious roots, highlighting the classical and traditional aspects of identity. The medieval *Reconquista* ('Reconquest') is the backbone that structures a Spain identified with its own system of values and with a specific mission

7. Sabaté, Flocel. "El Nacimiento de Cataluña. Mito y realidad", *Fundamentos medievales de los particularismos hispánicos*. Ávila: Fundación Sánchez-Albornoz, 2005: 223-276.

8. Brufal, Jesús. "El reto de la Historia, integrar la tecnología", *Historia y videojuegos: el impacto de los Nuevos medios de ocio sobre el conocimiento histórico*, Juan Francisco Jiménez, Íñigo Mugueta, Gerardo Fabián Rodríguez, eds. Murcia: Campobell, 2016: 123-134.

9. Aurell, Jaume; Balmaceda, Catalina; Burke, Peter; Soza, Felipe, eds. *Comprender el pasado. Una historia de la escritura y el pensamiento histórico*. Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2013: 237-329.

10. Sabaté, Flocel. *L'expansió territorial de Catalunya (segles IX-XII)*...

11. We highlight some of the main research carried out on Catalan territories: Curto, Albert; Lorient, Ana; Martínez, Charo; Rosa, Elisa. "Excavacions al Castell de La Suda de Tortosa", *Sharq Al-Andalus*, 1 (1984): 141-145; Curto, Albert. "Els nivells islàmics en l'excavació en la Plaça de Ntra. Sra. De la Cinta o de l'Olivera de la ciutat de Tortosa (Tarragona)", *I Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*. Saragossa: Diputación Provincial de Zaragoza, 1985-1986: III, 99-112. Balañà, Pere. "Els musulmans a Catalunya (713-1153). Una aproximació bibliogràfica", *Sharq al-Andalus. Estudios Árabes. Suplementos bibliográficos*, 3 (1986): 287-288; Barceló, Miquel. "Aigua i assentaments andalusins entre Xerta i Amposta (s. VIII-XII)", *II Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*. Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid, 1987: 411-420. Barceló, Miquel. "La invasió àrabo-musulmana i Catalunya". *L'Avenç*, 117 (1988): 14-17; Sénac, Philippe. "Notes sur les Husūn de Lérida". *Mélanges de la Casa de Velazquez*, 24 (1988): 53-69; Lorient, Ana. *L'horitzó andalusí de l'antic Portal de Magdalena*. Lleida: Ajuntament de Lleida, 1990; Balañà, Pere. *Els noms de lloc de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Editorial Millà, 1991; Barceló, Miquel; Kirchner, Helena; Martí, Ramon; Torres, Josep Maria. "L'hisn dels Madyuna (Mediona, Alt Penedès): la qüestió dels assentaments berbers a Catalunya", *Catalunya i França Meridional a l'entorn de l'any mil. Actes del Col·loqui Internacional Hug Capet*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1991: 283; Giralt, Josep. "Fortificacions andalusines a la marca superior d'Al-Andalus: aproximació a l'estudi de la zona nord del districte de Lleida", *La Marche Supérieure d'al-Andalus et l'Occident Chrétien*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1991: 67-74; Barceló, Miquel. "Els establiments àrabs i berbers de l'Alt Penedès i els seus noms", *Catalunya Romànica*. Barcelona: Fundació Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1992: XIX, 26.



in history.<sup>12</sup> This axis was shared by nineteenth-century intellectuals and politicians as it granted internal cohesion and justified the existence of a prior reality, the idea that before the arrival of Islam, identity national had been forged in the resistance of Sagunto and Numancia to the Roman invader.<sup>13</sup> Authors like José Álvarez Junco focused their attention on the 'Reconquest' and exalted the main characteristics of the Spanish as a nation when he emphasised the *esencia guerrera y religiosa del pueblo español*.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, in Charlemagne, Catalonia found its own path to identity. Thus, Víctor Balaguer identified Otger Cathaló as the *Pelayo Catalán* and interpreted that Manresa was the *Covadonga Catalana*.<sup>15</sup> For historians of the modern epoch until the nineteenth century, the legend of Otger Cathaló completes the heroic view of the first Catalans, who had to fight ferociously against the Muslims,<sup>16</sup> and at the same time, prepared the arrival of Charlemagne, which is explained as a release.<sup>17</sup> From a geographic point of view, the birth of the Catalan nation is identified with Pyrenean and pre-Pyrenean areas, where the population took refuge fleeing from Islamic domination. These allodial peasants gradually settled the area towards the frontier with al-Andalus.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the publication of the first works on Islam in the Iberian Peninsula by Codera<sup>19</sup> and Dozy,<sup>20</sup> the truth is that there were no incentives to study the subject, and the historiography continued to repeat the stereotypes with little contrast. That happened in the twentieth century, on one hand omitting the history of al-Andalus and on the other, continuing with the stereotypes of the recovery of Catalan territory usurped by the Muslims, in other words, the 'Reconquest'.<sup>21</sup> These approaches fitted into and facilitated links with the different elements of the national history.<sup>22</sup> In that context, Josep Maria Millàs i Vallicrosa<sup>23</sup> was the reference in the research

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12. García Carcel, Ricardo. "La manipulación de la memoria histórica en el nacionalismo español", *Manuscrits*, 12 (1994): 180-181.

13. Fox, Inman. *La invención de España. Nacionalismo liberal e identidad nacional*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1997: 40.

14. "warrior and religious essence of the Spanish people." Álvarez Junco, José. *Mater dolorosa. La idea de España en el siglo XIX*. Madrid: Taurus, 2001: 218.

15. Balaguer, Víctor. *Historia de Cataluña y de la Corona de Aragón*. Barcelona: Librería de Salvador Manero, 1860: 1, 108-407.

16. Riu-Barrera, Eduard. "Els orígens de Catalunya, de la historiografia feudal al medievalisme noucentista. A propòsit de l'obra de Miquel Coll i Alentorn", *El Contemporani*, 4 (1994): 4.

17. Zimmermann, Michel. "Les goths et l'influence gothique dans l'empire carolingien", *Les cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxà*, 23 (1992): 33-36.

18. Bofarull, Antoni. *Historia crítica civil y eclesiástica de Cataluña*. Barcelona: Biblioteca Clàssica Catalana, 1906: 178.

19. Codera, Francisco. "Límites probables de la conquista árabe en la cordillera pirenaica", *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 48 (1906): 289-311.

20. Dozy, Reinhart. *Historia de los musulmanes de España hasta la conquista de los almorávides*. Madrid-Barcelona: Calpe, 1920-1934.

21. Serra Vilaró, Joan. "Origen d'algunes localitats catalanes", *Estudis Universitaris Catalans*, IV (1910): 4.

22. Vicens Vives, Jaume. *Notícia de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1982; Rovira i Virgili, Antoni. *Història de Catalunya*. Bilbao: La Gran Enciclopèdia Vasca, 1972-1984.

23. Millàs i Vallicrosa, Josep Maria. "Els textos d'historiadors musulmans referents a la Catalunya carolíngia", *Quaderns d'Estudi*, 14 (1922): 125-161.



and study of the Arab documentation in the Lleida and Tortosa lands. Later, his research marked the trajectory of Catalan Arabist researchers like Dolors Bramon. Almost a contemporary of Millàs i Vallicrosa, Évariste Lévi Provençal<sup>24</sup> and his work are references in the research into western Islam in the Middle Ages. His evolutionist interpretation of Andalusian central power in Cordoba and his detailed examinations of the Umayyad family stand out. However, this panorama did not cover all the territories of the frontiers, especially that of the Upper Frontier.

In Catalan Medievalism, with his studies into the phenomenon of expansion, Ramon d'Abadal permits the traditional view to be assumed and reoriented.<sup>25</sup> He explained that the Pyrenees full of people would be the base from which the counts pushed the population towards the frontier with al-Andalus. These settlers occupied and exploited the unpopulated frontier territories, as these progressively advanced to the south. This idea displaced the 'Reconquest' and introduced a new one of *Re població* ('Repopulation'), as military attacks were only focussed on the cities and key Islamic positions. This interpretation of repopulation culminated with Pierre Bonnassie who explained that the population of the Pyrenees moved for socio-economic reasons, thus reducing the impact of the actions of the counts.<sup>26</sup>

However, the emptiness of the frontier areas was placed in doubt through specific studies of the Vall de Lord<sup>27</sup> and Sant Joan de les Abadesses.<sup>28</sup> In a more global outlook, Salrach proposed seeing the phenomenon of the occupation of the space as a slow process, where, on one hand, he saw the appropriation of agricultural land as an economic process,<sup>29</sup> and, on the other, the feudal dynamic as leading to an inherent expansionism towards Andalusian society. So, this view did not envisage 'Repopulation' but tended towards the point of view of conquest military but without considering the myths of the heroic deeds of the past.

At the same time as medievalist research advanced towards new ways of interpretation, Andalusian historiography adopts new and renovating approaches. From his multidisciplinary training, Pierre Guichard<sup>30</sup> approached the study of al-Andalus from an anthropological, historical and archaeological perspective. In fact, the territory in all its complexity was the subject of his study to understand Andalusian society. His studies focused on the Levantine area led him to claim a

24. Lévi-Provençal, Évariste. *L'Espagne musulmane au X<sup>e</sup> siècle: institutions et vie sociale*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1950.

25. D'Abadal, Ramon. *Els primers comtes catalans*. Barcelona: Editorial Vicens Vives, 1983.

26. Bonnassie, Pierre. *Catalunya mil anys enrera (segles X-XI)*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1979.

27. Benet, Albert. "El Solsonès. Marc històric", *Catalunya Romànica. XIII. El Solsonès i la Vall d'Aran*. Barcelona: Fundació Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1987: 24-31.

28. Feliu, Gaspar. "Sant Joan de les Abadesses. Algunes precisions sobre l'acta judicial del 913 i el poblament de la Vall", *Homenatge a la memòria del prof. Dr. Emilio Sáez. Aplec d'estudis dels seus deixebles i col·laboradors*. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona-Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1989: 421-434.

29. Salrach, Josep Maria. "Repoblament i colonització agrària a l'alta edat mitjana", *Cuadernos de historia económica de Cataluña*, 19 (1978): 17-28.

30. Guichard, Pierre. *Al-Andalus. Estructura antropológica de una sociedad islámica en Occidente*. Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada, 1998.



notable role for the rural communities, many of them organised from clan groups. To some extent, Guichard proposed a regionalist history of al-Andalus, which would clash with Lévi-Provençal's centralising view. The growth of studies into al-Andalus gaining strength as the last quarter of the twentieth century approached. Miquel Barceló<sup>31</sup> delved into the study of Andalusian society, especially, from the analysis of the hydraulics in the rural communities. However, despite the rise of Andalusian historiography all over Spain, Catalonia had to wait until the 1990s for the first research that presented an overview of Islam in the Lleida and Tortosa areas.<sup>32</sup> The knowledge about al-Andalus was consolidated later with the research by Dolors Bramon into the Arab documentation, which continued on from the work of Millàs i Vallicrosa.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, in that context of the end of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first, the bibliographic output resulting from research with a territorial scope was important,

We can highlight the studies by Giralt in Balaguer area<sup>34</sup>; the researches about *almunies* by Eritja<sup>35</sup>; the work on Islamic Tortosa by Esco<sup>36</sup>; or the innovations around the agrarian and hydraulic landscape in Andalusian Tortosa by Kirchner and Virgili<sup>37</sup>. Similarly we must add the studies about the rural communities in the Tortosa region by Negre<sup>38</sup>, the city of Lleida by Lorient<sup>39</sup>, and the landscape of the ancient district of Lleida by Brufal<sup>40</sup>, as well as the researches around Balaguer by Monjo<sup>41</sup>.

The research undertaken by the archaeological methodology coexists with editions and studies of the Arab documentation. Altogether, this contributes a successful bibliographic production that shows us the Andalusian society, economy and identity in both Lleida and Tortosa. Meanwhile, the studies into the expansion of the county society into Andalusian territories have adopted a new framework of

31. Barceló, Miquel. "El diseño de espacios irrigados en al-Andalus: un enunciado de principios generales", *El agua en zonas áridas: Arqueología e Historia*, Lorenzo Cara, ed. Almería: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses, 1989: 15-47.

32. Balaña, Pere. *Els musulmans a Catalunya (713-1153)*. Sabadell: AUSA, 1993.

33. Bramon, Dolors. *De quan érem o no musulmans. Textos del 713 al 1010*. Barcelona: Eumo Editorial, 2000.

34. Giralt, Josep. "Fortificacions andalusines a la marca superior d'Al-Andalus: aproximació a l'estudi de la zona nord del districte de Lleida", *La Marche Supérieure d'al-Andalus et l'Occident chrétien*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1991: 67-74.

35. Eritja, Xavier. *De l'almúnia a la turris organització de l'espai a la regió de Lleida (segles XI i XII)*. Lleida: Edicions i Publicacions de la Universitat de Lleida, 1998.

36. Esco, Carlos; Giralt, Josep; Sénac, Philippe. *Arqueología Islámica en la Marca Superior de Al-Andalus*. Osca: Diputación de Huesca, 1988.

37. Kirchner, Helena; Virgili, Antoni; Antolín, Ferran. "Un espacio de cultivo urbano en al-Ándalus: Madīna Turṭūša (Tortosa) antes de 1148". *Història Agrària*, 62 (2014): 11-45.

38. Negre, Joan. *De Tortosa a Turṭūša: L'extrem oriental d'al-Ṭagr al-A'là en el context del procés d'islamització d'al-Andalus*. Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (PhD Dissertation), 2013.

39. Lorient, Ana. "La vaixella andalusina de la primera meitat del segle X apareguda a la ciutat de Lleida". *Revista d'Arqueologia de Ponent*, 10 (2000): 293-325.

40. Brufal, Jesús. *El món rural i urbà en la Lleida islàmica (s. XI-XII)...*

41. Monjo, Marta. "El naixement de madina Balaguer: el Pla d'Almatà (segles VIII-XII)", *Catàleg de la col·lecció de materials andalusins del Museu de la Noguera*, Carme Alòs, Eva Solanes, eds. Balaguer: Museu de la Noguera, 2010: 21-29.



interpretation, namely the frontier. The concepts of ‘Reconquest’ and ‘Repopulation’ have been outstripped by significant progress in the analysis of the sources, in their diversity, and by the holistic and hermeneutic view. In this sense, Flocel Sabaté<sup>42</sup> explains the expansive phenomenon of county space in a careful periodisation that begins in the ninth century and goes through to the twelfth. This broad new focus extends the view towards global history, embracing economic, military, fiscal, religious and political history for both the county and Andalusian aspects. So, it seems that the medievalist historiography has assimilated the Andalusian, while approaching shared ways of interpreting the same phenomenon.<sup>43</sup>

Although the evolution of historiographic studies on the treatment of the expansion of the counties into Islamic territory and on al-Andalus has been synthesised, it is worth mentioning that the ideological weight of a given inherited historiographic tradition means that the recurrent theme of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula has provoked a lot of controversy in both Catalan and Spanish society in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In 2008, the archbishop of Valencia wrote *el cristianismo, la fe católica —se profese o no por las personas y se quiera o no— constituye el alma de España*.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, this statement is no accidental pronouncement if we take it into context, given that during the second term of José Luís Zapatero (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español* “Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party”), the conservative side of Spanish society feared the loss of identity as a nation, so they went back to the roots of what they consider the origin of the essence of Spain, one that clearly show the theoretical basis of what it is to be Spanish, where the Catholic faith is the pillar, while avoiding explaining the historical influences of other religions like Islam. In the same conservative line, but from his position as ex-leader of the Spanish government, José María Aznar (*Partido Popular* “Peoples’ Party”) gave a speech in 2004 about Islamist terrorism in Georgetown University. He explained that the problem of terrorism in Spain did not start with the Iraq war or al-Qaeda but rather dates back to the Middle Ages, from 711 with the Islamic conquest of the Visigoth Kingdom, or as he called it, the invasion of Spain by the ‘*moros*’.<sup>45</sup> This terminology responds to the negationist and catastrophist discourse of history, where, ignoring the historical sources, an important phase in the history of Western Europe is intentionally interpreted from a present-day outlook. It explains the present from the past and moreover, with a marked ideological bias. The media close to these conservative theses publish articles that are aligned with the discourse of Spanish identity. Thus, in 2011, Pedro Fernández Barbadillo stated, *cuando los árabes*

42. Sabaté, Flocel. *L'expansió territorial de Catalunya (segles IX-XII)*. ...; Sabaté, Flocel. *El territori de la Catalunya medieval. Percepció de l'espai i divisió territorial al llarg de l'Edat Mitjana*. Barcelona: Fundació Salvador Vives i Casajuana, 1997.

43. Sénac, Philippe. *La frontière et les hommes (VIIIe-XIIIe siècles). Le peuplement musulman au nord de l'Ebre et les débuts de la reconquête aragonaise*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2000.

44. “Christianity, the Catholic faith —whether professed by the people or not and whether one likes it or not— constitutes the soul of Spain.” Cañizares Llovera, Antonio. *El esplendor visigótico, momento clave en la edificación de España y para su futuro*. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2008: 44.

45. See from the second 45 <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Zt5h\\_wbaP4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Zt5h_wbaP4)> (Consulted 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015).



*irrumpieron en España ya existía un país independiente y unas personas que se llamaban a sí mismas españolas.*<sup>46</sup> Recently, once again Cardinal Cañizares, in an ‘informative breakfast’ entered into the debate about the relation between immigration, basically Syrian, and the loss of the traditional values of Europe, based on Christianity.<sup>47</sup> The immigration of Syrians, which Cañizares called ‘the invasion’, equivalent to the events of 711, was at the same time interpreted as a dangerous entry of infidels into Christian territory with the obscure aim of invading us. Indeed, once again, the theories based on national-Catholicism impregnate the public debate ignoring the objective facts being studied nowadays by university or liberal experts.

The opposite end of the postulates we have presented arose in the 1980s with a ‘bonist’ or romantic view of medieval Islam in the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>48</sup> From an ideological point of view, these perceptions are found in both progressive segments and in Andalusian nationalism. The latter see in,

*la civilización andalusí la máxima culminación histórica del ‘pueblo andaluz’. Más recientemente se prolonga como manifestación de una pretendida historia ‘antisistema’, que adopta una pose postmoderna de cuestionamiento de las verdades de la historiografía ‘oficial’, siempre adicta al poder y justificadora de sus manipulaciones.*<sup>49</sup>

The romantic theses about al-Andalus and the Andalusian or Islamic society have gone much further and still have more impact. On one hand, the thesis of the “Muslim Spain” an invented formulation and one that is contradictory in itself that shows the way of doing history at a determined moment. The need to differentiate between the Andalusians and Maghrebians lies behind these postulates, portraying the former as living in an enlightened society of poets and while the latter came from a barbarous place full of dangers.

The romantic ideas did not end there but became accentuated from the Spanish Transition and the marked desire among certain historians and ideological sectors to break away from the official history of the destiny of Spain that had been explained until then. Specifically, the consolidation of the autonomous communities led to the recovery of their own identity traits, and al-Andalus found its place in this project.

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46. “when the Arabs burst into Spain, there was already an independent country and people who called themselves Spaniards.” García Sanjuan, Alejandro. *La conquista islámica de la península Ibérica y la tergiversación del pasado*. Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2013: 52.

47. Levante. El mercantil valenciano. “Cañizares: ‘¿Esta invasión de inmigrantes y de refugiados es del todo trigo limpio?’”. 14 October 2015. 15 June 2016 <<http://www.levante-emv.com/comunitat-valenciana/2015/10/14/canizares-invasion-emigrantes-refugiados-trigo/1327304.html>>.

48. Menocal, Maria Rosa. “Al-Andalus and 1492: The ways of remembering”, *Islamic Civilization in Medieval Spain*. Leiden: Brill, 1992: 483-504; Menocal, Maria Rosa. *Culture in the time of tolerance: al-Andalus as a model for our own time*. New Heaven: Yale Law School, 2000; Menocal, Maria Rosa. “The dialogue of cultures in Medieval Spain”, *Le Dialogue des Cultures: est-il possible?*. Rabat: Academie du Royaume de Maroc, 2005: 329-333.

49. “The Andalusian civilisation the maximum historical culmination of the ‘Andalusian people’. More recently it was prolonged as a manifestation of a supposed ‘anti-system’ History, that adopted a post-modern pose of questioning the truths of the ‘official’ historiography, always addicted to power and justifying its manipulations.” García Sanjuan, Alejandro. *La conquista islámica ...* : 24.



Thus, a discourse was generated where the image of al-Andalus was linked to that of an Islamic society where tolerance and coexistence between the three cultures was possible as the result of mutual understanding that was violently eliminated by the Christian conquerors.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, and in line with Manuela Marín, as a derivation of the idea of tolerance, the virtues of Andalusian life were exalted, comparing them with the Andalusian *arte de vivir* ("art of living").<sup>51</sup> These are related to very varied aspects of everyday life, emphasising the *goces sensuales, el gusto por los perfumes, los jardines, la buena mesa, la música y las belles mujeres*.<sup>52</sup> However, the myths about Andalusian society should be qualified from the historical analysis by showing up the fallacies from which these are sustained.<sup>53</sup>

*La 'tolerancia' es una idea relativamente reciente y ajena a los andalusíes (y a cualquier otra colectividad anterior a la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos), o que la única cultura con caracteres dignos de ser considerada como tal, en al-Ándalus, fue la árabe-islámica. Es cierto que las minorías judías y cristianas gozaron en al-Ándalus de un estatuto de "protección" infinitamente mejor que el de los judíos en la Europa medieval, que hubo familias de religión mixta y que los emires musulmanes tuvieron a su servicio administradores y médicos judíos y cristianos. También es cierto que los episodios de persecución a estas minorías religiosas fueron contadísimos en la historia de al-Ándalus, aunque existieron y en algún caso, como en el progromo de Granada del siglo XI, con un número elevado de víctimas. Todo ello no implica, sin embargo, que existiera lo que hoy se califica admirativamente de convivencia modélica.*<sup>54</sup>

However, the myths about the Islamic conquest, the process of Christian conquest, and Andalusian social dynamics persist. Perhaps one should ask why this type of myth survives and we would find the response in a partial ideology or xenophobic and racist groups. In fact, the practice of understanding the past from an idea of the present is taking body and form all over Europe, as Flocel Sabaté shows referring to the presence of the Middle Ages in the current linguistic discourse:

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50. Marín, Manuela. *Al-Ándalus y los andalusíes*. Barcelona: Icaria editorial, 2000: 62.

51. Marín, Manuela. *Al-Ándalus y los andalusíes...*: 63.

52. "sensual pleasures, the taste for perfumes, gardens, good food and drink, music and beautiful women." Marín, Manuela. *Al-Ándalus y los andalusíes...*: 63-64.

53. Fernández-Morera, Darío. *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise. Muslims, Christians, and Jews under Islamic rule in Medieval Spain*. Wilmington: ISI Books, 2016.

54. " 'Tolerance' is a relatively recent idea and one alien to the Andalusians (and any other group prior to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), or that the only culture with characters worthy of being considered as such in al-Andalus was the Arab-Islamic. It is true that the Jewish and Christian minorities in al-Andalus enjoyed a statute of "protection" infinitely better than that of the Jews in medieval Europe, that there were families of mixed religion and that the Muslim emirs had Jewish and Christian administrators and doctors in their service. It is also true that there were very few episodes of persecution of these religious minorities in the history of al-Andalus, although they existed and in some cases, as in the pogrom in Granada in the eleventh century, with a high number of victims. All this does not, however, imply that there was what would be qualified admirably nowadays as a modelic coexistence". Marín, Manuela. *Al-Ándalus y los andalusíes...*: 64-65.



*L'Edat Mitjana és molt present a la societat actual. A penes és a l'escola. Viu, en canvi, en l'ambient: apareix en passar les pàgines del diari, en cercar les ofertes per a l'oci de cap de setmana familiar, en tota mena de discursos, a favor del progrés o del retrobament de la identitat maltractada, en propostes per encertar l'estructuració adient per al món actual. És una mena de fenomen atemporal que no deixa de ser una invocació històrica incrustada en el present i, potser, pretenent condicionar el futur.<sup>55</sup>*

Indeed, it is in education where we find the main transmitter of certain stereotypes and myths<sup>56</sup> about Islam in the Middle Ages. Flocel Sabaté warned about this when he referred to *generaciones de españoles se han formado bajo una omnipresente Reconquista*.<sup>57</sup> He was referring to schooling in the times of Franco's dictatorship, which gathered all the myths and stereotypes about the expansion of Christian kingdoms and counties into Andalusian territory. The footprint of this national history where the myths and ideological misrepresentations of the past have an important weight is also reflected in schools in democratic times. Probably the result of the necessity to justify the nature and existence of the autonomous communities, each thought up its own educational curriculum in history. In the case of Catalonia, stereotypes about the Late Middle Ages still survive: they emphasise the overvaluation of the Battle of Covadonga, following with the mythical 'Reconquest' of the territory of the old Visigoth Kingdom, and manifest the Christian essence.<sup>58</sup> In the end, it is clearly deduced that behind the national formation of Catalonia there is the conquest by force of a usurped territory and that the moral and spirit is Christian. At the same time, these stereotypes coexist with those of the romantic view of Islam. The food, art, the mosque and irrigation networks are the most recurrent themes when explaining al-Andalus.

Indeed, the task and responsibility of historians is enormous when it comes to studying and explaining episodes from history where the historical sources are not abundant. If, on top of that, we add a deep trajectory of historical interpretation, the work of the historian is significantly increased. Undoubtedly, we must continue to study the late medieval frontier, understand it from all the points of view that made

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55. "The Middle Ages are very present in current society. It hardly is so in the school. In contrast, it lives in the environment: it appears when turning the pages of the newspaper, in looking at options for leisure activities for the family weekend, in all kinds of discourses, in favour of progress or the reencounter of the mistreated identity, in proposals to ascertain the structure suitable for the modern world. It is a kind of atemporal phenomenon that is a historical invocation encrusted in the present and, perhaps, aiming to condition the future." Sabaté, Flocel. "Medievalismes actuals", *L'Edat Mitjana. Món real i espai imaginat*. Catarroja: Editorial Afers, 2012: 283-305.

56. Luque, Alberto. "La historia medieval a les escoles: una visió deformada?". *L'Edat Mitjana. Món real i espai imaginat*, Flocel Sabaté, ed. Catarroja: Editorial Afers, 2012: 243-258.

57. "generations of Spaniards have been educated under an omnipresent Reconquest". Sabaté, Flocel. "Frontera peninsular e identidad (siglos IX-XII)", *Las Cinco Villas aragoneses en la Europa de los siglos XII y XIII*, Esteban Sarasa, ed. Saragossa: Institución "Fernando el Católico" (CSIC)-Excelentísima Diputación de Zaragoza, 2007: 54.

58. García, Margarita; Gatell, Cristina; Llorens, Montserrat; Ortega, Rosa; Pons, Josep; Roig, Joan; Viver, Carles. *Marca 2. Ciències Socials, Geografia i Història*. Barcelona: Vicens Vives, 2006.



it up and especially without arbitrarily excluding any of the elements, and even less, one that is as important as Andalusian society.

### 2.3 A weak sensitivity about preserving the medieval Islamic heritage. Where do we come from?

The academic and intellectual world has placed the valuation and protection of the cultural heritage on the table, especially that which refers to history and art. The above point is a good example, given that, as we have noted, as mechanisms were sought for interpreting national identity, both Spanish and Catalan, the various elements of the heritage were among the main supporting arguments. To ensure the preservation of the heritage, the *Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes* i la *Dirección General de Bellas Artes* (“Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts and the General Office of Fine Arts”) were created in 1900. From then until 1933, the legal bases to protect, preserve, value and regulate Spanish and Catalan cultural heritage were established. Although the law of *Ley Relativa al Patrimonio Artístico Nacional de 13 de mayo de 1933* (“National Heritage of May 13<sup>th</sup> 1933”)<sup>59</sup> englobed the legislation from 1901<sup>60</sup> until then, we must go back to the *Decreto de 22 de mayo de 1931* (“Decree of May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1931”)<sup>61</sup> to see the vanguard that prepared the law of 1933. For the first time, this *Decree* contained a listing of properties and artistic, archaeological or historical objects and was designed to avoid the plunder and export of cultural heritage. On this legislative basis, in 1932, work started on what was the first great law on historical heritage in Spain.<sup>62</sup> After almost a year of preparation, the law was passed and published in May 1933. This law covered the following aspects: the contents and the notion of *Inventario del Patrimonio Histórico-Artístico Nacional* (“Inventory of the National Historical-Artistic Heritage”), the administrative organisation for the protection of patrimonial assets, assigning the police the task of pursuing offences involving the historical heritage, the legal status of the assets,

59. “Ley Relativa al Patrimonio Artístico Nacional”. *Gaceta de Madrid*. 25 May 1933: CXLV, 1393-1399 <<http://www.boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE/1933/145/A01393-01399.pdf>> (Consulted 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016).

60. The Royal Decree of October 18<sup>th</sup> 1901 approved the regulations for the State Public Libraries. “Reglamento para el Régimen y Servicio de las Bibliotecas Públicas del Estado”. *Gaceta de Madrid*. 22 October 1901: CCXCV, 359-360 <<http://boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE/1901/295/A00359-00371.pdf>> (Consulted 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016).

61. Alcalá-Zamora, Niceto. “Decretos”. *Gaceta de Madrid*. 23 May 1931: CXLIII, 880-881. <<http://www.boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE/1931/143/A00880-00881.pdf>> (Consulted 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016). From this *Decreto*, we wish to highlight the recognition given in the introduction that all citizens have *pleno derecho al disfrute de las obras de arte y de cultura; derecho que se funda, no solo en el origen e historia e inmuebles y objetos, sino en que su guarda y conservación ha sido y es carga de España* (full right to enjoy the works of art and culture bequeathed by the past; a right based, not only on the origin and history and properties and objects, but also that their protection and preservation has been and is a commitment of Spain).

62. García Fernández, Javier. “La regulación y la gestión del Patrimonio Histórico-Artístico durante la Segunda República (1931-1939)”, *Revista electrónica de Patrimonio Histórico*, 1 (2007): 12-14. <<http://www.revistadepatrimonio.es/revistas/numero1/legislacion/estudios/articulo.php>> (Consulted 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016).



the role of the curators of monuments and the creation of a census of endangered buildings. In international law, it regulated the control of fraudulent exports of heritage. It also included measures to encourage public museums, the new regime for assets that was based on the prohibition of their cession when they were the property of the Administration or the Church, and norms about the *Inventory of the National Historical-Artistic Heritage*.

In this busy legislative context, article 7 of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia passed by *Ley de 15 de septiembre de 1932* ("Law of September 15<sup>th</sup> 1932") attributed<sup>63</sup> *los Servicios de Bellas Artes, Museos, Bibliotecas, Conservación de monumentos y archivos, salvo el de la Corona de Aragón* ("the Services in Arts, Museums, Libraries, Conservation of heritage and archives, except its of the Crown of Aragon"). In this legislative framework, the following laws referring to the cultural heritage were passed: the *Ley de creación del Consejo de Cultura de la Generalitat de 14 de diciembre de 1933* ("Law of Creation of the Council of Culture of the Generalitat [December 14<sup>th</sup> 1933]"), the *Ley del Servicio de Bibliotecas, Archivos, Museos y Patrimonio Histórico, Artístico y Científico de Catalunya de 20 de marzo de 1934* ("Law of the Service of Libraries, Archives, Museums and Historical, Artistic and Scientific Heritage of Catalonia [March 20<sup>th</sup> 1934]"), and the *Ley de Conservación del Patrimonio Histórico, Artístico y Científico de Catalunya de 26 de junio de 1934* ("Law of the Conservation of the Historical, Artistic and Scientific Heritage of Catalonia [June 26<sup>th</sup> 1934]").

The 1933 Law remained in force during the Franco period despite having been promulgated by the Second Republic. Under Franco's rule, this law was complemented with the Law of December 16<sup>th</sup> 1954 that regulated the expropriation of land where archaeological remains were detected,<sup>64</sup> and for the first time, included underwater archaeology (decree *2055/1963 de 25 de septiembre*).<sup>65</sup>

From the start of the twentieth century until 1978, there was a well-defined legal framework, but one insufficient to stop the destruction of cultural heritage, especially architectural and archaeological. The Civil War led to notable losses of heritage either on the battlefronts or by the sacking of ecclesiastic heritage, archives, private collections, etc.

We must not forget that with the arrival of mass tourism and uncontrolled urban growth along the Mediterranean coast and in the main cities, the pace of the destruction of archaeological and architectural heritage quickened. The absence of coordination between the institutions that take care of the heritage and the scant material and human resources helped this deterioration. If we refer to Islamic

63. Alcalá-Zamora, Niceto. "Ley. Título II. Atribuciones de la Generalidad de Cataluña". *Gaceta de Madrid*. 21 September 1932: CCXLV, 2091 <<http://www.boe.es/datos/pdfs/BOE/1932/265/A02090-02094.pdf>> (Consulted 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016).

64. Franco, Francisco. "Ley de 16 de diciembre de 1954 sobre expropiación forzosa". *Boletín Oficial del Estado*. 17 December 1954: CCLLI, 8261-8278 <<http://boe.es/boe/dias/1954/12/17/pdfs/A08261-08278.pdf>> (Consulted 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016).

65. Franco, Francisco. "Decreto 2055/1969, de 25 de septiembre, por el que se regula el ejercicio de actividades subacuáticas". *Boletín Oficial del Estado*. 27 September 1969: CCLII, 15182-15184 <<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1969/09/27/pdfs/A15182-15184.pdf>> (Consulted 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016).



archaeological or architectural heritage, the situation was worse due to two factors: the first of these was the ignorance about the material culture of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages, and the second is deliberate neglect of the Andalusian material vestiges. Despite this bleak panorama, the great Cordoban monuments were already being given special treatment in the nineteenth century, as was the Alhambra in Granada.<sup>66</sup> These great symbolic monuments received careful attention to avoid their loss. Another thing was the historical and artistic interpretation.

In Catalonia, there is no shortage of examples of destruction or deterioration of Islamic archaeological or architectural heritage. For example, in 1905, a tank for drinking water for the town of Balaguer was built inside Castell Formós, one of the most emblematic historical monuments with a clearly Islamic part in the north-east of the Iberian Peninsula. An Islamic citadel first, and then from the fourteenth century, residence of the Counts of Urgell, the fortified site holds a large quantity and quality of historical-archaeological and artistic information that would require specific treatment.<sup>67</sup> However, the need to build this municipal infrastructure<sup>68</sup> led to the destruction of a good part of the monument, thus also conditioning future archaeological works. Despite its historical value, in 1905, the ideal legal conditions to prevent the building of the tank and the destruction of most of the inside of the fortress did not exist.<sup>69</sup> In Balaguer, the site was well enough known, as was its value as a monument. In fact, from the 1960s, this was reflected in various publications by local scholars and European specialists in the theme.<sup>70</sup> However, the absence of awareness among the political authorities, the non-existence of a law of heritage that safeguarded it and the lack of interest among the population condemned Castell Formós forever.

This context prior to democracy is also recognised as the period when researchers and scholars individually initiated research into very varied themes. Under the umbrella of such institutions as the Provincial Archaeological Museum of Tarragona, the Institute of Tarragona Studies Ramon Berenguer IV of Tarragona Provincial Council, the Ilerdenc Institute of Studies of Lleida Provincial Council, and

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66. Rosselló-Bordoy, Guillem. "Introducció a l'estudi de la ceràmica andalusina", *Arqueologia Medieval. Reflexions des de la pràctica*. Lleida: Ajuntament d'Algerri-Pagès Editors, 2007: 21-142.

67. Díez-Coronel, Luis. "La alcazaba de Balaguer y su Palacio árabe del siglo XI". *Ilerda*, 29 (1969): 337-347. Ewert, Christian. *Hallazgos islámicos en Balaguer y la Alfajería de Zaragoza*. Madrid: Servicio de Publicaciones del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1979-1980.

68. This type of action occurred in other places in the Lleida area, such as Sunyer Castle, little of which remains nowadays after the building of a municipal water tank.

69. We refer to the Royal Decree of November 29<sup>th</sup> 1901, which defined the regulations about state archaeological museums, served by a body of archivists, librarians and archaeologists.

70. Sanahüja, Pere. *Història de Balaguer*. Barcelona: ed. Seráfica, 1965. Díez-Coronel, Luis. "El palau dels comtes d'Urgell, fortalesa àrab", *Ilerda*, XLIII (1973): 31-39. Ewert, Christian. *Hallazgos islámicos en Balaguer y la Alfajería de Zaragoza*. Madrid: Dirección General del Patrimonio Artístico y Cultural, 1979. Giralt, Josep. "El Castell Formós (o de Balaguer)", *Catalunya Romànica. La Noguera*. XVII. Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1994: 225-238.



these researchers undertook the first historical and archaeological research.<sup>71</sup> They were undoubtedly the pioneers of local history in the Lleida and Tarragona areas. Their work favoured the preservation especially of archaeological sites and their divulgation in scientific circles and among the general public.<sup>72</sup>

Despite the complexity of safeguarding the cultural heritage, and especially the Islamic, during the twentieth century, it is worth mentioning that one has to recognise the legislation from the early century and that of the Second Republic, as well the interest of many people, either scholars or specialists in cultural heritage, who individually carried out the tasks of documentation and study, a colossal job that we appreciate so highly today.

#### *2.4 The Islamic patrimonial heritage. Where are we?*

The appearance of the Spanish democratic system under the Constitution of 1978 meant important progress in the field of cultural heritage for its preservation, consolidation and social projection. Thus, in the legislative field, the *Ley 16/1985 de 25 de junio del Patrimonio Histórico Español* ("Law 16/1985 of June 25<sup>th</sup> of Spanish Historical Heritage") was passed.<sup>73</sup> This opened the way to modernising the concept of cultural heritage and an organisational structure and action to preserve and adapt it to the European context. With the transfer of specific powers in culture, through its Department of Culture, the Generalitat de Catalunya established the Catalan law of cultural heritage.<sup>74</sup> A review and update for the new times came with the 78/2002 Decree with regulations for the protection of the archaeological and palaeontological heritage of Catalonia.<sup>75</sup> Clearly, in democratic Spain, the new legislation on cultural heritage propitiated the necessary re-organisation of the administration, especially regarding the types of protection, coordination between administrations, training of personnel, and its representation all over the state through its deployment in each autonomous community. In the case of Catalonia, the Generalitat de Catalunya opened offices of the Department of Culture in Tarragona, Lleida and Girona.

71. Destaquen Luis Díez-Coronel, Rodrigo Pita Mercè, Josep Lladonosa, Enrique Bayerri, Pere Sanahüja.

72. Díez-Coronel, Luis. *La Alcazaba de Balaguer y su palacio árabe del siglo XI*. Lleida: Instituto de Estudios Ilerdenses de la Excelentísima Diputació de Lérida, 1969.

73. Juan Carlos I. "Ley 13/1985, de 25 de junio, del Patrimonio Histórico Español". *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 29 June 1985: CLV, 20342-20352 <<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1985/06/29/pdfs/A20342-20352.pdf>> (Consulted 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016).

74. "Llei 9/1993, de 30 de setembre, del Patrimoni Català". *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya*, 30 September 1993. <[http://portaljuridic.gencat.cat/ca/pjur\\_ocults/pjur\\_resultats\\_fitxa/?action=fitxa&mode=single&documentId=92717&language=ca\\_ES](http://portaljuridic.gencat.cat/ca/pjur_ocults/pjur_resultats_fitxa/?action=fitxa&mode=single&documentId=92717&language=ca_ES)> (Consulted 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016).

75. "Decret 78/2002, de 5 de març, del Reglament de protecció del patrimoni arqueològic i paleontològic". *Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya*, 5 March 2002. <[http://portaljuridic.gencat.cat/ca/pjur\\_ocults/pjur\\_resultats\\_fitxa/?action=fitxa&mode=single&documentId=276664&language=ca\\_ES](http://portaljuridic.gencat.cat/ca/pjur_ocults/pjur_resultats_fitxa/?action=fitxa&mode=single&documentId=276664&language=ca_ES)> (Consulted 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016).



This consolidation of democracy in Spain and the definition and deployment of a stable legal framework also coincided with the notable rise in action by the public administrations to recover, consolidate or promote the cultural heritage, including within this, the Andalusian. For the first time, it was accepted that al-Andalus was also another stage in the history of Spain. In this sense, we can highlight the archaeological work in both the urban settings of the city of Lleida, especially the site of the old Portal de Magdalena, as in the various actions in the Suda and the old quarter of Tortosa, and the first archaeological digs in the Pla d'Almatà and Castell Formós in Balaguer. These works on Islamic settlements coincided with various archaeological interventions and the recovery of the Collegiate of Sant Pere in Àger, Siurana Castle, Castellans Castle, the Tossal de Solibernat, Avinganya Monastery, Miravet Castle, the Tossal de Vallferosa, the castles of Os de Balaguer, Tartareu, Aitona, Vinatesa hill and Algerri, among others. As the turn of the century approached, an enormous Islamic archaeological and architectural heritage was being discovered in the western and southern areas of Catalonia. Evidently, the Department of Culture, the provincial councils and universities dedicated efforts to managing and preserving this valuable inheritance.

In this aspect, we must highlight the role of the museums of Balaguer, Lleida, Tortosa and Terres de l'Ebre (Amposta). They carry out important and tireless informative and educational work through very visible conceptual messages in the various exhibition venues. Moreover, these installations serve as the logistic base for archaeological projects or restoration and conservation work on the material remains.<sup>76</sup> In this sense, they are a bridge between university research and dissemination in society. Following this line, mention must be made of the efforts for promotion through publications of notable interest. Thus, two publications about the heritage of Balaguer and the Noguera district between the Late Antiquity and the Late Middle Ages have been edited by the museum of Balaguer.<sup>77</sup>

The Andalusian patrimonial heritage also appears in the history textbooks for the second course of secondary education.<sup>78</sup> The inclusion of this type of contents gives the students the chance to understand and appreciate the rich cultural heritage, and specifically the Andalusian. Undoubtedly, this is the cornerstone to ensure critical understanding of the shared past, and so promote cultural integration in the present.

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76. Another element to highlight in the Catalan museums is the Service of Attention to the Museums (SAM) whose mission is to assess and give support to the museums in its area. Under the Plan of Museums of Catalonia, the Museum of Lleida was the pioneer in offering this service.

77. Giralt, Josep, ed. *La Noguera antiga. Des dels primers pobladors fins als visigots*. Balaguer: Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya-Museu de la Noguera-Ajuntament de Balaguer, 2001; Alòs, Carme; Solanes, Eva. *Catàleg de la col·lecció de materials andalusins del Museu de la Noguera*. Balaguer: Museu de la Noguera-Ajuntament de Balaguer, 2012.

78. García, Sebastián, Margarita; Gatell, Arimont, Cristina. *Ciències socials, Geografia i Història*. Barcelona: Vicens Vives, 2013: 4-17.



### 2.4.1 *The treatment of al-Andalus in the field of dissemination among the public*

Within this sub-chapter, we consider it right to incorporate a specific section to deal with the question of dissemination among the general public. Certainly, one of the functions of the historian is to transmit historical knowledge processed with scientific methodology to society. Unfortunately, we have lost this important function that justifies the historical science, either through neglect by the historians themselves or through the promotion of other professions. It is undeniable that through the genre of the historical novel set in the Middle Ages, novelists, with Ken Follet as a notable example, have done a great deal to popularise this period.<sup>79</sup> However, we must be critical of this literary genre for the all too frequent misrepresentation of important historical events, the difficulty of recreating dress, behaviour and, even more so, everything referring to mentality and values. In fact, *tot plegat avança cap a un espai estètic, farcit d'elements aliens a cronologies precises. Cal preguntar-se, doncs, per una Edat Mitjana sense cronologia*.<sup>80</sup> The popular television series 'Game of Thrones' produced by HBO recreates an imaginary world where seven kingdoms struggle to obtain the precious 'iron throne'. The series aims to recreate the European Middle Ages where a number of dynasties fight for control of each of the kingdoms.<sup>81</sup> This world of 'Game of Thrones' is organised around an economic system inspired in feudalism, and a society divided between those who fight, those who pray and those who work. The buildings that appear most frequently are those of medieval origin, like the cathedral and old quarter of Girona in the most recent season. When it leaves the seven kingdoms and moves to the kingdom of Meeren, we see an attempt to depict the Islamic world. However, the series is far from recreating it given the mixture of a slave-owning society, governed by sovereigns who lived in pyramids, and where capitalism is emerging with the trade in slaves and all kinds of merchandise. Despite the wishes of the author of the books, George R. R. Martin, and the scriptwriters of the series to recreate the Middle Ages, it has to be said that the dialogues, costumes, thought and ways of acting are far from resembling this, and the series seems more an anachronic jumble.

From another aspect, the Catalan public television, TV3, produced and broadcast two seasons of *Sota Terra* ("Under Ground") (2010 and 2012). It aimed to be a 'reality show' for the broad audience, and here, under the direction of the prestigious researcher, Eudald Carbonell, a team of archaeologists had to spend three days working on an emblematic archaeological site in Catalonia. The eighth episode of

79. Bueno, María Luisa. "Los escenarios materiales en 'Los pilares de la tierra'". *Castilla y el mundo feudal. Homenaje al profesor Julio Valdeón*, María Isabel Del Val, Paco Martínez, eds. Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León-Universidad de Valladolid, 2009: 147-159.

80. "Everything is moving towards an aesthetic space, filled with alien elements in precise chronologies. One wonders, then, about a Middle Ages without chronology." Sabaté, Flocel. "Medievalismes Actuals". *L'Edat Mitjana. Món real i espai imaginat*, Flocel Sabaté, ed. Catarroja: Editorial Afers, 2012: 288.

81. Arias, Fernando. "Sentarse en el Trono de Hierro: el poder regio en Juego de Tronos desde una perspectiva medieval". *Jot Down. Contemporary Culture Mag.* November 2011. 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016. <<http://www.jotdown.es/2016/11/sentarse-trono-hierro-poder-regio-juego-tronos-desde-una-perspectiva-medieval/>>.



the second season (2012) was dedicated to Balaguer,<sup>82</sup> more specifically to various sites in the old quarter and the valuable archaeological site of the Pla d'Almatà. In Catalonia, this was a groundbreaking television show, where history and archaeology were the main subjects, and an Islamic site was featured, together with others from very distant historical epochs. The aim was to imitate Channel 4's prestigious and popular 'Time Team', which presented various three-month long excavations from 1994 to 2014,<sup>83</sup> directed by a well-known archaeologist and presented by the actor Tony Robinson. This programme 'brought archaeology to the masses' according to the Daily Mail,<sup>84</sup> something previously unheard of in the United Kingdom, although the BBC already had an important archive of programmes on archaeology, with the series 'Chronicle' standing out.<sup>85</sup>

Going back to *Sota Terra*, this televised format undoubtedly brought archaeology and history closer to the wider public, and the aim was to promote the work of historians and archaeologists. However, some of the dialogues between members of the team came as a disagreeable surprise and a shock. We highlight the following: referring to the contributions of Islamic civilisation, the following value judgements are presented: *progrés econòmic i tecnològic* ("economic and technological progress") (11:22-11:27), *el comte d'Urgell no sap gestionar les sèquies, ni els molins ni el sistema de reg* ("Count of Urgell did not know how to manage the drains or mills or irrigation system") (11:56-12:04) and *enderrocar una mesquita islàmica després de la conquesta és una barbaritat* ("demolishing a mosque after the Islamic conquest is an outrage") (26:02-26:04). The following comparison is made regarding the conquest of the Count of Urgell Ermengol VI, *recorda una mica l'època franquista on el general Franco intenta esborrar els trets característics de la cultura catalana* ("somewhat reminiscent of the Franco era when General Franco tried to erase the characteristic traits of Catalan culture") (11:40-11:53), with the presenter ending up stating that *que la reconquesta cristiana ens va fer més mal que bé* ("the Christian reconquest did us more harm than good") (12:35-12:39). Taken together, the dialogues between members of the team are forced and full of value judgements, a bad *praxis* that historians are taught never to use in the first course of their degrees. Despite these very unfortunate comments, that do more harm than good, both Eudald Carbonell and Joan-Eusebi Garcia Biosca contribute some of the most notable scientific values, such as rigour and prudence, in their evaluations of the various archaeological activities carried out.

82. See: TV3 a la carta, "Balaguer: una ciutat musulmana per descobrir", *TV3*, 11 March 2012, 18 November 2016 <<http://www.ccma.cat/tv3/alacarta/sota-terra/balaguer-una-ciutat-musulmana-per-descobrir/video/3991571/>>.

83. See: Channel4, "The guerrilla base of the king", *Time Team*, 18 November 2016 <<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/time-team>>.

84. Thomas, Liz. "Time Team's final dig: Tony Robinson's series 'that brought archaeology to the masses' is axed by Channel 4 after 20 years". *Mail Online*. 23 October 2012. 2 November 2016. <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2221664/Time-Teams-final-dig-Archaeology-series-starring-Tony-Robinson-axed-Channel-4-20-years.html>>.

85. See: bbc, "Chronicle: Archaeology on Television Collection", 2014, 25 October 2016. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/chronicle/>>.



The proliferation of medieval fairs and markets could be another way to bring al-Andalus closer to modern society. The transfer of knowledge would clearly have a high impact in this format of a very well accepted cultural and leisure activity. However, in this kind of event, it is very difficult to differentiate characteristic elements from the medieval period and, even more so, anything from the Islamic times. So, for the Islamic, it is habitual to programme belly dancing, thus recalling the good life of the Andalusian citizens. The modern medieval fairs and markets are great areas for trading, where artisans of all kinds sell their products as pure, ecological and local, and also medieval, the latter understood as an added value.

Multimedia material proliferates on the web to raise the profile of museums, archaeological sites, cultural events, etc. In the specific case of Islamic heritage, there is a large amount of multimedia resources that bring this rich legacy closer to society. Platforms like *'arqueoxarxa'* are good examples, and in the specific case of Islam, they include various entries both for the Pla d'Almatà<sup>86</sup> and Castell Formós.<sup>87</sup> In fact, these two sites have become the visible face of Islamic heritage in Catalonia.<sup>88</sup>

The multimedia industry has seen rising in recent years in the specific field of videogames. Society has understood them from their beginnings as a leisure product aimed at children and teenagers. The ever more sophisticated designs, the quest to create imaginary worlds or to recreate scenarios from the past has also fascinated an adult audience who have entered this world of videogames with a great deal of interest and enthusiasm.<sup>89</sup> Within this wide field, there has been significant growth in videogames that recreate the past, and that is seen as a great opportunity to educate society about history not only by their producers, but also by historians.<sup>90</sup> So, the productions seek ever more specific details of the events they want to explain, including thoroughness in the clothing, historically accurate stories, music adapted to the context, etc. Here is where the research centres specialised in the medieval world come into their own to supply the contents with the required accuracy to produce this typology of videogame.

Moreover, another aspect, unknown or less known must be highlighted, namely the 'serious videogames'. These are especially deployed in the field of pedagogy

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86. See: Arcovaleno, "Muralla islàmica del Pla d'Almatà de Balaguer", 2011, 25 October 2016 <<http://arcovaleno.org/arcovaleno/muralla-islamica-del-pla-dalmata-balaguer/>>.

87. See: Aqueoxarxa, "Castell Formós (Balaguer)", 2012, 25 October 2016 <<http://www.arqueoxarxa.cat/Jaciments/CASTELL-FORMOS-BALAGUER>>.

88. "Nevertheless, we should analyze if the predilection for some emblematic archaeological sites is the best strategy because behind those iconic places there are many other smaller archaeological sites less promoted and known." *Caldria valorar si la predilecció per uns jaciments emblemàtics és una bona estratègia, donat que darrera seu, existeixen jaciments arqueològics més petits que avui resten a l'ombra.*

89. Jiménez Alcázar, Juan Francisco. "The other Possible Past: Simulation of the Middle Ages in Videogames", *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum*, 5 (2011): 299-340.

90. Jiménez Alcázar, Juan Francisco. *De la Edad de los Imperios a la guerra total: Medievo y Videojuegos*. Murcia: Campobell, 2016.



destined for schools and other educational centres.<sup>91</sup> The results of the pioneering experiences have shown that adolescents who have interacted in this type of game have gained knowledge and skills in the subject of history.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, in the light and shadows within the broad field of dissemination, we should note that there is room for improvement and to bring history of the medieval period and that of al-Andalus in all its breadth to society. Videogames are an excellent example, and moreover, one with a long way still to go.

### *2.4.2 The research. Stable ways of interpreting the past and for the transfer of the knowledge*

Although the cultural past of the Islamic period in the Middle Ages is increasingly assimilated in Catalonia, it is worth mentioning that from the field of research, archaeology plays an important role. In this sense, one of the aspects where there is a long way to go is precisely that of the archaeology of Islamic architecture, especially throughout the Ebro Valley. It is important to research the buildings because we still do not recognise the Islamic constructive typologies,<sup>93</sup> while the recognised ones, in the case of the various morphologies of the stretcher and header ashlar, have not yet been contextualised into a global overview of Al-Andalus. One way is undoubtedly to implement an integrating project that deploys a single methodology of analysis that is backed by the theoretical and methodological principles of the archaeology of architecture. Moreover, such an ambitious project has to have architects specialised in heritage and specially trained in the Islamic period. In this sense, Pedro Gurriarán proposes studying the building techniques with ashlar based on those who made them and who placed them, in other words, following the footprints of the Moorish masons and master builders.<sup>94</sup> This approach is based on the singular nature of the building technique throughout the Ebro Valley. It also suggests taking samples of mortar to analyse its composition, water stress, and its chronology from radio carbon dating. This line has had excellent results in the Tower of La Saira and Alguaire Castle, as both

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91. Mugueta Moreno, Íñigo; Manzano Andrés, Ane. "La historia moderna estudiada en el aula a través de un videojuego: 'Age of Empires III'", *Historia y Videojuegos: El impacto de los Nuevos medios de ocio sobre el conocimiento histórico*. Juan Francisco Jiménez Alcázar, Íñigo Mugueta Moreno, Gerardo Fabián Rodríguez, eds. Murcia: Campobell, 2016: 135-166.

92. Guevara Sánchez, José Manuel. "Jugar aprendiendo. Una propuesta del uso de los videojuegos en el aula de Ciencias Sociales", *Historia y Videojuegos: El impacto de los Nuevos medios de ocio sobre el conocimiento histórico*. Juan Francisco Jiménez Alcázar, Íñigo Mugueta Moreno, Gerardo Fabián Rodríguez, eds. Murcia: Campobell, 2016: 167-176.

93. Brufal, Jesús. "Identificación y sistematización de las técnicas constructivas andalusíes en el distrito de Lleida", *Nuevas investigacions de jóvenes medievalistas*, Conchita Villanueva, Diego Reinaldos, Jorge Maíz, Inés Calderón, eds. Murcia: Editorial Universidad de Murcia, 2013: 69-80.

94. Gurriarán, Pedro. "Una arquitectura para el Califato: poder y construcción en al-Andalus durante el siglo X". *Anales de Arqueología Cordobesa*, 19 (2008): 261-276.



buildings have been contextualised with a narrow margin for error.<sup>95</sup> A project of these characteristics could illustrate the social and economic aspects that of Andalusian edifications in the Ebro Valley.

Continuing with the field of research into Islam in the Late Middle Ages, nowadays, the most complete and integrating discipline for studying it is the archaeology of the landscape. From a holistic view, this opens interpretative lines given the complexity of the historical landscape. The landscape is configured from anthropic elements (towns, towers, fortresses, cemeteries, mills, mines) and the natural environment (soils, forests, water, stone, minerals). It is this enormous complexity of technological, cultural, agronomic and ethnologic factors, that also opens innovative lines of research, which, cohesively integrated into a multidisciplinary structure, concludes with very specific responses about the historical landscape, in this case, the Andalusian. On an European level, there are various projects where the archaeology of the landscape has opened new interpretative paths. I should highlight the projects APSAT, directed by Gian Pietro Brogiolo, The Ecology of Crusades, directed by Alex Pluwsowski, MEMOlab, directed by José María Martín Civantos, or the various projects carried out by the Research Group on Heritage and Cultural Landscapes directed by José Antonio Quirós. These projects pay special care to the transfer of knowledge to education or cultural tourism. These are well-developed and rigorous final products and highly sensitive to the cultural heritage. In the end, this is an excellent methodology for promoting and building the discourse of the record through the historical memory on a firm scientific basis.

### 3. Conclusions

In Catalonia, a cultural heritage of Islamic roots has survived protected by the law, as the heritage of everyone, studied scientifically in the research centres, and divulged and conserved through cultural installations like the museums. The path to date has been, and to an extent still is, complex due to the growing number of theories that seek a mythical vision of the history of the country, and where Islam appears as the worst of evils. Moreover, with the growth of so-called 'jihadi terrorism' it seems that recognising this Islamic cultural heritage, the result of being part of al-Andalus for four centuries, is still bothersome or has not yet been assimilated as one more piece of the shared memory.

The Andalusian heritage is seen in a wide range of aspects of our everyday lives: the words, irrigation networks, written documentation, urbanism, food and popular traditions. This Andalusian heritage, which goes beyond the monuments, should, through history and teaching, be used as a lever to bring society closer to a stage

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95. Brufal, Jesús. *Memòria de la Intervenció Arqueològica Preventiva: "Recollida de mostres i documentació del Castell de la Ràpita (Vallfogona de Balaguer, la Noguera), el Castell d'Alguaire (Alguaire, el Segrià) i la Torre de la Saira (Almacelles, el Segrià).* (R/N: 494/K121 1-11505/2014), 2014: 9-14.



in history that is still seen with a certain reticence. Moreover, this approach is a democratic and civic exercise in the recovery of the historical memory.

From one extreme to the other, the difficulty with which the history of Al-Andalus has to be faced lies in its irrevocable link to the Spanish or Catalan nations. Spain and Catalonia both confronted al-Andalus and everything seems to indicate that there is no clear way out of the dilemma between rejection and adoption. To cite Manuela Marín:

*Quizá haya que esperar a que se pueda entender que la historia de al-Ándalus no es la de la España musulmana y que tampoco es la historia que debió ser para el presente; es decir, a que se pueda entender al-Ándalus como una historia pròpia, la de una sociedad islàmica en el Mediterráneo occidental.*<sup>96</sup>

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96. "Perhaps we have to wait for it to be understood that the history of al-Andalus is not that of the Muslim Spain nor is it history that it should have been for the present; in other words, for al-Andalus to be understood as its own history, that of an Islamic society in the western Mediterranean": Marín, Manuela. *Al-Ándalus y los andalusíes...*: 66.

