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## Past Encounters

My initial interest in the theme of Islam in Europe goes back to a long-standing inquisitiveness about Islam in the Mediterranean and North Africa and its influence on West Africa, where I lived and worked for many years. More specifically it has roots in a concern with a number of conflicts in Europe and the role of religious affiliation in some serious disputes in the contemporary world, a role that I thought had been played down by many recent discussants. These analysts often came from intellectual circles that had themselves rejected religion as a personal faith and assumed that others had done (or should do) the same. I felt this was true of some important intellectuals who had examined nationalism, for instance, Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm, who paid little or no attention to religion, which was often treated under the vague blanket term ethnicity, or even identity, terms which I argued had little empirical reference. That neglect of religion was especially associated with uncommitted Jews as well as non-practising Christians, and of course with those many socialists who approved the Soviet constitution of 1917 which announced 'the abolition of all national and national-religious prejudices and restrictions, and the full development of national minorities and ethnic groups'. Similar aims either of religious freedom or freedom

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from religion were proclaimed by the English Revolution of 1649, by the American Revolution of 1787 and by the French Revolution (and its Napoleonic successor) of 1789. Nevertheless religion remained a significant factor not simply in assisting national struggles but in formulating them. Its power of resistance is outstanding, as with the Orthodox church in the USSR and its later revival, and as we see from Islamic resistance to that country in Afghanistan and in the current struggle in Chechnya, as well as in the historic divisions and the terrible 'ethnic cleansings' in Northern Ireland, in India and Pakistan and in Israel, in all of which cases we have evidence of the persistence of religious affiliation and perhaps to a lesser extent of religious belief in shaping these long-continuing conflict situations. We cannot understand contemporary Palestine nor for that matter what happened in New York on 9/11 simply under the rubric of 'terrorism' or 'ethnicity' without taking into account the profound religious dimension. Islam impinges directly on all our lives, now as in the past, ever since its establishment in Arabia at the beginning of the seventh century.

I want to say something of that past, but first the present, a topic to which I will return in greater detail. There are today some two million Muslims in Germany (mainly from Turkey), the same number in Britain (mostly from the Indian sub-continent), some six million in France (mostly from North Africa), and some fifteen million in the European Union, even before its projected expansion eastwards; the numbers are in all cases uncertain. These substantial minorities have important social and political implications for the respective societies, especially as the communities are made up of recent immigrants who differ not only in their religion but in other cultural ways, who maintain their distance and distinctiveness (as well as having them maintained) and hence provide fuel for xenophobic and what is often called racist reaction but which has a very strong element of religious prejudice. They provide cultural diversity but also constitute points of divergence from common norms. Bans on immigrants will not affect these numbers. Their size might suggest a substantial

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influence on the political process, but they are of course dispersed (and many dispossessed) and our type of democracy does not really allow independent representation. Unlike the wealthy Jewish lobby in the USA, these Muslims can do relatively little directly to affect national policies towards the Near East and elsewhere. Nevertheless they are beginning to make an impact. In England Muslims have demonstrated over Kashmir, an act that was interpreted as showing a concern with homeland issues rather than integrating into British politics (an accusation never made against Jewish groups demonstrating about Israel). In terms of direct influence on the political process, they are largely impotent. Partly as a result of this perceived impotence, they provided recruits for the Taliban and al-Qaeda and before that for the Afghan national struggle against occupation by the USSR, where 'terrorism' and 'extremism' emerged seamlessly from the national liberation struggle.

The history of Islam and Europe displays three broad currents of territorial penetration that have affected that continent since the very beginning of the Muslim religion in the seventh century. And Islam in turn was one of the three streams of Near Eastern religion that have affected Europe in the Common Era. In the Roman period there was the dispersion of the Jews (and Carthaginians) throughout the empire, to Italy, to Spain, to France and then more widely. There was Christianity from about the same period, but mainly after the conversion of Constantine in 313 CE, spreading out from its Roman stronghold. And there was the Islamic expansion beginning only three centuries later. The three currents of Islam to which I referred were the Maghribian (the Arab), the Balkan (the Ottoman Turkish) and the Northern European (the Mongol), and their rough dates are the eighth, the fourteenth and again the fourteenth century (as Muslims, after conversion). Each of the three Muslim thrusts made their mark on the thinking of Western Europe. There was the recognition of Islamic learning, its luxuries and its military achievements. The last posed a threat in the minds of people far away from the front line that is still embodied

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in linguistic usage. Just as the campaigns of earlier conquerors from the East have left their mark on the European vocabulary of devastation, in particular through the Huns and the Vandals, so too the Mongol thrust left its mark on English with 'he's a real Tartar' for a destructive child; the Turkish advance gave us 'a little Turk' for the same infant, while the Moors gave rise to 'street Arab'. Moreover both the Turks and the Moors left their impact on village fêtes that embodied Turks and blackamoors in their performances.<sup>1</sup> According to Primo Levi, the word *Musulman* came to be used in Nazi concentration camps for inmates who 'gave up'.

This long and massive penetration has been frequently neglected in the West. Historians have much to answer for as far as this aspect of Europe is concerned. To a large degree that continent is their creation as they have seen it as a boundary-maintaining region, a continent defined by an ancestry reaching back to Greece and Rome, and subsequently by its own religion, Christianity. As a supposed geo-cultural entity, Europe is the major focus of geography and history, which are taught as dominant subjects in schools, that is, when they are not dealing with the purely English, French or German varieties. The continent, like every old, and indeed new, nation, demands its exclusive history and geography, as we see from recent events in Africa where, after independence, the nations into which it was often illogically divided were defined, legitimized, in this very way. So too with Europe.

Right from ancient times, Europe has tended to be encapsulated, seen in opposition to Asia, a continent with its despotisms, its hydraulic civilizations, its inability to achieve capitalism, or even, according to some, to be as inventive as Europeans, who had their Christianity or their Protestant ethic, their entrepreneurship, their capitalism. According to some, it was always inherently backward. All this identification of Europe, Christianity and modernity has led to a neglect, even an implicit rejection, of the role of Islam in Europe. For example, one school of Spanish historians has seen the Muslim influences as being superficial, not touching

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on the 'idiosyncratic nature' of the Iberians (Guichard 1994: 679).

The East, on the other hand, has been less certain of the boundary between the continents. The Levant used the expression *Ifranj* (Franks) to denote Europeans; only in the mid-nineteenth century did the term *Urūbā* (Europe) come into use. The term Franks excluded Europeans under Ottoman rule: in other words, it was not basically geographical but political. The more embracing notion of the West (*Gharb*) could include Russia and certainly the United States (Heyberger 2002: 2).

But Europe is not really even a geographic entity; it is separated from Asia only at one point, the Bosphorus, by a small stretch of water. North of that there is continuity over the Russian steppes, a complete terrestrial flow. I suggest that is also true of culture, and indeed of social organization. Indeed Europe has never been purely isolated, purely Christian.

Instead of a Christian Europe, one has to see the continent as penetrated by the three world religions (that is, written religions) that originated in the Near East and which indeed had a common mythology or sacred text; in order of arrival, these were Judaism, Christianity and Islam. And those religions took over from a set of moral beliefs and practices we designate in a negative, deprecatory, throw-away fashion as 'pagan' but which endured, even at a state or elite level, until the fifteenth century in Lithuania, and much later at a popular level – some have claimed throughout the Middle Ages in much of Europe.

Turning specifically to Islam, its advent should not be seen simply as usurping Christian Europe any more than the latter can be considered simply as the destroyer of the pagan or the scourge of the Jews. All have equal entitlements to be present, and in this general ('objective') sense none can be considered only as the Other; they are part of Europe, part of our heritage.

However, for Christian Europe, Islam was always the most formidable Other, ever since the eighth century. It is true

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that the other Other, the Jews, were physically nearer, since they lived dispersed as merchants and as refugees. As such they constituted a moral, a commercial, but never a politico-military threat, whereas Islam was not only the Other, but one that was apparently as powerful as the West in every sense. They had begun by invading Spain, reaching beyond the Pyrenees. Militarily they were as strong. Culturally too, constructing as they did the great Alhambra at Granada and the superb mosque at Cordoba and creating many other magnificent buildings on the soil of Europe. They brought with them important developments of the classical tradition which had been neglected in the West, in particular translations of the works of Aristotle, as well as advances that the Muslims themselves had made in the medieval sciences and in hygiene. Under Christianity, Roman baths fell into desuetude, as did their systems of water supply; indeed baths were at first often adversely associated with the ritual bathing of Judaism and the daily ablutions of Islam, as inimical to the Christian religion.

Part of those terrestrial flows have been represented in a constant movement of peoples, largely but not exclusively in an East–West direction. That has been so from prehistoric times, and historic ones too have been marked by the migration of Indo-Europeans, of Celts, of Ural-Altai-speaking peoples such as the Finns, the Hungarians, and of course the Huns and others.

Culture too has often moved in the same way, first from the Near East to Europe, then in the reverse direction, but even where there has been no physical movement the boundaries have been open, so that much of culture has been shared. Culture has in fact moved both ways, as has conquest. Russia expanded in a swathe of territory stretching from the Black Sea to the Pacific; European culture ('modernization') and imperial rule have spread in the same direction. But earlier the movement was generally from East to West.

Of no sphere has this been clearer than religion, where the three main written creeds of the Near East, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, have pushed westwards (as well as

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eastwards) along both shores of the Mediterranean, so that Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, is not simply a foreign religion but has long been established within Europe and has had a great influence not only on its politics but on its culture more generally. It is partly against the Jewish (and before that Phoenician) and Islamic elements that Europe, Western Europe, has defined itself as Christian. So that, in thinking of the role of Islam, we need to see it against the background of the transcontinental components in the history of East and West, and of their role in defining the latter, that is, of the Huns who operated in both regions, the Mongols who attacked China and the West at the same time, the Turks too, of whom Mao Tse-tung wrote in one of his Long March poems:

Our forest of rifles darts ahead  
like the ancient Flying General  
who flew out of heaven to chase Turkish tribesmen  
out of Mongolia.<sup>2</sup>

The Orient, from which these world religions came, has always been of political interest to Europeans. The Greeks and then the Romans created major empires there, as did the Egyptians and the Persians. But with the advent of Christianity, the Orient, specifically Palestine, became the original source of the religion and an early centre of pilgrimage, just as Jerusalem and Mecca were to Jews and Muslims. Not only did people make arduous journeys to visit the Holy Land but there was early investment there. Access was rendered more difficult after the rise of Islam in the seventh century, and later attempts to 'free' the holy places, which the Muslims thought they had already 'freed', were of course one of the main, religiously inspired, motives of the Crusades, in which warriors were urged to their overseas duty by the popes and by the ecclesiastical establishment.

What I want to do is to consider firstly the extent, historically, of Islam's changing presence; it was always there as a point against which conceptually to define Christian identity

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in the East itself, as is very clear in the course of the Crusades, which constituted armed European invasions of Muslim territory. Secondly, I want to point to the major social and intellectual influences of Islam on Christian Europe, including the artistic impact. I touch upon its significance for Christian Europe's definition of itself, and more specifically the areas of confrontation or of difference. And finally, I look briefly at the role of Islam in contemporary Europe, especially its migrants from North Africa, the Near East and the Indian sub-continent.

The frequent neglect of the role of Islam in Europe (see López-Baralt 1994: 518; Guichard 1977; Torres and Macias 1998: 10), the emphasis on Christianity, in opposition to the Near East ('the Orient'), could be regarded as an aspect of the Orientalism which Edward Said, in his book of that name (1978), defines (outside the 'academic tradition') as 'a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological definition made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident"' (1978: 2). Of course conceptually, as we have seen, that had long been the case ever since the Greeks opposed Europe and Asia, seeing the first as democratic, the second as autocratic, and differentiating them not only geographically but in other broad cultural terms. But there was another more concrete way in which the later Orient (by which Said means the Arab Near East) was inevitably not only differentiated from but dominated by the Occident economically, politically and militarily, though in earlier centuries the balance of power, culturally as well as politically, often went the other way.

In his introduction to *Orientalism*, Said wrote: 'The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, its source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other' (1978: 1). In addition, he notes, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West). The Eurasian landmass was divided on a lateral axis, East being distinguished from West and vice versa. However, Islam was not only a feature of the



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Orient in a geographical sense; it came to Europe very early in its existence, with further profound implications for that continent. The Other in this sense was among us, not geographically separate, connected not only with European colonization, as Said suggests, but with the Islamic penetration ('colonization') of Europe. Islam was not only about what was happening in Damascus and Baghdad but, depending on the historical moment, in Barcelona, in Palermo, in Tirana, in Athens, in Budapest, in the Crimea and in Kiev and the Ukraine, as well as in Chechnya and Kosovo, to provide modern reminders of its extent.

Islam impinged upon Europe almost from its very beginning, in 622 CE, which was the year of the Hijrah ('the emigration', the 'severing of kinship ties'), when the faithful of Islam ('the surrender [to the will of God]'), that is the Muslims ('those who have surrendered'), followed Mohammed in leaving Mecca. There they had felt persecuted, and so established themselves in Medina, where a Jewish clan controlled the important market. From that base the prophet built up an alliance of clans which, from the early seventh century, were able to raid the rich caravans running between the Yemen, Mecca and Syria (Damascus and Gaza), trading in oriental goods from India and Ethiopia to the Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup> Both Mecca and Medina were major trading centres, the former having more political control, and were used by both Jewish and Christian merchants. Mohammed's first wife, for whom he had worked, was a trader, Khadijah, whose cousin Waraqah was a Christian.

Mohammed was in touch with both Judaism and Christianity, 'the people of the book' whose achievements were recognized, but under Islam they were nevertheless taxed (through the *jizya*, attempts to evade which encouraged conversion). But expansion from Arabia soon led to conflict with the Byzantine Empire, centred in the Eastern Christian capital of Constantinople. Islam had always had an important military side, being involved from the beginning in raids on the desert caravans. When Arabia was united under the Muslims, as a result of a series of alliances, towards the end

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of Mohammed's life (632 CE), by which time he was the strongest man in the country, the Muslim community, which had already raided Syria in 630, set out on a series of conquests, encouraged by the defeat of the Persian Empire by the Byzantine (627–8).

The expansion of that empire was phenomenal. Forty-six years after the flight of Mohammed from Mecca, his followers were under the walls of Constantinople. They attacked for seven summers but were defeated by the garrison using Greek fire and eventually retreated, with the loss, according to Gibbon, of some 30,000 men. A second siege (716–18) by way of the European side failed again through the fire-ships of the Greeks, although the making of such fire was said to have been invented by a Syrian engineer in the seventh century. In fact the fall of Constantinople had to wait seven centuries, until the coming of the Turks.

This move to the north, then to the west, to Spain by way of North Africa, later gave rise to the Crusades in the eastward direction, attempting to take back the Holy Land that Islam had conquered from the Byzantines. The second impact was of the Turks attacking that same Byzantine Empire to the north and moving into the Balkans before finally capturing its capital Constantinople, the Rome of the East, in 1453. Thirdly, yet farther to the north, were the invasions of the Mongol Tartars into Russia and Central Europe, beginning in 1237 with southern Russia, entering Poland and Hungary in 1241 in a two-pronged attack, but withdrawing on the death of the Great Khan.

### **The southern thrust**

Unable to make headway against the Byzantine Empire, the Muslims thrust westwards. They arrived in North Africa well after the Jews and Christians, but appear to have been welcomed by the former, especially in Spain, since they had suffered discrimination in the latter stages of Visigothic rule when that kingdom adopted a form of Catholicism. The

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conquest of North Africa was rapid and resulted in the conversion of many Berber tribes. Historically, the territorial impact of Islam on Europe began in the south, where already within a hundred years of the Hijrah in 622 CE the Muslim forces, largely composed of Berbers, had reached the Atlantic and begun to cross into Spain by way of Gibraltar, and later to occupy the Mediterranean islands. The Arabs reached the Atlantic and Tariq ben Ziad crossed the straits of Gibraltar at the end of April 711, invited by an excluded branch of the local dynasty; on 19 July he defeated the Visigothic king, Roderick, and a month later siege was laid to Cordoba, where they were assisted by the Jewish community, who became the guards of the town and rejoiced at being linked to their co-religionists in the East, including Jerusalem itself. Under Islam the Jews and Christians had the status of *dhimma*, paying a special tribute but being granted an acknowledged position in the state. In this way they received a large measure of autonomy and suffered little anti-Semitism of the European variety (Zafrani 1996: 27). That situation permitted a great deal of commercial cooperation at all levels, as we see from the Geniza documents from Cairo. Much trade in Muslim lands, as in other spheres of public life, lay in the hands of the Jewish community. Such trade was facilitated by the fact that Islamic rule stretched from Spain to the Far East, permitting easy access to the long-distance trade, for example, in silks and spices from India and beyond.

This conquest of North Africa and the Arab domination of the Mediterranean had important consequences for Europe, and for centuries to come. In a famous thesis, Pirenne (1939) argued that Europe did not collapse with the fall of the Roman Empire in 400 CE but continued in much the same way as before, at least from the standpoint of trade, until 600. Then it was the appearance on the scene of the Muslims that disrupted commerce in the Mediterranean and led to an effective division between the Eastern and Western empires. The Merovingian kings in the north-west were isolated from the south but provided the early scaffolding of

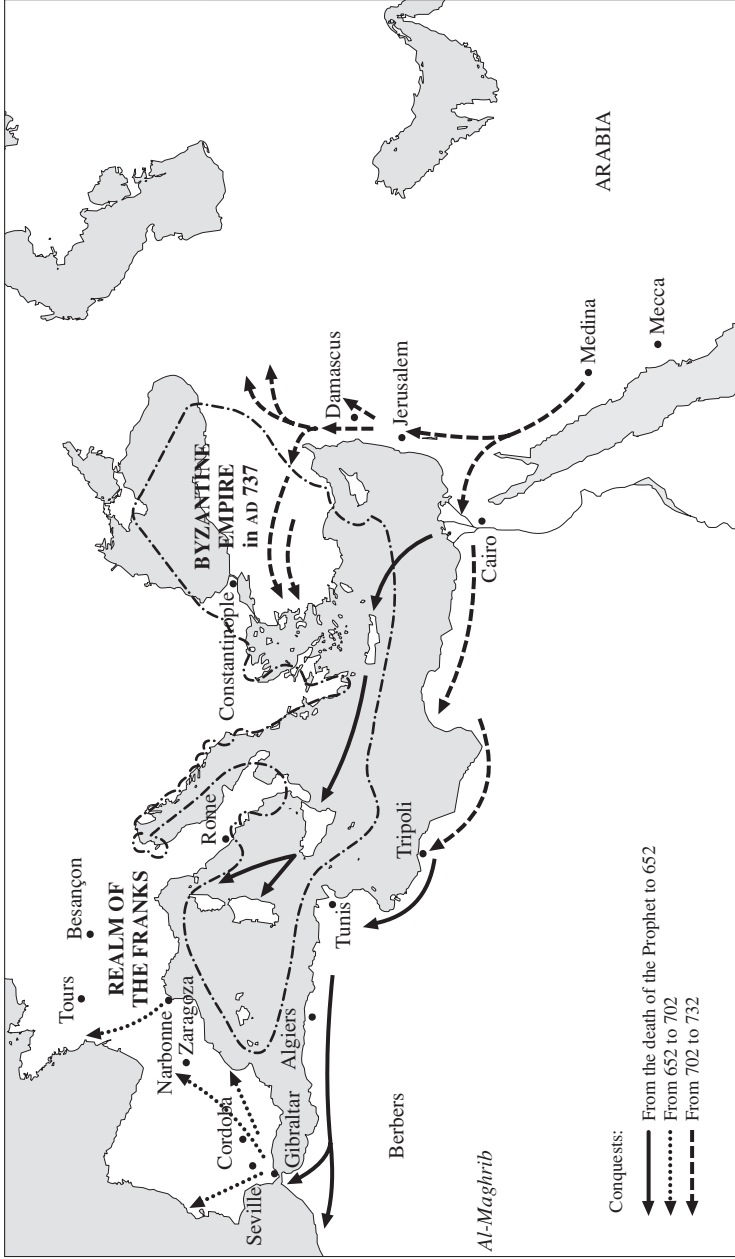
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the European Middle Ages, leading to the gradual emergence of the Carolingian Empire. Without Mohammed, Charlemagne would have been inconceivable.

In a detailed examination of the archaeological and historical evidence for this thesis, Hodges and Whitehouse (1983) argue that, while commercial life in the Mediterranean continued after Alaric's assault on Rome in 410 CE, it did so on a diminishing scale; the metamorphosis from classical to medieval had begun, with the construction of defensive hill-top forts as against dispersed rural settlement in the plains.<sup>4</sup> Warfare increased, as did taxes, so that 'the system gradually wound down' (Hodges and Whitehouse 1983: 52). By the time the Arabs arrived, the process was virtually complete.

So it was not the Islamic advance that made the great difference. The Carolingians were already mainly cut off from the Mediterranean, and the revival was based upon an exploitation of the northern resources of the Rhine valley and upon easy access to the North Sea in one direction and to southern Germany in the other (Hodges and Whitehouse 1983: 171). The Carolingians intensified craft production, especially in pottery, glass and querns, as well as developing long-distance trade. A prime focus of this trade was the Viking route (and hence included furs and slaves) from the Baltic down the Volga and the long passage to Bulgar and the Caspian Sea, leading straight to the centre of the Abbasid Empire, near Baghdad. Already by 750 that empire extended from Spain to Pakistan. By exchanging manufactured goods for silver coin, the Europeans obtained the wealth needed to finance the Carolingian Renaissance. The Umayyads were ousted from Damascus by the Abbasids and some found refuge in Spain, where they took control of Cordoba. The Abbasids moved away from the Mediterranean to Baghdad.

At this time Muslims in the Fertile Crescent were trading with Africa, with India and with China, and artefacts originating from this trade route, which included a well-known figure of Buddha, appear in the excavations of Scandinavian cemeteries. So there was already a connection between the



### 1.1 The Arab/Berber Invasions of Europe

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rise of Islam and developments in Western Europe very soon after the birth of that religion. But there were also more direct connections. As we have seen, by 710, the Maghrib was conquered and Islam had reached the Atlantic Ocean. In that year, an Arab–Berber army had set out for and raided throughout the south of the Iberian peninsula, which they called al-Andalus (in 710 it was Vandalia).

The Muslim advance not only took over the Visigothic kingdom of Spain, but also captured some of its territories, at least temporarily, on the other side of the Pyrenees. Narbonne fell in 719 and was then subject to forty years of Muslim rule. The region of Septimania, consisting of the bishoprics of Narbonne, Nîmes, Agde, Béziers, Carcassonne, Maguelone (progenitor of Montpellier) and Elne, became a protectorate and possibly included a ‘Jewish county’ (in Septimania one-third of the landlords were Jewish). There were confrontations with the Franks based on Toulouse, although Aquitaine received the attention of the Muslim forces when they moved to attack the north. The Arabs also established themselves in southern France, from the north of the Garonne to the mouth of the Rhône. However, the Carolingian historian Paul the Deacon describes Muslims entering Gaul in about 720 as coming ‘with their women and children to settle there’ (Guichard 1994: 683). The daughter of the Duke of Aquitaine was given in marriage to a Muslim chief. The Muslim forces then proceeded to the gates of Tours and to the vineyards of Burgundy, including the towns of Lyons and Besançon. Had the march continued, muses Edward Gibbon, ‘the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet’ (Gibbon 1887: chapter 52, p. 88). In the north Muslims were apparently aiming to plunder the treasure that had accumulated at the shrine of St Martin in Tours and the bishop, St Galien, was said, in folklore, to have played some part in the Christian victory against the ‘pagans’. However, in 732 Charles Martel defeated the invaders between Tours and Poitiers, the defeat

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of the Muslims (the additive 'hammer' he got through this victory) being widely welcomed throughout the Catholic world. He followed up his victory by putting Narbonne under siege six years later, an expedition that resulted in immense damage to the cities of the region and caused local feelings to be strongly anti-Frank. The campaign was later renewed by Charles's son, Pepin the Short, who pacified the local population and retook Narbonne from the Arabs in 759 (Saynes et al. 1986: 73–4).

While southern France was occupied only briefly by the 'Saracens', their constant presence in the eastern Mediterranean made a much more enduring impression. The coastal settlement of Maguelone, the site for the first cathedral of the area, was abandoned in favour of Montpellier, some kilometres to the interior. Place names continued to mark the whole littoral, a fortified village near Saint-Tropez, a pair of hills near Lodève (Gibre and Gibret), the record in the fifteenth century of a tenement called Peyra Sarrasina.<sup>5</sup> Scattered along the coast of southern France we find 'les tours Sarrasins' which, like the Martello towers of south-eastern England, remind one of ancient threats.

The activities of the Moors in Provence were the subject of an embassy from Otto the Great to the court at Cordoba, which he held responsible for their raids from the estuary of the Rhine to the Gulf of Saint-Tropez, leading to an exchange of visits from Cologne. Ambassadors also travelled between Constantinople and Cordoba, bringing gifts from the Basileus which included a Greek copy of a treaty on botany by Dioscorides, very important for the development of pharmacology in Andalusia. Ambassadors were already exchanged with European powers in 765 in the time of Pepin, father of Charlemagne, who had supported the Abbasid faction in Spain. Charlemagne himself sent an embassy there in 797 which was followed by a high-powered mission from the East that included the Governor of Egypt and brought a wide range of riches, notably a famous white elephant, a gift from the caliph, Harun al-Rashid. There was also a great deal of commercial exchange, giving rise to a large commercial

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and naval fleet in Muslim Spain, built in construction yards known as *dâr al-sina'a*, as the result of which the word 'arsenal' appeared in several European languages.

Large-scale conversion was not on the Muslim agenda; Christians were given rights as Mozarabs who had adopted the language and manners rather than the faith of the conquerors. They were an important element in Spanish society both before and after the conquest, especially round Toledo. At the beginning of the twelfth century Alfonso I of Aragon made a daring raid on Granada to liberate and resettle them in Christian lands. They had their own liturgy, which was suppressed as the result of the reforms of Pope Gregory VII (1073–85). Andalusia was an independent emirate (and later caliphate) ruled over by a member of the Syrian Umayyad dynasty (756–1031), who established themselves in Cordoba, declaring a caliphate in 929. The dynasty had been supplanted at the centre of Islamic rule in Baghdad by the Abbasids. The Umayyads ruled on much later in Andalusia, and it is through one of the Christian descendants, Maria de Padillo, that the British royal family has made a claim to be descended from the prophet.

The Umayyads were in many ways very successful, economically and politically, but a great liberation of written expression arrived in al-Andalus with the dissolution of the Umayyad dynasty into local kingdoms, *taifas*. These small courts modelled themselves on the caliphate at Cordoba and encouraged poets and writers in considerable numbers. The result was an efflorescence of Spanish Muslim culture in the eleventh century. That situation was to change with the advent of the reforming dynasty of Almoravids, Sanhajah Berbers originally from Senegal, and their yet more puritanical successors, also Berbers, the Almohads.

The invasions of the Almoravids and the Almohads were not purely military undertakings. There was a strong element of reform, of 'puritanism', of a return to the essentials of Maliki law, which had dominated the Maghrib. The rise of the Sufi brotherhoods was connected with a movement to modify the strict legal code on which reformers such as



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the Berber invaders had insisted, at least initially. These brotherhoods were becoming more common throughout the world of Islam, and the movement was particularly linked with the name of the jurist and theologian al-Ghazali (*d.* 1111), whose works enjoyed an immense success.

Previous conquerors of the Maghrib such as the Romans of North Africa had occupied the coast and exploited it for the benefit of their northern bases (especially for cereals). Now, in competition with Byzantines on the coast, the advancing Arabs spread inland into Berber territory. The Sanhajah Berbers extended as camel-herders across the Sahara, where they traded mined salt for gold, developing a caravan trade with the sub-Saharan black population, especially with the Kingdom of Ghana at Audagosht, where they had arrived around 990. After their leader had made a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1035, he and a Libyan teacher retreated, possibly to an island in the Senegal River, to practise a purer life. The founder of this movement was influenced towards Islamic reform by his encounter with the Libyan *faqih* at Kairouan in Tunisia, which no doubt motivated the movement to push northwards. But it was also fear of the northern caravan routes, on which their trade depended, becoming controlled by the Zenate Berbers.

The people of the retreat (the 'Marabouts') founded the Almoravid dynasty (to use the Anglicized form) and declared a *jihad* against the 'impure' Sanhajah, thus beginning the conquest of Morocco, and even reaching Algiers. In 1086 they responded to a request for help from the Muslim rulers of Andalusia against the Christian forces to the north, who had recaptured Toledo. By 1110 all the petty Muslim states in Andalusia had come under Almoravid control and an African dynasty was now established in Europe. This dynasty was in turn condemned as impure by Ibn Tumart, another Berber from the Atlas, who had studied in Baghdad and Cairo, for using wine, playing musical instruments and not insisting upon the use of the veil in public. In 1125 with a small group of disciples he led a revolt against the ruling dynasty, and by 1147 the Almohads ('those who attest to

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the unity of God') had replaced the Almoravids in the Maghrib as well as in Andalusia.

Almohad rule was financially successful and undertook many public works; it built aqueducts for the big towns and extended the irrigated areas. The mulberry was encouraged because of the important silk industry around Granada. Ceramics, paper, craft work, weaving were the subject of international exchange, as well, of course, as cereals, vegetables and fruit. These commercial relations gave rise to continual embassies and correspondence, especially now that the Italians were becoming more involved in the Mediterranean trade. The regime was more 'puritanical' than its predecessors, whose monuments it sometimes destroyed. It was also responsible for the rejection of all animated figures in the art of Western Islam. When they captured Fez, they proceeded to whitewash 'the ornament, leaving the once ornate mosque bathed in an austere, white light' (Dodds 1994b: 612). At first they even used calligraphy sparingly on buildings. According to Mohammed, poetry was 'the Qur'an of Satan', the maker of pictures was cursed along with women who tattoo themselves, those who lived from usury, and sorcerers (Bürgele 1988: 11ff). Even learning was not altogether spared; while much of Islam welcomed and spread classical knowledge, some orthodox Jews and Muslims objected to 'Greek wisdom'. And, while the Muslims were normally hospitable to Jews, the puritanical Almohads tried to eliminate them from al-Andalus. But Almoravid strictures were partly countered by mystical elements such as occurred in Algeria.

The eventual fall of the Almohads was accompanied by the Christians' reconquest of the south, of Cordoba and Seville, leaving the last bastion of al-Andalus around Granada to endure another 250 years. In North Africa, various coastal towns such as Algiers and Oran became independent corsair republics, continuing the holy war in their attacks against the Christians, as the latter started to dominate the western Mediterranean. Those incursions led to Spanish reprisals and occupation, which in turn resulted in appeals to the Turks,

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whose intervention led to the end of an independent North Africa, apart from Morocco.

Spain was not the only point of entry into Europe. A further thrust towards Italy occurred in 912–13. The Shiite Fatimids in Tunisia, who were also expanding eastwards and later moved to Egypt, which was a major player in the Asian trade with India and China as well as with Africa, tried with limited success to expand into Europe from the Maghrib but only succeeded in making Sicily into a naval base. The Arab conquest of North Africa had long placed the Mediterranean islands in danger.

Maritime control in the Mediterranean depended upon having island bases. The Muslim threat to Christian shipping was greatest from the late eighth to the early eleventh century, when Islam held the chain of islands from Cyprus to the Balearics and had secured a toehold in southern Italy and southern France (Pryor 1988: 101). Islam won its first great victory at sea in 655, just after a raid on Cyprus. For the next thousand years it provided a challenge to Christian shipping along the valued Mediterranean route, the road to oriental luxuries. The Balearics, the key to the control of the western Mediterranean, were under Muslim control from 902 to 1229. Crete, which was the key to the eastern Mediterranean, was held between 824 and 961.

The island of Sicily was conquered by the Byzantines in 535 and finally lost to the Muslims in 902, though they had made their first landing in 652; it was always the Byzantine hope to recapture it. The Muslims had taken the island of Pantelleria, south of Sicily, then in Byzantine hands, around 700, but did not mount a full-scale invasion of the main island until 827. In that year a small renegade force landed in Crete, which they took over from the Byzantines. At the invitation of a discredited Byzantine admiral, a large force was sent to Sicily, and Palermo fell in 831. The invasion of Sicily was mounted by the Aghlabid dynasty from Tangiers (Ifriqiya), and after a long struggle they gained control of the island and hence of the passage between the eastern and western Mediterranean. From here they crossed to the

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mainland and sacked Brindisi, Torrento, Adriatic ports, Sorrento, the Campania, even reaching Rome in 846. Those were raids. But in addition their assistance was called on by the Lombards of Benevento to take the town of Bari.

For more than twenty years, from 847 to 871, Bari was the capital of a small, independent Islamic emirate. They attacked farther north, sacking St Peter's, then lying outside the walls of Rome, in 846, leading to a Carolingian offensive against the Arabs, but the latter still posed a threat to the Carolingians until 915. Naples and Salerno were constantly raided and the great monasteries of Monte Cassino and Volturmo were looted. In 915 the Arabs were finally ousted and Christian trade in the Mediterranean began to revive (Hodges and Whitehouse 1983: 168).

The Fatimid ruler, Caliph al-Qua'im, sent his fleet to raid Genoa and the French coast (Terrasse 2001: 73). This activity caused the Byzantines to react and they too attacked, leaving Crete to call on the help of the Shiite Fatimids. The latter were unable to help but attacked western Sicily instead and captured Taormina, on the Italian mainland, in 963. As a result the Byzantines made a pact with the Fatimids, agreeing to their rule over Sicily and Calabria. Under the Muslims Sicily had been ruled first of all by the Aghlabids of Tunisia. After these adventures the Fatimids were ready to pursue their dream and conquer Abbasid Egypt. They took Egypt in 969, founding Cairo as their capital in 972.

Ten thousand Arabs, Berbers and Spanish Muslims were brought into Sicily, and eventually established their capital at Palermo. Under their rule, trade revived and that city became one of the greatest in the world (Finley et al. 1986: 52). The Arabs built mosques, gardens and palaces, resettled rural areas, renovating and extending the irrigation system, introducing new crops such as citrus, sugar cane, flax, cotton, silk, melons and date palms; with these products came the equipment and skills for processing them, especially cane mills and silk looms, which later came to play an important part in the 'modernization' of Europe and its colonies.<sup>6</sup> Taxation was rationalized, tolerance practised. Eventually they had to

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give up possession to the Normans, who captured Palermo in 1072. Apart from Muslim immigrants, there were many converts among the inhabitants (as happened in many places), leading to an Islamic majority in the population. But when the island was retaken by the Normans, no strangers to the area, beginning in 1060, it reverted to Christianity. The island of Malta followed the fate of Sicily, but the Arabs from Tunisia left that country their language, which became mixed with Sicilian Italian. After it was captured by the Normans, it was unsuccessfully besieged by the Turks in 1565, but the language remained even after the Christian reconquest. Culturally, dramatic expressions of the encounter between Muslims and Christians live on today in popular rituals, celebrating the encounter, as they do most prominently in Spain, especially at annual festivals and carnivals. But Muslim-Christian communication also flourished. The Cid fought for both sides; Jews and Muslims, as Mudejares, lived in Christian kingdoms. In Toledo, after the reconquest, Jews translated Arabic and Hebrew texts into Latin, then Spanish. The Muslim Mudejares were resettled in rural areas, where they carried out much of the work on irrigated lands for Christian overlords. Like the Jews they were at first allowed to practise their own religion, but were always subject to possible pogroms and suspected of encouraging the Turks to attack Spain to liberate them.

The tenth century saw the zenith of many Andalusian achievements. Granada became a great centre of silk production (Dickie 1994) as well as of other textiles. Its buildings included the Mosque of the Cotton Merchants. It was perhaps the biggest city in the whole of Europe and Africa. The town also profited from its fertile surroundings, irrigated with the Syrian water-wheels which provided two crops a year, as well as benefiting from the trans-Saharan trade in gold. Cordoba too became an intellectual centre and was described by a Saxon nun as the 'ornament of the world'. There the lute player Ziryab, from Baghdad, developed his school of music and 'civilized' both cuisine and tableware, as well as recommending crystal rather than

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jugs as a way of drinking special beverages, and introducing toothpaste.

One remarkable aspect over the whole history of Christian–Arab relations is the exchange of personnel through trade, through capture or through purchase. Female slaves from Europe became concubines of Muslim kings and princes, who sent singing-girls as gifts to the Christian rulers. In the Turkish case the Circassian slaves were acquired as concubines, and as such might become the mothers of rulers. The movement of concubines was largely a one-way trade because of the officially monogamous nature of Christian marriage and the reduced presence of slavery (but see Abulafia 1994, on Mallorca), and certainly singing-girls crossed the borders. Medieval romances tell of many romantic marriages between knights and warriors on one side and princesses on the other, in particular along the borderlands between the two faiths in Byzantium and Syria, as well as in Armenia, which constituted a Christian enclave within the Muslim lands. At that level the interchange was more bilateral and less common. Another main theme, closely connected with this exchange of personnel, is that of conversion (and, in the West, of the magical effects of baptism), as in the *Arabian Nights* with King Omar and Sophia, daughter of the King of Constantinople, who bears him a son.

El Cid Campeador was the Arabic name for lord, given to Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar (*d.* 1099), who was the vassal of Alfonso VI of Castile and León. He was forced into exile by court jealousies and he served the Muslim King of Saragossa. He later returned to the Christian ranks and became the protector of the King of Valencia, whom he defended against the Berber Almoravids when they had been called in from North Africa to help defeat the Christians. His exploits were celebrated in the *Poem of the Cid*, the first poem written in the Castilian language in the thirteenth century. He became the hero of Corneille's play *The Cid* (1637).

The Islamization of Portugal too began late in the first Muslim century. Between 710 and 732 Arab armies and their Berber followers crossed Iberia and invaded France, bringing

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with them a new flowering of Mediterranean civilization. Islam conquered the whole country except for some Christian chiefdoms in the far north. Otherwise the population was largely converted and young men left to work in the great Muslim cities. The wars of religion continued with the northern Christians raiding further and further south trying to dislodge the Muslims; their attempt was countered by the coming of the Almoravids from Africa. Nevertheless Henry of Burgundy established himself around Oporto and from there expanded his realm. The Algarve ('the West') was retaken after 1250; only later were Muslims expelled.

This was the time of the Crusades, which meant a movement in the opposite, eastward, direction. At the Council of Clairmont in 1095 Pope Urban II responded to an appeal from the Byzantine Empire for help against the Seljuq Turks, who had expanded into western Anatolia just as the Kipchak Turks in the Ukraine had cut off newly Christianized Russia from Byzantium.<sup>7</sup> The First Crusade, the holy war, began the next year and brought about the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099. The Christian *reconquista* of Spain was also under way, and scored its greatest victory to date at Toledo in 1085. The Crusades continued for more than 200 years, even though Jerusalem had already been retaken by the Muslims under Saladin in 1187. From then on the Europeans in Asia were confined to their massive coastal fortifications. But even after the Muslim victory at Hattin that year, which finally doomed the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Saracens tolerated Christian pilgrims (palmers) visiting Jerusalem and other holy places, though the popes discouraged such visits as contributing to the enemy's exchequer (since the pilgrims had to pay a fee). Likewise Muslim merchants were forbidden to trade with non-Muslims, but that was an injunction that they, like the Christians, often overlooked; nevertheless there was less Muslim trade in Europe than vice versa (Constable 1994: 766).

The Crusades were abandoned but Europe continued to have her eyes on the Near East. Later on there were the more violent episodes of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, which

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had some interesting consequences for knowledge systems even apart from the history of the Rosetta Stone and the founding of academic societies, as well as the British attack on the Suez area. And there were more peaceful invasions. The gathering of knowledge, as in visits such as Kingsley's (the author of *Eothen*, 1844) to the Holy Land, as in expeditions designed to capture antiquities, such as the Lion Gate of Babylon, for European museums, became dominant ways in which the West now came to penetrate the East. Archaeology, linguistics, history, anthropology, not to speak of the incessant search for oil to fuel the internal combustion engine, all added to the East's sense of exploitation by the West.

The influence of the Crusades has been much disputed. Prutz (1883) saw their historical and cultural significance as unsurpassed, with Frankish knights opening up the wonders of the East to astonished Europeans. That was a judgement revised by Runciman (1969), who saw the episode as costing Europe a few million men without bringing any enlightenment, and as involving the last barbarian invasions of Constantinople (1204) (Metlitzki 1997: 4). What they developed was a general aspiration to copy the comforts of the East.

So, while many major political relations between the Christian and Islamic worlds were defined by opposition, indeed by conflict, taking the form of the 'holy war', either in the Crusade or in the *jihad*, led by the Cross or by the Crescent, there was inevitably an interpenetration of the populations through trade and proximity (and certainly of cultural communication). Above all the conflicts gave rise to captives on both sides. The Crusades produced many prisoners, the better-off of whom were subject to ransom, as in the case of Richard, Coeur de Lion (the Christians' answer to Saladin, widely celebrated in Western Europe, as in the pub sign of the Saracen's Head). The poorer sort of prisoners had to make their own arrangements with their Muslim overlords. When the Crusaders did establish themselves in their coastal fortifications of Syria, they necessarily had to interact with the local population for the supply of food and services.



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They also took advantage of their opponents' superior skills in medicine and hygiene. Some of the earlier invaders married Arab Muslims and adopted many of their customs. The Templars in particular developed close relations with Islam, which was one of the reasons for their suppression in 1318. And other orders made Palestine their home, seizing back the holy places from the infidel. They even transformed those places in their imagination. Among the Crusaders' myths was that the Dome of the Rock was the biblical Holy of Holies and the al-Aqsa Mosque the Palace of Solomon (Howard 2000: 181).

Andalusia had to wait for Christian rule until the reconquest of Granada took place in 1492. The Moors of that town were at first granted religious freedom, as was usual when a town surrendered on 'terms', but later the introduction of forced mass conversions led to a revolt in 1499–1500 and again in 1568; after their defeat three years later they were given the choice of conversion or expulsion. Many Moors accepted conversion, but the Morisco community that resulted was never fully accepted by the Christians. Later under Philip II some of their lands were confiscated, and in 1567 a decree forbade their use of Moorish names and clothing as well as of the Arabic language. Their customs and ceremonies were forbidden, their cemeteries were closed and even the use of their baths proscribed (for fear of these being interpreted as ritual ablutions) – indeed the beautiful Alhambra baths were removed altogether. Christians too were forbidden to use them (De Castro 2002: 204). The Moriscos were also forbidden to observe Muslim taboos on pork as well as the eating of couscous (De Castro 2002: 207). However, in the privacy of their own kitchens they continued 'to eat as Moriscos', and indeed some of their practices were taken up by Castilians. As a result of these prohibitions the Moriscos were in a state of revolt and sought help from the Turks and North Africa. After two years the uprising was defeated and the inhabitants were scattered throughout Spain and yet further afield.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the community sent an envoy to Mameluk Egypt, not to ask

them to invade, but at least to threaten reprisals against Christians living in the East. Spain then became concerned and Ferdinand sent a special ambassador, Peter Martyr, to dissuade the Mameluk ruler from taking any action. When help was refused, the Moriscos approached the Ottoman court under Bajazet II, but with the same result. However, the Turks had been made conscious of the plight of their fellow Muslims, and their subsequent ventures in the eastern Mediterranean, including their defeat at Lepanto, were perhaps prompted by the earlier appeals. However, that did nothing to prevent the expulsion of all the Moriscos in 1609.

After the reconquest, Muslims remained numerous, not only in Andalusia but in Valencia, where they formed a large peasant population subject for 300 years to a land-owning nobility who protected them as good taxpayers and as improvers of the land. 'In spirit, Morisco Valencia remained part of Islam, . . . a nation within a nation, with its own leaders' (Lynch 1965: 208). Moreover, the Muslims formed a growing percentage of the population, the remainder of which feared their numerical dominance. Indeed the very size of the Muslim community was one of the main reasons for its expulsion in 1609.

After 1492 the commercial relations of Christian Europe with Mediterranean ports (and even Norway in 1262–3, according to Colley 2002: 229) were strong, with Marseilles selling wine in Tunis and Montpellier and Narbonne being actively engaged (Colley 2002: 228). The Europeans became stronger and stronger in the Mediterranean, especially with the Normans establishing themselves in Sicily and demanding tribute from Tunisia until al-Mustansir refused in 1266, when Charles of Anjou became king. A number of treaties guaranteed access for Christians to North African ports, where they possessed 'factories' (*funduq*). On the Muslim side, there was also an important Christian militia of the Hafsidites that included renegades and captives, who played a significant role in the history of the Maghrib.

North Africa generally had sufficient wheat to feed itself and it also exported to al-Andalus, whose population was

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swollen by refugees. Morocco also had a surplus of olives, dates and cane sugar for exchange. In addition the country exported leather as well as fine merino wool, especially to Genoa. From at least the tenth century Granada had cultivated the production of silk, which again was exported to Europe, until Italian silk later took over.

Under the new dispensation, the Muslims lived on mainly as forced converts, as New Christians or Moriscos. This policy, initiated in Castile in 1502 when the Muslims were given the choice of conversion or expulsion, was as we have seen partly the result of fear of the Ottoman Turks (Lynch 1965: 206), who were now making their presence felt in the eastern Mediterranean. For Spain was still being raided from the Maghrib, as a result of which Moriscos were forbidden access to maritime districts. A similar fate was suffered by the Jews, who were expelled very shortly after the capture of Granada. Later on, in 1609, even converted Muslims suffered the same fate. At that time Spain saw itself as constantly threatened by the Turks not only on the Mediterranean front but also in Central Europe. But there was also a strong ideological element. The Inquisition started up in 1478, the Jews were expelled in 1492 (the year of Columbus's voyage to the Americas), the Muslims followed in 1609 (they were essential to the rural economy of Spain). When this happened, the decline of Spain set in, despite the profits from the Americas.

The Islamic invasion of North Africa had led to the conversion of the vast majority of the population. Jews remained throughout the Maghrib and often felt themselves better treated than by the Christians. As a result, while many came to Spain with the Muslims, many returned to North Africa when they were expelled. And in Spain, as everywhere throughout the Mediterranean, there were many converts. With the reconquest the Spanish rulers were caught in a cleft stick. In the first place the Muslim peasantry were essential to the working of agriculture, because of their knowledge of irrigated farming and because of their very numbers. On the other hand there was the religious struggle against the Moors,

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which undoubtedly had much popular support – as we see from the long tradition of folk plays on the battles between Christians and Moors performed at festival times.

Apart from peoples and the religions, inventions and knowledge of Asian origins spread through Europe by way of the Muslims, especially to Spain, which during unsettled times in the Near East became a haven for Muslim and Jewish scholars. These I discuss later under the heading of cultural influences.

### **The middle way**

Apart from the Arabs in the Mediterranean, there were the Turks, who constituted the second major thrust of Islam, that is, of the Seljuqs, and then the neo-Mongols, who migrated continuously from Central Asia between 1055 and 1405. The Seljuqs were converted to Sunni Islam probably by Sufi missionaries after the beginning of the eleventh century. They conquered Khorasan (Persia), then Baghdad in 1055 and moved on to Syria, encountering some Byzantine resistance in the Armenian highlands. The Ottoman Turks were a conglomerate tribe formed in Anatolia, who made their capital at Bursa, near Constantinople, in 1326. They crossed into European Thrace at the service of rival factions in Constantinople, occupying Byzantine territory and establishing a second capital at Edirne on the European side. They were militantly Muslim and spread into Greece and the Balkans before entering Constantinople in 1453 under Mehmed II.

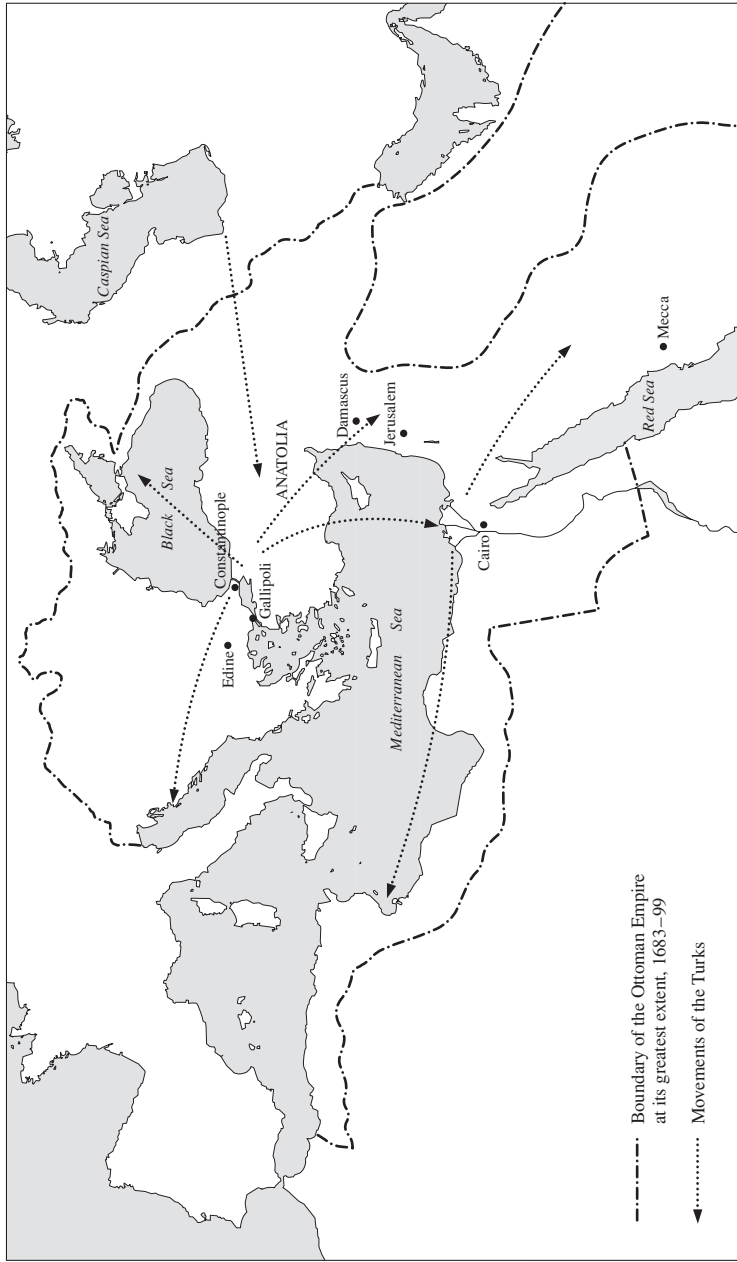
One of the myths of the Renaissance is to attribute the revival of learning to the Greeks who fled the eastern Mediterranean at that time. The Turks were envisaged as despots by Marlowe, Racine and others, in confirmation of the long-established notion of oriental despotism. But that did not stop communication. Ambassadors travelled in both directions, as did merchants. European artists paid visits. Gentile Bellini was invited to Istanbul by the sultan to paint his portrait. Other influences were present (Jardine and Brotton

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2000). The sultan, Mehmed, was a Renaissance man himself, and one of his favourite writers was Livy, read to him by an Italian, Cyriac of Ancona (Burke 1998: 58). But the Turks were also a great threat and seen as such. Giovio, who wrote a book about the Ottoman Empire, did so to encourage a crusade against the Turks (Burke 1998: 210).

On the European mainland the Turks first established themselves at Gallipoli in 1354, taking Adrianople in 1362, from where they moved up the Maritsa valley into the Balkans. They conquered Bulgaria and a substantial part of the Greek peninsula. Serbia was overrun in 1398 and Wallachia was made a tributary. Hungary and the Hapsburg possessions were subject to occasional attack; they suffered a bad defeat at Nicopolis in 1396 but were relieved by the attack on the Turks by Tamerlaine and his Mongols at Angora in 1402. They then turned their attention to the Mediterranean. But, with the fall of Constantinople, the Turkish armies consolidated their holdings on the Balkan peninsula, heralding the end of Hungarian influence in that area. By 1417 they had established themselves in the market town of Gyirokastra in Albania, on the route from Greece to Central Europe, where they had many converts from Christianity and built an imposing fortress and many merchants' houses. The Ottoman Empire attacked the unified states of the Jagiellonian dynasty of Poland, conquering the commercial trading cities of Kaffa (1475) and Kilia and Akkerman (1484), a move that completely cut off Polish trade with the Orient. Poland was also attacked by the Tartars of Crimea, who had come under Ottoman rule in 1475 and who made raids for slaves and booty into Red Ruthenia and Little Poland. The Tartars reached Krakov in 1498–9 as well as Moldavia. Tsar Ivan III even allied himself with the Crimean Turks to attack his neighbour Lithuania at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century.

It was Suleiman the Magnificent who renewed the attack against south-western Europe. Belgrade, the fortress on the Danube, collapsed in 1521. Rhodes, Christianity's main stronghold in the eastern Mediterranean, fell in the following



## 1.2 The Ottoman Empire

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year. The Mediterranean world became alarmed. Even so the Protestants were reluctant to aid the Hapsburgs in their struggles against the Turks, without concessions being granted regarding the Catholics in Germany. The situation was brought to a climax when in 1529 the Austrian ruler provoked the Turks into attacking (Fischer-Galati 1959: 36). The consequent siege of Vienna was not part of a Turkish plan to invade Germany but was intended to serve as a warning to the Hapsburgs against interference in Hungary, where the Porte were supporting an alternative ruler. Nevertheless the move aroused the leaders of contemporary Europe at least to talk about mounting a crusade. By and large public opinion favoured non-intervention,<sup>9</sup> but the Emperor Charles V called a Diet at Augsburg in 1530 both to consider religious 'errors' and to 'alleviate the evils which were feared on the part of the Turk' (Fischer-Galati 1959: 42).

The conquerors, who eventually seized control of the islands of Crete and Cyprus and of the Morea, continued their raiding until the fall of Constantinople, one hundred years later. Following that the Balkans were to be dominated by the Turks for the next five centuries. Belgrade was captured in 1521, Hungary defeated at Mohács Field in 1526, Vienna besieged three years later, as a result of which the Turks gained control of most of Hungary and Transylvania, as well as of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. They retained their rulership, at least nominally, of much of the Balkans until the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

The memory of the Turkish investment of Eastern Europe remains strong in nations such as Hungary and Serbia. For the first, the name of Mohács Field, where many Hungarians were killed, lives on. So too in Serbia does the Field of the Blackbirds in Kosovo. But in Western Europe the threat has had less importance. Indeed, before the defeat of Mohács Field, the Hungarians found it difficult to interest Germany and Austria in coming to their aid. Spain was different, having only recently reconquered Andalusia in 1492.

The Turkish fleet appeared in the western Mediterranean in the late 1520s when incursions were made into Spanish

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territorial waters. The sultan would not forgive Spain's humiliation of the Moors. In 1529 the corsair Barbarossa raided Algiers. The Ottomans were receiving support from the French under Francis I, but Barbarossa was appointed admiral of the Spanish fleet in 1534 and ordered to seize Tunis. He ravaged the coasts of Sicily and southern Italy. But a counter-attack was mounted by the Emperor Charles V, who reconquered Tunis and defeated Barbarossa, victories which were countered in their turn by the French, who stimulated Turkish action in the form of new raids in the Mediterranean and incursions into Slovenia and Croatia.

There had already been a number of major clashes between Turks and Christians in the Mediterranean, which was largely at the mercy of North African corsairs and of the Turkish fleet. The corsairs had been pushed by the nature of the country, in Tripoli for example, to live off the sea rather than the land. As a result they threatened Spanish grain supplies from Sicily; from 1560 onwards they raided everywhere. Even Western Europe was conscious of their presence, with North Africans raiding, and sometimes trading, as far as the coasts of Britain. Philip II intended to attack Tripoli that same year but went for Djerba instead. Here he was disastrously defeated by the Turkish fleet. As a result, he decided to re-arm and to join an alliance with Venice and the papacy to defeat the Turks, who had become a yet greater threat by capturing Cyprus from Venice in 1571, which then lost access to its resources of sugar, salt, cotton, copper and wine.

In the early modern period knowledge of the East is said to have been transmitted through Venice, 'the eye of all the West'. For centuries she had been Europe's main link with the Levant when the Mediterranean became an Islamic lake, and she continued to trade with the East. So Venice was always a doubtful ally of Spain, being dependent upon grain supplies from southern Russia and the Balkans, all of which had to come through the Turkish-controlled Bosphorus. She could trade through the eastern Mediterranean only with Turkish approval. Nevertheless, on this occasion Venice



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contributed well-armed galleys to the joint fleet which in 1570 famously defeated the Turks in the Gulf of Lepanto, putting a temporary end to the naval threat from the East. But within three years the Turks had recovered sufficiently to score a notable victory against Spain at Tunis. That victory led to a *détente* if not a formal truce in the Mediterranean that enabled Philip to turn to Northern Europe, where he was engaged in a constant armed struggle in the largely Protestant Low Countries.

The Turks were fighting on more than one front, also attacking Austria-Hungary. Protestant England too posed problems for Spain as, freed from the papal bans, it was courting the Muslim powers not only in Turkey<sup>10</sup> but in Morocco, where Elizabeth's technical assistance helped that country to mount a trans-Saharan expedition to conquer the Niger Bend. She sold weapons to the Moroccans in the late sixteenth century to use against the Catholic Portuguese. But it was not only reasons of state that led to these alliances. Islam was seen as closer to Protestantism in banning images from places of worship, in not treating marriage as a sacrament and in rejecting monastic orders (Colley 2002: 122). When Elizabeth sought an alliance with the Turks, the argument was used that Protestants and Muslims were alike haters of the 'idolatries' practised by the King of Spain, an interesting example where the hatred of icons was seen to bring together Muslims and the Reformed Church. Her attitude represented wider views among Protestants. Luther rejected war against the Turks as being un-Christian (Fischer-Galati 1959: 8): the attacks of the infidel on Europe represented God's punishment for sinfulness and for the wickedness of the Antichrist, the pope. Of course political factors were also involved. Long before this period, in about 1212, a rumour circulated against King John that he had tried to make an alliance with Morocco in order to outflank France. That was a continuing possibility. In this case Elizabeth wanted the sultan to attack Spain as a diversionary blow in order to hold up the preparations he was making against England for the Armada.<sup>11</sup>

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The desire for alliance was not all on one side. The predicament of the Moriscos meant the Turks were as keen to negotiate for Protestant help against the Catholics (in this case, Spain) as the Protestants were to ally themselves to the Muslims. The Moriscos were encouraged by Elizabeth, who gave military help to Morocco, where many of them had withdrawn. Indeed the town of Sallee was largely occupied by them, and their forces took part in the campaign of the Moroccan ruler, al-Mansur, to cross the Sahara and defeat the Songhai kingdom, seizing quantities of gold to help him pursue his plans. When Elizabeth died, her successor, James I, a great believer in divine right, was dismayed at the idea of encouraging rebellion, especially of the 'infidel', and he cancelled earlier understandings. But Charles I sought Moroccan aid against Spain in the 1620s, and from 1704 onwards Britain relied on Algiers and Morocco to provision Gibraltar and Malta.

By the Elizabethan period the crusading spirit had largely died down, but there developed an important commerce with Muslims in the Mediterranean, partly in woollen goods but also in weapons. The Muslims in turn exported sugar and fruit to Britain. Nor was it only in commerce that contacts were made; raiding continued. Muslim ships sailed into the Channel and round the coasts, in an attempt to capture both goods and men. In the 1630s, Algerian corsairs attacked coastal villages in western England and Ireland, and at the same time Morocco dispatched its first large-scale embassy to London to negotiate ransom for its captives taken by the English (Colley 2002: 115). Between 1600 and the early 1640s North African corsairs seized more than 800 British trading vessels in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, possibly capturing around 12,000 subjects. The British made similar attacks, but even more intensively, in the Mediterranean, acting much as Muslim corsairs. In the course of these conflicts many men were captured, especially Britons, some of whom were ransomed, some settling in North Africa, others reduced to slavery or to working for the enemy. Interest in Islam developed at the same time. That was the period that

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saw the establishment of the first chair in Arabic at Oxford and Cambridge.

The sixteenth century produced greater diplomatic efforts and a lively series of missions and exchanges with the Muslim powers, in particular Turkey. The sultan received expensive gifts from the European powers, not only from the Protestants but from the Catholics as well. Ambassadors as well as others from the East visited the West. While the crusading spirit had lingered and was replaced with a desire to trade, the fear of an Islamic attack, lower in Western Europe, persisted in the Mediterranean. Conflict still continued. As we have seen, when James VI came to the English throne, he reversed Elizabeth's policy and made peace with Spain. Swift retaliation against shipping followed. Between 1610 and the 1630s, Devon and Cornwall lost a fifth of their shipping to North African corsairs. In 1625 alone, nearly one thousand seafarers from Plymouth were seized, most within 30 miles of the shore (Colley 2002: 49). Such depredations led to resentment against the government, and Charles I had to levy the controversial ship money to improve the navy relative to the corsairs.

At the same time Muslims also played a major role in literature. In England we have Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and Shakespeare's *Othello* ('the Moor of Venice'), together with a host of other plays of the same period. In France, Racine's *Bajazet* became a classic. In Spain, it was tales of the reconquest that figured in literature, especially of the *Cid*. There we also have popular expressions of the conflict between Christians and Moors. In England the River Thames saw highly elaborated re-enactments of sea battles between Christian and Muslim forces (Matar 1999: 145). In those Jacobean pageants, the Cross (of St George) was victorious over the Crescent. The Elizabethan period did not see an end to the portrayal of Muslims on stage. In 1751 the Covent Garden Theatre staged a re-enactment of 'a matter of Barbary' in the form of displaying men in rags and clanking chains as in their captivity in North Africa, from which they had just been released.

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Let us return to Central Europe. The powers of the Porte meant that it was a constant element in European politics over the centuries, more significant after the fall of Constantinople than either Arab or Mongol Islam. Turkey was also a potential factor in internal politics because, while one party might win the support of other Christian powers, the other might seek the help of Istanbul. In Hungary the Hapsburg Staathalter Ferdinand had himself proclaimed ruler, and at the same time another claimant, Zápolya, secured Ottoman support for the same purpose. When the Emperor Charles V failed to agree with the Protestants in 1539, he sought a truce with the Ottomans. So at a different time did Ferdinand, and certainly Francis I of France tried to do so in opposition to the emperor, while Queen Elizabeth of England sent an ambassador to arrange an alliance against the Catholic powers. In Germany the necessity of raising funds to combat the threat of a Turkish attack on Vienna and beyond meant that the Lutherans had the possibility of forcing concessions from the emperor in respect of the Catholics. In this way, the politics of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was clearly influenced by Muslim (Turkish) pressures right up to the eighteenth century. The Reformation was a threat to the unity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and therefore of its capacity to resist. There was a certain collusion of Protestants with Islam, and it was largely the Catholic forces that resisted the Islamic advance.

The struggle of the Protestants for recognition in Germany after 1521 ended in 1555 with their triumph at the Diet of Augsburg. They triumphed largely because of the external threats to the Hapsburg hegemony in Europe from the French under Francis I in the West and from the Ottomans in the East. In the East the problem centred on the state of Hungary, coveted by both sides and subject to frequent Turkish invasions. Indeed it has been remarked that 'the consolidation, expansion and legitimizing of Lutheranism in Germany by 1555 should be attributed to Ottoman imperialism more than to any other single factor' (Fischer-Galati 1959: 117).

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The Ottomans continued to move westwards against Christians in the Balkans and in Hungary, reaching the outskirts of Vienna in 1683 during the course of a war with Austria and Poland (1682–99), in which they eventually suffered defeat at the Battle of Zenta (1698). After the Treaty of Carlowitz at the end of the war (1699) between the Ottoman Empire and the 'Holy League', the counter-attack began as a result of which Austria gained control of most of Hungary, Transylvania, Croatia and Slovenia, while Venice took Dalmatia and the Morea, and Poland won Podolia. Russian advances against the Ottomans began under Peter the Great at about the same time, at the end of the seventeenth century. That pressure was continued by Catherine, who gained the lands north of the Black Sea up to the Dnestr River. By a treaty of 1774, Russia not only acquired territory in the region of the Black Sea but also claimed to have become the protector of Orthodox Christians throughout the Turkish Empire, a claim with important historical and cultural consequences. Russia and Austria then continued to participate in the dismemberment of that empire in Europe, so that in 1812 Bessarabia went to Russia. However, at the end of the Napoleonic War, Turkey regained control of some of the Balkans. Subsequently the process of dismemberment continued, leading eventually to the Crimean War (1853–6), in which the Western powers tried to prop up Turkey against Russia. In 1878, after the defeat of Turkey by Russia, the Treaty of San Stefano defined a new dispensation for the Balkans, giving independence to Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Romania, but that had to be revised under Western pressure at the Congress of Berlin in the same year. Eventually, as the result of the defeat by the Balkan alliance in 1911–12, the Ottomans lost all their territories in Europe, except for a strip round Constantinople. It is that strip that now gives them a claim to a European as well as an Asian identity; their admittance to the European Union would bring a large Muslim power into the predominantly Christian conclave.

Under Turkish rule Christians in all these territories, known collectively as Rum (derived from Rumelia, or Rome), had

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supplied recruits, slaves of a kind (*devsirme*), by which one in four boys was trained in Istanbul to become a senior administrator. The Albanians were distinguished from the rest of the Balkan populations not only by their non-Slavic language but also by a large-scale conversion to Islam under the Turks in the fifteenth century (though some mountain clans became Catholic). The rest of the Balkans was either Greek Orthodox or mixed. So the defeat of the Turks at Vienna was the beginning of their retreat from Europe. That led to their withdrawal from Greece with the War of Independence of 1821 (in which the poet Byron became a hero), from Bulgaria with the advance of the Russians in the war of 1877–8 and elsewhere in the Balkans before the First World War. With Greece there was an exchange of populations, an ethnic cleansing, whereby with few exceptions Muslims went from Greece to Turkey and Christians from Turkey to Greece. But elsewhere, in Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and parts of Macedonia and Bulgaria (with its settlers of Tartar and Circassian origin), Muslims remain until today.

The time of the greatest pressure on Europe from Turkish Islam came during the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation, beginning early in the sixteenth century. What were the connections between the Turkish advance and the important developments in Europe? The resurgence of interest in Greek was much encouraged by the Council of the Roman and Greek Orthodox Churches held in Ferrara and then Florence in 1438, which was a direct consequence of Turkish pressure. The attempt to unify the churches, spurred on by the need of the Eastern Emperor, John Paleologus, for help against the Turks then threatening Constantinople, failed, but the presence of so many Greek scholars included in the 700-strong delegation stimulated 'the quickening interest in classical texts and classical history, in classical art and philosophy, and particularly the study of Plato, that great hero of the humanists' (Hibbert 1979: 68). Some stayed in Florence, where Cosimo Medici attended lectures on Plato and started an academy for Platonic studies, as well as

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building up his amazing library of some ten thousand codices of Latin and Greek authors.

There is a sense in which the Renaissance can be seen as a reaction to the splendours of the Islamic East. That had provided models of luxury and civilization, including a deeper knowledge of classical texts. The return to those texts, whether they came through Spain or Constantinople, was at one level an appeal to the past in the face of the Ottoman and Mongol societies that had penetrated Eastern Europe and that were being opposed by the Orthodox and Catholic churches, the churches of the East and West Roman empires respectively. The return of the classical past emphasized European achievements in Ancient Greece and Rome, playing down the Near East with its Christian and Jewish roots and its Islamic presence. Indeed the return to the classical world was seen as the answer to the threat from Islam to European culture. George Sarton commented that the humanists' love of Greece and Rome was nourished by their hatred of Islam. To counter the culture of the Arabic world, the revival of antiquity was carried forth on many fronts. He wrote that the Renaissance was 'partly a reaction against influences (especially those represented by Avicenna and Averroës). The anti-Arabic drive was in full swing in Petrarch's time' (Stimson 1962: 103).

The classical world provided a new model for a future which modified the religious by the secular, seeking to give the former a more restricted role and to allow a greater one for other forms of knowledge and action. The appeal to the classics made it easier to circumvent the picture of the world derived from religious texts and to open the way to Galileo, to Bacon, to the Scientific Revolution leading through the Enlightenment to Newton, to Darwin and to the prevailing domination of secular thinking. A humanistic and scientific view of the world had also been present in Islam at some stages in its history, and their *madrassa* education, at its highest level, was not confined to the religious alone. Muslims too had their dissidents and their heretics. Indirectly both the classical revival and the Scientific Revolution owed

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something to Islam, in which those traditions had been partly preserved. The Renaissance was made possible through the translations from the Greek, partly by way of Arabic (López-Baralt 1994: 509).

The Reformation provided stronger and more positive links with the Muslim East. There were commercial, political and ideological links between the Protestants and the Turks. Catholic rulers such as Francis I were also in touch with Constantinople, sending lavish presents to the sultan (Jardine and Brotton 2000), but the Protestants did not see themselves as bound by papal bans on trading with the enemy, nor did they recognize the division of the world decreed by the Vatican. In West Africa, Dane guns, manufactured and traded by the Protestant powers, were sold to the Muslims and to other enemy forces. In fact part of the success of the Protestant countries of Holland, Britain, north Germany and Scandinavia in penetrating the markets opened up by Spain and Portugal lay precisely in their being freer to establish commercial and other relationships with Muslim and pagan regimes.

### **The northern entry**

The movement of the Tartars to the Ukraine was the third of the major thrusts of Islam and, like the previous thrust, it has also to be seen as part of a millennia-old stream of Ural-Altai and Turkic-speaking peoples coming into Europe from the steppes of Central Asia, a movement which had had such dramatic repercussions on the Roman Empire, an empire, at least in a Christian form, that partly recovered. When the Mongols arrived in Europe, the Arabs were already present in Russia, having defeated the Turkic Khazars in 661, and in the Caucasus in 737, when their capital was destroyed. About three years later the Khazars adopted Judaism. That was two centuries before the state of Kiev converted to Christianity, in 988. Turkish nomads, later the Kipchaks, who were not at that time Muslims, penetrated



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the southern steppe of Russia in the eleventh century, and were followed by Muslim merchants into the towns of the Crimea and the Upper Volga. Those earlier movements westwards across the steppes were followed by that of the Mongols and the Golden Horde under the Great Khan, who reached the now Christian Kiev in 1223, defeating the heterogeneous alliance of princes on the Kalka River.

The Mongol Empire had been created by Genghis Khan, who received his title of ruler in 1206. His first main target was China to the south, but he was led into an attack to the west after some of his envoys who had been dispatched in that direction were executed. In revenge his forces set off through Afghanistan and continued until they crossed the Caucasus in 1223, defeating a Russo-Kipchak force that year. But due to the death of Genghis in 1227 they did not invade Eastern Europe until the winter of 1236–7, led by Batu, the grandson of Genghis Khan, who founded the Khanate of Kipchak, and was elected as the commander-in-chief of the western part of the Mongol Empire. By 1240, the year in which he sacked Kiev, Russia's greatest city, he had conquered all of Russia, then in 1241 defeated a Silesian army (from an area now in Poland) and a Hungarian force two days later. About to invade Western Europe, he heard of the death of the head of the empire and retreated with his forces to take part in the next election. The state he established in southern Russia was ruled by his successors for the next 200 years. Obviously the Golden Horde became a major factor in European politics, especially after converting to Islam under Ghazan (1295–1304), although Islamization had already begun under Berke (1257–67), that is, not long after the fall of Kiev, a conversion that associated the state with the Iranian tradition. The new conquerors established a rule that at its high point included the Crimea, the Polovtsian steppe from the Danube to the Ural River, Moldavia and parts of Siberia, as well as territories in Asia. These Tartars were in contact with Timur (the Tamburlaine celebrated by Christopher Marlowe), who aided them in enabling a threat to be made against Moscow, but in the end Timur set about

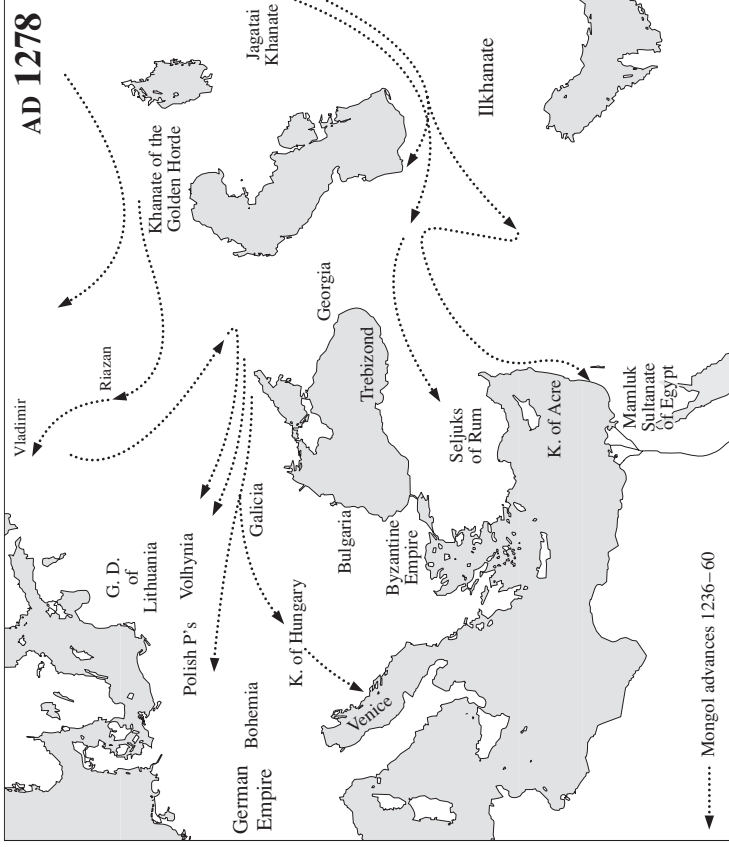
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attacking the Tartars themselves, probably wanting to establish his own control of the East–West routes.

The Cossacks, whose name derives from the Turkish *kazak*, meaning an adventurer or free man, lived in the northern highlands around the Black and Caspian seas. In the fifteenth century the term originally applied to semi-independent Tartar groups found in the Dnepr region (as well as to the fleeing serfs in that area) who established self-governing military communities which eventually received privileges from the Russian government in return for recognized military services. That was also the case in sixteenth-century Poland. It was the Cossacks who led the early colonization of Siberia under the Russian umbrella.

The Golden Horde passed westwards as far as Lithuania and Poland on the Baltic coast, ruling much of that area between 1241 and 1242, defeating the Polish army at the Battle of Chmielnik and the Siberian knights of the Teutonic Order at Legnica. In 1242 they returned to Mongolia to elect a new khan, but for another fifty years remained masters of Red Ruthenia, east of Little Poland, with its headquarters at Krakov. By 1240 the indigenous pagan Lithuanian tribes had been moulded by Duke Mindayas into a state which accepted Christianity around 1251, though general conversion did not take effect for another hundred years or so. Nevertheless the country was able to resist the attempts of the Teutonic knights from Prussia to take over the whole of the Baltic area. Before Lithuania became Christian the Lithuanian people were even labelled ‘Saracens’, the subject of a Crusade by the Order of the Teutonic Knights (Christiansen 1980: 169). On the other ‘western marches’, the Wends had earlier been subject to the first of the new-style campaigns in 1147, promoted by St Bernard formally as ‘crusades’ and which became a cheaper way of carrying out one’s vow and obtaining spiritual pardon than journeying to the Holy Land.

The Lithuanian state expanded to the east, taking over some of the territory of the early Kievan Rus and being joined by some Ruthenian principalities that wished to gain



1.3 The Mongol Empire

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protection against the Mongol Tartars. For it was their victory over the Mongol army at the Battle of Sinye Vody (Blue Water) in 1363 that enabled Lithuania to gain the provinces of Kiev and Podolia, giving them control over most of the Ukraine. The state wanted to take over all the former lands of the Golden Horde, but that aim was brought to an end by defeat at the Battle of Vorsk in 1399. Even so the country extended all the way from the Baltic to the Black Sea, where it held 150 km of the coast.

Lithuania operated in close alliance with Poland, which also played an important role on the international stage when John Sobieski ('the vanquisher of the Turks') defeated the invasion of the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Chocim in 1673, after a Cossack rising had sided with the enemy; ten years before they had inspired the successful defence of Vienna.

During the period of Tartar dominance, Russian Christian society continued to exist despite the conversion of the Mongol rulers to Islam. Culturally this dominance was thin. There is no evidence that any single Turkish or Islamic text of religious, philosophical, literary or scholarly content was translated into Slavonic or any East Slav vernacular during this period. Politically and economically things were different; in those spheres Christian Slavs and Muslim Tartars engaged in continuing relationships. Contact with Islam even led to a measure of kinship between Christians and Muslims, and the same was true of the sultanate in Turkey, which often preferred to marry out and establish alliances with Christian rulers rather than promote local families to near equality through marriage.

The empire of Genghis collapsed, but Timur, who was another Turkisized Mongol invader, claimed to restore it. But his intervention further north did not last long. He assisted and occupied Moscow, but later fought and took Georgia and surrounding territories. In the end he defeated the Ottoman Turks under Bayezid I (the Bajazet of Racine's play, 1672) near Ankara in 1402, as well as capturing Smyrna from the Knights of Rhodes. The Golden Horde disintegrated

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by the 1430s, leaving as its three successor states the khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan and the Crimea. This last became a Turkish vassal in 1475. Muscovy still owed them tribute, but this was met in an increasingly perfunctory way. Later, Ivan the Terrible decided it was time to put a final end to Tartar–Mongol rule in central Russia and so occupied Kazan in 1552, establishing his rule over Astrakhan four years later as well as securing control of the waterway to the Caspian Sea. During the sixteenth century Russia set out on an extraordinary and rapid expansion through the forests of Siberia to the north, taking over its hunting and fishing populations, and, aided by Cossacks in their search for fur, reached the Pacific in about 1639, annexing the Kamchatka peninsula by the end of the century and entering the Chinese sphere round the Amur River in the middle of the seventeenth. The whole of Siberia was soon colonized by Russians, although Islamic Central Asia, down to Afghanistan, was not conquered until the nineteenth century and then left largely under its Muslim rulers and culture, despite the Soviet regime's antagonism to religions generally.

During the period of the Russian expansion, the Tartar Confederation continued to be present in what we now understand as Russian Europe. Indeed in the Ukraine, as late as 1664, Peter Doroshenko, a new leader, deliberately put himself under the protection of the Ottomans. The Crimea (which had been allied to Lithuania) also survived until 1783 under the protection of the Ottomans. The Turks joined with them on a number of major military operations, alarming both Poland and Moscow into making a truce. The Tartars continued to form the major part of the Crimea's population even under the USSR until they were forcibly dispersed into Central Asia in 1945 for alleged cooperation with the Germans during the Second World War.

When Peter I became sole ruler in 1694, his first political aim was to secure Muscovy's southern border against the threat of raids by Crimean Tartars supported by the Ottomans. His initial attempt in 1695 failed to establish a foothold on the Sea of Azov because of a lack of sea power.

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As a consequence he followed Western European nations in building up a strong navy and so succeeded in capturing Azov a year later. He was convinced he needed to exploit Western technology if he was to defeat the Turks and spent a year in Holland and England to this end. He also extended Russian control along the Caspian Sea at Persia's expense (1723). That expansion was pursued by Catherine the Great (1762–96), who secured the northern shore of the Black Sea, annexed the Crimea (1783) and expanded beyond the Urals. Early in the new century, Russia gained great prestige from her contribution to the defeat of Napoleon. Later she recorded victories in the East against Muslim powers: Persia in 1826, Turkey in 1828–9, the mountaineers of the Caucasus during the 1830s and 1840s. In the first half of the century Russia expanded in the Caucasus: Georgia united voluntarily with Russia in 1801 and Persia ceded northern Azerbaijan, including the Baku peninsula, in 1813 and the Armenian province of Erwan in 1828. The Muslim Chechens, however, resisted Russian expansion for twenty-five years between 1834 and 1859. In the 1840s Russian rule was established over Kazakhstan, which was largely pastoral. In the Far East the Russia-America company explored Alaska searching for fur and even established a Russian fort in north California before that area became part of the USA, giving their name to Russian River.

In this way the Mongol and Turkish advances into Europe were largely reversed, even if Islam remained strong in some pockets. As a result of this reversal, the Muslim countries of Central Asia came under European domination, first of Imperial Russia, then of the Soviet Union, until they finally received their independence with the dissolution of the latter in 1991. In India too, in South-East Asia and in the Near East, Islamic states were taken over by European colonial powers and eventually became free as the result of the weakening of control after the Second World War, the movements for independence and the subsequent process of decolonization. The Near East and Afghanistan remained under the watchful eye of the Western powers, largely because of

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the nearby reserves of oil on which the developed world had come increasingly to depend, but there too resistance to external domination, especially on the part of non-Muslim powers, came to play a significant part.

Overall the Mongol–Tartar invasion of Eastern Europe in the late Middle Ages led to the dispersion of settlements, to the great emptiness of the region they invested and above all to the weakening of the relative autonomy of kings and great princes (Wallerstein 1974: 977). But there was also a considerable influence on the domestic scene, especially in terms of hygiene and the use of water, about which the Christians had a lot to learn. Writing of the encounter with a trading post of the Swedish Rus in the course of a diplomatic mission to the Khaganate of Bulgar on the Volga, Ibn Fadlan says: ‘Never have I seen people of more perfect physique.’ But ‘They are the filthiest of god’s creatures . . . as stray donkeys.’<sup>12</sup> Water, hygiene and cleanliness were more important to the Muslims, partly for religious reasons.<sup>13</sup> The difference between Christianity and Islam in this respect can be seen in Howard’s comment that in medieval Venice references to baths and bathing are rare but in Venetian colonies in the eastern Mediterranean they were essential, a difference she remarks that reflects not only climate and water supply but also ‘the greater significance of personal hygiene in the eastern religions’ (2000: 10).

### **The three streams of cultural influence**

This account has necessarily concentrated upon the physical penetration of Muslims into Europe. We need to look at the cultural influences that accompanied these movements, as well as the influences that came by other means, by merchants, by pilgrims, by embassies and by other travellers. Each thrust of Islam into Europe brought its own socio-cultural implications. The influence of Spanish and Sicilian Islam on Europe is well known. Under the impact of Islam, Hellenistic thought was applied to new questions. The philosopher

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Ibn Rushd (*b.* Cordoba, 1126; *d.* Marrakesh, capital of the Almohad dynasty, 1198), known as Averroës, was the *qadi* and physician whose commentary on Aristotle became so important to medieval Europe. In addition there were a number of other significant philosophers writing in Arabic, such as the Jewish Maimonides. The Alhambra palace in Granada was built.

Science and literature were given a boost by the introduction of paper-making that was promoted by the capture of a group of Chinese technicians at the Battle of Talas in Kyrgyzstan in 751. Or the process may have been brought from China by the Mongols to the Near East. In any case, paper was being manufactured in Transoxiana in the eighth century and was being exported from Damascus by about 935, but was not much used in Christian Europe until the fourteenth century.

The manufacture of paper spread west to Sicily in about 1000 and to the region of Valencia in Spain about 1151, when we also hear of water-wheels being used to drive the pulping process (as had already happened in Baghdad about 950); the processes reached England much later, around 1490 (and Italy and France somewhat earlier), and were critical in the expansion of book learning in the Renaissance, especially with the advent of the printing press adapted to the alphabetic script. Paper was much cheaper than other materials and used very widely, for some of the Geniza manuscripts in Cairo, for example. Paper was easy to transport and gave rise to huge libraries. The Fatimid royal library seized by Saladin was said to contain 1.6 million books (Howard 2000: 59). Book production increased and translations into Arabic were encouraged from Greek, Middle Persian and Syriac. Later, with the Christian recapture of Toledo, translations were made by Jewish scholars into Latin. While it is true that the advent of paper encouraged the publication of books, the growth in education (in the nineteenth century Dozy (Eng. trans., 1913) claimed that almost everybody in Cordoba could read and write, but he was mistaken) certainly did the same from the demand side.



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Much of scientific importance was transmitted. In the nineteenth century Islam as a religion was thought to be an impediment to economic and indeed other kinds of progress (or rationality), being too conservative and fatalistic. Over the long term that is clearly a very mistaken ethnocentric judgement, in so far as it is applied to the period before industrialization in the late eighteenth century. In any case it implied that every believer's commitment was identical. Mathematical knowledge was developed by Gerbert of Aurillac (c.945–1003, later Pope Sylvester II), who had gone to study in Spain. He wrote a book on the abacus which included the use of the numerals we still refer to as Arabic and in particular the use of zero, which was adopted from India (and there possibly from China). Calculation for scientific and practical purposes thus became very much simpler than with the cumbersome Roman system. In the field of mathematics, al-Khwarizmi, from whose name the word 'algorithm' is derived, creatively combined Hellenistic and Sanskritic concepts. The word 'algebra' derives from the title of his major work ('the Book of Integration and Equation'). Arabic gave birth to the words 'alcohol' and 'alchemy', from which the word 'chemistry' comes. Islam had the foremost scholars of medicine, many of whom were Jewish; some were based in Sicily, which set the model for the first Christian medieval schools at Salerno on the Italian coast and possibly at Montpellier on the coast of southern France. Two recent commentators have summarized the scientific achievements of Islam in the following words:

Muslim scholars calculated the angle of the ecliptic; measured the size of the Earth; calculated the precession of the equinoxes; explained, in the field of optics and physics, such phenomena as refraction of light, gravity, capillary attraction, and twilight; and developed observatories for the empirical study of heavenly bodies. They made advances in the uses of drugs, herbs, and foods for medication; established hospitals with a system of interns and externs; discovered causes of certain diseases and developed correct diagnoses of them; proposed new concepts of hygiene; made use of

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anesthetics in surgery with newly innovated surgical tools; and introduced the science of dissection in anatomy. They furthered the scientific breeding of horses and cattle; found new ways of grafting to produce new types of flowers and fruits; introduced new concepts of irrigation, fertilization, and soil cultivation; and improved upon the science of navigation. In the area of chemistry, Muslim scholarship led to the discovery of such substances as potash, alcohol, nitrate of silver, nitric acid, sulfuric acid, and mercury chloride. It also developed to a high degree of perfection the arts of textiles, ceramics and metallurgy. (Nakosteen and Szyliowicz 1997, vol. 18, 16–17)

Already in Charlemagne's lifetime 'the new Arab pharmacology . . . was beginning to make headway with practitioners on both sides of the Alps'; hence the use of the words *azarum* (a resinous gum), ambergris (from Arabic *ambar*) and camphor (Arabic *kāfūr*), the last-named being purchased by Jewish merchants in South-East Asia (McCormick 2001: 714). The first reception of Arab drugs in northern Italy occurred around 800. Evidence from Salerno with its medical school dates from the early tenth century. These imports attest to the importance of the new Adriatic trade route linking Venice to the Muslim world.

Muslim scholarship flourished both in Spain and Sicily. In Spain it was centred on the capital Cordoba, where in the tenth century the culture flourished under al-Hakkam II, second Umayyad Caliph of Spain (961–76), who culled books and scholars from the whole Muslim world. Cordoba became the capital of al-Andalus and its intellectual centre, thanks to the enlightened policy of the Umayyad rulers who encouraged musicians, poets and other scholars. Free schools were provided and learned men brought in to teach at the Great Mosque, which became what has been called Europe's first university college. These developed into the *madrasas*, which had appeared in an embryonic form in the Near East in the eleventh century, becoming widespread in the thirteenth century as schools of higher education, often with hospitals and mental asylums. Vernet writes of one as 'a real university

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college' (1994: 949). They came later in the Islamic West, but endowments of this kind already existed in Granada by 1349. At that period, the library in the Alcazar, one of seventy in Cordoba, was said to have contained 400,000 volumes at a time when the monastery of St Gall in Switzerland, one of the largest in Europe, had but 600. The discrepancy was enormous (Hillenbrand 1994: 121). Cordoba had paved roads and lamps at street corners some seven hundred years before London had only one, and centuries before it was possible to walk through Paris on a rainy day without getting covered in mud (López-Baralt 1994: 511).

With the fall of the dynasty and the division of the country into small kingdoms, the competition among them grew stronger, and scholarship and the arts flourished. The fall of Toledo in 1085 meant that much of this knowledge passed to Western Europe. Christians who had found themselves under Muslim rule, the Mozarabs, took very quickly to learning Arabic and, much to the dismay of the clergy, Latin was largely forgotten. The reconquest meant that the West acquired its knowledge of Arabic. Many northern scholars then came to study there and the town became a great centre for translating Arabic texts. The first translation of the Qur'an into Latin, a tendentious one, was made by an Englishman, Robert of Kelton, in 1143. Indeed it was the first in any language. It was 'Haly Abbas' who was one of the major channels of transmission of the ideas of Hippocrates and Galen. Meanwhile the Andalusian physician al-Zahrawi ('Albucasis') was noted for his description of surgical instruments; he completed his larger work about 1000 CE and 'revolutionised medicine in Europe' (Howard 2000: 54).

The other great centre was Palermo in Sicily, under Arab domination from 902 to 1071. But the influence continued under the Norman kings. Frederick II corresponded with Arabic scholars in many parts as well as having contacts with scholars from Norman England. That contact led to the court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine becoming a centre of cosmopolitan culture, with scholars such as Adelard of Bath, who became an enthusiast for *Arabum studia*. He

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translated Euclid's *Elements* and al-Khwarizmi's astronomical tables from the Arabic.

In a sense the rebirth of learning in Western Europe began long before the Renaissance, and that owed a great deal to Islam and its translations. There was an influx of Aristotle's writings in natural philosophy and science from about 1200, the principal part of which came from Arabic versions and from the commentaries of Avicenna and Averroës. *Metaphysics* and *Natural Philosophy* were banned by various popes, but the ban was never effective and the works served to emancipate the West from the influence of Plato (although only the *Timaeus* was then available). Experience and the experimental method rather than authority were lauded; science was characterized as 'Arabicorum studiorum sensa', 'the views of the Saracens' (Metlitzki 1977: 49).

The transmission of Arab science to Christian Europe was effected by the Latin translators of the twelfth century and was especially strong in astronomy and astrology; the two fields were often scarcely distinguishable, since the latter referred to the study of the influence of the stars on human affairs. Islam developed the astrolabe and introduced Greek knowledge. Copernicus was in turn influenced by the astronomical treatises translated at Toledo under Alfonso the Wise. Catalogues of stars, stemming originally from Ptolemy's *Almagest* (referred to by Chaucer's Wife of Bath), were developed in Baghdad but their onward transmission occurred in the Muslim West, where many English scholars flocked in search of Arab learning (Metlitzki 1977: 77). Such learning was used by Chaucer not only in *The Canterbury Tales*, especially *The Squire's Tale*, set at Sarray in the land of Tartary, where dwelt 'a kyng that werreyed Russye', but also in his treatise on the astrolabe, the origins of which lay in a Latin translation of a work by Mashallah (*d.* 815), an important Jewish astronomer at the Abbasid court in Baghdad. Indeed astronomical treatises spanned the Eurasian world, from Cordoba to Beijing.

Alchemy, as its name implies, was also transmitted through the Muslims. Of the empirical 'worldly' sciences, which

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ranked below the religious ones, only alchemy, which was the greatest, 'the science of sciences', could be pursued for its own sake (Metlitzki 1977: 90); it held 'the secret of secrets', a guide to spiritual as well as to empirical knowledge. This was the tradition expounded by the Canon's Yeoman in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, bearing witness to the extraordinary impact of Islamic learning on the medieval West in the pre-Renaissance period.

The influence of Arabic medical texts on Europe was also very marked, primarily in Italy and Spain, but from there they spread to the rest of Europe – Germany, France, England and the smaller countries. In Andalusia it was the period between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries that saw the peak of this literary development, in medicine, in dietetics and in agriculture. These texts were of course based on Galen and Hippocrates but did not stop there, as they were adjusted to local products, especially the introduction of rice.

The medical renown of Salerno seems to date from about 870, no doubt due to its proximity to Palermo and the Islamic world, but it was in the second half of the twelfth century that the works of Constantine the African became widely known. Constantine had travelled to Arabia, Persia, India and Ethiopia and ended up in the monastery of Montecassino. He translated a number of works of the Greeks and Arabs, including some by Hippocrates, Galen, ibn Ishaq ibn Abbas and others.<sup>14</sup> He is said to be the first person to transmit Arab medical science to the Western world. In the twelfth century his work passed to Arab Spain and to Europe through the translations of Gerard of Cremona.

In reconquered Spain, the fall of the great centre of learning of Toledo meant that Christian Europe could more easily get access to Islamic technical books, to information about Indian medicine and Hindu numerals, and to Arabic versions of Greek mathematical works and others. Gerard of Cremona lived in Toledo from c.1150 to his death in 1187 and organized a team of Jewish interpreters and Latin scribes through whose efforts some ninety books were translated from Arabic into Latin. Islam was always more welcoming to Judaism

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than Christianity, and under its rule an important Arabo-Jewish culture flourished in both Spain and the Maghrib. But some Arabs stayed on after the reconquest and were employed as translators. Other translations were made in Sicily and elsewhere in Spain. Scholars such as Adelard of Bath used this same store of knowledge for their own purposes, mainly concerning Euclidean geometry and Islamic trigonometry.

The greatest impact of Islam was in agriculture. Here, Europe had a lot to learn. It was Arabs who were experts in water control, irrigation and the associated forms of cultivation. Irrigation was improved and huge water-wheels lifted the contents of canals to the fields. The mechanization of corn-milling spread through the water-mill, thus saving a great deal of labour. The Muslims also brought sugar and its processing to the Mediterranean and developed cotton in Egypt and silk and its weaving in Southern Europe, all processes that originated in India or China. And they were the intermediaries in bringing citrus fruit (e.g., lemons, tangerines, Seville oranges, grapefruit) and other cultigens such as dates and sugar to the region from the East.

Water power too was important in the development of mills and manufacturing before major use was made of other forms of energy. But, above all, water transformed the landscape of Spain, where the development of large-scale irrigation made possible the cultivation of the dry lands into which rice and other monsoon crops were introduced from much further east and needed summer watering. Al-Andalus developed a complex irrigation system and utilized water-mills as well as windmills. But contrary to some writers, the Visigoths before them, and the Romans before that, seem to have practised extensive water control (Lévi-Provençal 1931: 166; Glick 1970), although that was largely for urban rather than for rural ends.

But although the Romans irrigated in Spain, dry-farming was the basis of their agriculture. Roman hydraulic works were directed largely to urban use. But when the Arabs arrived they produced a vast East–West movement of crops which had been grown in India and required water to take

them through the dry Mediterranean summers. In addition to the crops mentioned above there were the banana and the watermelon. Hence the importance of irrigation.

There was a great expansion in the use of water-mills in medieval Europe; they are first recorded in the first century BCE, but they only became more widely used first of all in the fourth century, then again after 1000 CE with the widespread adoption of wheat for making bread, the grain of which did not have to be separated by pounding, as did earlier varieties (Parrain 1964). The Muslims actually improved the system and gave their names to most of the local terminology concerning irrigation (such as the water-mill 'noria').<sup>15</sup> Water played a part in the decoration of architectural space through pools and fountains, as well as being used for hygienic purposes. The weaving of silk too spread to Palermo and then to Andalusia. Silk is claimed by some to have been introduced into Spain as early as the eighth century; others suggest the twelfth. From Sicily it spread to Lucca, to Lyons by 1480 and to the rest of Northern Europe.

Agriculture in southern Spain even experienced what was to be called the 'Andalusi agricultural revolution' at the time of the political collapse of the caliphate and the establishment of the petty kingdoms (*taifa*) in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. The establishment of an Andalusian school of agronomy was marked by the composition of treatises on the subject in the tenth century, obviously based on earlier traditions. At the same time we find the appearance of botanical or experimental gardens which attempted to grow new plants or to improve existing ones, the earliest of which was built near Cordoba by the first Umayyad ruler.

Agriculture in turn was linked to the more advanced sciences, botany, pharmacology (based on Dioscorides) and medicine. Scholars studied the composition of the soil, the use of manures and the processes of irrigation, including the distribution of water which involved devices like the clepsydra or water-clock, which paved the way for the mechanical clock (Vernet 1994: 950).

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Claudio Lange has written: 'Western Europe's takeover in the 11th century is supposedly the result of a number of ingenious inventions made behind monastery walls, of techniques of work, and of the import of technology originally exported by the Arabs into the territories they occupied . . . what remains central here is that, in the 11th century, Islamic civilization, together with the Byzantine, Chinese and Indian civilizations, established the First World of the time, while Western Europe embodied the Third' (quoted Jayyusi 1994: xviii). In making this contribution the Arabs and the Turks had long drawn on the settled civilizations of the Near East before they invaded Europe, which consequently profited from those traditions. For the northern entry the Tartar-Mongols remained much closer to their nomadic roots and therefore had less to offer. The Mongol invasions produced devastating results in Asia, especially in China, but for Europe there were also some benefits, since they opened up the Silk Road again in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and as a result communication with the East became firmly established. That route had been used in Roman times and was revived in the Middle Ages. It was possibly as the result of a journey of a papal ambassador along it that gunpowder and rockets reached Europe, for we hear of experiments with these in Cologne in 1257, the year following the ambassador's return. The first European accounts of powder were written by a friar, Roger Bacon, but a form of the material had been known in China since before 900 CE, some recipes appearing in a printed book in 1040. Guns too seem to have been first developed in China (Pacey 1990: 48) and again to have been transferred with Mongol rule to Europe (for Islam was at first without these weapons), but it was the Europeans who appear to have been the first to have produced cannon, though soon after these were being manufactured in Turkey.

Some other important inventions may indicate not communication but that parallel developments took place in Europe and Asia. The European windmill was so different from the Persian that it could be considered an independent



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invention. That may also have been true of the blast furnace and of some aspects of printing, although Needham sees these as being transferred from China (Pacey 1990: 51).

There was an export of ideas back to the East and West, frequently by way of merchants (many of whom were Jewish) – a ‘contributing factor in this process was the expansion of Muslim trade’ (Vernet 1994: 945). Much of the trade was with the Mediterranean, especially after the rise of the Italian states, principally Venice, Genoa and Pisa, as well as in Marseilles and Barcelona.

Islam played an important role in the so-called expansion of Europe. It had long since explored the Indian Ocean and the China seas. ‘Astrolabes as well as compasses, which first appeared in China in the eleventh century, were introduced to facilitate open-sea navigation and map-making. Muslim experience in ship-building for the high seas of the Indian Ocean rather than the quieter Mediterranean was adapted to suit Atlantic conditions’ (Birmingham 1993: 16). In these ways Islam contributed to the success of Portugal’s leading role in the ‘Age of Exploration’. As the first modern European colonizer, Portugal was tied to the Islamic sphere of exchange, which made it largely monetarized so that its bourgeoisie were prepared for extensive commerce.

It has been suggested (e.g., by Briggs 1931, 1933) that Islamic architecture had a significant influence on the development of the Gothic in Europe, with its attachment to the pointed arch, that influence coming either through Spain or through Sicily. In *Stones of Venice* John Ruskin himself first drew attention to the two phases in the Arabic influence on secular Venetian architecture, the first being the period up to the eleventh century when Islam owed much to the Byzantine, a period that was followed by one more distinctly Arabian when ‘the shafts become more slender and the arches consistently pointed’ (Howard 2000: 2). Howard also emphasizes the many specific features of Islamic architecture that were incorporated into Venetian buildings as the result of its close relations with the East, through traders primarily, but also through pilgrims, travellers and diplomats.

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The architecture of the Piazza San Marco, begun in 1225–8, was possibly stimulated by Damascus, with its great Umayyad mosque begun in 706. The use of coloured mosaics on the exterior of the San Marco was another feature.

The Palazzo Ducale has clear allusions to Mamluk architecture in the lozenge tiling and roof cresting as well as to the buildings of the Ilkanid (Mongol) rulers of Persia – for Venetian merchants the Silk Road was very important for trade. Many decorative themes emerged from contact with the East: the use of gold leaf and ultramarine, previously known in Gothic altarpieces, was later applied to merchant houses, following the practice in Damascus and Tabriz; the ‘telephone-dial’ windows in the façade of Ca Dario (1480s) had been a feature of the Palace of Bashtak (1337–8) in Cairo (Howard 2000: 153). For by the mid-sixteenth century Venice had inherited the Islamic supremacy in glass-making. The Mihrab-type window was adopted in many buildings, while roof space was adapted to the climate in the *altana*.

It was not only public buildings and great houses that were affected. More generally, the residence was turned inward around a patio. Decoration in Southern Europe is much influenced by Muslim abstraction, by its ceramics, by its recurrent shapes. What elsewhere are known as Roman roof tiles are known around Aix-en-Provence by the name of Sarassin. Muslim wall tiles, which were at first decorated with geometric designs, were later adapted by Christians for figurative purposes.

It has been noted that the form of Islamic art lingered on in Spain much longer than in Sicily or in the Balkans or Russia, where they hardly affected the arts of the local populace (except in clothes) even during Muslim domination (Grabar 1994: 588). Many buildings in Christian Spain, however, were touched by Muslim traditions in what has been called Mudejar art, art of Muslim forms within a non-Muslim context. As with the festival play of the Moors and Christians, that style migrated to the New World. What is obvious, as Grabar remarks (p. 589), is that this preservation of Muslim forms took place while Islam itself

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and those who professed it were being persecuted, often quite brutally, and eventually physically expelled. During this period Gothic from the north appears as an intruder; only with the Italianate taste of the Renaissance were Islamic elements modified.

Dodds (1994b) speaks of Christians living under Muslim rule (Mozarabs) resisting certain aspects of Islamic art, but when Islam had been thrown back, and the situation became more relaxed, they adopted various Muslim forms. Part of this continuation derives from people's aesthetic sensibilities, part from the practical availability of craftsmen trained in the Islamic tradition, as was the case in Norman Palermo.

The influence of Islam did not stop at science, technology, philosophy, agriculture and trade but extended to literature: the translation of Indo-Persian lore promoted the development of *adab*, a name for a sophisticated prose literature as well as for the refined urban manners that characterized its clientele. Moreover, in addition to the translation of scientific texts, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries also saw translations of an Arabic 'wisdom' literature used as exemplars for clerics to supplement their own biblical traditions. These exemplars included fables of animals and birds as well as other tales drawn from an international repertoire; they have been described as 'the first link in a Western chain that leads to Chaucer's narrative art' (Metlitzki 1977: 96). Many of these stories appear to have originated in India and were used in a moral and allegorical fashion in Islam as in Christianity. But they were seen as being part of the wisdom of the East.

Drama and even fiction were not favoured under Islam and little development took place in these spheres, except for that important collection, probably from India, of the *Arabian Nights*, where there is some suggestion that such storytelling had an influence on the European romance. 'That peculiar and arbitrary species of Fiction which we commonly call Romantic', wrote the eighteenth-century commentator Thomas Warton, 'was entirely unknown to the writers of Greece and Rome.' It came instead from 'the Arabians' via

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Spain rather than the Crusades (1871: 91), though this idea is disputed by his editor.

Some of these dramas were popular, others literary. In Laroles (Granada), at the fiestas in honour of Saints Sebastian and Anton, there is enacted a version of the struggle between the Moors and Christians which ended with the Moorish king's conversion to Christianity (García 1992). The performance was known throughout Spain and in Palermo; it even spread to the Spanish-speaking Americas (Wachtel 1971). The Turks too were represented in popular drama, not only of the Punch and Judy type but in the festival performances (in the Vivarais, for example) which were taken up by literary playwrights.

Of particular significance on the literary side was Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (written c.1587, while he was still at Cambridge, and published in 1590). There the Scythian shepherd defeats first Persia and then Bajazet, ruler of the Turkish Empire. Marlowe celebrates the conqueror's ambitions in magnificent blank verse:

Nature . . . Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds . . .  
Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest  
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all . . .

Bajazet is also the title of one of Racine's great classical dramas, written nearly a hundred years later (1672) and full of 'oriental' intrigue.

The Arab invasion of France was a defining moment for European literature, giving rise to the first known *chanson de geste*, *The Song of Roland*, which tells the story of the King of the Franks's seven-year war in Spain. It recalls how Charlemagne, unable to take Saragossa, was invited by the governor to mount an expedition against the Umayyads of Cordoba. He then negotiated with the Moorish leader, Marsile, for the right to pull back across the Pyrenees once peace terms had been agreed. The story tells how nevertheless the Muslims attacked his rearguard at Roncesvalles, where the paladin Roland died defending the king against

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overwhelming odds. In revenge Charlemagne attacked and reconquered Spain for the Christians. The reality of course was very different. He pulled out of Spain, defeated, sacking the Christian city of Pamplona and attacked by the Basques. The *chanson* is thought to have been composed long after these events, between 1090 and 1130, roughly at the time of the First Crusade, which resulted from the call to arms of Pope Urban II at Clermont. The Crusades formally continued until the eighth was launched in 1263 in an attempt to free the Holy Sepulchre from the Muslims, but as we have seen the notion of a holy war continued long after.

The *chansons de geste*, specifically the epic precursor the *Chanson de Roland*, gave rise to a vast body of narrative prose and verse that accumulated around the legends of Charlemagne and his wars with the Muslims. The same Roland, who famously met his death at Roncevalles, was the protagonist of Ariosto's poem *Orlando furioso* (1532) some four hundred years later. It followed other elaborations of the original legend, such as the *Chanson d'Aspremont* and later works that were influenced by the more fanciful Arthurian tales. Ariosto's poem was a continuation of Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*, which gives as much attention to love as to war. Ariosto's sequence begins:

Of loves and ladies, knights and arms, I sing,  
Of courtesies, and many a daring feat;  
And from those ancient days my story bring,  
When Moors from Africa passed in hostile fleet,  
And ravaged France, with Agramant their King.

Tasso did not think much of *Orlando furioso*. Beginning at a young age he composed what he saw as a more suitable epic, *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), about Duke Godfrey of Bouillon leading his peers and knights,

That the great sepulcher of Christ did free  
from the arms of 'the Turks and Morians'  
You must from realms and seas the Turks forth drive.

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The 'Turkish threat' was still very much in evidence at the end of the sixteenth century, and Fairfax's translation, as popular in England as the original was in Italy, was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth herself. Tasso's interest in the Crusades had been stimulated by a Turkish attack in 1558 on Sorrento, where he had been born. However, two of his protagonists fell in love with Saracen girls, so the threat was qualified by interpersonal relations.

Saracens are treated seriously in the *chansons de geste* (Metlitzki 1977: 118). Of the ten medieval romances in Middle English of the Carolingian tradition, all involve Saracens, many having Saracen heroes. At this time there were in fact frequent Saracen raids around the coasts of Britain and Ireland, so that it was not only in the romances that the British were acquainted with their activities. In fact the name Saracen was also extended to other types of raider, and we come across 'marchaunz Sarazin' in an Anglo-Norman version. In the eleventh century we even find Arabic inscriptions in the Isle of Man under the Normans. There is documentary evidence of English trade with the Saracens from the middle of the thirteenth century, but even before that Britain was providing the Muslim world with slaves (Metlitzki 1977: 127).

While various tales show the valour and generosity of Saracen warriors, the Middle English romances are 'essentially vehicles of fanatical propaganda in which the moral ideal of chivalry is subservient to the requirements of religion, politics, and ideology' (Metlitzki 1977: 160). They are concerned with 'the triumph of Christianity over Islam'. But the tales from Muslim sources, such as those in the *Arabian Nights*, do not have the same 'ferocious intolerance' as the crusader stories. The same absence of vindictiveness is found in the Byzantine epics. In the West, however, 'the crude caricature of the medieval Saracen flourished in the popular imagination at the very time when the superiority of Arabian learning was taken for granted' (Metlitzki 1977: 166)

Poetry of a lyric genre was equally important. The Arabs had long developed a strong tradition in this area, including

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love poetry, well before the coming of Islam. Far from twelfth-century Europe having invented love poetry at the time of the troubadours, as has been claimed by many historians such as de Rougemont and George Duby, as well as by many sociologists and psychologists who have pursued the line that part of the uniqueness of Europe lay in its invention of love, or at least of 'romantic love', the genre was well represented in Arabic. In Andalusia there were a number of women poets, most prominently Wallada, a caliph's daughter, who held a literary salon in Cordoba and composed love poetry. Other women too wrote poetry displaying 'a surprising freedom in their expression and fulfillment in their feelings of love' (Viguerra 1994: 709). The Muslim notion of a paradise on earthly terms seems to have been connected with the medieval notion of the land of Cockayne. On the level of prosody it has been argued that 'there are no precursors of troubadour lyric in the west but convincing analogues in theme, imagery, and verse form occur earlier with Hispano-Arab poets' (Nykl 1946).

Especially significant here was the work of the poet and theologian Ibn Hazm (994–1064), who composed love poetry such as *The Ring of the Dove*, which may well have contributed to ideas of chivalric love among the Provençal troubadours. For poets from Spain crossed the Pyrenean border between Islam and Christianity to practise their craft. Moreover, not only did representative figures from the different courts cross the religious divide, but singing-girls, who had a considerable repertoire of songs, were sent as gifts by Muslim rulers to their Christian counterparts. The Provençal court has been described as essentially similar to those that were to be found on both sides in this border region. That fact has a good deal of importance for Europe's mythology of its uniqueness elaborated by generations of scholars, especially from the nineteenth century onwards (Boase 1994).

One abiding legacy of the Arab invasion exists in flamenco music. Much controversy has surrounded its origins. Undoubtedly there is a contribution from north India brought by the Rom (the 'gypsies'). But the use of quarter-tones, on

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which Stravinsky remarked, is a major feature of Arab music, with which there are many similarities. Another musical borrowing was the *oud*, the Arab lute (from *al-'ud*), which was the first guitar-type instrument to arrive. It was brought both by the Crusaders and through Spain in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. One expert in its performance was Ziryab, who left Baghdad, settled in Cordoba and founded the first school for the *oud* and for Arabic singing, as well as introducing the fifth string for the lute. The lute (Old French *laut*) spread into Europe, where it achieved the height of its fame in Italy, France, Germany and England in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. It was the Renaissance instrument *par excellence*. Other musical instruments adopted in the West were the oboe, psaltery, cymbals, frame drum, trumpet, hornpipe and nakers; the rebec introduced a new concept of bowing which eventually led to the emergence of the viol family.

The musical influences of the Moors were experienced not only in the folk music of Andalusia such as the *cante hondo* ('deep song'), passionate in character with rhythmic guitar accompaniment, as well as the fandango, sevillana and seguidillas, but also in dances such as the *jota* of Aragon and Navarre, accompanied by castanets. Spanish folk music found its 'classical' expression in the work of Manuel de Falla (1867–1946); it greatly influenced the music of South America and North America, as in Gershwin's *Cuban Overture*.

Metlitzki speaks of 'the intense preoccupation with the Orient as theme, image and metaphor in the romantic literature of the Western world' (1977: 240). In the sixteenth century, European readers were more attracted by books on the Ottoman Empire than anywhere else. Nearly 50 per cent of French travel books of this time had that as their focus (Hamilton 2001: 26). Some indication of the impact of the Turks and Mongols on Western Europe is given by the numerous dramas in which they played a part. Literary influences too went the other way.

The Turks had less direct influence culturally, although their continuing presence in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean



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always made them a prominent point of reference for Europe through to the nineteenth century. But because of their situation across Suez, the Bosphorus and further north to the Urals, they became the necessary intermediaries in all exchange between Europe and East, South and South-East Asia. Artistically, the Muslim world had less to teach Europe, partly because of the aversion to figurative representation embedded in Islam. While the Orient formed the subject of European painters from Bellini to Kandinsky and later, Islam did not itself create much figurative art, though it exported some fabulous animals, and later on Mughal painting. However, carpets from the East ('oriental carpets') with their largely abstract designs became great favourites in Europe from an early period, especially so in the Renaissance. So too did jewellery and ceramics. Tartar embroidery was also much prized in the West, and among those items bequeathed by Marco Polo was a white outfit *alla Tartaresca*.

As a result of her contacts with the East, Venice became the great medium for the importation of Eastern art, particularly Byzantine, into Europe, especially in the great basilica of St Mark's, affecting the Renaissance and giving birth to a long line of painters from Cimabue to Giotto. After the capture of Constantinople, Byzantine and Eastern influences became more important for the West. Venice was the only historic port where Turkish merchant ships could dock in time of peace, and the visits were noted by a number of artists. Carpaccio's oriental figures in *The Miracle of the Relics of the Cross* (1494) are taken not from reports but from observations in the streets of Venice.<sup>16</sup> Albrecht Dürer similarly painted *A Turkish Family* from life there in 1511.

Gentile Bellini was the first to introduce the Orient into Venetian painting. In 1479 he accompanied an embassy to Constantinople at the express demand, it is said, of Mehmed II, the Conqueror. He painted a portrait of the ruler in 1580, now in the National Gallery in London, for it was later sold in the bazaar by his son, who properly disapproved of figurative images, and there it was bought by some

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Venetian merchants. Bellini and others later introduced oriental figures into their works.

European painters displayed an ambivalence about the Orient that represented the wider sentiments, as we have noted. They were attracted to its display, to its costumes, especially in dealing with biblical themes (as in the work of Rembrandt). At the same time there was undoubted fear at the constant threat Turkey posed to the West, at least until the defeat of its navy at Lepanto in 1571 and later on after the breaking of the siege of Vienna in 1683. That fear was a fear not only of conquest but of their reputedly 'cruel' behaviour and cultural influence.

The real beginning of Europe's unambiguous fascination with the Orient occurred at the end of the seventeenth century after that threat had largely disappeared, at least from Western Europe, and after the counter-attack was on its way. The eighteenth century produced a craze for things Turkish (*turqueries*) as well as for things Chinese (*chinoiseries*), both of which became part of the rococo style that characterized the opulence of the *ancien régime*. At this time there was an enormous expansion of trade to the East, from Marseilles and other ports. Ambassadors too wrote accounts of the East; especially influential were the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu from Istanbul. In the same century, but above all in the nineteenth, Orientalism achieved its zenith in painting, especially in attempts to depict Lady Montagu in Istanbul (e.g., by Van Mour) or in the more exotic scenes of harems, baths and toilettes painted by Boucher, Fragonard and, in Italy, the Guardi brothers.

There was also a new vogue for Arabic and Persian literature. In 1704 the first volumes of a French version of *A Thousand and One Nights* appeared. That was the century that also saw the use of the Orient for criticizing the West, as in Montesquieu's satirical *Lettres persanes* (1721). Voltaire likewise employed the appeal of the Orient in his moral tales, *Zaire* (1731) and, most famously, *Candide* (1759). He even wrote an essay entitled *Mahomet*. Diderot followed Montesquieu in using the East to comment on the West.

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In Britain, Dr Johnson chose an Eastern background, though in this case it was Ethiopia, for his moral tale *Rasselas* (1759). In Germany, Goethe used an oriental setting for a volume of poems, the *West-Oestlicher Divan* (1819). Orientalists such as the Austrian, Hammer, spent many years studying in Istanbul during the same period.

Regarding everyday life, the Turkish conquest did have a considerable influence on Eastern Europe, especially on the Balkans, an influence that endures even to this day. According to Rayna Gavrilova:

The coming of the Ottoman Turks in the fourteenth century, besides its significant economic, political and social consequences, had the undeniable character of a major cultural interaction. An empire, stretching from Persia to Morocco and Budapest, had all the advantages of a common market, including several ecological zones. [The] fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have been an era of intensive exchange, primarily in the everyday culture, including nutrition. Several new crops were introduced – such as the apricot, the melon, rice; new culinary techniques and recipes; new practices – [such] as coffee drinking.<sup>17</sup>

As far as cuisine was concerned, the Turks were heirs to the great tradition of Persian cooking, as indeed were the Arabs. Many aspects of the culture of the Balkan area were influenced by Islam, not only the food but daily life generally. That remains true even today, especially among the continuing Muslim population of Bosnia and especially of Albania (including Kosovo and parts of Macedonia). One of the major changes to European patterns of consumption as a whole brought about by the coming of the Arabs to Spain was the introduction of rice in the tenth century; its cultivation took off especially around Valencia. These changes were incorporated in Andalusian recipe books such as *Kitab al-Agdiya* (García 2002).

In Italy, too, the Muslim presence greatly affected daily life. The Arabs occupied Sicily for two centuries before the

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Normans took over in 1091, and even then the Norman emperor, Roger II, wore Arab dress at court, spoke Arabic and cultivated Arabic arts and sciences, employing Arab craftsmen to build the magnificent cathedral and monastery of Monreale (1172). The book of the great Arab geographer Ibn Idris, entitled *The Delight of One who Loves Travelling around the World*, was also known as *King Roger's Book*. Idris discusses the abundance and beauty of Sicily, praising the greatness of Palermo, its buildings and surrounding gardens. It was to Sicily they brought sugar in the eleventh century. It was there that they developed, perhaps invented, spaghetti and *pasta asciutta*, using hard-seeded, gluten-rich durum wheat grown only in Sicily and other hot countries around the Mediterranean. Both macaroni and vermicelli were known as *siciliani*, which in the upper strands of society was eaten with the newly imported forks from Constantinople. On a more particularistic level, Robb (1996: 66–7) reports that Palermo's Vucciria market still produces *panelleria*, fried slices of chick-pea flour, a dish going back to Arab times. Another very significant contribution to European cuisine made by the Arabs was *maccharoni*, a general name given to a variety of pasta, vermicelli, gnocchi, tortelli and others, whose adoption throughout Italy seems to have been the result of transmission by Jewish communities (Toaff 2000: 90ff).

Among other things, the Crusaders brought home oriental ways of cooking, having employed local cooks in the East. Traces of early influence appear in many English foods, in Christmas puddings and mince pies (with their dried fruit from the Mediterranean), marzipan, rice pudding and the mint sauce served with lamb. In the twelfth or thirteenth century a book of Arab dietetics was translated into Latin in Venice by one Jambobinus of Cremona as *Liber de ferailis et condimenti*, originally written by Ibn Jazla, a doctor of Baghdad (d. 1100). There were in fact many books on cooking written under the Abbasid rulers of Baghdad, where an elaborate court cuisine was developed by the Arab conquerors largely based on earlier Persian models. That became the aristocratic cuisine of the Arab world.

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Coffee drinking was introduced into France by a messenger of the sultan to Louis XIV of France in 1669, who impressed with his taste and refinement. As the result of disappointments arising from the status of this messenger, the king asked Molière to write a comedy ridiculing the Turks and was further disappointed when the dramatist produced *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, which only ridiculed Frenchmen disguised as Turks.

The direct influence of Islam is very clear in the history of food, not only as a source of borrowing but as a source of opposition. Late medieval food, with its addiction to sweet flavours, to sherbets, to golden desserts and dried fruit, was much indebted to the Muslim world. The influence on food is clear from the vocabulary, sherbet from *sharbat*, soda from *suda*; the influence was also there on comfortable domestic furnishing, on cushions, divans, mattresses and sofas. And it was Islam that had brought an abundance of cheap sweetener to Europe, sugar from India to Egypt, Cyprus, Southern Europe, Madeira and then Brazil and the Caribbean. At least for the upper elements in society, recipes had been greatly expanded. Spices too came through Islam from the East. Here too the development of a European *haute cuisine* was in part an opposition to Islamic ways, both by way of a return to classical models and to supposedly European traditions, and on the Protestant side, at least on the part of Puritans, by a rejection of luxury and an insistence on plain living. The Renaissance was a mixture of moral revival and of sensuality, the sensuality of the Graeco-Roman world, bringing back the notion of the male connoisseur of food. In their efforts to revive antiquity, scholars compiled compendia of what their ancestors ate, a source that was satirized by Rabelais when he writes of scholars who had their books brought to the table (*Gargantua*, chapter 23).

In the Middle Ages, Islam was sometimes viewed not as a different religion but as a Christian heresy, various accounts being given of Mohammed's earlier adherence to Christianity, by Langland for example. Contact with the Near East led not only to Islamic science and medicine being incorporated

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in university studies but also to the extension of teaching about Islamic religion and the languages of the Muslims, principally Arabic. It was at the Council of Vienne in 1312 that an appeal was made for the establishment of chairs in Arabic (as well as Chaldaic and Hebrew) in Europe's foremost universities – Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Salamanca and Avignon (temporally wherever the Roman see happened to reside; Linehan 2001). Almost nothing came of this plan in France, favoured above all by missionaries, until more than two centuries later Postel was appointed professor of Arabic at the Collège Royal in Paris. And in 1599 a chair of Arabic was created at Leiden that led not only to the study of Arabic but also to the printing of books, which was at first forbidden in the Arabic world, so attached were they to calligraphy and to the copying tradition. But Arabic books were printed in Venice using a moveable type as early as the 1520s. The great achievement in Arabic typography was the establishment in Rome in 1584 of the Medici press, which aimed to help the union of Arabic-speaking Christians with Rome and to present some non-religious Arabic texts, while Arabic type was also useful for providing travellers with safe conducts. The printing press was undoubtedly a great boon in this as in other branches of knowledge and education; the initial ban by Islam on its use made it more difficult for Muslims to contribute and to compete with the explosion of knowledge that followed its introduction.

So the East not only constituted a threat to the West, it also held great attractions. These appear above all in literature and later in art. In the literature of the Middle Ages, as we have seen, many oriental tales were incorporated in the sermons that became so important in England in the new millennium, being used as exemplars by travelling priests. Later more historicizing accounts of the East were embodied in the epics and the *chansons de geste* that centred upon the defeat of Charlemagne at Roncevalles in 778. In these works the Muslims were usually presented as brave warriors, as worthy enemies. They might be cruel but they could also be generous.

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In art and decoration, the East was associated with luxury goods, with colourful carpets, with perfumes, with silks, and later with bright cottons. Oriental carpets played an important part in Renaissance paintings, but they were necessarily the possessions of the rich and powerful. With the large-scale imports of Indian cottons by sea at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the bourgeoisie too began to enjoy the colours of the East; with the Industrial Revolution, colourful cottons, made locally but often using oriental designs, spread through the whole society.

In the Middle Ages 'Christian Europe and the Arab world were in a symbiotic relationship in terms of gold and silver', and it has been claimed that 'in monetary matters . . . the two regions should be treated as a whole' (Wallerstein 1974: 39). We have seen the earlier spread of Arabic coins into Carolingian Europe. Later it was Europe that minted silver, the Arabs gold. Gold came mainly from West Africa, silver from local mines. Both flowed eastwards in exchange for Eastern luxuries for which Europe had few equivalent goods to exchange, apart from raw materials and wool. The sources and quantities of bullion changed dramatically with the European invasions of the Americas; that and the opening of the sea routes led to an increase in the amount of Eastern trade goods coming to the West, especially cotton, porcelain and spices. According to Sarton:

Many people were alarmed by the inroads the Arabic world had made into the cultural fabric of Europe, and perhaps none more so than Petrarch, though he was seduced in a variety of ways by what he struggled to resist. He lived in a world where the serving of highly aromatic, yellow, sugared food had become imperative, where architecture was now characterized by the pointed arch of the Arabic world, where light poured through jewel-like stained-glass church windows to bathe the worshippers in colour.

The influential work of Wallerstein (1974) on world systems theory divided the modern world into the core (Europe)

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and periphery (the rest). He sees Europe as creating a capitalist world economy; for according to him capitalism is only possible within that framework, not in that of a 'world empire'. Portugal and Spain were at the forefront of this monetization, even if they did not subsequently lead the industrialization of the continent, which depended on this capital being employed in 'productive' ways rather than for the direct consumption of luxuries. It is a theory that to others has seemed to play down the earlier role of manufacture and trade in Asia, by land but especially by water. That trade, frequently in the hands of Muslims, gave rise to a diaspora of merchants throughout the Eastern seas who were very active in commerce well before the arrival of the Europeans and whose networks certainly involved the use of money and of instruments for long-distance exchange and banking such as were later developed in Italy (Markovits 2000).

In this account I have spoken mainly of the apparent benefits that came from Islam. Obviously there were negative aspects as well. Some would argue that intolerance is involved in all religions, as we can see from the contemporary world as well as from 'the wars of religion' that tarnish our past. That of course is true: the writings of all three major Near Eastern religions contain sentiments and presumptions that today would mostly be unacceptable. We phrase things differently in terms of terrorism and 'ultimate values'. Nevertheless the very fact that these religions centred upon written texts, the holy scriptures, meant that their specialists not only became the custodians of those texts but dominated the whole process of education in reading and writing. In this way they became important figures in the transmission of the entire corpus of written knowledge. It was a long time before knowledge could begin to be released from these shackles, however useful they might have been in the early stages. Secular humanism had been characteristic of the classical civilizations and also made its appearance in Islam at certain periods (Zafrani 1996: 89). Indeed the natural sciences were part of the teaching of the higher Islamic schools as



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they were in Hindu ones. But a clear division between the secular and the religious, where there frequently continued to be some overlap, emerged only after the Renaissance and the Enlightenment.

There is something more to be said about the contact between peoples of these two faiths. The first is that, although there was hostility, fear and conquest, there were also periods of peaceful interaction. I have discussed the confrontation between the Islamic East and the Christian West which is often seen in terms of conquest, *jihad* and holy war. It was much more; culturally the East had a very marked influence on the West, just as later the roles were reversed. Nevertheless it is often held, especially today, that the value systems are quite different. However, towns in the Near East consisted of multi-faith communities; in Spain, Muslims, Christians and Jews lived side by side over long periods. And where trade and travel took place, the societies interacted with one another, reciprocally and to the advantage of both. In her account of the relations of Venice with the East, Howard stresses that neither side consistently adopted attitudes of superiority towards the other; as trading partners they were equal.

If I have spoken of it in a holistic way, Islam is of course highly differentiated from the theological point of view. The Sunni and Shiite sects differ as much perhaps as Catholics and Protestants, and indeed resembled that division even in some of the details. Just as the Jews did in Europe, the Shiites in Persia and the Lebanon developed miracle plays around the death of Ali, whereas the rest of Islam rejected dramatic performances. Equally, probably under the influence of China, they permitted figurative representations of a visual kind and transmitted this tradition to the miniatures of the court art of Mughal India. As with Christian sects, they fought with one another, treated each other as heretics. Nevertheless, in the face of Judaism or Christianity there was a considerable measure of unity, more so perhaps than in the latter case.

The three movements of Muslims into Europe had very different social and cultural effects. All had great military,

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political and religious implications. But as far as the wider cultural impact was concerned, the implications were more variable. The consequences of Arab penetration into North Africa, Spain and the Mediterranean were by far the greatest. That was the time when Europe lagged most behind intellectually and economically, and so the arrival of the Arabs was most significant. For the latter were drawing on the results of their advance into West Asia, where they were in touch not only with the civilization of Persia and its ancient roots but also with the inheritance of Greece and Rome on the one hand and to a lesser extent of India and China on the other, the land routes to which they dominated.

### **The agency of trade**

Transmission of knowledge from the Near East to Europe occurred primarily through the Islamic presence. But there was a great deal of contact that involved neither conquest nor yet the other kinds of military struggle we have discussed. The main external point of communication with the East was through Venice, which was dependent on the Eastern trade and maintained a sea route to Constantinople (later Istanbul), to Alexandria (often compared to Venice) and to the Levantine coast over much of this period.

Trade expanded rapidly in Europe, principally in the Mediterranean, after the twelfth century. In the year 1000 there were no large trading towns in Northern Europe. These were situated in the Mediterranean, at Venice, Naples, Spain, Constantinople, Alexandria and Cairo, and along the routes to Baghdad, Basra and the further East. By 1212 they had developed greatly, largely due to trade with the East, and London, Paris, Bruges, Ghent and Novgorod were all important centres in the network. By 1346, North-West Europe saw a great efflorescence of trade as merchants penetrated into Germany and Bohemia looking to purchase metals. By 1485 the French traders of Toulouse, Bordeaux and Ravenna

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were in the picture, and so too was the Muscovy trade with the Baltic (McEvedy 1992).

Venice was built on trade, and has been described as 'a colossal suq'. She was importing luxury goods from the East as early as the eighth century. In 991 the doge sent ambassadors to 'all the Saracen princes' (Howard 2000: 15). She negotiated a base in Byzantium as early as 1082 and then established a series of trading colonies from Tabriz to Alexandria. She had rivals, especially Genoa, but extended her dominion in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By the fifteenth century, manufactures began to be exported to the Islamic world – textiles, soap, paper, glass, as well as wood and metal from Northern Europe and olive oil, honey, almonds and raisins from along the trade route. The principal imports were cotton, spices, dyes and aromatics, and salt from Egypt and Syria, as well as silk, slaves and furs from the Tartar region. One sees the way that such transnational cultures developed in the books of Venetian traders, and also in those of pilgrims, which were already in circulation in the thirteenth century (Howard 2000: 17). Using the local language, they treated the problems of travelling *oltremare*, of conducting oneself in foreign ports and especially of getting on with the foreigners. The profit of returning with a valuable cargo, at 35 to 50 per cent on the purchase price of imports, was augmented by the fact that knowledge of the East was itself a valuable commodity.

Venice's commerce was not always approved by the papacy, which regarded it as trading with the infidel. For twenty years up to 1345 there was even a formal ban, but otherwise Venice continued her relationship with the East which had so influenced her way of life, in architecture as in some domestic matters, for the port was known for its seclusion of females (apart of course from prostitutes and working women) – hence the construction of balconies so that they could see something of the world.

Merchants were specially educated for trading, partly as 'apprentices' (learning by experience), partly in schools. The Latin of Venetian merchants may not have been perfect,

but they were well educated in accounts. Pacioli's explanation of double-entry book-keeping did not, apparently, refer to a new system but had been practised by earlier generations (Howard 2000: 20). Commerce produced what has been called 'a shared culture of great complexity and richness' (Howard 2000: 21), and that description applied not only to Venice but to the groups with which she traded. In such long-term mercantile relationships, which required more than the dumping of goods or the practice of the 'silent trade' of earlier Africa, both communities flourished and exchanged not only goods but knowledge and techniques. For Venetian merchants the need for Arabic had marginalized the use of Greek and Latin, as we see from the fact that, as in Spanish, many Arabic words were incorporated into the Venetian dialect, mostly belonging to the sphere of trade.

Together with the Cairene Jews, the Arabs also controlled much of the vast Indian Ocean and its trade between Africa, Arabia, India and China before the violent advent of the Portuguese in 1498. They had been at the centre of the South Asian world economy. Islam took control of the north of India at an early date and established trading posts down the west coast, at Malabar and elsewhere. The religion reached the north-west of China too, by way of the Silk Road, but Arab trading communities were also found along the coast of southern China, at Gwangzhou (Canton) and Quanzhou (Zaitun). Muslim traders had none of the prohibitions that inhibited Hindus, for example, from travelling by sea, and in China one of the great voyagers, the seven-jewelled eunuch Zheng He, who reached Africa, was Muslim. The *hajj*, the pilgrimage, placed an obligation to travel on all Muslims and was sometimes combined with trade; more often it opened up opportunities and showed the way. The prophet himself had been a trader, originally working with his wife, a rich widow.

There was an influx of Eastern goods, mainly 'luxuries', perfumes, carpets, and silk and cotton cloth. The last-named became one of the great staples of the sea-borne trade to the East when the route to India by the Cape was opened

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up after 1497. The larger-scale importation of these brightly coloured materials at the beginning of the seventeenth century changed the domestic scene as well as domestic manners. The use of the fork, much commented on by historians of culture such as Elias and Lévi-Strauss, was probably another of these elements. Flowers too changed the European scene, as we are reminded by the history of the tulip, coming as it did from Turkey. While there were other influences, Islam does seem to have played a part in improving the hygiene of Christians, as well as famously introducing the smallpox vaccine.

East–West relations were also affected by the presence of ambassadors in each other's countries. Venice and Genoa had long held recognized trading ports in the Ottoman realms, as they had done in Byzantium before that. These were supplemented by occasional envoys to the Muslim countries. But early in the sixteenth century, France sought to establish herself in Istanbul on a more permanent basis, and in 1534 an arrangement was made which allowed Francis I to do just this, partly to consolidate an anti-Hapsburg alliance. That embassy henceforth became the focus of scholarly as well as of diplomatic activity. Other great powers followed: England, and then in 1533 the Hapsburg emperor, Charles V, dispatched a diplomat, one of whose successors was Augier Ghislain de Busbecq, from the Netherlands, between 1555 and 1562. The latter collected a great deal of information on Turkey and returned with many manuscripts, including a spectacular botanical codex of Dioscorides, as well as camels, possibly the tulip, but certainly sedge and the lilac. He also studied the language of the Krimgoths and wrote vivid accounts of everyday life. England was followed in 1612 by Holland. The appointment of ambassadors was accompanied not only by diplomatic and scholarly activity but also by the further growth of trade.

Travellers such as pilgrims, and converts such as Leo Africanus (albeit temporary), brought knowledge of the East to Europe. The most notorious of these voyagers was Sir John Mandeville, whose account of his travels raised

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many doubts about their authenticity but certainly contained some useful information, probably culled from other authors. Marco Polo was another popular author who provided a detailed account of his activities but on whose reliability doubts have recently been cast (Hamilton 2001: 35).

Another important element in the transactions between East and West was the continual flow of pilgrims to the Holy Land, dating from the first centuries. The pilgrimage, which resulted in considerable investment in Palestine, eventually turned into the Crusades. In the fifteenth, Philip the Good of Brabant, who was fascinated by the Levant and turned his court into what has been described as 'a seminar for Turkish studies' (Hamilton 2001: 5), advocated a further crusade against the Turks. That ideal continued into the sixteenth century and in 1527 an Antwerp printer published an appeal to finance such a campaign. The capture of Tunis in 1535 by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles can be seen as part of this desire to confront the 'infidel'. But meanwhile the pilgrimage continued and gave birth to an extensive travel literature. Pilgrims usually started from Venice and later Antwerp: in the fourteenth century a Venetian entrepreneur offered to transport and feed would-be 'palmers' for 60 golden ducats; later an Antwerp merchant attempted to organize a regular passenger service to the Levantine coast.

Antwerp and the western seaboard received a stimulus from the opening up of the Atlantic, the rise of Protestantism and the phenomenon of 'Turco-Calvinism', the belief that an anti-Catholic alliance might be formed with the Porte. That aim was simply a continuation of the policy of alliance that earlier had seen the French king, François I, courting the Ottoman ruler in an attempt to check the power of the Hapsburgs. Envoys were exchanged between the Turks and the Dutch, with the latter proposing a trading centre in Antwerp to the sultan, whose representatives in turn offered to support the Protestants against Catholic Spain at a time when the former were experiencing their iconoclastic riots in 1567. The Turkish presence in Antwerp was represented by four Greek merchants, obviously from occupied Europe.

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In the fourteenth century the port of Antwerp was already a significant trading centre, along with its more successful neighbours, Ghent, Bruges, and the inland towns of northern France. It rose to greater importance in the sixteenth century. The ruler of the Netherlands, Charles of Austria, had succeeded to the Spanish crown in 1516 and was elected Holy Roman Emperor three years later. His empire now bordered the East, reached to the Mediterranean and included territories in America. Antwerp became 'the commercial metropolis of the world', taking over from Venice, and coming into active contact with the Arab and Turkish worlds. However, these relationships were characterized by 'mixed feelings of dread and attraction'. 'The fear of a powerful religious antagonist advancing ever further north, the prospect of alliances of value, the awareness of the Arab contribution to culture and to science, curiosity about an exotic neighbour, all contributed to the ambivalent fascination of the Levant and North Africa' (Hamilton 2001: 1). It was ambivalence that ran throughout Muslim-Christian relationships.

## **Values**

The East in its various forms continues to be seen as very different from the West in its 'despotic', anti-democratic governments, the absence of freedom and of the Christian concepts of love and charity (*caritas*). Indeed a number of countries have drawn a veil over past contacts with Islam, partly because of the perceived discrepancy in value systems. Here I want to call attention to the many convergences that enabled the different communities to interact peacefully as well as conflictually. The point about charity is simplest to deal with, since it was a duty of Muslims to give to the poor, and many charitable bequests (*waqf*) were established which provided educational, hospital and other social facilities. The notions of love and freedom I shall consider, with particular reference to the studies of Nur Yalman (2001). Regarding

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the nature of government, it is all too easy to note the arbitrary features of the monarchical and republican regimes of the present Near East, and to ignore the authoritarian regimes of Europe in the not-too-distant past, including the extraordinary efforts of Queen Victoria to install her offspring on the thrones of all the major European powers. Regarding democracy, there is more than one way of consulting the people, in addition to the numerical head counts that are part of the modernizing 'ideology' of the recent West. And it is as well to reckon with the limitations of such methods when we take into account the minority that gave the present president power in the USA, and the way that even the head of the elected government in Britain can threaten a major war without the authority of parliament or the UN Security Council and against the opinion of a majority of the electors. Other systems of consultation would make that impossible. We ourselves prefer frequent elections and changes of government, but we need to recognize the limitations of any system of authority, whether Western or Eastern. Some measure of consultation takes place in virtually all regimes.

It will help to give more substance to this comparison if we turn to the views of Islam on equality, fraternity and freedom, so often seen as markers of the liberal democracies of the West. Writing of equality and love (which in this context is fraternity), Yalman sees these as a 'fundamental aspect of the culture of Islam'. Certainly they are 'translated' into practice in the notion of open access of opportunities for people and of the absence of a group with privileged access to divine truths. That idea has been one of the great appeals of the faith to underprivileged groups such as the Black Muslims in the United States. But that notion does not mean there is no inequality among Islamic peoples. 'In practice, inferiority and superiority are as much a part of daily Islamic experience as any other' (Yalman 2001: 271).

Yalman contrasts these high ideals with the notions of hierarchy and renunciation seen by Dumont (1970) as being fundamental to India, counterpoising the highly idealized



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formula of Islam on the one hand and that of India on the other. The contrast is between his description of Islam and that of Dumont of hierarchy and renunciation in Hinduism, 'an almost mirror-image comparison of two religious world-views that have intermingled with bitter intimacy for more than a thousand years in the Indian sub-continent' (Yalman 2001: 270). According to Dumont, renunciation, ascetic self-denial, is the religious dimension of hierarchy, allowing for some liberation and permitting 'the specially gifted individual to escape from the strict crucible of caste' (2001: 270). But the reality is less dramatically different. Yalman always recognizes that equality has not been achieved throughout Islamic states, and for India he also quotes a comment on the presence of *bakhti*, through which, despite the hierarchy, those who have fallen from twice-born status might be brought to better condition (Hopkins, quoted Yalman 2001: 277). Equally he refers to the great Hindu traditions of love, of the *gopis* for Krishna, of Mughal miniatures, and he might well have called upon the large body of Sanskrit love poetry (Brough 1968). In other words, contradictory practices and beliefs emerge. However, he does still claim a 'profound contrast in Hindu and Muslim devotionism', going on to suggest that in the Hindu case it is a minor theme of a great civilization (Yalman 2001: 278).

I want to suggest that we need to modify the stark contrast that Yalman draws between the religious ideologies by taking into account the secular ideologies that accompany them. From the African standpoint, both the Islamic society of Turkey and the Hindu society of India are representative of the post-Bronze Age cultures of Eurasia, which are heavily stratified, however those forms of stratification may be qualified by the religious ideologies. Islam may do something to loosen and even oppose the secular stratification, which for the most part is based on unequal access to valuable resources such as land, always ploughed, sometimes irrigated; there is charity, sometimes revolt, but no effective redistribution. In India the secular hierarchy is to some extent supported by the religious ideology, but not entirely, since it is

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the literate priesthood who create and carry out the religious rites, as in Islam, and who top the hierarchy. The secular rulers follow. Nevertheless the hierarchy is modified by charity, as in Islam, by the act of giving, as when in a Congress-dominated village in Gujarat, I saw the Harijan, formerly the untouchables, queuing up to obtain the leftovers from the yoghurt-making activities of the 'peasant' Patels. Most significant is the fact that there are two sides to the ideology, *bakhti* and Krishna-worship, both displaying more egalitarian characteristics than the dominant orientation of religion. Then there has always been the outright opposition of others, the long tradition of Indian atheistic thought (see Goody 1998, chapter 11), the long tradition of Dalit (untouchable) opposition to the caste system in which they were at the bottom of the pile.

In other words, the notion of equality, of freedom, was present in Hindu society, even if not embedded in the Brahmin religion, just as the practice and to some extent the ideology of hierarchy exists in Islam. It is these contrary tendencies which are mirrors of each other within each society; the religious ideologies do display contrasts, but if they are considered in a wider frame of dominant religious ideology, plus an alternative, often secular, one, we find both trends present in both societies.

How and why? Because both societies, being dependent upon advanced agriculture and its commercial and artisanal concomitants, are heavily stratified from a socio-economic point of view as well as having political stratification in the form of chiefship, and religious-educational stratification in relation to the written word and to the holy scriptures more generally. But stratification runs up against what are virtually pan-human notions of equality and fraternity among humans (as 'brothers' and 'sisters') which constitute a counter-current in stratified societies, and are based on the idea of distributive justice. From the standpoint of the family, it is linked to relations between siblings ('all men are brothers') rather than between parents (prototypically fathers) and children. One set involves equality, the other inequality, and both are

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built into social relationships from the family outwards. The imposition of hierarchy by the father is countered by claims to equality on behalf of the brothers. These claims may dominate the lifestyles of a person or a community, or they may constitute a point of ideological reference that does not, however, prevent one continuing to act in a rapacious or consumerist manner. We are well acquainted with these ideological-behavioural contradictions in our own daily lives, as when we decry the pollution that cars make to the environment and jump into our Nissan to go down to the supermarket (which we decry as having taken over the small, personalized shops of yesteryear).

Yalman also elaborates on the concept of freedom in Turkish Islam. The Englishman Sir Adolphus Slade, who served as an officer in the Ottoman navy in the 1820s, wrote: 'Hitherto the Osmanley has enjoyed by custom some of the dearest privileges of free men, for which Christian nations have so long struggled.' He paid a very limited land tax, no tithes, needed no passport, encountered no customs or police: 'from the lowest origins he might aspire without presumption to the rank of pasha.' He compares the freedom, 'this capacity of realising the wildest wishes', to the achievements of the French Revolution and implicitly contrasts it with the West (quoted Yalman 2001: 271).

As Yalman explains, the notion of freedom is connected to that of equality. The 'high ideals of Islam', he notes, 'do turn around the principle that there are no privileged persons in Islam, or rather that a person's worth depends upon the morality of his/her intentions, behaviour, and piety. This may lead to the gates of heaven, but even in the worldly kingdoms, all people, once converted to the belief of Islam – i.e., having "surrendered" (*teslim*) to the will of God – must be given an equal chance to rise in society. Hence the promise of Islam, for instance, to Black Muslims in America and to oppressed peoples elsewhere' (Yalman 2001: 271). There are many other practical significances. You could make a slave a Muslim but you could not make a Muslim a slave. Equally a new convert, as with the Albanian dervishes,

could rise to the highest offices in the land, bar that of sultan itself.

One of the most disturbing myths of the West is that the values of our 'Judaeo-Christian' civilization are to be distinguished from the East in general and Islam in particular. But Islam has the same roots as Judaism and Christianity, and many of the same values. If we are thinking of the level of religious ideology, then Yalman points out that not only are equality (and love) and freedom fundamental features of its ethical teaching, but so too is a concern for the individual. About the latter he writes of the Islamic world of the Middle East as being a 'vibe' culture. 'People must relate to each other as individuals', a mode of relating that is seen as *alla Turca* in contrast to that of the West, *alla Franca*, meaning cold, distant, elegant, formal, whereas the 'East is läübali, annoyingly informal and unnecessarily friendly' (Yalman 2001: 273).

'All the sufis', Yalman writes, 'from the great martyr al-Hallaj onwards, have sung of the sanctity of the individual' (2001: 278). The individual, you may agree, but surely not individualism. The individual is stressed, especially by Sufis, in contrast to the formal teaching of the 'authorities'. However, individualism, in the sense of the headlong pursuit of personal economic aims in a consumer-capitalist context, does not meet with the approval of Islamic scholars, whose antipathy to the West may be based on this difference of aims. I do not suggest that there is no conflict here with the aims of the masses to improve their conditions, as they would see it, just as Christian theology concerning riches differs from the aims of the majority of the followers of that religion. But one ideological element within Islam stresses the puritanical values of restraint and simplicity. When he returned to Iran, the Ayatollah Khomeini made a great impression by leading a very humble existence, and is said to have dined on a simple meal of bread and yoghurt in the evenings. Yalman reports even a large and rapacious landlord as saying, 'I am an old man. My needs are few. All I need is a piece of bread and a bit of cheese to keep me going'

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(2001: 274). The values of puritanism, of charity, of love and freedom are present in Islam as they are in Christianity. Neither faith has the monopoly of positive aims, nor yet of more negative ones.

I have tried to outline some of the effects, intellectual and technical as well as political, that Islam has had on Europe over the centuries. It cannot, as the late Pim Fortuyn of the Netherlands would have us believe, be considered a 'backward civilization', except in the sense that all civilizations could be thought to display some backward aspects. It is argued by some that religion is a chimera in world affairs; that the real reason for a *jihad* is economic or perhaps political. Such aspects were, of course, always present, but it is impossible to reduce events to those dimensions and to dismiss the ideological factor which has motivated so many, so explicitly, so consistently, so firmly, not only in the religious but also in the political domain.

These three movements of Muslims from the Near East to Europe can be considered as being continuations of earlier tribal movements from Asia to Europe of the kind discussed in McNeil's *Europe's Steppe Frontier*, a 'frontier' that was open to continual penetration from the drier regions of Central Asia. So to some extent they are. But those earlier movements eventually led to their participants being incorporated in Europe in quite a different way. They did not have the ideological commitment of a written world religion. From this point of view the coming of Islam into Europe is better compared to that of Judaism and Christianity, which did not lead to incorporation into earlier regimes but rather to conflict, opposition and conversion. So the movement had a different dynamic which cannot be explained away by so-called ethnic factors; the religious had a significance *sui generis*, an ideological importance which contemporary secularists may not always appreciate but which nevertheless exists for the actors. Just because of our own disbelief or scepticism, religion has to be taken very seriously as an element in the constitution of the country, of Europe, of the world in which we live. Islam was never

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simply the Other, the Orient, but an element of Europeans, not only part of our past but of our present too, in the Mediterranean, in the Balkans, in Cyprus, in Russia. We need to appreciate its significance and accept the relationship, even if its influence has had a strong religious component to which we may be antipathetic.

## **Migration in Europe today**

The penetration of Islam into Europe had been largely repulsed in earlier times, with the reconquest in Spain and in the Mediterranean, with the demise of the Turkish Empire, 'the sick man of Europe', and with the withdrawal of the Mongols to Central Asia. There has been a small but continual flow of Muslims into Western European countries as migrants, setting aside captives, sailors, merchants and ambassadors. This flow increased with the expansion of colonial rule over Muslim areas. It was a Muslim, Dean Mahomed (1759–1851), who started the first Indian café in London. Well before that there had been a Lascar element in East London, probably as early as the 1600s, when the term became used for East Indian sailors. There was also a small professional immigration from the British Empire. The first attorney in Britain to swear on the Qur'an did so on his admission in 1850. The first mosque was built in Woking in 1895, funded in part by the Emir of Afghanistan.

Some immigration continued from colonial territories, but the massive increase in the recent influx of Muslim immigrants into Europe began in Britain after the Second World War, after their home countries had become independent. The influx then is a feature of decolonization, of post-colonialism. Later it extended to Europe, primarily to Western Europe. Now the European Union is contemplating including Turkey, as well as states like Cyprus and Albania with large Muslim populations. However, in recent years Islam has already made a striking come-back through the immigrants that have moved into a Europe increasingly

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unable to maintain its workforce. Some superficial index of this penetration is given by the impact of Near Eastern food. Today such restaurants proliferate in our cities, Cypriot, Greek, Turkish and Lebanese, now North African and Iranian, brought by numerous migrants coming either as political or as economic refugees. In France this growth has been described as 'the conquest of France by couscous'. Especially important has been the cooking of skewered meats, kebabs, over charcoal, said to have been invented by the Turks as a food for the battlefield. But from the fourteenth century the Turks also developed a court cuisine, based on the Persian of the Sassanid dynasty as early as the seventh century, and much later there emerged a restaurant culture which subsequently took root in Western Europe.

This immigration has seen national policies vary between the pluralist and the assimilationist. The pluralist nations have not insisted upon integration in the same way as the assimilationist, and allowed for multi-culturalism. The former are represented by the Dutch and the Germans, the latter by the French, who with their republican tradition insist that the state requires the full participation of each citizen in its basic secular traditions; so that it is in France that the wearing of headscarves in schools has given rise to most conflict, whereas in the Netherlands it has largely been ignored or held to be an aspect of religious freedom. In pragmatic Britain headscarves have sometimes been allowed if they display the school's colours (Rath et al. 2001: 4).

Despite these different policies of the host countries, similar questions have been raised throughout the region. These questions relate to places of worship (and in some parts to their financing), to schools and the language of religious instruction (it is Arabic for the Qur'an), to the slaughter of meat (*halal*), to the circumcision of males and to the Muslim festivals, as well as to the application of Muslim law more generally. Whether assimilationist or not, each society is forced by its immigrant population to adjust to these problems, partly because the very nature of the immigrant situation has in many cases led them to place

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increasing emphasis on their Islamic beliefs and relationships. International links with Islamic states have helped conserve and extend Muslim institutions; the immigrants too have become more conscious of their Islamic identities in a local situation which may claim to be secular but which celebrates Christian festivals on a weekly and annual basis, as well as allowing schools and lessons which tend to promote a version of Christianity. There was initially a 'fiction of temporality' under which both hosts and migrants thought of the latter as returning to their home country, so they usually maintained relationships with this in view. When temporary became permanent, so too their involvement with the new societies changed. Those relations became more politicized with the publication of *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie and the subsequent *fatwa*, by the bombing of Tripoli by the Americans, and of course by the running sore of Palestine. Politicization did not await the coming of Bin Laden, and that politicization inevitably had its radical side. Let us see how matters developed in specific countries.

Into France have come some six million immigrants, overwhelmingly from its former colonies and dependencies in North and West Africa; Germany has conditionally welcomed two million 'guest workers' from Turkey; Britain has accepted approximately the same number of Muslims from the Indian sub-continent, also formerly a dependent territory. There are problems with these figures, which vary with different sources and apply at best to the numbers originating in Muslim countries. But in fact many became practising Muslims as immigrants, since Islam and attendance at the mosque were aspects of their new identity.<sup>18</sup> In France that is part of the 'sedentarization' of Muslims that followed restrictive measures taken as the result of the petrol crisis of 1973, which meant that many North Africans no longer regarded themselves as temporary residents but wanted a more permanent place in the host country.

All of the new Muslims come as applicants for work and living space, often taking up positions in the host society



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which its own members no longer wish to fill. The religious map of the continent has changed radically. Mosques have become a feature of the main towns; so too have Islamic schools and centres, as the Muslims attempt to conserve their religious identity in a context of predominantly Christian expectations. Schools may begin with a 'non-denominational' service, but it is nevertheless Christian in its broad content. The festivities observed throughout the land are based upon the Christian scriptures; Christmas, Easter, All Saints and lesser ceremonies, together with the Christian week, determine the rhythm of work and leisure activities. In such a world Muslims have to fight to maintain their identity and their faith.

It would be impossible even to outline the present situation of Islam throughout the continent, but as examples of what is happening I take two countries – one, France, where the impact has been stronger than in others, the other less so, namely Italy. In France, as in most of Europe, Muslims are very divided and attend different mosques, partly according to nationality (or ethnic group), partly according to 'sect'. Of these the major divisions are between orthodox Sunni and Shiite, the followers of Ali, son-in-law of the prophet. A similar range of Islamic groups seems to emerge in Europe as appeared in Afghanistan, where, following the takeover by an 'independent' Marxist government in Kabul in 1978, six main parties emerged, two led by Sufis, two by clerics, two by students (Edwards 2003). That range is also found in France, but one of the other most important divisions there is the Salafist, who are ultra-orthodox and include the puritanical Wahhabis (founded 1744), supported by Saudi Arabia, and seen as including radical activists; the sect, which is organized in small groups, has been growing recently in France and appeals particularly to the young.

Opposed to the Salafists is the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928 and devoted to the modernization of the Sunni sect, but nevertheless with fundamentalist tendencies. They again are opposed by the various Sufi brotherhoods (Sufi, 'weavers of wool') going back to the

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eighth century and offering a mystical, quietist, version of Islam. One group of Sufis is known as the Habach, originating in Lebanon in the 1970s and strongly supported by Syria. They have been very active against other groups in France, especially the Salafists, and have also tried to convert the young. A fourth sect is that of the Tabligh, a preaching movement originating in India in the 1920s.

Between most of these groups there has been considerable hostility and violence, the Sufis regarding the Wahhabis as 'heretics', the Sunnis considering the Shiites as the same; most contain radical elements, Islamists or fundamentalists, who have acted against non-Muslims, Jews in particular. But the majority of Muslims in France do not belong to any group, nor do they attend a mosque; they are for a measure of integration into the republic.<sup>19</sup>

Some of this differentiation has centred on places of worship. The most important is the Great Mosque of Paris, founded in the 1920s, when France already viewed herself as a 'Muslim power' as a result of its interests in North Africa and the Near East. After some confusion about its management, the Algerian government (from whence the bulk of Muslim immigrants came) took over in 1982. Attached to that central mosque were many other places of worship. Another important association was the Islam Cultural Association of Belleville, which managed the mosque Stalingrad (it is in a communist quarter) and the group Faith and Practice, which in turn was affiliated to the world-wide movement Jama'at al-Tabligh, the Society for the Propagation of Islam, a pietist movement originating in India.

Already in 1987 there were more than 1000 mosques and places of worship in France. More than 600 Islamic associations were registered with the prefecture and in Paris a muezzin called the faithful to prayer five times a day on the local radio. There has been a spectacular increase from the early 1970s; since that time mosques have even appeared in factories such as Renault at Billancourt, itself formerly a shrine to the communist working class. That development has again been attributed to the recognition by immigrants

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from Islamic countries that they had now become permanently settled in France (Kepel 1991: 11).

The French government has recently made strenuous efforts to organize a central Muslim council that would provide a unified point of communication between all these different elements and the state, in the same way as was earlier done for Catholics, Jews and Protestants. An arrangement was reached in December 2002 to create 'Le Conseil Français du Culte Musulman', presided over by the rector of the Paris mosque, supported by Algeria, with two vice-presidents from the UOIF (Union des Organisations Islamiques de France, supported by the Muslim Brotherhood) and the FNMF (Fédération Nationale des Musulmans de France, supported by Morocco), the two other main associations in the country. The general secretariat will be organized by the Comité de Coordination des Musulmans Turcs de France. The Association of African Muslims will be responsible for international relations, the leader of the Lyons mosque is treasurer. There are representatives from all the five major mosques and seventeen posts for various federations. Only some young Muslim groups have stood aside.

The main problem discussed in relation to these immigrants, once they have arrived, is integration. Have they become French, Dutch, English or German? It is often difficult to know what is meant by this question. Some have not learnt the local language, but that is clearly a transitory phenomenon. Some immigrants from Pakistan support that cricket team rather than England. That too is a transitory matter; it is not long before they are actually playing for their new country. Muslim religion is a mark of difference and doubtless many will continue to hold to that faith, like Jews. But, like Jews and Christians, others will become secular non-believers or non-attenders. However, religion is bound to remain a focus of differentiation, with its adherents attending the mosque (rapidly increasing in number) rather than the church, with many women continuing to cover their hair, and both sexes demanding ritually pure (*kosher* or *halal*) meat. Similar practices have long been tolerated by

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other religious communities, by Jews, by Sikhs and others. But with a total of 10 per cent Muslims in the French population, one needs also to ask how the host society will integrate with its immigrants. As we have seen, efforts have been made to establish a general council for Muslims, thus adapting the political system. But will the whole range of 'national', that is Christian, festivities have to be modified to include the celebrations of other faiths? Already this practice has been adopted in some schools. Will it eventually change the practices of the whole community? It is difficult to see that 'multi-culturalism' will not move some way in this direction, a direction that would certainly do much to make Muslims (and other minorities) feel at home and less alienated.

The problem posed by contemporary Islamic immigration to Western Europe is seen most explicitly in France, and in particular in 'the crisis of the headscarves'. Should the state insist on assimilation, that is, forbid the wearing of discriminating clothing, especially that which indicates religion, or should it adopt a more multi-cultural approach. The traditional republican line demanded secular conformity, but others on the left did not insist on expulsion from schools for wearing scarves. The tone of the debate was highlighted by the fact that, for many, the 'veil' (in fact, the headscarf) was seen as a sign of the inferior position of women under Islam and therefore doubly defying the spirit of the constitution. But while a majority of the French public were against the practice, the Jospin socialist government and the Council of the State made various compromises, although these measures did little to appease the more radical Muslims.

In fact there has already been a great deal of assimilation, much of it through the schools for the second generation. But the schools themselves are also a source of difficulty. It is there, above all, that one's identity is established *vis-à-vis* other groups. It is there that the wearing of the headscarf marks a girl out from her classmates. Many French are devoted to the particular tradition of 'laicism', of separation of church and state; in fact that was only nationally proclaimed,

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after the revolution itself, in 1905. However, republicanism has always stressed this separation, with the state trying to offer similar opportunities for citizens of all faiths. The role of the Catholic Church has continued to be important for many citizens, even in some secular matters, but nevertheless the wearing of the Islamic headscarf has been seen as a threat to the unity of the republic, just as was the recognition of ethnicity in the 1970s (and, for Chevènement, any concessions to Corsican demands for autonomy). Consequently the 'war of the headscarves' was not only a question of the integration of Muslims, who had to behave publicly as French, but also of the nature of the republic itself. The struggle opened in earnest when the headmaster of a college at Creil in northern France sent three young girls home for wearing them. An attempt was later made by the head to arrange some compromise, but many sympathetic organizations came to throw in their weight and the affair became highly complex, raising consciousness on both sides.

Apart from this history of the 'war of the veil', the more general problem of assimilation as against co-existence, which is virtually irresolvable in respect of members of another religion whose beliefs touch upon matters of life and death as well as of heritage and identity, cannot easily be compromised in Europe other than by people's becoming agnostically 'Christian'. In France the impact of Islam has had a more direct influence on national affairs than in Britain. The communist stronghold of the Renault manufacturing works at Billancourt recruited large numbers of Muslim immigrants, as a result of which mosques and prayer-rooms have been installed in the factory. The strikes of 1982 were attributed by some to this 'subversion intégriste'. Indeed the fact that the subsequent victory of the unions was celebrated with a communal prayer demonstrates that the actors themselves saw Islam as a potent force in their labour dispute. Certainly immigrants were no longer seen as a docile workforce by employers but demanded their rights like anyone else; part of their confidence came from Islam, perhaps from a rebirth of Islam in the migrant context.

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While other European countries such as Germany have different models of citizenship, the problems arising from the expression of religion are still present, partly because Muslim law allows practices such as polygyny which laws deriving from the Christian church have prohibited (Goody 1983). In any case those different practices are changing under European pressures. In the eighteenth century, Germany had already recruited a number of Turkish soldiers captured in the various campaigns as well as Mongols from Poland (Sen 2002: 11). In the later nineteenth century the Orient-Politik of the Kaiser led to a heightened rhythm of contact with the Near East. And after the First World War, in 1922, the Islamische Gemeinde Berlin was founded, mainly by students and traders. Berlin was also the location of the first mosque; today there are some 2200 places of worship. With the award of citizenship to Turks living in Germany from 2000, Islam has become eligible for state finance along the same lines as that specified in the agreement between Catholics and Protestants worked out at the compromise of Augsburg (1548) and embodied in the present post-war constitution. Islam then will become a rich and powerful institution.

I have suggested that one of the interesting features about Islam in Europe is that the immigrant situation has itself often led to a greater Islamization, by no means always fundamentalist but including some radical elements. The 'demand for Islam' both in Germany and in France has been seen as a compensation for the earlier exclusion of Turks from citizenship in the first case and for the need to renounce Muslim law and accept the Code Civil if an immigrant took on French nationality (Leveau and Mohsen-Finan 2001: 12). That aspect is certainly present in the rebirth of Islam in Europe but it must not be taken too negatively. There are also positive features about Islam and their own traditions of which the immigrant situation makes people aware. There is pride as well as the reaction to perceived rejection.

Tietze, for example, shows how, for the unemployed, excluded youth, the hours of prayer and the attendance at the place of worship gives meaning, in time and space, to an

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otherwise unstructured life in the deprived suburbs (Tietze 2001). In Germany, the Turks approximate more closely to their local counterparts, but they do suffer from discrimination which leads them to seek the same comfort in Islam as those in France.

Consciousness of being Muslim in Europe was greatly raised by the Iranian uprising against the Shah of Persia which brought in a puritanical regime devoted to the Sharia, the religious law. Known as 'le mouvement iranien', this change of regime showed the dynamism of a polity based on the Qur'an and gave comfort to those who saw the Muslim East as offering some counterbalance to the dominant, globalizing, Christian West. 'On the part of Muslims', wrote Kepel (1991: 18), 'the Iranian revolution gave birth to considerable enthusiasm, gave pride in their religious faith to a number of people who otherwise would be ashamed of the devalued view of Islam they were faced with in the West.' That was a time when petro-dollars from Arab countries helped to support Islamic associations and when Islamic awareness grew rapidly; 1989 has even been described as 'a Muslim year' (Kaltanbach and Tribalat 2002: 188). In schools, it was 'la guerre du foulard', the war, or the crisis, of the headscarf. Somewhat tendentially, Kaltanbach and Tribalat use the term veil (as in the title to chapter 6, 'Le voile et la république'), but it was never that. However, certain schools regarded the wearing of the headscarf as a threat to the exclusion of religion from schools, as demanded by the republic. The wearing of a headscarf suddenly grew more popular, in Turkey, in Algeria, in Britain, throughout Europe. Many saw this as a threat not only to a 'humanistic' education, but to internal peace. Not only did it represent a refusal to 'integrate', to do as others do, but possibly indicated an attachment to 'terrorist' causes and certainly a raising of consciousness. This was the year that saw a conference of European Muslims in the Netherlands, the aim of which was to try and get themselves recognized as a community with a legal status. Gradually that change is taking place.

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We are accustomed to think of Islamicist ideas as being spread by a handful of bearded clerics in the mosques of the larger cities. But, like the rest of the world, radical Islam has gone electronic and broadcasts its ideas via the internet, available in every cyber-café in town or every computer in the home. Kaltanbach and Tribalat devote a special chapter to 'L'Islam des internautes', listing some of the various websites propagating Islam, especially the Centre Islamique de Genève, which appeals to an international audience, bringing together fighters from Bosnia, Chechnya and elsewhere. Khosrokhavar, too, in his account of *Les Nouveaux Martyrs d'Allah* (2002), stresses the role of the internet in making radical Islamic ideas available to the diaspora, a medium that, because of its addiction to the 'virtual', increases the degree of radicalization of its message (2002: 324, on the 'néo-umma transnationale') since it tends to decontextualize ideas and to confuse the boundary between game ('starwars') and reality.

The recent advent of Muslims in Italy has been chronicled by Allievi and Dassetto in *Il ritorno dell' Islam: i musulmani in Italia* (1993). It is a return because Islam had been established in Sicily as early as the first visit of 'Saracens' in 652 CE. The capital Palermo was known as 'the town of three hundred mosques' by Ibn Hawkul, an Arab traveller in the Norman period. Conquest was followed by 156 years of domination, but the influence of Islam continued well into the Norman period, being especially important in the reign of Frederick II.

Islam spread to the mainland as well with the Emirate of Bari and to the far north in the Valley of Aosta, where small groups of Muslims had come from France. There is even mention of mosques up until the eighteenth century, especially 'the mosques for slaves' in coastal towns such as Genoa, Livorno and Naples.

Of course, Italy was always geographically close to the world of Islam, and the city of Venice conducted continuous commerce with the Turkish capital of Istanbul (and with Constantinople before that) as well as with other ports on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. But in the modern



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period Italy made little obvious effort to establish colonies in that area, though she did occupy Eritrea in 1885 and Somaliland from 1889, invading Ethiopia in 1895. Italy invaded Libya, still under Ottoman domination, in 1911. That was followed by Mussolini's grander imperial ambitions and the desire to make the country 'a great Islamic power' and the Mediterranean into 'our sea'. Unlike the case of those other imperial powers Britain and France, these adventures did not lead to a great influx of Islamic refugees in the period after the Second World War. However, since then there have been some immigrants from Albania and others from Somalia, both of which constituted part of the scene of Italy's conquests overseas, but the majority of Muslims have come from Morocco, Tunisia and the former Yugoslavia, perhaps 96,000 in the first case and 50,000 and 45,000 in the other two. The migration has been rapid, as we see from the growth in the number of mosques and places of prayer in recent years. Before 1970 there was only one (at Rome); by 1994 there were some sixty mosques and 100 to 120 places of prayer, often associated with particular national groups. The growth of mosques served some quarter of a million faithful and has been stimulated by the Unione degli Studenti Musulmani in Italia (USMI), founded in 1971 and located primarily in university towns, and receiving funds from Saudi Arabia and Libya, as in many other cases elsewhere.

The Muslims in Italy constitute the second most numerous religion in the country and belong to the same wide range of sects, movements and fraternities (*tariqa*) as in France. Numerically the most important of the *tariqa* is the Tijanniyya, but also of great significance among immigrants from the Senegal are the Murides, who are heavily involved in organizing their members for petty trading activities, here as in other parts of the world. The Murides collect contributions from their employed members which are paid to the local sheikh. He organizes a range of welfare activities for the members, who draw benefits from this 'friendly society'.<sup>20</sup> Other groups too may be linked to a charismatic leader or to the imam of a mosque.

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The Murides (from *murid*, seeker after God) are of special interest, since they spread throughout Europe as well as to New York and Hong Kong. They belong to a Sufi brotherhood from Senegal, from whence the earlier Almoravids came to conquer Spain. These itinerant traders are organized around a founding saint, Sheikh Amadu Bamba (c.1857–1927), whose followers were initially very successful in peanut farming in the early colonial period. The conditions of production and trade grew worse, and many abandoned agriculture and now belong to an international trading diaspora. They succeeded because of hard work, discipline and prayer, as well as through their efficient organization. The members (*taalibe*, disciples) are organized into ‘circles’ (*da’ira*) around a particular sheikh whom they support and with whom they keep in contact. The sheikhs generally visit their scattered circles once a year (O’Brien 1971).

The majority of the Murides are street peddlers but some have reached higher ranks in business. They deal in items that are small in size and produce a quick turnover, such as Asian watches and novelty items. Some Murides have become students, some work in other jobs, most still support themselves by trade (Ebin 1996). They return to Senegal from time to time to visit their holy city of Touba. While abroad they limit their contacts with the outside world and keep mainly to themselves.

Various movements, some of which are more political, others more religious, have spread throughout Italy, in particular the Jama’at al-Tabligh and the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as militant groups within the student organization who distribute Islamic literature. There are other movements connected with organizations such as Hamas and formerly the Afghan *jihād*. On quite a different level of sects we find groups of Shiites, but very few that relate to the countries of origin, unlike the situation in other European countries. At a yet more inclusive level of association there is the high status, ‘diplomatic’, Centro Islamico Culturale d’Italia, which has existed since 1966 and is in the hands of Saudi Arabia, as in most European capitals. This conservative body is

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opposed by a new one, Unione delle Comunità e delle Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia (UCOII), founded in 1977 but including older groups (among whom are the students). This radical group opposes the Centro as consisting of representatives of Islamic politics, of ambassadors, of persons compromised with Europe and the enemies of true Islam. It is this organization that is most prominent in the media.

The fact that in Italy as elsewhere groups of Muslims receive support from other Islamic powers – France from Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Syria – could be taken as interference by those nations in the internal affairs of the host country. But we have to put this aid in the context of the contributions of Jewish communities to Israel, long seen as interference by Palestinians and by other Muslim communities, as well as the aid offered by Western countries to missionary groups scattered throughout the world (and seen as a particular threat in China, India and some Arab countries).

Such external links are inevitable within written world religions whose boundaries necessarily stretch beyond those of nations or of ethnic groups and, as we have seen, are often of an enduring kind. That is even true of Hinduism, despite the absence of any overall religious organization; not only are immigrants, to Britain for example, drawn back on pilgrimage to various Hindu shrines (where these cannot be replicated locally) but wealth too returns in quantities large enough to make a substantial contribution to the country's balance of payments. Such a plurality of allegiances has to be accepted in the modern world, since they exist and would be difficult to eliminate, especially in view of the respect for cultural difference (multi-culturalism) which has become part of our more globalized network of communication and social space, our eating habits and our travel for business or for leisure.

Today Islam in Europe is an important religion with many adherents. Those followers range from the conservative to the radical, the latter being strongly opposed to the treatment of the Palestinians in the Near East and always providing a

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potential recruiting ground for violent and militant action, of the kind discussed in chapter 3. Their situation requires some kind of formal recognition on the part of the state, at least on the same level as that of the Jewish communities. While such recognition will not lead to the abandonment of Muslim causes throughout the world, it might help to lead to political rather than to violent action in their support. In any case we need to recognize Islam as part of our present as it has been such a significant part of our past. That process will involve some difficult adjustments which follow from the need for an overseas labour force drawn largely from former colonies or 'territories of influence', as well, of course, as from more generous inputs leading to the provision of a refuge for those in need.

More recently, Islamic activism has taken on a pan-European direction with the founding in 2001 of the Arab European League by Abou Jahjah, a Lebanese immigrant with a degree in political science and Belgian nationality. His aims, he declares, are neither extremist (fundamentalist) nor integrationist. Like his model, Malcolm X in the United States, he is against integration but in favour of Islamic pride. The demands include Islamic schools, bilingual education for Arab children, hiring quotas for immigrants and the recognition of Arabic as an official language (German is already so recognized on the basis of a much smaller minority). So far the movement too is relatively small, with no regular headquarters but meeting, significantly, in an Antwerp internet café (*International Herald Tribune*, 5 March 2003). Small as it is, it represents a new activism arising out of the immigrant situation which events in the Near East will only help to stimulate.