

# The Muslim Influence in the Haciendas of New Spain

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**Abstract:** *The hacienda in Mexico known as that self-sustaining production unit that emerged at the end of the 16th century and was consolidated in the 18th century, contributing to the economic diversification of the different regions of New Spain according to their production and for whose productive needs generated a diversity of sets in industrial and residential architecture, has its origins in Spanish farmhouses and in a series of constructive elements that we will list in this essay.*

**Keywords:** Muslim architecture, Haciendas of Mexico, Novohispanic architecture

## 1. The Muslim influence in Andalusia

The Muslim occupation in Hispania began in 711 AD, leading to the establishment and foundation of various entities, towns and cities in which cultural syncretism was evident through multiple cultural and artistic manifestations such as language, law, geography, roads, economic exchange, architecture, sculpture and minor arts; in short, the appropriation and adaptation of existing elements or models in the new paradigms of said time and space.

The Muslim expansion from North Africa was decisive from its gradual entrance to the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the alliances and internal help with thrones, ruling houses, invaders and rebels<sup>1</sup>, although the situation of the Visigothic Hispania was also decisive for occupation, since there was a moment of social tension between the Hispano-Goths (Mauritanians, Visigoths, Vandals and Byzantines).<sup>2</sup> For this reason there was a weakness in the kingdoms of Hispania that generated a social, economic and political lack of control. Likewise, the advance of Arianism over official Catholicism weakened the ecclesiastical institution, propitiating the marginalization and constant persecution of minorities.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the fact that the occupation of the territory was based on an Arab military invasion, Chalmeta proposes that it was not planned, but that it was an expedition, in borrowed boats, with a small group of a strictly male character<sup>4</sup>. Right now

...the Visigoths had centralized the State with Toledo as its capital. Such a designation came to disrupt the Hispanic structuring due to the certain fact that in the previous era – the strictly Roman Hispania – Córdoba was the ecclesiastical capital and – in some way – centralizing in the Hispano-

Christian time. For its part, in Hispano-Arabic time, Al Andalus would return in some way to the previous structure of Córdoba's capital in the Baetica, and such a structure would be maintained for a large part of Islamic-Arabic time.<sup>5</sup>

These population and political characteristics favored the integration of the female population through couple ties and the conversion of the natives due to the social and tax advantages that Islam offered as the dominant ideology.<sup>6</sup>

A cultural exchange was developed in the territory that permeated different spheres of society and human expressions, generating syncretisms between the Hispano-Christian culture and the Hispano-Muslim culture, converging in multiple spaces and moments in history.

The conversion in Hispania was not a forced act, the tolerance displayed by the Andalusian authorities favored coexistence between Muslims, Christians and Jews. This, without a doubt, contributed to the cultural interaction between these three groups, in such a way that there was a mutual influence.<sup>7</sup>

In this process, the population of Hispania was integrated into the Muslim culture in an effective and profound way, appropriating in both directions characteristic elements that defined the Al-Andalusí civilization. In the words of Cervera Fras "it received culture, contributed another and meant the penetration of an Eastern culture in the Western Christian world".<sup>8</sup>

With the peaceful emirate of Abd al-Rahman II (822-852) we find ourselves before a key period in the history of Muslim Spain. The new Emir laid the political-administrative, economic and cultural foundations of Al-Andalus, which the caliphal era would bring to its culmination. It is from the middle of the 9th century when it

<sup>1</sup>Julia Montenegro, Arcadio del Castillo. The Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula...p. 762.

<sup>2</sup>Emilio González Ferrín, General History of Al Ándalus...p. 115.

<sup>3</sup>María José Cervera Fras, Conquest and Muslim occupation. History of Aragon I, Zaragoza, 1989. p.120

<sup>4</sup>Pedro Chalmeta, Invasion and Islamization. The submission of Hispania...pp. 762-765.

<sup>5</sup>Emilio González Ferrín, op. cit., p. 184.

<sup>6</sup>Joaquín Vallve Bermejo, Spain in the 8th century... pp. 67-84.

<sup>7</sup>Luis Teófilo Gil Cuadrado, The Muslim influence...p.64.

<sup>8</sup>María José Cervera Fras, Conquest and Muslim occupation...p.120.

is allowed to speak of a total Islamization of Andalusian life, which will receive the influence of the Baghdad court. And this influx of oriental origin will not only affect the central and provincial administrative coverage of the Umayyad emirate, but will deeply permeate the mentalities, ways of life and customs of its inhabitants.<sup>9</sup>

Sánchez Albornoz refers to a series of cultural loans such as the melodic music of the East, transformed into choral music by the Andalusians, or the incorporation of various architectural elements. In addition, it addresses the social and cultural transformations that took place, as well as the multiple conflicts generated due to religion between Hispania-Muslim and Hispania-Christian.<sup>10</sup>

It can be inferred that the knowledge and ways of thinking of Al-Andalus are the result of syncretism formed through elements taken from the many occupied territories<sup>11</sup>.

## 2. Mudejar as a language

Within the territory of Al-Andalus multiple groups converged that shaped medieval Hispania. One of the determining groups in the formation of this culture were the Mozarabs, who, coming from the Hispano-Roman world, lived in the Muslim territory of the Iberian Peninsula during the Islamic domination.<sup>12</sup>

The appropriation and adaptation of elements continued to evolve, giving rise to a representative style of the Spanish territory: the Mudejar, made mainly by the Muslim groups that inhabited the Christian territory, assimilating the influences of Mozarabic, Visigothic, Romanesque, Gothic and Byzantine art.

Mudejar can be conceived not only as an artistic style, since according to Meyer Schapiro "for a historian of culture or philosopher of history, style is an expression of culture that brings together the set of visible signs of its unity"<sup>13</sup>, and Based on this affirmation, the questioning of the supposed Mudejar style has been formulated for lacking a unifying character of the Spanish culture.<sup>14</sup>

Taking into account the considerations of the cited authors, the Mudejar must be considered as a way of thinking, of doing and seeing the world, through the cultural combination that characterized the population of Andalusia or as the set of elements that made up the entire culture of the region.

Thus, the elements that build the Mudejar culture in Andalusia permeate beyond the arts and are nourished by the

interaction with the multiple ideas and thoughts of the inhabitants of the region.

Mudejar has as its main influence the ideas and beliefs of Christianity, combined with ideological elements of Islam, in addition to the contributions and interpretations of the different groups that converged in space. This term refers to the Arabic concept of *mudyyan*, tributary.<sup>15</sup>

Some of the characteristic elements within the artistic representations of the Mudejar come from the Romanesque and Gothic, finding ornamental motifs typical of Mozarabic cultures, adapting them to the conditions of the context, highlighting the use of materials typical of the region.

## 3. Mudejar architecture in Andalusia.

Despite the presence of Mudejar in different areas of Andalusian society, it is in architecture where we find some of the most relevant evidence and it is through this that the context and ideas on which it was built and defined can be interpreted. Andalusian culture.

Mudejar architecture is also a compendium of techniques, ideas and elements of the cultures that converged, through reinterpretation and adaptation to space, to the new use and the new needs of users; it was also affected by access to resources, Materials and labor.

During this period in Hispania, religious architecture acquired paramount importance due to its symbolic meaning from which the conversion of Christians to Islam was encouraged, but it also served as a space in which the coexistence of the different cults was reinforced. Some of the significant buildings of the time were temples, churches, chapels and monasteries.

Despite the rise and importance of religious architecture, civil architecture was also influenced by the cultural paradigms of the civilizations that preceded it, such as the Roman or the Visigoth through houses, palaces and some public facilities such as fountains and towers watch. In Muslim art the essential function was the ornamental; in Mudejar architecture the structural function competes with the ornamental function.

In addition to the ornamental elements that define the style, it is also possible to identify inherited elements, such as the morphology of the space in the house, which is developed around one or several<sup>16</sup> square or rectangular patios, equipped with porticoes on all four sides<sup>17</sup>.

Emilio Camps Cazorla approaches architecture in Andalusia from its eclectic character, taking as a case study the

<sup>9</sup>Manuel RiuRiu, et al, History of Spain...T-II, p. 37.

<sup>10</sup>Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, Spain: a historical enigma...p.19.

<sup>11</sup>Some of the conquered territories are the Visigoth kingdom, Persia, the Byzantine territories, North Africa, Central Asia (Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan) and the dominion over the nomadic tribes of the Maghreb (Berbers). Roger Collins, The Arab Conquest...pp.726-729.

<sup>12</sup>Giorgio Levi Della Vida, I mozarabi tra... pp.187.

<sup>13</sup>Schapiro Meyer, Style, artist and society... pp. 56-82.

<sup>14</sup>Alberto Nicolini, On the Mudejar urban insertion...pp. 39-54.

<sup>15</sup>Emilio González Ferrín, op cit, p. 496.

<sup>16</sup>This model of architectural layout was commonly used by the civilizations of the Indus River (Mohenjo-Daro, 3000-2000 BC), the Mesopotamian area (Sumeria, Ur, 2175-2000 BC) and the Mediterranean (Miceenas 1550-1100 BC) Katia Simancas Yovane, Housing in ancient times...pp. 57-59.

<sup>17</sup>Heritage of Roman architecture. Juan Agudo Torrico, Traditional architecture...p. 17.

Cordoba mosque in which Roman and Visigothic columns were implemented, in addition, the red and white colors in its arcades recall the Roman aqueduct of Mérida. The materials used are characteristic of Islamic architecture, including wood, brick and plaster.<sup>18</sup>

For his part, Valdés Fernández refers to the construction systems, pointing out that "it was the result of the work of expert masons who mastered Romanesque spaces, who were able to easily solve such audacious structures. . . they simplified them and interpreted them with singular attention".<sup>19</sup>

Andalusian rural architecture was also influenced by the paradigms, construction systems and materials found in the Mudejar constructions of the main cities, although to a lesser extent and adapted to the needs of each farm, some of the properties in which said influence are wineries, farmhouses and haciendas, as well as the complementary facilities in each of these.

Some characteristics of Muslim reminiscence in rural architecture are: the use of brick and plaster, the implementation of ornamental elements with a strong Muslim influence such as mosaics or painting and coffered ceilings.

#### 4. The farmhouse (cortijo) as a defining element of the Andalusian rural space.

Within the rural context, the Andalusian farmhouse occupies a leading role. These complexes contain multiple references and elements from different cultures and time periods. Although the influence of the Roman villa is evident, it also encompasses Muslim characteristics. One of these topics is the minaret, typical of Islamic architecture, which is adapted and implemented in the farmhouse.

The Andalusian rural environment includes Roman characteristics that were transformed by Muslim interaction, integrating the Mudejar style over the course of the time.

During the Visigothic period, the network of roads was mostly the same as in Roman times, although quite deteriorated due to the decrease in the transit of people and goods; however, the Muslims preserved these roads for the conquest of Hispania, to later restore them, implement complementary roads and new infrastructure, mainly bridges, inns, inns for authorities and officials, fountains, watering holes and on the main roads: towers and fortresses as elements surveillance and control of the roads.<sup>20</sup>

These complex communication systems have been modified over time, mainly due to the emergence of new population centers or the disappearance of others. The road served as a fundamental element in the functioning and interrelation of urban and rural systems.

The heritage of the multiple cultures that converged in the territory of Andalusia generated characteristics of the region and time, thus distinguishing it from the rest of Hispania. These characteristics are reflected in the architecture and urban planning of rural complexes such as the farmhouse, which later inherited these elements from the Andalusian hacienda.

After the reconquest, the Andalusian influence was favored by the monarchs, who adopted styles and customs of the Muslim culture, in addition, due to the absorption by the Christian kingdoms of the Islamic communities, they became Mudejar. Many of the inhabitants of these territories worked as builders or masons and left their mark on the peculiar art resulting from multiple secrecy, cultural adaptations and imposition of ideas.

#### 5. The export of Mudejar thought to the new world.

With the arrival of the conquerors in America, new ideas, paradigms and beliefs arrived that significantly altered the context of the territory. These new settlers imported characteristic elements of Spanish culture, among which was the Mudejar representation through architecture and some other artistic manifestations.

Mamani proposes that Mudejar art functioned as a bridge since it is the art that is recognized as Hispanic, a product of miscegenation and developed in conditions similar to those existing in America<sup>21</sup>, using it as a reference in architecture and as a model of occupation within the territory. .

The mestizo character of the Mudejar is also manifested in the American territory and maintained syncretic relations with the pre-Hispanic heritage, giving rise to manifestations that are the hallmark of the place in which they were made, impossible to find in Andalusia or in other territories where they were present. the style: "The Mudejar thus becomes the distinctive mark that, due to its positive solutions for the historical moment in which it develops, has a leading role in the construction of America"<sup>22</sup>.

Due to the complex sociopolitical, technological and ideological reality of the new territories, the mechanisms of diffusion and imprint of the moral values and aesthetic keys of the Spanish Crown, were part of the processes of conquest and acculturation that "culminated in the speech of the Mudejar Ibero-American, as a result of a peninsular political model tending to encompass, ideologically and formally, the plurality of cultural sequences".<sup>23</sup>

The perceptive and symbolic model that Mudejar architecture ensured in Spain spread in America with all its productive, organizational, and technical traditions, as well as its typologies, operations, customs, beliefs, and rituals.

<sup>18</sup>Emilio Camps Cazorla, Module, proportions and composition...pp. 59-66.

<sup>19</sup>Manuel Valdés Fernández, "Mudejar architecture... p. 72.

<sup>20</sup>Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, Itinerary of the conquest... pp. 21-74.

<sup>21</sup>Francisco Mamani, "The Hispano- Muslim heritage... pp.2-5.

<sup>22</sup>Jeronimo Páez, The Andalusian legacy... p. 95.

<sup>23</sup>Ignacio Henares Cuellar, Rafael, Lopez Guzman. From Granada to Mexico, ...Pp. 10-14.

Within the continent, as in the Iberian Peninsula, the main manifestations that can be found are within religious architecture, in temples, churches, monasteries and convents. Both the typologies, the materials, as well as the operation and ornamentation reflected the new ideas and their main purpose: to evangelize and control the territory.

With the arrival of Antonio de Mendoza as viceroy of New Spain, the existing colonization process promoted by the mendicant orders was reorganized, imposing Spanish master builders in order to regulate construction and avoid bad practices due to ignorance of the construction techniques of the mendicants. Construction managers who prioritized the spiritual function.<sup>24</sup>

It is essential to consider some factors that promoted the implementation of Mudejar in America: first, the imposition of a style as a discourse of power and domination over the inhabitants of the territory; the availability of raw materials (mainly wood) that allowed the construction systems imported from Andalusia to be implemented; the "indigenous construction skill"<sup>25</sup> of the builders and master builders who arrived with the conquerors; and the implementation of the "moderate trace".

The civil architecture of the time was also influenced by the syncretic thought that permeated each of the elements that made up the New Spain culture, mainly in the first centuries of the Spanish occupation, finding particular Mudejar components in multiple buildings, among the most recurrent: the alfarjes, the right feet, the carpentry (mainly in doors)

Although the elements of Mudejar art are evident in the architecture of America, there is a debate about its classification within the American territory, finding various authors who propose "survivals of Mudejar architectural or decorative elements in New Spain art, as an inheritance of an art itself". Mudejar that did not occur (within the territory) because the latter contains a historical and artistic content of a very specific period"<sup>26</sup>.

## 6. Continuities of Muslim thought in the Mexican hacienda.

The haciendas in America and specifically in the territory of the new Spain are the result of a long historical journey, of evolution, the adaptation of the natural space for its use and exploitation, always linked to agriculture and other productive activities such as livestock, metal benefit or processing of natural resources.

At the time of the arrival of the Spaniards in Mesoamerica, in the territory there were various towns and cities with a functioning social, cultural and political system, with established institutions and advanced technological development, as well as buildings and constructions that fulfilled various functions. Within Mesoamerican cultures.

The cultural and artistic progress that existed in each of the civilizations established in the American territory, allowed masters to exist in the various arts, in the case of architecture, these masters "constituted the support of the works built by the Spanish"<sup>27</sup>, mainly during the first years of the viceroyalty when there were still no Spanish builders.

Geographic and demographic expansion prompted the creation of new towns and cities that served different purposes: in some cases as centers of control and political and territorial dominance, in other strategic points of economic activities through the exploitation of the resources of the territory.<sup>28</sup> These new settlements were established under the ordinances, ideas and styles imported from Europe; however, the influence of pre-Hispanic cultures in the culture and architecture of these settlements was evident.

Due to the constant growth of the cities, the demand for basic products such as food increased considerably, generating a need that stimulated the development of the rural territory through agricultural and livestock activities<sup>29</sup>.

Rural growth promoted the establishment of farms and cattle ranches, which were units of limited production, smaller in size than the hacienda (similar to the smallholdings that were established in Spain), which had buildings made of perishable materials or with rudimentary buildings of stone or adobe dedicated to housing or storage, in addition, with corrals for cattle.<sup>30</sup>

These production systems were displaced and replaced with the establishment of the hacienda,<sup>31</sup> which functioned as a self-sufficient production center to later, with the founding and consolidation of large cities, become main nodes in trade routes and leading elements in the dynamics of consumption of the urban centers and mainly of the mining markets.

It is under the construction of the haciendas that we find one of the characteristics that are retaken from the Andalusian culture, by following a very similar development path in the rural territory, taking as a reference the creation of the farmhouses that were control centers and rural administration. . These buildings had the particularity of being self-sufficient economic units or with a high degree of independence, also becoming a fundamental part for the functioning of cities and urban areas.<sup>32</sup>

With the rise of a new model of production, exploitation of resources and their commercialization through the hoarding of large properties, the consolidation of the latifundium of Roman culture was promoted, made up of aristocratic owners and the personnel in charge of the operation of the property, as well as its production and exploitation.

<sup>27</sup>Ignacio Henares Cuellar, Rafael, Lopez Guzman. Mudejar architecture ...p. 27.

<sup>28</sup>Carlos Aguirre, "The constitution of the urban: ...pp.30-34

<sup>29</sup>David Navarrete, Mining in Zacatecas, ...pp. 89-95.

<sup>30</sup>Ward Barrett, The Sugar Estate... p. 97.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid*p.32.

<sup>32</sup>*Idem*.

<sup>24</sup>*Ditto*.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup>Guadalupe Avilez Moreno, Mudejar of New Spain...pp. 333-340.



Like the Andalusian farmhouse and hacienda, the Mexican hacienda became a small rural community, under the protection of the owner. At the end of the 16th century, the laborers of the large estates found everything they needed in them. This same phenomenon was also typical of the Lower Empire, where the fundos became closed economic and social units that were generally self-sufficient and in which the owner could manage to administer justice.<sup>33</sup>

The Roman villa was also an element that defined the architecture of the hacienda in New Spain, establishing itself as a production and habitation system. Its characteristics evolved to adapt to new needs, first in Andalusia and later in America, integrating models of stately residence of the landowner, increasingly sophisticated and elegant, establishing the *domus*<sup>34</sup> with particular characteristics such as its location within the complex, occupying the place of greater importance and becoming the axis for the distribution of the rest of the components.

In the haciendas of New Spain, it is evident how they followed the basic structure of the *domus*, which consisted of a central patio, which was accessed through a vestibule (*fauces*) to an atrium that delimited said patio, around which they were distributed. The rest of the areas. One of the most important and most influential spaces for later buildings was the *peristylum*<sup>35</sup>.

The typology of the large house<sup>36</sup> shows elements in common with villas and farmhouses, but adapted to the American context and responding to the needs of the place. It is possible to identify the central courtyard as the guiding axis of the architectural and urban complex, generally delimited by arcades in the manner of the *peristylum*; access through a hallway that can be related to the *fauces* and in general the distribution of spaces within the complex.

In addition, auxiliary elements were implemented, which allowed the correct functioning of these productive units, taking up the characteristics of the rustic villa<sup>37</sup> that contained the sites dedicated to production, among which

the employee housing, storage places, barns, stables, etc. orchards, mills or presses depending on their vocation.

In this human settlement, the necessary buildings were concentrated for the correct development of productive, recreational, worship, housing, administration, commerce and education activities, as well as the physical space that contained the social interaction of multiple users. According to Chevalier, these complexes also had the function of social, religious and military control.<sup>38</sup>

The surrounding materials and construction techniques will affect the characteristics of the building and the definition of its constructions, subject to the production system and the organization of work itself, where the presence of the owner's living area was the private setting for relationships of the new agrarian aristocracy. From there, the areas were gradually distributed, hierarchizing their functions until reaching the operators' quarters.

As in the stately buildings of European complexes, in America the ornamental elements and construction systems and special materials functioned as a symbol of economic power, although with symbolism and repercussions on the social development of the complex's inhabitants.

Weckmann<sup>39</sup> asserts that the Spanish were able to transmit typically medieval values and institutions to the New World. Thus, the *encomienda* that was born in the Spain of the Reconquest is linked to the appearance of the Mexican hacienda, whose parallelism with the rural property of the Mediterranean established Chevalier: a pastoral stage (livestock in Mexico), the construction of a Roman villa (the helmet of the hacienda), the birth of the feudal aristocracy (the colonial nobility), the grabbing of land and the constitution of a population center around the room of the great owner.<sup>40</sup>

From its first evolutionary stages, the incorporation of components such as manors and chapels, showed the tendency that should complement the initially productive one that would be the dominant one. Therefore, the relationship of a ruling social class-whatever its characteristics-and an extensive property that functions as a leisure and productive space will make the hacienda model the most suitable for adapting to the American reality that developed from of the 16th century, establishing a logical parallelism between Europe and America<sup>41</sup>.

As in the cases of ancient Spain, the need arose to adapt to the new economic, social and political conditions of each historical period, so it is essential that the constructions evolve and adapt to provide solutions to the new needs and show stylistic references that would draw from European models incorporating the idiosyncrasy of the region's own solutions, functioning as legitimizers of the owner due to their high symbolic and rhetorical component.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>33</sup>*ibid.* p. 236.

<sup>34</sup>It consisted of high-level housing, generally belonging to the Roman aristocracy, large in size and loaded with ornamentation that evidenced the tastes, interests and power of the owners. María Luz Neira Jiménez, Approach to the ideology of the Hispanic elites in the Roman Empire... p.266

<sup>35</sup>It consists of a porticoed courtyard, generally adorned with fountains, gardens or sculptures, around which the private rooms were arranged. *Ibid* p.268.

<sup>36</sup>This is how the house of the owner of the hacienda is known, it constitutes one of the main spaces. María del Carmen López Núñez, The role of the farm as a form of collective housing... <https://raco.cat/index.php/ScriptaNova/article/view/60256>

<sup>37</sup>Some authors make a differentiation between the urban villa, which includes the residence of the landlord or *domus*, which was distinguished by the quality of the materials used, the construction systems used and the ornamentation implemented (highlighting the mosaics in the Hispania region). On the other hand, the rustic villa refers to the buildings outside the walls of the *domus*, among which were the housing of settlers and slaves, the storage and production spaces, these with greater precariousness in their construction. María José Bravo-Bosch, Urban planning and territory in late antiquity in Hispania... pp.145-191

<sup>38</sup>Chevalier, Fracois, The formation of large estates....pp. 33-43.

<sup>39</sup>Luis Weckmann, The feudal society... pp. 29-36.

<sup>40</sup>*Idem*

<sup>41</sup>*ibid.* p. 96.

<sup>42</sup>Ricardo Pérez Monfort, Haciendas and ranches in...pp. 24-41.

It is thus that in the current Mexican territory and in the different regions where the treasury complexes are visualized, a series of influences can be located fundamentally from the architectural discourses coming from Muslim Spain and from all the stylistic aspects that influenced it during many centuries of entries. Cultures from his birth to 1521 that moved to the American continent.

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