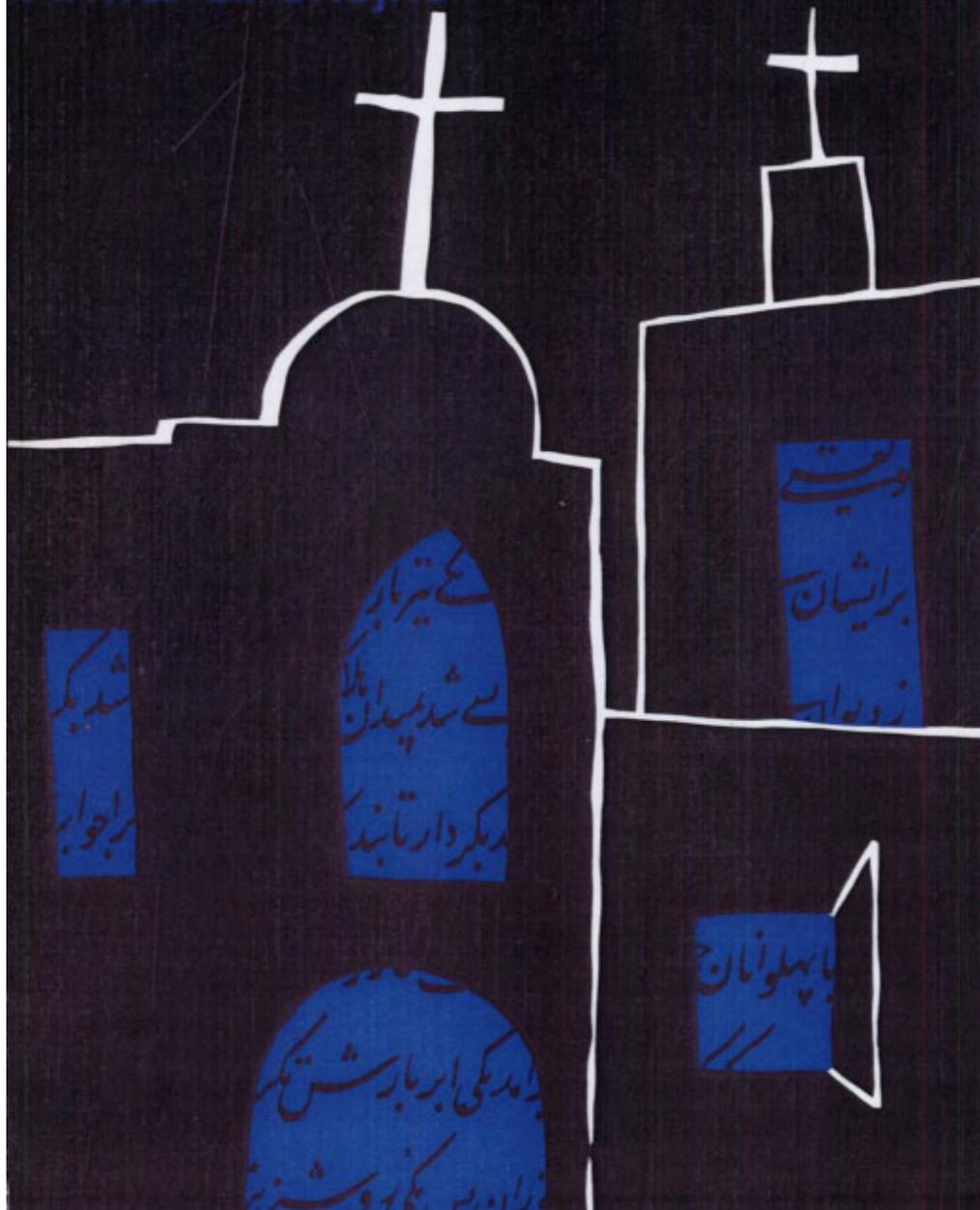


# ISLAM AND THE WEST: THE MORISCOS

A Cultural and Social History

Anwar G. Chejne



“The strength of Moriscos’ belief in a future deliverance is based on a number of prophecies that foretell not only their desperate plight, but the ultimate triumph of Islam over Christianity.” Some of those prophecies became known to the Inquisition, giving an added pretext for harsher measures against the Moriscos“. It is of great significance that two prophecies are attributed to San Isidoro, which give added strength to Morisco expectation. One prophecy says that one cannot change what Allah has ordained: In the year 1501<sup>62</sup> Spain will be so chaotic that no one will know whether he is coming or going; there will be great evil and corruption. In that year the Muslim faith will decline and will be followed by conversion of Muslims into Christianity. However, Christianity will soon be overtaken by evil and will be finished at the hands of Moors, who will conquer all of Spain. A destructive war will continue until the will of God is fulfilled. The second prophecy" of Isidoro is filled with admonition and lament: Spain is depicted as boiling in the passion of its evil deeds, beyond salvation because of the enormity of its sins. It will become like a herd without a shepherd, a corpse without a head, and widows and people without a leader“. Its governors will be thieves; famine, war, and death will overwhelm it; knights will be hypocrites, and the clergy vainglorious, sinful, and lecherous. Religious men will lack conviction, truth, and charity; and the anger of God will fall upon them. All this will come about after the fall of Constantinople, when the Moors will give the final blow.

**A third prophecy<sup>65</sup> is attributed to Muhammad himself**, and may have formed the basis for other prophecies. It is related that Muhammad was asked about the end of the world and what would happen thereafter to his community. Muhammad replied that the world will come to an end when the most perverse and worst people appear at a time when a part of his community will still be in an island situated in the extreme west which is called Andalusia. The people of his community will be the last of its inhabitants. All calamities will befall them because of their neglect of the religious law and their worldliness, neglecting prayers and indulging in luxury. The minors among them do not respect the elderly, nor do the elderly have compassion for the minors; in justices and false oaths abound among them; merchants purchase and sell with usury and deceit and covet properties. These and other evil things will become manifest, and God will subject them to people worse than they. They will be tormented; cruel governors will rule over them; their property will be confiscated for no reason; they will be captive and subject to killing and conversion and will worship images and idols; they will be obligated to eat bacon, and will endure other oppressions to the point of hopelessness and despair. God will punish their sins, but He will also have pity on them and will forgive them when those evils are eradicated and when they return to the practice of the religious law. The cruelty imposed will be so intense that the angels will become vexed and will appear before Almighty calling His attention to their plight. It is then that God, the Avenger, will send someone to rescue them from their miserable condition. This will take place when the New Year falls on a Saturday. God will then send a sign consisting of a cloud of birds, two of which will represent the angels Gabriel and Michael. The first cloud of birds will be followed by other birds of the earth to announce the coming of the king of East and West, who will take Andalusia. The conflict between Islam and Christianity will end with a return to the law of the Moors. There will be much cloud in that year, scarcity of water, trees bearing extra fruits, and other signs.”