FOREWORD

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In 1492 Fernando and Isabel accepted the surrender of the city-kingdom of Granada, the last redoubt of Muslim political power on the Iberian Peninsula, granting in return to the conquered the right to continue practicing their religion. In 1501 officials of the same monarchs broke that promise and offered the region's Muslims a "choice" between conversion to Christianity or expulsion from their homes and lands in the Peninsula. Tens of thousands chose conversion, giving birth to what would become a new religious category in Spain, that of the Moriscos, as the converts and their descendants came to be known.

The creation of this new category (made much larger over time by the eventual forced conversion of Muslims living in Valencia, Aragon, and other regions of the Peninsula) raised any number of new questions. Among these were questions of what it meant to be Muslim, what it meant to be Christian, and what aspects of a person's behavior or belief needed to change in order to make the transition from the one to the other. Today we often speak of "religious identity" as if the phrase—with its etymological implication of the subject's religious "oneness," "unity," or "sameness"—were unproblematic. But what these mass conversions of Muslims to Christianity catalyzed was a debate about precisely what such spiritual "oneness" required of the individual. This basic question, already posed sharply a century earlier but in a different flavor with the forced conversion of the Peninsula's Jews to Christianity, was the bellows that raised the issue of Christian perceptions of Muslim identity to a red-hot heat.

Addressing the converts at around the time of their baptism, Hernando de Talavera, Granada's first archbishop, took a position on this question: "So that no one might think that you still adhere to the sect of Muhammad in

your heart, it is necessary that you conform in all things to the good and honest ways of good and honest Christian men and women, including their manner of dressing, wearing shoes, doing their hair, eating at tables, and cooking their food."[1] Note how the model of religious subjectivity implicit here approaches a totalizing "identity." In order for the interior spiritual state (the heart) of converts to be legible as Christian to someone else, their exterior, so to speak, had to "conform in all things" to the exterior of known, nonconverted Christians ("old," "clean" Christians, in the vocabulary of Talavera's contemporaries).

The book before you is, among other things, an exploration of the consequences that flowed from the emergence and imposition of this model of religious subjectivity. It focuses on many of the same registers of culture as in Hernando de Talavera's exhortation: dress, food, manners, and other aspects of behavior whose relationship to faith was neither simple nor obvious to contemporaries (or to us). Through this exploration it shows us what Christians (and to a lesser degree, Muslims) perceived as "Islamic," and how that perception changed as a consequence of these mass conversions. All kinds of cultural practices become meaningful. Baths, for example, emerge as signifiers of Islam, napkins and tablecloths become banners of Christianity. Couscous can condemn a descendant of converts who eats it as "Muslim" before the Inquisition but be included in a royal chef's cookbook as an exotic delicacy. Painstakingly piecing together these fragments of culture, Olivia Remie Constable reveals to us how a society built and rebuilt its images of Islam, and with what consequences, for Muslims and for Christians both.

In this task she was inspired by a remarkable predecessor, himself a member of the very first generation of Moriscos: Francisco Núñez Muley, born into an elite Muslim family in Granada shortly before the city's surrender to the Catholic Monarchs in 1492. Many years later, in 1567, the now venerable Morisco took up his pen to protest prohibitions recently promulgated by royal officials on certain activities by Moriscos—frequenting baths, speaking Arabic or possessing Arabic books, using their old family names, singing their traditional songs, or wearing their traditional dress. According to the officials, these activities were Islamic or Islamizing. They threatened or belied the Moriscos' Christian faith and therefore had to be abandoned by them, whether of their own volition or by force. In page after page of his memorandum, Núñez Muley argued that these aspects of Morisco culture were local customs, not carriers or determinants of what we today would call religious identity. Ancient communities of Christians in the Holy Land, he pointed out, spoke Arabic and dressed in local garb but were no less Christian for that. Foods

and foodways were not matters of faith but of habit and taste; baths were a question of hygiene, not of Islam, for Moriscos who labored in fields and mines.

Núñez Muley's passionate and precocious critique of these totalizing Christian models of Muslim "identity" appeals to the present antiessentialist generation of historians, who have learned to think of culture as construction, but it went unheeded in its own day. The prohibitions on dress, food, language, and so on were imposed on the Moriscos, with tragic results: violence, rebellion, massacre, and eventually expulsion. This book is a history of those cultural practices, a history that Núñez Muley did not—could not—write. Would the outcome have been different if Christian authorities had been able to read Remie Constable's history rather than Núñez Muley's polemic? The question may seem perverse, but I ask it to make a point: *To Live Like a Moor* is a book that teaches us about a history with enormous consequences for Muslims and Christians alike. How we learn to think about that history today may not change the fate of the Moriscos, as Núñez Muley tried to do, but it may very well help us change our own "fate," as we think about similar questions about religion, Islam, and Christianity in our day.

To Live Like a Moor is the last book we can hope for from Remie Constable's pen. Indeed she was not able to complete the manuscript before her untimely (she was fifty-three) death in 2014. She bequeathed the task of preparation for publication to her student Robin Vose, to whom we as readers owe an enormous debt. (Professor Vose describes the precise contours of his editing in the following preface.) It seems fitting here, in the first pages of her final work, to dwell for a moment on its elder siblings, for her career was fruitful and extremely distinguished, although too brief.

The honor of primogeniture belongs to her Princeton doctoral dissertation, published as *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900–1500* (Cambridge, 1994). The title alone makes clear the subject and vast scope of that book, although no title could reveal the riches it contained. For already in this first book Professor Constable displayed the characteristic virtues that mark all her subsequent work: a special focus on the material conditions of life, a willingness to embrace time spans of a length that make most historians blanch, and a technical ability to work with a vast array of sources, from Arabic chronicles to the ledgers of Genoese merchants, from pilgrimage narratives to ships' manifests.

Trade and Traders was a book very much alert to the lessons of the founding giants—Fernand Braudel, Charles Verlinden, Roberto S. Lopez, and Shelomo

Dov Goitein—who taught the historical profession about the enduring importance of the movement of commerce as a mode of what we might call cultural production and intercultural exchange. It was equally influenced by the next generation in this field, some of them Constable's teachers at Princeton, such as Abraham Udovitch and Mark Cohen. But unlike the work of these great predecessors, it was marked by equally deep commitments to the western European and the Islamic medieval traditions, and to sources both Latin and Arabic. In this sense the book marked the emergence of a new generation of historians of the Mediterranean, one eager to explore the interaction between Christendom and Islamdom along as many axes as possible.

Remie Constable was not only a founder of this generation, she was also particularly gifted at discovering new axes for it to explore. I think it is on page 43 of *Trade and Traders* that readers first encounter what seems merely a detail of some of the treaties negotiated between the Almohads and the Genoese: these often included provisions regarding the establishment of *funduqs* (translated here as "hostelries") for Genoese merchants in Almohad lands. It is difficult to imagine trade agreements today spending much time on hotels for business travelers, but by page 119 we learn that one anonymous author reported as many as sixteen hundred such establishments in early thirteenth-century Islamic Córdoba, while others reported roughly one thousand in Almería: places "where merchants, travelers, single men, foreigners, and others may stay."

I am not sure if Professor Constable already knew as she wrote those pages that in these *funduqs* she had found the foundations for her next book, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2003). Again her penchant for titles both clear and illuminating makes evident the vast scope of the book, which used the long history of "hotels"—from the ancient Greek *pandocheia* so scathingly criticized by Plato in his *Laws*, to the *funduqs* of classical Islam and their final transformation into *fondacos* at the hands of European commercial powers like the Catalans and the Venetians—to explore a long and shifting history of exchange and interaction between communities of disparate faiths.

Like *Trade and Traders*, the book was a major contribution to the long tradition of scholarship on commercial institutions from which she in some sense descended. But it is also a monument of scholarship in the tradition of another of her teachers, John Boswell, who captured her attention (as he did that of so many others, including me) during her undergraduate years at Yale.

Much as Boswell had done in works like *The Kindness of Strangers* (1988), on the abandonment of children in western Europe, but on an even wider canvas that included the Islamic as well as the Christian world, Constable proceeded to create a pointillist portrait of a vast but hitherto overlooked cultural formation out of an accumulation of tiny shards of detail expertly recovered from a seemingly endless library of heterogeneous sources. Is it fanciful to detect a hint of homage in the echo between titles?

If for the sake of brevity I mention only her monumental monographs, it is not for lack of contributions in other genres. Remie was also mistress of the short form, and published pieces—such as her article on the medieval slave trade as an aspect of Muslim-Christian relations, or her essay on chess and courtly culture—chiseled and compressed on fundamental topics that others might have stretched into a book. She also translated her pedagogical gifts into print, editing a collection of documents for the classroom that has become the broad gate through which a generation of students enters into the rich "multicultural" history of medieval Iberia.[2]

The present book, unlike Professor Constable's previous works, is not primarily about commercial institutions or relations. Its arch extends over fewer centuries, and its emphasis is more melancholic: more a history of how exchange was impeded than how it was facilitated. But like all of her engagements with the past, this one is focused on the ever-shifting cultural formations that mediated interactions between Muslims and Christians (and Jews as well, though these were less often the focus of her attention) in the medieval Mediterranean and especially Spain. It is easy enough to see how it grew out of her previous engagements. *Trade and Traders* already pivoted around the great shift that occurred in the relative fortunes of Iberian Islam and Christianity, and *Housing the Stranger* contained revealing pages about how that same shift transformed the meaning and function of the *funduq* of Valencia.

But it is also easy enough to see how these differences illustrate yet another of Professor Constable's great virtues as a historian: because she was always on the qui vive for new approaches and interests emerging in the profession, her work could put the medieval material she mined so well to the service of historians discovering those emerging topics even before they knew they wanted it. To pick but one example, whatever period they work in, the many historians who are becoming interested in the cultural work done by material culture—dress, food, housewares and furnishing, the things and objects we bear about our lives as we construct them—will find much inspiration in these pages. So too will those whose attention is increasingly tuned to

questions of Islamic “diasporas” in Christian Europe, both past and present. There is a great deal to learn from this book, which cannot help but remind readers who knew its author in life (and I suspect also the many more readers who did not) what a sharp loss we have all suffered with the too early silencing of such a generous, learned, distinctive, and humane historical voice.

NOTES

FOREWORD

1. Antonio Gallego Burín and Alfonso Gámir Sandoval, *Los moriscos del Reino de Granada según el sínodo de Guadix de 1554* (facsimile; Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1996), 162–63; cited in Chapter 4.

2. "Muslim Spain and Mediterranean Slavery: The Medieval Slave Trade as an Aspect of Muslim-Christian Relations," in *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000–1500*, ed. Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 264–84; "Chess and Courtly Culture in Medieval Castile: The *Libro de ajedrez* of Alfonso X, el Sabio," *Speculum* 82, no. 2 (April 2007): 301–47; *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997; 2nd ed., with the assistance of Damian Zurro, 2012).

EDITOR'S PREFACE

1. For related studies using different methodological approaches and different types of sources, see, for example, John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); and Barbara Fuchs, *Exotic Nation: Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

2. Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) xi; Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xix.

CHAPTER 1

1. As explained in the preface, a planned fifth chapter on the significance of Muslim music, naming, and language practices must await future publication.

To Live Like a Moor

Christian Perceptions of Muslim Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Spain

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