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Of Word and Stone: The History of Medieval Spain through the Lens of Architecture and Language

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Introduction

Medieval Spain is a unique summation of religious and cultural communities. Through the built forms of Al-Andalus, there is unique preservation of societal imprints that parallel the formation of the Castilian language.[1] These two mediums—architecture and language—are a telling of the culture and history of the region. By first observing the historical formation of Spanish, and in turn the various communities which inhabited the Iberian Peninsula, one may find many correlations with architecture created at the same time. After understanding the historical making of the Spanish language, it is important to analyze the language itself and how it differs from English, as a point of reference. Drawing out these theories entails conjecturing over their origin stories, structural similarities, and finally by comparing various equivalencies between the two forms. The landscape of central to southern Spain is a unique area which contains an overlaying of societies and religious groups which used similar styles in their architecture. Through the study of the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian social and political groups, architecture and language can be theorized as more the same than not. The cities of Toledo, Córdoba, and Granada have prominent works which showcase these attributes during the Middle Ages. By studying the culture of Al-Andalus through the forms of architecture and language, one can also see the reflection of language within architecture.

Structure of the Capstone

The history of the Spanish language closely follows the historical changes in rulership throughout the Iberian Peninsula. The first section of this essay discusses the beginning of the

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[1] Al-Andalus refers to the area of the Iberian Peninsula under Islamic rule, up to 1492.

development of the Spanish language from the first century BCE and culminating in the fifteenth century. To study the formation of the language is one way to see how culture has been preserved within Spanish, while another is to study its grammatical structure. The end product, standard Spanish, catalogs thought processes and cultural notions. By studying morphemes, phonemes, sentence structure, and the numerous tenses and moods, one can grasp in a holistic sense how language functions as a living document for society through history.

Language and architecture may be similar incubators for culture and politics, as shown in medieval Spain. The second section describes how architecture and language have similar structures by bringing together communication and ideas. There are few ways to use either medium without conveying a message. By looking at case studies and theories about the forms, it is possible to "read" architecture through the lens of language. The systems of language mentioned above might have their equivalent in space, such as a word equating to an arch, a layout of spaces to the arrangement of a sentence, or a monument representing a manifesto. With the rich history of medieval Spain, there is clear legibility of culture and political change ingrained in the formation of the Spanish language and architecture. Taking the Great Mosque of Córdoba (8th-13th centuries), and the Alhambra (8th-15th centuries) as primary examples, it is possible to apply language as a structural system and read their architecture.

The final section explores how architecture and language are forms that do not happen in a void, rather they are used by powerful people in culture and to achieve certain ends. This section places previous linguistic history mentioned and the architectural monuments brought forth in context to their location. The architecture answers questions about the historical events that occurred during the tumultuous period. In medieval Spain, the question of patronage is complex. Convivencia, one of the large societal ideas that helps us understand the situation

emphasizes the coexistence of three religious groups in the same culture.[2] This has been preserved in works in cities such as Toledo, Córdoba, and Granada. By looking at specific examples of prominent architecture, one can in turn see how historical events and life are inscribed in the walls of buildings, and furthermore, how they compare to language. Toledo was a cultural capital for the peninsula; looking at the Synagogue of Santa María la Blanca (1100s), and the San Juan de los Reyes Monastery (1476), one can still read the convivencia which occurred in the city and its religious spaces. The Great Mosque of Córdoba is a religious and political example of the palimpsest of rulers and periods encased within a single building. The last city remaining in Al-Andalus prior to the reign of the Catholic Monarchs (r. 1474-1504) is Granada, which is home to the Alhambra. The Alhambra, an Islamic fortress, expresses the life of royalty for Muslim rulers, while also capturing the moment the Iberian Peninsula became a Christian controlled land. Subsequent buildings within the city, such as the Royal Chapel and the Palace of Charles V, both constructed during the sixteenth century, demonstrate a different reign in the land and a new way of encoding language into architecture.

Historiography

There are many sources which cover the history of Spanish architectural monuments. Of those most useful for my research are those written from the 1970s to the 2000s, starting with Oleg Grabar. Important to my background is *The Alhambra,* written in 1978, which takes an analytical look at the fortress of the Alhambra. This art historian interrogates dynamics within the structure

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[2] Vivian B. Mann, Jerrilynn Denise Dodds, and Thomas F. Glick, *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain* (New York: G. Braziller; The Jewish Museum, 1992), 3-4. The work serves as a focal point to describe society during the dynastic changes from the 700s to the 1500s in Al-Andalus.

and the monument's significance. Grabar analyzes the relationship between secular architecture in the medieval time period and Islamic architecture through this fortified city, an area less explored due to limited first-hand sources.[3] Divided into three sections, Grabar studies its lineage and physical context, functions, and forms. He offers explanations for the design choices with trenchant formal analysis, but leaves his theories open-ended and does not state them for fact. Within this time of architectural review, it was the norm to speak of built forms in an analytical way from a design perspective. Though the book includes some historical background, it mainly focuses on what is visible within the Alhambra and little outside context.

To cover the history of this time, other resources are employed to understand both physical and social perspectives of Spain. The coexistence of three distinct cultures and religions, and their relationship within a specific region, is, for some historians, showcased through the term convivencia, as mentioned above. For example, the authors of *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain* (1992) write with a specific emphasis on the mostly neutral coexistence of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian cultures, at least up to the time of total Christian rule.[4] The contributing authors argue that under Muslim rule, both Christians and Jews lived under a more equitable rule than was the case in other European cities. They strive to write in an unbiased tone, without commentary of the ongoings that overtly incite a specific sentiment. But as a work published in conjunction with the Jewish Museum in New York, there is a clear desire to represent what the Sephardic Jews' experience was.

As more authors have written about this time period, there have been varying perspectives or takes on convivencia. The work *The Ornament of the World* by María Rosa

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[3] Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* (Solipsist Press), 1992.
[4] Mann, Dodds, and Glick, *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*.

Menocal, written in 2002, creates a complimentary understanding of the unique period of cultures coexisting in southern Spain before 1492.[5] It is a persuasive study meant to honor the coalescing of the three cultures in their fullness, invoking a sense of loss for, according to some historians, an over-idealized past. The book can be biased in describing the highlights of the cultural sharing that occurred, while neglecting the experiences of other religious groups that still took place, as mentioned by Brian Catlos in *Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain* (2018).[6] It is a glimpse into the best moments and products of the time period, and offers information on how knowledge and beliefs were spread between the three cultures.

On the history of the Spanish language, Ralph Penny, a well-known linguist, delves deeply into the morphological and syntactical history of the language in *A History of the Spanish Language*, written in 1991 but revised to its third edition in 2009.[7] Penny recounts the internal history and development of the language and its phonology, including some social and historical context behind new additions to the language. The source is unbiased, without overt ulterior motives and strives to provide clear documentation of the complex linguistic history of Spanish. Penny discusses the history of the formation of Spanish briefly, only to add context to how Spanish functions today. He is analytical in his approach to the language, only stating what is known for fact in a categorical fashion. Works that weave together language and architecture are relatively few, but an important source for this essay is "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture" (2017) by Jason Rhys Parry.[8] Parry compiles thoughts on this relationship in a purely theoretical form, using both linguistic and architectural articles as

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[5] Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2012).
[6] Brian A. Catlos, *Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain* (Basic Books, 2018).
[7] Ralph Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), 7728.
[8] Jason Rhys Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," (*SubStance* 46, no. 3, 2017) 125–149.

sources. He is known as a semiotician who has written a wide variety on "ruinology" and its application to other mediums. Parry is not an architect or historian, so he approaches architecture and language (and their combined origins) through a symbolic perspective. He first measures similarities between the structure of language and the structure of architecture, looking at grammar and semantics through comparisons of physical mediums. He compares the analogy of language to architecture to other famous analogies, such as architecture to a machine or to a living organism. Finally, Parry draws attention to the similarities in their end goals of communication, while also noting that the two forms have differences. Though the article does not consider the history of architecture or how the theory works beyond the present, it is a new thought-process on the intersection of language and architecture.

The formation and use of the Spanish language is a capsule for the history and culture of medieval Spain. Studying and experiencing the architecture created under Islamic and Catholic rulers showcases messages and moments of history in a similar way as the formation of the language. In this essay, language and architecture are treated less as distinct mediums and more as interrelated modes of communication for political and cultural beliefs, as well as devices to impose messages. Through the study of both Spanish architecture and language, the history of Al-Andalus is remembered and revisited. The cities of Toledo, Córdoba, and Granada are key to grasping the unique changes the area underwent while being inhabited by Jewish, Muslim, and Christian groups in overlapping time periods. To view the history of medieval Spain through the lens of architecture and language is to study how and what each mode of communication conveys.

The Spanish Language

Iberia has hosted numerous communities and languages within its peninsula, contributing to a unique cultural crossing of diverse peoples and beliefs. To study the language of the region is to study the many groups that have inhabited its landscape, beginning with northern European communities such as the Celts, continuing through the age of Roman civilizations, and arriving at modern-day Spain and the dominant Spanish language. Latin through the Romans created the bones of what would be the standard Spanish language. Closely following this was the impact of the Visigoths who established settlements and linguistic precedents that would forever impact the path of the language thereafter. Influences from Arabic-speaking peoples, traveling through North Africa, had a strong-welded hand in the vocabulary of Spanish. The culmination of differing religious and cultural groups that created their own languages and dialects, such as Mozarabic, were integral to the formation of Castilian, a term which here refers to Old Spanish (medieval) as well as to the Spanish spoken in Spain today. The Spanish language is a direct accumulation of the numerous communities and reigns that preceded the formation of the Castilian tongue.

The Plurality of Languages in the Iberian Peninsula

The timeline of historical influences begins with pre-Roman communities, with the Celts around the first century BCE as the most prominent group in the Iberian Peninsula, mainly located to the north and west. Though the language has stayed intact within Galicia through the continuance of

the Basque language, their influence on Spanish is present only in words loaned to Latin.[9] Other dialects of smaller groups were eventually taken over by Latin, with few changes or additions made to what would become Spanish. For example, by the first century CE Tartessian, spoken in the region that is now Andalucía and southern Portugal, was lost as were Iberian and Greek, which were once used in Catalonia and Valencia.[10]

The Romans brought the Latin language to the Iberian Peninsula in the first century CE and the language became more dominant by the third century CE when migrants and those in commerce grew in number. Because of the early Latinization, the form of the language brought to the region was "vulgar" while in Italy and other areas of Europe Latin developed into later phases. This left a unique "idiosyncratic form of Peninsula Romance" in Spain.[11] Because of this, it was considered to be a less eloquent stage of Latin usage. During this period, language was not centralized, but diversified, and many dialects were spoken in a variety of regions.[12] If Latin was not sufficient for new ways of life or landscapes found in Iberia, the language would borrow from other communities and their languages, such as Basque.[13] Peninsula Romance became unique to Spain during this time and was cultivated further under the Visigothic rulers.

The Visigoths were Christians, a branch of the Goths from Germanic Europe who overtook the peninsula from the Romans in the fifth century. They contributed many cultural changes and established geographical landmarks which ultimately added dramatically to the creation of the Spanish language. From the fifth to eighth centuries, the group started as Roman military personnel and subjects, and later became independent monarchs when the Western

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[9] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language*, 7728.
[10] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 985.
[11] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 994.
[12] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,*1003.
[13] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,*7681.

Roman empire fell. Their capital was initially in Toulouse, France.[14] The change in rule did not create a new language to replace Latin, as it is most likely that the Visigoths already spoke Latin along with their native Germanic language. During this time, Latin was the linguistic form cultures were fostered in and administration was conducted through. Though there were not many morphological facets added to Latin by the Visigoths, one example that still is present in Spanish today is the addition of *-ez* or *-oz* endings to surnames, meaning 'son of.' This is shown in *Rodrigo* to *Rodríguez*, or *Fernando* to *Fernández*.[15] Many of the languages of other communities were abandoned in this time; there was a loss of bilingualism as Latin became the mainstream language, though diverse itself in its forms across the region.[16] One of the main linguistic advancements of the Visigoths was achieved through establishing Toledo as their governmental capital. The city became an urban jewel in central Spain already in the eighth century. Alfonso VI of Castile and León, conqueror of Toledo in 1085, introduced Castilian to the city. Later, the Catholic Monarchs, determined to conquer the entire peninsula and restore its former Christian roots, imposed Castilian on their newly acquired territories.[17]

A long period of Islamic rule brought Arabic and Arabic culture, which greatly influenced language and society in medieval Spain. Starting with the Umayyads, whose conquest in Spain began in 711 CE, is when Arabic became a substantially more cultivated and prestigious language than the Hispanic Romance language, which borrowed from its lexicon.[18] Islamic dynasties were in control of Al-Andalus from this moment until 1492, and much of the rest of the peninsula at least until the eleventh century, save for the northernmost land. Because of the few

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[14] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1120.
[15] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1147.
[16] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1141.
[17] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1198.
[18] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1173.

areas left under Christian rule, languages such as Basque survive today, and because northern regions of Castile, León, and Galicia were only under Muslim control for less than three centuries, Castilian had a head start in becoming the dominant tongue, even though it was less influenced by Latin and Visigothic rule, and considered unusual to the ears of other communities in this time.[19] Arabic was the official language of most of the peninsula, especially Andalucía, until the fifteenth century, with the majority of people being proficient in it as a second language.[20] Because of its widespread usage, there are nearly four thousand terms that derive from Arabic in the Spanish language.

Christians under Muslim rule spoke a variant of Hispano-Romance known as Mozarabic. Though Christians were its primary speakers, many Muslims and Jews also used the dialect.[21] Hebrew, French, and Occitan—the latter two introduced by conquerors from the north, also left small marks in the Spanish language. By the middle of the thirteenth century, by which time the Kingdom of Castile had overtaken more than half of the peninsula, Mozarabic and Arabic both began to fall into disuse but lasted until the fifteenth century in southern Spain.

It follows that the cultures which contributed the most to the Spanish language—Visigothic, Islamic, and Castilian—were also the most prominent culturally, and this would include their architectural languages as well. The Celts laid the groundwork for the creation of the standard Spanish language. Latin was the strongest building block in its lexical and semantic forms. Large linguistic endowments nevertheless came from Islamic cultures, which added greatly to the vocabulary of both everyday life and elevated discourse for medieval Spaniards. The Castilians then spread this much enriched Hispano-Romance tongue across the Iberian

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[19] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1191.
[20] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 7998.
[21] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 8199.

Peninsula as they slowly but surely "reconquered" lands controlled by Muslim dynasts. It goes without saying that all of these languages and dialects were culturally embedded, and shared language entailed shared practices.

The Creation of the Castilian Tongue

Contributions from regional languages to medieval Castilian, and therefore ultimately to the Spanish spoken in Spain today, are proportional to the amount of time ethnic and religious groups spent in the Iberian Peninsula. In this manner, the Spanish language is a synthesis of many moments from one timeline into one living body of history. The formation of Spanish began before the first century BCE and was carried through the many dialects of the region before arriving to one majority Castilian tongue in the fifteenth century CE. This section traces the remnants of early languages prior to and through this time period as they were incorporated into Spanish. Their systems left their marks largely by addition to vocabulary, as Spanish was highly determined by its Latin grammatical bones.

The Spanish language was built upon the bilingualism and cohabitation of the different societies populating the peninsula.[22] The Celts began the long linguistic history, followed by the Romans and Visigoths. The Celts' influence on the Spanish language is mainly through words Hispanic Latin had already incorporated previously into its vernacular; there were few additions made from the Celtic language to Spanish directly. Greek, Iberian, and Germanic influences only affected Spanish in the same way the Celtic language did: through Latin.[23] Spanish and Latin have around seventy-five percent similarities between their grammar structure and verb

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[22] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 981.
[23] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 7799, 7921.

conjugation (discussed in detail below). This percentage is a direct representation of their time spent in control of the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the cultural and societal hegemony they created. Twenty to thirty percent of modern-day Spanish vocabulary has Latin roots, but many of these borrowings have become antiquated and are not used in everyday jargon.[24] Other languages made their own contributions. For example, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, French and Occitan also had a hand in the vocabulary of standard Spanish. After a migration from the north of Pyrenees, they created a role in medieval Spanish literature. One significant contribution is the replacement of the word *españón*, meaning "spanish," to *español* from both French and Occitan. The period from the first century to the eighth century were thus formative for setting up the grammar and structure of the language, while still holding an open hand to the large borrowings other communities would contribute.

The influence of Arabic on the Spanish language was mainly dispersed through bilingualism and cohabitation of differing cultural groups. As previously mentioned, the Islamic cultural height was from 711 to 1492, when Arabic was thought to be a highly prestigious language in comparison to other Iberian tongues. Because Christians, Muslims, and Mozarabs were able to coexist together in a mutually neutral disposition, bilingualism was common, though most cultural interactions came through shared territory more than shared language. The widest spread and growth of Arabic was reached in the tenth century.[25] Despite the extent of the territory controlled by Arab rulers, only eight percent of Spanish derived its vocabulary from Arabic. Nevertheless, those who spoke Castilian and Arabic were responsible for the shared lexicon between the languages.

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[24] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 7728.
[25] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 7998.

Arabic inculcations into Spanish society were denoted by borrowed terms, many comprised of military and civil topics. For example, the words for mayor, village, and tarif (*alcalde, aldea*, and *tarifa)* were all new additions from Arabic.[26] More examples of "arabisms" include *adarve, ajimez, alcázar, coracha, harem, madina, Mexuar, qibla,* and *yamur*. Though these words derive from Arabic, some of them are not words in Arabic, but what the Spanish thought they heard, and consequently a new word brought into the language with Arabic phonetic origins. Other areas of Islamic cultural differences, such as residential terms and house building techniques, were also brought into the Spanish vernacular.[27] This could be due to the new terms signifying new housing constructions introduced by Muslims, or to the possibility that Arab housing was considered altogether "other" socially. The Arabs also introduced many plant-related, gardening, and scientific terms, which evidenced the arrival of never-before-seen inventions and botanical products.[28] They also opened Spain to new leisure practices and games, one of the most famous and widespread of which was *ajedrez*, now Spanish for chess.[29] This is one of the ways in which the Arabic language greatly displayed the wealth and knowledge the medieval Islamic period fostered. Although there was later a decline in influx of Arabic convergences with Spanish, where the latter at the end of the fifteenth century was the more prestigious and 'chosen' language, there is no denying the impact of Arabic-Muslim society that formed Spanish and made medieval Spain a rich state culturally and linguistically.

The Castilian language, originally a dialect spoken in Castile, made its first steps to becoming the standard Spanish language in Toledo. As previously mentioned, in 1085 the city was conquered by Castilians, led by Alfonso VI, king of León and Castile. This moment

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[26] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 8027.
[27] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 8040.
[28] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 8056.
[29] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 8069.

cascaded into a series of poignant societal changes where the language grew into a prestigious tongue and authoritative weapon, and from here spread to other Spanish regions. Alfonso X (r. 1252-1284), king of Castile and León, was one of the most prominent enforcers and advocates for the language system during his reign in Toledo, Spain. As noted, Latin and its various linguistic dialects were highly diverse in their representations before the eighth century within the peninsula, but it was Alfonso X who unified the language to one norm, establishing the precedent of a single correct spoken form. By the end of the thirteenth century, small dialects were almost completely displaced. This did not occur by chance, as Alfonso X was conscientious of grammatical importance and the flourishing of the language.[30] As the Christian reconquest proceeded, Castilian speakers moved to newly conquered areas, and therefore spread the tongue to other parts of Spain.[31] Later the Catholic Monarchs would see Castilian as a valuable asset in consolidating the Reconquista.

After the Christian Monarchs became the dominant force, textual language was used as a weapon of submission. Around 1492 in Spain, Jews who converted over to Christianity were called "New Christians," signifying an otherness inherently, as well as *Conversos*, which has derivation from the word "hog".[32] Likewise, Muslims were called *Moriscos* and Muslims under Christian rule were known as *Mudejares*.[33] Shortly after the capturing of Granada and the expulsion of Muslims and Jews, the Castilian language became the only acceptable tongue to speak in, unless it was beneficial to the Catholic Monarchs. The vernacular Spanish language

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[30] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1241.
[31] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1198.
[32] Mann, *Convivencia,* 30; Menocal, *The Ornament of the World,* 250.
[33] Menocal, *The Ornament of the World,* 248.

among Jews was Ladino, derived from Latin, which survived among refugees of the Reconquista in Safed, Israel, after the exile of the Jews from Spain.[34]

It is possible that the future supra-regional "edition" of Castilian originated among the upper-crest citizens of Toledo.[35] The Castilian language was used in the city's administration exclusively under Alfonso X's rule. Though this decision could be seen as culturally oppressive to speakers of other tongues, during this time it was a "unifying cultural weapon as it was religiously neutral," according to Penny.[36] Castilian was presumably palatable to all parties during this time of cultural coexistence in Toledo, when many scientific and creative advancements occurred. Old Spanish thus grew exponentially in vocabulary, syntax, and grammar. Latin and Arabic, as mentioned, were large banks for borrowing words during this time.[37] Other cities, such as Seville, created competition in the thirteenth century with the Toledano Castilian, although ultimately Seville did not win in the grammatical battle. As another of medieval Spain's most prolific and flourishing artistic cities, it lent elements of its Castilian to Toledo's. An example of this is within the use of the direct-object pronouns *lo* and *le*. Central Spain practiced *leísmo*, the incorrect use of *le* as a direct object pronoun instead of *lo*.[38] *Lo* was and is still today more correct, because it is not grammatically right to use *se* and *le* together when referring to a direct object. Castilian became the preferred language in higher education in areas with their own preserved regional dialects, such as Galicia and Catalonia, a change from previous centuries. Eventually, all areas speaking Catalan, such as Valencia and the Balearic

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[34] Menocal, *The Ornament of the World,* 249.
[35] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1247.
[36] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1247.
[37] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1249.
[38] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1259.

Islands, achieved bilingualism with Castilian as the new primary language.[39] By the 1250s, Castilian was the dominant language, and soon surpassed both Arabic and Mozarabic.

The structure of the Spanish language is largely tied to the numerous hegemonies that competed for dominance in the Iberian Peninsula. Each community contributed to the creation of Castile in varying degrees through trades, arts, sciences, and new ways of thought. While its origins can be traced back to the Celts in the first century, Latin was the backbone of the standard Spanish, accounting for its grammatical structures and much of its vocabulary. In the early Middle Ages, the Visigoths were integral in their domination of Castilian over Latin, in part through using Latin as a captured language under a new name. The large cultural expansion achieved by Islamic reigns are equally represented linguistically in additions to vocabulary and vernacular in Castilian. Toledo, Spain was important in the establishment of Castilian as the true tongue of the Iberian Peninsula. Place and language are intrinsically tied to one another throughout the history of the Spanish language.

A Study of the Spanish Language

Languages are built on individual rules and vocabulary unique to each tongue; Spanish is just as much its composition as its whole. To understand its complex relationship with architecture, the language must be viewed as a structure itself with a shared vocabulary that speaks about both equally well. Some of the most prominent facets of Spanish are the gendering of nouns and the phonetic cadence which remains homogenous for the majority of its vocabulary. The frameworks of sentences vary in their grammatical orderings, as well as how nouns and adjectives interact

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[39] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 1274.

based on intended messages. One of the largest and most interesting characteristics of this Romance language is the multitude of tenses and moods which denote a higher degree of specificity than found in English. To compare architecture and language, both mediums must be defined in full on their own to then juxtapose how they convey information in tandem. Spanish is unique in its forms of communication by its vocabulary, syntax, tenses and moods, and cultural ways of expressing information.

Spanish differs from English by its isolation and inflections.[40] In a sense, the words in a Spanish sentence multitask to synthesize information into the smallest quantity of words required. Often, subjects after their initial introduction can be left out, leaving the conjugated verb to describe who is completing the action and when it is done. Though in English it is possible to leave the proper noun out of a following sentence and use pronouns in its place, in Spanish even the pronouns can be inferred from the context of the sentence. Gendering is another one of the most prominent and differing aspects of Spanish in comparison to English. Nouns can be masculine or feminine. The scope of gendered endings and subsequent articles for each is limited to just two in almost all cases, in comparison to other languages where there are non-gender related endings like Swedish, or a neutral gender like in German. Andrés Bello, author of *Gramática de la lengua castellana destinada al uso de los americanos* (2006), analyses and describes grammatical facets of the Spanish tongue and their origins in the chapter "De género neutro." Genders come from the language's Latin roots, where most Romance languages have condensed Latin's three genders into two.[41] A trace of three genders is present when discussing ideas or referencing a previously mentioned idea, with the use of *lo* and *ello,* instead of gendered

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[40] English will be used as a basepoint for reference in grammar and structure.
[41] Andrés Bello, "De género neutro," Archive (May 3, 2006, https://web.archive.org /web/2006050 3054735/http://www.jabega.net/bello/bajo15.html).

notions of ideas such as *la, ellas,* or plural forms. These words are considered neutral to whatever idea they are speaking about.[42] There are some cases where nouns have a "common gender," usually used for professions or identities, where depending on the subject the articles "*el*" (masculine) or "*la*" (feminine) can be used. An example is "*el testigo,"* which means "the [male] witness," and "*la testigo,"* which means "the [female] witness."[43] Other instances of variances include ambiguous nouns, where both genders are allowed to define the word depending on its context. This is common in Spanish poetry, and used with words like *mar*, meaning "sea," where it can be described with the articles *el* or *la*.[44] Adjectives used to describe nouns are often placed behind nouns, instead of before like in English, unless they are a salient attribute to the noun. This furthers the notion that because nouns as subjects do not always need to be directly expressed, when they are, they take precedence over the words used to describe said subject. If the sentence "She wants sweet bread," were written in Spanish, the word for sweet, *dulce,* would be behind the noun, "bread," as shown: *Ella quiere pan dulce.*

Another aspect of Spanish, common to many languages, is the use of the formal and informal style of speaking. The language distinguishes among directives to family, friends, peers, and subordinates and to those of a higher status or social standing, such as those in positions of power at work, at school, by age, or as a way to convey respect. The informal style uses *tú* to mean "you" while the formal style uses *Usted*, with the same base meaning. In this way, Spanish is responsive to its subject and object, telling more of the sentence's background than what can be expressed in English. Spanish in Spain has another style used for a replacement for "you all"

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[42] Bello, "De Género Neutro."
[43] Bello, "De Género Neutro."
[44] Bello, "De Género Neutro."

in English, known as the *vosotros* style. This is used in place of *Ustedes*, the plural of *tú* in Latin America and the United States.

Spanish verb conjugation is a large realm that, in some ways, is more specific than English. There are eighteen total tenses and moods for verbs within the language, though not all eighteen are used at the same rate. One unique difference from English's twelve tenses is the approach to the past tense. For the simple past tense, in Spanish there is the imperfect and preterite, which divides verbs for the past into two groups. The imperfect describes in essence past events which have not been completed, or do not have a set endpoint identified. Often the imperfect creates background knowledge for the preterite. The preterite tense denotes when actions have a set time frame and are completed. In combination with other past tenses in Spanish, such as present perfect, past perfect, future perfect, and past tenses within the subjunctive mood, they all work to define time frames at a deeper and clearer level. The Spanish language places more care and precision in its descriptions of the past while speaking of it in the present.

In regard to the future, the tenses are similar to English in stating "I will go" (*Iré*) or "I am going to go," (*Voy a ir*). Where things begin to differ is the subjectivity of these statements, as well as the ability to use the present tense to describe future events. When using the future conjugation, as shown in the former example, there is an air of uncertainty and subjectivity to change implicitly in the verb conjugation; the latter is a sure statement. In English, stating that one will go somewhere does not denote this meaning. The present tense can also indicate future references, similar to how habitual events in English can use the present to do so (i.e., "I go to class on Mondays".) Spanish takes this method and expands beyond cyclical scheduling, such as saying *yo corro manana,* meaning "I run tomorrow," but written in the present tense. In this

manner, Spanish expresses time periods through its structures in a series of overlays, or palimpsests of meanings within one conjugation.

The subjunctive mood is a wholly separate mode of communication which has its own conjugations for the past, present, future, and perfect tenses. Through the subjunctive, one can express wishes, doubts, requests, imaginative or unrealized events, mood, and demands, always between two different subjects. There is a subjunctive tense in English, but it is not as broad reaching or used in the same way the Spanish subjunctive mood is utilized. This is a tense that is common to Romance languages, as it derives from Latin. In a sense, verbs are more subtle and expressive in their telling of events and background mood of the speaker than English verb tenses are.

Just like verbs, the word order for Spanish seems to be similar to English, with some exceptions. Word order is most often subject-verb-object (SVO) arrangement, like English. Though this is the general outline for word order, Spanish allocates space for variations where English does not. Spanish is considered a much freer language, stylistically and structurally. Sometimes, as mentioned previously, the subject can be left out completely, leaving the word order to be solely verb-object. When direct or indirect objects are used within a sentence, the order is changed to subject-object-verb, with the stand in *lo* or *le* placed before the verb. This switching of arrangement may also be done to emphasize a point; the Spanish language has great freedom in expression through the chosen composition of a sentence. An example of this is the phrase "I am," in Spanish. Normally, one would say *yo soy* to literally translate to the said sentence. However, it is also possible to leave off the first word, and just say the verb *soy*. Even more, one is able to change the order of the words to *soy yo* to further emphasize the subject in the statement. This is a small expression which lends a hand in understanding the numerical

difference of expression within Spanish; in English, this phrase can only be translated in one way. The article, "A Linguistic Look at Spanish," by Gerald Erichsen (2018), a Spanish expert and language lessons creator, looks at the grammatical structure of Spanish in comparison to other languages. He considers English to be a more isolated language, meaning that each word does not change form to create a cohesive whole or overall meaning. Nouns and articles do not change structure—i.e., they are not inflected—to further the intended action or describe a subject. Spanish is less of an isolated language and more of an inflectional language, meaning that the complete sentence is reactive to the number and gender of the subject and object, relative to the verb. In fact, conjugation itself is a way of inflection through verbs specifically.[45] This could be compared culturally to the many inflections the formation of the language had by numerous cultural influences.

All languages have their nuances, but small changes between tongues are what create their uniqueness. An example is the use of *estar* and *ser,* both which mean "to be." In English, there is no lexical difference in stating the circumstance or condition of the state one is expressing. This distinction points to a categorical difference in thought process during the formation of the language, which necessitated this decision. To say "I am happy" does not tell if they mean they are happy in general, or happy in the moment. Spanish distinguishes between identity and conditional circumstances, with *ser* as a case of identity and *estar* as an indicator of condition. Consider the idiosyncrasy of saying one is hungry in Spanish and English. When one says they are hungry in English, they state "I am hungry." It is a state one is, and therefore one identifies however briefly with this expression. In Spanish, hunger is a noun to be had, so one

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[45] Gerald Erichsen, "A Linguistic Look at Spanish," ThoughtCo, https://www.thoughtco.com/a-linguistic-look-at-spanish-3079195 (accessed September 11, 2022).

states *tengo hambre,* which literally translates to "I have hunger." Differences such as this, though in essence meaning the same thing, influence the thought and understanding of one's situation. Take, for example, the accidental *se* tense in Spanish. When one does something negative on accident, such as breaking a glass, burning a hand, or dropping keys, it is conjugated in a way which takes the blame off of the person who did the action. If one dropped the keys, one would say *Se me cayeron las llaves*, instead of *Caí las llaves,* which does not directly state oneself as the instigator of the action. It is a way Spanish removes the purpose behind the action, a unique manner of stating something was an accident without saying the words specifically. There are many countless differences between the languages such as this.

Spanish, as a Romance language, is built upon a longstanding foundation of the Latin language. It is similar in its structures to other languages of this family tree, but is unique in its vocabulary and specific idiosyncrasies. The understanding of the language's units are what make the whole into a functional tool of communication; comparing this sequence and formation will help to grasp the intonations and connotations of architecture and language more fully. Spanish word order, gendering, and inflections all work to create a living and responsive tongue. Grammatical structures, as well as tenses and moods, aid in the specificities of the tongue, unique to Spanish, and reflect the chosen manner of representing its culture. Spanish as a language is a key part of culture and history; knowledge of its makeup exhibits how Spanish could work with and against architecture in conveying these values.

Architecture as a Language

Architecture and language are both forms of communication capable of containing decades and even centuries of history and culture. Each medium is governed by structures, such as architectural and grammatical rules. Each speaks, directly and indirectly, to and about the groups that gave rise to them and inhabit them. The origins of language are closely linked to architecture, from the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9) to storytelling around the hearth. One might even say that architecture and language created one another, and have left their impression on each other. A kind of "grammar" unites these two modes of expression, creating voices for populations and spaces for individuals, empowering them to make their mark. Though the comparison is not without flaws, the greatest commonality between the two forms is the creation of narrative. Looking forward, ruins from both architecture and language can peer into the "what could have beens" of the future, combining monuments of the past, through the present, to what might be. There is a harmony in the juxtaposition of language and architecture's form through comparison of structure, grammar, and time.

Architecture and language have the ability to define elements of a community's culture, as explored in the article "The Relationship between Language and Architecture: A Case Study of Betawi Cultural Village at Setu Babakan, South Jakarta, Indonesia," by Agustin Rebecca Lakawa (2015). The piece is a scientific study of the Betawi language and vernacular architecture, as they relate to characteristics of the community. In the study, Lakawa found that both media show the group's openness to foreign influences, lifestyle, and adaptability to change.[46] Residential architecture, through plan and ornamentation, demonstrated these

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[46]Agustin R. Lakawa, "The Relationship between Language and Architecture: A Case Study of Betawi Cultural Village at Setu Babakan, South Jakarta, Indonesia," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 5, no. 8 (August 2015), 84–101.

characteristics as did the language. Houses in Setu Babakan, for example, contain three parts: the *amben,* the *pangkeng,* and the *srondoyan*. The space for guests is the *amben*, and it is the largest and most open area, placed at the front of the house, signifying the culture's reception of new influences and people.[47] Language has shown similar cultural ideas of openness as well. The Betawi language has received new phrases and structures from a multitude of outside communities. For instance, though the main vocabulary of the village stems from the Betawi language, it has been heavily influenced by Indonesian and Sundanese languages with new words and phrases.[48] The relationship between architecture and language is shown to be reciprocal and capable of communication in similar manners through studies such as this. In this way, architecture is a type of "plurality of languages" which speaks to the many cultures who have their own modes of communication through it.

Parry discusses the inherent connection between language and architecture in Hebrew scripture.[49] The Tower of Babel is the first major architectural work in the Book of Genesis and it is the mythical generator of the world's many cultures and languages. The tower, considered an architectural feat with the goal of reaching the Gods, represents people's desire for a single common language. God saw this as endowing people with God-like power. His destruction of the tower eliminated the dream of a common language by creating many. The various tongues, and therefore cultures, that came from the tower's destruction also contributed to much architectural variety in the world, and consequently, created more for people to talk about.[50] The connections of both architecture and language can be exploited by individuals as well as groups, as we have

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[47]Lakawa, "The Relationship between Language and Architecture: A Case Study of Betawi Cultural Village at Setu Babakan, South Jakarta, Indonesia," 95.

[48] Lakawa, "The Relationship between Language and Architecture: A Case Study of Betawi Cultural Village at Setu Babakan, South Jakarta, Indonesia," 100.

[49] Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," 146.

[50] Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," 133.

seen with Alfonso X and the Catholic Monarchs. These historical moments are permanently entrenched within their architecture, creating space for the individual, beyond the whole. The destruction of the Tower of Babel is the start of both linguistic and built forms and their complex relationship through history. In a way, architecture and language serve larger populations more than individual counterparts as each represents groups beyond one unit or leader; they are markers of culture.

On a more modest level, the hearth, a known origin story for architecture, may also be regarded as a generator of language. As a point of convergence for many communities throughout the span of history, the hearth brought language and place into intimate relationships. According to the Roman architectural writer Vitruvius, a fire was a source of heat and therefore created an area around which many could gather.[51] Those around the fire began to speak to each other and so the hearth "spoke" into existence the first common language. Here marks the beginning of architectural "writing" as left in modest vernacular structures, which were not destroyed by an angry God, upon the earth and writing through verbal expression. Though architecture and language differ, they are brought together by their beginning, and their continual overlaps of usage and meaning. In opposition to other forms of art, such as painting, singing, and sculpture, architecture and language are distinguished by their essential utility. Though both may be beautiful, they are utmost necessary for communication and shelter, such as the fire is what necessitates the hearth. Other possible metaphysical meanings of speech and architecture come combined with their necessity, a unique attribute to both.

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[51] Vitruvius Pollio and M. H Morgan, *Vitruvius: The Ten Books on Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960).

Language is not the only possible metaphor one can generate from architecture, but it is an uncommonly strong one. While modernist architects in the early twentieth century, such as Le Corbusier (1887–1965), compared the ideal architectural design to a machine, Parry points out that language makes for a much stronger pairing because it can capture the emotion of architecture. Architecture is a fully experiential art form, derived from utility, which brings all five senses into one space. Language can capture the same experience and name the singular feelings of each moment, through the form of intangible ideas. There is a unique fusion of reader and text, analogous to occupant and space.[52] Though the totality of each experience cannot be ever fully captured within walls of stone or walls of paper, each is capable of expressing significance and recalling what has passed between pages or halls. The knowledge grafted onto books of stone and books of paper work to create narratives. Both means of communication do not solely name, but instead form a unifying thread of a story or retelling unto themselves. A continuation of thought, though not required as each medium can stand alone, elevates both beyond naming and identification. This is discussed in greater detail in the following section. Each medium can comment on current events through their works, socially and indirectly.[53] Language clearly has a strong ability to form opinions and thoughts on current events, as most news is received in written or oral form through language. It also can absorb the current events into itself, similar to how new words or trendy phrases become part of everyday vernacular, capturing the cultural moment as it passes and inscribing it within the language. Architecture can do the same—as one style or moment of design ends and another begins, architecture can document the changes in thought and general feelings of a culture at one time. After the Catholic Monarchs began their rule of the Iberian Peninsula, their use of the Gothic style, in rejection to

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[52] Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," 129.
[53] Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," 134.

the use of full Mudejar style, that is, an Islamic-derived elements and motifs used in Spain's Christian kingdoms, was just as telling of current events then as were the new laws and rules put in place. The abandonment of some architectural "vocabulary" under this new political rule also spoke to active reactions to the then current events.

Architecture and language work within structural parameters, the logic of constructional systems and grammar, respectively. Units of speech, such as individual sounds, words, sentences, and paragraphs, build upon one another, much as a column, arch, and wall create larger edifices from smaller forms. According to Parry, Italian philosopher Umberto Eco (1932-2016) has argued that a syntagm, the sequence of linguistic parts, is comprised of the linguistic equivalent of first and second articulations, the form of a distinct unit or sound. A second articulation would be, spatially, a line, curve, or point. A first articulation is the creation of a word or a shape like a triangle or square, where meaning is placed within the units.[54] This theory is to be discussed at length in the next section. Both architecture and language have subsets of meaning and categorization, like morphemes, words, and phrases, or a base, shaft, and capital of an overall column. The ordering of literal words and metaphorical architectural units creates the meaning of any intended message.

Though there are many similarities between the functions of architecture and language, it is important to call attention to how they are not perfect mirrors of one another. Architecture is an active experience, a first-person narrative entrenched within the five senses. Though language can explain these moments, it is almost always a retelling. An idea of something is not the same as the physical object itself. Language is a more explicit manner of communication in that there

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[54] Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," 129.

is less room for subjectivity when deciphering a historical text compared to interpreting the meaning of a building. Though both are historical sources, they differ in their ability to articulate facts and experience, yet their ability to do so in any form is unique and worthy of note. Each is specific to their cultures and origins; Spanish architecture and the Spanish language were formed by the people to be the best modes of expression for themselves. If one were to use a completely different language to adequately describe the ways of life found in medieval Spain, or only have the architectural vocabulary for Asian or Nordic architecture, they would be altogether lacking in their descriptions, and missing a large cultural component inherent in these tongues.

Architecture and language are both deeply entrenched in a unique intercourse between past and future, while remaining rooted in the present. Architecture is a living document of a previous state of being in a specific cultural location. To walk through structures previously inhabited by a myriad of classes and people is to intimately grasp spatially and somatically the social order and daily life of those who occupied the buildings. Architecture that was lost, or became ruins, before its primary use are monuments of the past that speak to a future which never reached fruition. In this way, although a building can be constructed and in a sense be "completed," and live in the past, the same structure can also call to a future that never occurred. They are like a nursery room built for a child that never arrived, yet the room remains and speaks to a future. Ruins can be communicated through language as well. One may say what would have been through the conditional perfect tense. In this verb conjugation, one is stating a statement in the past, speaking about what might have occurred in the future, as it is contrary to the present. Language is likewise a time capsule of periods of history through written and spoken words. It permits readers or listeners to be present in narrations of ongoings and events of the past. As Parry explains, "The meaning of any architecture is predicated spatially on all the architecture

that it is not, and, temporally, on the future architecture yet to come. The meaning of architecture, like the meaning of language, is never fully present *in* the present."[55] There is a unique moment in time punctuated by the creation of architecture and language which crosses the past, present, and future, in one fell swoop.

As both architecture and language live within multiple times at once, they both share an incompleteness. Because they are tied to other times, they are each never entirely a part of the moment of "now," or only adapt this status when one enters a building or speaks a sentence in that instant. Architecture may be constructed for one use, but later serve as another; no monument survives the passage of time without the possibility of growth or change. Language is a fluid structure which adapts readily to the people who utilize it. It can rotate, adding and leaving behind phrases, vocabulary, and dialects in order to remain current. By this virtue, each leaves behind a trail of what has been and what could have been. Architectural constructions can be built with a future intended use later abandoned, speaking more to the future than to the past.[56]

Language cannot call out *exactly* what it tries to dictate. To say a word is to conjure an image of the intended thing, but the utterance cannot physically bring the said subject into existence. Language lives in an in-between, much as the meaning of architecture does. Ideas of architecture live through other works, and social messages such as hierarchy, obedience, or remembrance are within the walls of a space, without a clear sign dictating so. Buildings can reference previous works in their design, such as how the Great Mosque of Córdoba references the hypostyle halls of Great Mosque of Damascus (705-715 CE). Language is generative based

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[55] Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," 131.
[56] Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," 133.

on new inculcations and interactions with others, just the same as new forms of architecture were often spurred by more people and societies to work with. This is shown linguistically in the completion of the standard Spanish language, having been created from borrowings of dialects and composed from Latin. As previously mentioned, Spanish took many terms from Arabic especially in cases where it lacked precise vocabulary for new cultural items or procedures.[57] The structures for language and architecture are thus compiled from their histories, incomplete in one sense of preserving only the present, but complete in their retellings of modifications and relationships.

Architecture and language are deeply intertwined since their origins. As forms of communication, they take a likeness from one another, and serve as capsules of history and culture. Through their advent in the monument of the Tower of Babel or the group-oriented hearth structure, they laid the groundwork for one another. The mediums can preserve emotions in both words of stone and words of paper, allowing for a renewed experience each time reviewed; narratives are a part of each of their constructions. Though architecture and language are experienced in the present, they both live concurrently within the past and future. In their incompleteness and connection to times beyond the present, architecture and language are reflections in their structural orientation, references to various times at once, and narrative form.

Architectural, Syntax, Semantics, and Vocabulary

Architecture and language weave amongst one another, defining each other's systems by comparison between their forms. The structure of language may be an applicable theory of

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[57] Penny, *A History of the Spanish Language,* 8040.

structure for architecture. Parts of grammar, the vast variety of word forms, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and works of literature can find their counterpart within the built form. Architecture and language use these devices to give voice to their messages and create a stronger impact in their meanings. The Great Mosque of Córdoba and the Alhambra are examples that show the congruences and dynamic relationships between language and architecture. By viewing architecture through the lens of language, meanings and hidden connotations may be brought forth, leading to a richer understanding of Spanish built forms.

The Great Mosque is a hypostyle mosque, a building type with roots in the late antique Mediterranean world; it is imbued with classical "Latin" grammar, especially in its early examples such as the Great Mosque of Damascus. So, while the early Muslim patrons spoke Arabic, the architectural language of their early buildings was decidedly Latin.[58] When the Umayyads establish a foothold in Spain, they are still in this mode to a great degree, but they show themselves to be receptive to Visigothic interpretations of Roman architecture. Though many of the architectural feats that will be discussed in this and coming sections spawn from a time of mixed use of languages, specifically Castilian in addition to Arabic or Ladino, Castilian will be the only language analyzed as it is the product of many cultures into one form of communication. The language contains these periods of other usages in conjunction with Spanish in itself.

The analysis of architecture through language structures begins with morphemes and phonemes. Morphemes are the parts created from the breakdown of a word, holding an individual meaning, and are unable to be divided beyond this point. An example is the word

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[58] Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (Yale University Press, 1987), 21.

desinteresado, where *-des*, *interés*, and *-ado*, create one word, though each segment is significant. Some of these parts can stand on their own, but the overall meaning is changed by their addition. An architectural equivalent can be found in the articulation of elements fundamental to structure, such as the components of a column. The base, shaft, and capital create a "word" and these three individual parts are morphemes of this word. For example, this column from the Great Mosque in Córdoba is the word "Corinthian," (fig.1). But the use of differing ornamentation through these "morphemes" can change the overall message. A shaft with entasis, a Doric capital, and a base with a relief are altogether different from a column without these morphemes. Some morphemes can allude to motion, such as the ending *-iendo/ando*, which implies a continuation within the present. This can be seen in architecture that encourages movement. A door, which is grand, centrally located, and has views to the following space, has an *-iendo/ando*, ending, as it states the desire of continuance and for the occupant to continue forward (fig. 2). A small, irregularly placed door does not denote the same meaning, and would not include this ending.

Phonemes are the sound changes which create differentiation between words, generating a new meaning by the change of a letter. In Spanish, examples include *gato*, *pato*, *mato*, and *dato*; though they all share similar sounds, the beginning letter forms a new meaning for the entire word. Though phonemes are created from small units, and may be easily overlooked, their impact is large and important for clear communication. Architecturally, phonemes may come into play when arches, which are all spanning devices, have different crowns or imposts. For instance, at the Great Mosque of Córdoba there are polylobed and horseshoe arches. Though they may have the same "root" of letters, the small nuances of their size, shape (such as rounded or squared), and emphasis are what create meaning within the grouping of architectural letters that

constitute a "word." A pointed, narrow arch does not say the same thing as a wide, horseshoe arch. The differentiation is within the form itself; it is not an external adjective working on the structure.

The next unit of speech are words, which denote a meaning within themselves, distinct from morphemes or phonemes but aided by them. Just the same as words can define, describe, or indicate an action (among a variety of other functions), architectural words follow a similar format. The plurality of architectural languages, spanning across time periods and cultures, allows for an ample vocabulary to stretch through architectural forms. To return to the arch to illustrate, an architectural "word" is an arch. An arch, bolstered by columns, is a single unit, a noun, defined on its own, showcased by itself and in conjunction with others, which creates messages through space. It contains morphemes and phonemes, which, as previously mentioned, are found within the columns holding the arch, or the style of arch employed. Similar to the way nouns in Spanish are gendered, columns have been associated with feminine (Ionic) and masculine (Doric) attributes since Vitruvius's writings in the first century BCE. The Great Mosque of Córdoba is predicated on the rhythmic forest of columns supporting double horseshoe arches. The flow of words in the form of arches, repeated from end to end and beginning once more down the next row, is similar to a repeated chant of one word (fig. 3). Hence, the spatial choices could be seen as an architectural comparison to remembrance within the Muslim faith; the space is a representation of their spoken prayers that echoed within the hypostyle hall. The rows are composed of double arches, almost imitating the call and response system of worship in mosques. The phonemes of this specific example could be found within the difference of spoil columns, creating the same word but using different sounds and slightly differing intonations to make the chant all the richer.

Adjectives are the culmination of design elements to create the main mood of a space or structure. As adjectives in language are used to describe a noun, architectural adjectives are the summation of design choices within the "noun" unit, in total adding to the architectural message and experience as supporting motifs. As phonemes are the internal parts of the word units, adjectives are the external appearance, in combination with other adjectives to represent the overall message conveyed. In the Great Mosque of Córdoba, the adjectives appear through the spatial configuration of its many columns, creating an infinite distance of space. The numerous types of spolia columns add to the air of grandeur and diversity within the mosque. This is not an inherent style of one moment, but the overarching mood achieved by this design choice.

A verb within language is a word used to state an action taking place (using present tense as a reference). Though architecture is fundamentally an immovable structure, rooted in place and built to be sound, it allows for modification, and above all, places emphasis on the actions of the space's users. The built form can help direct these movements throughout the space. A building can command, be passive, order, change, open and close, restrict, allow, direct action, and establish importance among the users, as examples. Architectural verbs are, similar to adjectives, the overall messages imbued by a structure's form. An axial, directive path demands adherence and a prescribed flow, while winding and organic paths denote a meandering and slower pace, with a less overtly controlled message. The "verb" of architecture can be completed by both the building itself and the subjects intended for the space. Two specific verbs in Spanish with their own complex meanings are *ser* and *estar*, which both mean "to be." The former is indicative of an inherent quality or identity of the subject, whereas the latter is used to demarcate a condition. These verbs come into play when looking at the cultural and political aspects of architecture. The Alhambra was constructed in the Moorish, and subsequent Mudejar style,

which was used by both Christians, Muslims, and Jews equally, almost as a communal architectural art form. This style is part of the identity of the structure, though the different dynasties and certain aspects of the architecture bring out different conditions. For instance, the actions of a space may be *estar,* like the changing uses of the space based on different times of the day or year. The five prayers bring in a new condition at their prescribed times in contrast to a mosque void of its people. The *ser* verb is the permanence of what the mosque is, its identity which allows for the continual change in conditions it undergoes. The fundamental ideas and cultural expressions are intrinsic within the structure, similar to the *ser* verb, while the lived conditions of rule and specific, finite, periods of use are considered to be defined "architecturally" with the *estar* verb.

In contrast to English, Spanish is more expressive in its telling of time. As mentioned, there are six more tenses in Spanish than in English. These are used to distinguish mainly between types of past events and subjunctive statements. They may have new statements in the present or suggest possible future outcomes, but they are rooted in the past. Architecture in the medieval era is inherently a past statement, as the culture and political ideologies stamped within its walls are from centuries long ago. The imperfect and preterite tense are both past tenses, where the former is used to describe ongoing past events (such as background information or uncompleted tasks) and the latter is for completed events with specific endpoints. Architecturally, there can be built forms which represent past conditions versus past completed actions. For example, the imperfect tense can be experienced in spaces like the preserved fifteenth century home, the Palace of Dar-Al-Harra, of the mother of Muhammad XII Boabdil (r.1487-1492 CE), the last leader of the Muslim dynasty in Spain. The mother, Aixa, was born in 1493 in the Nasrid ruling dynasty in Granada, and her preserved home can be used to understand

the everyday surroundings for a person of her status in medieval Spain. As the imperfect explains

background information without a beginning or an end, so does the home. The space

demonstrates the everyday uses through its rooms and layouts, and shows no completed

historical event (fig. 4). In contrast, when entering into the Alhambra, there is a mark of

distinction made from the Catholic Monarchs when they took over the fortress, going from the

present tense of the Muslim rule and documenting the dynasty into the past tense. It insinuates

that the structure has "completed" its task of an Islamic official building, and now reigns without

end as a representation of their power. This moment of takeover is overwritten onto the

traditional Muslim architecture, depicted in its showcasing of Jesus and Mary and other Christian

motifs (fig. 5). The Great Mosque of Córdoba, as another example, underwent a series of

additions, first a succession of Muslim rulers, and finally by Christian rulers. The Muslim rulers

chose not to place themselves within the architecture, or signify an end to what the previous

rulers had done. Instead, they continued the same sentence using the imperfect tense, with no

action ending and another beginning between rulers (fig. 6). In contrast, the Christian rulers, after

conquering the mosque and consecrating the structure, built a cathedral directionally opposing

the existing structure of the mosque. The form clearly denotes a completed action, firmly set in

the past, of the usage of the mosque through the preterite form. As Spanish can convey these

nuances of the past, so can architecture communicate through readings in the present the

difference between unending past themes and definite events.

The subjunctive tense has a large hand in the Spanish language, and has a place within

Spanish architecture as well. As mentioned, the subjunctive tense is used to speak of things that

are wishes, desires, opinions on a topic, or simply not the current condition at present. In this

way, the subjunctive points to possible action in the future, unrealized in the present. When one

states, "*Cuando llegues, llamáme,*" ("When you arrive, call me"), the verb for arrive, *llegues*, is conjugated in the subjunctive. This is because it is an event that has not happened, though expected or wished for, and therefore cannot be talked about in a concrete manner, using the indicative tense. Architecture may have a conceptual equivalent to this idea of actions uncompleted but expected. Spaces that are created for future purposes, though not realized completely, represent a similar idea. Wishes, hopes, and expectations for what a space might be can be embedded within previous built forms, inherently made with the future in mind. The literal future conjugation of verbs in Spanish is often used with an air of subjectivity, and is considered less sure than other forms of future expression, furthering the connection of the future tense and the subjunctive in its usage. At the Great Mosque of Córdoba, the rows of arches beckon the Islamic followers to the qibla wall, almost initiating for them the prayers which reverberate throughout the space. It is an invitation for the masses to pray and show devotion to their religion and God; it is not a command or something that will for sure happen inside the walls, but the creation of a space expecting the action that is at current an idea.

Articles within language are used to distinguish which nouns are being discussed, as well as indicate a level of knowledge about them. In Spanish, some examples of indefinite articles are *un/una* (a/an)*, unos/unas* (some). Definite articles are *el/los* (the, masculine), and *la/las* (the, feminine). Articles in Spanish determine what is being discussed, and clarify between the general idea of a noun and the specific noun itself (such as *a* column vs. *the* column). Spanish is an inflected language, which denotes that most words surrounding the subject and object change in spelling (usually endings) to match the quantity and gender at hand. Architecturally, there can be inflection within space, where not only do the "nouns," the defined units, coincide together, but also the articles and transitional words. Inflections linguistically could translate to regionalism,

architecturally. The use of local materials and styles is one way to cultivate a shared unity and message through design. An architectural sentence with inflection could be compared to the column and arch usage within the Court of the Myrtles at the Alhambra. On the north wall, there is a row of arches which have Nasrid capitals, juxtaposed to two Muqarnas capitals on the central arch to the entrance of the Hall of the Ambassadors (fig. 7). The capitals, all indigenous to the artforms of the culture which created the structure, denote hierarchy through these changes in the capitals and their placement on the central aisle. Here is the difference between definite and indefinite articles as showcased by columns. The outer Nasrid capitals are similar to stating "a" capital, whereas the Muqarnas capitals, by their hierarchy through placement, are considered "the" capitals. The Nasrid capitals are all the same order outside of this change, sharing the same "gender" and "quantity" throughout their row, inflecting together to show hierarchy and a communal message.

Hierarchy within space is a known property of architecture and language. There are demarcations of it through ornamentation, orientation, or the dimension of structures, as a few examples. This is implied within the constructional system itself; it is inherently part of the building. Within the Alhambra, there is separation of public versus private, with specific areas relegated to those who come from outside the walls inward to see the ruler, and spaces specifically for the ruler or royal family. As architecture conveys this, so does Spanish with the forms of *Usted* and *tú*, the formal and informal styles. Though the same sentence in different styles can convey the same message, there is an added context of who the message is being directed towards. This is very similar to architecture; though there is no literal sign within the Alhambra that states an area is specifically for the ruler, it is understood through the many spatial messages that some quarters are for chosen individuals only. The fundamental difference

between vernacular or common architecture and formal architecture is the same difference between *Usted* and *tú.*

Though it may be obvious who is implying the hierarchy in some circumstances, in others, it is much harder to discern the voice of the commands through space. This is similar to the accidental *se* tense used in Spanish. As mentioned, for someone to say, "I have broken my arm," would have the implication that there was intent behind the action. In Spanish, one uses the accidental *se* tense to clarify that the arm was broken by the subject on accident. Though there are fewer mishaps and sudden slip ups within the actual construction of architecture in the Alhambra or Great Mosque of Córdoba, there is the omission of the subject at hand. With the Great Mosque in mind, there is no clear statement showcasing the architect or ruler of the mosque, or its many phases under the Umayyad rulers. This can be likened to the same removal of intent in Spanish to take responsibility for what they have done. Though the Great Mosque may have employed this strategy to further the overall remembrance and glory of Allah, it at the same time lessens their personal touches and hand within the projects they were charged with as rulers.

As language connects words together to create a meaning beyond the simple summation, so does architecture. Sentences combine subjects, objects, and verbs, with helping articles, prepositions, and descriptors. A spatial "sentence" can be numerous for one structure, as one navigates through the space. It may also be interpreted as the "thesis" statement which undergirds the structure of a form. As previously mentioned, Spanish uses the same SVO sentence structure as does English. Sentence structure translates to architecture by the manner of orientation, composition of space, and active or passive use of architectural language. When considering the Great Mosque of Córdoba, the subject first presented is prayer by the people of

faith. This is the topic that resonates through the space and the chants of arches, reaching the people at the doorstep. The 'spatial verb' is the condition that draws one farther into the space, or commands an action. This could be a hall leading to a great space, or in the case of the mosque, the hypostyle hall itself. Upon entrance to the hall, the rows of columns draw one to the mihrab, facing Mecca, and exert a sense of remembrance over the users of the space. The 'object' of a sentence is the recipient of an action in a grammatical definition. In a religious space in general, the recipient of prayer is the God of the religion itself, and spatially, the object would be the mihrab upon the qibla wall. The focal point of the verb (the directives from the orientation of the arches and call to continue through the space) and the subject of Muslim prayer all culminate in focus to the qibla wall, and by extension, to the house of Allah in Mecca. This is one manner in which sentence structure, in SVO fashion, is depicted within space. Just like Spanish, they can change order, omit subjects or objects, and contain more parts than just SVO.

Spanish sentences are longer and more fluid than English sentences. It is common in translation from Spanish to English to break up the sentences at hand to sound more natural in the English, and vice versa when translating to Spanish by adding clauses instead of sentence breaks.[59] This rhythm is exemplified by less but longer architectural statements within space. Spaces within the Alhambra, such as the Court of the Myrtles and the adjacent Hall of the Ambassadors, are not distinct, succinct statements that carry their own separate meanings. Instead, they may be viewed as the same sentence, stretching and meandering through each space to form a complete thought (fig. 8). To native Spanish speakers who learn English, sentences in

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[59] Antonio Jiménez, *Introducción a la traducción: inglés < > español* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022), 3. The book focuses on basic cultural and syntactical differences between Spanish and English, as conveyed through translation work.

English can sound brusque. There could be a link between this thought process and how designers who use each language consider space.

When these "spatial sentences" combine, they create a paragraph. These statements are ordered to first introduce the following form, fully explain with details and points the meaning and message of the space, and conclude while leading to the next area. If one compares a complete architectural work to some form of written art (such as a narrative, poem, or memoir), then the work must be divided into paragraphs and individual moments. Consider the Alhambra and its Court of the Lions. The space is a main open courtyard with a central fountain. Four halls are configured off of the court. The introduction of this "paragraph" begins with the small, cramped hallway, opening to the large, bright space. This moment captures a small glimpse to the court, almost like a small sample to the grandeur and significance; this serves as a summary and idea of what is to come, like a view that comprises the thesis statement. Through the door and into the court, one is within the body of the text. As one walks around the edges of the space, they are dipped into the four adjoining spaces, the Hall of the Ambassadors (fig. 26), Hall of the Muqarnas, Hall of the Kings, and Hall of the Two Sisters (fig. 27). These sections are the supporting facts to the main paragraph, all converging to show the opulence of the ruler with a hint of a dream-like quality. As one exits into the next space, they experience for a moment the transition from one complete thought into the beginnings of another.

The use of space may join to create complete types of works language. A narrative, poem, novel, instruction manual, or manifesto have distinct audiences and goals. Space similarly uses its articulation to reach these differing groups of users through modes of narration, hierarchy, or experience. The Great Mosque of Córdoba, though minimally related to political messages directly under Muslim rule, is its own form of liturgy for the Islamic faith. The

structure is a large prayer, a chant, and all notions lead to the remembrance of Allah and the direction of Mecca. These types of construction may be combined into one cohesive narrative; the Alhambra, for example, is a post-narrative of the Golden Age of Islamic rule leading up to the Catholic Monarch's reign, and a capturing of this specific takeover in history. Its walls remember the change of rule and desire for what the region should be from the Monarchs. The Alhambra is a physical representation, a manifesto, for both the Islamic rule during its time, showcasing its power and sovereignty through its towering silhouette over Granada, and later a built code of conduct for the Catholic Monarchs, especially after the consecration of the religious spaces within the compound. The experience of the Alhambra, aside from its political aspirations for the external eye, is internally a work of art, synonymous with architectural poetry. "Words" composed of arches, vaults filled with muqarnas, and winding, rhythmic paths that form sentences all lend a hand in the fruition of a lyrical, poetic space. The structure is a form of art, stating its beliefs and feelings through its composition.

Though architecture and language are two differing mediums, the grammatical structure of language and its abilities to communicate may have their architectural counterparts within the built form. Small units of language, like morphemes and phonemes, find their equal through articulation and ornamentation. Words, divided by verbs, nouns, adjectives, and articles as examples are present in architecture by way of structural design and overall messages. Sentences and paragraphs contain more complex and more readable impacts, similar to spaces within the Alhambra and the Great Mosque of Córdoba. These lead to complete architectural works, which convey a finished narrative, poem, or story. By examining Spanish medieval architecture through the lens of language, further conclusions and depths can be found within its history and culture.

Medieval Spain & Culture: Convivencia

Political action and state formation in medieval Spain was a dynamic arena in which the relationship between architecture and language was deployed, exploited, and advanced. The architecture of medieval Spain is a palimpsest of Latin, Islamic, Jewish, and Christian landscapes, which have permeated each period of hegemonic control throughout the eighth to sixteenth centuries. Focusing solely on three cities of historical significance, architecturally and linguistically, creates a subject to further understand how architecture works similarly to language in its efforts of communication. Córdoba, a predominantly Muslim city until its capture, records a moment of cultural change that is encased within the Great Mosque of Córdoba as it changed to a Cathedral; it speaks highly to the change in ideals. Toledo is one of the most important cities in the formation of Castilian as well as a prominent landscape for the mixing, and benefits of doing so, of diverse groups. Granada, the last stronghold of the Nasrid dynasty and any Muslim reign, evidences the change from an Islamic rule to Christian country through the Alhambra, Palace of Charles V, and the Royal Chapel. By examining the architectural history of medieval Spain, its numerous cultures can be brought forth and studied through their preservation in the built form.

The time frame from the eighth century to the sixteenth century was a formative period for the standardization of Spanish and the rise of the Mudejar architectural style; the theory of architecture as a language can be applied to specific situations and contexts. Having already looked at Toledo as a linguistic capital pivotal for the formation of the Castilian tongue, its architecture can now be examined through the lenses of language and political ambition. There is a myriad of religious spaces throughout the city which lend themselves to linguistic-architectural analyses during the period of convivencia as well as under the Catholic Monarchs.

Events that are showcased through the architecture begin with the convivencia between the religious cultures of Spain's Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Before 1492, there was a clear distinction in relationship between Muslims and Jews, as the former preferred to reject the religion and group of the latter, while Christians were semi-symbiotic with both communities. These interrelationships are especially showcased in Toledo, where Islamic and Christian rulers partnered with each other for common goals or creative aspirations. But with the Catholic Monarchs, religious tolerance was abandoned. They initially had an agreement with the Muslim leader Boabdil where he agreed to submit Granada, the final city of the Moors, to the Catholic Monarchs on the condition that Muslims could still practice their religion. But soon after 1492 the Catholic Monarchs banned the practice of the Islam. Three months later, Judaism was also banned, and forced conversion for both groups occurred. Many Jews were expelled from the new territory of united Spain or became slaves in other areas of the peninsula and Portugal. The ruling Spanish court considered Muslims to be politically dangerous, and Jews to be a threat to Catholicism, even after their forced conversion. [60] Hence, the Christian takeover put an end to the mix of artistic and linguistic expressions seen in the centuries before. But previously the relations between the faith groups had ebbed and flowed, allowing for cultural, economic, literary, and artistic exchange. Córdoba, Toledo, and Granada encase these segments of history within their built forms.

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[60] Mann, Dodds, Glick, *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*, 32.

The Great Mosque of Córdoba: A First Step in Architectural Convivencia

The Great Mosque of Córdoba was a monument of a predominantly Islamic society from the eighth through the thirteenth century. It then documents the cultural turning point into the rigid religious hegemony of Catholic rulers in Córdoba beginning in 1236. The structure evidences distinctive periods of Islamic rule in Al-Andalus, each with their political ideology verbalized in each expansion. The Muslim Umayyad rulers of Córdoba (750–1031) governed a multiethnic community and the city became one of the most prolific in the world during the Middle Ages. The mosque became the cathedral of Córdoba in 1236 without substantial architectural change, but three centuries later, under the Catholic Monarchs, its hypostyle hall was fractured by the insertion of a cathedral building in the middle of its dense forest of columns. The cathedral was almost like erasing of centuries of worship, by being overwritten with a new language and message. The Great Mosque then became a strict example of the only acceptable religion in the newly formed country. The mosque exhibits the Umayyad civilization and its tolerance with other religions, specifically with ties to Christianity, while capturing the exact moment and change in society when Charles V sanctified the success of the Catholic Monarchs' conquest of the Iberian Peninsula.

The ruler Abd Al-Rahman I (r. 756-788 CE), one of the sole leaders of the Umayyad dynasty surviving at that time, began construction on the Great Mosque of Córdoba in the eighth century (fig. 6). His portion of the mosque opens to an almost rectangular shaped courtyard (with one wall not parallel to its counterpart) containing a fountain for ablutions and rows of orange trees that hint at the rhythmic aisles of columns found in the interior. At this time, only the beginnings of a minaret tower existed, a structure which would serve as a base for the centuries of long dialogue between a Muslim minaret and a Christian bell tower. The interior consisted of

eleven aisles of horseshoe arches, doubled above one another for added support, running in the direction of what the builders thought was to Mecca. Each aisle repeats the arches above spolia columns from the Roman through the Visigothic period, with alternating red brick and white stone voussoirs, creating an energetic movement throughout the space (fig. 10). According to art historian Jerrilynn Dodds, horseshoe arches were indigenous to the Visigoth communities from the pre-Islamic era. The Great Mosque represents one of the first interfaith linguistic code-mixing through architecture.[61] It served as a multicultural, multilingual monument. Because the Great Mosque used techniques that were indigenous to the region, disregarding whether they emerged from Christian Romans or Jewish groups, their architectural language of the Mudejar style grew to encapsulate more than just Islamic people. The middle aisle is the widest, the two aisles along the exterior walls the smallest, and those in-between are uniform. The general plan reflects the standard hypostyle mosque, derived from Jerusalem and Damascus. The overwhelming quantity of "commonplace" cultural techniques drawn from the eastern Mediterranean and Visigothic Europe elevate the space to a dizzyingly new design.[62] These commonplace architectural additions, words added to the Iberian Peninsula lexicon, were able to achieve so highly by their sheer quantity, and their inherent connection to another place. Words in other languages, architectural or not, have a unique ability to connect one to somewhere else, and within that they can be found useful and beautiful simply by their difference to the norm.

For Abd Al-Rahman I, the new and grand creation was a call of remembrance to his family's former dynasty in Syria. The Umayyads had been wiped out in Syria in 750 by the

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[61] Dodds, *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, 22. One of the many origin stories of the Mosque claims that Abd Al-Rahman I had bought out a pre-existing mosque and church that shared a plot of land, representing a sharing of sacred space before the eighth century. Dodds expounds upon the derivations and significance of art in Al-Andalus for the purpose of analyzing the depth of impact by the Muslim community in Spain and surrounding areas.
[62] Dodds, *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, 15.

Abbasids (r. 750-1258 CE), except for Abd Al-Rahman I who fled to the Iberian Peninsula. The Great Mosque of Córdoba was built in the honor of the lost Syrian community which the caliph preserved in Spain. It is possible the caliph conserved the Visigothic vocabulary to create an alliance between the existing Christian culture in the Iberian Peninsula and the new one, much as the Catholic Monarchs would later do with Mudejar. The Great Mosque of Córdoba, as one of the formative contributions to the Mudejar style, speaks into existence the precedent for cultural expression in the built form. It is a union of earlier communities to one, singular voice, which later was used as a weapon against cultural minorities by Spanish thrones. Here lies a key difference for the structure, first a mosque and then a cathedral: the former was created in order to remember the past, whereas the Christians built to declare their future claim.

The strength of memory can be seen in the fact that Córdoba's next leaders in succession, Abd Al-Rahman II (r. 822-852 CE), Abd Al-Rahman III (r. 912-961 CE), Al-Hakam II (r. 961-976 CE), and Al-Hakam II's prime minister Al-Mansūr (b. 938-1002 CE), maintained the architectural language Abd Al-Rahman I had started. The latter two contributed new additions, expanding the size of the mosque without taking away from what had been done. These rulers did not erase or rewrite the statement made over the relationship between royalty and faith, yet continued the same sentence through the spatial constructions. Al-Mansūr was responsible for the total ground covered by the Mosque today, by which the mosque became more squarish, breaking the longitudinal shape maintained by his three predecessors. It is important to note that under the reign of Abd Al-Rahman III Córdoba became a cultural and literary capital of the world. It would seem that the rulers after him understood the profound greatness of his achievements and chose to preserve and remember his architectural tradition instead of rejecting the built representation of its prolific culture.

Abdallah (r. 888-912 CE), the great-grandson of Abd Al-Rahman III, infused an elevated language into the mosque by having parts of the edifice speak the language of the upper class, an equivalent of the *Usted* formal style architecturally, thus creating a literal spatial distinction between citizens and the royals. He constructed a separate entrance and passage for the caliph and his entourage, a *sabat*, from the Umayyad palace in Córdoba to the mosque.[63] Though he claimed humble intentions, explaining that this would cause less disruption to the people's prayers by his presence, it also marks one of the first physical distinctions of the state within the religious space. This decision could have been added from the Christian architectural lexicon, and used later within the Mudejar style. Though the mosque is a strong display of power and abundance, its unstoppable two-story arcading is also a fitting representation of the culture at the time, which would not be overtly dominated by or fused with the government. Overall, the four main rulers did not step on one another's toes to declare their own greatness; instead, they continued on the foundation of a message of remembrance.

One of the greatest contributions to the mosque came from Hakam II, who added twelve new aisles in the same direction as the existing in 962-966 BCE and redesigned the mihrab as a small chamber rather than merely a niche, a unique word added to Mudejar linguistic architecture (fig. 11).[64] This addition was a recategorization of the semantic message within this prominent religious space. This, along with the addition by Abdallah, changed the overall verse of passivity within the space, to an active spatial instructive form. Before, the mosque was an echo of the prayers spoken within; now, the space dictates its own meanings, and reinforces a power structure. Hakam II had a maqsūra, a screen of poly-lobed double arches with alternating

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[63] Dodds, *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, 16.
[64] Dodds, *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, 18.

voussoirs, created in front of the mihrab which highlights the three aisles leading to the mihrab and establishes a zone of privileged access in front of the mihrab (fig. 12).[65] These changes continued the hierarchical voices in the mosque begun by Abdallah. It is interesting that this design choice was adopted when Islamic liturgy was not hierarchical, unlike Christian ritual, yet the creation of hierarchical space centered on the mihrab might have been inspired by hierarchic Christian basilica design. The architectural vocabulary of the Muslim dynasty absorbed new words and ideas from other religious groups.

The minaret later-turned bell tower is perhaps the most telling example of the dialogue between the two primary faiths in Córdoba. A minaret is the architectural support for the verbalization of Muslim piety in the form of the call to prayer. Christians used bells to mark the time of masses. To eliminate this acoustic religious marking of time and space, general and de facto ruler of Islamic Spain, Al-Mansūr, attacked Santiago de Compostela in 997 and removed bells from the church, had them brought to Córdoba, where they were used as lamps within the mosque, not as bells in the minaret. In a retributive twist, when Christian Ferdinand III of Castile (r. 1217-1252 CE) conquered Córdoba in 1236, the bells were returned to their original setting, carried the entire distance on the backs of incarcerated Muslims. This tug-of-war of power demonstrates a larger system at work in Córdoba between the Christians and Muslims. With Ferdinand III's victory, the Christian religion expanded its dominance in Spain. In his newfound empire, he set to work changing the mosque into the Cathedral of Santa María. Small chapels and burials were added along with Mudejar elements such as Arabic writing as decoration, as seen in the Royal Chapel, built for the royalty of Castile (fig. 13). Over the course of the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, forced conversion to Christianity from a Jewish or Islamic

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[65] Dodds, *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, 19.

faith was increasingly demanded, as discussed by Angus Mackay in *Spain in the Middle Ages*.[66] Christian authorities deeply mistrusted the Conversos and Moriscos*,* and many Jews and Muslims left the Iberian Peninsula. It would seem that by consecrating the Mosque and overlaying Christian emblems of architecture over one of the greatest Hispano-Muslim works was a method of stamping out any possible dissent, although it is hard to explain the presence of Arabic script in Mudejar ornament in Córdoba's erstwhile mosque, now cathedral. It is possible that these inclusions of the Islamic architectural style were a way to create a common language of architecture. From here, the Catholic Monarchs used the style as a way to relate and appropriate Jewish and Muslim cultures. Before this time, the ways of constructing architecture differed in tongues by their roots; Muslims and Christians spoke different design languages, united only by Visigothic and early Roman techniques.

The greatest display of the rigid religious structures in Córdoba came with the Catholic Monarchs in 1523, when they had a full-blown new masonry church building inserted as the new cathedral according to a design by Hernán Ruiz. The structure has a strong nave and transept, forming a cross in plan with its liturgical axis running in ninety-degree opposition to the qibla axis. Ornamentation from the Renaissance and Gothic period are showcased in sculpture, tracery, the classical orders, and the massive bundled piers instead of individual columns, a stark contrast with the delicate field of columns in the rest of the remaining prayer hall (fig. 14).[67] Instead of muting the language of the previous centuries of Islamic rule, the Gothic and Renaissance languages of the new Cathedral did not eliminate the old tongue, but instead stifled it, keeping Moriscos and Conversos firmly trapped and closely watched. The new structure shouts its

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[66] Angus MacKay, *Spain in the Middle Ages* (St. Martin's Press, 1977), 195-196. The source takes a frank look at all aspects of culture, politics, and religion during this time period.
[67] Dodds, *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, 18.

dominance far above the mosque, almost as an ever-present reminder of the authority of the Christian God, and by extension the Catholic Monarchs. Though the Umayyad dynasty displayed their wealth and culture through the Great Mosque, the leaders did not celebrate themselves blatantly within the structure, at least not initially, choosing instead to do so in their palaces, such as the Madinat Al-Zahra outside of Córdoba. It appears that palatial architecture was combined with religious architecture, a theme that was exacerbated by the Catholic Monarchs and their use of ornamentation to convey their political agenda and authority. Here lies another layer of architectural languages: regional styles versus universal messages. Not only did the Catholic Monarchs introduce a new style to the Iberian Peninsula, they also introduced a far more direct power structure to architecture, which has become a part of Spanish architectural jargon. Though one can enter into the space and read the hierarchy, whether using regional designs or not, the most powerful usage will be when it is understood in an area's native tongue. Church and state, though not ever fully separate in the history of the Iberian Peninsula, were clasped firmly together by the advent of the Monarchs and demonstrated by the Cathedral in Córdoba.

As seen in the Great Mosque of Córdoba, conceived and nurtured in an era of convivencia, the language of architecture was an effective mode of communication within each faith group. Eventually the Mudejar style, fast becoming the Spanish style, entered into the dialogue. Each faith had contributed architectural facets, such as the horseshoe arch, hypostyle hall, and main aisles to create a tongue that spoke to the cultures on the Iberian Peninsula. Exploiting architectural language to push their agenda, as the Catholics Monarchs did, marginalized, but did not exterminate the Mudejar language. The beginning phases of the mosque were building blocks for Mudejar, as one of the earliest works which combined regional architectural techniques into one fluid form. Building design and ornamentation display power

dynamics and speak underlying or overt messages to viewers. The Great Mosque of Córdoba holds in its arches and plan one of the most prominent moments of history in Spain, showcasing the Islamic culture that flourished for centuries and strongly preserving the moment when the city came under a Christian regime.

Toledo as a Multilingual Architectural Capital

The urban culture of Toledo is a living document of multifaith and multicultural exchanges over centuries, preserved in architectural forms which invoke a unique dialogue with politics and spoken languages. The rich history of Toledo's artistic bounty begins with the Muslim ruler Yahya ibn Ismail al-Mamun (r. 1043-1075 CE), the second of the Berber Hawwara Dhulnunid dynasty to be of the Taifa of Toledo.[68] Contemporaneously in northern Spain, Christian Ferdinand I (r. 1035-1065 CE), the ruler who united Castile and León, died, and left each of his sons one region (Castille, León, and Galicia) to rule. After tumultuous political exchanges between the brothers, the middle son, Alfonso, took refuge in Toledo, where he was received by al-Mamun. After many years and changes in dynasties throughout the Iberian Peninsula, Alfonso VI became the king of Toledo in 1085. He created an era of general peace and comingling among the religious communities. Many Jews and Muslims from other areas fled to Toledo when their own Taifas persecuted them. Toledo was known as place of preservation of the "Old Christian" ways, which the Mozarabs, Christians under Muslim rule, had instilled in the area. As an influx of new religious ideas flowed through newly arrived Christian residents from the north, Latin Christian script became more common place. The city had immense libraries of books

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[68] Taifas were the Muslim factions which divided southern Spain.

from the past hundreds of years with religious, philosophical, and scientific texts in Arabic and Latin as well as technological inventions such as the astrolabe.[69]

The fluidity of languages translates over to the architecture within the city. Parry states that the built form can be represented by multiple tongues, an idea which is abundantly on display in Toledo's history of sacred spaces.[70] To address the plurality within the built forms is to name the city's many longstanding religious structures, such as Cristo de la Luz Mosque (one of ten mosques in the city), the Synagogue of Santa María la Blanca, constructed in the late 1100s, the Cathedral of Santa María, built in the late thirteenth century, and the San Juan de los Reyes Monastery, built in 1476.[71] Both the synagogue and mosque were eventually converted into Catholic churches in the following centuries. Though the structures spanned over different time periods, the continuance and non-destruction of the spaces alludes to an understanding and respect to others' religious spaces. Just as Alfonso X fostered what would become Castilian into a national language, so did Toledo in architecture with its multifaith sacred spaces using the same tongue.

Of the many religious spaces in Toledo, Spain, the Synagogue of Santa María la Blanca creates an in-depth discourse in how austerity, ornament, and the Mudejar style were drawn upon to encode messages resonant for each civilization. The Synagogue of Santa María la Blanca (fig. 15), built by Moorish architects for Jewish patrons, used architectural language to further its connection to place through the Mudejar style, albeit tempered with specific ties to the Almohad dynasty in Spain (1125-1269). It speaks in the strong shared language of the Mudejar tongue with its five aisles composed of plain white stucco columns supporting horseshoe arches, with

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[69] Menocal, *The Ornament of the World,* 136-188.
[70] Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," 145.
[71] Christopher Wilson, *Gothic Cathedral* (Thames & Hudson, 1990), 157-159 & 276-292.

poly-lobed arches resting above, extending the length of and creating a rhythm conducive for chants and prayers (fig. 16).[72] Like the Great Mosque of Córdoba, this modest hypostyle hall appears to chant a prayer of remembrance through its form. Blank expanses stretch across the space, with ornamentation only reaching boisterous levels on the capitals of the columns. Designs, such as vegetation and geometric shapes, are the main subject of the ornamentation in the space, where there is any.

The Almohads, a conservative, if not fundamentalist, Islamic ruling dynasty came to Spain from North Africa. They believed that the Muslims living in Al-Andalus were too frivolous with their opulence, and they imposed their own visual language which was nearly puritanical. It appears that the synagogue was heavily influenced by this Muslim community; the white walls and limited ornamentation within the synagogue speak to this style. In their preference for plain, white surfaces, it almost appears that the Almohads did not want to have a voice or speak a language within their religious spaces, and wished for only the messages from their religion issue from sound in the mosques. As Jerrilynn Dodds points out, geometry and linear concepts were popular in Almohad architecture, which had come to the peninsula in 1125.[73] These ideas of lines and geometry are reminiscent of the first and second articulations linguistically. These are the beginnings of sound and form in language, and the Almohads returned to this idea by preferring linear and geometric patterns over the high Islamic ornamentation. They preferred the simple, unclear (and therefore unassuming of overstepping God's power) descriptions of space over complete, whole messages within their walls. In a sense, they were rewriting what Muslim architecture should like in their eyes as they dominated

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[72]Jerrilynn Dodds, "Mudejar Tradition and the Synagogues of Medieval Spain: Cultural Identity and Cultural Hegemony," in *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*, ed. Vivian B. Mann, Jerrilynn Denise Dodds, and Thomas F. Glick (New York: G. Braziller; The Jewish Museum, 1992), 115.
[73] Dodds, *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain,* 117.

politically. Instead of the creation of a new architectural language, they added to the larger conversation already in place at this time. It may be the case that ornamentation was not used as a self-celebratory device for the Jews at this time, but instead as an overall celebration of their religion through shared means of design.

After Alfonso VI became king of Toledo in 1085, the commingling of cultures within the city disassociated Islam from the Mudejar style.[74] The architectural motifs became communal property, and for the Jewish community, a personal landmark for their beliefs and people. Though the treatment of Jews was better than in the rest of Europe, in Christian Al-Andalus they were the most oppressed group of the other Abrahamic religions. The evidence of the synagogue suggests that the Mudejar style became a shout of defiance for Toledo's Jews and an emblem of their own. The chosen moments of ornamentation against plain ground only serve to highlight the austere cultural beliefs of the ruling Almohads.

Even in the construction of the new cathedral of Toledo begun in 1227, the intermingling of "Hebrew," "Arab," and "Christian" vocabulary finds a home.[75] For example, the cathedral's Mudejar dialect includes cinquefoil arches in its arcades as well as the upper triforium having lobed arches such as those seen in the Great Mosque of Córdoba and common in much Hispano-Muslim architecture (fig. 17).[76] Here lies a linguistic equivalent of the existence of more than one tense captured in one moment. Santa María recognizes the culture and then-current climate of Toledo, which necessitates a use of a language familiar to the inhabitants at the time (Arabic)

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[74] Dodds, *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain,* 118.
[75] Wilson, *Gothic Cathedral,* 157-159 & 276-292.
[76] Wilson, *Gothic Cathedral*, 158. In his work he aims to address motives behind European churches built between the 12th century and 16th, including political responses and problem-solving through design.

in an effort to ease their conversion to Christianity. The cathedral was built in recognition of the past society, not signifying an end as it is brought forward into the present through the cathedral.

A true testament to the layering of communities throughout time is the Church of San Roman, which was built as a church in the thirteenth century but bears signs of Islamic culture and Arab language. After Toledo became the capital of the permanently united kingdom of Leon and Castile in 1230, Christianity was the predominant religion but the practice of others was permitted. Within the religious space of San Roman are scripts in ersatz Arabic, horseshoe arches, and alternating red and white voussoirs (fig. 18). The church was a new structure, not ever used as a place of worship for the Muslims who came before; it is interesting it was first chosen to mimic the architectural style of a mosque rather than look familiar to a typical Christian church layout. This speaks to the communal usage of the Mudejar style, and its roots of one culture being dissolved into a sense of one, which contributed to the prolific period of creativity. It is as if the Christian builders wanted to write in a language that was still familiar to the existing community, borrowing the other's lexicon to express themselves better. This mix of styles hints at the complicated relationship between Muslims and Christians at this time. Religion had no stake in dividing alliances or rivalries that were created in this moment specifically.[77] The ever-changing relationships of these groups contribute to the wealth of creativity that abounded in Toledo.

During and after the domination of the Catholic Monarchs (1469–1516), the Mudejar "language" began to represent the submission of the non-Catholic communities to the power and control of Catholic rulers over the entire Iberian Peninsula. This new position of Mudejar can be

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[77] Menocal, *The Ornament of the World,* 131-134.

seen once again in the exaggerated dialectic between austerity and ornamentation in the Late Gothic monastery of San Juan de los Reyes in Toledo. Built as the Reconquista was sweeping ever farther south, it demonstrated control and authority through ornamentation over a multifaith population whose culture had drastically changed. San Juan de los Reyes, begun in 1480, was intended to be Ferdinand and Isabella's mausoleum, although they later changed the location and plan to Granada.[78] Due to its close proximity to the beginning of the Monarchs' rule, works built around this time might be viewed as a celebration of their newfound power and a showcase of how religious spaces should henceforth be created.

The monastery's church has one main nave, flanked by four side chapels. The show of power begins with the aisleless nave, instead of the hypostyle hall as seen in the Synagogue of Santa María la Blanca, with only one direction towards the altar indicating the existence of only one true faith (fig. 19). Here, the architectural sentence is simply a command. The statement is one word, a verb, demanding an action, conjugated to be a mandate, which could be the word *obedezcan* meaning "obey" to the royal subjects of Toledo. According to architectural historian Christy Anderson, the church's expansive vaults use parallel ribs similar to those in the Cathedral (former mosque) of Córdoba, signifying that the Church has "conquered" the pre-existing social structure.[79] Instead of using the Mudejar style as the Jews had done as part of the shared architectural culture in Toledo, the Catholic Monarchs laid claim to the architectural style as if it were one of the spoils of their Reconquista war. In the nave of San Juan de los Reyes, stretches of austere ashlar wall surface contrast with bursts of carved stone ornament on the vertical supports and horizontal cornice. Ornamentation within the church is vegetal and trapped

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[78] Wilson, *Gothic Cathedral*, 288.

[79] Christy Anderson*, Renaissance Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 88. She develops an expansive look at this work and other European Renaissance churches, with special regard to their users and impacts.

in Late Gothic traceries (fig. 20). Whereas the synagogue makes use of white plaster and stucco décor, the Monarchs' church commits fully to stone masonry. The dialogue between austerity and ornamentation furthers the narrative of control and celebration. The ornamentation, found through the detailed sculptures and reliefs, along with Gothic tracery, speak to the new hierarchy the Monarchy had established. It could be argued that the Late Gothic usage was a source of confusion, a new tongue, to express in the built form. What was recognizable in a sea of strange characters was the Mudejar, trapped and contained.

Examples of this are shown in the lower level of the cloister garden of the monastery. Latin epigraphy abruptly ends the vegetative ornamentation, signifying an end to the convivencia of the Mudejar style in lieu of the future of the Catholic Monarchs' reign (fig. 21). Saints are featured in attached columns lining the cloister garden, stating with certainty the power and structural support needed by the Christian church. San Juan de los Reyes Monastery could be compared to a law written in stone. Though a religious space, one of the primary messages is the end and containment of a Jewish, Muslim, and Christian common language, and the beginning of a new reign which holds space for only one language, and "higher" architectural styles imported from other areas of Europe. The monastery has outlasted the Catholic Monarchs' specific rule, proving that writing a law in stone lasts beyond that written in paper. It forces all who enter to read it, creating an immovable, permanent, forced understanding of the new rule, which is still being read today.

In the cloister of San Juan de los Reyes, an *artesonado* wooden ceiling, a patterned wooden design derived from Islamic culture, is an almost hidden aspect of the Mudejar style on

the second-floor arcade (fig. 22).[80] The ceiling's position could be comparable to using a casual

jargon when not in the public eye, only heard by those with that level of intimate clearance of

oneself. The style could have been enjoyed in private for the sake of reveling in a wonderful

architectural contribution, but not wishing to outwardly celebrate a feat from another's culture.

The overall Gothic style takes the center stage in both stories of the cloister's arcades, allowing

the *artesonado* ceiling to be a unique distinction. Supporting arches in the space begin with

vegetative tracery, and summit to the Monarch's crest, with two lions sitting above the arch and

Latin adorning its sides (fig. 23). It is almost like they recognized the benefits and cultural

expressions of the Toledo they overtook, and chose to build upon it and control from their new

political position. As the monastery is one of the first examples of large-scale Late Gothic

architecture in Toledo, it is logical that the first space entered, the church, is wholly in the new

style, creating a dramatic, law-like effect, which slowly incorporates the Mudejar style as one

progresses further, contemporaneously decreasing in public eye.

Though Jews, Christians, and Muslims shared a sense of place in Toledo, it seems that

one of the only communal paths of visual communication between Jews and Christians was the

Mudejar style. The Jewish community in the city was comfortable in the Muslim culture that

had reigned for the past hundreds of years. It is not likely that the Jews would have ever felt a

similar sense of belonging in the Christian community, or vice-versa. Though Toledo was the

capital of the Visigoths, there is almost no sense of continuation of their culture through Jewish

works such as the Synagogue of Santa María la Blanca; its roots are thoroughly Moorish. This

could be due to a closer proximity in time, but there might have been a desire to distance

themselves from the faith that had had more animosity towards them. Architecture in sacred

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[80] Anderson, *Renaissance Architecture*, 89.

spaces was not utilized solely to express gratitude or devotion to faith, but to stake claim to one's own culture or the traditions of another.

The Last of the Moors: Granada and its History

As the last standing Muslim city of the Nasrid Dynasty (r. 1230-1492 CE) in medieval Spain, Granada has large historical significance in both built form and Mudejar language. In the thirteenth century, Christian kings and queens took control over Seville, Córdoba, and Murcia, while the province of Granada was for the most part without turmoil until the 1480s. In the years leading up to the Catholic Monarch's rule, Muhammad XIII Ez-Zaghal (r. 1485–86 CE) was the leader of Granada while his nephew, Muhammad XII Boabdil, was imprisoned in Castile until 1487, after which time he ruled Granada until he surrendered it in 1492 to the Christian Monarchs. Boabdil was known to be weak, and when he surrendered, he supposedly gave the "last sigh of the Moors." After the Catholic Monarchs took over, they renounced the open practice of Islam against their previous promises, as noted, and Boabdil returned to the Moorish land where he became a beggar.[81] In Granada, the Alhambra was prized by both Muslim and Christian rulers for its location with natural protection from the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and its site upon a hill above the city.[82] As a palace for the Nasrid and Zirid dynasties , the Alhambra uses its style and voice to represent the wonders of God, speaking distinctly against the soon-to-be norm of politics and religions being united. The Alhambra along with other monuments in

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[81] Lane-Poole, *The Story of the Moors in Spain*, 267.
[82] Stanley Lane-Poole and Artur Gilman, *The Moors in Spain* (London, 1887), 221. The author strives to remain without prejudice and solely recount historical events through an interesting narrative, with an emphasis on race and creed.

Granada combine the final moments of the Mudejar style while simultaneously ushering in a new rule and architectural tongue, which would serve as a precedent for years to come.

The Alhambra: The Voice of Allah Through Stone

The Alhambra encapsulated the architectural language of its longstanding Islamic dynasties' culture and religion in its walls. The structure serves as an almost pure representation of the Moorish style which is a large part of the Mudejar style. The unique palace-city upon a hill, containing ostensibly secular residences, an Alcazaba, and Arab baths nevertheless communicates the importance of the Muslim faith through a unique display of remembrance of faith, shown through celestial motifs, and a statement of privacy's prerogatives. Three spaces serve to demonstrate the all-powerfulness of Allah: the well-preserved Court of the Myrtles, Hall of the Ambassadors (the throne room), and Court of the Lions.

The Court of the Myrtles (fig. 7) is a rectangular courtyard with a pool of water in the center, a mirror that reflects the highly detailed architecture. This court is a representation of the oasis the Quran leads its followers to yearn for; in a climate such as the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula, dry and desert-like, water is a precious material that is used as a relic and theme of prosperity in the court and the Alhambra as a whole.[83] On the north side, through a screen of Sebka panels and seven arches adorned with Nasrid and Muqarnas capitals, is the entrance to the Hall of the Ambassadors. As mentioned, these two capital types may initiate a systematic program of recollection in language, through indirect and direct articles (fig. 28). It

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[83] Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 160.

could appear to one who is in the court that he or she is "a" person. Then, passing through the

Muqarnas "the" capitals, one becomes "the" person, who has the right and privilege of seeing the

ruler on his throne in the Hall of the Ambassadors. Spaces have the power to define its

inhabitants as architectural languages speak to them.

To the east, the Court of the Lions (fig. 24) was added under the reign of Yusuf I (r.

1333-1354 CE), in the first dynasty in Granada, the Zirids. It is a rectangular courtyard

punctuated by domed halls on its north and south sides and alcoves on its east and west. Like the

Court of the Myrtles, the theme of water returns here but in the form of four small, river-like

paths that flow outwards from these four rooms to the Fountain of the Lions in the center of the

court.[84] As opposed to the pool of still water in the Court of the Myrtles, here the four runnels of

water start their paths in the four interior spaces, almost leading the inhabitant to follow the paths

to the center, to the oasis of the fountain surrounded by twelve different marble lions. The four

rivulets represent the four rivers of life: honey, water, wine, and milk. At the same time, the

space literally and figuratively speaks the magnificence of God, using architectural languages

and inscriptions in stucco to create a simulacrum of heaven on earth.

On the column capitals and fountains of the Court of the Lions are many Arabic

inscriptions (fig. 33) phrases like "Only God is victor," or parts of poetry with lines like "Are

there not in this garden wonders that God has made incomparable in their beauty?"[85] The

frequent repetition of the same phrases allows architecture to bear the message of the importance

of remembrance in Islam, namely, that the human frailty of forgetfulness is an obstacle to

salvation. The architecture serves as a reminder to reflect on the wonders of their God, the

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[84] Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 34.
[85] "Epigraphic Poems," Alhambra de Granada, Area25, Accessed November 20, 2022.

physical voice of the five calls to prayer each day. Repeated verses of praise to Allah from the Quran as well as from poetry express faith, tying devotion, form, and spatial practice together. Parry states that "Architectural experience is always already encoded by place names, memories, advertisements, and symbols that coat the somatic dimension in linguistic meanings. There is a special consideration to the mix of literal writing upon architecture."[86] The writing appearing in the Court of the Lions is a frank desire to express literally what the space speaks figuratively. This removes the guesswork of wondering at a form's purpose, while also layering a voice over a subconscious voice that speaks already. The inscriptions were not done in heavy, lasting stone, but in stucco, which, through water and materials, is subject to age and damage. It seems the creators of the Alhambra chose to not encapsulate the voice of God in an enduring material, so as not to limit God to one time condition, without the possibility of change, while also representing the human's understanding of what religious messages are. The fragility of stucco stands for the perishability of man-made things in contrast to the enduring kingdom of God.

Halls accessed from the Court of the Lions—the Hall of the Abencerrajes, Hall of the Kings, Hall of the Two Sisters, and Sala de los Mocárabes—reiterate the themes of the eternalness of heaven. (fig. 25).[87] Earlier I noted that these adjoining spaces create a paragraph of supporting arguments to the idea of the celestial realm. For areas that were considered to be more exclusive socially, at the end of significant axes (possibly for the ruler's meetings with chosen individuals), the rooms are lavish especially in their ceiling adornments. The muqarnas domes, created from multifaceted geometric shapes, take small single units and multiply them, manifesting the infiniteness of the heavens. The sheer abundance of muqarnas can be likened to

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[86] Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," 130.
[87] Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 178.

the spoken words of prayers of the many Muslims joined into one. A single voice of prayer is a different sound and experience of the powerful praises of a group. Oneness and shared moments of prayer are an important part of Islamic practice. Additionally, those invited to these halls were assumedly Muslim, or nobility of other faith groups, in other words, those with enough hierarchy to glimpse the wonders at hand. Spaces woven further into the Alhambra, alluding to more privacy, such as the Hall of the Kings, allow even fewer visitors. These distinctions could be comparable to the *Usted* vs *tú* styles in the Spanish language. It is possible, as the Alhambra is for the rulers and not for the subjects, that the entire structure is "written" in the formal *Usted* form.

The Alhambra complex as a whole is not controlled by a single axis. It weaves and layers larger spaces into smaller ones. There is no specific direction to be read from the work. This characteristic is typical of Mudejar, resulting from Moorish styles, geometry, and how parts are related to the whole, as seen in the two muqarnas domes. Spatial legibility was conducive to the inner workings of the court and the desire to elaborate a quality of the ruler's Islamic faith through design. From the exterior, there are no views of the interior courtyards, and glimpses inside are few and far between. Grabar writes of the deliberate confusion in the military-strategic floor plan and the complexity of the mix of light and dark in the interior, guarded by the austerity shown on the exterior, and the necessity to be in the center of it all to fully comprehend the many systems at play.[88] This privacy protects the messages of God the walls speak on, allowing them to recede and come forth depending on who is inhabiting the space. Like poetry, the multiplicity and interweaving of muqarnas and architectural forms is made clear to those of the faith, yet may fall on deaf ears of those outside of Islam, becoming merely visual enhancements. Privacy can be

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[88] Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 199.

defined by speaking in a language that only the chosen can understand, even if spoken in front of all.

A theme that connects many of the motifs made in the work is the overlapping and compiling of many into one. This layering is most apparent in the Court of the Lions, where column groupings are stacked upon one another, changing and mixing a pre-conceived notion of rhythm in manners of support (fig. 24). As Grabar pointed out, larger arches hold compositions with small and medium sized arches, with ends of each grouping laying over their neighbors. Then, in the two halls, the use of squares, stars, and octagons is repeated and represented in the complicated system of muqarnas as ceiling ornamentation and in the smaller portions of capitals and arches.[89] Each muqarnas does not necessarily denote a meaning on its own, but when amplified with others creates a message of significance. Muqarnas are thus similar to morphemes, which are units of language, but do not have their individual meaning without the aid of others. Just the same, they are compounded into words in a way familiar to how muqarnas are compounded into arches and ceilings. At a larger scale, the repetition of smaller shapes to create larger spaces is seen in size and number in plan through spatial progression. Geometry is a main theme of Islamic architecture that the Alhambra capitalizes on, using mathematical sequences to create spaces of splendor.[90] It is possible that the use of geometry and shapes, yielding to exactness and grandness at once, are a representation of the perfectness and absoluteness of God, yet also the extreme incomprehensibility of his messages; humans can never perfectly understand the ways of God or his intentions. The myriad of messages yield to

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[89] Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 165.
[90] Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 196.

the intricacies beyond our grasp. The complex star and polygonal shapes replicated over and over allude to the complete wonders of the Islamic faith and heavens.

In general, good architecture joins beauty to utility, and, being a fortress, the Alhambra has a clear utilitarian purpose. Language shares this effort, with both the utility of communication and the ability to create art from sound and words. It could be argued that the art created by the Alhambra was poetry, poetry inscribed on the walls and experienced in quiet spaces for contemplation. The Alhambra tells of a reverence and deep appreciation for spiritual life through the art and experience each space holds. Compared to the Great Mosque of Córdoba, the Alhambra's architectural language is not multicultural. It speaks a Moorish tongue that is not without evolution, as shown in the change in the courtyard plans. More important than using the palaces as a display of power and dominance, the Alhambra seems to regard faith and spirituality as ultimately more pressing than earthly concerns. As Grabar noted, it was the duty of political leaders to safeguard the Islamic faith instead of bolstering themselves through the built form.[91] Because the years of the construction of the Alhambra saw much turmoil and changes in leadership, the patrons and designers may have decided to represent the culture and overall values of their community rather than make overt political statements. This decision may account for the preservation of the work by the Catholic Monarchs after the Reconquista that directly contradicts the religious objectives of the Spanish. But, after the Catholic Monarchs' takeover, the Alhambra may be considered to signify the end of the Mudejar, and assuredly pure Moorish, language and the beginning of a new spatial tongue.

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[91] Grabar, *The Alhambra*, 154.

The New Reign of the Catholic Monarchs in Granada

The Spanish Reconquest executed by the Catholic Monarchs marked a time of resurging Christianity in the previously Moorish land of Iberia, where in Granada they met a more purely Muslim architectural style than was the case in Córdoba or Toledo. The Catholic Monarchs' use of the Late Gothic and Renaissance dialogue speaks to the new path Granada was to follow in its religious and architectural practices, in lieu of the Mudejar architectural language previously favored by Jewish and Muslim communities.[92] To fit their new narrative, they used international building styles which were more adequate for their political messages. Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, at the helm of Castile and Aragon, achieved societal reform through forced conversions. In Granada, this was demonstrated architecturally by the consecration of mosques to churches. The Monarchs showcased their power through architectural motifs as well, as did Charles V (r. 1516-1556 CE), the grandson of the Monarchs. Finally, in Granada in 1492, the new rulers gained their power from the existing *Granadinos* by abruptly ending their multifaith ways of life and inculcating what the Monarchs deemed a correct function of society. Uses of Romanesque and Gothic styles parallel the dominant Castilian tongue, from which in this point of time becomes a marker for the Catholic Monarchs' reign and no longer the cultures that made up the Iberian Peninsula before them. Effectively, the Mudejar style became a dead language, leaving the region to fill in its wake with a new, confusing, and imposing tongue. The Catholic Monarchs, and their successor Charles V, used architectural forms to further their Christian

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[92] The Mudejar style was favored by these communities in places like Toledo, in Granada within the Alhambra, through the use of tilework in the Mexuar (Fig. 29) or the *artesonado* ceiling in the Comares Palace. (Fig. 26).

dominance in the city of Granada through forced conversions, shows of authoritativeness, and an overlay of a new culture.

The Catholic Monarchs' first task was to change Granada from a Muslim majority to a strong Christian city. One of the most direct ways the Monarchs achieved dominance was forced conversions, as mentioned, done even after promises of keeping the *sharia*, Islamic law, and many of the main mosques.[93] Architecturally, the Catholic Monarchs forced conversions by taking away places of worship. There were examples of new architectural languages in the city as well, like the Royal Chapel and the Palace of Charles V, but coupled with these confusing tongues was the familiar Mudejar, now fully removed from its old comfort. It is like the Catholic Monarchs introduced a "better language," a correct form of speech, like Castilian, but made sure to muddy the existing languages and their styles in the same turn.

After the consecration of the majority of mosques in Granada, the Monarchs did destroy the remaining mosques, such as the main mosque of the city, where Charles V later constructed the Cathedral of Granada in 1523. Isabella and Ferdinand illustrated their dedication to the city and its changes in the creation of the Royal Chapel (fig. 30), designed by Enrique de Egas, designated to be their and their successors, Joanna the Mad and Philip the Handsome (r. 1482-1506 CE), place of rest as a royal mausoleum.[94] The Royal Chapel, built from 1504 to 1517, is a direct exhibition of Queen Isabella's architectural style: Late Gothic with flamboyant instances (fig. 31). The Gothic style in general was not common to Granada and was an introduction of a new way to design religious structures. Isabelline style speaks to its new tongue through the use

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[93] Katie A. Harris, "Granada in the Sixteenth Century," Essay, in *From Muslim to Christian Granada: Inventing a City's Past in Early Modern Spain*, 8–27 (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 10. Harris analyzes various aspects of society in Granada after the Spanish Reconquest, using a variety of sources and texts to lessen the likelihood of bias.
[94] Harris, *Granada in the Sixteenth Century,* 11.

of Gothic features like flying buttresses and pointed arches, and ornamentation of complex

Gothic traceries and effusive adornment that earns the new Isabelline style its namesake. These

features, like pointed arches and the use of traceries, are using a different vocabulary than

Muslim religious spaces, which opt for horseshoe or rounded arches and mosaics. The space

speaks vertically, with a defined axis, where previous Mudejar works, like The Great Mosque of

Córdoba, had no prescribed path and were oriented horizontally. These new sacred spaces must

have felt alien to the Moriscos and Conversos, yet incredibly powerful to the Christians new to

the area. In comparison to other religious spaces which minimize ornamentation, such as the

Santa María la Blanca Synagogue, the high exorbitance could appear to be a competition in voice

for power between the Monarchs and the Christian God. Though the Monarchs surely recognize

the subservience they are under from their God, the way they convey themselves to their subjects

architecturally appears to question this. They create almost a competition, or at minimum a

strong discussion, between God and themselves. The dialogue between rulers and God is

evidently on display, with ornamentation and tracery used as floral adjectives and exuberant

speech to embody the conquest and achievement the Monarchs did in the Lord's name. This is at

complete opposite ends from the religious traditions of the Moors, who, as mentioned,

minimized their role in architecture to the greatest extent.

These design choices declared the monarchy's power through submission, evidently

shining through the yoke and arrow emblem. Within the Royal Chapel, this insignia can be found

everywhere. The altarpiece's many panels depict biblical stories, with emphasis on the

Crucifixion, Resurrection, and the role of Virgin Mary. One row shows the last Muslim emperor

of the Nasrid Dynasty, Muhammad XII Boabdil's, final agreement with the Monarchs which led

to Granada's demise, and the following baptisms (put politely) of the city's residents, as Julia

Ryskamp points out in her website article "The Cathedral and Royal Chapel of Granada."[95] With

strong semiotics, the Monarchs argue that their contribution to the kingdom of heaven was so

large that it merited a place along biblical tales. Altarpieces which depicted people was a new

method communication added to the architectural language in Granada, as the Moorish and

Mudejar styles often used iconography or geometric patterns as ornamentation.

It is possible that the Royal Chapel was constructed in the late Gothic Isabelline style,

rejecting what was the Mudejar form throughout the city, to solidify the mausoleum as a sign of

domination and control over Granada, representing the final and absolute conquest of Al-

Andalus. The Monarchs' first intended resting place, San Juan de los Reyes Monastery in

Toledo, had incorporated the Mudejar style, albeit in small ways, as mentioned above, by which

means creating a connection with the previous ruling communities. But in Granada the Catholic

Monarchs used the chapel instead to further display their complete domination of the Iberian

Peninsula with no traces of Islamic influence. It is the final stake to any communal inculcations

into the Spanish architectural style, and its completeness is held comparatively with little

additions to the Spanish language by other cultures up to this point.

The addition of the Renaissance Palace of Charles V (fig. 32) to the Alhambra, similar to

the Royal Chapel's rejection to the city's Mudejar vernacular, abandons its surroundings and

suggests a new and superior way of design coming from Italy. The structure, started in 1535 and

not completed until 1637, was built to house Charles V's family after he moved his court to

Granada. The palace displays the ideal Renaissance style, with a square plan and a circular

courtyard inscribed within the form. The *cortile* is almost pure Bramante in its sculptural quality

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[95] Julia Ryskamp, "The Cathedral and Royal Chapel of Granada," Duke University, Duke WordPress, April 1, 2019, https://sites.duke.edu/andalusia/2019/04/01/the-cathedral-and-royal-chapel-of-granada/. This website is particularly helpful in describing the architectural feats of the Royal Chapel in the context of its historical background.

and correctness: the lower level uses the Tuscan order for its columns, while the upper level utilizes Ionic columns with Corinthian capitals. The palace uses these orders as important marks of hierarchy, whereas in Mudejar style structures, like the Great Mosque of Córdoba, they are undifferentiated and seen as a whole rather than an individual. Here, the parts of the column are no longer parts of a word, but a complete message and utterance unto themselves in the power of their groupings. This built form language would have been more familiar and easily legible to the Monarchs. There is no mystery, hidden wonders, or sense of call-and-response between those who inhabit the space and the space itself; it is simply directive without receiving from its occupants—a monologue only in a previous culture of dialogue-like buildings.

The façade is a show of what the crown has done: sculpted reliefs flaunt previous wins over armies of others, such as the Arabs, Romans, and Turks. Themes of fame and victory adorn the exterior face, creating a narrative that places the kingdom as the utmost high.[96] The structure could linguistically be a glorified retelling of the Monarchs' victory, an architectural epic. The main theme of the building is superiority over the vernacular Mudejar style, emphasized by its juxtaposition against the Alhambra. The clear geometries of the space speak to a presumed higher spatial understanding and a clear "guide" to how reasoning and proportions should be conveyed. The works of the Royal Chapel and the Palace of Charles V are both landmarks that demarcate a new governance in the city of Granada, richly brandishing types of architecture that parade the greatness and distinctiveness of the Catholic Monarchs over the Muslim city. These works coincide with the true advent of the Castilian language, at its height of domination over Iberia.

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[96] "Charles V Palace," La Alhambra de Granada, Alhambra Pedagogical and Cultural Association, Accessed August 9, 2022, https://www.alhambra.org/palacio-carlos-v.html. The Alhambra Pedagogical and Cultural Association describes the architectural and ornamental detail of the Palace of Charles V.

The new rulers of the city found the streets of the Albyacín and subsequent areas to be too narrow and windy; they did not fit the narrative of what a prominent city should look like.[97] To rectify the situation, the rulers added straight paths, widened roads, and created plazas that remain today.[98] In a way that almost mirrors how mosques were changed to fit the form of a church, the city now had central "naves" and directed paths. It could be possible that the Muslim city structure, mirroring tactics within palatial and religious buildings that wielded privacy to hide brilliance within, was purposely changed to resemble Christian churches, which more often share their extravagance publicly, have directed paths, and derive from axes. Suddenly, the messages received in religious spaces were heard around the city. Once again, strict orders were given to the Conversos about how they must use the correct paths, the correct language, and relearn life in their own homes.

With expulsion and forced conversion, many Muslims left for North Africa, leaving those who remained to navigate the new, prescribed societal path the city now directed to the Church. Tensions grew between Christians and Moriscos after the segregation of the latter group to the Albyacín, the labyrinth of the city reminiscent of times before the new reign.[99] Not all the houses in the neighborhood were filled, leaving some to fall in on themselves, almost a visual representation of the sigh of the Moors, the homes and Islamic culture collapsing at the hands of the Catholic Monarchs.[100] They made large changes to the city to challenge the community's norms and disorientate the Moriscos, as well as mark claim to the territory. It is comparable to a person learning one language at home, thinking and understanding the world through that said tongue, but to survive outside the house, being forced to learn another social language. The chaos

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[97] Harris, *Granada in the Sixteenth Century,* 9.
[98] Harris, *Granada in the Sixteenth Century,* 9.
[99] Harris, *Granada in the Sixteenth Century,* 21.
[100] Harris, *Granada in the Sixteenth Century,* 26.

of not being understood, and not understanding, was impressed upon life-long residents of Iberia. Prominent Jewish neighborhoods were destroyed for the construction of churches to populate the city.[101] Granada, deeply tied in the Muslim tradition, was a fully developed and centuries old society that quickly was uprooted and built anew with the Christian religion and new reign. The Catholic Monarchs, in combination with cultural restrictions, stripped the Moriscos of their familiar language, creating their idealized Granada in the Christian, Castilian tongue.

The beginning of the Catholic Monarchs' reign was the end of the living Mudejar language. Though the formation of the Spanish language parallels this architectural style, by the time of 1492, Spanish changes to become representative of the Monarchs. So, the period of convivencia and the Mudejar style ends, while the Spanish language curated during its time lives on in new forms, and now is known for its strong political, Christian ties. Language cannot always be a correct interpretation for architecture, but living within the present (or examining one period of history), it is possible to accurately mark culture through language and architecture as one overlapped medium. The concurrent history of language and architecture can parallel one another, but beyond large breaks in society, such as the Monarch's vast change, it is less accurate to hold one to another.

After the centuries-long Moorish empire came the domination of the Catholic Church and Spanish monarchy, executing their mutually beneficial intentions through cultural changes and the built form of Granada. The post-1492 physical changes to the landscape aided in supporting the forced conversions executed during the Monarch's reign, most especially the consecration of many mosques to churches. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, as well as their successor

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[101] Harris, *Granada in the Sixteenth Century,* 11.

Charles V, declared their authority over the last remaining Moorish city in the Iberian Peninsula, and by extent over the whole of Spain, in the non-Moorish, Gothic and Renaissance structures of the Royal Chapel and Palace of Charles V. One of the largest changes, which truly stripped the previously Muslim community of its familiarity and structure, was the loss of culture and subsequent overlay of Christian themes and ways, demonstrated in architectural forms and the urban fabric throughout the city. The Mudejar "language," built upon centuries of communities in Iberia, once paralleling the creation of Castilian, faces an abrupt end by the beginning of the Monarchs' rule. The Catholic Monarchs utilized the existing architecture and created new sites as tools of cultural demands, forced religious conversions, and displays of power to further their dominance over the Moorish community in Granada.

Conclusion

The Mudejar and Spanish language are two living accounts from the medieval Spanish era. Studying the history of the region by the mediums of architecture and language is a process often done in reverse, where the history is first studied and then its subsequent mediums; it is important to question how the Spanish language is a sponge to the culture around during its formation, and not only how the language was one byproduct of historical events. The way the creation of the language speaks to history may tell different stories, or place contrasting emphasis on locations or cultures which a dictation of the general history of Spain may fail to recollect. Architecture in turn gathers conscious and subconscious cultural beliefs. To study the history of medieval Spain through architecture as the primary source is to understand the intended messages in the built form, and read the prominent dates, takeovers, and changes through echoes left upon the walls.

The formation of the Spanish language parallels some of the most formative years for Spanish civilization and its culture. Though many languages were spoken within the Iberian Peninsula, Castilian came to be at first a unifying factor, and then a weapon of domination over non-Christian communities. One of the most interesting aspects of the creation of the language is its new lexicon added by cultural interactions. There was not a sufficient vocabulary within the Hispano-Romance language to cover all the new additions from Muslim and Jewish culture, and so the language grew and melded to match its occupants' needs. From this initial formation, it can be concluded that the current grammatical and syntactical system of Spanish is a culmination and best-fitting method of describing the quotidian life for medieval Spaniards. If an area was lacking in expression, or not useful for the region (such as the neutral gender which was dropped from Spanish), these changes were allowed. Under the guidance of prominent rulers, such as

Alfonso X, Castilian was given the necessary structure for the new Spanish reign which soon would fill the region. By this manner, looking at Spanish as it originated and architecture from the medieval period, its changes and additions from then to current serve as a base to compare how culture and expression formed itself through the two mediums.

Architecture has always been a manner to communicate ideas while providing shelter, but establishing the dictation of its words and messages requires the study of both architecture and language. Architecture works inherently under a structural system, beginning with base supports, adding walls, doors, windows, and capping itself with a roof. These are the bases of communication; what language is versus which language it is. Language is composed of its own linguistic equivalents of these elements, in the form of nouns, verbs, sentences, and a complete work. Ornamentation, arches, traceries, and styles mirror their linguistic equals in architectural structure, changing the dialect of the base architectural language as design styles change. Building with the inclusion of culture and history is to build using the local language of a region.

In Parry's comparison of architecture and language and their creation of cultural weaving, one is able to see how prevalent both mediums are in the preservation of culture. History is often recounted as political dates and social events, but it is argued that language and architecture hold different, but not contrasting, views. Parry discusses how language in general is a useful component today for understanding the articulation of architecture, yet does not delve into how the history of language (or a specific language in any case) pairs with historical architecture. Language is the most common example of a universal form of communication, and thus makes sense to compare to what architecture can say through its forms. In his essay, language and architecture are left as theories, without application to the world. Though his argument is thought-provoking and a compelling comparison for how architecture functions, it

remains rooted in the present by not applying its theories against previous events or monuments. History of architecture as a study centers itself on the works or monument at hand, using historical accounts to explain design choices. To study history through architecture is to follow the trail of monuments left behind a civilization and deduce changes in society by first understanding the spaces they inhabit. The Great Mosque of Córdoba speaks an architectural language just the same as the Alhambra, closely following the creation of Standard Spanish. This architectural, Islamic voice, which was so prominent in the medieval era and was the foundation of the Mudejar language, was directed to end in usage by Spanish monarchs after becoming a spoil of their conquest. As Arabic disappeared as the common mode of communication, so did the full Islamic architecture directive, instead joining with Castilian to create a new voice through the Mudejar form. Just as the languages within the Iberian Peninsula were diffused into one tone, so was the architectural style. Though many places in history have combined styles and languages into one, after a period of immense, prolific creative growth born from a period of many different peoples coexisting, it is a shame to see the end of a period where coexistence led to new and interesting creations unparalleled in Spanish history.

The Great Mosque of Córdoba and its numerous forest of columns could be just as well attributed to structural necessity and invention, rather than attempting to create chants that mirror the sacred actions of the space. With little first-hand historical accounts, there are merely conjectures on what the real intention behind the design was. Though language may not be a perfect comparison for architecture, to consider the intentions, messages, and choices made in design through the lens of pure communication mediated through the structure of language provides a unique perspective. Even more, considering one's ability to create a message through space literally is to understand and recognize the power the creator of space has. Possibly

architecture and language are two products of structure and meaning, as Parry states, just formulated through different mediums.[102] Therefore, each should be treated with the same precision and thoughtfulness as the other. The architectural languages we speak in, and others that we choose to negate, will be preserved and carried forward, in turn becoming statements that live beyond ourselves, just the same as those made by the Islamic rulers or Catholic Monarchs of medieval Spain.

Taking into account cities within Spain which contributed both as prominent locations for linguistic change and important architectural work, the history of this time period can be studied with coverage on two ends. The overarching messages received from the architecture analyzed is the mixing of culture within the region, and how this acceptance at times (and other times ruthless impositions) added to the depth of cultural exchange and Spanish architectural style. Through periods of simultaneous and separate Muslim, Christian, and Jewish cohabitation, the most pressing works of the cities of Toledo, Córdoba, and Granada document the cultural symbiosis which occurred through religious and political structures. Beginning with the Islamic rulers in the peninsula, the Mudejar style was brought to the region and allowed to foster under three separate cultures. It eventually lost its distinct ties to Muslim architecture, and became a common language for medieval Spaniards. After the Catholic Monarchs began their rule, buildings like San Juan de los Reyes Monastery quite literally speaks to the iron hold they had over the other cultural groups in the region through the restriction of architectural expression of the Mudejar style, a vernacular form by the 16th century. The Mudejar architectural language's fate equaled the previous societies' native tongues, such as Arabic and Ladino, in its

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[102] Parry, "Primal Weaving: Structure and Meaning in Language and Architecture," 125.

consolidation into one unifying reign over the Iberian Peninsula. Like Castilian, it was used like a vise clamped over the minorities in the region and to send an imposing message. New styles and ideas became the future of Spanish architecture, leaving behind traces of the wonders of medieval, Islamic Spain.

Through these regional studies, there are more questions raised about what the implication of this relationship means for architecture and language. As this essay largely applies the structure of language to architecture, it would be beneficial to compare how the structure of architecture could be applied to language. Though this capstone heavily explores one direction of the relationship, to fully understand their relationship, both directions must be studied. It would also be interesting to consider the degree to which language affects the way one culture thinks. One could conjecture that the grammar a community uses would inherently change the way the group considers aspects such as time, categorization, and attributes of certain words. For instance, it could be beneficial to compare how those who first spoke Arabic in this time described how architecture should be built and how their language structure influenced these ideas, in comparison to those who spoke Hispano-Romance in this time period. In the present, the same study could be conducted for how English and Spanish carry different thought patterns and categorizations for nouns, adjectives, and time, and how these patterns influence the built form. The patterns may affect how buildings are designed or used, and as well how architecture is perceived by other groups.

The Spanish language is a unique, living document of culture and communication beginning in the Iberian Peninsula. The language is a witness to the coexistence of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian religious groups, from times of unrest to times of convivencia. Through the built form and language, these relationships are studied and contained within their mediums. By

this process, it is possible to see that architecture and language have more commonalities than

not, and there are architectural languages which speak to a similar level of clarity as Spanish.

This essay leaves room for further investigation in this theory. The history of medieval Spain is a

rich setting to understand the cultural implications in the formation of the Spanish language and

medieval architecture.

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