

Foreword

Each year crowds of tourists visit Spain, generally with the object of seeing the great monuments of Granada, Cordoba and Seville. More than anything else, the Spanish Muslims left posterity a fairyland, especially the Alhambra that sits on its hill facing the city of Granada down below, the last capital of Arab and Muslim Spain. The Moroccan globetrotter Ibn Battutah visited it in the year 1350, while the gypsies, whom Washington Irving found there in the 1830s, did not manage to destroy it.

An insolent church is built into the Great Mosque of Cordoba, which the Cordobese still affectionately call *la Mezquita*. Yet a Muslim cannot pray the Sunset prayer nor the late Evening prayer there because the heavy doors are closed at sundown. Charles I of Castile (Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire of Germany) remarked when he saw it: "You have destroyed something irreplaceable with a church one can find anywhere," as he chided the builders for their barbarity.

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