

From Al-Andalus to Andalusia – the power of religion(s)

In September 2009, more than a thousand years will have passed since the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty on the Iberian Peninsula. This was the same dynasty that established the Caliphate of Córdoba in 756 AC. Al-Andalus was an Arab “kingdom” until 1492. Under Arabic governance, Islam was the main religion. But what about Christianity or Judaism? What status did they have under Islamic dominance?

In 1492, after centuries of wars, the Catholic rulers Isabella and Ferdinand terminated the regime of the Muslims. But still, traces of 700 years of Arab presence in Europe can be easily found all over southern Spain. Even the name of this region stayed the same: “Andalusia”. But what did the change of religious power mean for the daily life of people living there? How do the descendants of the former “rulers” live today, with Christianity as the state religion?

This year, 18 students from across Europe will search for traces of Arab history by visiting historical places like Córdoba, Medina Azahara and the Alhambra in Granada. At the meeting point of Occident and Orient, they will discover the past and present role of religion in that region and will compare it with other parts of Europe. Was or is peaceful coexistence between all three religions possible? And how was and is life for people of different faith under one official religion?

Historical sources on religious conflicts and life under different religious dominance in European history provide the background for the students’ joint work. Evaluating these texts, the students will find out about different perspectives on the shared past of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Andalusia.

Meetings with members and official representatives of the three religions, as well as with experts, will be at the core of this EUSTORY academy. Working in small groups, the students will prepare and conduct interviews and thus have the possibility to look at the topic from different points of view. The young Europeans will learn how their interviewees perceive the influence of these faiths on Europe’s cultural heritage and on the current situation in Andalusia itself; how they look at the coexistence of different religious groups there; and what they think could or should be done to foster mutual understanding between members of these different religions.

In cooperation with:

La Real Maestranza de Caballería de Ronda

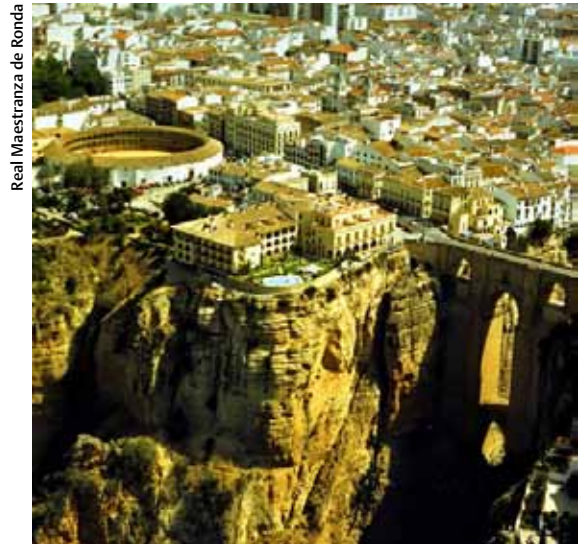
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When: 12.09. – 19.09.2009

Where: Ronda, Spain

Age: 18 – 20 years

Group size: 15 – 18 participants



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