

Activity 5. Islamic Tolerance

Source: Constable, O. ed. (1997). *Medieval Iberia, Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania), 37-38.

Background: This peace treaty between Abd al-Aziz and Theodemir of Murcia was agreed on two years after the initial Moslem invasion of Spain. It demonstrates Islamic tolerance toward other religious groups. The local Christian population was treated as dhimmi or a protected group. Personal safety was ensured, property rights were recognized, and they were permitted to continue Christian religious practices as long as they pledged loyalty to the Islamic rulers and paid an annual tax in money and goods. Read the passage and answer questions 1 – 4.

Treaty between Abd al-Aziz and Theodemir [Tudmir] of Murcia (713 AD)

In the name of God, the merciful and the compassionate. This is a document by Abd al-Aziz ibn Musa ibn Nusair to Tudmir, son of Ghabdush, establishing a treaty of peace and the promise and protection of God and his Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace). We will not set special conditions for him or for any among his men, nor harass him, nor remove him from power. His followers will not be killed or taken prisoner, nor will they be separated from their women and children. They will not be coerced in matters of religion, their churches will not be burned, nor will sacred objects be taken from the realm, [so long as] he [Tudmir] remains sincere and fulfills conditions that we have set for him . . . He will not give shelter to fugitives, nor to our enemies, nor encourage any protected person to fear us, nor conceal news of our enemies. He and his men shall pay one dinar every year, together with four measures of wheat, four measures of barley, four liquid measures of concentrated fruit juice, four measures of vinegar, four of honey, and four of olive oil. Slaves must each pay half of this amount.

Questions

1. What does Abd al-Aziz promise in this treaty?
2. What does Theodemir [Tudmir] agree to in return?
3. How does this treaty demonstrate Islamic tolerance toward other religious beliefs?
4. How does the treatment of Christians in this treaty differ from the Christian treatment of Muslims when they conquered Jerusalem during the Crusades?