

LEARNING UNIT

1 – Which three religious and cultural communities lived together in Toledo in the 12th and 13th centuries?

2 – Can you classify these words to identify them with each of Toledo's religious communities?

You can use the dictionary to find the meaning of a word you are not familiar with

Rabbi	church	Diaspora	Sephardic	Quran	
mosque	synagogue	Lent	Bible	Mudejar	
Mozarab convert		Talmud	aljama	Moorish	
Mass	Sufism	Caliph	Ramadan	Baptism	sin

3 – Do you know the name by which the area governed by Arabs in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages was known, and where the main language was Arabic? How were its inhabitants called?

4 – What is the Toledo School of translators? Indicate the answer you believe is the most accurate:

A- A school in Toledo during the 12th and 13th centuries where translation was taught.

B- A set of libraries in Toledo which preserved manuscripts of translated scientific and philosophical works written in Arabic in the 12th and 13th centuries.

C- A set of scientific and philosophical translations from Arabic to Latin and Old Castilian Spanish that were carried out in Toledo in the 12th and 13th centuries.

- 5** – What was special about Toledo for it to become a place where a phenomenon such as the School of Translators appeared?
- 6** – Besides Toledo, can you recall any other place where translations were carried out in the Middle Ages?
- 7** – a) Search for the meaning of the words “patron” and “sponsor” in the dictionary.
Now that you know the meaning: Who were two of the most important sponsors of the Toledo School of Translators?
b) Search for a piece of news or an announcement for a cultural, sports or scientific activity that is sponsored by a person or an entity and think of what a medieval patron and a sponsor of nowadays may have in common.
- 8** – You have read in the text that Toledo played an important role in the transmission of Oriental knowledge to Europe thanks to the translations that were produced from Arabic into Latin or Old Castilian Spanish:
a) What languages do you think were spoken and written in Toledo in the Middle Ages?
b) What is the Old Castilian Spanish called nowadays?
- 9** – There are still Jews around the world who have conserved an ancient variety of Spanish. Do you know the reason behind this and what these varieties are called?
- 10** – There are many Spanish words of Arabic origin:
- Mention some Spanish words that come from Arabic.
- Read the names of the following places and guess what the word “wad” could mean in Arabic: Guadiana, Guadalquivir, Guadiaro, Guadalajara.
- 11** – Throughout the 12th and 13th centuries, the Toledan translations of Oriental

and Classic works were crucial for European thought and scientific development; especially in new European universities.

Try to relate the following authors to the branches of knowledge they were dedicated to:

Averroes	Mathematics
Aristotle	
Avicenna	Philosophy
Euclid	
Hippocrates	Medicine
Plato	
Galen	Astronomy
Ptolemy	

- 12** – Toledo became the cradle of the rebirth of Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries. A large number of translators were Jewish who had a good command of the Arabic language. Search and indicate the Jewish translators or those of Jewish origin in the following list:

Domingo Gundisalvo	Juan de Sevilla	Michael Scot
Gerardo de Cremona	Samuel Ha-Levi	Yehuda ben Moshe
	Isaac ben Said	

- 13** – Part of the scientific and philosophical knowledge of Greece, Rome and Eastern populations like Persia, India and China reached the Christian West through translations that were carried out in Toledo. Could you mention any scientific contribution and/or a technique that we owe to Muslims?
- 14** – In literature, Arabs stood out in the imaginative world of tales. Before the famous *Arabian Nights* reached the West, and much before Disney made animals talk in his stories, King Alfonso X assigned someone to translate *Kalila wa Dimna*: a story collection that holds the name of two wolves; its two main characters. In the book's foreword, Ibn Al-Muqaffa; the compiler



and translator of the Arabic version, stresses the importance of knowledge independence. Before the court of the King Lion, Kalila and Dimna told stories where the main characters are always animals. Even if you haven't read it, it's very likely that you know some of these stories. Do you know the one about a group of mice that decide to place a bell around the cat's neck?

Tell us the story. (You can also search for another one).

ANSWER KEY

1. Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
2. Islam: Quran, mosque, Mudejar, convert, Moorish, Sufism, Caliph, Ramadan, aljama.
Judaism: Rabbi, Diaspora, Sephardic, synagogue, convert, Talmud, aljama.
Christianity: church, Lent, Bible, sin, mass, Mozarab, baptism.
3. Al-Andalus. Andalusians.
4. C.
5. Various language speaker communities cohabited in Toledo. There were many libraries and it was a city which had a long cultural tradition to both the Arab civilization (for being the capital of Al-Ma'mun's Taifa) and the Christian (for being the capital of the Visigoth Kingdom and an important ecclesiastic centre).
6. Zaragoza, Murcia, Seville, Tudela, Tarazona, Ripoll and Barcelona.
7.
 - a) – Collins English Dictionary definitions
Patron 1. *n.* A person, esp a man, who sponsors or aids artists, charities, etc; protector or benefactor.
Sponsor 1. *n.* A person or group that provides funds for an activity.
 - b) Archbishop Raymond of Toledo and King Alfonso X the Wise.
8. Spoken: Arabic and Old Castilian Spanish.
Written: Arabic, Hebrew, Latin and Castilian Spanish (from the time of King

Alfonso X).

9. Because they are the descendants of the Jewish people who were expelled from Spain from the time of the Catholic Monarchs.

The variety of Spanish spoken by the Sephardic community is called “Ladino” (Judaeano-Spanish) or “Sephardic”.

10. –For example: oil (*aceite*), shoe (*zapato*), jug (*jarra*), storage room (*almacén*), carpet (*alfombra*), sewer (*alcantarilla*), beans (*alubia*), eggplant (*berenjena*), tile (*azulejo*), wild boar (*jabalí*), miserable (*mezquino*).

- River or valley.

11. Philosophy: Aristotle, Plato, Averroes. Euclid (Mathematics). Hippocrates, Galen, Avicenna (Medicine). Ptolemy (Astronomy).

12. John of Seville, Samuel Ha-Levi, Yehuda ben Moshe, Isaac ben Said.

13. Algebra, the current numeration system, irrigation, introduction of rice, sugar cane and cotton cultivation, the use of paper, gunpowder and the compass, hospital organization under official control, among others.

14. If you wish, you may search one of the following issues of *Kalila wa Dimna*:
Ibn al-Muqaffa, Abd Allah: *Calila e Dimna*. Madrid: Emiliano Escolar, 1981.
Ibn al-Muqaffa, Abd Allah: *Calila y Dimna*. (Trad. de Marcelino Villegas).
Madrid: Alianza, 1991.
Calila y Dimna: cuentos y fábulas para niños. (Adaptación, Teresa Caso).
Oviedo: Nobel, 2001.