Alquerian custom, courting and courtesy

Old customs survive longer in Alqueria due to its isolation. The village is only ever visited out of necessity. The traditional courting ritual, although dying out is well remembered and still practiced by some of the more formal in Alquerian society. Other forms of etiquette were to demonstrate politeness. Due to the division within the village, a rigid framework of behaviour has prevented many a fist fight. As the Alquerian way of life becomes less formal so the framework which keeps the peace diminishes proportionally.

Alqueria's courting ritual, like others of old Spain consists of a boy, a girl, a window and a guitar. In the Alquerian portrayal the boy arrives at the young ladies house in the early evening. He brings his guitar and an Iberian Ribbed Newt which must have seen two summers. He will sing of her beauty and his desire for the young lady in question. He will then present her with the newt and proceed to sing of his own attributes and prospects. If he is successful in his quest, the young lady will present him with a toenail from the left foot of her Grandmother. They are kept for such occasions. The boy must keep the toenail by his bedside wrapped in a Colleja leaf. The courting ritual can then move up a gear. If the mother disapproves however, the serenading adolescent could find his ardour being dowsed with a pot of water or at least a pot of something.

Some years ago a naive young man, Alonso Plucketo turned up outside Manuela's house suitably equipped with guitar and amphibian. Manuela, not being one for the subtleties of life grabbed his collar and dragged him through the open window before he could get his plectrum out. It was three days before he emerged disheveled and exhausted. He never played the guitar again.

On the matter of politeness.
When answering a knock at the door it was deemed courteous to appear either bareheaded or hatted depending on the visitors state of cranial dress. For this reason a

small peep-hole was built into Alquerian doors. This enabled the householder to determine the presence or not of headgear before opening the door. On seeing the visitor wearing a hat, the householder will rush off to find his. The visitor thinking the delay is because the householder can't find his hat, removes his own. The householder opens the door hatted and sees the visitor is now bareheaded. The householder slams the door and removes his hat. The visitor realises his mistake and puts his hat back on. This can, and indeed has gone on for hours until one or both fall from exhaustion. This custom has now been discontinued on medical advice.

Regarding nicknames and dining protocol, more later.