

THE BOUNDARIES OF RELIGION:
STRATEGIES FOR CHRISTIAN
IDENTITY IN LIGHT OF ISLAM
IN MEDIEVAL SPAIN

by

CHARLES LOWELL TIESZEN

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Department of Theology and Religion
School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion
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ABSTRACT

This study argues that the use of reflected self-image as a tool for interpreting Christian anti-Muslim polemic allows such texts to be read for the self-image of their authors instead of the image of just those they attacked. This self-image is further described as the author's assertion of Christian identity in light of Islam. As such, polemic becomes a set of boundaries authors offered to their communities, helping them to successfully navigate inter-religious living.

Using this interpretive tool, two sets of medieval anti-Muslim polemic from Spain – four treatises from the third/ninth century and four from the fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth centuries – are analysed in order to discern how their authors defined themselves in light of Islam, and in turn, how they hoped their readers would distinguish themselves from Muslims. The research found differences in both the strategies deployed by the different sets of texts and the definitions of Christian identity that result from them. In the first case, Christian defamation of Islam is used to define Christians by their isolation from Muslims. In the second case, familiarity with Islam and Muslim culture reveals a definition of Christianity more supportive of the cultural proximity to Muslims even as Christians' religious distinctiveness is emphasised.

DEDICATION

To the One, the Light of the heavens and the universe,
who illumines my path as a lamp on the way.

To family and cherished friends, both near and far,
who join me on this path.

To Santiago and María, guides I met whilst walking,
whom I discovered already knew me.

And to Sarah, a beaming reflection of the Light,
who walks beside me on the way.

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Finally, the influence of various Muslims, some of whom are mentioned above, is precious to me. For this reason, I hope they will not be disgraced by some of the regrettable medieval statements analysed in this study. In reviving them, may both Christians and Muslims be inspired to reconsider the boundaries between them so that authentic relationships might exist.

Charles Tieszen
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INTRODUCTION

As early as 237/851, Eulogius (d. 244/859), a priest from Córdoba, Spain, began to reflect upon disagreement among Cordoban Christians about their role in an Islamic environment. Were they to remain distant from Islam and its effects on the culture around them? Could they speak Arabic, work for Muslims, or enjoy Arabic literature? Should Christians interact at all with Muslims? The answers to these questions, for Eulogius, said a great deal about whether or not one was a good Christian, or indeed a Christian at all. With frustration, then, the Cordoban priest fulminated that certain Christians “willingly abandon the line of sane doctrine . . . with their dim-witted rabbit trails.”¹

For Eulogius, living as Christians amid Islam meant keeping within prescribed boundaries. In fact, he describes these boundaries as a precise and unbending line (*lineam*) that, in effect, separated Christians from Muslims and forbade inter-religious contact. By not venturing beyond this line that Eulogius set out in his writings, Christians could avoid the Muslims that would otherwise so easily entrap them. Wandering beyond Eulogius’ boundaries, however, meant abandoning what marked one out as a Christian.

As Eulogius’ angry remark implies, there were some Christians in third/ninth century Córdoba who disagreed with him. For them, the boundaries that distinguished Christians from Muslims were different. Whilst they looked to Eulogius very much like a meandering trail for fools, they were perhaps no less precise and could distinguish between Muslims and Christians in their own way.

¹ “. . . *per devios intelligentiae suae calles . . . lineam sanae doctrinae proprio electionis iudicio derelinquant . . .*” *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.19.

In the study that follows, we will examine these two approaches by asking:

How did various Christians in medieval Spain define their religious identity vis-à-vis Islam and how did they go about creating this definition (or definitions)?

To pose the question in another way, in a medieval world influenced and at times even governed by Islam, how did Christians distinguish themselves from Muslims? What constituted the boundaries that lay between them?

As Wout van Bekkum and Paul Cobb note, these questions leave us with two very important concepts.² The first is religious “identity.” In using this term, we are most concerned with what marks individuals out as belonging to one group and not the other, or as van Bekkum and Cobb write, “that group of practices (subtle or not) that individuals use to recognize (‘identify’) one another.”³ This concept also makes religious identity a *communal* matter as well; what makes one religious community different from another? For example, at a time when Islam was exerting a major influence upon Christians in medieval Spain – an influence often resulting in conversion – should Christians speak Arabic or should they refrain in order to stabilise their distinctiveness with regards to Muslims? One’s answer to this specific question made language a potential marker of religious identity for both individual Christians and for whole Christian communities in Spain. In this case, they could be defined, at least in part, by the language they spoke.

Furthermore, religious identity is often not simply asserted, but is rather a “*negotiated* process” where claims are made against or in light of another.⁴ This is especially important in what follows because questions of Christian identity are applied to an inter-religious

² Wout J. van Bekkum and Paul M. Cobb, “Introduction: Strategies of Medieval Communal Identity,” in *Strategies of Medieval Communal Identity: Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Wout J. van Bekkum and Paul M. Cobb. Mediaevalia Groningana New Series, ed. G. J. Reinink and A. J. Vanderjagt (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 3-5.

³ Ibid., 3.

⁴ Ibid., 5 (emphasis in original).

context where Muslims played a significant role. For this reason, we are most concerned in our study with definitions of Christian religious identity *in light of Islam*. With this in mind, the processes by which Christians distinguished themselves from Muslims (or “identified”) in medieval Spain become just as important as the definitions of their religious identity.⁵

These processes bring us to the matter of *how* various Christians created their religious identity, or to put it succinctly with our second important term: what “strategies” did they deploy in order to arrive at their religious identity? The emphasis our study places on both identity and strategies is important because medieval Christian identity in light of Islam does not seem to have been dictated as a “static ‘given.’” Instead it seems to have been constructed and arrived at as a result of strategic processes whereby Christians had to be convinced of what should distinguish them from Muslims.⁶ Christians, for example, who defined or identified themselves by the distance they kept from Muslims, did so not simply because they were told to, but because specific strategies were deployed by authors that convinced them of the importance of such distance (e.g., the portrayal of Muslims as enemies might drive a Christian community away from Islam entirely). It is also in this regard that the religious identity offered by certain Christians reflected not just their self-identity, but one they proposed for their community as well.

In answering the questions posed above, then, we hope to discover not just definitions of medieval Christian religious identity in light of Islam, but the specific strategies that certain Christians deployed to support those definitions as well. In this, we must discover how Christians in medieval Spain ensured that the boundaries distinguishing Christian communities from Muslim ones, in whatever shape they took, remained clearly visible so that individuals might remain safely within (or outside of) them. As a result of what we discover,

⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 4-5.

perhaps new light might be shed upon Christian-Muslim relations in medieval Spain.

Methodology

To help answer these questions, we will consult two sets of Christian anti-Muslim polemic, the specifics of which we discuss below. Such polemic often focuses on an author's (negative) treatment of Islam as opposed to Christianity. Indeed previous scholarship has analysed similar works for what they have to say about Islam.⁷ For this reason, we reorient our focus and reading of polemical texts in this study.⁸ We do this by applying to them a new interpretive lens. By reading these treatises with an eye towards *reflected self-image*, we can discover not what Christian authors thought about Muslims in general, but more specifically, what they were saying about themselves ("identifying") when they wrote about Islam. In other words, discussing who lay *outside* their religious boundaries (i.e., Muslims) allowed various Christian authors in Spain to describe those whom they welcomed *inside* of them.⁹ By reading the texts in this way, we can discover a self-image for their authors in light of Islam. Since such a self-image was also offered to a specific community, we can also discover the definitions of Christian religious identity that authors hoped would be adopted by those who read their texts.

William Montgomery Watt very briefly touches on this notion of reflected self-image

⁷ E.g., Richard Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962) and Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960; reprint, Oxford: Oneworld, 2000) (page citations are to the reprint edition). More recently, see, e.g., John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) and a collection of his articles in *Sons of Ishmael: Muslims through European Eyes in the Middle Ages* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2008). Tolan's work shares much with Southern and Daniel, but greatly improves what we know of how Christians used their knowledge of Islam.

⁸ "Polemic" refers to religious treatises that attack another religion, employing varying degrees of apology as well.

⁹ Cf. van Bekkum and Cobb, "Introduction: Strategies of Medieval Communal Identity," 3-4.

in a small chapter devoted to “Islam and European Self-Awareness.”¹⁰ Therein, he argues that the image of Muslims in medieval Europe had implicit in it “aspects of a corresponding and contrasting image of Catholic Christendom.”¹¹ Thus, the image of Islam as a religious perversion was meant to contrast with, and in so doing, draw readers minds and eyes to, the truth and purity of Christianity; an image of Islam’s inherent violence could contrast with Christianity’s peacefulness; an image of Muslim self-indulgence may contrast with Christian asceticism and self-restraint; and so on.¹²

In his book *El enemigo en la espeja*, Ron Barkai expands on the relationship of image and reflected self-image.¹³ He argues that whilst important lessons can be learned from the image projected by an author in texts about an opponent, it is equally important to consider the “mirror image” (*imagen del espejo*). As he explains:

At the base of this concept is the idea that the mirror reflects in inverted form the same image, that is to say, the left side appears like the right and vice versa . . . the “mirror image” is involved in the exaggeration of praises for [one’s] self-image, on the one hand, and in the presentation of a diabolical image for the opposing group, on the other.¹⁴

For example, projecting a fabricated or exaggerated image of Muslims’ inherent degeneracy could reflect an inverted image of Christianity, i.e., not Christian degeneracy, but alleged Christian purity. In this way, an author’s assessment of someone else may provide us with clues about his/her own nature; the author’s self-image can be located in the image he/she portrays of the opponent and it is often seen as an inverted reflection.

¹⁰ W. Montgomery Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*. Islamic Surveys, 9, ed. W. Montgomery Watt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1972), 72-84.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹² *Ibid.*, 74-77.

¹³ Ron Barkai, *El enemigo en el espejo: Cristianos y Musulmanes en la España medieval*, 3d ed. (Madrid: Ediciones RIALP, 2007).

¹⁴ “El base de este concepto se halla la idea de que el espejo refleja en forma invertida la misma imagen, es decir, el lado izquierdo aparece como derecho y viceversa . . . la ‘imagen del espejo’ está involucrada en la exageración de los elogios a la autoimagen, por una parte, y en la presentación de una imagen diabólica para el grupo adversario, por la otra.” *Ibid.*, 13.

This methodology poses two questions. In the first, we must wonder if a desired definition for Christianity can indeed be derived from a negative portrayal of Islam, i.e., can anti-Muslim polemic really clarify matters of an author's Christian religious identity or is it simply meant to elucidate Muslim error? Underlying this question is a concern for the essential purpose of such polemic. If we make the assumption that Christians wrote these texts to Muslims, then we must further deduce that they wished their readers to abandon their identity as Muslims after seeing it dismantled before their eyes. But if this was the case, Christian authors did not merely hope that Muslim readers would leave their faith in order to exist in a sort of agnostic limbo. They must surely have wished that their negative images of Islam would force Muslims to turn away from it and towards a superior religious identity (Christianity). In this way, a definition for Christian identity can lie beneath a negative portrayal of Muslims.

However, we might more carefully deduce, as we will argue in our study, that much anti-Muslim polemic was intended not for the Muslims it assailed, but for specific Christian communities. In this case, an author's rhetorical destruction of Islam was perhaps intended to reveal superior Christian faith. In turn, this might safeguard against conversion and strengthen the religious identity of the Christians reading the texts. In this way, negative images of Islam would crumble and give way to positive images of Christianity. Christians would be the only ones still standing strong after reading a relentless assault that exposed Islam's alleged weaknesses. In this case, a Christian author's religious identity, as revealed in his/her text, might be taken up by readers.

That this method might be possible is often the result of a feature quite common within religious polemic: the rhetorical foil. Often times a negative image of Islam contrasts with and so emphasises the positive qualities of Christianity. Sometimes this is made explicit

by authors, e.g., when an author writes that Islam spread throughout the earth by the sword, but Christianity spread with neither violence nor coercion¹⁵ or when authors momentarily step aside from their polemic so that they might briefly defend a point of Christian doctrine in light of a contrasting Muslim one. At other times, this foil is implied. An author's discussion of Muḥammad's inability to perform miracles, his restriction to Arabic and Arabic-speaking people, and his failure to rise from the dead after three days (a claim many authors placed in the mouth of the Prophet) is likely meant to contrast with and so emphasise Christ's superiority (his miracles, the universality of his message, and his successful victory over death).¹⁶ As Suzanne Akbari puts it, then, Christian "depiction[s] of Muslims in . . . texts [are] designed to hold up a mirror to medieval Christian practice, showing the readers of those texts what they are *not* so that they may understand what they *are*."¹⁷

In each of these cases, there is much more that lies beneath polemic's negative images of Islam than simply a clarification of Muslim error; assertions of Christian identity are likely suggested as well. In fact, this method would be preferable to others. It would be easier and more effective to assail Muslim impurity, and thereby allow a Christian reader to feel that his/her own piety was being emphasised and clarified, than to directly assert Christian faith and practice as superior, leaving it up to one's readers to decide how or if this might be so *vis-à-vis* Islam.

So it might also be the case when an author's strategy may not involve a rhetorical foil at all. It would be far easier, for example, to construct Islam as an enemy of God, and thereby

¹⁵ See, for example, al-Qūṭī in Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Khazrajī, *Maqāmi' al-ṣulbān*, ed. 'Abd al-Majīd al-Sharfī (Tunis: n.p., 1975), 10:38.

¹⁶ See our discussion of this point in Chapter 6 in particular.

¹⁷ Suzanne Akbari, "Imagining Islam: The Role of Images in Medieval Depictions of Muslims," *Scripta Mediterranea* 19-20 (1998-1999): 20. See also p. 12 where she writes that many medieval accounts of Islam ". . . show not only how medieval Christians saw Muslims, but also how they saw themselves . . ." and Tolán's discussion of how ". . . cultures define themselves over and against outside groups . . ." With this in mind, he notes that written works such as the ones examined in our study ". . . show how the denigration of the other can be used to defend one's own intellectual construction of the world." Tolán, *Saracens*, xxiii.

elicit distance between Christians and Muslims than to point out the specific ways in which Muslims and Christians shared common ground or parted theological company. Thus, even when a rhetorical foil does not exist, a negative portrayal of Islam may still be meant to outline an identity for Christians.

In the second question, one must ask if the projection of a distorted image of Islam, as is most often present in anti-Muslim treatises, might not reflect a distorted Christian self-image. Such might be the case even if the image of Islam was *deliberately* distorted.¹⁸ Consequently, we must remember that these self-images were often inverted ones. But we must also discuss in this regard the use of religious polemic as a tool for asserting an *ideal* religious identity, not necessarily the *real* practice of Christians.¹⁹ For example, a Christian author may wish to mark Christians out by their asceticism and purity when he/she highlights alleged Muslim licentiousness. Doing so, may in fact neglect the reality of sexual indulgence and impurity present within any given medieval Christian community. Nevertheless, it is this ideal image that is being offered by the author as a marker for what *should* distinguish Christians from Muslims. In this light, the result of the strategies we will examine is an ideal religious identity for these medieval Christian authors in light of Islam. This is important not only for what it can show us about medieval Christian-Muslim relations in Spain, but also for what we might learn about the use of religious polemic and how reading it with fresh eyes can yield new insights.

¹⁸ This concern may anticipate Watt's proposition that "the darkness ascribed to one's enemies is a projection of the darkness in oneself that is not fully admitted. In this way the distorted image of Islam is to be regarded as a projection of the shadow-side of European man." Watt, 83. This notion is acknowledged by Daniel as a "psychological interpretation" that he did not "feel competent to judge" (Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 387, n. 84), but also by Tolan who confirms that, ". . . indeed European denigration of the other is the back side of Christian universalism" (Tolan, *Saracens*, 283).

¹⁹ Cf. van Bekkum and Cobb, "Introduction: Strategies of Medieval Communal Identity," 9 where they discuss the differences between the "normative *ideals* of what it meant to be a follower of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam [and] . . . the very *real* practices by which medieval Jews, Christians and Muslims could police the perimeters of their spiritual communities" (emphases added).

Yet for all that can be discovered through this method of reading polemic, Thomas Burman and Thomas Glick offer helpful warnings we must consider. Given the often hateful and exaggerated tones that generally characterise polemic, such texts pose “interpretive difficulties” since each side in the polemical drama attempts to portray the other in the worst light possible.²⁰ We are left with considerable difficulty in gauging the full personality of the authors and the diverse and complex nature of Christian-Muslim encounters.²¹

This concern is well-noted. Indeed, the story of conflict and misunderstanding that underlies the vehemence of anti-Islamic treatises is only part of the story. For this reason, scholars must show caution when using texts like these to judge Christian knowledge of Islam. But that is precisely why we turn our gaze in this study away from Islam and back towards our texts’ authors; their scripted treatises may tell us more about their religious identity and what they hoped would be embraced by the communities that might read their treatises than the Muslims they attacked in them.²²

Furthermore, as Alexandra Cuffel clarifies, the volatility within anti-Muslim polemic also suggests a certain degree of cultural and/or religious mixing, even to the point that two groups become relatively indistinguishable. When two different religious communities are no longer distinct, each one must be reminded of its unique identity; boundaries must be re-cleared and made visible once again so that the two groups are not completely indecipherable. In this way, Christian anti-Muslim treatises often followed on the heels of varying degrees of

²⁰ Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur’ān in Latin Christendom, 1140-1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 3-5.

²¹ Thomas F. Glick, “My Master, the Jew: Observations on Interfaith Scholarly Interaction in the Middle Ages,” in *Jews, Muslims, and Christians in and around the medieval Crown of Aragon: Studies in Honor of Elena Lourie*, ed. Harvey J. Hames (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 157-158.

²² Cf. Nadia M. El-Cheikh, “Describing the Other to Get at the Self: Byzantine Women in Arabic Sources (8th-11th Centuries),” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40 (1997): 239-250.

Christian-Muslim mixing. Thus, there may be a story of interaction corresponding to every account of scripted disdain.²³

Cuffel's clarification also suggests that just as polemic might be used to distinguish between two groups by driving them apart, so might it be a resource for controlling the ways in which the same two groups might interact. In this way, polemic could function, as Lucy Pick argues, as a strategy for stabilising relationships by defining the lines of interaction; authors could use their works to pull readers away from Muslims entirely or show them what aspects of Muslim culture were admirable and what aspects of Islam were not.²⁴

Understanding polemic in this way allows such treatises to contribute to what we know of Christian-Muslim relations in general in a given context without characterising them entirely. Perhaps more importantly, this understanding helps us to see polemic as a means for enhancing the identity one has as a member of one group over and against another.

For these reasons, anti-Muslim polemic can make an ideal source for exploring certain authors' Christian identity in light of Islam. This is an important function of religious polemic, but in the study that follows, we delve even deeper into the texts by attempting to point out the individual strategies *within* this polemic that support more specific definitions these authors offer for Christian identity in light of Islam.

Sources

With this methodology in mind, the specific treatises detailed presently were chosen because medieval Spain – at times ruled predominantly by Christians whilst at other times predominantly by Muslims – offers a remarkable context in which to examine medieval

²³ Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 242-243.

²⁴ Lucy Pick, *Conflict and Coexistence: Archbishop Rodrigo and the Muslims and Jews of Medieval Spain* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 3-4.

Christian-Muslim relations and gauge Christian identity in light of Islam in particular. Moreover, as we intimate above, Christian communities in medieval Spain differed as to their approach to Islam. The self-images that result from these varying approaches differ as well. Two groups in particular – those who rejected Islam on the one hand and those who embraced much of its language and culture on the other – present us with a unique opportunity to examine different strategies towards defining Christian identity.

In order to examine these perspectives, we will analyse religious polemic from three different centuries in medieval Spain. This, perhaps, is a rather broad period to study, but doing so gives us the ability to see the continuity between these eras, unified by a common effort to respond to Islam, even though the responses and contexts themselves are unique. For these reasons, we will analyse Christian anti-Muslim polemic from Spain in the mid-third/ninth century and from the fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth centuries.

The earliest extant treatises in this regard come from mid-third/ninth century Spain and are examined in Part I (Chapters 1-3) of our study.²⁵ Three of these texts are written by Eulogius: the *Documentum martyriale* (*The Martyr's Document*), completed in 237/851; the *Memoriale sanctorum* (*A Memorial of the Saints*), completed in 242/856; and the *Liber apologeticus martyrum* (*A Book in Defence of the Martyrs*), written in 242/857. The fourth and final text analysed in Part I comes from Eulogius' friend and fellow-Cordoban, the layman Paulus Alvarus (d. c. 284/862): the *Indiculus luminosus* (*Shining Example*), written in

²⁵ In the second/eighth century, Felix of Urgel wrote *Disputatio Felicis cum Sarraceno*, but this is now lost. Also lost is an anti-Muslim treatise from the early-third/ninth century written by a Cordoban abbot named Speraindeo (a small portion of this work is preserved by Eulogius in *Memoriale sanctorum*, 1.7; Eulogius also preserves a biography of Muḥammad in his *Liber apologeticus martyrum* 16 which we discuss in Chapters 2-3). Finally, an Arabic treatise was composed by the late third/ninth century Christian Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭī, very likely titled *Kitāb al-masā'il al-sab' wa-l-khamsīn*. Only portions of this work are preserved by a seventh/thirteenth century imām known as Imām al-Qurṭubī writing from Spain.

240/854. We cite from the Latin edition of these texts edited by Ioannes Gil in his *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*.²⁶

In Part II (Chapters 4-6) we discuss four more texts, these ones written by various authors from or near Toledo in the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries. The first of these is the *Liber denudationis siue ostensionis, aut patefacientem* (*The Book of Denuding or Exposing, or The Discloser; henceforth, Liber denudationis*), likely written originally in Arabic by an unknown Christian in the late-fifth/eleventh century or early-sixth/twelfth century. The text's only extant manuscript comes to us in Latin and so we use Burman's Latin edition with English translation.²⁷

The second text is the *Dialogus contra Iudaeos* (*Dialogue against the Jews; henceforth, Dialogus*), written in approximately 503/1109 by Petrus Alfonsi, a Jewish convert to Christianity (*converso*). We use Irven Resnick's English translation²⁸ and give particular attention to Alfonsi's fifth chapter devoted to Islam.

The third text is the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* (*Trinitising the Unity [of God]*), a mid-sixth/twelfth century treatise written by an unknown Christian. It is preserved and refuted by a Muslim known only as Imām al-Qurṭubī in his *al-I'lām bi-mā fī dīn al-naṣārā min al-fasād wa-awhām wa-iḥhār maḥāsīn dīn al-islām wa-ithbāt nubūwat nabīyinā Muḥammad 'alayhi al-ṣalā wa-l-salām* (*Information about the Corruption and Delusions of the Christians, and Presentation of the Merits of the Religion of Islam, and Affirmation of the Prophethood of*

²⁶ Ioannes Gil, ed., *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Instituto Antonio Nebrija, 1973). We also make use of Spanish translations: María Jesús Aldana García, *Obras completas de San Eulogio: introducción, traducción, y notas* (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 1998) and the Spanish-Latin edition (based on Gil) by Feliciano Delgado León, *Alvaro de Cordoba y la polémica contra el Islam: el Indiculus luminosus* (Córdoba: Cajasur, 1996). References to Alvarus' letters also come from Gil, but for a Spanish translation, see Gonzalo del Cerro Calderón y José Palacios Royán, *Epistolario de Álvaro de Córdoba* (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, n.d.)

²⁷ See Part II of Thomas E. Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

²⁸ Petrus Alfonsi, *Dialogue against the Jews*, trans. Irven M. Resnick. *The Fathers of the Church: Medieval Continuation*, vol. 8 (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2006).

Our Muḥammad, upon Him Be Prayer and Peace). Here we use Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqqā's modern Arabic edition.²⁹

The fourth and final text is *The Letter of al-Qūfī* written in the mid-sixth/twelfth century by an unknown Christian priest in Toledo. The text is preserved and refuted in the same century by Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Khazrajī in his *Maqāmi 'al-ṣulbān* (*Mallets for [Hammering] Crosses*). For this text we use the modern Arabic edition by 'Abd al-Majīd al-Sharfi.³⁰

A few texts remain in this period.³¹ The same author who preserves the *Tathlīth al-waḥdaniyya* also preserves a text by a Christian known only as Aghushtīn titled *Maṣḥaf al-'ālam al-kā'in*. The brief portions that are preserved are nearly identical to the arguments of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdaniyya*, and for this reason, Aghushtīn's treatise is not included in our study.³² We might also have considered works that were included in Peter the Venerable's sixth/twelfth century translation project³³ or with polemic written in other eras of Spain's history. To do so, however, takes us far beyond the scope of our project and would make it considerably longer. In this light, we will frame our study with the texts noted above, and as will become clear, within the different definitions of Christian identity that their authors represent.

²⁹ Imām al-Qurṭubī, *al-I'lām bi-mā fī dīn al-naṣārā min al-fasād wa-awḥām wa-izhār maḥāsīn dīn al-islām wa-ithbāt nubūwa nabīyinā Muḥammad 'alayhi al-ṣalā wa-al-salām*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqqā (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1980). A partial English translation by Burman is found in Olivia Rémie Constable, ed., *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*. The Middle Ages Series, ed. Ruth Mazos Karras (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 148-151. There is also a partial French translation by Paul Devillard in his "Thèse sur al-Qurṭubī." Thèse de troisième cycle présentée à la Faculté des Lettres à Aix-en-Provence (N.p.: n.p., 1969).

³⁰ See note 15 above. Another modern Arabic version is in *Bayn al-Islām wa al-Masīḥiyya: Kitāb Abā 'Abīda al-Khazrajī*, ed. Muḥammad Shāma (Cairo: n.p., 1979), but our references refer to al-Sharfi's edition. A partial English translation by Burman is found in Constable, ed., 143-147.

³¹ Imām al-Qurṭubī mentions a treatise by 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. GhṢN, but as Burman notes, no manuscripts of the text are known to exist. Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 36.

³² See *ibid.*, 80-82. Preserved portions of Aghushtīn's text appear in al-Qurṭubī, 57-58, 69, 72, 81-83, 86, 110, 126, 128, 143-148, 156.

³³ See James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*. Princeton Oriental Studies, Number 23 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964). The marginal annotations added to Robert of Ketton's Latin Qur'ān translation could also be considered in this same regard (cf. *ibid.*, 57-58, n. 31).

Chapter Summary

We begin our study in Chapter 1 with a discussion of the historical context of the third/ninth century texts studied in Part I. We examine Islam's emergence in medieval Spain, the treatment of Christian communities under Islam in Spain up to the third/ninth century, and the Cordoban martyrs' movement. Here we discover a whole range of Christians differing in their response to Islam. Though these Christians cannot all fit into neat categories, we argue that the martyrs' movement exposed a rift in the Christian communities of Córdoba. This rift brings special attention to two types of Christians in third/ninth century Córdoba: those who were attracted to Islamic and Arabic culture (among whom were many Christians absorbing this culture without converting to Islam) and those who condemned this attraction, wishing to resist Islamic hegemony. It becomes clear that an identity crisis was at hand for many Cordoban Christians. Speaking for the martyrs, Eulogius and Alvarus responded with their texts, hoping to make some sense of this crisis.

In Chapter 2 we examine these texts, noting that they were meant to chronicle the martyrs' movement and honour those who, in Eulogius' and Alvarus' opinions, gave their lives in an assault upon Islam. We argue, however, that whilst these texts did function as hagiography and as an apology for a martyrs movement, they also served as a means for re-clearing religious boundaries between Christians and Muslims, boundaries that had become for their authors increasingly blurred and indistinguishable. In this light, we argue that Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts were ultimately designed to tell Christian readers what they should look like and how they should function in light of Islam. With this purpose in mind, we then examine important features of their texts that are relevant to our discussion of Eulogius' and Alvarus' religious identity.

In Chapter 3 we shift from tracing the development and use of their polemic to the self-image discernable in Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts and their deployment of strategies to support the self-image they asserted.³⁴ Building on these strategies, we delineate a definition of Eulogius' and Alvarus' Christian identity in light of Islam.

In Part II we turn to an analysis of works written by Christians in Spain who did absorb Arabic and Islamic culture, not simply to denigrate Muslims, but as part of a larger effort to define their Christian identity amid Islam. In Chapter 4, we examine the historical background of the fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth century texts written from this perspective. Here we discover another identity crisis for various Christians. This crisis was informed by Christological controversies emanating from Toledo as well as the religious and cultural shifts that followed in the wake of *Reconquista* (reconquest), the reconquering of Toledo in 478/1085 in particular. We argue that as a result of these crises, many Christians faced the need to redefine their identity or at least offer a reminder of their religious identity in light of Islam and the social upheaval around them.

In Chapter 5 we study the polemic produced in the fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth centuries and argue that they were designed as a response to this identity crisis. By reconsidering who their intended audiences were, we contend that the texts functioned as tools for asserting Christian identity by reminding readers of religious distinctiveness in the face of significant change. With this function in mind, we analyse each text, focusing on features relevant to our discussion of identity.

In Chapter 6 we move from an examination of how these treatises functioned to the deployment of strategies within them that point to a definition of these fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth century authors' Christian identity *vis-à-vis* Islam.

³⁴ Cf. Tolán, *Saracens*, 172.

Finally, in our Conclusion we make some comparative observations of these two eras of religious polemic. We then offer some concluding remarks regarding the implications of our study for Christian-Muslim relations.

Definitions of Key Terms

A few key terms are used throughout the study and warrant some brief comments here. Accordingly, we use “Spain” to refer to the Iberian Peninsula in its entirety, understanding it as a translation of the Latin *Hispania*. Of course, this area was referred to at various times by different names, reflecting a specific kingdom or state. Furthermore, areas of Spain controlled by Muslims after 92/711 were known as “al-Andalus.” To avoid confusion, we use “Spain” throughout, differentiating between Christian and Islamic areas with the use of “Islamic Spain.”

Throughout our study we describe Muslims residing in Islamic Spain as “Andalusī” Muslims. Referring to Christians in Spain presents some difficulties, especially when we consider “Mozarab” Christians. This term has been a source of difficulty and confusion in works related to medieval Spain. It is also the focus of numerous studies, among them Mikel de Epalza’s article, “Mozarabs: An Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic al-Andalus,”³⁵ and Richard Hitchcock’s book, *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*.³⁶ Suffice it to say here that the word is likely derived from the Arabic passive participle *musta‘rab*, meaning “Arabised.”³⁷ Yet it often carries a wide range of application: it is broadly applied by some to *all* Christians living in Islamic Spain, to art and architecture in Spain reflecting an

³⁵ Mikel de Epalza, “Mozarabs: An Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic Al-Andalus,” in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi. Handbook of Oriental Studies (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992).

³⁶ Richard Hitchcock, *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Identities and Influences* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

³⁷ Though, as Hitchcock points out, it could also derive from *musta‘rib*, the active participle, meaning “to make oneself similar to the Arabs” (ibid., ix). The passive participle is closer phonetically, but there is a provocative difference, i.e., who initiated the Arabisation.

Islamic or Arab influence, or even to Latin literature written in Islamic Spain. As just one example, many Christians in Islamic Spain resisted Arabisation, so to call them Mozarabs is clearly problematic. Moreover, Muslims never applied the term to Christians. Its earliest use in reference to medieval Spain is instead found in Christian sources from the fifth/eleventh century.³⁸

Keeping these difficulties in mind, we will not describe Christians in Spain prior to the fifth/eleventh century as “Mozarabs,” even though some Christian communities were indeed Arabised to various degrees by this point. When referring to members of such communities, we use the term “Arabised Christians.” Of course, Arabisation could at times give way to varying degrees of Islamicisation, though not necessarily in any way that meant conversion to Islam (e.g., not only speaking Arabic, but communicating in qur’ānic thought forms). In such cases where this is clear, we will include references to being “Islamicised;” otherwise, the term “Arabised” is used in reference to Christians from these communities.³⁹ From the fifth/eleventh century onwards, when the term “Mozarab” was employed, we will describe members of authentically Arabised Christian communities as “Mozarabs,” noting that they were Arabised and perhaps even Islamicised to varying extents in reference to language and culture, but not necessarily at any cost to their Christianity.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., xix, 69.

³⁹ The nuances between “Arabisation” and Islamicisation” and how this may have looked are illustrated in Hanna Kassis, “The Arabicization and Islamization of the Christians of al-Andalus: Evidence of their Scriptures,” in *Languages of Power in Islamic Spain*, ed. Ross Brann and David I. Owens. Occasional Publications of the Department of Near Eastern Studies and the Program of Jewish Studies Cornell University, number 3 (Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press, 1997). The tension between the two terms is also nicely summarised in *ibid.*, 155.

⁴⁰ As Hanna Kassis writes, with reference to Mozarabs or simply Arabised and/or Islamicised Christian communities, “... [they were] transformed in language and culture as [they] adapted [themselves] to those of the new masters, Arabic and Islamic, and that this came about without violation of [their] religious (Christian) orthodoxy.” See *ibid.*, 136. See also, Hitchcock, *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, 75-97 and his treatment of Mozarabism as a phenomenon in fifth/eleventh-seventh/thirteenth centuries as well as Hitchcock’s article, “Christian-Muslim Understanding(s) in Medieval Spain,” *Hispanic Research Journal* 9, no. 4 (September 2008): 314-325.

Notes

Transliteration of Arabic follows the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*.⁴¹ Common Arabic words such as Muḥammad, Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, other proper names, and locations are transliterated according to this system, but are left unitalicised. Arabic “sun letters” that phonetically assimilate with the *lām* of a preceding article are retained in spelling. Thus, “al-Raḥman,” though it is pronounced “ar-Raḥman” retains the former spelling.

To avoid confusion, many Arabic words are pluralised simply by adding an “s;” e.g., “*sūrahs*” (multiple qur'ānic chapters) is used instead of “*suwar*.” Spanish words like Córdoba retain their Spanish spellings, but when anglicised for adjectival forms, the accent will be dropped (e.g., “Cordoban”).

The patronymic form “ibn” is abbreviated to “b.” The same applies to “bint” which appears as “bt.” The only exceptions appear when “Ibn” is used as the first element in a personal name. The *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d, ed. is henceforth abbreviated as *EI*.⁴² Similarly, Gil’s *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum* will appear in notes as *CSM*.

All dates are given according to both the Islamic era of the *hijra* and Common Era, the latter following the former. The date Muslim armies entered Spain, for example, appears as 92/711, or more generally in this case, the first/eighth century.

Finally, all non-English titles are left untranslated with the exception of sources that form the central focus of our study or those that preserve them, as described above.

⁴¹ Jane Dammen McAuliffe, ed., *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

⁴² P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965).

PART I

CHAPTER 1

CHRISTIANS UNDER ISLAM IN THIRD/NINTH CENTURY CÓRDOBA

When the nun Hroswitha poetically described medieval Córdoba as the “ornament of the world” (*decus orbis*)¹ she would be too far removed to perceive the social and religious tensions underlying the cultural affluence of the famous Islamic city. These tensions are detailed in the present chapter. We begin by briefly tracing the emergence of Islam in Spain and its swift conquest of nearly the whole of the peninsula beginning in 92/711. The religious conversions that followed, by no means matching the rapid political conversions, provide a picture of how Muslim rulers dealt with their new subjects. These conversions, in turn, reveal the tensions that were perhaps most evident within the Cordoban Christian communities and dramatised by the third/ninth century Cordoban martyrs. As will be seen, the unrest that was present in third/ninth century Córdoba provides the background and context that further enlightens the ensuing polemic of Eulogius and Alvarus.

The Muslim Conquest of Spain

The Muslim conquest of Spain was at once a complete surprise and part of a historical pattern. Those living in Spain at the time were unlikely to have anticipated the attack, but for the invading Muslims, it was merely one more phase in a history of expansion.² The

¹ Hroswitha, “Passio Sancti Pelagii Pretiosissimi Martiris Qui Nostris Temporibus In Corduba Martirio Est Coronatus,” in *Hrotsvithae Opera*, MGH SS rer. Germanicum, ed. Paul von Winterfeld, (Berlin: Apud Weidmannos, 1902), 52. Hroswitha wrote from fourth/tenth century Gandersheim (in Saxony, present-day Germany) about Pelagius, a Cordoban Christian martyr of the same century.

² W. Montgomery Watt and Pierre Cachia, *A History of Islamic Spain*, Islamic Surveys 4, ed. W. Montgomery Watt (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 5.

historical sources of the invasion, from both Muslim and Christian authors, mirror this tension. There are elements, for instance, in some Muslim accounts that seem to glorify the manner in which Muslim armies so decisively wrested control of Spain from its former Christian rulers.³ Various Christian sources seem to downplay the Muslims' victory and military prowess in order to give a greater role to internal weakness, sin, and even a rather curse-like prophecy.

According to one Christian account, Roderic (r. 91-92/710-711), newly and controversially appointed king of Spain, opened a palace in Toledo which had been sealed for years. Inside, a chest was found, the contents of which revealed a single cloth inscribed with the words: "Should it happen that the bars are broken, and the palace and the chest opened, and the contents of the latter revealed, it should be known that the people whose pictures are drawn on the cloth will invade Spain and subject the country to their rule."⁴ Depicted on the cloth were Arabs *en route* to war. The pictures terrified Roderic and he immediately re-sealed the palace.

Other sources attribute the Muslim army's access to Spain to a sexual affair and a vengeful Count Julian, governor of Ceuta, opposite Gibraltar. Accordingly, Wittiza (r. c. 72-91/692-710), king of Spain, spoke in his royal court about the beauty of women. In the course of this conversation someone mentioned the unsurpassed beauty of Count Julian's daughter. Upon hearing this, Wittiza devised a plan in which he, pretending to be Julian, would send for his daughter. The plan succeeded and upon her arrival in Sevilla, Wittiza slept with her.

³ Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400-1000*, 2d ed., New Studies in Medieval History, ed. Maurice Keen (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1995), 156 and 291, n. 24. For the available Muslim sources, see *ibid.*, 151-154. See also Janina M. Safran, "From Alien Terrain to the Abode of Islam: Landscapes in the Conquest of Al-Andalus," in *Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Senses of Place in Western Europe*, ed. John Howe and Michael Wolfe (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002).

⁴ Translated in Colin Smith, *Christians and Moors in Spain*, vol. I, *AD 711-1150* (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1988), 8-9. The translation is taken from Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's seventh/thirteenth century history of Spain. The prophecy is also contained in less detail in an Arab source: Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's *Futūḥ Miṣr* dating from the third/ninth century. See a translation in Constable, ed., 34.

When Julian discovered what had happened he quickly returned to Cueta, met with the nearby Muslim army, and offered his services in an attack on Spain.⁵ The Muslim invasion ensued.

Both Muslim and Christian sources contain elements of legend, but more problematic is the fact that they post-date the invasion by more than a century, some by hundreds of years more.⁶ While there are certainly considerable portions in these accounts which are trustworthy, we cannot depend on them in their entirety. For this reason, the Latin *Chronicle of 754* is significant, for it provides the earliest extant history of the Muslim invasion of Spain.⁷ Further, it is unique in its rather objective perspective of the conquest.⁸ Though there is mention of internal tensions, the writer of the *Chronicle of 754* makes little effort to moralise the Christian loss. They fall, not necessarily because they are reaping the divine judgment of God, but because they represent a disjointed kingdom unable to face an expanding Muslim army. Similarly, there is no attempt in the *Chronicle of 754* to demonise the Muslim attack and subsequent rule. While the violence of some of the Muslim army's exploits is at times highlighted, this is balanced with equal discussion of Muslims' peaceful negotiations and fair treatment of the people they conquered.

Adding the *Chronicle of 754* to the reliable portions of other extant sources thus shifts the focus away from propaganda, possible legend, and prophecy and places the Muslim invasion of Spain in the framework of previous Muslim expansion.⁹ Accordingly, Muslim

⁵ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 14-17. The translation here may date from as late as the sixth/twelfth century. Al-Ḥakam's version replaces Wittiza with Roderic and sets the event in Toledo rather than Sevilla. See Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, "Narrative of the Conquest of al-Andalus," in Constable, ed., 33. Cf. Watt and Cachia, 13.

⁶ For a source-critical examination of Muslim sources see Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 151-154. For the questionable credibility of some of the more legendary details, see *ibid.*, 158.

⁷ Its name derives from the approximate year in which it was written. For a commentary and translation see Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*. Translated Texts for Historians, 9 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1990). See also Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 156-162 and Tolan, *Saracens*, 78-85.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 80 and Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 158.

⁹ *Ibid.* As Watt summarizes, "The expansion into Spain was thus entirely in keeping with the previous extension of Arab power in North Africa, and might well have come about even had there been no factors in the local situation (such as the attitude and interests of Count Julian) to encourage them and give them an opening." Watt and Cachia, 9.

armies, comprised mostly of Berbers, did invade Spain in the spring of 92/711.¹⁰ With Roderic fighting Basques in northern Spain, Muslims faced little opposition early on.¹¹ After learning of the Muslim army's advance, Roderic made his way south and met them on the river Guadalete.¹² The battle was a decisive victory for the Muslims and Roderic either disappeared or was killed.¹³ In the end, Christians, fraught with internal weakness, could not sustain any effective defence.¹⁴ Campaigns lead by Ṭāriq b. Ziyād, commander of the first Muslims to invade Spain; Mūsā b. Nuṣayr (r. 79/698-98/716-717), governor of northwest Africa; and 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 95/714-97/718), Ibn Nuṣayr's son and first *amīr* of Islamic Spain, solidified Muslim rule of over two-thirds of the peninsula.¹⁵ By the mid-second/eighth century, 'Abd al-Raḥman I (r. 138/756-172/788) ruled as an Umayyad *amīr* from a capital in Córdoba.¹⁶

Conversion and *Dhimma* Regulations in Islamic Spain

Though Muslim armies conquered much of Spain with relative ease, their conquest

¹⁰ Watt and Cachia, 13; M. Shaban, "Conversion to Early Islam," in *Conversion to Islam* ed. Nehemia Levtzion (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), 29.

¹¹ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 155; Watt and Cachia, 14; and Bernard F. Reilly, *The Medieval Spains*, Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 52.

¹² Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 155.

¹³ Watt and Cachia, 14. Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 131.52.

¹⁴ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 157-159; Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 131.52; Watt and Cachia, 12-13. Watt identifies three factors contributing to Spain's weakness prior to the Muslim invasion: 1) disagreements over who should succeed Wittiza as king; 2) discontent of the lower-classes with the upper-class, leading the former to welcome and give aid to the invading Muslims; and 3) Jewish discontent with the treatment they received from Christians, leading them to welcome Muslim invaders as the aforementioned lower-classes did.

¹⁵ The Muslim army itself was not without internal conflict. Ibn Nuṣayr is said to have become jealous of Ibn Ziyād's early success and set out on campaigns of his own in Spain meeting with Ibn Ziyād near Toledo. Both were later summoned to Damascus by the Caliph (*khalīfa*) al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 86/705-96/715), after which neither returned to Spain. See Watt and Cachia, 14-15; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, "Narrative of the Conquest of al-Andalus," in Constable, ed., 35. Al-'Azīz assumed leadership of Islamic Spain, but was assassinated in 97/715. He was succeeded by a series of rulers whose reigns rarely lasted more than five years.

¹⁶ 'Abd al-Raḥman I escaped the 'Abbāsīd takeover of the Umayyads in 132/750 and ruled Islamic Spain as an Umayyad. A later successor, 'Abd al-Raḥman III (r. 300/912-350/961), declared himself caliph of an independent Umayyad state in 316/929. See Watt and Cachia, 30-31; Ann Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus, 711-1000*. Culture and Civilization in the Middle East, ed. Ian R. Netton (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002), 14. For a study of al-Raḥman III, see Maribel Fierro, *'Abd al-Raḥman III: The First Cordoban Caliph*, new ed. Makers of the Muslim World (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007).

was not necessarily matched by rapid religious conversions of the peninsula's indigenous population.¹⁷ In fact, Muslim expansion was rarely followed by immediate mass conversion. Instead, local populations often maintained their religion for generations beyond conquest. Richard Bulliet describes this phenomenon in his effort to enumerate the rate of Christian conversions in the medieval Muslim world.¹⁸ In so doing, he suggests that naming patterns provide clues as to the rate indigenous Christians converted to Islam. Using Arabic biographical dictionaries from the period, Bulliet asserts that the first occurrence of an Arabic name represents the first generation converting to Islam. Conversion rates are then illustrated by a logistic curve in which a greater number of Muslims assumes increased contact with non-Muslims. This being the case, as the indigenous Muslim (converts, or *muwallads*) population grew, so would the rate in which indigenous Christians would convert.

Applying Bulliet's method to medieval Spain yields less decisive results than in other areas, but does provide us with a general framework for understanding how Christians converted to Islam on the peninsula and allows us to begin to see empirically what was likely inherent historically.¹⁹ Accordingly, as was initially true for other areas of Muslim expansion,

¹⁷ Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, 2d rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 21-22.

¹⁸ Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979). See also Richard W. Bulliet, "Conversion Stories in Early Islam," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, Papers in Mediaeval Studies, 9, ed. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 128-129.

¹⁹ Bulliet's method is not without its pitfalls and becomes particularly troublesome when applied to medieval Spain where his population sample is not entirely representative and perhaps too small (Christys, 3; Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, 22, n. 40). Nevertheless, the results do correspond to conversion rates from other Islamic societies where stronger data is available (*ibid.*). It must be recalled that Bulliet's work serves as an initial effort to offer a set of preliminary estimates; it is not designed to produce conclusive, quantitative data, but a general framework for the process of Christian conversion to Islam (Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, 1, 128). Also, many of Bulliet's critics (and some proponents) misread his work (Roger Collins, review of *The Martyrs of Córdoba*, by Jessica A. Coope, *The English Historical Review* 112, no. 447 [June 1997]: 698). They falsely assume that his percentages refer to the Christian population of Islamic Spain as a whole instead of a percentage of the total number of converts over time (e.g., Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, 23-24; Christys, 3; and Jessica A. Coope, *The Martyrs of Córdoba: Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995], 10). In other words, when Bulliet's estimate of 6 percent corresponds with

Christians in Islamic Spain did not convert *en masse*. In fact, it appears that the majority of those converting did not do so during the first two centuries of Muslim rule. As Bulliet estimates, perhaps less than 20 percent of Christians converting to Islam had done so by the mid-third/ninth century.²⁰ Thus, a century-and-a-half after the conquest, it is likely that sizeable Christian communities still remained in Islamic Spain.

This may illustrate much of the indigenous population's initial desire to keep Islamic hegemony at a comfortable distance. Later generations, however, would become increasingly comfortable in Islamic society and found conversion more attractive. Bulliet's data suggests that by the time this conversion process had reached its mid-point (350/961), strife within the Muslim community (*muwallads* and non-indigenous Muslims) increased.²¹ Earlier periods though, the third/ninth century in particular, see strife largely confined to each religious community itself. Thus, Muslims struggled early on to overcome internal tensions²² and Christians strained to forge an identity for themselves under Islam.

the year 150/767, he is not arguing that Christians made up 6 percent of the population, but that 6 percent of all Christians who converted to Islam had done so by that time (Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, 117). Note especially Mikel de Epalza, "Mozarabs: An Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic Al-Andalus," 158-160. Though de Epalza appreciates Bulliet's innovation, he balks at the notion that large portions of the population remained Christian. He does so, however, by assuming that Bulliet suggests that half of the population of Islamic Spain was still Christian by the fourth/tenth century when this is, in fact, not what Bulliet asserts. De Epalza himself suggests that much of Islamic Spain's population converted to Islam quite rapidly by the second/eighth century. His evidence is based on the lack of ecclesial structure in Islamic Spain such that Christians would not have been able to be baptized as such or maintain a Christian community without the necessary bishoprics. Legally, then, these individuals would have been considered non-Christians. But what bearing would this legal understanding have upon the cultural and qualitative self-understanding such persons might have had as Christians. We thus conclude with Manuela Marín that Bulliet's work "... may be accepted as a well-founded hypothesis" ("Muslim Religious Practices in Al-Andalus [2nd/8th-4th/10th Centuries]," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi, 878). See also, Hanna Kassis, "Arabic-Speaking Christians in Al-Andalus in an Age of Turmoil (Fifth/Eleventh Century until A.H. 478/A.D. 1085)," *Al-Qanṭara* 15, no. 2 (1994): 419, n. 50. Cf. Mikel de Epalza, "Falta de obispos y conversión al Islam de los Cristianos de al-Ándalus," *Al-Qanṭara* 15, no. 2 (1994): 385-400.

²⁰ Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, 124.

²¹ The mid-point refers to the point at which half of those who would convert had already done so. Ibid., 128. Strife peaked with the collapse of the Umayyad state and the emerging rule of separate *mulūk al-tawā'if* ("party kings") beginning in the fifth/eleventh century. See *ibid.*, 124-125 and David Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002-1086* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985).

²² Watt and Cachia, 26-29.

The fact that so many Christians remained as such after Muslim conquest informs the manner in which Muslims dealt with their subjects. Those succumbing to Muslim advance often surrendered to *dhimma* (“covenant” or “pact”) regulations and were known as *dhimmīs*, or *ahl al-dhimma* (“people of the *dhimma*”).²³ These regulations developed over time and governed many aspects of civic and religious life. Many of them are consolidated in the so-called “Pact of ‘Umar,” but are ultimately “considered to have been a body of practices which grew up piecemeal and which did not reach full embodiment” until the third/ninth century.²⁴ As Muslims developed these conditions, they were better able to stabilise an extending *dār al-islām* (“house of Islam”); *dhimma* regulations allowed them to govern *dhimmī* daily life in a manner that gave Muslims social and religious precedence²⁵ and helped them to control a subject population often constituting a larger portion of the whole than they did. In all of this, though certain aspects of *dhimma* regulations could vary in different periods and contexts,²⁶ those that were applied were designed to ensure that *dhimmīs* remained distinct from the Muslims who governed them.²⁷

²³ For a full treatment of *dhimma* regulations see A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1970). See also C. E. Bosworth, “The Concept of *Dhimma* in Early Islam,” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1: *The Central Lands*, ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982); Youssef Courbage and Philippe Fargues, *Christians and Jews under Islam*, trans. Judy Mabro (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1998); Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 3-66; and *EF*² II:227-231, s.v. “Dhimma,” by C. L. Cahen and Chafik Chehata.

²⁴ The pact (treated by Tritton in detail) refers to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb or ‘Umar I (r. 13/634-23/644), but may possibly be attributed to ‘Umar II (r. 99/717-101/720). Bosworth, 47 and Courbage and Fargues, 24 and 212, n. 71. For a translation of the pact, see Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews in Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 157-158. For its restrictions’ development over time, see *EF*² XI:572, s.v. “Zunnār,” by A. S. Tritton.

²⁵ Bosworth notes that these regulations were expressions “. . . of *ṣughr* or humiliation . . .” and reminded *dhimmīs* of their second-class status. Bosworth, 44.

²⁶ For instance, the colour of clothing used to distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims (*ghiyār*) and the different religious groups represented by the *ahl al-dhimma* themselves often varied. See *ibid.*, 48 and *EF*² II:1075-1076, s.v. “Ghiyār,” by M. Perlmann.

²⁷ Here we see the pragmatism of *dhimma* regulations and the advantage they gave Muslims. By making *dhimmīs* a distinctive class and regulating daily life, Muslims increased their ability to conquer and maintain authority over groups who often remained a majority of the population after conquest. This strategic use of *dhimma* regulations became more common than their religious use as seen in extensions of them to polytheists in later periods of Muslim expansion. See Bosworth, 43-44; Lewis, 20; Sri Ram Sharma, *The*

What is most important to note with regards to *dhimma* regulations is the process of development that they went through. There was no set collection of stipulations that were applied equally in every context of Muslim invasion. In fact, not only did *dhimma* regulations develop with time, but they often varied from period to period and place to place. Moreover, what might be legally applied in theory may not have been what was actually applied in reality in a given context. Similarly, courses of action that were taken in one period or geographical context may not have been developed or applied in another. Thus, it is one thing to identify various *dhimma* regulations in legal texts, but quite another thing entirely to identify actual practices.²⁸

In this light, it is difficult to gauge how Christians in Spain were treated after the Muslim invasion of the peninsula. Even more, it is difficult to discern how their treatment might reflect the state of restrictions governing *dhimmīs* in general. In fact, no extensive records exist for how such regulations were first applied in Spain. Some information is passed on by the city of Murcia which peacefully surrendered to Muslim armies in 94/713. In this case, Murcians conceded to terms briefly outlined in the *Treaty of Tudmīr*.²⁹ In it, al-‘Azīz, who was to become the first *amīr* of Islamic Spain, promised the Murcians protection in addition to a lack of interference in matters of government and religion. In exchange, the Murcians could not engage in any activity that might undermine or endanger Islamic

Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 1-4; and Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 79-80.

²⁸ Cf. Lewis, 16. Here, Lewis notes that the theoretical interpretation of *dhimma* regulations by jurists was rarely matched in practice by rulers and administrators. Cf. Abū ‘Uthmān Amr b. Bahr al-Jāhiz (160/776-255/868-869), whose writings were known in Islamic Spain (Watt and Cachia, 66-67), and his “Reply to the Christians” where he loathes the high social level attained by Christians in third/ninth century Baghdad irrespective of their status as second-class citizens. See Joshua Finkel, “A Risala of Al-Jahiz,” in *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries (632-900 A.D.)*, ed. N. A. Newman (Hatfield, Pennsylvania: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 705-706.

²⁹ Tudmīr, Arabic for Theodemir, was the local ruler of Murcia. Translated portions are found in “The Treaty of Tudmīr” in Constable, ed., 37-38. See also, Charles Melville and Ahmad Ubaydli, ed., *Christians and Moors in Spain*, vol. III, *Arabic Sources (711-1501)* (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips Ltd., 1992), 10-13. The treaty dates from *Rajab* 94/April 713.

authority. They were also to pay an annual tax of cash and food-crops. Presumably, the basic elements of this treaty would not have been entirely unlike agreements made with other conquered cities in Spain.³⁰

These stipulations generally follow the basic treatment of other *dhimmīs* under Muslim rule. Though not entirely novel,³¹ basic stipulations were in many cases uniquely based on revelations in the Qur’ān.³² Accordingly, most conquered polytheists and unbelievers were expected to convert to Islam. Monotheists, or the *ahl al-kitāb* (“people of the book”), were tolerated provided they submitted to certain *dhimma* regulations and paid the *jizya* (“poll tax”).³³ The *jizya* was taken in exchange for protection and exemption from military service. Indeed, these elements are present in the *Treaty of Tudmīr*.

The example of Christians in late-second/eighth century Córdoba may add further detail to early *dhimma* stipulations in Spain. By the time al-Raḥmān I became *amīr* of Córdoba, the Muslim population had outgrown its mosque, then half of the Church of St. Vincent.³⁴ Additions to the mosque were becoming ridiculous so al-Raḥmān I approached Christian leaders and offered to purchase their half of the structure. This would allow for the destruction of the current building that in turn would make way for a new, larger mosque. However, Christians declined the offer and instead appealed to an agreement, perhaps part of

³⁰ Similar treaty forms come in post-conquest agreements with Wittiza’s sons and Roderic’s widow in which they were allowed to keep and supervise their lands on the condition of the payment of a tax and their cooperation with the new rulers. See Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, vol. II, trans. Pascual de Gayangos (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1840), 14-15, 30-31.

³¹ For instance, the Byzantine and Sassanid empires had similar systems of dealing with conquered peoples and/or “dissenting minorities.” Bosworth, 37-40.

³² See, for instance Qur’ān *al-Tauba* (9):29.

³³ The tax itself (i.e., its monetary worth) was most likely based on the Byzantine system. See Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects*, 208, 211. Other taxes, such as a land-tax (*kharāj*), were developed later. See *ibid.*, 198-200 and Daniel C. Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam* (*n.p.*: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, 2000).

³⁴ Al-Maqqarī, *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, vol. I, trans. Pascual de Gayangos (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1840), 217-218. Quoting the third/ninth century al-Rāzī, al-Maqqarī notes that dividing the principal church of a city between conquered Christians and newly resident Muslims was customary. *Ibid.*, 217.

early *dhimma* regulations, made between earlier Christians and their Muslim conquerors. In the end, al-Rahmān I allowed the Christians to construct a new church at another location and the Church of St. Vincent was subsequently destroyed to make way for the new mosque.³⁵ The significance of these negotiations lies in the agreement Christians appealed to in order to protect their church.³⁶

The *Treaty of Tudmīr* and the negotiations over the Church of St. Vincent represent, in large part, the extent of what is known of the earliest *dhimma* regulations in Islamic Spain. As we move ahead to third/ninth century Córdoba, evidence of similar or even more fully developed *dhimma* regulations is hardly extensive. Hence, even though some Islamic societies came to restrict the way *dhimmīs* could wear their hair, the colour of hats or belts they could wear, or the ways in which they might look or act that might be similar to Muslims,³⁷ third/ninth century Córdoba appears much more relaxed. In fact, with the exception of civic officers, few Cordobans made use of the traditional turban.³⁸ In its place, many Cordoban Muslims and *dhimmīs* alike wore a woollen cap. References to such caps state that they were most often red or green in colour, but no mention is made of specific colours reserved for specific religious groups.³⁹ Third/ninth century Cordoban Muslims and *dhimmīs* also seem to have enjoyed the right to share preferences in hairstyle.⁴⁰ This seems to have even created a certain snobbish pride in a style that Cordobans considered uniquely their

³⁵ Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 6. Expansions to the mosque were completed under various rulers to make room for Córdoba's increasing Muslim population until it reached the size of the mosque that presently occupies the site. For an estimation of Córdoba's Muslim population based on these expansions, see Leopoldo Torres Balbás, "Ampliación y tamaño de varias mezquitas," *Al-Andalus* 21, no. 2 (1956): 351-352. Torres Balbás estimates the Muslim population grew from over 5,000 under al-Rahmān I to nearly 24,800 by the fourth/tenth century.

³⁶ Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 6.

³⁷ This included the way *dhimmīs* dressed, the colour or kind of head-dress they wore, and even their use of language and names. See Stillman, 157-158.

³⁸ Al-Maqqarī, I:116.

³⁹ Jews, the sole exception, only wore yellow caps and ". . . on no occasion, [were] allowed to use any other." See *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* The only differences in hairstyle occur among Muslims in civic and religious offices who, unlike other Cordobans, wore their hair long.

own, such that visitors from outside Islamic Spain whose appearance might be accepted in other geographical contexts were mocked in Córdoba.⁴¹

Furthermore, in some Islamic societies we read of restrictions on the construction and repair of places of worship. Similarly, we hear of limitations on certain public expressions of worship. For Christians, this could mean an inability to proselytise or ring church bells. In some societies, wooden clappers might be used instead of bells, but they were to be beaten quietly, just as Christians were to quietly worship and mourn.⁴² Yet contemporary accounts concerning third/ninth century Córdoba mention the construction of new churches and the use of church bells.⁴³ Public funeral processions and chanting of dirges were seen and heard in Cordoban streets.⁴⁴

Though *dhimma* regulations in some contexts limited the jobs *dhimmīs* could perform, many such positions were, for the time, open to *dhimmīs*. Many Cordoban Christians even

⁴¹ Al-Maqqarī, I:116. Similarly, Cordoban *qāḍīs* (“judges”) and ‘*ulamā*’ (“religious leaders”) wore their hair “underneath the left ear” instead of “. . . letting it hang over their shoulders, as is the fashion in the East” Ibid. Being Umayyad, Córdoba did mimic at least some Damascene culture. For instance, like the *qibla* (direction of prayer) of Damascus’ Great Mosque, the *qibla* of Córdoba’s Great Mosque originally faced south, but in its case, incorrectly towards Africa. See Robert Hillenbrand, “‘The Ornament of the World’: Medieval Córdoba as a Cultural Centre,” in *The Legacy of Medieval Spain*, ed. Jayyusi, 130 and D. F. Ruggles, “The Great Mosque of Córdoba,” in *The Literature of Al-Andalus*, ed. María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin and Michael Sells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 159, 162. Nonetheless, many observe that different forms of high-society culture (cuisine, hygiene, hairstyle, seasonal clothing, music, etc.) were imported, most notably by the poet and musician Ziryāb (175/790-238/852), from ‘Abbāsīd Baghdād. See Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 171; Coope, 6-7; and Hillenbrand, 117.

⁴² Other similar laws were developed in order to control where *dhimmīs* could build their homes and even permissible heights of *dhimmī* structures. Marriage laws were also developed, restricting marriages between *dhimmī* men and Muslim women. A Muslim’s legal testimony in court was given more weight than a non-Muslim’s and other services were demanded in order to remind *dhimmīs* of their second-class status (e.g., providing Muslims with shelter, acting as guides for Muslims, and maintaining roads and bridges). Stillman, 157 and Bosworth, 44 and 49.

⁴³ For instance, Alvarus mentions the ringing of bells, but also notes that Muslims heard the bells with disgust. See *Indiculus luminosus*, 6. See also, Bernard and Ellen M. Whishaw, *Arabic Spain: Sidelights on Her History and Art* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1912), 20 and Reinhart Dozy, *Spanish Islam: A History of Moslems in Spain by Reinhart Dozy*, trans. Francis Griffin Stokes (London: Chatto and Windus, 1913), 299-300. Earlier periods demonstrate the opposite extreme, insofar as Ibn Nuṣayr, during his initial conquest of Spain, is known to have destroyed churches and broke church bells. See Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects*, 45.

⁴⁴ Whishaw, 20 and Hillenbrand, 123.

actively sought such positions.⁴⁵ Other Cordoban Christians served in the army or as a part of the *amīr*'s bodyguard even though the *jizya* was intended to exempt them from such service. There were even Christian tax collectors and official translators among a host of other civic offices.⁴⁶ Thus, *dhimma* regulations that may have been present elsewhere or at different times in *dār al-islām* were not necessarily applied in third/ninth century Córdoba.

In essence, whether because of relaxed or simply undeveloped and therefore non-existent *dhimma* stipulations, it seems it would have been nearly impossible, or at least increasingly difficult, to distinguish many Christians from Muslims in third/ninth century Córdoba by outward appearances alone.⁴⁷ Of course, that many Cordoban Christians *began* to look and sound like Muslims suggests that there may have been at one time various differences in the ways, for example, Cordoban Christians and Muslims dressed or appeared. As various Christians mimicked Muslims, however, these types of distinctions began to deteriorate. Hence, the lack of regulations that might return a focus to such distinctions, whether they were unenforced or simply undeveloped, contributed to the external similarities between many members of the two religious communities.

It remains most likely, as we have said, that with *dhimma* conditions in flux early on, the whole of *dhimma* restrictions as these later came to be known were not yet in place.⁴⁸ In

⁴⁵ At times, *dhimmīs* holding such positions essentially acted as “lightning rods” for *dhimmī* discontent. This was especially the case when bishops served as representatives of the government to their respective *dhimmī* communities. In effect, they became scapegoats and a means in which Muslims could redirect pressure away from themselves. This procedure was prevalent in the Ottoman (*‘Uthmānī*) empire, but is also seen in Islamic Spain as noted in Mercedes García-Arenal, “Jewish Converts to Islam in the Muslim West,” in *Dhimmis and Others*, ed. Rubin and Wasserstein, 229-230.

⁴⁶ Dozy, 268; Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 13-14, and 123, n. 44; al-Maqqarī, I:103. Cf. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects*, 25 where Tritton states that “in Spain and Morocco no Christians and no Jews were secretaries.”

⁴⁷ Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 13. Wolf adds, “With the exception of the clergy, Cordoban Christians must have looked much like Cordoban Muslims.” Cf. al-Maqqarī, I:246 and the description of a Christian church and a priest wearing “girdle cords” (*zunnār*). Only *dhimmīs* wore the *zunnār*, a more general girdle or belt being the *mintāqa*. See *EF*² XI:571-572, s.v. “Zunnār,” by Tritton.

⁴⁸ Bosworth, 44, 48 and nn. 24, 26, and 28 above. Cf. Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 13 and Safran, “Identity and Differentiation,” 582. These sources suggest, contrary to our argument, that restrictions were in place, but not consistently enforced.

this case, certain restrictions may simply have not yet been seen in Islamic Spain. As a result, the only regulations that were in place (e.g., the *jizya*) were applied, leaving few other distinctions between Cordoban Muslims and non-Muslims.

Other explanations highlight the fact that the Muslims who initially invaded Spain were Berbers from northern Africa, non-Arab converts to Islam. As converts, they may have been less keen to uphold strict forms of religious and legal rulings. Consistent Berber presence on the peninsula along with the constant intermarriage of Muslims and *dhimmi*s certainly ensured a diverse society if not one which was also prone to the lax observance of certain codes.⁴⁹

However, one must acknowledge the ironic tendency of many converts to uphold the tenets of their new faith with more vigour than longer-standing believers. If this was the case, the third/ninth century *qādī* (“judge”) Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Laythī may exemplify such a phenomenon. A Cordoban of Berber origin, his legal approach represents a swift shift towards more rigorous rulings.⁵⁰ In this light, variations in *dhimma* stipulations in Córdoba could be attributed to the cyclical nature of *dhimma* administration evidenced in other Islamic societies. Here, the *dhimma* regulations are relaxed, revived or altered with a change in leadership or because a specific context required it, and then changed again later on.⁵¹ In this case, third/ninth century Córdoba could mark a period where strict control of religious

⁴⁹ Al-Maqqarī does cite numerous Arab tribes immigrating to Islamic Spain. Al-Maqqarī, II:20-29. Cf. Ṭāha ‘Abdulwāḥid Dhanūn, *The Muslim Conquests and Settlement of North Africa and Spain* (London: Routledge, 1989), 132-134. Even so, the consistent presence of Muslim Berbers is unquestioned. As Shaban notes, “. . . until 739, Berbers were allowed to cross Tangiers into Spain to settle there.” Shaban, 29. Wolf adds, “. . . by the ninth century the effects of intermarriage had begun contributing to the physical homogenization of the population.” Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 122, n. 35. See also Norman Roth, *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims in Medieval Spain: Cooperation and Conflict*, Medieval Iberian Peninsula, vol. X, ed. Rachel Arié and Angus MacKay (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 45.

⁵⁰ See Dominique Urvoy, “The ‘*Ulamā*’ of Al-Andalus,” in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi, 847, 852-853. Cf. Roth, 42.

⁵¹ For instance, the occasion of al-Jāḥiz’s writing described in n. 28 above may possibly precede a revival of stricter *dhimma* applications under the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 232/847-247/861). The “. . . perennial nature of *dhimmi* purges of this sort in other parts of the Muslim world . . .” is noted by Wolf and Tritton as well. See Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 118 and Tritton, *Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects*, 18-36.

communities was not required though stricter application of *dhimma* regulations followed later on.⁵²

Regardless of whether third/ninth century Córdoba represents a period of relaxed *dhimma* regulations or whether certain stipulations were simply not available to be applied at this time and place, specific demands remained. *Dhimmīs* in third/ninth century Córdoba continued to pay the *jizya*.⁵³ Marriage restrictions continued to dictate who a *dhimmī* may or may not marry and ultimately worked to decrease the *dhimmī* population itself.⁵⁴ In effect, the restrictions that are known to have been in place ensured that there was an ever-present reminder to third/ninth century Cordoban *dhimmī* communities of their second-class status.

Third/ninth century Córdoba, then, represents a tension between social cohesion and social unease. Religiously, Christians were able to carry on in many of the same ways as they might have before the Muslim conquest, often in plain view of Muslims. Socially, they were able to work within the Islamic system. Even the outward appearance of Cordobans demonstrates a rather high degree of social similarity between many Muslims and Christians living there. On the one hand, then, we are left with a Cordoban society that was fashionably cohesive and conducive to the economic growth and cultural expression of its *dhimmīs*.

On the other hand, this cohesion may have been only skin-deep. The *dhimma* restrictions that remained may have stood as a constant reminder of a Cordoban *dhimmī*'s position in the social strata of the day. Even if a *dhimmī* progressed upward in society, constant social elevation would only come with conversion to Islam.⁵⁵ In the end, it may only

⁵² Muḥammad I (r. 238/852-273/886) could represent just such a shift as well. Consider, for example, his removal of many Christians from civic positions. See *ibid.*, 118 and Dozy, 299-302.

⁵³ Both Eulogius and Alvarus discuss the tax against non-Muslims (Eulogius, *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.21, *Documentum martyriale*, 18; Alvarus, *Indiculus luminosus*, 3).

⁵⁴ Children from these mixed-marriages would automatically be considered Muslims.

⁵⁵ Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, 187. For more on these levels of tolerance and intolerance, cf. Robert I. Burns, S.J., "Muslims in the Thirteenth-Century Realms of Aragon: Interaction and Reaction," in *Muslims under Latin Rule, 1100-1300*, ed. James M. Powell (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 70-73.

have been Muslims who remained assured of their place in society.⁵⁶ Cordoban *dhimmi*s, on the contrary, were quite possibly left inextricably caught between submission and progress. For some, submission to competing religionists would be a bitter pill to swallow. For others, the potential that lay behind integration and acculturation would be attractive. Consequently there could be tension for many Cordoban Christians as to how they should live in an Islamic society.

Third/Ninth Century Cordoban Christian Communities

This tension may not have been felt equally for every Cordoban Christian. There were, in fact, a variety of Christians in third/ninth century Córdoba. Some accepted their lot as *dhimmi*s with only slight resentment, not showing the least interest whatsoever in their new Muslim rulers or their religion.⁵⁷ Other Christians simply converted to Islam. For these converts, the social and economic benefits of becoming Muslims may have outweighed any benefits to be gleaned from remaining Christian. So, they exchanged their faith for a new one. Within this group were also various secret Christians, Christians who had outwardly converted to Islam, but likely remained Christian inwardly, practicing their faith in private.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ This point notwithstanding, Janina Safran aptly asserts that the conversion to Islam of so many Berbers, Christians, and Jews and the resulting intermarriage and acculturation forced Andalusī Muslim jurists to struggle to uphold and protect the religious purity of the *umma* (“Muslim community”). In this sense, Muslims shared in this identity struggle to a certain degree insofar as they tried to protect Islamic orthodoxy and fervour which included making distinctions between themselves and non-Muslims. Janina M. Safran, “Identity and Differentiation in Ninth-Century al-Andalus,” *Speculum* 76 (2001): 573-598. See also Bulliet, “Process and Status in Conversion and Continuity,” in *Conversion and Continuity*, ed. Gervers and Bikhazi, 4. Muslim jurists’ attempts to protect the *umma* become most clear in various apocalyptic signs whereby Muslims who associate with Christians and Jews too closely change into apes and pigs. In other words, such Muslims would become what they associated with. Safran, “Identity and Differentiation in Ninth-Century al-Andalus,” 580. See also Uri Rubin, “Apes, Pigs, and Islamic Identity,” in *Dhimmi and Others*, ed. Rubin and Wasserstein and María Isabel Fierro, “Heresy in al-Andalus,” in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi.

⁵⁷ Tolán, *Saracens*, 84.

⁵⁸ Allan Cutler, “The Ninth-Century Spanish Martyrs’ Movement and the Origins of Western Christian Missions to the Muslims,” *Muslim World* 55 (1965): 322. Cutler is correct in his observation of Cordoban Christians who would deny their faith or keep it secret, yet there are problems related to his breakdown of Christian society in Córdoba as well as his overall hypotheses. See James Waltz, “The Significance of the Voluntary Martyrs of Ninth-Century Córdoba,” *Muslim World* 6 (1970): 151, n. 28.

Their conversions were perhaps merely a matter of convenience. They were able to enjoy the higher social status accorded to Muslims and maintain a bit of their religious heritage as well.

There were many other Christians who sought to maintain their faith while securing a place for themselves in Islamic society, and some a rather comfortable one. With Islamic Spain already a dominant military and political force, in the third/ninth century its capitol began to flourish as a cultural centre as well. In order to take full advantage of all that this society had to offer, many Christians began to more fully integrate into Islamic Spain.⁵⁹

This process of integration meant that many Christians, like Muslims, became circumcised and kept Islamic dietary laws, sometimes in order to secure various positions of employment.⁶⁰ Perhaps most significantly, some Christians, foregoing their use of Latin and Romance, learned Arabic. For some, this linguistic shift marked the loss of the last cultural mooring able to keep Cordoban Christians tied to the cultural and religious traits that marked them out as a distinct community. It was this shift that Alvarus grieved over when he wrote,

The Christians love to read the poems and romances of the Arabs; they study the Arab theologians and philosophers, not to refute them but to form a correct and elegant Arabic. Where is the layman who now reads the Latin commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, or who studies the Gospels, prophets or Apostles? Alas! all [*sic*] talented young Christians read and study with enthusiasm the Arab books; they gather immense libraries at great expense; they despise the Christian literature as unworthy of attention. They have forgotten their language. For every one who can write a letter in Latin to a

⁵⁹ The distinctions between integration, acculturation, and assimilation are important here. Many Christians had most definitely integrated into Islamic Spain insofar as we understand integration as a “process of normalization of day-to-day interactions.” Glick, “Convivencia: an Introductory Note,” 3. Acculturation implies a process whereby cultural features are exchanged between different cultural groups. In this process, each group remains distinct. Assimilation occurs when one group is completely incorporated into another; no distinctions remain. While some Christians were assimilated by Islamic Spain, the situation can generally be described as acculturation even though it was largely the Christian community that was moving or being pulled towards an Arabic and Islamic cultural centre. See Coope, 3. Cf. Safran, “Identity and Differentiation,” 597. Safran’s view that, “Acculturation and assimilation ran in two directions . . .” may therefore not be precise enough, though many Muslims did speak Romance and even participated in non-Muslim festivals. For a more comprehensive discussion of these elements, see Thomas F. Glick and Oriol Pi-Sunyer, “Acculturation as an Explanatory Concept in Spanish History,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* II, no. 2 (April 1969): 136-154; H. G. Barnett, Leonard Broom, Bernard J. Siegel, Evon C. Vogt, and James B. Watson, “Acculturation: An Exploratory Formulation,” *American Anthropologist* 56, no. 6 (December 1954): 973-1000; and Conrad Phillip Kottak, *Cultural Anthropology*, 8th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000).

⁶⁰ Coope, 83.

friend, there are a thousand who can express themselves in Arabic with elegance, and write better poems in this language than the Arabs themselves.⁶¹

All of these cultural shifts marked a process of acculturation (for some, assimilation) that was well under way by the third/ninth century. Christians who entered this process may have represented a climax in the identity crisis described above, for it became increasingly difficult for onlookers to discern the group to which they should belong. In the eyes of Muslims, even though various Christians progressed higher in society by taking on more and more Islamic and Arabic culture, their status as *dhimmīs* would quite possibly preserve their status as second-class citizens required to submit before their rulers. For non-assimilating Christians, this draw towards Arab and Islamic culture would perhaps be distasteful and represent an abandonment of religious roots.

But in some cases, the incorporation of various aspects of Arabic and Islamic culture did not pose a threat to Christianity. In other words, some Christians remained so even as they enjoyed aspects of this new culture. That this may have been so in third/ninth century Córdoba is supported by a similar process that took place in the second/eighth century. In this period, a doctrinal controversy within the Church in Spain was exacerbated in the context of disagreements over how Christians should view themselves in light of their Muslim rulers and neighbours. The controversy became, in essence, a bifurcation between two Christians.⁶² On one side of this divide was Elipandus (c. 99/718-187/802), archbishop of Toledo, who seems to have accepted the permanency of Islam and Muslim rule on the peninsula, and

⁶¹ *Indiculus luminosus*, 35 and trans. Southern, 21. Cf. Dozy, 268. Alvarus also laments his fellow Christians' attraction to Islamic clothing and employment: "And when we . . . pay a price to serve them and to go along with them in their most evil deeds, and we hereby lead a life in the world and gorge our bodies, gathering together from the unlawful service and execrable ministry abundant riches, jewels, perfumes, and a wealth of clothes and different things . . . do we not openly bear the name of the beast in our right hand when our feelings are such?" *Indiculus luminosus*, 35 and trans. Coope, 9.

⁶² Dominique Urvoy, "The Christological Consequences of Muslim-Christian Confrontations in Eighth-Century Spain," in *The Formation of al-Andalus. Part 2: Language, Religion, Culture and the Sciences*, ed. Manuela Marín. *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, Volume 47, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), 41, 45-48.

without completely abandoning his cultural heritage, integrated into the new culture around him. He even maintained a familiarity with secular, or Arabic, philosophy and science. At the same time, however, he sought to preserve and expand the orthodoxy of his Church while managing relations between Christians and Muslims.

We will return in Part II to Elipandus and the efforts of others who used their absorption of Islamic and Arabic culture to invigorate Christian identity in Islamic Spain. Suffice it to say here, however, that there were those on the other side of the divide who did not agree with him. Most notably, Migetius, a rather obscure second/eighth century Christian most likely operating from Baetica in southern Spain, saw the relationship of Christians and Muslims differently. As a result, he was among those who pulled away from Arabic and Islam in opposition to Muslim rulers.⁶³ For Migetius, Christians were not to associate with pagans. Thus, he forbade close association with Muslims, prohibited eating food that was associated with Muslims, and roundly criticised Christians who intermingled with Muslims.

We will see more later how Migetius differed from Eulogius and Alvarus in how he advocated for distance between the two religious groups, but for now it is important to recognise that a desire for such distance links them.⁶⁴ Moreover, the perspective they do share suggests that Eulogius' and Alvarus' concern for how Christians distinguished themselves from Muslims was not an entirely isolated one. Whilst Migetius was motivated by his own circumstances, it seems apparent that he was intent on separating Christians from Muslims by making it clear (through his proposed purity laws and proscription upon inter-religious mingling) what Christians were and what Christians were not. A century later, reacting to their own set of circumstances, Eulogius and Alvarus were resolute in their refusal

⁶³ Ibid, 41.

⁶⁴ For a fuller discussion of Migetius, Elipandus, and the controversy surrounding them, see Chapter 4. On the irony that Migetius' proscriptions actually mimicked Islamic law (i.e., his proposed dietary restrictions), see Chapter 4 as well.

to acculturate and in their own proscription of Christian-Muslim relations. For them, Christians should not convert to Islam, they should not privatise their faith, and they should not be content to live as compliant *dhimmīs*. They were also not to neglect the culture of their Christian heritage in favour of a new Arabic one, or if they did, as Alvarus' lament quoted above suggests, they were at least to employ their knowledge of Arabic culture and Islam as a means for refuting Muslims.⁶⁵ Hence, Cordoban Christians were not just to distance themselves from Muslims and their culture, they should also defy it. In this light, Eulogius and Alvarus dramatised their perspective by making a group of Cordoban martyrs representative of it.⁶⁶ Over the course of nine years (235/850-244/859), nearly fifty Christians – most born in Spain, but some non-indigenous Christians and converts from Islam as well – were executed by Muslim authorities for apostasy and/or blasphemy.⁶⁷

Nearly fifteen months prior to the first martyr, Perfectus, a priest of the St. Aciscius basilica just beyond Córdoba's walls, was killed under similar circumstances. Though his path to martyrdom is slightly different than the other Cordoban martyrs, his example provides some context for the events that followed.⁶⁸ On one particular spring day, Perfectus was stopped by a group of Muslims who inquired about his beliefs concerning Christ and

⁶⁵ “. . . they study the Arab theologians and philosophers, *not to refute them* but to form a correct and elegant Arabic” (emphasis added). *Indiculus luminosus*, 35 and trans. Southern, 21.

⁶⁶ For a select bibliography on the martyrs, see Tolán, *Saracens*, 306-307, n. 62. In-depth studies include Edward P. Colbert, *The Martyrs of Córdoba (850-859): A Study of Sources* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1962); Coope; Cutler, 321-339; Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Mediaeval Europe*, 2d ed., Arab Background Series, ed. N. A. Ziadeh (London: Longman, 1979), 23-48; Clayton Drees, “Sainthood and Suicide: The Motives of the Martyrs of Cordoba,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 20 (1990): 59-89; Dominique Millet Gérard, *Chrétiens mozarabes et culture islamique dans l'Espagne des VIII^e-IX^e siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1984); Waltz, 143-159, 226-236; and Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*. Wolf's study includes a survey of scholarship beginning in the tenth/sixteenth century (36-47). Muslim sources for the martyrs do not exist, but there is a later account of a third/ninth century Christian woman who blasphemed Muḥammad and was executed. See Janina M. Safran, “The Sacred and Profane in Islamic Cordoba,” *Comparative Islamic Studies* 1 (2005): 23. Similarly, see a fourth/tenth century Christian's similar desire for martyrdom in Melville and Ubaydli, 41.

⁶⁷ The martyrdom of two Arab brothers precedes the first of the Cordoban martyrs by some thirty years. Their biography, written by Abbot Speraindeo, is now lost making it impossible to know why the brothers were executed or if they inspired the martyrs who followed them. See Coope, 16. Chronological and thematic summaries of the martyrs are included in Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 23-35 and Coope, 16-34 respectively.

⁶⁸ Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 24.

Muḥammad. In his response, Perfectus acknowledged the divinity of Christ, but fearing that his view of Islam's Prophet might incite the Muslims, he declined to answer unless a pact of friendship was agreed to. The Muslims did so and Perfectus proceeded to thoroughly disparage Muḥammad. According to the priest, Muḥammad was, “. . . seduced by demonic illusions, devoted to sacrilegious sorcery, he corrupted with his deadly poison the hearts of many idiots and condemned them to eternal perdition. Lacking any spiritual wisdom, he made them subjects of Prince Satan, with whom he will suffer the most abominable punishments in hell.”⁶⁹

This answer naturally angered the Muslims, but they were true to their word and Perfectus was allowed to go about his business. Several days later however, the priest was again met on the street by Muslims and accused of blaspheming the Prophet. Surrounded by a crowd, he was taken to the *qāḍī* and sentenced to death. At first, Perfectus denied the charges, but realising that his fate was sealed, he publicly defamed Muḥammad once again. After enduring the month of *Ramaḍān* in prison, Perfectus was brought before the *qāḍī* and asked to retract his statements concerning the Prophet and convert to Islam. He refused, reiterated his assessment of Muḥammad, and was beheaded on 1 *Shawwāl* 235/18 April 850.

Perfectus' experience may have inspired the first of the Cordoban martyrs, Isaac, who had at one time held a position in the Islamic government of Córdoba that so many others coveted. He was *kātib al-dhimma* (“secretary of the covenant”), but abandoned this position to become a monk in the monastery of nearby Tabanos.⁷⁰ After three years in the monastery, he returned to Córdoba, entered the *amīr*'s palace, and asked the *qāḍī* for instruction in Islam. Assuming that Isaac wished to convert, the *qāḍī* began to explain Islamic doctrine. Before he

⁶⁹ Eulogius, *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.1.2 and trans. Tolan, *Saracens*, 87. Presumably, Perfectus made his speech in Arabic, but see Hitchcock, *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, 25-39 and his discussion of Romance-speaking Muslims.

⁷⁰ Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 23. Eulogius tells us that Isaac was familiar with Arabic and so it seems that he was fairly Arabised (Eulogius, *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.pref.2).

could finish doing so however, Isaac interrupted and attacked Muḥammad in a manner similar to Perfectus. Isaac even implored the *qādī* to leave Islam and become a Christian. Utterly shocked by Isaac's tirade, the *qādī* slapped him and along with other witnesses assumed that he was either drunk or crazy.⁷¹ Isaac assured them that he knew exactly what he was saying. The *amīr* was thus notified and Isaac was beheaded on 29 *Dhu 'l-Qa'da* 236/3 June 851.

Following Isaac's example, fourteen more martyrs came forward in the remaining months of 236-7/851. In the eight years that followed, thirty-four more Christians would be killed for similar actions. A significant number of the martyrs were priests, monks, or nuns, many of whom came from the same monastery in Tabanos where Isaac spent three years of his life.⁷² Other martyrs were Muslim converts to Christianity or the children of mixed marriages.⁷³ As the martyrs were fully aware, their actions, in the eyes of Muslims, were punishable by death. Even so, they invited execution and martyrdom by publicly insulting Muḥammad or by publicising their conversions to Christianity.⁷⁴

Discerning what may have motivated these Christians to seek martyrdom in the way that they did is the focus of most scholarly works on the topic and most examinations of Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts, the only presently available accounts of the movement. Arriving at any certain conclusions is ultimately impossible given these limits of available historical information. For whilst Eulogius' and Alvarus' accounts are reliable as to the

⁷¹ Coope notes that the *qādī*, Saïd b. Sulayman, took his office in 233/848 and suggests that he therefore may have known Isaac as a colleague. This may explain his shock at Isaac's seemingly uncharacteristic statements. Coope, 20.

⁷² In this light, the monasteries of Córdoba, Tabanos in particular, are described as "ideal breeding grounds for radical thought" and as a "centre" (*mittelpunkt*) for the movement. See Coope, 21 and Franz R. Franke, "Die freiwilligen Märtyrer von Cordova und das Verhältnis des Mozarabes zum Islam (nach den Schriften von Speraindeo, Eulogius und Alvar)," in *Spanische Forschungen des Gorresgesellschaft* 13 (1953), 18.

⁷³ Of these martyrs, most were Muslims by birth. Even though their mothers may have been Christians, children automatically took the religion of their father. For these martyrs, then, publicising their conversions and choosing to live as Christians constituted apostasy and was punishable by death.

⁷⁴ Perfectus is unique on this point insofar as he did not initially seek martyrdom. Instead, he was indicted of a crime he thought a friendship pact would protect him from. Only after his fate was sealed did he insult Muḥammad.

events of the movement and its historicity, they operated from an isolationist perspective whereby the presence of Islam and a community of Christians that was receding both culturally and numerically spelled disaster. From this point of view, the only answer to Islam and those assimilating towards it was separation and thus the writings of Eulogius and Alvarus are highly polemicised and vehemently anti-Islamic.⁷⁵ So, whilst their texts are historically reliable, they may not accurately reflect the martyrs' own thoughts or motivations. Consequently, depending on them alone as sources to discover why the martyrs invited their deaths in the manner that they did may only yield biased results.

In this light, Allan Cutler's hypothesis that the martyrs were rebelling against Islam and part of a missionary movement aimed at re-converting assimilated Christians and *muwallads* in order to usher in the eschatological messianic era is quite unlikely.⁷⁶ Eulogius and Alvarus may have felt this way, but we cannot be sure of how the martyrs felt. Portrayals of the martyrs as "extremists" who hated Muslim culture and were driven by "... stifled anger, severe depression and their ongoing sufferings," adds modern psychological analysis, but still betrays a dependence on Eulogius and Alvarus as isolated sources.⁷⁷ As James Waltz and Norman Daniel cogently observe, Eulogius may have had his own motivations for seeking martyrdom.⁷⁸ In the same way, the writings he and Alvarus produced may have simply been responses to the martyrs as opposed to histories of the movement or accounts that they wrote as leaders of the movement.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Waltz, 144. According to Waltz, "While their reporting of data (names, dates, events) appears accurate and trustworthy, their inferences and interpretations are less reliable because they are more influenced by their interests and biases."

⁷⁶ Cutler, 329-333. Cf. Waltz, 143-159, 226-236. Cf. Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 45-46.

⁷⁷ Drees, 88. Cf. Daniel, *The Arabs and Mediaeval Europe*, 34-35. Another hypothesis, admittedly more honest to the historical records, suggests a connection between the strict orthodoxy imposed by the third/ninth century Caliph Mutawakkil in Baghdad and the actions of the Cordoban martyrs, the former possibly influencing the latter. See Eva Lapiedra Gutiérrez, "Los mártires de Córdoba y la política anticristiana contemporánea en Oriente," *Al-Qanṭara* 15, no. 2 (1994): 453-463.

⁷⁸ See Wolf's commentary in *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 44.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

Taking their cues from this last point, other scholars propose alternative suggestions for why the Cordoban martyrs acted in the way that they did. Some suggest that for at least some of the martyrs martyrdom was an expression of penitential angst. In this way, their deaths were the ultimate form of asceticism and became the culmination of monastic vows that would secure their salvation.⁸⁰ If this was the case, the martyrs were not necessarily reacting against Islam, but rather seeking an escape from the world. Islamic laws concerning Muḥammad and apostasy, then, may have merely become a convenient means to an end.

Others find such a conclusion unsatisfactory and seek to find the martyrs' motivations more closely centred on the identity crisis at hand in third/ninth century Córdoba. As Coope posits, “. . . the movement as a whole represented a protest against and an effort to slow the process of assimilation to Arab Islamic culture”⁸¹ One might also attempt to synthesise these two propositions, combining the roles of monasticism and identity crisis. In this case, Islam and Christian assimilation towards it was at once a centripetal force driving many of the martyrs into monastic life and a centrifugal force directing them out towards martyrdom.⁸²

Ultimately, we may never ascertain what truly motivated the Cordoban martyrs, but the results of the movement are immediately discernable. Early on, ‘Abd al-Raḥman II (r. 206/822-238/852) worked closely with Reccafred, archbishop of Sevilla, to stifle the movement and discourage more martyrs. As a result of Reccafred's policies, the deaths of the first few martyrs in 236/851 precipitated the imprisonment of many of Córdoba's clergy.⁸³ At first, this seemed to put a stop to the intensity of the movement. A second wave of martyrs

⁸⁰ Ibid., 116.

⁸¹ Coope, 14.

⁸² Daniel adds that, “Voluntary martyrdom, of course, was actually condemned at the early-fourth century Council of Elvira (Granada); perhaps there was an unbroken Spanish survival” This suggestion neither takes away nor adds to the composite theory suggested above. Rather it merely indicates that there may have been a historical precedent for the events that occurred in mid-third/ninth century Córdoba. Daniel further suggests that these fourth century martyrs and the third/ninth century ones that followed them might reflect a classical sentiment evinced by Christians in Spain, a topic we return to in Chapter 3. See Daniel, *The Arabs in Mediaeval Europe*, 34.

⁸³ Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 16.

followed though and the Cordoban clergy were forced by al-Raḥman II to convene a council in the summer of 238/852 in an effort to control the movement. The council resulted in a condemnation of future martyrdom attempts, but still more martyrs came forward.⁸⁴ When Muḥammad I began his rule from Córdoba in 238/852 he responded to the martyrs' unrelenting onslaught by intensifying his application of *dhimma* regulations and removing Christians from employment in Islamic courts.⁸⁵ This had profound effects within the Cordoban Christian community itself. Some Christians were angered by the martyrs' actions, claiming that their actions only made life more difficult for Cordoban Christians in general.⁸⁶

To the relief of many, the movement lost momentum by 244/859, but because punitive measures had been taken against Cordoban Christians as a whole, disagreement within the community was exacerbated. We are left with Eulogius and Alvarus – two Christians wishing to isolate themselves from Islam – and their opponents – those Christians not only critical of the martyrs, but those who also tried to find ways of incorporating into their identity as Christians the enjoyment of Muslims' culture. For both groups, there was a need to define Christian identity *vis-à-vis* Islam.

Conclusion

Like so many other societies that fell to Muslim armies, residents of Spain had little time to contemplate the events of 92/711. The Muslim invasion was swift and decisive.

⁸⁴ Joaquín Vallvé Bermejo, "The 'Zalmedina' of Córdoba," in *The Formation of Al-Andalus*, Part 1: *History and Society*, ed. Manuela Marín. The Formation of the Classical Islamic World, Volume 46, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), 395; Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 59. It seems the council was careful to distinguish between its condemnation of future attempts at martyrdom and those who had already been executed. Cf. Coope, 31-32.

⁸⁵ Waltz, 227 and Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 17. The stricter application of *dhimma* regulations may be attributed to the influence of Māliki, and therefore much more conservative, jurists. Yet, as Wolf states, the fact that Christians were singled out in these new rulings as opposed to *dhimmīs* as a whole suggests that Muḥammad I had "... political reasons, to discourage any further Christian participation in Cordoban dissidence." Ibid.

⁸⁶ Coope, 66.

Nearly a century later, many Christians, now *dhimmīs* in Islamic Spain, were still coming to grips with what their place in an increasingly Islamicised society should be and what their Christianity should look like. While many *dhimmīs* played an important role in third/ninth century Córdoba, an examination of this society reveals dissension beneath the image of prosperity, cohesion, and the pursuit of upward social mobility. As *dhimmīs*, Cordoban Christians may have constantly faced the reality of their second-class social status regardless of their outward appearance or their economic standing. How they responded to this dilemma formed the dividing lines within the Christian community itself as illustrated by the Cordoban martyrs of 235/850-244/859.

These events form the background and context of the polemic written by Eulogius and Alvarus. Even with the martyrs' movement over and Córdoba settling into an extended period of cultural affluence, their works guaranteed that the events of mid-third/ninth century Córdoba would live on. In fact, their writings mark one of the first attempts by Latin Christians to write about Muslims, and more importantly, an early attempt to define themselves in light of Islam. What did they hope their Christian identity might look like amid Islam and how did they intend to guide their readers towards that definition? It falls to the following chapters to answer these questions in an effort to discover just how Eulogius and Alvarus perceived their religious identity *vis-à-vis* Islam.

CHAPTER 2

OUTLINING THE BOUNDARIES OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY:
THE POLEMIC OF EULOGIUS AND ALVARUS AND ITS PURPOSE

It was in the context of community division and civic and religious uproar that Eulogius and Alvarus emerged. The treatises they wrote were designed to make sense of the disorder around them, yet reading their works leaves the impression that it was not Eulogius and Alvarus who sought understanding. Rather, it was their own Christian community whom they hoped would be convinced by their interpretation of the events they witnessed. That the Cordoban Christian community's "most learned ones" (*peritissimi*) – a group to which Eulogius and Alvarus apparently belonged – gathered to assess Muslims and their religion suggests that the "problem" of Christianity amid Islam was a pastoral and theological concern for some. So whilst it is clear that Eulogius and Alvarus wrote to defend the martyrs, could they also have written to address Islam as an ecclesiastical dilemma?

Indeed it seems that the works Eulogius and Alvarus produced were more than simply anti-Muslim polemic or an apology for a movement of martyrs. For as the present chapter will argue, their texts can ultimately be read as an exercise in outlining the boundaries of an identity for Christians who had seemingly lost their way in an Islamic environment. In what follows, then, we will introduce Eulogius and Alvarus and discuss the texts that they wrote in mid-third/ninth century Córdoba. We will focus our attention on their treatment of Islam and the development of their polemic as a message for their Christian readers.

Eulogius and His Writings

The Life of Eulogius

The main source for Eulogius' life comes from Alvarus' *Vita Eulogii*,¹ written as a commemoration of the priest's life and as a testament and defence of his martyrdom.² Based on various portions of this text, we can suggest that Alvarus wrote his work as a sort of offering that he hoped would garner him the intercession of Eulogius and the same blessings in heaven that the martyrs were to receive upon their deaths. In other words, Alvarus may have hoped his *Vita Eulogii* would serve as a substitute for his own martyrdom – an act that, as far as we know, he was unable to set himself to.³

In any case, Alvarus tells us that Eulogius was born in Córdoba to a senatorial family. Early on, he was dedicated to the priesthood and lived among the clergy of the Church of San Zoylo.⁴ From Eulogius himself, we know that he was keenly aware of the Islamic environment that surrounded him and that he inherited at least a portion of his distaste for Islam from his grandfather. When the latter heard the muezzin's (*mu'adhhdhin*) call to prayer (*adhān*), which Eulogius compared to a donkey's bray (*impietatis ruditum*) and idol worship, he would cross himself, groan a psalm, and hope for God's judgement upon his enemies (i.e., Muslims).⁵ Of Eulogius' family or the date of his birth, little else is known.⁶

¹ CSM I:330-343. For an English translation and edition, see Paulus Alvarus, *Vita Eulogii*, trans. Carleton M. Sage, in *Paul Albar of Cordoba: Studies on His Life and Writings* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 1943), 185-214. Citations refer to Sage's English edition.

² *Vita Eulogii*, I.2. Portions of the work were also designed for use as liturgy on St. Eulogius' feast day. *Ibid.*, III.11; Sage, 185.

³ This is most noticeable in *ibid.*, VI.17-20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I.2.

⁵ *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 19. Eulogius' grandfather quotes Psalm 83:1-2 (Septuagint [LXX] and Vulgate [Vul.] 82:2-3). Eulogius responds similarly, but quotes Psalm 97:7 (LXX and Vul. 96:7).

⁶ Eulogius mentions his mother (Elizabeth) and five siblings (his sisters Niola and Anulo and his brothers Alvarus [not to be confused with Paulus Alvarus], Isidorus, and Ioseph) in his letter to Wiliesindus, bishop of Pamplona. See Eulogius' *Epistula*, III.1, 5, and 8 (the full letter appears in CSM II:497-503). See also Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 51-52 and Coope, 36-37.

According to Alvarus, the young Eulogius was a very capable student taught by the finest teachers. In particular, the well-known abbot Speraindeo would have a profound influence upon him. It was through the abbot that Eulogius was taught the Scriptures and lessons pertaining to the priesthood, and it was through Speraindeo that he would first meet his friend and fellow-student Alvarus.⁷ Eulogius was eventually ordained a priest, but though his place was with other clergy members, he found himself spending more time in monasteries with monks. It was perhaps here that he first met some of the Christian monks who would join the Cordoban martyrs' movement.

As we observe in Chapter 1, the first group of Cordoban martyrs caused such a stir that many of the Cordoban Church's clergy were imprisoned in 237/851 in an effort to stem the tide of martyrdom-seeking Christians. Eulogius was among these prisoners.⁸ Whilst other incarcerated priests spent their time "relaxed in ease and quietness," Eulogius read the Bible, mastered Latin metrics, and composed letters.⁹ One of these letters was written to Alvarus and introduces Eulogius' *Documentum martyriale*, a work devoted to Flora and Maria, two Christians in the same prison who would later be martyred.¹⁰ Another letter written to Alvarus introduces what became the first book of Eulogius' *Memoriale sanctorum*, a treatise written as a testimony of the Cordoban martyrs and of what were to Eulogius heroic and divinely inspired acts.

Four days after the executions of Flora and Maria on 25 *Jumādā* 237/24 November 851, Eulogius was released from prison, an act he attributed to the intercession of the two

⁷ *Vita Eulogii*, I.2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II.4.

⁹ *Ibid.* For his letters see CSM II:495-503. Other letters accompany two of his major works: *Documentum martyriale* and the first portion of *Memoriale sanctorum*.

¹⁰ The work was completed in 237/851. Colbert, 228. The work appears in CSM II:459-475.

martyred women.¹¹ Martyrs continued to come forward until 244/858, during which time Eulogius continued to interact with Christians seeking martyrdom and dutifully recorded their efforts until his *Memoriale sanctorum* comprised three books.¹² Before his own martyrdom on 2 *Dhu 'l-Hijja* 244/11 March 859,¹³ Eulogius also wrote the *Liber apologeticus martyrum* in which he continued defending the martyrs' movement and attacking Islam.¹⁴

Eulogius and the Boundaries of Christian Identity

But these texts can be seen as more than an apologetic commemoration of a group of martyrs or as a series of attacks upon Muslims. Even more, they can be read as Eulogius' attempt to outline the boundaries of Christian identity in an Islamic environment. Hence, in Chapter 1 we ascertain the tensions evident in third/ninth century Córdoba and observe that Christians responded to them in ways that affected their Christian identity. We noted that whilst some simply accepted their status as *dhimmīs*, others converted to Islam and/or absorbed its culture. Still others like Eulogius, Alvarus, and the martyrs they claimed to speak for, resisted assimilation and any accommodation of Islam.

In any of the former cases, Christian identity was disrupted and altered. Those who converted to Islam or concealed their faith exchanged their religious identity for a new one. More significant, however, was the question of acculturation and assimilation. Cordoban Christians, for example, who absorbed Islamic and Arabic culture, chose to alter part of their identity by including in it factors that for some, were seemingly foreign to Christianity in

¹¹ Upon his release, Eulogius praised God, “who freed me in peace by means of [Flora’s and Maria’s] worthy merits” See his *Epistula*, I.3. See also, *Vita Eulogii*, II.4.

¹² Colbert states that “Book II is a chronicle of events . . . up to . . . September 852.” He continues, “Book III is a chronicle . . . up to July 856.” Thus the work as a whole was completed by 242/856. Colbert, 192-193. The work appears in *CSM* II:363-459.

¹³ For his death and the events leading up to it, see *Vita Eulogii*, IV.12-V.16.

¹⁴ Wolf estimates that Eulogius wrote this work sometime in or after 243-4/857. Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 60. It must have been completed at least after the deaths of Rudericus and Salomon who were killed on 13 *Dhu 'l Qa 'da* 242/13 March 857 and the last to be recorded in the work. Only two more martyrs would follow – Eulogius and Leocritia, a convert from Islam. The work appears in *CSM* II:475-495.

Spain. In Eulogius' mind this was a bow to Islam, and as such, blurred the line that defined Christianity. Hence, a Cordoban Christian who was happily indistinguishable from a Muslim in, for example, appearance or language might be seen as an anomaly. Even more, Eulogius underscores his discomfort with such Christians by making their acculturation tantamount to conversion. With this in mind, Eulogius could use his texts as a single corpus meant to clearly mark the boundaries of Christian identity in a growing Islamic environment.¹⁵ These boundaries, moreover, would identify Christians in such a way as to keep them safe from the corrosive influences of Islam.¹⁶ The martyrs' deaths, then, were not necessarily to be equated with what it meant to be a Christian (a discussion of this point follows), but were for Eulogius a dramatic call to recognise what he thought should delineate Cordoban Christians from everyone else around them. In this sense, as we observe in Chapter 1, their actions were also used by Eulogius to sanction the ways in which Arabisation or Islamicisation might be accepted: it should not be a means for enjoyment or integration, but might only be used as a resource for fine-tuning one's denunciation of Muslims.¹⁷

In this way, Eulogius disagreed with Christians who saw the martyrs' movement as an unnecessary disruption of their absorption of Islamic and Arabic culture. He further disagreed that this absorption was possible, perhaps necessary, in light of an acceptance of the permanence of Muslim rulers, and might even supplement efforts to invigorate Christian

¹⁵ Safran, "Identity and Differentiation in Ninth-Century al-Andalus," 573; Safran, "The Sacred and Profane in Islamic Cordoba," 21; and Kenneth B. Wolf, "The Earliest Latin Lives of Muḥammad," in *Conversion and Continuity*, ed. Gervers and Bikhazi, 94.

¹⁶ That this intent underlies Eulogius' overall purpose in writing is confirmed with Safran's observation that legal rulings (*fatwās*) in third/ninth century Córdoba were given in response to the city's social and religious turmoil (she has in mind conversions to Islam, but posits that these rulings can be used to "develop a Muslim perspective on the problems of social change demonstrated by the actions and deaths of the Christian martyrs and the writings of their supporters" [575]). In particular, when 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, a third/ninth century Cordoban *qādī*, associated apocalyptic predictions with the end of Muslim rule, he was seeking to strengthen his own community so that it might withstand the tensions that were present in Córdoba at the time. See Safran, "Identity and Differentiation in Ninth-Century al-Andalus." See also, Chapter 1, n. 56.

¹⁷ Cf. Chapter 1, n. 65.

identity under Islam.¹⁸ For Eulogius, preserving Christian identity meant isolating Christians from Muslims and those who migrated towards their culture.

To this end, when a council met to denounce future martyrs, Eulogius responded by refusing to administer mass.¹⁹ In so doing, he sought to distance himself from that segment of Cordoban Christians that denounced the martyrs' movement. His protest, however short-lived,²⁰ would even go so far as to accentuate the new line Eulogius wished to create in terms of appropriate Church praxis. By refusing to enact the office of priest, Eulogius effectively broke communion with his wider clerical and ecclesiastical community. This would mean a departure from any sort of unity represented by the Cordoban Church in favour of his perception of uncompromised Christianity.²¹

Even more, Eulogius' writings served as his most defiant and long-lasting gesture in putting forth his view of Christian identity amid Islam. For when he wrote these treatises defending the martyrs' movement, he also interpreted it by assigning specific motives to the martyrs' actions that fit his own personal agenda. For him, though not necessarily for the martyrs themselves, the movement was a double-edged sword. On one side it attacked Islam – the force that oppressed Cordoban Christians, luring some of its members towards its culture and others to convert to its religion. On the other side, the movement was also an

¹⁸ Of course, there were certainly Cordoban Christians who assimilated Islamic and Arabic culture merely for its economic and/or cultural advantages, without any concern for their own faith. Likewise, Reccafred held his ecclesiastical position as a result of the *amīr* appointing him to it. In this light, it may have been his willingness to be a puppet of the Islamic state rather than his spiritual credentials that qualified him for the position. In any case, as we begin to discuss more thoroughly in Chapter 4, there were certainly Christians, perhaps even among the clergy, who sought to maintain orthodoxy and various degrees of acculturation. In this light, a comparison is still warranted. See Sage, 22 and Coope, 25.

¹⁹ *Vita Eulogii*, II.6-7.

²⁰ As Alvarus writes, "But his own bishop was so insistent that he return to his rightful office of sacrificing that he did not hesitate to threaten him with anathema if he would not promise to return to it quickly." *Ibid.*, II.7. See also, Sage, 198, n. 31.

²¹ As Wolf notes, "No matter how shortlived, Eulogius' refusal to perform the mass was a symbolically pregnant gesture. More than any other ritual, the eucharist symbolized the unity of the Christian community as a whole and the community of clerics in particular. By suspending himself from its performance, Eulogius sought to detach himself from the policies of [Reccafred] and those clerics who supported him." Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 58.

attack on Christians who were appreciative of Arabic and Islamic culture. The martyrs, so Eulogius thought, served as a signal for this segment of the Cordoban Christian community which he saw as backsliding. Yet Eulogius was not just concerned with what these Christians were sliding away from, but what they were slipping towards, for absorption of Islamic and Arabic culture was, as we shall see, synonymous to conversion to it as well.²²

Thus, like Alvarus, whose *Vita Eulogii* was perhaps written as a sort of substitute for martyrdom, so it appears that Eulogius' literary onslaught was meant to mimic his interpretation of what he saw the martyrs doing physically; for him, their actions were attacks on Islam and a wayward Christian community.²³ Seen this way, these texts were not just a defence of the Cordoban martyrs' movement. Neither were they simply hateful rhetoric aimed at Muslims and various Christians who associated with them. Much more, the treatises Eulogius produced were tools designed to clear away the boundaries separating Christianity from Islam that had been obscured in third/ninth century Córdoba. If Eulogius could effectively demonise, vilify, and tear down Muḥammad and his religion – if he could weaken efforts to incorporate Islamic and Arabic culture and place such efforts in the context of sin and backsliding faith – then he could effectively safeguard and assert what to him was proper Christian identity.

Of course, Islam and Muslims easily fell outside these boundaries. Eulogius went further though and sought to exclude not just non-Christian religion and un-Christian theology, but un-Christian culture, language, and life in general. As a result, Christians who adopted various elements of Islamic or Arabic culture as a way of life wandered quite far

²² As Coope summarises, “[Eulogius’ and Alvarus’] interpretation of [the Cordoban martyrs’ movement] was, however, influenced by their own specific agenda, which was to prove that those who died were true martyrs; to demonstrate that Islam was an entirely evil and unacceptable system of belief; and to condemn Christians who favoured accommodation with their Muslim rulers.” See Coope, 35.

²³ For instance, see *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.38 where he expresses a similar disposition towards the place his writing holds in the context of the martyrs’ movement (i.e., hoping that through them he might attain the glory the martyrs did through their deaths). Cf. n. 3 above and the same sentiment expressed by Alvarus in his *Vita Eulogii*.

beyond Eulogius' boundaries. Thus, to be convinced of what Eulogius related and argued in his treatises was to be convinced of a new way of living the Christian life *vis-à-vis* Islam.

The *Documentum martyriale*

Eulogius' first work, *Documentum martyriale*, is introduced by an exchange of letters with Alvarus. In the first, Eulogius writes that he will not cease to glorify the martyrs, the "soldiers of Christ" (*militum [Christi]*) who resist the "enemy of justice" (*inimico iustitiae*). For this reason, Eulogius hopes his *Documentum martyriale* might serve as a testimony of the martyrs' efforts to future generations. He then requests that Alvarus review the work before presenting it to Flora and Maria, two Christians imprisoned with him.²⁴

What follows in the body of the *Documentum martyriale* is largely an encouragement of Flora and Maria to sustain their hope in the midst of battle by continuing their pursuit of martyrdom.²⁵ In this, it is clear that Eulogius sets the women's efforts, and those of the previous martyrs, in the context of military engagement. In nearly every section of the work the martyrs are described as soldiers who are armed with weapons in order to fight in battle and war against an enemy. In essence, the martyrs' efforts rally others ". . . to triumph, arms the weak for battle, strengthens the weak for war, exhorts with hope of victory those who

²⁴ As Colbert observes, "It seems strange that Eulogius, a priest, should submit his work for approval to a layman who could give it authority." Colbert, 229.

²⁵ See Eulogius' remarks in the cover letter he addresses to Alvarus at the beginning of the *Documentum martyriale*. Paragraph sixteen of Alvarus' *Indiculus luminosus* contains an obscure discussion of simulation, perhaps in reference to the attempt of some Christians to conceal their faith before Muslims. This may also have been the case for Flora and Maria and may explain why Eulogius encourages them to stay their course and seek martyrdom, not renouncing their previous attacks of Muḥammad. See *Indiculus luminosus*, 16 and Colbert, 280-283. For more on the general structure of the *Documentum martyriale*, see Colbert, 228-234; Coope, 26-27; and Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 66-68. For more on how this text conforms to other martyrologies, see the latter two references.

doubt in returning to the camp of fighters, and shows all the Church a miraculous example of death for the truth.”²⁶

The target of this battle was of course Islam, but more specifically, when Eulogius reminded Flora and Maria of their verbal assault upon Muḥammad he states that they were speaking of the “forerunner of the Antichrist . . . possessed man, servant of Satan, full of lies and son of death and perpetual ruin.”²⁷ Eulogius goes further, coupling his criticism of Islam and its Prophet with a condemnation of the wider Cordoban Christian community (*nostra ecclesia*), which in his opinion, approved of Islam by its silence. Accordingly, Flora and Maria must not recant upon their previous insults of Muḥammad when they faced the *qāḍī* again. If they did, their recantations were to be equated with telling outright lies.

Likewise, any retreat by Flora and Maria was to be equated with Christians who remained silent when it came to passing judgment on Islam.²⁸ In the end, Flora and Maria could do nothing but uphold their public decrials of Muḥammad, for if they “. . . den[ie]d having cursed their prophet, [they] will be cursed; and if [they] have not rejected what the Lord rejects, [they] will be guilty of double sin And surely whomever we do not curse, on the contrary we bless, and whoever we do not reject, we admit in our fellowship as if we were befriending him.”²⁹ Thus, refusing to condemn Muslims meant being equated with them as well.

It would seem for Eulogius that Cordoban Christians should do nothing less than curse, reject, and condemn Muslims along with Christians who supported Islam in their

²⁶ “. . . *ad triumphum, imbecilles armando ad proelium, debiles roborando ad bellem, tergiuersantes hortando spe uincendi rediuiuum ad castra pugnatorum facere reditum et uniuersae ecclesiae specimen pro ueritate moriendi exhibendo signiferum.*” *Documentum martyriale*, 1. Cf. Aldana García, 177.

²⁷ “*praeuium [Antichristi] . . . uirum daemoniosum, Satanae ministrum, mendacio plenum, mortis acperditionis perpetuae filium.*” *Documentum martyriale*, 15.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

²⁹ “. . . *negaueritis uos maledixisse uatem, maledicimini; nec detestatas fuisse quod Dominus detestatus est, duplici peccato eritis obnoxiae Et certe quae non maledicimus e contrario benedicimus et quem non detestamur quasi fauendo nostrae societati admittimus.*” *Ibid.*, 16.

failure to defend the martyrs. Eulogius even wonders, if Flora and Maria do otherwise, “. . . how can the Lord not consider that [they] have failed by not proclaiming in the public place what has been the reflection of [their] heart[s] . . . ?”³⁰ Thus, one could not stand idly or silently by as Christian truth was trampled upon by those willing to move back and forth in the exchange of culture. Instead, Cordoban Christians, for Eulogius’ sake anyway, should take the offensive by actively and publicly denouncing Islam lest they themselves be considered among them.

Did Eulogius, then, equate Christian identity with martyrdom? He seems to distinguish between the two. For him, martyrdom became a vehicle transporting third/ninth century Cordoban Christians from where they were (undecipherable from Muslims) to where they needed to be (rightly distinguished from Muslims). Impeding this journey were various Christians who defamed the martyrs and others who remained silent in their opinion of Islam. Was there a place, then, within Eulogius’ boundaries for Christians who supported the martyrs and were vocal in their opinion of Islam, but nevertheless remained unable to set themselves to voluntary martyrdom?

On this, Eulogius is not entirely clear. On the one hand, the events of his life, as told in the *Vita Eulogii*, seem to suggest that it was not his intention to become a martyr. Neither was it Alvarus’. Instead, as we observe above, both authors seem to situate their writings in place of martyrdom, hoping to achieve the same ends and later blessings. In this light, martyrdom seems to have been set out as an ideal by both authors, but perhaps there were actions one could take in place of it. Indeed, in a later work, Eulogius remarks that there would be certain Christians not able to bring themselves to voluntary martyrdom, but that they

³⁰ Translated by Aldana García, 185: ¿ . . . cómo no os consideraría el Señor para la falta que habéis referido en la misma plaza pública sólo con la reflexión del corazón y no con la manifestación pública . . . ? (. . . nec statueret uobis Dominus ad reatum quod sola cordis meditatione, non oris professione ipsum referretis in forum?). Ibid., 18.

should not be held accountable for this weakness.³¹ This would suggest that Eulogius' vision for publicly proclaiming one's identity as a Christian need not be equated with martyrdom, but may lie in support of the message the martyrs proclaimed, or at least the message as interpreted by Eulogius. Christians agreeing with him, but unable to become martyrs could thus simply support and follow those who could.

Yet elsewhere Eulogius is rather blatant in his insistence that Cordobans make public their decial of Islam. On the other hand, then, it would be difficult to keep a supportive position and one that made defamation of Islam public from eventually becoming martyrdom. In the context of Islamic Spain, a public attack on Islam might surely include an insult of Muḥammad since his status as prophet, for Christians like Eulogius, embodied paganism and threatened the stature given to Christ. As the martyrs' examples demonstrate, such an act would surely end in death in a context where laws governed what one could and could not say about Islam and its prophet. Thus, if Eulogius advocated taking the offensive in a public decial of Islam, then it would seem that martyrdom would eventually befall all those who agreed with him.

In fact, the end of Eulogius' life is illustrative of this very point. Upon his arrest, he too sought martyrdom when it seemed clear that his death was unavoidable.³² Alvarus' life, though it ended differently, may illustrate this point as well. His *Vita Eulogii*, a literary offering he gave in place of martyrdom, is given almost ashamedly and with the sense that he knew it was an inferior offering. It paled in comparison to the ideal opposition of martyrdom that the authors had set out and Eulogius achieved, and as such, would inevitably fall short of the radical stance towards Islam that he called for. Alvarus, not able to bring himself to end

³¹ See *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.29. Eulogius was even well-known by Muslim leaders in Córdoba, further suggesting that he was able to carry on with a relative degree of normalcy in Islamic society, yet not seeking martyrdom. See *Vita Eulogii*, V.15.

³² *Ibid.*

his life in the same way, thus rests his fate on the intercession of Eulogius. Hence, even if Eulogius made no explicit call for *all* Cordoban Christians to become martyrs, the logical extension of the widespread and public decial of Islam that he did call for would be death.

Perhaps Eulogius did not intend for all Cordoban Christians to seek martyrdom, provided they would at the very least support those who did, but caught in the heated emotions of his rhetoric, he simply did not consider the inevitable consequences of the actions he called for. In either case, he marked the boundaries of Christian identity with radical and deliberate distinctiveness and one even made room for unavoidable martyrdom as long as Muslims ruled Spain.³³ In Eulogius' mind, if third/ninth century Cordoban Christians embraced such distinctions, then perhaps future generations of Christians could live without the presence of Islam.

Regardless of the place martyrdom held in Eulogius' mind, it remained clear for him that Christians could not afford to allow anymore sin beyond what already existed in their midst. It was, after all, the sin of Christians in Spain that was ultimately responsible for their loss to Muslim armies in 92/711. Due to sin, Spain's former glory was "carried away by the worshippers (*cultorum*) of this abominable prophet, by a secret and just judgment of God, since all that the Lord has inflicted upon us, he did with true justice because of our sins."³⁴

³³ Using Māliki *fatwās* given under *amīr* 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad (r. 275/888-300/912), Safran observes that the status of the Prophet formed the lines between sacred and non-sacred for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. This is seen from rulings stating that Christians, for instance, must at the very least say, "[Muḥammad] was not sent to us but to you" By doing so, they retained their own beliefs without infringing upon Islamic law, specifically the *shahāda* (the Islamic creed, the last portion of which ascribes unique prophet-status to Muḥammad). Safran suggests that such a ruling may inform Eulogius' response to life under Islam. For him, Christians could never allow even this slight recognition of Muḥammad, for doing so denigrated the supremacy of Christ. "In this view," Safran argues, "it was blasphemous to say that you have your prophet and we have ours, and corrupt to live accordingly. The very idea of the pact of protection was intolerable. The act of insulting the Prophet was . . . an act of Christian sacrifice that should confer sacred status on those who did so." Safran, "The Sacred and Profane in Islamic Cordoba," 24. The fact that Eulogius makes similar statements in his other works suggests that this notion was not a limited prescription meant only for Flora and Maria. See, for instance, *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.20, I.27, I.28, and *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 21.

³⁴ Translated by Aldana García, 185: "*llevada a la tiranía de los adoradores de este abominable profeta, por un oculto y justo juicio de Dios, puesto que todo lo que el Señor nos ha infligido lo hizo con acertado juicio y ello por causa de nuestros pecados*" (. . . *in istius nefandi cultorum priuilegium uatis occulto*

The judgment of God resulted in the oppression of his people, a curse which Cordoban Christians brought on themselves with sin.³⁵

For Eulogius, the cruel living conditions necessitated by Christian sin might be eliminated – God’s favour might be more readily reapplied – when and if Christians like Flora and Maria would continue to carry out their pursuit of martyrdom or at least rally around their cause. In this light, Eulogius lamented those Christians that so willingly accepted the presence of Muslims, their leadership, and their customs:

But we wretches, delighting in [Muslims’] crimes, rightfully condemn ourselves by the prophecies of the psalmist who says: “but they mingled with the gentiles and learned their works, they served their idols, and a scandal took place among them.” Oh, what agony, that we consider it a pleasure to be submitted to gentiles and we do not oppose carrying our yoke with the unfaithful. And thus, in our daily business, we participate in their sacrilegious and desire their company more than, according to the example of Lot the patriarch, fleeing the territory of Sodom in order to save ourselves in the mountains.³⁶

Eulogius aimed this piercing condemnation at Cordoban Christians seemingly sympathetic to Muslims. It was not merely the idea that various members of Arabised Christian communities

iuoque Dei iudicio transueta est, quoniam quaecumque Dominus nobis intulit in uero iudicio fecit et haec omnia propter peccata nostra atque). Documentum martyriale, 18. Does Eulogius seemingly (and wrongly) assume that Muslims worship Muḥammad here? He may in fact simply be saying that Muslims are those who support or express a special interest in (*cultorum*) the Prophet. Elsewhere, however, Eulogius writes of an “impious people’s [Muslims’] god” (*diuino impiae gentis*). We cannot be sure whether he refers here to Muḥammad or to his understanding of who Muslims worship as God (see *ibid.*). In either case, there seems to be some distinction for Eulogius between the God whom Christians worship and who Muslims worship (for more on this point, see n. 70 below).

³⁵ Eulogius lists some of the oppressive experiences they were forced to endure, all constituting various elements of *dhimma* regulations (i.e., limitations on their practice of Christianity, a tax [presumably the *jizya*], and restrictions upon property and ownership). See *ibid.*

³⁶ Translated by Aldana García, 186: “*Pero nosotros, desdichados, deleitados con sus crímenes, nos condenamos con toda razón con las profecías del salmista que dice: ‘Mezclados están entre los gentiles y aprendieron sus obras, sirvieron a sus ídolos y se produjo entre ellos el escándalo.’ ¡Ay, qué dolor!, puesto que consideramos un placer estar sometidos a los gentiles y no nos oponemos a llevar nuestro yugo con infieles. Y por eso, por el cotidiano trato, usamos por lo general de sus sacrilegios y deseamos su compañía más que, según el ejemplo del patriarca Lot, dejar el territorio de Sodoma y salvarnos en el monte*” (*Sed nos miseri eorum oblectati sceleribus non incongrue psalmistae denotamur oraculis, qui ait: ‘Commixti sunt inter gentes et didicerunt opera eorum et seruierunt sculptilibus eorum et factum est illis in scandalum’. Heu pro dolor, quia ese sub gentibus delicias computamus iugumque cum infidelibus ducere non renitimur. Et inde ex cotidiano usu illorum sacrilegiis plerumque utimur magisque ipsorum contubernia affectamus quam ut exemplo Loth patriarchae relicto Sodomitico rure in monte saluemur*). *Documentum martyriale, 18.* Eulogius refers to Psalm 106:35-36 (LXX and Vul. 105:35-36). By “works” the author indicates “customs” or “ways” (Greek – *erga*; Latin – *opera*; Hebrew – *ma’asehem*).

spoke Arabic or adopted Arab dress or even became, to varying degrees, Islamicised; the very fact that some Christians in Córdoba sought the friendship of Muslims was abhorrent and called down God's judgment upon the entire Cordoban Christian community.

Here we begin to see that Eulogius seems to include in his definition of Christian identity not only matters of doctrine, but those of culture as well. As a result, the language Christians chose to speak or the company they chose to keep in third/ninth century Córdoba was connected to the religious identity one may or may not have had as a Christian. Favouring Arabic over Latin, choosing to dress like Muslims did, or even preferring Muslims' company said just as much about one's identity as a Christian as any theological compromise would.

This indicates that there were, for Eulogius, rather specific ways in which Christians should speak and dress and certain people with whom they should not associate. To put it another way, there was such a thing as Christian language and non-Christian language, Christian dress and non-Christian attire. Thus, what could be deemed culturally pure or appropriate was irretrievably tied to religious, specifically Christian, identity. As a result, any absorption of non-Christian culture was tantamount to absorption of un-Christian culture, both of which contaminated Christianity as a religion.

In Eulogius' mind, while the efforts of other Christians like Flora and Maria were an attack on their Muslim rulers, they, along with Eulogius' *Documentum martyriale*, were also an outright denunciation of the manner in which many Christians chose to live in regards to Muslims and Islam.³⁷ Reversing this approach meant that potential martyrs should stay the course and Cordoban Christians should rally around them and publicly oppose their enemies.

³⁷ This becomes particularly apparent in light of Flora's place in the *Documentum martyriale*. As a convert from Islam, Flora most dramatically represented the extreme distinctions between Christianity and Islam that Eulogius had in mind. On this point, see Coope, 26-27.

They may have faced inevitable death as a result, but in doing so they may also allow future generations the privilege of living without Islam's presence.³⁸

The *Memoriale sanctorum*

Book I

Eulogius begins his second work, *Memoriale sanctorum*, with a cover letter to Alvarus seeking once again his friend's approval of the work.³⁹ What follows therein constitutes a disputation in which Eulogius explains why he sets out to write the treatise and defends and explains the martyrs' actions.⁴⁰ It is also in this first book that Eulogius begins to set out more clearly his understanding of Islam and its Prophet, apparent both in his own words and in what he reports the martyr Isaac to have said in his attack.

Eulogius' summary of what was revealed to Muḥammad and what Muslims believe, although sprinkled piecemeal throughout and at times accurate, is often exaggerated, highlighting matters of typical interest to Christians.⁴¹ Accordingly, Eulogius correctly asserts that it was Muḥammad who first led Muslims and propounded the religion of Islam after being enlightened by the angel Gabriel.⁴² Muḥammad was familiar with Christian doctrine and affirmed that Christ was a word of God and a great prophet.⁴³ Yet he went

³⁸ In the prayer that concludes the *Documentum martyriale*, Eulogius calls upon God to revisit his liberation of the Israelites and destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptian army. We can only assume that Eulogius draws a parallel to Muslims whereby he wished God might destroy them and liberate Christians from their rule. See *Documentum martyriale*, 25.

³⁹ See Eulogius' remarks in the cover letter that he addresses to Alvarus at the beginning of the work. *Memoriale sanctorum*, I. Cf. n. 24 above.

⁴⁰ For a more detailed treatment of the *Memoriale sanctorum*'s structure, see Colbert, 169, 192ff. His overall purpose in writing is most explicitly stated in *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.10 and II.1.6.

⁴¹ References to Muḥammad's supposed sexual cravings, for example, make frequent appearances in the works of earlier Christian writers such as John of Damascus (c. 31/652-c. 133/750) and 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. Ishāq al-Kindī, supposedly a Nestorian living in the 'Abbāsīd empire and a probable contemporary of Eulogius.

⁴² *Ibid.*, I.7. See also, *ibid.*, I.pref.2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, I.7 and I.20.

against the Bible and the Church fathers when he taught that Christ was an ordinary man, without divine qualities and unequal to God.⁴⁴

Even though these scant details betray hints of accuracy, they occur far too infrequently to give the impression that Eulogius knew very much about Islam. It is instead his *interpretation* of Muḥammad and Islam that is emphasised. Further, Eulogius asserts his interpretation as the correct one by admonishing his readers to heed the truth he proclaims even in spite of his unworthy life.⁴⁵ Yet the outlandish details concerning Islam in his first book lack sufficient evidence and remain unconfirmed. Eulogius' only real proof is the supposed authority that he asserts, and because he has laid claim to this, his faulty interpretation of Islam was perhaps believable to many of his readers.

Thus, the reality for Eulogius was that Muḥammad was a wicked, filthy, and false prophet and the precursor of the Antichrist.⁴⁶ As such, Muḥammad was “completely demon-possessed” (*daemonio plenus*) and a “leader of perdition” (*ducem perditionis*).⁴⁷ The substance of his lies – Islam – was for Eulogius an absurdity and a poisonous doctrine adhered to by “reprobates” (*reproborum*) and “pagans” (*gentilitas*).⁴⁸ In other words, Muslims were to Eulogius wholly other and degenerate.

What is more, having believed Muḥammad's lie, Muslims followed him not to a heavenly paradise (the description of which sounds to Eulogius more like an earthly

⁴⁴ Ibid., I.7.

⁴⁵ “Because just as it is the duty of those to whom the office of preaching has been given to preach, so it is necessary for you to listen” (*Quia sicut nobis incumbit officiositas praedicandi, ita uobis subest necessitas audiendi*). Ibid., I.4. As Wolf observes, these are the words of a priest “underscore[ing] his right to provide laymen with the correct interpretation of the events that had recently divided the community.” Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 73.

⁴⁶ *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.pref.1, I.6, and I.20.

⁴⁷ Ibid., I.pref.2 and I.6. See also I.20 where Eulogius refers to Muḥammad as a “very false and lost little man (*uanissimi ac perditii homunculi*), “armed by a diabolical spirit” (*spriritu diabolico perarmatus*), and a “scoffer” (*derisoris*).

⁴⁸ Ibid., I.3, I.7, I.10-I.12, and I.17.

brothel),⁴⁹ but to the eternal punishment of hell.⁵⁰ Besides malevolently leading so many astray, Muḥammad also remained the source of the Church's persecution. As Eulogius remarks, “. . . who among all the persecutors of the faithful ones has pursued the Church more savagely than this abominable one?”⁵¹

According to Eulogius' interpretation, then, Muḥammad was not only a persecutor of Christians, but an evil false prophet whose absurd sect effectually led its ignorant followers to hell. As if this were not enough for Eulogius, Muḥammad's sect also acted as a gravitational force that, if it did not dupe people into converting, at the very least pulled Christians towards its culture. Thus, Alvarus, in his response to Eulogius' cover-letter, referred to the “straying of our times” (*aetatis nostrae huius . . . errorem*).⁵² For his part, Eulogius was angered that “the faithful have mixed with the gentiles”⁵³ and “by the vice of some stupidity, disloyal inventions have been intermingled with pious religiosity.”⁵⁴ The frustration of what was to Eulogius a lethal mixture of cultural and religious compromise represented a dangerous blurring of the line distinguishing Cordoban Christians from Muslims.

As we observe above, various Christians in Córdoba did not share Eulogius' concern over embracing aspects of Arabic and Islamic culture. Such an embrace, however, was complete foolishness to Eulogius. In his mind, there existed such a thing as Christian culture

⁴⁹ This interpretation of the Islamic paradise (*janna*) Eulogius relates by quoting a section of Abbot Speraindeo's work against Islam. This preserved passage is all of the work that remains extant. See *ibid.*, I.7.

⁵⁰ Eulogius records Isaac having said some of these words to the Cordoban *qādī*: “You are entangled in such great sin, having taught this to so many lost ones who are going along with yourself to hell. Indeed, he who is completely demon-possessed, favours demonic deceptions, and has given a lethal drink to the sick ones will suffer eternal destruction” (“. . . *qui tanto scelere implicatus tantorum agmina perditorum inuasit secumque inferorum barathro mancipauit. Ille etenim daemonio plenus, daemonicis fauens praestigiis, letale morbidis propinans poculum aeternae perditionis luet interitum*”). *Ibid.*, I.pref.2. See also, I.7.

⁵¹ “*Et quis inter cunctos persecutores fidelium cruentius quam hic infandus ecclesiam insecutus est?*” *Ibid.*, I.21. Critics of the martyrs' movement claimed that they sought their deaths at a time when, unlike Christians under Roman persecution, they were not being persecuted. Here, Eulogius sets Muḥammad and his followers out as persecutors in an effort to counter this claim and validate the martyrs' actions.

⁵² *Ibid.*, I.

⁵³ “. . . *immixta gentibus caterua fidelis . . .*” *Ibid.*, I.21.

⁵⁴ Translated by Aldana García, p. 87: “. . . *por el vicio de alguna estupidez se han entremezclado invenciones desleales a la piadosa religiosidad . . .*” (*uel si qua uitio cuiusque hebetudinis sese interserunt commenta piaie religiositati adultera*). *Ibid.*, I.1.

that was just as important a factor in deciphering Christian identity as doctrine was. Ignoring this notion, as some Cordoban Christians were doing, meant abandoning Christianity. Consequently, it was not just Muḥammad and his followers that were the degraded other, but even those who chose to associate with them as many of Eulogius' critics did. Such Christians were to be considered among Muslims' vile ranks.

Christians adopting Arabic and Islamic culture were indeed unthinkable for Eulogius, but insult was added to injury when many of these Christians claimed that the Cordoban martyrs should not be considered martyrs at all. For these critics, the martyrs' "irreligious" (*profanum*) actions made them murderers of their own souls (*interempti suarum parricidae effecti sunt animarum*) and by inviting their own deaths they deliberately violated Scripture. According to these critics' understanding of the Bible, when the martyrs should love their enemies, they hated them. They returned evil with evil, and in doing so, rejected the kingdom of God that they might otherwise inherit.⁵⁵

For Eulogius, it was not the martyrs' actions that were invalid, but the rebukes of Cordoban Christians who denied the martyrs their honour. So, in response to the critics' condemnation, Eulogius lashed out with a condemnation of his own. Such Christians, for Eulogius, were "content to understand the Scriptures in a shallow way, having interpreted them as they wish[ed]."⁵⁶ When they spread their condemnations of the martyrs in public, they infected the minds of other Cordoban Christians like a cancer. They were, according to Eulogius, the leaven that spoiled the entire loaf.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid., I.18. According to Eulogius, these Christians rebuked the martyrs with Scripture, citing Matthew 5:44-45; Luke 3:14; I Peter 2:23; and I Corinthians 6:10 which, among other things, taught Christians to love their enemies. See also *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.19 and I.21.

⁵⁶ "... contenti sunt scripturas uano sensu intelligere, sed eas pro suo libitu exponentes . . ." Ibid., I.19. Such an accusation is ironic at the very least in light of Alvarus' rather twisted and contrived hermeneutics which we discuss more below. Eulogius counters his opposition's Scriptural quotes by citing I Timothy 1:6-7; Jeremiah 9:5; and Isaiah 5:20, noting the straying of the Church and how they confusedly called evil good.

⁵⁷ According to Eulogius, "a little leaven of sin easily spoils the entire loaf" (*modico ferment sceleris facilius ingens massa panis*). *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.19. Cf. I Corinthians 5:6.

With this in mind, Christians who condemned the martyrs, or even those who remained silent and refused to attack Muslims were, to Eulogius, heretics.⁵⁸ Consequently, they, “. . . like salt without any flavour, should be thrown out of the community of catholics, looked down on by everyone, and like a tree without fruit, clipped off with the axe of the Gospel and condemned to eternal fire.”⁵⁹ Here, as in his *Documentum martyriale*, Eulogius’ rather violent rhetoric suggests that Christians who stood idly or silently by when it came to a public opinion of the Cordoban martyrs, Islam, and Christian incorporation of Muslim culture were only worthy of being discarded from the Church.

Furthermore, if the Christians Eulogius abhorred were not worthy of the Church, then Muslims, all of whom he abhorred, were not worthy of the Gospel. In other words, they were not even worthy of an invitation to enter into the Christian community.⁶⁰ Instead, Muslims could only be seen as a public enemy and as adversaries of God.⁶¹ Consequently, both groups, unworthy of the Church and its good news, were only worthy of an attack. As Eulogius remarks:

⁵⁸ In *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.20 Eulogius refers to those who, unlike the martyrs, silently refuse to attack Islam. Later on, in I.28, Eulogius declares that those who do not venerate the martyrs are heretics.

⁵⁹ Translated by Aldana García, 108: “. . . como la sal sin su sabor, deberán ser arrojados fuera de la comunidad de los católicos, despreciados por todos y, como un árbol sin fruto, cercenados con la segur del Evangelio y condenados al fuego eterno (qui ut sal infatuatus a coetu catholicorum foris proiciendi et ab omnibus conculcandi ac uelut nemus infructuosum securi euangelica praecidendi igni perpetuo deputandi sunt). Ibid., I.27.

⁶⁰ In his defence of why the martyrs’ actions resulted in no miracles, Eulogius explains that it is not appropriate to perform miracles at all times (see *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 7-10 and Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 77-85). In the same way, in an opinion not uncommon in Eulogius’ era, not all people were worthy of the Gospel. It was the ecclesiastical consensus that the Apostles had already preached the Gospel throughout the whole world (as Eulogius himself asserts in *Memoriale sanctorum*, III.10.11 and *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 12) – those who had not already accepted it were unlikely to do so. For Eulogius, such was the case for Asians (*Asianis*), to whom the Holy Spirit prevented the Apostles from preaching. These, Eulogius claims, were known by the Holy Spirit to be “[un]worthy of receiving the love of the Gospel” ([*indignum*] *percipiendi euangelican caritatem*) and “were going to reject the word of life with an arrogant spirit, they would not listen because they would despise it” (*uerbum uitae arrogant spiritu erant reiecturi neque audirent, quoniam spernerent*). See *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.14. In light of the context, it is difficult not to read “Muslims” when Eulogius writes “Asians.” For more on this, see Chapter 3.

⁶¹ Among other variants, Eulogius refers to Muslims as the “public enemy” (*hostem publicum*) and the “enemy of justice and the adversary of the church of God” (*inimico iustitiae et aduersario ecclesiae Dei*). See *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.3, I.6, I.9, and I.10.

. . . to resist this lost and very filthy prophet is the value of a great crown, and it is a great trophy to demolish the religion of such a scoffer . . . it is absolutely the duty of Christians to separate from their destruction . . . to break his poisonous dogma, to curse his sect [and] to detest his thoughts which are bringing in a great multitude to perdition [and a perpetual abyss!]⁶²

Eulogius, once again, goes even further when he sets this attack in the context of war. In this light, the martyrs were armed soldiers whose purpose it was to expose danger, combat opposition, and “stir up hate against the enemies of the Church.”⁶³

As a result, there could be no cultural or religious overlap between Christianity and Islam. They must be kept separate and in order to ensure that the line dividing the two communities remained visible. Moreover, Eulogius is rather clear that Cordoban Christians must work towards this end by *publicly* attacking Muslims. This would seem to consign Christians to martyrdom, for if they refused this attack then they would not only find themselves outside Eulogius’ boundaries of Christian identity, but along with Muslims, cut off from the kingdom of God as well.

Book II

When Eulogius continued the *Memoriale sanctorum* with a second book, he focused more closely on the martyrs and their actions, with specific references to how they verbally insulted and attacked the Muslims they opposed. His second book is thus divided into chapters, each one devoted to relating the martyrs’ efforts. Eulogius begins with an admission of the cultural heights Córdoba was able to attain by the mid-third/ninth century under al-

⁶² “. . . huic perdito atque spurcissimo uati resistere uirtus maetae coronae est summumque tropaeum tanti derisoris cultum euertere . . . nequaquam ab eius esset interitu [Christicolis] resiliendum . . . dogma uenenosum infringere, maledicere sectam, detestari sententiam, qui tantae multitudini perditionem inducens perenni eam dedicarit barathro. Ibid., I.20.

⁶³ “. . . perfecto odio contra aduersarios ecclesiae insurgentes . . .” Ibid., I.6. Eulogius refers to the martyrs as soldiers and uses military language throughout. See also *ibid.*, I.19-22 and I.28-29.

Rahman II.⁶⁴ “Meanwhile,” Eulogius recalls, “beneath [al-Rahman’s] very heavy yoke, the Church of the orthodox had groaned and was beaten to extinction.”⁶⁵

Perhaps in order to personify this oppression, Eulogius relates the account of Perfectus, the priest who essentially sparked the martyrs’ movement. Although reluctant at first, when pressed for his opinion concerning the Prophet, Perfectus launched into as vehement attack as any against Muḥammad.⁶⁶ In Perfectus’ opinion, Muḥammad was the greatest of all the false prophets. Possessed by Satan, he tricked his followers with the deadly venom of his doctrine. Abandoning them, he left his followers to the eternal punishments of hell.⁶⁷ Perfectus wondered how Muḥammad could even be considered a prophet in light of his seemingly adulterous and incestuous marriage to Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh b. Ri’āb al-Asadiyya, the wife of Zayd b. Ḥāritha, his adopted son.⁶⁸ He concluded that Muḥammad “. . . favours wantonness and is enslaved to the pleasure of lusts [and] has dedicated to [his followers] all the impurities of perpetual extravagance.”⁶⁹

Perfectus’ summary would of course later earn him his execution, an act that was “certainly that with which [Muslims] dedicated their vain law, doing it with solemn veneration and much joy, thinking that in that day they would bring a great offering to their God”⁷⁰ Eulogius goes on to claim that Perfectus’ example stimulated the martyrs’

⁶⁴ Ibid., II.1.1.

⁶⁵ “. . . *dumque sub eius grauissimo iugo ecclesia orthodoxorum gemens usque ad interitum uapulet*. . . .” Ibid.

⁶⁶ Perfectus’ initial reluctance to attack Muḥammad and the choice he made to do so might be better understood in light of Safran’s comments regarding possible *fatwās* that governed non-Muslim assessments of the Prophet (i.e., “he was a prophet sent not to us, but to you”). Cf. n. 33 above.

⁶⁷ *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.1.2.

⁶⁸ See Qur’ān *al-Ahzāb* (33):37ff. When Zaynab’s husband Zayd heard that Muḥammad was fond of his wife he offered to repudiate her. Even though Muḥammad declined, Zayd repudiated her anyway. Muḥammad married Zaynab and it was subsequently revealed that the marriage was sanctioned by God.

⁶⁹ “. . . *fautor immunditiae et libidinum uoluptati seruiens omnes uso perennis luxuriae impuritibus dedicauit*.” *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.1.2.

⁷⁰ “. . . *scilicet quem sollempni ueneratione summoque tripudio ritu uanae legis gerunt dicatum; in quo se magnum Deo suo praestaturi arbitantes obsequium . . .*” Ibid., II.1.4. Here again, there a distinction seems to be made between who Muslims and Christians worship (cf. n. 34 above). Eulogius’ description of Islam is notable: it is, for him, a “law” (*legis*) that Muslims dedicated themselves to with a “joy” (*tripudio*) reminiscent

movement, encouraging other Christians to spontaneously and publicly curse “the criminal prophet” (*sceleratum uatem*).⁷¹

The remaining chapters of Eulogius’ second book include far less detail,⁷² but systematically relate the affairs of the martyrs who followed Perfectus. In these chapters, the martyrs are once again portrayed as an army – soldiers of Christ engaged in war against the enemies of their faith.⁷³ Muslims are consistently referred to as enemies, gentiles, and pagans. Their fascination with sex and over-indulgence represents all things earthly and temporal.⁷⁴ Their religion is vain and satanic. It leads them to hell and represents venom that inflicts them with the sickness of Muḥammad’s lies. Consequently, Muslims are portrayed as ignorant followers of a demon-possessed prophet.

With this in mind, the manner in which the martyrs engaged Muslims reveals that their ridicule of Islam, or at least Eulogius’ interpretation of it, was perhaps fuelled by an unwillingness to take it seriously as a religion.⁷⁵ In their eyes, Muslims did not adhere to Islam out of any sort of piety, but were instead made devout by blind loyalty. Converts did not turn to Islam for its religious value, but for the political and economic benefits they might secure. In other words, Eulogius would have his readers believe that Islam carried with it a following of duped fools who hungered for earthbound pleasures. Having tasted the truth of Christianity, no Christian, Eulogius speculates, should seriously accept a “cup from a rotten

of ritual dances to Mars. Prior to this, Eulogius includes a curious summary of the postscript that Muslims recite following the name of Muḥammad. Eulogius heard, “Zalla Allah Halla Anabi Ua Zallen.” In Latin, Eulogius claims this means “May God praise the prophet and save him” (*Psallat Deus super prophetam et salute eum*). See *ibid.*, II.1.3. Eulogius may have had in mind *ṣallā ‘Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* (“may God bless him and grant him peace”). See Dominique Millet-Gérard, *Chrétiens mozarabes et culture Islamique: dans l’Espagne des VIII^e-IX^e siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1984), 74-75.

⁷¹ *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.1.5-6.

⁷² Cf. *ibid.*, II.8 and II.10 which are lengthy exceptions. The extra attention Eulogius gives to Flora and Maria in II.8 matches the infatuation he seems to have with Flora. Cf. Daniel, *The Arabs and Mediaeval Europe*, 38 and Norman Daniel, “Spanish Christian Sources of Information about Islam (Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries),” *Al-Qanṭara* 15, no. 2 (1994): 372.

⁷³ See, for example, *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.9 and II.13.1.

⁷⁴ See *ibid.*, II.10.31.

⁷⁵ Eulogius even seems unwilling to refer to Islam as a “religion,” instead frequently referring to it in Book II as a sect, a heresy, or with various forms of paganism (e.g., “*profanes ritibus*” [II.1.3]).

sewer, when they were already receiving heavenly manna.”⁷⁶ Indeed, some of the martyrs studied Islam simply to make fun of it⁷⁷ and in fact a better grasp of Arabic on the part of some of them elicited a more vehement assault on Islam.⁷⁸ Thus, while the religious tenets of Islam were laughable to Eulogius, it was its adherents, their culture and language in particular, that remained a threat to Cordoban Christians. As such, Muslims must be faced.

As for the ways in which the martyrs spoke of Muḥammad, they continually attacked him as the precursor of the Antichrist and a false and criminal prophet.⁷⁹ One martyr, Paul, even claimed Muḥammad was completely mad (*insania*).⁸⁰ Others, like the martyr George, a monk from Jerusalem, described Muḥammad as a “disciple of Satan” (*discipulo Satanae*). He further claimed that:

the angel which appeared to [Muḥammad] and was transfigured into a spirit of light . . . was a demon . . . [Muḥammad was] the most abject of all men, since he is loyal to the devil, servant of the Antichrist and labyrinth of all the vices, who not only is plunged into the depths of the abyss, but has also surrendered . . . his followers, to the eternal fires by means of his hollow precepts.⁸¹

Curiously, though George’s assessment of Muḥammad is not at all surprising in light of the context in which it occurred, it came only after a decree that he was to be released from

⁷⁶ Translated by Aldana García, 125: “*la copa de una podrida cloaca, pues ya estaban restablecidas con el maná celestial*” (*caelesti iam manna refectis cloacae putrientis poculum*). Ibid., II.7.2.

⁷⁷ Eulogius refers here specifically to Aurelius, a Muslim by birth (Muslim father, Christian mother), who was instructed to study “Arabic literature” (*Arabica . . . litteratura*). Aurelius’ Christian faith prevailed, however, and he used his knowledge of Islamic subjects and perishable (*periturarum*) things “only to mock it” (*solum derisionem*). Ibid., II.10.1.

⁷⁸ Referring to Emila and Jeremiah, Eulogius states, “since both excelled extraordinarily in the Arabic language, the eminent Emila accumulated such great insults against their prophet because of her fluency that they forgot the insults of the preceding martyrs, noting that these new verbal attacks against their doctrine were more piercing” (*quoniam uterque Arabico insigniter praepollebat eloquio, ferunt tanta per eandem linguam in eorum uatem uolubilitate egregium Emilam exaggerasse opprobia, ut praecedentium martyrum conuicia obliuiscerentur, cernentes horum prosecutions contra suum dogmatistam acrius inualere*). Ibid., II.12.

⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, II.4.3 and II.6.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, II.6. The idea that Muḥammad received his revelations in a fit of epilepsy (or perhaps a demonic attack) may underlie this assertion. Eulogius often describes the reactions to the martyrs’ attacks by the Cordoban *qādīs* in a manner curiously similar to the way Muḥammad is said to have received his revelations – their reactions were of such angry proportions that they seemed not of themselves. See, for example, *ibid.*, II.8.13, II.10.34, and II.11.1. See also *ibid.*, III.7.4, III.17.5-6, and *Epistula*, I.2.

⁸¹ “*illum angelum, qui eidem praeceptorum uestro transfigurando se in spiritum lucis apparuit, daemonem credo fuisse et hunc cunctis abiectiorem hominibus adiudico, utpote diaboli credulum [Antichristi] ministrum et uitiorum omnium labyrinthum, qui non solum se uoragini barathri immerserit, uerum et uos sequepedas sua per inania institute aeternis dedicarit incendiis.*” *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.10.33.

prison and allowed to live. Unlike his fellow martyrdom-seekers, he had yet to publicly insult Islam or its Prophet. Fearing that martyrdom would escape him, George was quick to publicly profess his faith and decry Muḥammad in a manner that would secure his death. Thus, like his counterparts who perhaps found Islam to be religiously trivial – studying it only to mock it – George seemingly manipulated the tenets of Islam in order to achieve his desired goal. This tactic appears to be the selfish verbal jabs of someone intent on pursuing his own martyrdom, regardless of who he might need to engage in order to realise his aims.

Islam may have thus meant little else to George beyond a convenient force that would carry him to the rewards of martyrdom. Yet Eulogius does not interpret George's actions, or what any of the other martyrs did, in this way. Instead, this quick and calculated manipulation represents for Eulogius a focused attack meant to weaken and eliminate an enemy; it was an offensive strike ultimately meant to defend fellow-Christians and the identity they stood for.

As Eulogius understood them, the martyrs took Islam serious enough for the threat they perceived it to be to the Church. Yet this threat was only a cultural one because it threatened to expunge Christian culture, replacing it with the language and culture of Islam. As a result, though Eulogius did not seem to acknowledge Islam as a religion in and of itself, he set out to denigrate it as such. If he could demonstrate to his readers that it was a foreign mixture of foolish and evil beliefs, perhaps he could convince them to avoid it. If he was successful, they would inevitably distance themselves from Islam's culture and language as well. Moving away from these would mean a movement ever closer to the correct culture of Christianity that only Eulogius could guide them towards.

Book III

Eulogius presumed that his second book “has sufficiently [exposed] the cruelty of the

impious ones,” but in the event that he has not already convinced his readers, he believed this third book would.⁸² With this in mind, Eulogius begins the final book of his *Memoriale sanctorum* by detailing more of the historical context surrounding the Cordoban martyrs’ movement. He even discusses the reign of Muḥammad I and his purge of Christian churches and civic offices held by Christians.⁸³ The rest of the work remains almost identical to the *Memoriale sanctorum*’s previous books with details given concerning the Christians who were executed before Eulogius’ own death.

Not surprisingly, then, Muslims continue to be described as enemies and pagans. Islam remains the sect of the devil, but is now also “noxious” (*noxiae*) and “shameful worship” (*culturae paedoribus*), a pollutant and stain upon those who fall under its spell.⁸⁴ The prophethood of Muḥammad is consistently mocked and the martyrs are most eager to attack his impudence.⁸⁵ And of course, each of Eulogius’ descriptions is couched in the language of battle and war, the martyrs portrayed as soldiers and combatants fighting for justice and truth.⁸⁶

The *Liber apologeticus martyrum*

The *Liber apologeticus martyrum* is, in part, a sequel to the *Memoriale sanctorum*.⁸⁷ In this way, it relates the actions of two further martyrs, Rudericus and Salomon.⁸⁸ In essence, if Eulogius has proven the validity of the martyrs’ actions over and against their

⁸² “*affatim impiorum crudelitatem*” (cf. Aldana García, 155: *ha expuesto suficientemente la crueldad de los impíos*). Ibid., III.pref.

⁸³ Ibid., III.1-6. See also, Chapter 1, p. 43.

⁸⁴ Ibid., III.7.3 and III.4. See also, ibid., III.14 where the martyr Witesindus – a Christian convert to Islam who reverted to Christianity – is reported to have denied being “stained” (*manere infectum*) by Islam (described here as a “sacrilege” [*sacrilegio*]).

⁸⁵ Ibid., III.7.3 and III.11.4.

⁸⁶ See, for instance, ibid., III.pref. where Eulogius refers to the “warlike acts of the saints” (*actusque belligeros . . . sanctorum*).

⁸⁷ Colbert, 333.

⁸⁸ See *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 21-35.

foolish critics, and if he has demonstrated the inherent evil of Islam, then it is only fitting that he illustrate his success by relating the victory of the latest martyrs over their enemies.⁸⁹

Accordingly, these martyrs are portrayed by Eulogius in the same ways as their predecessors – they are armed soldiers engaged in a battle against a perverse law adhered to by pagans. However, as his title suggests, Eulogius also devotes a significant portion of the work to defending the martyrs’ movement. In this, Eulogius may hope to secure in the minds of his readers the notion that his assertions concerning the martyrs and Islam – his proposed vision of what was and what was not Christian identity – should be embraced.

With this in mind, Eulogius begins the work by responding to criticisms that the Cordoban martyrs did not deserve to be considered as such in the light of a comparison of their acts to earlier Christians who were martyred under Roman persecution.⁹⁰ To begin with, critics of the martyrs’ movement – and here Eulogius is speaking in particular to the movement’s Christian critics – were unwilling to honour the martyrs because they were not slowly and painfully killed at the hands of polytheistic idolaters (as the Romans were). Instead, Christian critics claimed that the Cordoban martyrs were “quickly put to death . . . by men [Muslims] who venerate God and confess to heavenly laws.”⁹¹ In other words, they felt that the martyrs of the early Church died a traditional and torturous martyr’s death; most of the Cordoban martyrs suffered only briefly before being swiftly beheaded. The martyrs of the early Church, critics added, were killed by true pagans who worshipped as many gods as they wished to create; the executioners of the Cordoban martyrs worshipped the one God and submitted to a divinely revealed law.

⁸⁹ As Eulogius postulates, “Having finished the apologetic of the saints, what now remains is that we reveal something of their victories for the emulation of the catholic people” (*Restat iam nunc, expeditis apologeticis beatorum, ut aliquid de uictoriis eorum ad aemulationem catholicae plebis pandamus*). Ibid., 21.

⁹⁰ Eulogius makes this purpose most clear in *ibid.*, 3. For the relevance of persecution to the authenticity of martyrdom, see Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 96-104.

⁹¹ “. . . ab hominibus Deum colentibus et caelestia iura fatentibus compendiosa morte perempti sunt.” *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 3. For more on Eulogius’ treatment of a pagan environment as a necessary criterion for martyrdom, see Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 86-95.

For the movement's Christian opposition, such a comparison revealed a significant qualitative distance between those that were honourably and truly martyred under the Romans and those who selfishly invited their own deaths at the hands of Cordoban Muslims. Eulogius counters by arguing that the defining moment of martyrdom lay not in the manner or speed of death, but in the death itself.⁹²

More important to Eulogius were the religious claims of some Christians regarding Muslim monotheism. If he has thus far only hinted at the distinctions to be found between Christian and Muslim conceptions of God,⁹³ then Eulogius will now more forcefully advance the differences as he sees them here. If he could do this and successfully counter the claims of his Christian critics, then "the community of the faithful might learn with more passionate devotion to love what they believe, when they discover, by the authority of the holy law and the true religion [Christianity], the error of the wicked novelty [Islam]."⁹⁴ As Eulogius reflects:

For they say that [the martyrs] were killed by men who had worshipped God and a law; they have suffered because they were invited, not to sacrilegious idolatry, but to worship of the true God, and for this reason these martyrs should not be venerated as the primitive martyrs. Therefore, are we to think that these false worshippers in any way believe in God and a law, [in spite of the fact that] not only do they not believe in the saving precepts . . . that have been dispersed throughout the world, but in the zeal of their perversity they also force those who confess such precepts to suffer great danger, for they think it hateful and unkind to believe that Christ is truly God and truly man?⁹⁵

This assessment of Islam described by Eulogius is noteworthy, for it reveals that various Cordoban Christians felt that Muslims worshipped the same God as they did on the

⁹² See *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 4-6.

⁹³ Cf. nn. 34 and 70 above.

⁹⁴ ". . . *fidelis conuentus discat uotis ardentioribus plus amare quod credit, dum ex auctoritate sacrae legis et ueritatem religionis et errorem impiae nouitatis compererit.*" Ibid., 11.

⁹⁵ "*Dicunt enim quod ab hominibus Deum et legem colentibus passi sunt nec ed sacrilegia idolorum, sed ad cultum ueri Dei inuitati perempti sunt, et edio non ut priorum martyrum horum martiria ueneranda sunt. Deum ergo et legem isti uanitatis cultores ullo modo habere credendi sunt, qui euangelicae institutionis per totum orbem uitalia diffusa praecepta non solum non dredunt, uerum etiam omni zelo peruersitatis magnum discrimen ea fatentibus ingerunt, exosum et iniquum putantes [Christum] uerum Deum et uerum hominem credere?*" Ibid., 12.

basis of a revealed law. Eulogius does not disclose how these Christians came to this conclusion. It could be that they were extending to Muslims the same ecumenical gesture that allowed Muslims to offer a pact of tolerance (*dhimma*) to monotheists like them in possession of a revealed law. Such recognition might even justify for these Christians their willingness to take on Arabic and Islamic culture.⁹⁶

In any case, such assertions were for Eulogius outlandish and so he took it upon himself to show how the differences between Islam and Christianity were not as minor as these critics would have others think. In his mind, he was certain that these Muslims with a so-called law “put their gullible hope and faith in the prophecies of a pestilent demonised little man who, having been snatched away by an impure spirit, practiced worship of iniquity as a true precursor of the Antichrist, and for his pleasing and instigated by demons, instituted a law of novelty for a lost, ignorant people.”⁹⁷

This “corrected” assessment of Muḥammad and those who followed him fit nicely, according to Eulogius, with prophecies such as those from St. Paul who predicted a time when people would willingly suppress truth and give themselves to evil, lawlessness, and impurity.⁹⁸ Thus, Eulogius put an apocalyptic twist on the Prophet and argues that Islam fits

⁹⁶ Kenneth Baxter Wolf, “Christian Views of Islam in Early Medieval Spain,” in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, ed. John Victor Tolan. Garland Medieval Casebooks, Vol. 10, ed. Joyce E. Salisbury and Christopher Kleinhenz (London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996), 96. While these Christians may indeed have formed this opinion based on their knowledge of Islam (and Wolf observes that this is the earliest recorded recognition of Islam of this kind [see *ibid.*, 107, n. 553]), the third/ninth century *fatwās* we discuss in n. 33 above may have also informed these Christians’ assessment. If they conformed to the injunction that Muḥammad was a prophet sent not to them, but to Muslims, then this would give them reason to legitimate Muslims’ monotheism as well.

⁹⁷ “. . . *spem credulitatis et fidei suae in cuiusdam pestilentiosi ac daemoniosi homunculi diuinationibus collocantes, qui ab spiritu immundo praereptus iniquitatis mysterium ut uerus [Antichristi] praecursor exercens, nescio quam nouitatis legem pro suo libito et instinctu daemoniorum perduto uulgo instituit.*” *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 12. Cf. Wolf, “Christian Views of Islam in Early Medieval Spain,” 97.

⁹⁸ See *Liber apologeticus*, 12-13. Here, Eulogius cites for biblical support, II Thessalonians 2:10-11; Romans 1:18-19, 21-32; II Peter 1:19-2:3; and Matthew 24:11. As Eulogius states, “many of the most learned ones” (*multi peritissimorum*) agreed with him that these texts conformed to Muḥammad as a false prophet along with those who revered him. See *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 13. Eulogius’ mention of the “most proficient” or learned ones here is important. As he notes, this group understood with him that the biblical prophecy he cites referred to Muḥammad. He goes on to state (*ibid.*, 20) that this group had gathered significant evidence from the

within the context of foretold evil. Further, when he cites St. Paul's second letter to the Thessalonian Church (i.e., "... for that reason God sent to them the spirit of error so that they might believe in the lie") he interprets Islam as a foreordained punishment that secures the condemnation of a wilfully errant people.⁹⁹ From this interpretation, it would seem that Muslims were set apart for condemnation before their religion was even born. With the mark of evil permanently upon them, Muslims could hardly hope for authentic salvation, much less make any serious claims regarding a divinely revealed law or their worship of the true God.

If biblical evidence condemning Islam, its so-called monotheism, and alleged revealed status were not sufficient enough, then Eulogius needed only to turn to "the testimony of previous doctors" (*praecedentium de eo doctorum testimonium*) in order to solidify his case.¹⁰⁰ To do so, Eulogius includes an anonymous author's biography of Muḥammad that he acquired in the monastery of Leyre in Pamplona when travelling through northern Spain.¹⁰¹

According to this unknown author, Muḥammad was born in 618 and a contemporary of Isidore of Sevilla. An orphan, Muḥammad was taken under the care of a widow and worked for her. He excelled in his business as a "greedy usurer" (*cupidus faenerator*), and as time passed, he began to attend the small gatherings of certain Christians, memorising what

Bible against Islam and Muḥammad (Colbert [p. 334] states that Cordoban Christians gathered this evidence, but the text seems to indicate that the group supported Eulogius who did the gathering himself). With this in mind, Colbert suggests that this assembly may have been a specific group of Cordoban Christians formed for the purpose of gathering together biblical evidence and polemical works from other authors to refute Islam. See Colbert, 157, 270-271, 334, and 406. This may be the reason that Eulogius, as a member of this group, sought out and preserved material written against Muslims, i.e., the bit of Abbot Speraindeo's text he preserves in *Memoriale sanctorum* I.7 (see n. 49 above) and the life of Muḥammad he found in northern Spain and preserved in *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 15-16 (discussed below).

⁹⁹ "... ideo mittit illis Deus spiritum errores ut credant mendacio . . ." Ibid., 12. Eulogius here quotes II Thess. 2:10-11. Cf. n. 60 above, citing Eulogius' description of Asians (i.e., Muslims) as unworthy of the Gospel, willingly denying the Apostles' message of truth that had been spoken of throughout the entire world. For more on this, see Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁰ Eulogius does so in order to counter the argument of those who foolishly claim that Muḥammad brought a revealed law and worshipped God contrary to the judgment and denunciations of "previous doctors." *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 14. Quoting from Scripture and from earlier sources (i.e., the Church Fathers) was the standard medieval approach to disputation. See Colbert, 150.

¹⁰¹ *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 15. For more on Eulogius' excursion to Pamplona, see *Vita Eulogii*, III.9. It was redacted by Eulogius in his *Liber apologeticus martyrum* and occupies 15-16. For more on the life (including an English translation of one of its Latin manuscripts) and Eulogius' use of it, see Wolf, "The Earliest Latin Lives of Muḥammad."

he would hear them say.¹⁰² With these lessons from Christians, Muḥammad became “the wisest among all the irrational Arabs” (*inter suos brutos Arabes cunctis sapientior*).¹⁰³

Even though his growing, inherited wisdom outmatched his fellow Arabs, Muḥammad continued to share with them a wanton lust for women, and so he began to flirt with the widow who took him in and employed him. Soon after, an evil spirit began appearing to him in the form of a vulture. Claiming that it was the angel Gabriel, it ordered Muḥammad to appear before his people as a prophet. Yet it was not just the vulture’s nudging that moved Muḥammad. As the life’s author writes, “Swollen with pride, [Muḥammad] began to preach unheard of things to irrational animals so that almost on the basis of reason [his listeners] retreated from the cult of idols and worshipped the corporeal¹⁰⁴ God in heaven.”¹⁰⁵ Those who opposed him were to be killed by the sword. In this way, Muḥammad and his Arab successors were able to expand their influence, the success of which, according to the life’s author, was permitted by God. Muslims eventually established a capital for themselves in Damascus.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² *Liber apologeticus martyrurum*, 16.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ For the use of “corporeal” (having physical substance) instead of “incorporeal” (having no physical substance), see Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches towards the Muslims* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 22. Kedar compares the misuse here of “corporeal” with Nicetas of Byzantium (842-912) who, in his *Refutation of the Book Forged by Muḥammad the Arab*, translated *ṣamad* (understood figuratively as “eternal”) in Qur’ān *al-Ikhlās* (112):2 into Greek as *holosphairos* (“all-spherical”) which allowed him to assert that Muslims understood God as a solid body. See Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The “Heresy of the Ishmaelites”* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 77 and 77, n. 1. This essentially gave Nicetas a polemical “opportunity of ridiculing such a material conception of the divinity.” John Meyendorff, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000), 100-101. Consider also the Byzantine formula of abjuration required for Muslim converts to Christianity: “And before all, I [the convert] anathematize the God of [Muḥammad] about whom [Muḥammad] says, ‘He is God alone, God made of solid, hammer-beaten metal [*holosphuros*]; He begets not and is not begotten, nor is there like unto him any one.’” See Craig Hanson, “Manuel I Comnenus and the ‘God of Muhammad’: A Study in Byzantine Ecclesiastical Politics,” in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed. Tolan. This time *ṣamad* is translated with the Greek *holosphuros* allowing, once again, for a material conception of divinity. So it also may have been for the writer of the life of Muḥammad, as we discuss below.

¹⁰⁵ “*Cumque repletus esset tumore superbiae, coepit inaudita brutis animalibus praedicare et quasi ratione quadam ut ab idolorum cultu recederent et Deum corporeum in caelis adorarent insinuavit.*” *Liber apologeticus martyrurum*, 16.

¹⁰⁶ It would seem that the anonymous writer here gives credit to Muḥammad for sacking Damascus, an act rightly attributed to later successors, or he has simply conflated two periods of history. God’s granting of

The biography relates some of the contents of Muḥammad's revelations, claiming that he "composed psalms in honour of insensible animals" (*Psalmos . . . in honorem insensibilium animalium composuit*), here thinking of the titles of various chapters (*sūras*) in the Qur'ān. In order to "season his error," (*condimentum sui erroris*), Muḥammad added bits about biblical figures such as Joseph, Zechariah, and Mary. His lust for women continued, though, and here the life's author inserts the story of Muḥammad's marriage to Zaynab and his claim that it was divinely sanctioned. Nearing death, Muḥammad allegedly predicted his resurrection. This would occur three days after his death and would be performed by the archangel Gabriel, the very same one whom the vulture who appeared to him so frequently claimed to be.¹⁰⁷

Upon Muḥammad's death, guards were posted near his body. When his resurrection failed to materialise, it was assumed that Gabriel was afraid of the guards. They were removed, only for part of Muḥammad's body to be eaten by dogs that "had filled their stomachs with such a . . . prophet who had handed over not only his own soul, but those of many to hell."¹⁰⁸ What remained of Muḥammad was buried.¹⁰⁹

Of course, there is a great deal contained within this brief account that is completely accurate. For instance, Muḥammad was indeed employed by a woman he later married (Khadija [d. 619]). He did preach a message pointing towards the worship of one God. The life's author is also apparently aware of various details in the Qur'ān, such as its chapter titles and Muḥammad's marriage to Zaynab.

success to the Arabs is gleaned from Habakkuk 1:6-9 where the life's author interprets the Arabs of his time as the Chaldeans of Habakkuk's. See *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 16.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰⁸ "*uentrem tantus ac talis propheta replet, qui non solum suam, sed et multorum animas inferis tradidisset.*" Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ According to the author's closing line, "This much is written so that those reading might recognise how much might have been [written] here" (*Hoc tantum scriptum est, ut legentes quantus hic fuerit agnoscant*). Ibid. Cf., Wolf, "The Earliest Latin Lives of Muḥammad," 97, 99. Cf. also, Aldana García, 200: "*Esto ha sido escrito tan sólo para que quienes lo lean conozcan qué grande fue este hombre*" (This has been written so that those reading it might recognise how great this man [Muḥammad] was").

Even so, the author has taken these facts and twisted them into an image of a haughty religious usurper whose claims may have hints of monotheism, but are nevertheless inferior. Accordingly, Muḥammad preached against polytheism, but only in favour of one, *corporeal* God instead of the rightly understood *incorporeal* God. This change is only slight, but one that put significant distance between Christian and Islamic conceptions of divinity, for worship of a corporeal being made the Islamic concept of God rather earthly and un-divine.

Furthermore, Muḥammad was miraculously inspired, but only by a vulture masked as an angel. Muḥammad predicted he would rise from the dead in three days, but failed to do so. It is difficult in this regard to not compare the vulture to the dove that so often represented the Holy Spirit's inspiration. We might say the same about Muhammad's botched resurrection and corresponding inferiority to Christ.

In all of this, Islam may have shared various elements with Christianity, but it was inherently inferior and as such remained a dangerous affront to Christians. With this in mind, Eulogius concludes that if critics of the martyrs do indeed claim that their persecutors worship the one God and have a revealed religion, then they have clearly not considered such evidence as he is able to put forth.¹¹⁰ Instead they have been seduced by the appearance of truth – demonic evil with only a veneer of divine monotheism.

As further proof, Eulogius deduces that the message of the Gospel has already spread to all the nations on earth. In fact, he is confident that “no part of the world is free from its light” (*nullam iam partem orbis expertem luminis eius*).¹¹¹ Consequently, any other message that might be preached should be condemned, having come subsequent to the Gospel. So, whatever Muḥammad proclaimed to an ignorant people was completely false.¹¹² In this,

¹¹⁰ *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 17.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 18. Cf. nn. 60 and 99 above.

¹¹² *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 18.

Eulogius has utilised both biblical and historical evidence in an attempt to counter his critics' charges.

Even more, by including the anonymous author's life of Muḥammad, Eulogius essentially turned the very claims of his critics against them as well. They claimed that Muslims worshipped God and followed a revealed law. In like manner, the life's author writes that Muḥammad bade his followers to cease their worship of idols in favour of "the corporeal God in heaven."¹¹³ In much the same way as the critics of the Cordoban martyrs, the author of the life of Muḥammad acknowledges the monotheism of Islam. He recognises the influence of Christian doctrine upon Muḥammad. Yet these shared points of religion are abused under the control of Muḥammad's pride and used to trick the foolish Arabs into following him. They may have left their pagan roots behind, but they nevertheless followed their prophet straight to hell. Such would be the case for Cordoban Christians who might mistakenly assume that Muslims had anything to do with true religion. As Wolf observes, "[from] Eulogius' perspective, the beauty of the [biography] was that it accepted Islam on his opponents' terms as a separate law directed toward the one God. But at the same time, it allowed Eulogius ample room to assail Islam as the diabolical message of a deluded false prophet."¹¹⁴

In this way, Eulogius is able to extend a certain allowance of truth to Muḥammad whilst maintaining his opinion of him as an evil false prophet. As Eulogius later states, Muḥammad did speak some truth concerning Christ, yet he went against the Church when he failed to acknowledge Christ's divinity. Even more, Muḥammad went on to proclaim unheard of and demonic lies. This same evil, Eulogius reminds his readers, is the very message proclaimed by *mu'adhdhins* from minarets: "like donkeys, their jaws gaping, their filthy

¹¹³ Ibid., 16.

¹¹⁴ Wolf, "The Earliest Latin Lives of Muḥammad," 94.

mouths open, they bray their horrible edicts, but first block both ears with their fingers, as if they themselves could not bear to hear the wicked edict that they proclaim to others.”¹¹⁵

In the end, Eulogius is able to portray Muḥammad as an evil false prophet and his message as a deception on grounds that his critics might find difficult to counter. Moreover, Eulogius’ use of the life of Muḥammad also allows him to depict the Prophet as one more in a long line of heretics. He is thus portrayed as they were – as heresiarch, antichrist, and false prophet. As a result, Eulogius was able to reconfigure his critics’ claim that Islam had some religious value by presenting it as the latest in a well-documented series of heresies.¹¹⁶ Like these unorthodox beliefs, Islam was ultimately a shrewd and cunning deception sprinkled with just enough truth and shared perspective to be lethally believable.

For Eulogius, this made Islam a true hazard to Christian identity and Christians who, though perhaps not converting, chose to incorporate bits of its culture. It was, as a result, distance from these threats that third/ninth century Cordoban Christians needed. According to Eulogius, this was the message championed by the martyrs and it was one that could only be realised within the boundaries of his proposed Christian identity.

Summary

Though some vouched for its monotheism, Islam was hardly to be taken seriously as such. If anything, it was, for Eulogius, simply an enemy that persecuted the Church. It lured Christians towards its language and culture, but ultimately into hell. Thus, the religious identity of Cordoban Christians was threatened and a fresh awareness must be brought to the

¹¹⁵ *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 19 and trans. Tolán, *Sons of Ishmael*, 152 (*ita ut more aselli dissutis mandibulis impurisque patentibus labiis horrendum praeconium non prius emittant quam obseratis utroque digito auribus: quod aliis exequendum annuntiant, quasi quoddam edictum sceleris idem ipse eorum propheta audire non patitur*). Here, Eulogius has in mind the *mu’adhdhin’s adhān*. A *mu’adhdhin* may cover one or both ears to aid intonation. Cf. n. 5 above, where Eulogius also recalls his grandfather’s distaste for the *adhān* which he compares to a donkey’s bray.

¹¹⁶ Wolf, “Christian Views of Islam in Early Medieval Spain,” 100.

boundaries that distinguished them. Moreover, these boundaries must be kept secure by publicly defaming the enemy, something the Cordoban martyrs' onslaughts of Muḥammad and Islam embodied.

Eulogius went further when he made those who criticised the martyrs, or even Christians who remained silent in their opinion of Islam, an enemy as well. He made other equations too; most notably a rather unclear connection between religious identity and martyrdom where it appears that the logical result of his call to defend Christian identity by publicly defaming Islam would inevitably lead to death. Eulogius also draws a connection between religion and culture. For him, to be culturally distinct was part-and-parcel of being religiously distinct; to abandon what he thought was Christian culture was to abandon Christianity.

Alvarus and His *Indiculus luminosus*

The Life of Alvarus

Little is known about Alvarus beyond the few details he reveals within his own writings in addition to those of his friend Eulogius.¹¹⁷ In an exchange of letters to Bodo, a third/ninth century Christian convert to Judaism, Alvarus seems to claim a Jewish heritage.¹¹⁸ But he appears to have known only a Christian upbringing, his family converting to Christianity before his birth in Córdoba in the early-third/ninth century, most likely before

¹¹⁷ For the most detailed biography, see Sage, 1-42. See also, Colbert, 148-166 and Allen Cabaniss, "Paulus Albarus of Muslim Cordova," *Church History* 22, no. 2 (June 1953): 99-112.

¹¹⁸ For more on Bodo, see Allen Cabaniss, "Bodo-Eleazar: A Famous Jewish Convert," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 43, no. 4 (April 1953): 313-328. Alvarus claims he was a Jew both by "faith and race" (*fide et gente*). See his *Epistula*, XVIII. The possibility remains that Alvarus was simply speaking metaphorically (i.e., as a Christian his religious roots stemmed from Judaism and he, as a Christian, is part of the new people of God). Elsewhere, he seems to hint at a non-Jewish heritage. See Sage, 4 and Cabaniss, "Paulus Albarus of Muslim Cordova," 103-105. In any case, it appears that Alvarus' father was a Christian as well in light of gifts he may have made to a monastery located on property owned by Alvarus' family. See Sage, 3, n. 11.

199/815.¹¹⁹ His family was apparently of some means and respectability within their community and the respect given to Alvarus himself – evident from Eulogius’ remarks and the letters Alvarus exchanged with John of Sevilla (c. early-third/ninth century) – indicates that he carried this legacy to his death.¹²⁰

As we observe above, Alvarus was taught by Abbot Speraindeo, through whom he became friends with Eulogius. Though he was well-educated and may have desired a clerical position, Alvarus is known only as a layman. His writings evince a thorough interest in theology, Latin literature, and poetry, but beyond various hints that Alvarus acted as a lawyer, no evidence exists for his profession.¹²¹ Alvarus seems to have died in as much mystery as he lived. He was stricken with a life-threatening illness from which he later recovered. Having received his last rites prior to his recovery, he petitioned the bishop of Córdoba to reinstate his ability to receive the Eucharist. The bishop declined, nonchalantly suggesting that Alvarus ask someone else. Alvarus’ response, among the last of his writings to survive, was biting and vituperative. He died in perhaps 284/862 for reasons presently unknown.¹²²

Alvarus and a Reminder of Eulogius’ Boundaries

Though Eulogius remains the most well-known figure of the Cordoban martyrs’ movement, his treatises seem to have come (or continued) only at the insistence of Alvarus.

¹¹⁹ Cabaniss, “Paulus Albarus of Muslim Cordova,” 100. Cabaniss estimates Alvarus’ birth to have been around 194/810. Feliciano Delgado León suggests a date between 194/800 and 200/815. See his introductory remarks to his translation of the *Indiculus luminosus* in Delgado León, 16.

¹²⁰ Ibid.; Sage, 5; and Colbert, 149, 154. For more on the identity of John of Sevilla, see *ibid.* For more on Alvarus’ family, see Cabaniss, “Paulus Albarus of Muslim Cordova,” 102-103. Alvarus’ importance is further evident, not only in the fact that Eulogius requested his approval of his writings, but in light of the fact that he appreciated Alvarus’ opinions on the interpretation of Scripture. It is clear that others respected him as well: on a visit to Alvarus’ home for a discussion of biblical texts, Eulogius observes him instructing and encouraging Aurelius who came to Alvarus concerning his impending martyrdom. See *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.10.18.

¹²¹ As Colbert observes, Alvarus’ varied interests and skills prefigure him “in some ways as the universal man of the Renaissance.” Colbert, 149. See also Sage, 6-7.

¹²² See Alvarus’ *Epistula*, XIII. See also, Cabaniss, “Paulus Albarus of Muslim Cordova,” 106-107.

Eulogius wrote early on that Alvarus, “. . . advised me to not cease glorifying the soldiers of Christ, so that my first opinion of them would not become useless.”¹²³ Alvarus thus seems to serve as a sort of inspiration in Eulogius’ defence of Christian identity and a reminder to Cordoban Christians of their need, as he and Eulogius saw it, to maintain their attack on Islam.

This commitment to the Cordoban martyrs’ movement is further reflected in Alvarus’ *Indiculus luminosus*, perhaps the best known of his works.¹²⁴ Written in 240/854, the treatise lacks the hagiographical details that Eulogius focused on up to that time, and as a result, it represents perhaps the most ambitious and sustained attack on Islam coming from the two authors.¹²⁵ In this light, it seems clear that Alvarus had it in mind to discredit Islam to such a degree that readers might warrant it distasteful. His condemnation of Christians who were drawn to Islamic and Arabic culture underscores this purpose further.

If Alvarus did finish his *Indiculus luminosus* in 240/854, we can also observe that he and Eulogius produced a text relevant to the tensions of mid-third/ninth century Córdoba at regular intervals.¹²⁶ Indeed, whether coincidental or intentional, every three years a work was written.¹²⁷ In this light, the *Indiculus luminosus* may also have served as a reminder to the

¹²³ “. . . praemonuit ne a glorificatione militum [Christi] desisterem, ne primam de eis sententiam meam irritam facerem . . .” See Eulogius’ cover letter to Alvarus in *Documentum martyriale*. See also, Cabaniss, “Paulus Albarus of Muslim Cordova,” 105.

¹²⁴ Besides Alvarus’ *Vita Eulogii*, discussed above, and the *Indiculus luminosus*, a number of letters exchanged between Alvarus and others has been preserved in addition to various poems and his *Confessio*. For these latter writings see CSM I:315-330, 344-361. See also, Colbert, 148-150 and Sage, 27-37, 83-183. For matters of authorship related to the *Indiculus luminosus*, see Colbert, 266-268.

¹²⁵ *Indiculus luminosus* 21. Cf. Sage, 28. Of course, Eulogius’ *Liber apologeticus martyrum* lacks the same extent of hagiography that his other works contain, but the *Indiculus luminosus* remains far longer, even without the second book Alvarus promised to append later with evidence from the doctors to confirm the evidence he put forth in what we know today as the *Indiculus luminosus* in its entirety (this addition is no longer extant, or more likely, appears to never have been completed [Cf. Colbert, 286 where he argues that paragraphs 21ff constitute the second book]). See *Indiculus luminosus*, 1, 11, and 21. For the date of the work, see *ibid.*, 21, but cf. Colbert 269-270. For matters pertaining to Alvarus’ intended audience(s), see *ibid.*, 268-269 and 273-274.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 344.

¹²⁷ 237/851 – *Memoriale sanctorum* Book I (with Books II and III coming later) and *Documentum martyriale*; 240/854 – *Indiculus luminosus*; 242/857 – *Liber apologeticus martyrum*.

Christian community of the message Eulogius declared and Alvarus encouraged him to write. It may have even inspired more martyrs who may not have otherwise come forward. Or if the texts were not widely read, then their regularity still suggests that the identity crisis at hand in third/ninth century Córdoba remained an issue for some in the Christian community, one that Alvarus felt deserved another reappraisal.

More than this, however, convinced readers of the *Indiculus luminosus* may have found themselves reminded of what it meant to maintain their religious identity in the face of Islam and the portions of their Christian community that drifted towards its culture. With this in mind, though Alvarus brings some of his own emphases to his discussion of Islam, we might also suggest that in the *Indiculus luminosus* he ultimately emblazoned the boundaries or religious identity that Eulogius had begun to outline in his earlier works. In so doing, Alvarus took it upon himself to shed more revealing light upon Islam, something Eulogius had largely left undone before 240/854.

The *Indiculus luminosus*

In the prologue of the *Indiculus luminosus*, Alvarus explains to his readers the purpose of his work and the significance of his chosen title. It is the image of light that holds Alvarus' work together,¹²⁸ and so as the title suggests, the *Indiculus luminosus* is intended to serve as a light illuminating the enemies of the Church and exposing for Christians what is to be avoided.¹²⁹ The boundaries of Christian identity, already outlined by Eulogius, would now burn brightly with the light of Alvarus' "shining example." Thus, Alvarus implores God, the

¹²⁸ The use of light imagery occurs in various ways throughout the *Indiculus luminosus* and even appears in Alvarus' *Vita Eulogii* (e.g., III.8, 9).

¹²⁹ "This book is called *Indiculus luminosus* because it brightly shows full light upon that which is to be followed, and it exposes with clear proofs the enemies of the Church that all mankind must avoid." (*Hic liber ideo luminosus indiculus dicitur quia lumine que sequenda sunt docet et apertis indiciis hostem [ecclesie], que hominis vitare [Christianitas] debet, hostendit*). *Indiculus luminosus*, prol.

“indescribable light” (*lumen inenarrabile*), to illuminate (*inluminet*) him; to serve as the “lamp for [his] feet and the light for [his] paths”¹³⁰ so that he in turn, with the cross of Christ, might destroy (*deuastans*) fear and illuminate the way of Christ. In so doing, the ungodly ones (presumably Muslims and Christians who denounced the martyrs) would be crushed.¹³¹

The thirty-five paragraphs that follow can essentially be divided in half. The first half constitutes an argument against Christians who denounced the martyrs and the last half focuses on an argument against Islam.¹³² But more than this, Alvarus is essentially swinging his shining lamp to bear light upon that which he feels most threatens the religious identity of Cordoban Christians.

Light on Persecution

The first of these threats concerned the various critics of the Cordoban martyrs’ movement who claimed that Christians in Córdoba endured no persecution. To illuminate the error of this claim, Alvarus begins by dispelling the notion that the Cordoban martyrs’ actions caused persecution. According to some critics, Muslims were simply meting out a just response to unjust attacks and their punishments would stop when and if martyrdoms ceased. In other words, no persecution existed until the martyrs came forward.

Alvarus disagreed. For him, the martyrs may have stirred-up opposition, but they did so only by obediently proclaiming Christ’s truth. Further, they were simply following the

¹³⁰ “*lucerna pedibus meis et lumen semitis meis.*” Ibid., prol. Cf. Psalm 119:105 (LXX and Vul. 118:105).

¹³¹ *Indiculus luminosus*, prol. Furthermore, in writing this work, Alvarus presumes to act as the “dog that barks in [God’s] favour against the rabid wolf,” i.e., Islam (*canem tuum pro te latrantem contra rabidum lupum*). Ibid. See also, *ibid.*, 1. Elsewhere, Alvarus seemingly refers to Muslims in his use of “wolves” (*lupi*). See *ibid.*, 10 and 35. Eulogius does likewise in *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.1, I.21, II.9 and *Documentum martyriale* 20 (here specifically referring to the mixed parentage of the martyr Flora [*lupino create coitu et oue matre*]).

¹³² For more discussion of the structure of the *Indiculus luminosus*, see Sage, 29-30 and Colbert, 270-304. Before settling into his arguments, Alvarus states in his first paragraph that the “learned ones” (*peritissimorum*) of the Cordoban Church, of whom he is to be included, have gathered to combat the Church’s enemies. *Indiculus luminosus*, 1. See also n. 97 above concerning Eulogius’ use of the same term.

example of the early Church's martyrs who were instructed to refute the errors of gentiles, Jews, and heretics.¹³³ Some of the early Christians even sought out martyrdom. It was only *after* these efforts to preach truth and justice that persecution began. Thus, like the famed martyrs of old, the Cordoban martyrs declared truth to those in error, and for this, they were killed and Cordoban Christians persecuted. The Christian community in Córdoba, then, existed in a state of opposition to godly truth – the very seed of persecution – whether the actions of some of its members inflamed Muslim rulers or not. Surely, according to Alvarus, the proclamation of truth and the denunciation of error could not be sacrificed for earthly comfort and persecution-free living.¹³⁴

Other critics insisted that the period of great persecution had passed long ago.¹³⁵ Alvarus, however, clarifies that it was the time of the Apostles that had passed, for it was their zeal that was supposed to spurn later Christians on in their attacks on adversity and evil persecutors. It would seem according to Alvarus, then, that the Cordoban martyrs were simply trying to reawaken their fellow believers by “igniting the wick of the light, to illuminate with starry brightness the region of the East the darkness of the century.”¹³⁶ For Alvarus, the Cordoban martyrs carried with them a divine purpose: to proclaim truth and to denounce the errors of Islam – those lies from the East that had infiltrated the peninsula, casting their dark, evil shadows upon Cordoban Christians. Thus, in Alvarus' mind, third/ninth century Córdoba did constitute a period of persecution. Those who thought otherwise were contributing toward the lack of apostolic zeal, were supporting the Muslims

¹³³ Ibid., 3. As Colbert observes, “these three groups seem to have embraced all non-Christians.” See Colbert, 272.

¹³⁴ *Indiculus luminosus*, 3.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Translated by Delgado León, 89: “*encendida la mecha de la luz, alumbrar con el brillo sideral de la región del oriente las tinieblas del siglo (flammas spiritalis in adversos cyere et fomite inluminatjonis accenso tenebras eui corusco sidere eoy climatis inlustrare)*. Ibid.

who persecuted Christians, and were “sleeping in a dream of slothfulness” (*dormiens iugum serbitutis somno socordie*).¹³⁷

Alvarus adds evidence to these claims by offering examples of persecution that Cordoban Christians endured even before the martyrs came forward. Accordingly, he observes that they endured slavery and paid an unreasonable tax that was imposed upon them (*jizya*). Further, Muslims destroyed churches, hurled insults, stones, and manure at priests, imposed their law on everyone, and tortured Christians.¹³⁸

For these actions Alvarus adds Muslims to the annual curse the Church calls down upon those who hate it. Even more, Alvarus includes in this curse those that refuse to give their support to the martyrs.¹³⁹ If the light of this evidence has failed to convince his readers, then Alvarus hopes a reminder of Perfectus’ martyrdom and others who were tortured and imprisoned will further illuminate his readers’ minds.¹⁴⁰

Having expounded the horrid details of Perfectus’ death, done at the hands of zealous pagans (*gentilicio zelo peremtum*),¹⁴¹ Alvarus wonders if there can be any greater persecution. Anyone who might think so is clouded with error and stained with iniquity.¹⁴² He thus implores his critics to offer a reasonable judgment in light of the evidence he has put forth.¹⁴³ For Alvarus, not only did Perfectus’ example illustrate persecution, but it further demonstrated that even though persecution followed the martyrs’ testimonies of truth, it was Muslims – those who followed the Antichrist and refused to worship God – who initiated it.¹⁴⁴ “With whom,” Alvarus asks, “does the persecution originate with? Is it not clear that they –

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 7. This curse, done not in secret, but in full light (*set patenter hac luminositer clamat*) is, according to Alvarus, ordered by the Angel of the Lord.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 3 and 5. Cf. *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.pref.6, I.9, II.1.1-4, II.10.5, and II.10.9.

¹⁴¹ *Indiculus luminosus*, 3.

¹⁴² “. . . nube herroris forte possessus, fece iniquitatis conspersus . . .” Ibid., 6.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 4.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

the inciters of evil, the champions of errors” – who have carried out a very real, albeit deceptive, persecution?¹⁴⁵

Muslims thus represented a threat to Cordoban Christians, one that persecuted them and intended to eliminate them. Avoiding this threat meant keeping within certain boundaries, but staving off this threat meant defending those boundaries in an attack on Islam. Doing so would mean that Cordoban Christians must also take the offensive, in which case, martyrdom would become the vehicle driving Alvarus’ tactic forward. Alvarus offers Isaac, one of the first Cordoban martyrs, as a prime example of one who acted as a “warring soldier” (*belliger miles*) and who, as a part of a “militant church” (*ecclesia prelians*), “waged war openly” (*bella aperte*).¹⁴⁶

Like Eulogius, then, Alvarus at first connects Christian identity close enough to martyrdom that a pursuit of the former may inevitably lead to a pursuit of the latter. He softens this connection later on, however, and suggests that Cordoban Christians unable to set themselves to such a task should at least support the martyrs’ movement and pray for those bold enough to die. In this way, just as Eulogius and Alvarus offered their treatises in place of martyrdom, perhaps Christians might offer up comparable actions that served as different means to the same end.¹⁴⁷

If Alvarus’ readers were convinced, then the light of his *Indiculus luminosus* would have successfully laid bare the persecution that might otherwise lie “concealed, hidden, or guarded” (*uelatum . . . occultum . . . uel contectum*).¹⁴⁸ Even more, by making Muslims the source of authentic Christian persecution, Alvarus would have created an active threat to

¹⁴⁵ “*A quibus nunc ortam, rogo, persecutjonem ese uidetis? Nonne prespicuum est ipsos ese in-centores malorum, assertores horrorum . . . ?*” See *ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 12. Alvarus offers a number of examples of biblical heroes who, in his opinion, attacked adversity in their proclamation of truth. At times, the examples he gives (e.g., the Old Testament prophet Elijah who killed the priests of Baal [I Kings 18:1-19:1]) literally attack their adversaries. See *Indiculus luminosus*, 11.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

Cordoban Christian identity. Their community was not just losing its ground to a growing foreign entity. For Alvarus, this entity was also on the offensive, actively seeking to destroy Christians. Thus, Islam became not just something to fear and recede from, but an enemy to combat and overcome. The boundaries of Christian identity, then, were not just meant to keep their followers safe, but were also meant to be defended. As a result, Cordoban Christians were meant by Alvarus to retaliate against their persecutors.

Light on the Cordoban Martyrs' Critics

Readers who were unconvinced of Alvarus' rhetoric and remained critics of the Cordoban martyrs' movement may have found themselves quite distant from the boundaries that he was highlighting. As we shall see, falling beyond these boundaries would also leave them open to the attacks of those defending them. With this in mind, Alvarus casts his shining light on the critics themselves. These, he claims, "grant the palm of victory" (*palman uictorie tradere*) to the devil when they diminish the martyrdoms with their "twisted words" (*obtorta lingua*).¹⁴⁹ Muslims, referred to here as Amalekites (*Amalacitarum*), may kill the martyrs with the sword, but Christians who condemn the martyrs' actions kill them with their opinions.¹⁵⁰

If the martyrs' critics support the devil's victory, might they not also be considered to be among his ranks? Alvarus makes clear that his ultimate enemies are not those "common in the faith" (*comunes fidei*), but the "Chaldeans" (*Caldeorum*).¹⁵¹ The latter were, for Alvarus, Muslims, but in a phrase curiously reminiscent of Eulogius, he seems to include in his vision of his community's enemies various Christians who denounced the Cordoban martyrs' movement. These enemies should be "cut with the sickle of the Gospel" (*euangelica falce*

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 1.

precidere); they were a tall, leafy tree, but they bore no fruit. As such, they were to be cut down and left to the fires of hell.¹⁵² Thus, those who criticised what to Alvarus was a movement declaring truth were to be thrust out of the Christian community. In short, they were enemies in the same way that the Muslims who persecuted Cordoban Christians were.

This becomes even clearer when Alvarus asserts that his critics chose lies over truth. They even went so far as to appoint a committee (*fraternalis*) – priests, doctors of the Church, bishops, abbots, and other leaders (*proceres*) – to go before the Cordoban *qāḍī* in order to make their complaints publicly known. According to this assembly of ecclesiastical officials, the martyrs were responsible for the absence of priests in churches and the prohibition of mass. They even chose to condemn the martyrs as heretics.¹⁵³

Thus, the shining light of Alvarus' fiery rhetoric revealed for Cordoban Christians a battle with two fronts: on one were its Muslim persecutors; on the other were those Christians who condemned the martyrs as heretics. If the latter chose to betray the martyrs in this way, then Alvarus would not hesitate to attack them in an exchange of mutual condemnation and excommunication. For in failing to curse what the martyrs cursed, these critics blessed the adversary. In using Scripture to do so, they used “the Gospel against the Gospel” (*contra euangelium euangelio*). The martyrs “affirmed what all the Church proclaims” (*dixerunt quod omnis ecclesia predicat*), but these critics affirmed “that which all Christianity rejects” (*quod cuncta [Christianitas] infamat*). In essence, Christians who chose to condemn the martyrs condemned the Christian community itself, and in so doing, their betrayal made them the enemy.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² *Indiculus luminosus*, 1. Cf. *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.27 and n. 59 above.

¹⁵³ *Indiculus luminosus*, 14. On this assembly, see Colbert, 279-281.

¹⁵⁴ *Indiculus luminosus*, 15. Alvarus notes elsewhere that those who denounce the martyrs will also attack the valiant efforts of the earlier saints and martyrs, those he has previously set out as the archetypal preachers of truth. In this sense, the critics curse the Church. See *ibid.*, 8. What was to Alvarus a betrayal here is compounded in his eyes by various two-faced Cordoban Christians (*homunculos*) who criticise various

Light on the Attraction of Islamic Culture

Alvarus saw more concern when he cast his piercing light on Cordoban Christians who drifted towards Muslims and their culture. For him, Christianity and Islamic and Arabic culture were strange bedfellows. Indeed, as we argue above, mixing with the enemy made one the enemy. As a result, there seemed to Alvarus to be a void in Córdoba of anyone who would stand for Christ in the midst of an atmosphere that was in his eyes thoroughly evil. At a time when Muslims daily declared blasphemy from their minarets, no Christian existed that would rise above these towers with “the standard of the cross of faith” (*crucis fidei . . . uexillum*).¹⁵⁵ In essence, the cross was being submerged by minarets when Cordoban Christians turned their backs on their community in favour of Muslims and their culture.

Even if they did not actually convert, these Christians’ perceived lack of commitment fostered shallow Christianity. As Alvarus declares:

We not only accepted the poison [Islamic rule] with a glad mind, calm acceptance, and a humble glance, drinking the potion with the taste of deadly germs, but even worse, we opposed those who, like Elijah, fervently fought by the zeal of God. With a deaf ear, we unite in friendship with the enemies of the supreme God and in order to please them we apostatise from our faith.¹⁵⁶

Attraction to the culture, language, and even the friendship of an enemy effectively chilled Cordoban Christians making their love for God insipid and lukewarm, or what Alvarus refers

Christian leaders condemning the martyrs whilst at the same time criticising the martyrs. See *ibid.*, 19. For more on this tension, see Colbert, 284. What these critics should condemn, Alvarus states, is Muḥammad who “under the name of Gabriel” (*sub nomine Gabrielis*) “feigned” (*mentitus*) to bring another law of God that was contrary to the Gospel. See *Indiculus luminosus*, 8 (cf. Alvarus’ use of the condemnation in II Corinthians 11:4 of those, up to and including angels, who preach anything that opposes the Gospel). Though Alvarus does not use Muḥammad’s name here, it is clear that he has the Prophet and his revelations in mind. As Colbert observes, Alvarus never refers to Muḥammad by name in the *Indiculus luminosus*. See Colbert, 272.

¹⁵⁵ *Indiculus luminosus*, 6.

¹⁵⁶ “*Et non solum mente iucunda, acceptione serena, respectjone modesta uenena recipimus, potjones liuamus, germina letifera pregustamus, set, quod perniciosius est, aduersantibus et zelo Dei ut Elias zelantibus aduersamus, hac surda aure cum inimicis summi Dei amicitjas conligamus et placentes eis nostre fidei derogamus.*” *Ibid.* Here, Alvarus compares the actions of the martyrs with Elijah’s slaughtering of the priests of Baal. Cf. I Kings 18:1-19:1 and n. 145 above. It would be far better in Alvarus’ mind to follow Elijah’s example and fight Islam with the sword, but the Cordoban martyrs, at the very least, stood up to their Muslim oppressors with words.

to as “the state of our tepidity.”¹⁵⁷ This was most apparent for Alvarus when Cordoban Christians thought little of acquiring positions in Islamic courts; when, under Islam’s influence, they claimed Muslims were brilliant. Even more, such Christians neglected to

. . . perform their prayers in public before the pagans, nor do they protect themselves with the sign of the cross when yawning. They proclaim the divinity of Christ, not openly in [Muslims’] presence, but with evasive words. They profess a word of God and a spirit, as [Muslims] affirm, declaring in their soul their confessions with the idea that God sees everything.¹⁵⁸

In other words, lukewarm Christians happily affirmed what they knew their Muslim friends would agree with, but only confessed in secret what is fully true of Christ. This, they assumed, was adequate since God is omniscient. For Alvarus, these Christians only half-heartedly confessed Christ and in this way only “partially defend[ed] Christianity” (*medie [Christianismum] defendunt*). As a result, these Christians were lukewarm; they were like “leopards” (*uarietatem pardī*), conforming to their surroundings instead of making their Christianity distinct.¹⁵⁹

What is more, this tepid brand of Christianity went so far as to stunt the spread of the Gospel. As Alvarus claims, the message proclaimed by the prophets and Christ would cease to be carried forward when and if lukewarm Christianity was not condemned. According to Alvarus, the Cordoban martyrs seemed to be the only remaining Christians in Córdoba willing to proclaim Christ’s truth. If they were denounced and lukewarm Christianity was allowed to run rampant, then the truth would not be proclaimed and all those who needed to hear it would be unable to. As Alvarus announces, “. . . inside this Ishmaelite [Islamic] people there has not been until now any preacher . . . of the faith.”¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, when Cordoban

¹⁵⁷ “*teporem nostrorum*” and “*nostre tepiditatis statum.*” Ibid., 9.

¹⁵⁸ “. . . *palam coram ethnicis orationem non faciunt, signum crucis oscitantes frontem non muniunt, Deum [Christum] non aperte coram eos, set fugatis sermonibus proferunt, uerbum dei et spiritum ut illi asserunt profitentes suasque confessiones corde quasi Deo omni inspiciente seruantes.*” Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ “. . . *in hac Ismahelitica gente nullus actenus extitit predicator per quod . . . fidei . . .*”. Ibid., 10.

Christians condemned the martyrs instead of supporting their efforts to preach the truth they became “mute dogs unable to bark” (*canes muti non ualentes latrare*), damaging the cause of the martyrs and arresting the spread of the Gospel.¹⁶¹

Alvarus’ uncharacteristic compassion seems to contradict the position held by Eulogius in which Muslims were not worthy of the Gospel.¹⁶² In reality, however, Alvarus has little concern for the salvation of Muslims. Instead, his concern lies in the return of Christ, for if all people do not hear the Gospel, then Christ will not return as he predicted he would.¹⁶³ In Alvarus’ mind, the Cordoban martyrs were the only remaining witnesses to Christ’s truth and according to his interpretation of the events, the martyrs succeeded in proclaiming this truth to those who had not yet heard it. It made little difference if Muslims accepted their message. What did matter was that the cross was loudly proclaimed over and above Córdoba’s minarets. When this occurred, Christ would surely return ushering in an age of unrestrained orthodoxy that was free of Islam.

Tepid Christianity, then, represented a threat not only to the Christian identity that Alvarus so desperately wished to highlight, but the coming kingdom of Christ as well. Consequently, Alvarus would have such Christians outside of the community of the faithful.¹⁶⁴ For him, true Christian identity was vanishing and would completely disappear if he did not emblazon before the eyes of the Cordoban Christian community the boundaries that defined it. They must see the threat of lukewarm Christianity that resulted from an attraction to Muslims.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Cf. nn. 60 and 99 above.

¹⁶³ *Indiculus luminosus*, 10. Cf. Matthew 24:14 where Christ states that the end will come only when the Gospel has been preached to all nations.

¹⁶⁴ Alvarus’ wish to jettison such lukewarm Christians outside the Church is reminiscent of Revelation 3:16 where God spits lukewarm Christians out of his mouth.

With this, Alvarus ends the first half of his *Indiculus luminosus* by interpreting theologically what to him was a very obvious evil. Accordingly, the rule of Muslims, the harsh conditions they imposed upon Cordoban Christians, the persecution they inflicted upon them, and the presence of certain bishops who supported these efforts against Christians¹⁶⁵ were all permitted by God. He allowed them in part to test and refine the Cordoban Christian community and in part to judge its wayward Christians.¹⁶⁶ Alvarus thus implores his readers to “open the eyes of the soul and see that the judgment of the Lord has come justly against us and let us give up insulting the martyrs, so that the vengeance of the eternal king does not lead unrepentant ones to hell.”¹⁶⁷

Light on Muḥammad and Islam

In Alvarus’ second set of paragraphs he offers his most unique contribution beyond what Eulogius had already written. In this section, he casts his light on Muḥammad, whom he calls the precursor of the Antichrist, in order to crush him and bring him under the light of various testimonies.¹⁶⁸ These testimonies constitute a discussion of the Antichrist as treated in the Old Testament by Daniel and Job. Here, Alvarus relied heavily on previous authors, Jerome (c. 346-420; his *Commentarium in Danielelem*) and Gregory the Great (c. 540-604; his *Moralia in Job*) in particular, who connected the Antichrist or precursors of him to rulers such as the Roman emperor Nero or the Seleucid king Antiochus.¹⁶⁹ Alvarus simply applies their methodology to Muḥammad as the precursor of the Antichrist.

¹⁶⁵ Alvarus may have Reccafred in mind. Cf. Chapter 1, pp. 42-43.

¹⁶⁶ *Indiculus luminosus*, 18-19.

¹⁶⁷ “*Aperiamus ergo oculos cordis et iudicium Domini iustum in nobis uideamus seuisse et desinamus a contumelio martirum, ne nos ultjo regis eterni incorreptos perducatur ad Tartarum.*” Ibid., 19.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 21.

¹⁶⁹ Sage, 30. Cf. John of Damascus and chapter one hundred of his *De Haeresibus* where he, much like Eulogius and Alvarus after him, refers to Islam as a “deceptive superstition” and “the forerunner of the Antichrist.” See Sahas, 133, 137. One of the Cordoban martyrs, George, had been a monk at the same monastery

With Jerome and Gregory as his guides, Alvarus plunges confidently ahead, “not diverting from the [hermeneutical] rules of our fathers” (*a patrum regulis in deum non diuertam*), determining that the vision of Daniel 7 correlates in “our time . . . to the precursor of the condemned man [Muḥammad]” (*nostrī temporis damnati hominis precursorem*).¹⁷⁰ After all, in keeping with Daniel, it was Muḥammad who conquered three kingdoms (the Greeks, the Franks [the Romans of Alvarus’ time], and the Christians who formerly ruled Spain), attempted to eradicate the Decalogue, and assaulted the Trinity. Furthermore, Muḥammad invented words against God, he tried to conceal the law of the Lord, he created lies, and he persecuted the Church. For Alvarus, such acts corresponded quite well to the precursor of the Antichrist.¹⁷¹ Having set Muḥammad out as this figure, Alvarus then calculated that Daniel’s “time and times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25) equalled 245 years of Islamic reign. Then, using a set of erroneous dates, Alvarus concluded that there were just sixteen years remaining in this reign and Islamic rule would end in 239-40/870.¹⁷²

Thus far, Alvarus has only hinted at Muḥammad’s role as precursor to the Antichrist. He has done more to assure his readers of the soundness of his methodology.¹⁷³ But if these generalities were only hints, then they would point to the litany of evidence and accusations that would follow. And so, Alvarus sets himself to the task of “review[ing] the errors of these

where John of Damascus was a century earlier. He may have provided Alvarus and Eulogius with source material about Islam from his writings. See Coope, 39.

¹⁷⁰ *Indiculus luminosus*, 21. Alvarus agrees that Rome is the fourth beast/kingdom (Daniel 7:23), but where others have interpreted Antiochus as the eleventh horn of this beast (Daniel 7:24-25), Alvarus sees, at least in part, Muḥammad.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁷² *Ibid.* Here Alvarus writes that the year 854 (Era 892), the year he wrote in, was 240 lunar years for Muslims, or 229 solar years. Alvarus was incorrect in his equation of lunar to solar years and his assumption that the Islamic era began in 625 is mistaken as well (it began in 622 with Muḥammad’s journey from Makka to Madīna).

¹⁷³ He addresses this methodological question again in *ibid.*, 22 and 32.

gentiles that is worthy of laughter and expos[ing] to the entire Church their pestilences worthy of being considered as stench.”¹⁷⁴

Alvarus admits that the sheer crudeness of Muḥammad and his followers was so embarrassing that it prevented him from revealing too many of the sordid details of their law.¹⁷⁵ Yet despite his red cheeks, Alvarus’ rhetoric hardly seems restrained. He is instead relentless, sparing no detail in favour of brevity or tact. According to Alvarus, Muḥammad was a womanizer with sexual prowess on loan from Aphrodite (also known as Venus).¹⁷⁶ With god-like skill, this “very wicked thief” (*predo iniquissimus*) spilled sperm in greater amounts and with more ease and effectiveness than anyone else; so much so, that his sexual longevity was not equalled by less than forty men.¹⁷⁷ Alvarus goes on to compare Muslims’ licentiousness with the description of Egyptians given by the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah,

¹⁷⁴ “. . . horum gentium deridendos recenseri errores hominque ecclesie pro execratione habendos exponere fetores.” Ibid., 23.

¹⁷⁵ According to Alvarus, “. . . neither does the redness of the cheeks permit us to launch into a rhetorical discourse against the enemy, particularly because shame imposes silence” (*nec sinit nos rubor genarum retoricum contra hostem iactare sermonem, presertim quia pudor silentium imperat*). See *ibid.* Ironically, this caveat is sandwiched in between two extensive attacks on Islam, both of which focus squarely on the wanton sexual cravings its followers. Alvarus does, however, close this paragraph with an attempt to justify his purpose in sharing so many sordid details; he hopes that his readers would be able to see the shameful Muḥammad for who he really was without becoming shameful themselves by reading Alvarus’ description. See *ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Alvarus notes here that Aphrodite/Venus is also known as “*alkaufeit*.” Citing Franke, Colbert notes that Alvarus may have confused this for *al-kaukaba*, the Arabic rendering of the Syriac *kawkabta*, or the female morning star (i.e., Venus). Colbert, 289-290. However, it may more likely be a poor transliteration of *al-kawthār*, “the abundance,” which, though a Qur’ānic term, would in this case refer to excessive sperm (i.e., virility). See Fernando González Muñoz, “El conocimiento del Corán entre los mozárabes del siglo IX,” in *Sub luce florentis calami. Homenaje a Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz*, ed. M. Domínguez García, J. J. Moralejo Álvarez, J. A. Puentes Romay, and M. E. Vázquez Buján (Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2002) and Fernando González Muñoz, “En torno a la orientación de la polémica antimusulmana en los textos latinos de los mozárabes del siglo IX,” paper presented as part of the colloquium “¿Existe una identidad mozárabe? Historia, lengua y cultura (ss. IX-XII)” organised by the Casa de Velázquez and the Escuela de Estudios Árabes (CSIC, Granada), Madrid, Spain, 16-17 June 2003. Millet-Gérard suggests a derivative of the root “*k-f-t*” meaning to “pour promptly” (*verser promptement*). Millet-Gérard, 71-73. Colbert further observes that this may betray dependence by Alvarus on Eastern sources such as al-Kindī. In his *Risāla*, al-Kindī also mentioned Muḥammad’s worship of al-‘Uzzā which others tried to interpret as Venus. See Anton Tien, “The Apology of Al-Kindī,” in *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, ed. Newman, 426, 494. On the presumptive connections between al-‘Uzzā and Venus, see *EF*² X:967-968, s.v. “al-‘Uzzā,” by M. C. A. Macdonald and Laila Nehmé.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. al-Kindī who also wrote that Muḥammad had the sexual power of forty men. See Tien, 432.

noting that they were crazy with lust, their genitals were like a donkey's, and their ejaculation, similar to Muḥammad's, rivalled that of a horse.¹⁷⁸

Alvarus provides as evidence of these unthinkable impurities Muḥammad's adulterous and incestuous marriage to Zaynab. If this were not enough, he notes that the marriage was supposedly "permitted by God by a revelation of Gabriel" (*a Deo siui per reuelationem Gabrihelis*). Such a notion essentially made a marriage between earthly, sinful sexuality and divine purity. Clearly, Alvarus observes, Muslims have "embraced a lustful and adulterous one" (*ambientes amissarii et adulteri*) who allowed marriages to three or four women. In short, Muslims were "lustful horses or donkeys that bray" (*amissarii equi innientes seu rudentes asini*) for whomever they choose.¹⁷⁹

Alvarus' so-called reluctant and embarrassed rant continues, transitioning from the sexual pleasures enjoyed by Muslims on earth to what is promised to them in the "paradise of [Muḥammad's] God" (*paradiso Dei sui*).¹⁸⁰ There, Muslims could expect ". . . sex of endless satisfaction . . . the last heat [of which] is not finished in the space of an hour . . . the pleasure [being] prolonged with the pleasure of seventy men" ¹⁸¹ Their partners will be perpetual virgins and the restoration of their virginity will be a painless process.¹⁸² With this, Alvarus closes his self-proclaimed abridged exposition of Islam's supposedly disgusting features with the ironic promise of another work of greater clarity and detail should the Lord grant him life.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Ezekiel 23:20 and Jeremiah 5:8.

¹⁷⁹ *Indiculus luminosus*, 23.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁸¹ ". . . *nullo saturo coitu finienda . . . extremus calor . . . non terminetur spatjo, set protendatur per septuaginta delectatjone uirorum ipsa delectatjo . . .*" *Ibid.* Cf. Delgado León, 149.

¹⁸² Here, concerning heavenly virgins (houris [Arabic – *hūr*]), Alvarus refers to the breaking of the female's hymen. This will be painless and it will painlessly return in between each sexual encounter. *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

Returning to his exegesis of Daniel, Alvarus locates Muḥammad in the text, suggesting he despised the religion of gentiles, Jews, and Christians.¹⁸⁴ In keeping with the text, Muḥammad instead chose to venerate the god *Maozim*, but even though *Maozim* means “great and greater or also strong and very strong” (*grandis et maior . . . seu fortis uel fortissimus*), Muḥammad only appeared to honour this superior god in order to strengthen his own domination of others. This, according to Alvarus, “[Muslims] vociferate every day in their smoky towers, in a loud and monstrous battle-cry, their snouts gaping like savage beasts, their lips hanging down, their throats belching, they vociferously proclaim that they must protect Maozim along with a foreign god that he knew. That is to say, that they must protect Maozim, whom they call Cobar.”¹⁸⁵

In other words, Muḥammad instituted the worship of a greater god (literally *Maozim*) called *Cobar* in Arabic,¹⁸⁶ a demon who appeared to him as the angel Gabriel and is called to by Muslims from their minarets. Essentially, Alvarus has rather confusedly connected *Maozim* in Hebrew with what he perceived to be *Cobar* in Arabic (*akbar*) and set this out as the god of Muslims. Alvarus further grounded this theory with what he thought he heard being repeatedly proclaimed by *mu’adhdhins* from Cordoban minarets (i.e., “*Allāhu akbar*” which he mistook for *Cobar*). Given Alvarus’ rather imaginative exegesis, it is interesting that he made no attempt to highlight the auditory similarities between *Maozim* and *mu’adhdhin*. Perhaps the connection was already apparent for his readers, especially in light of Alvarus’ description of the *adhān* coming from “smoky towers” (*fumosis turribus*).¹⁸⁷ In

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 25. Alvarus quotes here Daniel 11:37.

¹⁸⁵ *Indiculus luminosus*, 25 and trans. Tolán, *Sons of Ishmael*, 154 (“. . . in fumosis turribus cotidie barritu inormi et monstruoso hac ferarum ri[c]tu, dissolutis labiis et faucium iatu aperto ut cardiaci uociferant hac uociferando uelut furiosi preconant, Maozim cum Deo alieno quem cognouit, id est, ut Maozim, quem illi Cobar uocant . . .”). Cf. John of Damascus’ *De Haeresibus* and his discussion of Aphrodite and “*Habar*” (*Chabar*) (see Sahas, 133).

¹⁸⁶ For more on the confusion between *Cobar* and *akbar*, see Millet-Gérard, 72.

¹⁸⁷ Kenneth Baxter Wolf, “Muḥammad as Antichrist in Ninth-Century Córdoba,” in *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, ed. Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English (Notre

any case, Alvarus has gone a few steps further than his friend Eulogius in dividing Christian and Muslim conceptions of God.¹⁸⁸ No longer do Muslims simply worship an inferior and heretical God; in Alvarus' text they now bow to a pagan deity.

In the event that this interpretation was read with disbelief or confusion, Alvarus introduces more evidence against Muḥammad and Islam. He recalls for his readers that Muslims continue to gather annually where their idol is located. In so doing, he confusedly describes the *Hajj* and the relationship the pilgrimage had with pre-Islamic events known as “*Almozem*” (*Mawsim*).¹⁸⁹ In Alvarus' mind, this pilgrimage demonstrated that Muslims merely perfected the paganism of their idolatrous forefathers by exchanging multiple idols for one.¹⁹⁰ Alvarus thus feels compelled to go into greater detail “to expose . . . the insanity of his temple” (*insaniam ipsius domui . . . exponere*) and to demonstrate how Muḥammad and the contrary law of his sect fit into the prophecies of Daniel.¹⁹¹

Though he claims once again to restrain himself,¹⁹² Alvarus carries on with an exposition of how the Behemoth of Job can be interpreted as Muḥammad.¹⁹³ Since Behemoth is in Hebrew what animal is in Latin, Alvarus notes, it aptly described Muḥammad's stupidity insofar as he was allegedly unable to read or write.¹⁹⁴ He deceived the gentiles like the Behemoth consumed grass and in turn Muḥammad's followers were hypocrites.¹⁹⁵ How could they not be since their leader was inspired by the devil himself and his law was

Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 12-13 and Millet-Gérard, 39-46. For Alvarus' description, see *Indiculus luminosus*, 25.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. n. 93 above.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. For *Mawsim*, see *Et* VI:903, s.v. “Mawsim,” by A. J. Wensinck and C. E. Bosworth. Alvarus also mentions here “*Almoarram*,” the first Islamic month, *al-Muḥarram*.

¹⁹⁰ As Alvarus claimed, “like idol worshippers in another time, so they support it today with greater perfection” (*ut cultores idolatrie olim sustollebant, ita hii odie habundantjori perfectjone*). See *ibid*.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*.

¹⁹² “I pass over many things because I am in a great hurry” (*Multo pretereo quia multum festino*). *Ibid*.

¹⁹³ Cf. Job 40:15ff (Vul. 40:10ff).

¹⁹⁴ *Indiculus luminosus*, 26. As he admits in his *Epistula XVI*, Alvarus does not know Hebrew. Yet just as he is aware that *Maozim* means “great” in Hebrew, so he is aware of the meaning of “Behemoth.” Cf. Wolf, “Muḥammad as Antichrist in Ninth-Century Córdoba,” 19, n. 37.

¹⁹⁵ *Indiculus luminosus*, 26-27.

borrowed from demons, pagan philosophies (even Judaism), and venom absorbed from ungodly sects?¹⁹⁶

Various physical references – the strength of his back and navel and the intertwined sinews of his thighs¹⁹⁷ – referred to the earthly, sexual cravings and boasted potency of Muslims. The beast’s tail – as stout as a cedar tree – had certainly been felt by Christians in the persecution Muslims dealt them.¹⁹⁸ Even Behemoth’s bones personified aspects of Islam: for Alvarus, they were the essence of the gaps between Arabic language and Arabic culture; like metal chimes the language of Muslims had the insensible ring of speaking well, but they had no sense for living well.¹⁹⁹ In the end, Behemoth slept in the shade and Muḥammad, too, was content in the darkness, unaffected by the light of Christ.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless, as a river is absorbed by Behemoth, so many were drawn to Muḥammad’s lies.²⁰¹ Alvarus would thus have his shining light expose Muḥammad and Islam for the deceptions that they were in order to stem the tide of Cordoban Christians drifting towards them.

Alvarus goes on to claim that Job’s Leviathan, expressed in the language of divine apostrophe, referred to Muḥammad as well.²⁰² Who else, Alvarus wondered, could this serpent be than the one who has slid over all the earth deceptively introducing new features to divine law as if from the mouth of God?²⁰³ As Christians say “Christ save us” ([*Christe*], *salua nos*), so Muslims repeatedly utter and proclaim praises to Muḥammad from their

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 27.

¹⁹⁷ Following Job 40:12 in the Vulgate (“*nervi testicularum*”), Alvarus has “The nerves of his testicles are entwined” (*‘Nervos habens testicularum perplexos’*). See *Indiculus luminosus*, 27.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 26.

¹⁹⁹ Quoting Gregory the Great, Alvarus writes, “they have the insensible metallic sound of good speech, but they have no sense of good living” (*‘More metalli insensibilem sonum bene loquendi habent, set sensum bene uiuendi non habent’*). Ibid., 27. Cf. Coope, 49 and Daniel, “Spanish Christian Sources of Information about Islam,” 367-368.

²⁰⁰ *Indiculus luminosus*, 27.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Job 41:1ff (LXX 40:25ff; Vul. 40:20ff).

²⁰³ *Indiculus luminosus*, 28.

minarets.²⁰⁴ In essence, those the Prophet duped into following him now bless him. Where the law of God resounds to angels, Muḥammad’s law calls to demons and lost souls: ““Oh multitude of demons and men”” (*‘O multitude demonum et ominum’*).²⁰⁵

Alvarus continues to vilify and denigrate Muḥammad. Using Job as a guide, he explains that Muḥammad was like the bird because it was in the air that the princes of darkness had power, he was like Behemoth (animal) because of his unrefined and uneducated birth, and he was like Leviathan (serpent) because he was deceptive. Consequently, the friends of the Lord, Alvarus says, are those who expose Muslims for what they really are and “make an effort to assault [them] like the enemy of the Church in public profession.”²⁰⁶

With this in mind, Alvarus reminds his readers of their dangerous attraction to Muḥammad’s lies, for they frequently read with admiration the “composition of his words and the prayers of all his followers said every day on his behalf, offered with stylish elegance and great beauty”²⁰⁷ Cordoban Christians have been deceived Alvarus asserts, and in reality, Muslims devote themselves to their prayers in vain, for they “[do] not provide salvation, but eternal prayer” (*non eis remedium, set supplicium acquirit eternum*). In other words, the prayers of Islam, admired by Christians for their beauty and style were completely ineffectual; they were empty words that waste much time. Such vacuous devotion, Alvarus warns, was not based on Christ and for this reason it will prove costly in the final judgement. “Without Christ,” Alvarus declares, “all virtue is depraved” (*Sine [Christo] enim omnis uirtus in uitio est*). He adds that Jesus Christ is the true light of the world; those who walk without this

²⁰⁴ Ibid. Cf. Colbert, 294.

²⁰⁵ *Indiculus luminosus*, 28. Alvarus states that his phrase is “*iemahascar algen*” in Arabic. He may have had *yā mu’askar al-jinn* (“oh camp of demons” or “oh assembly of *jinn*”) in mind. Cf. Qur’ān *al-An’ām* (6):128, 130. See Muñoz, “El conocimiento del Corán entre los mozárabes del siglo IX” and Millet-Gérard, 74.

²⁰⁶ “. . . publica professione hostem ecclesie insiluisse contendunt.” See *Indiculus luminosus*, 28.

²⁰⁷ “*Conpositjonem, ut iam dixi, uerborum et preces omnium eius membrorum cotidie pro eum eleganti facundia et uenusto confecte eloquio . . .*” Ibid., 29.

light, walk in darkness; not following the only way (i.e., Christ), they risk “falling in eternal death” (*mortem eternam incurrit*).²⁰⁸

Alvarus’ allusion to John 8:12 and 14:6 here may simply be a rhetorical flourish – yet another convenient metaphor for him to utilise with his imagery of light.²⁰⁹ But it also raises a question: did Alvarus see the *Indiculus luminosus* – his shining example – as an extension of Christ, the Light of the world? If so, then Alvarus, has given his work rather weighty authority, for the light of his words would then purport to reflect the light of Christ. In turn, the boundaries that Eulogius had begun to outline and Alvarus works to emblazon here are more than mere suggestions for Christians living amid Islam. They instead become the marks of Christian identity in which there is little room for thought contrary to Alvarus’. Just like Eulogius, who used his priestly office to leverage the authority of his interpretations, so Alvarus may have given his own work authority by comparing it to the light of Christ.

For Alvarus, if his shining example illuminated the way of Christ, then the lies of Muḥammad shrouded the way to hell in a dim, hazy fog. Thus, Alvarus portrays him as an aggressor, having armed his lie with a law of severe vengeance. As a result, Muḥammad’s followers are hardened with obstinacy. They proclaimed words that contradicted the Church and feigned to announce the light of truth, claiming that Christians remained in darkness. In this, they only imitated the light, according to Alvarus, and in so doing failed to illuminate anything, only succeeding to ignite a burning torch of dark errors.²¹⁰

Alvarus concludes his exegesis of Job with similar defamations of Muḥammad, his law, and his followers. They are dishonourable in nearly every way, he reflects. They mock humility as if it was foolishness, they reject chastity as if it was filth, and repudiate virginity

²⁰⁸ Ibid. Alvarus quotes here John 8:12 (“I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” [*Ego sum lux mundi. Quo sequitur me non ambulauit in tenebris, set habeuit lumen uite*]) and 14:6 (“I am the way and the truth and the life” [*Ego sum uia, ueritas et uita*]).

²⁰⁹ Cf. n. 128 above.

²¹⁰ *Indiculus luminosus*, 29.

like they would a disgusting mould. In short, “staining . . . the virtues of the soul with the vice of the body” (*sordes . . . uirtutes animi corporis uitjo*), Muslims show their true colours in their actions.²¹¹ “What other thing is there,” Alvarus asks, “that is considered like the Antichrist, but the opposite of Christ?”²¹²

Alvarus answers his own question by considering Muḥammad in the very light of Christ. The risen Christ instituted a day of worship and remembrance of him. According to Alvarus, Muḥammad rejected the resurrection of the Lord, dedicating the day Christians set aside to mourn and fast in remembrance of this event (Holy Friday) to “gluttony and lust” (*uentri et libidini*).²¹³ Christ taught peace and patience; Muḥammad and his followers were warmongers. Christ purified his followers with virginity and chastity; Muḥammad sullied his faithful ones with lust and incest. Christ taught marriage, sobriety, and fasting; Muḥammad taught unrestricted divorce and gluttony dedicated to Venus. Christ fulfilled the old covenant law; Muḥammad re-established Mosaic Law by instituting the “injustice of the circumcision” (*circumcisionis iniuriam*) and declaring pigs to be impure.²¹⁴ Christ promised a spiritual and angelic heaven; Muḥammad assured his followers of a paradise of carnality. For Alvarus, it seemed abundantly clear that Muḥammad’s sect was greater than all other heresies. It was for good reason, then, that Muḥammad should be called antichrist.²¹⁵

Alvarus concludes that various events of the Apocalypse were fulfilled in his own time in Córdoba. Accordingly, its citizens essentially welcomed Muḥammad when they pandered

²¹¹ Ibid., 31. Literally, Alvarus writes, “showing with their actions . . . their own morals” (*gestu . . . mores proprios indicantes*), i.e., their true colours. See *ibid.*

²¹² “*Quid namque aliut [Antichristus] quam [Christi] contrarius dicitur?*” *Ibid.*, 32.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 33. Alvarus refers here to *jum’a*, the weekly Friday Muslims set aside for public worship. He may also have in mind a comparison with Christian fasting and Muslim fasting, the latter seen as pointless and gluttonous by Christians since Muslims broke their fast at sundown and often accompanied this with celebration.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

²¹⁵ Upon making this point, Alvarus challenges his readers to consult the works of other scholars in order to confirm what he has expounded. Other scholars, he suggests, pointed out that there are many precursors to the Antichrist. Clearly, then, they would agree that Muḥammad is the very “instrument of the Antichrist” (*[Antichristo] organum*). See *ibid.*, 33-34.

after Islamic employment. They bore his mark on their foreheads when they neglected the sign of the cross in favour of Islamic gestures. Christians themselves accepted circumcision, neglecting the superior circumcision of the heart. In his oft-quoted passage, Alvarus observes that Cordobans took pleasure in too much of Islamic culture.²¹⁶ They read Islamic literature and sought out the company of Muslims, their language, customs, and clothing. Cordoban Christians accused their brothers before Islamic courts and they offered to Muslims examples from the Bible so that they might use it against other Christians.²¹⁷ In short, much of the Cordoban Christian community had forsaken their Christian identity in favour of the mark of Islam. In so doing, they simply looked on as the diminished light of Christianity's cultural and religious distinctiveness dwindled away, the boundaries of their religious identity becoming increasingly blurred in the process.

Summary

For Alvarus, Cordoban Christians were living in a state of blind stupor. They were simply unaware of the dangers surrounding them. His solution was to expose these dangers and so he sought to shed light on the persecution they were forced to endure, the hazards of not publicly supporting the martyrs, the dangerous lure of Islamic and Arabic culture, and the evil degradation of Muḥammad and Islam. If Cordoban Christians could see Muslims and Islam in this light, then perhaps they would avoid them as well.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 35.

²¹⁷ After Alvarus' extended lament here, he abruptly concludes the *Indiculus luminosus*, claiming that "There are many other things which would have shown the reliability of this explanation of ours; that is, which would have brought out into the light the things we are exposing" (*Multa et alia erant que nostre huic expositjoni exhiberent firmitatem, immo que ipsam patule in lucem producerent*). See *ibid.*, 335 and trans. Colbert, 301.

Conclusion

With the relative chaos present in mid-third/ninth century Córdoba, Eulogius and Alvarus sought to make sense of the disorder and harness the energy of a martyrs' movement in such a way as to support their own polemical agenda. In so doing, they interpreted the Cordoban martyrs' movement as a statement against what they saw as the eventually-passing threat of Islam and against that segment of the Cordoban Christian community that was attracted to its language and culture. Even more though, as we argue above, their works can ultimately be read as an effort to chart the boundaries of Christian identity that they thought might best distinguish Christians from Muslims.

To do this, Eulogius authorised his interpretation of Islam with his priestly office. In his mind, it was a heretical sect of over-sexed followers who honoured a god of earthly, temporal desires. This simply could not compare to Christianity – the pure and heavenly religion of the true and everlasting God. Consequently, there could be no real shared elements of truth between Christianity and Islam, and thus, there could be no intermingling of Christians and Muslims and no exchange of cultural ideals. For Eulogius, there were clear lines between the two religions.

More than this, Eulogius seems intent to equate cultural distinctiveness with religious distinctiveness. This becomes clear when we see the rather small focus given to the doctrinal differences apparent between Christianity and Islam in Eulogius' works. Though he does use biblical exegesis to touch on Islam as a matter of fore-ordained evil and heresy, and though he very briefly mentions some Islamic religious tenets (e.g., Christ as human prophet and a word and spirit from God), his greatest focus is on moral disparities (e.g., Muslims' seeming sexual deviance) and the differences Cordoban Muslims and Christians should have in the language they spoke, the ways they appeared, and with whom they associated. As a result, his effort to

distinguish his religious community is done largely on grounds of cultural distinctiveness; to be religiously different was to be culturally different. To put it another way, non-Arab language and dress, for example, was just as important to Eulogius as non-Muslim religious beliefs when it came to the distinctions between Christianity and Islam. In this, it seems that Eulogius was forced or at least content to fight his polemical battle on the grounds of his opponents. Hence, in an environment where the Muslim community distinguished itself, for example, with a linguistic preference for Arabic, Eulogius, too, chose to make (non-Arabic) language preferences a marker for his Christian community. Thus, the boundaries of Christian religious identity could become for him a matter of culture.

If Eulogius outlined these boundaries, then Alvarus emblazoned them. In doing so, he shares Eulogius' concern for Christian language and culture, but he also goes further by adding to his treatment of Islam a theological discussion. But this theological discussion is limited to apocalyptic details, inventive exegesis, and ways in which Muḥammad was religiously suspect, most notably as a forerunner of the Antichrist. Instead of highlighting theological distinctives of Christianity that could serve as a basis for religious identity, Alvarus sets the Prophet out as a heresiarch. In so doing, he is able to create more than just cultural difference between Christians and Muslims; for him there was now also an eschatological reason for Cordoban Christians to distance themselves from Muslims. In this way, when Alvarus wrote his *Indiculus luminosus*, he cast its shining light, exposing what he perceived to be a threat. In doing so, however, Alvarus failed to expose Islam under his shining example, instead shedding contrived light on the Christian sources he was most familiar with in a hapless effort to interpret Islam. His imaginative biblical exegesis only further diminishes this light, resulting in gross misperceptions. Moreover, Alvarus seems to have put forth little effort to confirm the validity of many of the exaggerated details he shared

about Muhammad and Islam – an act entirely possible by consulting most nearby Muslim or even various Arabic-speaking Christians in the Cordoban streets – in favour of marking out his own polemical agenda.

Despite Alvarus' attempts to defend and add credence to his approach, however, his work really only has the stamp of his own approval. Alvarus thus seems to use his shining light to lay claim to Christ's light so that he might add authority to his text. Consequently, the *Indiculus luminosus* – much like the works of Eulogius – may have remained authoritative to readers simply because Alvarus claimed it to be so; his light was the light of Christ only because he said it was. In this, convinced readers of the *Indiculus luminosus* would fall prey to Alvarus' logical fallacy, for much of the evidence he set forth in order to prove his claims is so strained that his only real proofs are the assertions themselves. Logically speaking, then, he has really only succeeded in "begging the question."²¹⁸ As a result, Alvarus, like Eulogius, has essentially placed himself inside his own stoutly constructed barriers, calling what was inside true and pure and what was outside false and evil. Readers would thus inevitably see Christ's light and even Islam through the rather blurry lens of Alvarus' own shining example.

This vision of Christian identity amid Islam, in short, left no room for Christians who enjoyed Islamic and Arabic culture or criticised the actions of the Cordoban martyrs. As for Eulogius' and Alvarus' vision of Islam, the more immediate results for convinced readers would most surely be to view it as a disgusting perversion, a laughable sect, and a growing evil. If Islam was disgusting, it was because Eulogius and Alvarus made its followers out to be over-indulgent, sex-crazed fanatics. Muslims would thus be avoided as one might evade a sickness. If Islam was laughable, it would be as a result of Eulogius' and Alvarus' efforts to

²¹⁸ By offering no real, substantial proof beyond his own assertions, Alvarus has essentially laid claim to his own propositions and in so doing has committed the logical fallacy of "begging the question" (*petitio principii*). See A. W. Sparkes, "Begging the Question," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 27, no. 3 (July-September 1966): 462-463.

portray it as full of foolish errors and unbelievable claims that fell far short of anything truly divine. Those convinced of this image would thus likely dismiss Muslims as one might ignore anything that was completely shallow and unserious. If Islam was a growing evil it would likely be because Eulogius and Alvarus portrayed Muslims as ungodly liars in nearly every possible way. Almost naturally, then, many Christians would look upon Muslims with fear, anger, and disdain.

With images such as these, it is little wonder why Eulogius and Alvarus felt they must define their religion's boundaries, defend them, and take the offensive against those who threatened them most. Religious distinctiveness was in this way a prize to be won and was for both Eulogius and Alvarus worth a fight, one which they saw the Cordoban martyrs embodying. For them, engaging in this fight would, after all, sound the death knell for Islam and re-establish Cordoban Christians in the eyes of God.

What would the Christians who found their way inside Eulogius' and Alvarus' boundaries look like? How would they define themselves in light of the Muslims these lines allowed them to avoid? Whereas the present chapter traces the development of Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts as outlines of Christian identity, the focus in Chapter 3 will be on the deployment of strategies within their writings. Identifying these specific strategies will, in turn, allow us to deduce the definitions of Christian identity amid Islam that Eulogius and Alvarus offered their Christian community. In other words, we will focus less on what Eulogius and Alvarus said about Islam, and more on what their attacks said about their Christian self-image.

CHAPTER 3

EULOGIUS AND ALVARUS IN ISOLATION:
STRATEGIES FOR DEFINING THIRD/NINTH CENTURY CORDOBAN
CHRISTIANITY IN LIGHT OF ISLAM

In his *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, Eulogius writes that the dreadful assertion of some Cordoban Christians – that Muslims “. . . worship God and have a law . . .”¹ – was more a diagnosis of the Christian community in the city than it was an assessment of Islam. For Eulogius, this remark about Muslims reflected something of the various Cordoban Christians who dared to make such a claim. Hence, he contends, “. . . if such a cult or law [Islam] is said to be valid, indeed the vigour of the Christian religion is certainly impaired.”² In other words, the validity given to Islam by Christians could determine the validity of the Church. If Islam was to various Cordoban Christians an authentic monotheism, then their own faith was questionable; an Islam condemned by the Cordoban Christian community was a sign of its stalwart faith. Thus, a Christian’s religious identity had much to do with how he/she viewed Islam.

In this way, the unsightly image of Islam resulting from assaults upon Muḥammad and Muslims was often meant by Eulogius and Alvarus to act as a foil for the kind of Christians they wished their community to comprise. In other words, Eulogius’ and Alvarus’ image of Islam reflected their self-image, and by extension, an image for their Christian community that they thought would be most appropriate. In fact, there were layers to their reflected (and often inverted) self-image. On the surface, a particularly visceral image of Islam could

¹ “. . . *Deum colentibus et legem habentibus . . .*” *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 17.

² “. . . *si talium cultus aut lex uera dicenda est, pro certo uigor [Christianae] religionis infirmabitur.*”
Ibid.

suggest their sense of Christian piety. Beneath this simple juxtaposition, though, lay much more complex strategies that Eulogius and Alvarus deployed in an effort to solidify their definition of Christian identity amid Islam. As we shall see below, it seems abundantly clear that what connected these layers was Eulogius' and Alvarus' intention to separate the Cordoban Christian community from Muslims, hoping it would adopt their self-definition of religious isolation from Islam.³

Eulogius and Alvarus Opposed to Islam

Among the more immediately discernible features of the texts Eulogius and Alvarus produced is the attention they give to Muslims and Islam as an entity in opposition to Christianity. What might lay behind this image of Muslims for Eulogius and Alvarus? If Islam opposed Christians, then they must oppose Islam. For these authors, though, this opposition was not merely a matter of doctrinal difference. Instead, Islam was a foe to be conquered in a match where identity, religiously *and* culturally speaking, was a prize to be won. Thus, the image of both Eulogius and Alvarus that we glimpse in their texts is one of opposition to Islam and an engagement with Muslims that is governed by forceful antagonism.

Creating an Enemy

This image of Eulogius and Alvarus is apparent since Muslims are most frequently referred to in their texts as enemies. In order for this self-image to be acceptable by their

³ There is a curious disparity between Eulogius' and Alvarus' predominant response to Islam and the response of Christian communities in other areas under Islam. The latter's first responses were attempts to reinterpret Christian heritage in light of Islam. These were followed in later centuries by strategies of acculturation (during the 'Abbāsid period) and only much later, isolation (seventh/thirteenth – twelfth/eighteenth centuries). See J. J. van Ginkel, H. L. Murre-van den Berg, and T. M. van Lint, eds., *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*. *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 134 (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), viii-ix.

community as part of their religious identity, however, Eulogius and Alvarus had to create a comprehensive image of Islam as an adversary. In one sense, for Christians who bemoaned the existence of Islam and their status as *dhimmīs*, viewing them as an opponent would likely not be an outlandish task. They could easily echo Eulogius' and Alvarus' assessment of Islam as an "adversary" (*aduersario*) and Muslims as the "enemy of the Church" (*hostem ecclesie*).⁴

Eulogius and Alvarus went further, however. For them, Muslims were more than just the enemy that ruled over them; they pursued Cordoban Christians in order to eliminate them. Consequently, it was important for Eulogius and Alvarus to counter the argument that no persecution existed in mid-third/ninth century Córdoba. For some, the absence of persecution meant that the Cordoban martyrs' deaths were not valid as martyrdom. Instead, the martyrs, "by their own will insulted those who have in no way mistreated or molested them." These critics did not ". . . think that the destruction of the churches, the taunts of the priests and the offering that [Christians gave] monthly [*jizya*] with great sadness . . ." were in any way problems.⁵ For Eulogius and Alvarus, countering this argument meant more than simply creating an environment in which authentic persecution and martyrdom might exist. By emphasising certain aspects of *dhimma* regulations, restrictions placed on Cordoban clergy, and the insults that might have been hurled by Muslims at Christians, Eulogius and Alvarus made Muslims persecutors of their Christian community. In their minds, Muslims actively pursued Cordoban Christians.

In reality, some of their harsh treatment came about as a direct result of various Christians' unwavering pursuit of martyrdom. Additionally, Christians were allowed by Muslims to worship in accordance with their faith in many of the same ways they had before

⁴ See for instance, *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.6 and *Indiculus luminosus*, prol.

⁵ ". . . sponte sua uenientes his conuicium intulerunt qui eos in nullo molestia affecerint, nullam opinantes esse molestiam diruptiones basilicarum, opprobia sacerdotum et quod lunariter soluimus cum graui maerore tributum . . ." *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.21. Cf. *Indiculus luminosus*, 3.

Islam's emergence in the peninsula. Nevertheless, the notion that Muslims actively sought to antagonise and/or eliminate Christians substantiated Eulogius' and Alvarus' claim that they were a very real enemy and reinforced a self-definition of opposition to Islam.

Likewise, Eulogius and Alvarus were keen to remind their readers that Muslims pursued them not just so that they might destroy by force, but so that through conversions, Christian numbers might progressively dwindle as well. In this way, Eulogius and Alvarus portrayed Muḥammad and his followers as the source leading Christians astray. Due to Muslims' influence, Christians careened almost helplessly towards their culture and religion, just as Alvarus' Behemoth absorbed a rushing river.⁶ In this sense, Muslims did not watch unwittingly as Christians converted to Islam. Rather, they acted as a deliberate magnetic force, an opponent who intentionally drew Cordoban Christians away from their religious community.

If this were not enough, Muḥammad and those who followed him also denied the central truths of Christianity. They denied the divinity of Christ, considering him equal to Adam, the "first created man" (*protoplausto*).⁷ They claimed Christ was just "like other men, but not equal to God the Father" (*ceteris hominibus simile, sed non Deo Patri aequalem*)⁸ and considered it "hateful and unjust" (*exosum et iniquum*)⁹ to believe otherwise. These unthinkable assertions made Muslims more than just irksome opponents. Much more, they were "the enemies of the Supreme God" (*inimicis summi Dei*)¹⁰ and the "adversary of the Church of God" (*aduersario ecclesiae Dei*).¹¹ Eulogius' and Alvarus' creation of the Islamic

⁶ Ibid., 27.

⁷ Ibid., 30. Eulogius makes a similar statement in *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 19.

⁸ *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.7.

⁹ *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 12.

¹⁰ *Indiculus luminosus*, 6.

¹¹ *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.6.

enemy culminated in this sense, then, by portraying Muslims in direct opposition to God himself. In turn, how Eulogius and Alvarus not oppose Islam?

Having created an image of Islam as the Church's supreme foe and put forth a self-image of opposition to Muslims, Eulogius and Alvarus effectively forged an "us *versus* them" mentality for Cordoban Christians. This mentality was further grounded with language that suggested there was even a geographical predisposition of enmity between Christians and Muslims. To this end, there was for Alvarus a boundary that separated east (the general direction of Muslims' origination) and west, Islam and the Church. The darkness of the former had crept into the peninsula, diminishing the Church's light. Thus, it was the job of Cordoban Christians, or at least those members of it remaining untainted by Islam's darkness, to, as Alvarus urges, "illuminate with starry brightness the region of the east the darkness of the century."¹² For Eulogius, this region was predisposed to reject God and in fact despised the Gospel.¹³ In yet another way, then, Eulogius and Alvarus pitted themselves and their community against Muslims.

Finally, as if to solidify the definition of Christians in opposition to Islam, Eulogius and Alvarus add to their "us *versus* them" mentality another binary arrangement. In this construct, Christians who did not publicly criticise Islam in addition to those who remained silent, neither condemning nor supporting Islam, could be equated with the enemy as well.¹⁴ The result was a "for us or against us" approach in which Cordoban Christians could either agree with communal identity Eulogius and Alvarus asserted or be relegated among the condemned opponent. As a result, Eulogius and Alvarus became the righteous middle ground

¹² Translated by Delgado León, 89: "*alumbrar con el brillo sideral de la región del oriente las tinieblas del siglo.*" *Indiculus luminosus*, 3.

¹³ See Eulogius' remarks concerning "Asians" (*Asianis*) in *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.14.

¹⁴ *Documentum martyriale*, 14-16.

between two very similar evils.¹⁵ There remained, then, only two sides: those who opposed Christians (Muslims and their sympathisers) and those who opposed Islam. This condensed the world of third/ninth century Cordoban Christian community into a rather tidy dichotomy of good *versus* evil.

In creating this comprehensive image of an Islamic enemy, Eulogius and Alvarus effectively sanctioned a zero-sum game where the success of their Christian community was directly related and even dependent upon the failure of Islam in Spain. Moreover, an unwillingness to engage in Eulogius' and Alvarus' requisite denunciation of Islam ran the risk of self-condemnation. As a result, Cordoban Christians had much to lose and everything to gain in Eulogius' and Alvarus' game where their very existence depended on the realisation of their identity as a community pitted against Islam.¹⁶

The Language of War in a Pursuit of Martyrdom

It is also clear from Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts that the presence, as it were, of pagans on Christian soil represented an affront to them. In their minds, if the presence of Islam was an offence to them, then it must surely be an insult to Christ. Their community, then, should work to restore Christ's honour by engaging its enemy.¹⁷ It is thus with relative ease that Eulogius and Alvarus employ the language of war and militancy in their efforts to oppose Islam. In this light, the Cordoban martyrs are described as "soldiers of Christ"

¹⁵ Cf. John B. Henderson, "The Multiplicity, Duality, and Unity of Heresies," in *Strategies of Medieval Communal Identity*, ed. van Bekkum and Cobb, 15-16.

¹⁶ This notion of the Church's non-Christian enemies and its obligation to combat them has curious similarities to Augustine who advocated a sort of just persecution meted out by Christians towards those who opposed them. See, for instance, Augustine's Letter 185.11 in his *A Treatise Concerning the Correction of the Donatists* (ed. Philip Schaff in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, first series, vol. 4 [Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999]) and his Letter 93.5-6 in *Letter of St. Augustine* (ed. Philip Schaff in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, first series, vol. 1 [Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999]). For the influence of Augustine on this line of thought, see also Daniel Bazar, *Medieval Cruelty: Changing Perceptions, Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 18.

¹⁷ Cf. Tolan, *Saracens*, 123.

(*militum [Christi]*), “warriors” (*pugnatorum*), “victors” (*uictores*), “protectors” (*patroni*), and even “athletes” (*athletas/adlete*).¹⁸ Their efforts are portrayed as “wars” (*bellas*) and a “fight” (*turba*).¹⁹ This imagery would intensify Eulogius’ and Alvarus’ definition of opposition to Islam.

Of course, it was quite common in martyrologies to describe martyrs as soldiers or the victors in a battle.²⁰ Many of those who commemorated martyrs ultimately considered their efforts in the context of a struggle against spiritual evil.²¹ For many of these authors, Christians were indeed involved in a battle, but this sort of fight was completely spiritualised. The literalism had been all but completely drained from the battle. Eulogius’ and Alvarus’ works share these features, but go much further by re-infusing a bit of realism in their use of the same militant language. Therefore, when the Cordoban martyrs engaged the evil enemy, they engaged real people (Muslims), not just a spiritual world. When they did, they publicly insulted Islam so that they might “incite [Muslims] to war” (*bellum iubemur*).²² All of this the martyrs did quite literally.

With this in mind, the martyrs’ words and actions were hardly the stuff of an inner spiritual battle where spiritual sword and shield were taken up against demonic forces.²³ So, whilst Eulogius’ and Alvarus’ descriptions of the Cordoban martyrs and encouragement of those who followed them may carry echoes of traditional hagiography, they are also quite

¹⁸ See, for instance, Eulogius’ remarks in the cover letter he addresses to Alvarus and the first chapter of his *Documentum martyriale; Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 7, 35; and *Indiculus luminosus*, 3. Related to military engagement, the image of the athlete or gladiator would evoke images of opposition and contest where the death of one’s opponent was not only a reality, but meant victory and the preservation of the victor’s life.

¹⁹ See, for instance, *Documentum martyriale*, 17 and *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.10.

²⁰ Tolan, *Saracens*, 107.

²¹ Cf. St. Paul’s description of spiritual warfare (e.g., Ephesians 6:10ff). See also, Daniel, *The Arabs in Mediaeval Europe*, 33-34.

²² *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.22.

²³ Eulogius does refer to a “struggle against demons” (*daemoniorum . . . litem*), but this occurs in the context of spiritually encouraging Flora and Maria to not grow weary in their struggle. See *Documentum martyriale*, 12. There is no direct reference to Islam, though it may be implied. In the prayer which concludes the *Documentum martyriale*, Eulogius once again refers to “the armies of demons and men” (*acies daemoniorum et hominum*). See *ibid.*, 25. Eulogius does connect Islam and Muslims with demons elsewhere in his writings, but his concept of warfare, though expressed theologically, seems never to be simply spiritualised.

literal. In their minds, it seems that these martyrs were engaged primarily in a tenacious, physical pursuit of truth in the face of an enemy who remained a very real opponent from whom a victory must be won.

From this point, we can observe two unique features of Eulogius' and Alvarus' works that impinge upon their definition of Christianity amid Islam. To begin with, the Cordoban martyrs' efforts (as they are described by Eulogius and Alvarus) introduce a novelty to the concept of Christian martyrdom. Here, emphasis is placed not on what a persecutor might do to bring about martyrdom, or on a context that might make Christian faith punishable by death, but on the martyr and his or her disparagement of Islam that will secure death.²⁴

For some, this point was made to invalidate the Cordoban martyrs' deaths. Yet Eulogius and Alvarus used it to demonstrate the victory of the martyrs' passion over and against their ironically powerless opponent. In this way, despite the *qādī*'s best efforts to convince many of them otherwise, the Cordoban martyrs did what they had to do in order to guarantee their martyrdoms. For the martyrs, this seems to have been part of the contest. By demanding their deaths, they snatched their reward from Muslims' hands and won the palm of victory in their martyrdom. In this game, Muslims lost when they were not able to deter the martyrs from their goal.

The Cordoban martyrs, then, become warriors whose mission it was to exact justice from their Muslim opponents. Muslims were, after all, the "enemy of justice" (*inimico iustitiae*),²⁵ and by publicly decrying Islam, the martyrs dramatised their opposition to them and the affront their presence was to their community. As Eulogius and Alvarus tell it,

²⁴ Speaking of the second/eighth century martyr Cyrus of Ḥarrān, Griffith observes, "This situation in turn introduced a new consideration into the Christian conception of martyrdom, one that put the accent on the personal testimony of the martyr and his disparagement of Islam rather than on the persecutor's direct challenge to the martyr's Christian faith. It would become a standard feature of most Christian martyrologies from the Islamic world." See Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 149.

²⁵ See, for instance, *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.6 and *Documentum martyriale*, 16. Cf. Alvarus and "defence of justice" (*defensione iustitje*) in his *Indiculus luminosus*, 2.

martyrdom and the support of those who sought it was thus a public witness of authentically defined Christianity in a context where the boundaries between Christian and non-Christian were increasingly blurred. Thus, the battle against the injustice of Islam was won in martyrdom, when Christians most dramatically asserted their identity.

Yet even as individual martyrs came forward to win their individual battles, a war still raged on. In this, a second unique feature is introduced by Eulogius' and Alvarus' interpretation of the Cordoban martyrs' acts. For Eulogius, not only had Muslims' ancestors rejected the Gospel, but they it was predetermined that they would do so.²⁶ As Gospel-rejecters, they were worthy of his condemnation, something the martyrs offered Muslims in their pursuit of death. For Alvarus, the martyrs are seen as heralding a message, not necessarily rejected by Muslims, but one as yet unheard by them ("... inside this Ishmaelite [Islamic] people there has not been until now any preacher . . . of the faith").²⁷ Of course, Alvarus' concern is not with Muslims' salvation, but in the return of Christ. For him, the martyrs proclaimed truth to those who had not yet heard it. It mattered little if these hearers chose to believe this proclamation of truth; they needed only to hear it, for the message's purpose was to draw Christ's return nearer. For Alvarus, then, martyrdom, and the unwavering support of it, was a tool that hastened the second-coming of Christ. Christ's arrival would, in turn, bring his judgement and the final elimination of Islam. Alvarus' prediction that Islamic reign would expire sixteen years from when he wrote would likely only have rallied those who believed him to further enable this end.²⁸

We explore more below what martyrdom meant to Eulogius and Alvarus as a form of Christian mission. For now, we must recall from Chapter 2 our discussion of whether or not

²⁶ Eulogius, *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.14 and III.10.11 and *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 12.

²⁷ "... in hac Ismahelitica gente nullus actenus extitit predicator per quod . . . fidei . . .". *Indidulus luminosus*, 10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

Eulogius and Alvarus equated martyrdom with rightly-defined Christian identity.²⁹ While there is ambiguity in the way each author connects the two, we concluded that whilst martyrdom may not have equalled a Christian's religious identity, it was clearly a vehicle that Eulogius and Alvarus felt would propel their Christian community from an unclear identity amid Islam to one that not only distinguished itself from Muslims, but was able to exist without Islam. In this, Cordoban Christians would be defined in part by martyrdom until the latter was realised. Thus, individual battles against Muslims were won in securing martyrdom; the war against Islam was won when these martyrs and their supporters forced the hand of God in an eschatological triumph over their enemy.

Summary

For Eulogius and Alvarus, if they were to exist in an environment that was thoroughly Arabic and Islamic, then they must not do so interminably. Thus, in their attacks on Islam a self-image of opposition emerges for these authors. In order for their community to adopt this definition, Eulogius and Alvarus tried to convince their readers that they were at war with Muslims. To achieve this definition, Eulogius and Alvarus created an enemy out of Islam and then wove a seamless transition between that enemy, a war to oppose it, and a programme of martyrdom that would seal their enemy's fate.

Placing Christianity in opposition to Islam would also contribute towards an overarching strategy of isolation. In this case, by engaging Islam so that they might eliminate it, Eulogius and Alvarus might effectively isolate Islam from their community. Even more, if Islam no longer existed on the peninsula, then they need not concern themselves with the corrosive influence that Muslims might otherwise have upon them.

²⁹ See Chapter 2, pp. 54-56, 86.

Eulogius and Alvarus and the Connections between Culture and Religion

Many other strategies were meant to isolate Christians by retreating from Muslims and thereby creating distance between the two communities. One way to achieve this distance was to distinguish between what was culturally inherent to Muslims and what might be culturally inherent to Cordoban Christians. In Chapter 2 it becomes clear that both Eulogius and Alvarus demonstrate a remarkable tendency to equate cultural distinctiveness with religious distinctiveness. As a result, it seems that there was for Eulogius and Alvarus such a thing as a Christian culture that was every bit as much a part of defining Christianity as theology was. In their mind, Christians were Christians because they looked and sounded a certain way in addition to believing certain things. Such a definition made it difficult for one to have anything to do with Islamic or Arabic culture and maintain a favourable position in the eyes of those like Eulogius and Alvarus.

Of course, Eulogius and Alvarus were faced with the withering away of their language and culture as Arabic and Islam gained greater precedence in third/ninth century Cordoban society. This must surely have left them with a fear of losing something that was familiar to them as something seemingly foreign took over.³⁰ Yet as we shall see below, there is perhaps more depth and complexity to their fear and their equation between religion and culture than what might at first seem apparent. It may be that they were not just resistant towards Arabic and Islam, but also keen to preserve their own cultural heritage as well. The degree to which this heritage was tied to Christianity may, in turn, impinge upon the ways in which they sought to define their religious identity as (culturally) non-Arab. Understanding this complexity may shed further light on what Eulogius and Alvarus thought their community should look like regarding Islam.

³⁰ Kassiss, "The Arabicization and Islamization of the Christians of Al-Andalus," 141-142.

Ethnic Differences with Religious Ramifications

With this in mind, we can note with ease Eulogius' and Alvarus' distaste for Arabic and Islamic culture, but what awareness might they have still retained of their pre-Islamic past? If they were conscious at any level of this heritage, then they may not only have been actively non-Arab in culture, but may also have preserved and propagated an awareness of aspects of their Hispano-Gothic heritage.³¹ Indeed, Luís García Moreno argues that this heritage was "fully consolidated" with at least a certain segment of Spain's Christian population by the second/eighth century and preserved by some well into the third/ninth century as well.³²

For many, the ethnic dimension of this heritage was so important that, as Barkai asserts, ". . . the [Hispano-Gothic] identity in general (and at times in particular) deservedly occupied the first place and Christian identity happened to be secondary."³³ In other words, many of those indigenous to medieval Spain gave first priority to their ethnic identity; their religion was seemingly secondary, though intrinsically connected to their culture.³⁴ Given this precedence, culture could become intertwined in one's religious identity. Thus, embracing Arab and Islamic culture in medieval Spain, as some Christians in third/ninth

³¹ By "Goth" we refer to the Germanic people group which invaded Rome between the fourth and fifth centuries, and in particular, their Visigothic branch which ruled Spain (hence, "Hispano-Gothic") from 415-92/711. As we discuss in Chapter 4, the Goths were Arian until King Reccared's (r. 586-601) conversion to Nicene orthodoxy in 589. Some cultural aspects of this Hispano-Gothic identity would not be preserved (e.g., Gothic language). See Stanley G. Payne, "Visigoths and Asturians Reinterpreted: The Spanish Grand Narrative Restored?" in *Medieval Iberia: Changing Societies and Cultures in Contact and Transition* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2007), 50.

³² Luís A. García Moreno, "Spanish Gothic Consciousness Among the Mozarabs in Al-Andalus (VIII-Xth Centuries)," in *The Visigoths: Studies in Culture and Society*, ed. Alberto Ferreiro (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 303-304. As García Moreno's title suggests, an awareness of Hispano-Gothic heritage is evident even in the fourth/tenth century, beyond Eulogius' and Alvarus' lifetimes.

³³ ". . . la identidad española general (y a veces la particularista) ocupaba justamente el primer lugar y la identidad Cristiana pasaba a ser secundaria." Barkai, 285.

³⁴ Barkai notes that his may be historically counterintuitive given the general assumption of modern historians that "'the medieval man was, in the first place, Muslim or Christian . . . only in the end was he French, Egyptian, or German'" ("*El hombre de la Edad Media era, en primero lugar, musulmán o cristiano . . . sólo por último era francés, egipcio o alemán*"). Gustave von Grunbaum, as quoted in *ibid.*, 283.

century Córdoba did, may have seemed to others like Eulogius and Alvarus like an abandonment of expected cultural heritage, and thereby Christian identity.

That such a cultural heritage would be preserved by an increasingly minority population is on some levels not altogether surprising. Indeed, one simple way to preserve Hispano-Gothic identity was to reintroduce elements of it to younger generations by virtue of their names. Many Christian families well into Eulogius' and Alvarus' time used their names as a testament to this heritage. Hence, we have the well-known third/ninth century Christian Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭī al-Qurṭubī (“son of Alvarus the Cordoban Goth”)³⁵ and even *muwallads* such as renowned fourth/tenth century historian Ibn al-Qūṭīyya (“son of a Gothic woman”). For these figures in particular, their names also allowed them to pay homage to their descent from Hispano-Gothic royalty. Ibn al-Qūṭīyya takes great pride in his maternal descent from King Wittiza and tells us of Ḥafṣ b. Albar's royal lineage as well, for he, too, was a descendant of Wittiza.³⁶ Others, like Ayyūb b. Sulaymān b. Ḥakam b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Bilkāysh b. Ilyān al-Qūṭī (“son of Julian the Goth”), celebrated their relation to Julian, the famous governor of Ceuta who betrayed Spain by purportedly aiding Muslim armies in their entrance into the peninsula in 92/711.³⁷ Even those of no particular notoriety were keen to claim their royal stock as Asturian monk Beatus (d. c. 182/798) notes of various Toledan Christians

³⁵ A possible son of Paulus Alvarus. For more on him, see D. M. Dunlop, “Ḥafṣ b. Albar – the last of the Goths?” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1954): 136-151 and D. M. Dunlop, “Sobre Ḥafṣ ibn Albar al-Qūṭī al-Qurṭubī,” *Al-Andalus* 20 (1955): 211-213.

³⁶ García Moreno, 304-305 and Miguel Barceló, “Els ‘hispani’ de Qurtuba a meitat del segle III,” *Faventia* 3, no. 2 (1981): 189.

³⁷ He is mentioned by Ibn al-Faraḍī (d. 403/1012) in his *Ta’rīkh ‘ulamā’ al-Andalus*. Ibid., 189-190. See also Ann Christys, “‘How Can I Trust You since You are A Christian and I am a Moor?’ The Multiple Identities of the Chronicle Pseudo-Isidore” in *Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Corradini, Rob Meens, Christina Pössel, and Philip Shaw. *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters* 12 (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 367-369. García Moreno suggests that observance of royal ancestry may indeed have been a matter of Hispano-Gothic pride, but the possibility remains that it was also a matter of political advantage. By declaring a connection to the traitor Julian, for example, such Christians and/or *muwallads* may have used such pride to emphasise the historicity of their loyalty to Muslim rulers. García Moreno, 305.

known to him.³⁸ For Christians and even *muwallads* like these, pride in their Hispano-Gothic heritage was significant enough to warrant an expression and preservation of it in their names. In essence, even as the cultural influences of Spain changed with Muslim rulers, there were those who retained vestiges of their Hispano-Gothic past by this intentional, albeit simple onomastic means.

More importantly, there is also a classical sentiment inherent to Hispano-Gothic identity. This classical sentiment is evinced in the writings of Christians in Spain, and most notably, it was developed by Isidore of Sevilla (560-15/636) and even manipulated by him “to preach the virtues of the ancient Goths”³⁹ As a result, Hispano-Goths became in the tradition of Isidore of Sevilla the inheritors of classical culture, virtue, and ideals. This is evident even with Alvarus. In a letter to Eleazar, an early-third/ninth century convert to Judaism, Alvarus asserts his Hispano-Gothic heritage over and against Eleazar’s Frankish roots in a display of cultural superiority. Alvarus’ heritage was superior to Eleazar’s because as a Hispano-Goth he represented the realisation of classical idealism. So, he became an unbeatable dialectical opponent because he embodied the superiority of classical lore.⁴⁰ There was in this way a connection between classical literary tradition and Hispano-Gothic identity. As for Eulogius, this sentiment may even underpin the works he sought on his trip to Pamplona and returned to Córdoba with. That Eulogius learned and taught Latin metrics can be remembered in this regard as well.⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid. 305 and Barceló, 189. See also, Payne, 50.

³⁹ García Moreno, 305.

⁴⁰ See Alvarus’ *Epistula*, XX. See also Daniel, *The Arabs in Mediaeval Europe*, 34 and García Moreno, 305-306. Such an assertion would be especially intriguing given Alvarus’ more than likely Jewish heritage.

⁴¹ Ibid.; Daniel, *The Arabs in Mediaeval Europe*, 33-35; and Payne, 50. Eulogius returned with books not only by St. Augustine, but also works of Virgil, Juvenal (c. early-second century), Horace (65 B.C.E.-8 B.C.E.), Porphyry (c. 234-c. 305), Aldhelm (d. 90/709), and Avienus (c. fourth century), all classical writers. See *Vita Eulogii*, III.9 and II.4. As for Alvarus, he quotes with ease poets like Virgil (70 B.C.E.-19 B.C.E.) and Lucan (39-65). See Alvarus’ *Epistula*, XX.

Might these classical sentiments even explain Alvarus' curious reference to Muslims as "Cynics" (*cinicorum*) and "Epicureans" (*epicureorum*),⁴² his obscure discussion of "Donatists" (*Donatistas*),⁴³ and Eulogius' use of the likes of Arnobius, the early-fourth century Christian apologist who wrote amid the last great Roman persecutions?⁴⁴ Such sentiments may even explain their utilisation of classical vocabulary. For example, both authors refer to Muslims almost exclusively as gentiles or pagans.⁴⁵ This in itself conforms to a classical model, but even their use of "Ishmaelite people" (*Ismahelitica gente*), is at most scriptural and/or classically Roman.⁴⁶ These elements would support Eulogius' and Alvarus' efforts to portray the Cordoban martyrs as classical martyrs of the early Church and Muslims as classical persecutors *à la* Rome. But perhaps such a method was all the more readily available in their minds as a result of their classical sentiments and a Hispano-Gothic tradition that supported it.

Similar suggestions might also be made concerning Eulogius' liberal use of Eusebius' (c. 260-340) *Ecclesiastical History* and the lives of the early Church martyrs.⁴⁷ By utilising sources such as these and making subtle comparisons to the early Church's persecution under Rome, Eulogius would substantiate his claim that the Cordoban martyrs were victims of a persecution with historical precedence and were authentic martyrs like those of old. But the deliberate choice of sources could also serve a greater purpose. As García Moreno points out,

⁴² *Indiculus luminosus*, 14.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20. See also, Daniel, *The Arabs in Mediaeval Europe*, 34. Cf. n. 16 above where we discuss Augustine's work against the Donatists as a part of a tradition of creating enemies of the Church.

⁴⁴ *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.21.

⁴⁵ They do occasionally use "Arabs" (*Arabes*), but this only reinforces their predominantly ethnic view of Muslims which we discuss more below. The same might also be said regarding Eulogius' description of the accession of Muḥammad I who, adorned with his "*fascibus*," renewed the persecution of Cordoban Christians. Curiously, Eulogius chose a physical symbol of Roman consolidated power (*fascēs*) to describe Muḥammad I's authority (*Ibid.*, III.1). Consider also, for example, Eulogius' use of "*forum*" (e.g., *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.10.5). Daniel, *The Arabs in Mediaeval Europe*, 34.

⁴⁶ See *Indiculus luminosus*, pro., 1, 10, 13, 21, 22:, and 35. See also, Daniel, *The Arabs in Mediaeval Europe*, 34.

⁴⁷ As Daniel states, there are hints of Eusebius throughout (*ibid.*), but he is explicitly quoted in *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.21.

it also reflects a historiographic tradition in Spain, one that gave “a Christian view of classical history” and “cast the Barbarian invasions within a great ‘Divine plan’ for the [Christianisation] of Iberia, and the establishment of the Gothic Kingdom in Spain.”⁴⁸

Moreover, this historiographic tradition asserted that Spain was divinely predetermined to be Christian and Hispano-Gothic. In this light, Muslims could be seen simply as part of another barbarian invasion that would threaten, but not eliminate, the Hispano-Gothic and Christian destiny of Spain.⁴⁹

In this way, Hispano-Gothic heritage and its ties to Christianity are further substantiated even in times when their political influence waned. Spain, Hispano-Gothic, and Christian could thus be inseparable ingredients and a consciousness of them might ensure the preservation of Eulogius’ and Alvarus’ view of Christian identity in Spain as inherently non-Arab, if not intrinsically Hispano-Gothic as well.⁵⁰ Removing one of these elements of identity might, then, cause the entire equation to break down. Thus, when various Cordoban Christians began using Arabic at the expense of Latin and absorbing Arabic and Islamic culture, Eulogius and Alvarus were not only upset by the attraction to a different culture, but by the abandonment of their historic identity. By ostensibly relinquishing elements of Hispano-Gothic heritage, such individuals may have seemingly relinquished their Christian identity as well. With this in mind, another layer is added to Eulogius’ and Alvarus’ view of Arabic and Islamic culture when we see their distaste for it in light of the possibility of this preference for Hispano-Gothic heritage.

⁴⁸ García Moreno, 308. For “evidence” of the works comprising Spain’s historiographic tradition, one so emphasised that García Moreno considers it a veritable “historiographic *codex*,” see *ibid.*, 308, n. 24. García Moreno proposes in this light an “ethnic identification as *gothi/getae* [Goth/Getae] as well as *christicolae* [Christian] and *hispani* [Spanish] . . .” (*ibid.*, 308).

⁴⁹ Tolan writes similarly: “Spain’s marriage with the Goths was not over, it was merely undergoing a temporary separation.” See Tolan, *Saracens*, 99.

⁵⁰ García Moreno, 308.

This becomes more apparent when we consider Eulogius' and Alvarus' fondness for ethnic terms for Muslims like "Arabs" (*Arabes*) or "Ishmaelites" (*Ismahelitica*). To be true, both authors were aware, though only slightly, of various Islamic religious tenets that were at odds with certain Christian doctrine. Even so, their distaste for Islam was in many ways an ethnic, and thereby also a cultural one. This may even further explain why Eulogius and Alvarus were careful to remind their readers that the martyrs who were converts from Islam or were from mixed parentage were "from an Arab family."⁵¹ Such descriptions underscore a view of Cordoban Christians with regard to Islam as ethnically and culturally different.

Summary

With this in mind, Muslims represented to Eulogius and Alvarus a foreign evil and inferior difference. Their response to Muslims – their distaste for who they were ethnically and culturally – can indeed be seen as a knee-jerk reaction to the introduction and growing influence in the peninsula of something different.⁵² More than this, however, the presence of Islam in Spain was a foreign intrusion that represented a threat to Hispano-Gothic heritage and what it meant to be a Christian in Spain. Being a Christian there meant being part of a predetermined plan, one that made indigenous residents *both* Hispano-Gothic *and* Christian. Therefore, Christians abandoning their cultural legacy for another – absorbing portions of it or fully converting to it made little difference – was tantamount to forsaking the very essence of

⁵¹ *Vita Eulogii*, IV.12. As for Eulogius, he refers to Flora's mother, a Christian, as having "pure and noble" (*purissimis et nobilibus*) parents and her father as a "pagan" (*gentilem*). See *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.8.3. He describes the sisters Nunilo and Alodia as having a "pagan" (*gentili*) father. See *ibid.*, II.7.2. García Moreno even suggests that this would forever mark such Christians (converts to Christianity, those of mixed parentage, and *muwallads*) as separate from the ideal Hispano-Gothic identity. García Moreno, 310-311.

⁵² As Kassis writes, "the product of fear that Christian faith itself was weakening among [their fellow Christians] as a result of the growing appeal of the Arabic language and Islam. [Arabisation] could only hasten the impending danger . . ." He goes on, "Such fear of dilution of identity through assimilation, linguistic or otherwise, is not limited to the Christians of Al-Andalus in the ninth century. For any minority community, the expiration of its language or dialect is but the beginning of its disintegration." Kassis, "The Arabicization and Islamization of the Christians of Al-Andalus," 142.

Christianity in Spain; they began to look and sound like that which Hispano-Gothic Christians should not. In this perspective, Eulogius' and Alvarus' reaction to third/ninth century cultural and linguistic mixing in Córdoba was perhaps understandably harsh, for if Spain was a Christian land with a Hispano-Gothic consciousness, then the disruption of that definition – a Cordoban Christian who spoke or looked like an Arab – would be a bitter pill to swallow.

For Eulogius and Alvarus, political changes need not alter the definition of those indigenous to Spain as Hispano-Gothic and Christian. Furthermore, the revival of this consciousness would support their strategy to isolate Cordoban Christians by giving them reason to pull away from new cultural influences on the peninsula and cling in a fresh way to the historic identity that defined them as Christian. Reviving an awareness of Hispano-Gothic culture and its ties to Christianity could be just one more way, then, of accentuating the distance and difference between Muslims and the Cordoban Christian community.

Eulogius and Alvarus with a Mission to Secure Muslims' Damnation

The presence of converts from Islam⁵³ among the Cordoban martyrs suggests that there might still be room in Spain for Christian mission. The conversion of Muslims, it might then be thought, would be actively pursued. If the Christian community in Córdoba could be defined by Eulogius and Alvarus as one that went out to Muslims to engage them through martyrdom, might it not also be possible to engage them in mission, hoping that a shrinking Muslim community (*umma*) in Córdoba, so to speak, would reflect a swelling Cordoban Christian community?

Such a sentiment is not revealed by Eulogius and Alvarus. Any sense in which Muslims are seen as objects of mission is in fact absent in their writings. Instead, as we

⁵³ Consider, for instance, the martyrs Flora, a Muslim by birth, or Felix, a Berber convert from Islam.

discern above, the two authors reveal a self-definition of opposition to Muslims and see them as objects of attempts at martyrdom. Of course, missionaries were dispatched to Spain – we know of one example in the second/eighth century – but in this case Spain’s Muslims were not the missionary objective. Instead, it was the peninsula’s perceived wayward Christians who were targeted with the hope that they might be returned to Rome’s orthodox fold.⁵⁴ Two of the Cordoban martyrs – Isaac and Eulogius – do call for the Muslims they assailed to convert, but these were more “acts of defiance, not attempts at persuasion.”⁵⁵ In fact, the actions of all of the martyrs, as they are told to us by Eulogius and Alvarus, place an accent squarely upon their desire for martyrdom over and against any authentic desire to sway Muslims towards Christianity.

We must ask, then, along with Benjamin Kedar, why Muslims all but completely fell outside of Eulogius’ and Alvarus’ missionary vision, especially when the Church saturated other geographical areas with mission?⁵⁶ What bearing do answers to this question have upon Eulogius’ and Alvarus’ definition of Christian identity amid Islam? What does Eulogius’ and Alvarus’ estimation of Muslims as exempt from mission reveal about their self-image?

An Anti-Gospel Predisposition

Kedar argues quite convincingly that the history of medieval European mission to Muslims suggests that such an effort remained dormant early on in large part due to Muslims’ doctrinal assuredness – they would not be easily swayed from those tenets standing in stark contrast to Christian ones – and the awareness Christians had of the rather strident consequences of preaching against Islam.⁵⁷ In short, mission to Muslims was dangerous and

⁵⁴ For more on Egila, a missionary sent from Gaul by Rome to Spain’s Christians, see Chapter 4.

⁵⁵ Kedar, 16. For Isaac, see *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.pref.2. For Eulogius, see *Vita Eulogii*, V.15.

⁵⁶ Kedar, 3-41.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 14, 41.

more assuredly so than it may have been to non-Christians in other geographical areas (e.g., northern Europe). This was surely the case in third/ninth century Islamic Spain as well, but various comments made by Eulogius suggest that other sentiments may also have been at play.⁵⁸

For Eulogius, it seems that the reason Andalusī Muslims lay outside his community's mission had something to do with an anti-Gospel predisposition inherent to Muslims in general:

When [the Apostles] wanted to preach the Good News to the Asians, the Holy Spirit prohibited them, who shortly before had instructed them to announce the Gospel to every creature, knowing that in Asia there was not anyone worthy of receiving the love of the Gospel. With the foreboding authority of his divinity, he prevented the disciples from offering [the Asians] salvation, since they were going to reject the word of life with an arrogant spirit, they would not listen because they would despise it.⁵⁹

These remarks appear within a larger argument concerning the lack of miracles evinced by the Cordoban martyrs. According to Eulogius' logic, the Holy Spirit had predetermined that those from Asia would arrogantly despise and reject the Gospel. As a result, he prevented Christ's Apostles from preaching to them even though the Apostles were commanded to proclaim the Gospel to all creatures. As it concerned miracles, Asians, and by extension, Muslims, were thus "hopeless cases on which God would not waste his precious

⁵⁸ Kedar does not explore this aspect of Eulogius' work (he does discuss Alvarus as we note below). He recognises the theory of "a tacit acknowledgment that the Christian duty to spread the Gospel did not extend to the Muslims," but believes it to be "hardly convincing" and one among other theories that are "pure conjectures." Ibid., 6-7.

⁵⁹ "*Qui cum uellent bonum nuntium Asianis praedicare, prohibiti sunt a Spiritu Sancto; et qui pridem adnuntiare euangelium omni creaturae praeceperat, sciens in Asia nullum existere dignum percipiendi euangelicam caritatem, praesaga diuinitatis auctoritate discipulos ab eorum salute inhibuit, utpote qui uerbum uitae arrogant spiritu errant reiecturi neque audirent, quoniam spernerent.*" *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.14. "Asians" here refers to those from Asia, that is, the Roman province of Asia Minor, or more generally, the east. In either case, Eulogius is apparently unaware of the Asians (*katoikountes* . . . *tēn Asian*) who heard of the "mighty deeds of God" (*ta megaleia tou theou*) in Acts 2:8-11, of the likelihood that St. Thomas preached the Gospel in India in the first century, and of early Syrian Christians (Nestorians) who brought Christianity as far as China by the late first/seventh century. See Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2 ed. The Penguin History of the Church, vol. 6 (London: Penguin Books, 1986), 44-46, 82.

signs.”⁶⁰ Being unworthy of signs proving God’s favour, Muslims were equally unworthy of a message heralding God’s love and saving grace. This divine guarantee of failure meant a mission to Muslims was hopeless. Christians need not bother, then, with engaging Muslims in any sort of missionary endeavour, for not only would they proudly reject it like their Asian forebears, but they were equally predetermined to despise it as well.

In the same way, Eulogius argues that Muslims can hardly be the bearers of a divinely revealed law as some Cordobans contended (they asserted Muslims “confess[ed] to heavenly laws”).⁶¹ Eulogius adamantly opposes this opinion and counters with a string of biblical quotations. Most notable among them is his use of St. Paul, specifically II Thessalonians 2:11 (i.e., “. . . for that reason God sent to them the spirit of error so that they might believe in the lie”).⁶² Eulogius employs this passage in order to set Islam out as a foreordained condemnation for a people who wilfully rejected God’s truth. For their sinful arrogance, according to Eulogius’ exegesis, God essentially baited those who were to become Muslims with a lie (i.e., Islam). Accepting the lie secured their damnation. In other words, non-Christians, by virtue of their faith and practice, lived in a state of potential damnation. Conversely, though, there was potential for their salvation. But in the case of Muslims, if we follow Eulogius’ exegesis, their damnation was foreordained; their damnation was not potential, but certain. In this light, the Church (Cordoban Christians in particular) was excused from mission to Muslims as a direct result of the latter’s sin and predetermined rejection of the Gospel.

Eulogius’ argument eliminated any need for miracles to validate the martyrdoms of Cordoban Christians and called into question the notion that Muslims might actually worship God. Moreover, it also set the parameters for and defined the ways in which Cordoban

⁶⁰ Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 85.

⁶¹ “. . . caelestia iura fatentibus . . .” *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 3.

⁶² “. . . ideo mittit illis Deus spiritum errores ut credant mendacio . . .” *Ibid.*, 12.

Christians ought to engage Muslims. Any command within Christian Scripture that would urge these Christians to engage Islam so that its followers' potential salvation might be realised (i.e., convert to Christianity) is swiftly dismembered with Eulogius' inventive exegesis.

In short, Christian mission ceased whenever and wherever it met Islam. Christians were thus to have nothing to do with Muslims. In this way, Eulogius' claim for an anti-Gospel predisposition was a strategy that would isolate Cordoban Christians from Muslims.

Mission Completed

Supporting Eulogius' argument for an Islamic anti-Gospel predisposition was his assertion that the essential mission of the Church to preach the Gospel throughout the entire world was complete. For Eulogius, this had already been carried out "by the voice of the apostles in the whole world."⁶³ In this case, there was little incentive to continue propagating a message that had already been proclaimed throughout the entire earth.⁶⁴ Perhaps not all had accepted it, but they were given an opportunity. If the mission of the Church was essentially complete, then Eulogius would have all the more reason to isolate himself from Muslims.

With this in mind, he can confidently insist that:

. . . the knowledge of the holy faith has passed through the crossroads of the entire world and has spread to all nations of the earth, so that we are confident that no part of the world is free from its light, particularly because the message of the [Apostles] has come to all the earth and to the ends of the world⁶⁵

Eulogius can then echo St. Paul's admonishment to the Church of Galatia and apply it to

Cordoban Christians:

⁶³ ". . . per totoum orbem apostolorum uocibus . . ." *Memoriale sanctorum*, III.10.11.

⁶⁴ *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 12.

⁶⁵ ". . . notitia sanctae fidei totius mundi compita penetravit [et] cunctas nationes terrae peragrans, nullam iam partem orbis expertem luminis eius fore confidimus, praesertim quia in omnem terram exiuit sonus apostolorum et in fines orbis terrae uerba illorum . . ." *Ibid.*, 18. Cf. Romans 10:18.

. . . if we confess that another doctrine, except that which the [Apostles] taught to the gentiles, is more anathema than word, just as the [Apostle] says: “If anyone is preaching to you another gospel other than what you received, it is anathema.”⁶⁶

In other words, if the Church’s mission was complete, then there could be no rival claim to divine truth (e.g., Islam). Anything that purported to be such should be condemned. This defined Eulogius’ actions towards Islam. It is in this light that the conversions he really seeks are those of wayward Cordoban Christians and his engagement with Muslims is limited to martyrdom.

Holy Cruelty

It would appear that Alvarus disagreed with his friend’s assertion that the mission of the Church was complete. In his view, “inside this Ishmaelite [Islamic] people there has not been until now any preacher . . . of the faith.”⁶⁷ Muslims, according to Alvarus, had not thus far been given their opportunity to hear the Gospel and so he commends the Cordoban martyrs for their efforts to demonstrate the truth before them. Yet it must be remembered that it was the return of Christ, contingent upon the Gospel being proclaimed (not necessarily accepted) in the whole world, that Alvarus is most concerned with. Thus, he has little interest in mission and his call for martyrdom – the manifestation of truth preached to Muslims – is really accompanied by propagation of what he believes is “holy cruelty” (*sancta crudelitas*).⁶⁸

The idea of holy cruelty was actually much older than Alvarus. When the early Church questioned God’s love and wisdom in allowing it to be persecuted so harshly, Tertullian (c. 160-240) responded by encouraging it with a surgical metaphor. He likened the

⁶⁶ *praeter quod apostoli gentibus tradiderunt, anathema magis esse quam uerbum fatemur, sicut dicit apostolus: ‘Si quid uobis euangelizauerit praeter quod accepistis, anathema sit’” Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 18. Cf. Galatians 1:9.

⁶⁷ “. . . in hac Ismahelitica gente nullus actenus extitit predicator per quod . . . fidei . . .” *Indiculus luminosus*, 10.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 11. See also Kedar, 17-18 and Bazar, 17-18.

Church's persecution to a scalpel in the hands of the divine surgeon. As with any medical treatment there would be pain for the patient – various elements must be cut away to make room for healing. “And the healing art,” Tertullian writes, “has manifestly an apparent cruelty In short, that man who is howling and groaning and bellowing in the hands of a physician will presently load the same hands with a fee, and proclaim that they are the best operators, and no longer affirm that they are cruel.”⁶⁹ For this reason, persecution continued, but only for the betterment of the souls of the ones God loved.

Jerome, whom Alvarus made extensive use of, adapts this surgical metaphor and applies it not to individual Christian souls, but to the body of Christ (i.e., the Church) in general. In this way, just as certain members of a body must at times be removed for the benefit of the entire body, so must certain members of the Church be eliminated so that the entire body of Christ might flourish. Like Tertullian, Jerome thus suggests that this holy cruelty – these harsh actions by God – only appeared to be cruel; in reality, holy cruelty brought revitalisation.⁷⁰

Alvarus goes a step further and interprets the actions of the Cordoban martyrs as holy cruelty, not against Cordoban Christians *per se* (although certain ones were in need of removal), but against Muslims. With Jerome as his guide, Alvarus further asserts that his notion of holy cruelty has a biblical precedent. In this way, he gives several examples, among them, the prophet Elijah, who was not afraid to face the prophets of Baal with his words and the sword (I Kings 18:19-40); Moses, who fearlessly opposed Egyptians and disobedient

⁶⁹ Tertullian *Scorpiace* (ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3 [Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999]), V:637.

⁷⁰ Jerome *Letters* (ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace and trans. W. H. Fremantle in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 6 [Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999]), XL.1:54. See also, Bazar, 17 and n. 16 regarding Augustine's influence above.

Israelites with holy cruelty (Exodus 7:14-12:29; 32:1-28); and Samuel, who decapitated the pagan king Agag whom Saul was meant to destroy (I Samuel 15:1-33).⁷¹

Like these men, the Cordoban martyrs were justified in their cruel hatred of Muslims. It was, in fact, a “perfect hatred” (*perfecto odio*),⁷² one which Eulogius feels would even justify the murder of Muḥammad if he were alive in the third/ninth century.⁷³ And much like Tertullian and Jerome, this cruelty only seemed malicious for Alvarus. In reality, the martyrs’ actions represented Christian piety. “‘Piety on behalf of God,’” Alvarus clarifies in Jerome’s words, “‘is indeed no cruelty.’”⁷⁴ In this, the message the martyrs preached was hardly meant for the eternal benefit of its Muslim listeners. Hateful as it was, it was instead simply meant to be proclaimed in their presence so that when they spurned it their eternal damnation would be secured. Traditional witnesses heralded the Gospel so that their listeners might be saved by its truth; the Cordoban martyrs, in Alvarus’ view, scorned Islam with their message of truth so that their listeners would despise it and be condemned. Their elimination would make way for Christians’ renewed health.

It is in the light of Alvarus’ holy cruelty that we must read his assessment of Muslims as a people to whom no one had preached the Gospel prior to the Cordoban martyrs. At first appearing to contradict Eulogius’ idea of a completed mission, Alvarus essentially reduces mission from a gentle invitation to a cruel provocation that would hasten Christ’s final judgement. Seen this way, neither Eulogius nor Alvarus leave much room for a traditional sense of mission. This brand of mission was essentially complete. What remained was a

⁷¹ Alvarus also offers Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16), David (Psalm 139:21-22 [Vul. 138:21-22]), Phinehas (Numbers 25:1-11), and Peter and Paul (Acts 13:6-11; 5:1-10) as evidence. In each case, holy violence is carried out either by or to the figures mentioned. *Indiculus luminosus*, 11. Cf. a similar sentiment by Eulogius in *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.20.

⁷² *Indiculus luminosus*, 11.

⁷³ *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.20. See also, Kedar, 17-18.

⁷⁴ “‘Non est enim crudelitas’ . . . ‘pro Deo pietas.’” *Indiculus luminosus*, 11.

need to secure the damnation of those who scorned the Gospel. It was this mentality that should define, according to Alvarus, Christian identity *vis-à-vis* Islam.

Summary

The ultimate outworking of holy cruelty – likely a full-fledged war against Islam – was hardly practical in third/ninth century Córdoba. Thus, Alvarus limits himself to a holy hatred of God’s enemies voiced in the preaching of invective against Islam.⁷⁵ In this, traditional mission to Muslims was set aside and Eulogius and Alvarus defined their relationship to Islam on the one hand by distance. On the other hand, in their abandonment of mission, Eulogius and Alvarus left room for an engagement of Muslims that was defined by martyrdom. In either case, the resulting definition was isolation from Islam.

This tension is perhaps most plain in Eulogius’ description of Rogellius, a monk from Parapanda in Granada, and Servus Dei (likely the Latinised form of ‘Abd Allāh), a monk “from the East” (*ab orientis*) who came to Granada as a pilgrim.⁷⁶ From Granada, the two monks travelled to Córdoba in 238/852. They did so with the express intent of becoming martyrs.⁷⁷ Upon their arrival, they entered the mosque, mixed among the worshippers there, and then “preach[ed] the Gospel, mock[ed] the sect of impiety, [and] censur[ed] their community.”⁷⁸ Eulogius adds that the monks did this so that certain ones might grow closer to the kingdom of heaven and others might be destroyed in hell.⁷⁹

Regardless of what Eulogius claims, his portrayal of Rogellius’ and Servus Dei’s actions, indeed those of most of the martyrs, leaves some doubt as to the authenticity of their desire to convert Muslims. The monks were surely aware of the reaction from Muslims that

⁷⁵ Kedar, 18.

⁷⁶ *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.13.1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ “. . . *praedicant euangelium, sectam impietatis subsannant, arguunt coetum.*” *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

their missionary endeavour would elicit, but to carry their tactic out in a mosque whilst Muslims worshipped suggests that their motives were rooted most deeply in their desire for certain martyrdom. Furthermore, being reasonably sure of an aggressive reaction to their preaching would ensure that the Muslims who heard them would reject their message and underscore the martyrs' ultimate desire to secure condemnation. Seen this way, the accent the martyrs place on achieving death at the hands of Gospel-rejecters and acquiring "heavenly rewards with their blood"⁸⁰ leaves serious doubt that the monks intended to engage Muslims in authentic mission.

Thus, the type of mission Eulogius and Alvarus promoted at once isolated them from Muslims and defined the contact they did have with Muslims by advocating martyrdom. Yet this latter act of witness was hardly intended for the benefit of Muslims. Instead, emphasis was placed on the ways in which the martyrs could secure their deaths. As a result, it was not so much that the martyrs discarded their fear and engaged Muslims whether or not such an act would end in death; they merely set their fear aside, circumvented traditional mission, and plunged headlong towards a sure death that would earn them a heavenly prize and their executioners' condemnation. Thus, Cordoban Christians, as far as Eulogius and Alvarus were concerned, were to define their purpose regarding Islam as "procuring the damnation of the Muslims rather than . . . securing their salvation."⁸¹

Eulogius, Alvarus, and New Characters in Old Stories

Eulogius' estimation of Islam as a heaven-sent evil (" . . . God sent to them the spirit of error so that they might believe in the lie" [II Thessalonians 2:11]), eliminates, as we argue above, Christian mission to Muslims. But it also provides us with various clues as to the

⁸⁰ " . . . *recessuri caelestia sanguine*" Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 17.

ways in which Eulogius sought to explain Islam, and in turn, his community's place in that history. For him, St. Paul could be made to say that Islam had its origins as a divinely sanctioned lie. By contrast, Christianity was defined as divinely sanctioned truth and must be so in a context that faced Islam. Thus, like other Christians who were confronted by Muslims and were forced to reconsider their theological identity, or at least the way they formulated it, both Eulogius and Alvarus used their writings to explain the historical emergence of Islam and their community's place in that event.⁸²

In this effort, Eulogius and Alvarus could delineate a fresh definition of their Christian identity that would account for their Christian community's stumbling before Islam and chart a course for their future as well. In order to complete this task, both Eulogius and Alvarus would turn to a familiar text. The Bible, as it did for earlier Christians, would function as a lens in which to view Islam and its story would be reshaped to accommodate a cast of third/ninth century Cordoban Christians and Muslims. As we shall see, explaining Islam in this way would be yet another strategy Eulogius and Alvarus deployed that would divide Muslims and Christians and define their community by its isolation from Islam.

Islam as Incentive for Christian Restoration

Eulogius and Alvarus are not entirely unique in their conclusions regarding Islam's purpose and origination. Like other Christians who faced the emergence of Islam and its rule, they quite naturally looked for answers to the vexing problem of Islam in the Bible. Thus, they had easily accessible biblical precedents that could explain their community's misfortune. Biblically speaking, calamity befell God's people as a result of their own sin and rejection of him. Likewise, Eulogius asserts that everything "the Lord has inflicted upon us"

⁸² For examples from other Christian communities in this regard, see the first five chapters of van Ginkel, et al, *Redefining Christian Identity*, 1-89.

(*Dominus nobis intulit*) – the replacement of Gothic rule by Muslims – is the result of the “just judgment of God” (*iustoque Dei iudicio*). For Eulogius, God was justified in allowing Islam “because of our sins” (*propter peccata nostra*).⁸³

Alvarus shared these feelings. In his characteristic fashion he was not slow to castigate Cordoban Christians. He believed that “our vices have brought us punishment” (*nostro uitio inlatum . . . flagellum*).⁸⁴ In essence, Christians’ errant ways provoked the judgment of an otherwise “Merciful Father” (*clementissimi patris*) and so Cordoban Christians deserved the “temporary sword” (*gladium temporalem*).⁸⁵ Consequently, Alvarus concluded “that the just judgment of the Lord has come justly against us.”⁸⁶ It was not without reason therefore that “the Lord gave us to the beast to be eaten away.”⁸⁷ In this way, an old paradigm for assessing calamity was revived and applied to a new context.

Islam, then, as we note above, originated as a seductive device intended to condemn would-be Muslims. But more than this, God also authorised it to act as a redemptive tool for his Church. According to Alvarus, God allowed it so that he might test and refine Cordoban Christians.⁸⁸ As Eulogius confirms, God would judge their sins – and so Islam ran rampant throughout much of Spain – but so he might also restore Cordoban Christians. For these reasons, Alvarus urged his readers to open their eyes and repent of their sins. If they did, Islam would serve its purpose; it would pass away and Cordoban Christians might return to their former glory.

Accordingly, wherever one might find Muslims, one would also see Christian sin.

The Cordoban Christian community, defined by Eulogius and Alvarus in regard to Islam, was

⁸³ *Documentum martyriale*, 18.

⁸⁴ *Indiculus luminosus*, 18.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸⁶ “. . . iudicium Domini iustum in nobis uideamus seuisse . . .” *Ibid.*, 19.

⁸⁷ “. . . tradidit nos Dominus . . . bestie conrodendos.” *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* Cf. Cynthia Villagomez, “Christian Salvation through Muslim Domination: Divine Punishment and Syriac Apocalyptic Expectation in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries,” *Medieval Encounters* 4, no. 3 (1998): 203-218.

therefore a sinful one. As the decades and even centuries passed with no change in Islamic rule, this assessment could potentially live on with each new generation. Consequently, Eulogius and Alvarus, well over a century after Muslims entered Spain, remained confident that their generation's sin married their community to Islam. Eulogius and Alvarus, then, define Cordoban Christians amid Islam in the same way a doctor might go about diagnosing a disease and prescribing methods to eradicate it. According to their diagnosis, the body of Christ in Córdoba was sick – it was infested with Muslims. This disease was the direct result of their unhealthy habits and deviant behaviour – their sin. Curing Cordoban Christians' sickness and curing their damaged religious identity *vis-à-vis* Islam meant undergoing intense treatments of repentance.

Such an assessment would not only constitute a convenient and rather self-absorbed explanation of Islam. It would also, as Michael Morony deduces, “function as a means of coping.”⁸⁹ By emphasising Cordoban Christian sin in relation to Islam, Eulogius and Alvarus could explain what they felt to be genuine calamity. If they understood the suffering they felt, then they could endure and focus on what might be the key to righting their community's ways and improving its condition. Moreover, in an odd twist, when a righteous few emphasised communal transgressions as a marker of identity, they could console themselves as “the true believers . . . in a world of sin.”⁹⁰ Thus, Eulogius, Alvarus, and the Cordoban martyrs they claimed to speak for rise to the surface as the virtuous minority capable of calling the entire Christian community in Córdoba to repentance and its restoration over and above Islam.

Perhaps most of all, though, this method for explaining Islam's origin could serve as a strategy to reinforce the authority leaders like Eulogius and Alvarus had to stamp out deviant

⁸⁹ Michael G. Morony, “History and Identity in the Syrian Churches,” in *Redefining Christian Identity*, ed. van Ginkel, et al, 7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

behaviour and define their community.⁹¹ If Cordoban Christians must repent of their sins as a response to Islam, then they must seek this absolution from priests who interpreted Islam like Eulogius did. This leaves Eulogius in a rather powerful position and he becomes a bridge between the Cordoban Christian community in its corrupted state and what it could be when it was absolved. It is likely with this in mind, that we must view Eulogius' temporary refusal to administer mass.⁹² This protest leveraged his interpretation of Islam and his view of Christianity in light of it such that the outworking of his vocation was dependent upon his community's compliance.

In the same way, Eulogius' and Alvarus' ability to identify Islam's origin reinforced the authority they had to explain Islam and expanded their role in directing Cordoban Christians towards restoration.⁹³ As a result, their authority became a prod they could use to nudge Christians in the direction they thought they should go. With this in mind, Eulogius admonished his readers to listen to what he said⁹⁴ and Alvarus compared his perspective to the light of Christ.⁹⁵ If Cordoban Christians were to redefine themselves *vis-à-vis* of Islam – if they were to eliminate the sin that caused it and thereby eliminate Islam – then they must not deviate from Eulogius' and Alvarus' proposed communal identity.

Islam as a New Heresy to Distance From

In much the same way as earlier Christians, Eulogius and Alvarus also set out to

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹² *Vita Eulogii*, II.6-7. In the same light, consider García Moreno's statement (309-310): "... although having fallen under the cruel domination of the Arabs, [Christians] were still the collective object of their clerics' teachings, and part of a single Spanish Church still under the doctrinal primacy of the metropolitan see in Toledo." This is especially interesting and applicable to Eulogius' authority in light of his unrealised election to succeed Bishop Wistremirus as bishop of Toledo. See *Vita Eulogii*, III.10.

⁹³ Morony, 11.

⁹⁴ "Because just as it is the duty of those to whom the office of preaching has been given to preach, so it is necessary for you to listen" (*Quia sicut nobis incumbit officiositas praedicandi, ita uobis subest necessitas audiendi*). *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.4.

⁹⁵ See our discussion of this point in Chapter 2, p. 100.

highlight Islam's historical foundations as a heretical sect. If Christians could understand themselves in light of Islam by referring to biblical precedents, then they might also refer to historical precedents. In this, Christians could use as a model the early Church's dealings with heretics and heresies. It is hardly surprising, then, that Alvarus frequently refers to Islam as a heresy and offers Muḥammad as an anti-Christ and heresiarch as well. For his part, Eulogius is consistent in his descriptions of Muḥammad as a false prophet.

In this light, Eulogius did not fashion his texts after early Christian martyrologies simply because it supported his portrayal of the Cordoban martyrs' actions as valid martyrdoms. For centuries, the Church had classified various emerging doctrines and heterodoxies as heresy and certain of the Church's members made it their task to write scathing condemnations of them. Thus, Eulogius had a vast library to draw from that would shape his view of Islam. Quite naturally, then, Cordoban Muslims are cast as Roman persecutors and Muḥammad becomes very much like early heretics who denied the divinity of Christ and tampered with his message. It is little wonder then that Eulogius defined his identity amid Islam as isolation. Like the early Church's efforts to excommunicate and exile those they deemed unorthodox, so Eulogius would distance himself from Islam and seek to curb any influence Muslims might have upon his community.

With this in mind, Islam was also portrayed as the latest in a long line of heresies. More than just a revision, however, Islam was the powerful tip of the heretical spear. So, whilst other heresies appeared on the peninsula from time to time, those who developed them were often accused of falling under the influence of Islamic doctrine.⁹⁶ Furthermore, as John Henderson observes, marking out Islam in this way was a rhetorical strategy that "served to gird the faithful for an imminent armageddon against the most terrible of foes."⁹⁷ A

⁹⁶ For more on this, the so-called heresy of adoptionism in particular, see Chapter 4.

⁹⁷ Henderson, 18.

multiplicity of heresies, then, could be absorbed into one arch-heresy, the defeat of which could also spell the downfall of all the evil that lay behind it. Characterising Islam in this way would thus help to explain it, galvanise Cordoban Christians against it, and leave them defined as the uncontested bearers of religious truth.

In the same way, Islam was also criticised as a parochial newcomer. Like other false messages, Islam emerged in a particular area subsequent to the message of Christ. Thus, behind Eulogius' reminder that "no part of the world is free from [Christianity's] light" (*nullam iam partem orbis expertem luminis eius*), lay hints of Islam's particularity and youth.⁹⁸ As a result, Muḥammad's message should be discounted, for its confinement to Arabic and lack of antiquity fell far short of Christianity as a universal, time-tested faith. In this, Islam is seen in the light of earlier heresies, false-doctrines that should be defeated before they matured and spread.⁹⁹ Again, then, old stories are revived to explain new ones, and in the process, a way is made for a definition of Cordoban Christian identity amid Islam.

Reinterpreting Christian History

A final method for explaining Islam that would shape Cordoban Christian religious identity was reinterpreting Christian history. To do this, Eulogius and Alvarus would once again turn to the Bible. This time however, they ransacked the text, seeking to locate Christians and Muslims within it. When they did, biblical figures and events were compared with contemporary ones and both were described in the same way.¹⁰⁰ By doing so, they could give an assessment of Islam and instruct Cordoban Christians on how God would have them respond to Muslims.

⁹⁸ *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 18.

⁹⁹ Cf., Henderson, 11 and J. J. van Ginkel, "History and Community: Jacob of Edessa and the West Syrian Identity," in *Redefining Christian Identity*, ed. van Ginkel, et al, 72-73.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Morony, 5.

With this in mind, in his earliest text Eulogius compares Cordoban Christians to the Israelites. This comparison allows him to identify Muslims as the oppressor and play the part of both Egyptians and Assyrians.¹⁰¹ Eulogius is then able to make the subtle suggestion that Cordoban Christians are oppressed in the same way that the Israelites were and that communal sins were the chains that bound both ancient Jews and third/ninth century Christians alike. In the same breath, Eulogius asserts that his community, if not in deed then at least in word, should abstain from mixing with Muslims just as Lot fled the degradation of Sodom before its destruction.¹⁰² Eulogius also calls upon the Lord for strength amid oppression and reminds him that he “. . . not only liberated your former Israelites, when they had groaned under the awful yoke of the Egyptians, but you also completely destroyed Pharaoh and his army in the middle of the sea”¹⁰³ It seems clear that Eulogius and those like him were the new Israelites awaiting God’s judgment upon Muslims, the new Pharaohs.

In essence, what Eulogius has done is to take bits of biblical history and recast the characters with his allegorical interpretive method. By doing so, he could use as a reference point a plot that was already interpreted; it was perfectly clear who the protagonists and antagonists were and the ending had already been revealed. By injecting contemporary characters and events into this history, Eulogius could provide for his readers a blueprint for Islam and an ideal response to it. In essence, Cordoban Christians might better understand themselves in reference to Islam if they were able to refer to their biblical counterparts and the enemies that oppressed them. Thus, Cordoban Christians become the latest righteous

¹⁰¹ *Documentum martyriale*, 18. Cf. Lamentations 5:2-8 which Eulogius uses here. Cf. also *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.16.1.

¹⁰² *Documentum martyriale*, 18. Cf. Genesis 19:12ff.

¹⁰³ “. . . Israelitas tuos olim sub diro Aegyptiorum iugo gementes non solum potente dextera liberasti, uerum etiam Pharaonem et exercitum eius in medio mari . . . omnino contriuiisti.” *Documentum martyriale*, 25. Cf. *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 10 and *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.13 where Eulogius reinterprets the same history and applies it to the lack of miracles produced by the martyrs *à la* the Egyptian magicians who were able to duplicate Moses’ miracles. He did so in order to diminish the importance of miracles in validating martyrdom.

minority oppressed by Muslims, the latest in a long line of the Church's opposition. Maintaining the integrity of this biblical drama meant acknowledging God's loving chastisement (Islam) by repenting of one's sins (the essential cause of calamity) and fostering an environment that would allow for the elimination of chastisement and calamity.

Alvarus did not depart from Eulogius' strategy. In fact, he seems to perfect it and use it to its fullest and most inventive extent. He, too, understands Muslims in a manner which may suggest a re-application of biblical history. In this way, though Alvarus refers to Muslims in a variety of ways, he includes curious references to them as "Chaldeans" (*Caldeorum*).¹⁰⁴ Of course, for the medieval reader, a reference to Chaldeans brought to mind the science and learning of ancient Babylonia. This was particularly true for both Christians and Muslims alike in Islamic Spain – the gateway to medieval Europe for scientific knowledge from Muslims further east.¹⁰⁵ But medieval Christian readers would also be quite able to recall a biblical history where Chaldeans played the role of oppressors to the Israelites.¹⁰⁶ Much like Eulogius, then, Alvarus' readers might be compelled to view their circumstances through the lens of Christian history.

Moreover, as we note above, this process of naming Muslims (as Egyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Amalekites, and even Arabs and, Ishmaelites) demonstrate Alvarus' (and even Eulogius') decidedly ethnic view of Islam insofar as Muslims are portrayed as the oppressing kingdom and reviled outsider. With this view in mind, Alvarus could thus identify

¹⁰⁴ *Indiculus luminosus*, 1 and 35. See also, *ibid.*, 22, but applied here to Nebuchadnezzar and the historical Chaldeans and compared to Muslims. Cf. also Alvarus' description of Muslims as coming from "the region of the East, the darkness of the century" (trans. Delgado León, 89: *la región del oriente las tinieblas del siglo* [cf. Chapter 2, n. 136]). *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰⁵ See, for instance, Šā'id al-Andalusī, *Science in the Medieval World: "Book of the Category of Nations,"* trans. and ed. Sema'an I. Salem and Alok Kumar (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1996), 18-19. See also, *Indiculus luminosus*, 35 where he mentions the Christian youth of Islamic Spain and the eagerness with which they read "the books of the Chaldeans" (*uolumina Caldeorum*).

¹⁰⁶ See, for instance, the discussion of the Babylonian exile – when Jews in the biblical kingdom of Judah were conquered and deported – in Daniel 1:1-4, II Chronicles 36:6-7, and Jeremiah 52:28-30.

himself with God's chosen people; their oppressors become enemies and gentiles.¹⁰⁷ Armed with this reinterpretation of biblical history, Alvarus could also respond to his oppressors in the same way that his biblical counterparts did – by creating a distance and disdain that might support God's action on his community's behalf.

In similar fashion, Alvarus is keen to give new meaning to biblical images by applying them to Muḥammad. Thus, those features of the Leviathan and Behemoth in the book of Job which are most unbecoming and evil are accentuated and connected by Alvarus to the Prophet's beastly sexual cravings, cunning deceit, and overall ungodliness. We shall see more below what role these revolting portrayals of Muḥammad play in his vision of Christian identity. For now, in the context of simply explaining Islam, Alvarus' comparisons would ground his elucidation of Islam in Christian Scripture. In this light, Islam could be explained and understood using the Bible. It would be forced to submit to what the biblical text could say, or in Alvarus' case, to what it could be made to say about it. And in this, old definitions of righteous ones and evil foes would be made new.

Finally, there is a strategy most notable with Alvarus to give immediate application of biblical prophecies to events that occurred in his own day in Spain.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the prophesied powerful king in the book of Daniel who would depose weaker rulers and introduce a new law became, for Alvarus, Muḥammad. The end of Muslim domination in Spain is also thought to be derived from the same passage (i.e., Daniel 7:23-25). In turn, Muḥammad then becomes, at the very least, a forerunner of the apocalyptic Antichrist.¹⁰⁹ In casting Muḥammad in this role, Alvarus made of the Prophet a villain of biblical proportions and polished the biblical lens through which his readers could view the events occurring around them. Guided by Alvarus, what they saw was an environment that was defined as decidedly

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Marony, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Dan. 11:36-39 and even Alvarus' use of 1 John 2:18.

anti-Christian.¹¹⁰ This made Cordoban Christians and Muslims incompatible and reinforced the view of Islam as an enemy, an entity that Christians should avoid and work to eliminate.

Summary

In all of this, Eulogius and Alvarus are able to offer in their own ways an explanation of Islam using sources with themes that their readers would be familiar with. Essentially, their explanation is a well-known drama with a different cast. Biblical villains and historical heresiarchs are now Muslims and God's righteous minority are those he has chosen from the Cordoban Christian community. Seen this way, it became clear who Cordoban Christians were in light of Islam and what they were to do in response to it.

For both Eulogius and Alvarus, Islam was to their community the manifestation of God's loving chastisement. If Muslims were present on the peninsula, then it was because sin was present among its Christians. So, like their biblical counterparts, Christians were called to repentance from the sin that necessitated their punishment. Freedom from Islam, then, came with freedom from sin. Similarly, Eulogius' and Alvarus' position in relation to Islam, seen from the lens of Christian history, is one of distance. If the heretics of old were excommunicated and exiled, then so must Cordoban Christians distance themselves from Muslims – the latest bearers of heresy. Restoration in the eyes of God came when they could define themselves as free of heretical influence. Thus, for Eulogius and Alvarus, the Bible and the ecclesiastical texts they favoured offered not just guidelines in which one could better understand or respond to Islam. More than this, these texts became comprehensive accounts

¹¹⁰ See Wolf's comment that Alvarus' discussion of Muḥammad as a forerunner of the Antichrist did not necessarily indicate that he thought that the eschatological end was near; as a forerunner, he merely precipitated the coming of *the* Antichrist. See, Wolf, "Muḥammad as Antichrist in Ninth-Century Córdoba," 14-15.

able to fully categorise and explain Islam in such a way as to define for Cordoban Christians what its identity *vis-à-vis* Muslims should be.

Eulogius and Alvarus on the Other Side of Revulsion

Among the most striking features of Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts are the bold attempts they make to degrade Islam and besmirch its Prophet. As we see in our discussion of the texts in Chapter 2, these attempts are at times simply meant to portray Muslims as a nuisance to Christians. In many other passages, however, we read what might best be described as outlandish cheap-shots and boorish displays of near-pornographic claims. In either case, projecting the revolting image of Islam that Eulogius and Alvarus did may have been the most effective strategy for distancing themselves from Muslims, for it divided Christians and Muslims along the most simple of lines: purity and impurity.

In fact, if Eulogius and Alvarus were to successfully accentuate their Christian community's purity and supremacy – if they were to curb conversions to Islam and absorption of its culture – then there would be no better way than to highlight Muslims' utter shamefulness. As William Ian Miller so insightfully asserts, a polemic of revulsion could be a strategy deployed to “confirm others as belonging to a lower status and thus in the zero-sum game of rank necessarily defin[e] oneself as higher.”¹¹¹ Islam, its perceived unseemly qualities in particular, would thus become a foil to Eulogius' and Alvarus' purity; a revolting image of Muslims was made to reflect by Eulogius and Alvarus a pleasing self-image for the Cordoban Christian community.

¹¹¹ William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), x.

Deploying this strategy would emphasise Muslims' "profound difference as a source of . . . pollution that needed to be controlled and dominated."¹¹² In this light, Eulogius' and Alvarus' strategy of revulsion may also have incited hatred and disdain for Muslims.¹¹³ And so they dehumanise and even demonise Muslims, erecting before them walls of hatred and revulsion¹¹⁴ that could effectively isolate and protect them from Islam's undesired influence.

Offending Christians' Senses

Perhaps unwittingly, the image of Islam Eulogius and Alvarus projected could be so complete and so offensive that it would penetrate each of the traditional five senses. So, whilst Alvarus acknowledges the attraction some Cordoban Christians had of various auditory elements of Islam, both he and Eulogius are quick to accentuate those aspects that made Christians' ears bleed. In this way, Arabic may have had an "admirable sound," but it was essentially "meaningless matter."¹¹⁵ Islamic prayers may be performed with beauty and said with "stylish eloquence" (*eleganti facundia*), and as such were read and admired by Cordoban Christians, but they were ultimately mindless repetitions unbecoming of salvation.¹¹⁶ Simply put, Islamic doctrine, especially those points where it contradicted Christian theology, was "sacrilegious for all [Christians'] ears" (*sacrilegum . . . totis catholicorum auditibus*).¹¹⁷

Most notably, the *adhān* was received by Eulogius and Alvarus with such disdain that they could not bear to hear it. Hardly virtuous to their ears, it was likened by Eulogius to a donkey's bray¹¹⁸ and was to Alvarus a "loud and monstrous battle-cry" (*barritu inormi et*

¹¹² Cuffel, 239.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 47, 242. Cf. Tolan's "walls of hatred and contempt," in Tolan, *Sons of Ishmael*, 135.

¹¹⁵ As Alvarus says, quoting Gregory the Great, "they have the insensible metallic sound of good speech, but they have no sense of good living" (*More metalli insensibilem sonum bene loquendi habent, set sensum bene uiuendi non habent*). *Indiculus luminosus*, 27.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹⁷ *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.7.

¹¹⁸ Eulogius calls it "impious braying" (*impietatis ruditum*). *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 19.

monstruoso).¹¹⁹ More than simply obnoxious, however, the *adhān* represented a public declaration of blasphemy.¹²⁰ As such, its content was also an offence to their ears and religious sensibilities. Moreover, the *mu'adhdhins* must block their ears with their fingers when calling the prayer, or so Eulogius thought, to keep from hearing what must be detestable even to them.¹²¹ In this, the very message of Islam remained an offence to Christians. They could not bear to hear it, and it fell far short of the divine and holy melodies that Eulogius claimed defined his community.¹²²

As difficult as the *adhān* may have been to hear, it was that much more unsightly for Eulogius and Alvarus to look upon and they are both unforgiving in their portrayals of it. In keeping with his description of its sound, Eulogius observes the *mu'adhdhins* calling out the *adhān*, “like donkeys, their jaws gaping, their filthy mouths open”¹²³ Similarly, Alvarus writes that the *mu'adhdhins* cry out with “their snouts gaping like savage beasts, their lips hanging down, their throats belching”¹²⁴ Like a donkey’s bray, then, the call to prayer was as unpleasant to view as it was to hear. Hardly a pious sight, it was a beastly, disgusting, and offensive spectacle to behold.

In other ways, the sight of Muslims’ faces was a fearful one¹²⁵ and their moral degradation made them simply filthy to look upon.¹²⁶ Finally, if various Christians sounded like Muslims in their use of Arabic, many of the same ones also looked like Muslims in the way they dressed, with whom they could be seen working or associating with, and even in

¹¹⁹ *Indiculus luminosus*, 25.

¹²⁰ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 132.

¹²¹ *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 19.

¹²² *Documentum martyriale*, 11 and *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 34. For their part, Muslims heard church bells with similar disdain. See, for instance, *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.21; *Indiculus luminosus*, 6; and Tolán’s treatment in *Sons of Ishmael*, 148-151.

¹²³ *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 19 and trans. Tolán, *Sons of Ishmael*, 152.

¹²⁴ *Indiculus luminosus*, 25 and trans. Tolán, *Sons of Ishmael*, 154. Note also that this battle-cry (*barritu*) can also indicate an elephant’s trumpeting. This, then, could be yet another beastly image of Islam’s call to prayer.

¹²⁵ *Documentum martyriale*, 13.

¹²⁶ *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.20.

their choice to be circumcised. In this, some Arabised and certainly Islamicised Christians became to Eulogius and Alvarus as unsightly as Muslims and could not be looked upon without disgust. They, too, would be an unsightly foil to the pleasant and undefiled appeal that Eulogius and Alvarus felt should define Cordoban Christians.

This sort of Christian-Muslim mixing, as hideous as it was to behold with one's eyes, would also represent a pollutant. Christianity and Islam were simply not to touch in this way and so this would be an affront to the type of contact expected of Christians. As a result, contact with Muslims or Islam, whether it came through friendship, employment, cultural attraction, or religious conversion, is described by Eulogius and Alvarus as staining oneself.¹²⁷

Islam itself is also considered a stain and a noxious pollutant.¹²⁸ In essence, Muslims were to be avoided as one might hope to avoid spilling something on oneself. One would not want to sully the pure with a splash of the impure. Following close on the heels of such unthinkable contact would also be the visual offense that the Islamic stain would bring. Thus, like a permanently stained shirt that must be thrown out, it would simply be best for Cordoban Christians to avoid the embarrassing and harmful contact that might come with such inappropriate mixing.

Eulogius and Alvarus go even further by describing the Islamic stain as a stench and a foul smell. In this way, avoiding opposition to Islam or favouring Muslim's culture were actions that gave off a "foul odour" (*fetoribus*).¹²⁹ In fact, these were the same sorts of smells

¹²⁷ E.g., *ibid.*, III.14 and *Indiculus luminosus*, 6 and 20. Cf. *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.21 where Eulogius notes that Muslims share a similar disdain: ". . . many of them consider us unworthy of touching their clothing and curse us if we approach them, considering it in truth a great defilement if we mix with them" (. . . *multi ex eis tactu indumentorum suorum nos indignos diiudicent propiusque sibimet accedere exsecentur, magnam scilicet coinquinationem existimantes si in aliquot rerum suarum admisceamur*).

¹²⁸ See, for instance, *Indiculus luminosus*, 31 and *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.7, II.8.5, III.7.3, and III.10.11.

¹²⁹ *Indiculus luminosus*, 9.

(*fetoribus*) that the lecherous Muḥammad exuded.¹³⁰ Furthermore, Christians who condemned the Cordoban martyrs, and in so doing, rejected God's truth, are described by Alvarus as "dress[ing] with foul-smelling skin" (*induimus olida pelle*).¹³¹ In a twist, then, Christians who flirted with the enemy were in the eyes of their more pious Christian brothers and sisters sheep dressed in wolves' clothing. Such a cross-over, in Alvarus' nose, stunk.

Cordoban Christians, like Eulogius and Alvarus, were meant to be on the other side of this wretched stench. When they were, their smell, like the martyrs in Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts, would fill rooms with a "wonderfully sweet aroma" (*miro suauitatis odore*) and a "pleasant fragrance" (*suauissimi odoris*).¹³² Their very faith was like a pleasing perfume that wafted about them.¹³³ This dichotomy of scents – the pleasant fragrance of Christians and the foul stench of Muslims – would be an effective tool for defining good and evil. As Cuffel argues: "To impute stench or fragrance to a person was to consign him or her symbolically to the world of materiality, and, potentially, evil, or to the divine realms."¹³⁴ And so the smell of Islam and Muslims made them evil; the sweet fragrance of Christianity, by contrast, marked Christians out as divine.

Rounding off the image of Islam as a sensual offence were Eulogius' and Alvarus' descriptions of it as "poisonous grass" (*herbae morbidae*) intended to deceive Christ's flock.¹³⁵ To be deceived by Islam and taste its poison was to ingest death itself.¹³⁶ For Alvarus, converting to Islam or even sheepishly ignoring the danger of its message was

¹³⁰ Ibid., 24. See also, *ibid.*, 29 ("not . . . a good odour" [*nulli . . . boni odoris*]) and 30 ("the stench of cadavres" [*putorem cadauerum*]).

¹³¹ Ibid., 15.

¹³² *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 34. See also Alvarus' response to Eulogius' letter to him that prefaces the *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.

¹³³ Ibid., II.7.2.

¹³⁴ Cuffel, 36.

¹³⁵ *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.1. See also II.4.3 where the message of Islam is a "deadly potion" (*letalī succo*) and "poisonous preaching" (*uirulento praedicamine*) and *Liber apologeticus martyrum* 19 where it is a seductive "venom" (*ueneno*).

¹³⁶ *Indiculus luminosus*, 27.

“drinking a potion tasting of deadly germs.”¹³⁷ Thus, Islam was not only harmful, but repulsive as well. It might also be seen as contagious if one dared to even taste it. For his part, Eulogius is abhorrently clear: when Muslims taught their “venomous doctrine” (*uenenosum dogma*) to Christians, they vainly offered a “cup from a rotten sewer” (*cloacae putrientis poculum*) to those who were happily accustomed to the taste of “heavenly manna (*caelesti . . . manna*).”¹³⁸ In this sense, Islam was a foil to Christianity; its insipidness only accentuated Christianity’s tasty and heavenly delight.

For a consummate image of sensual revulsion, Eulogius and Alvarus would focus on Muḥammad. In Eulogius’ case, it was the Prophet’s death that was disgusting and he demonstrated this in his utilisation of an anonymous author’s biography of Muḥammad. As we recall from Chapter 2, this account asserts that Muḥammad predicted he would be resurrected three days after his death by the angel Gabriel. This failed to materialise and the anonymous author writes, “[attracted] by the stench [of Muḥammad’s rotting corpse], some dogs immediately came near instead of an angel and devoured the side of his body.”¹³⁹

At play here, of course, is the disgust related to a decaying body, both in terms of what it looked like, and as this author relates, what it smelled like. Alongside this, though, is a less-than subtle comparison to Christ. Unaffected by the cycle of life and death, Christ’s body was resurrected, as promised, untainted. At his former tomb were left heavenly angels. Quite the opposite, Muḥammad’s body was rejected and forced to submit to the impure culmination of natural biology.¹⁴⁰ No angels followed his death. Instead, his impure body become a meal for dogs – impure beasts – and he returned to the same dirt that these animals were accustomed to eating.

¹³⁷ “. . . *potjones liuamus, germina letifera pregustamus . . .*” Ibid., 6.

¹³⁸ *Memoriale sanctorum*, II.7.2.

¹³⁹ “*Statimque uice angelica ad eius foetorem canes ingressi latus eius deuorauerunt.*” *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 16.

¹⁴⁰ Cuffel, 26.

The implications of this display of sensual disgust were clear: beyond underscoring the falsity of Muḥammad's prophetic office, the comparison to Christ suggested that Eulogius, like him, was defined as a sweet-smelling, heaven-bound soul. Muḥammad and those that followed him, was altogether earthly and impure.¹⁴¹ In this, the barriers of revulsion that defined and separated Eulogius from Muslims would be all the more firmly planted.

Dehumanising Muslims

For Alvarus, it was Muḥammad's life that was disgusting.¹⁴² Instead of assaulting Christian senses, however, Alvarus is intent on disgusting his readers in general and ensuring that they read about the Prophet with a shriek. Thus, he shocks his readers with the details he shares by dehumanising Muḥammad, and by extension, all Muslims. In this light, he mentions the usual Christian accusations: Muḥammad's lust for women and loose sexual morals. Other references, though, point towards a strategy of "hypermasculinity" whereby Muḥammad's "excessive masculinity became a negative category with which to make" him and his followers something other than human and thereby strengthen barriers of revulsion.¹⁴³ In this way, Muḥammad's genitalia, both in size and productivity, were like that of a donkey or a horse. Likewise, in his brothel-like paradise, Muḥammad's sexual longevity, along with those who followed him, would be equal to seventy men.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 76-77, 226.

¹⁴² For these passages, see our discussion of Alvarus in Chapter 2 and the *Indiculus luminosus*, 23.

¹⁴³ Cuffel, 118-119. Similarly, Alvarus' references to the painless restoration of virginity for heavenly hours (*hūr*) might be seen from the perspective of Christian readers as a sort of "hyperfemininity." If so, it would have the same function of shocking and disgusting readers and setting Islam and Muslims out as debase.

¹⁴⁴ The rigorous theological views and restrictions of sex even within marriage, common in medieval Christianity, must have added an extra measure of sinfulness to various Christian views of sex in Islam, already fraught with apparent excess. Of course, these restrictions represented only an *ideal* Christian view of sex, not necessarily the complete *realistic* sexual practice among medieval Christians. See Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 162ff,

What Cuffel refers to in this regard as “hypermascularity” is, in essence, an effort to reform human qualities until they become excessive. In other words, they would be very much like animals. In this sense, the references above make Muḥammad and his followers rather animal-like in their excessive sexuality, and in this, they were disgusting and revolting. In short, they were abnormal and un-human. Rounding off this dehumanising image of Muslims are Alvarus’ comparisons of Muḥammad to Job’s Behemoth and Leviathan. This comparison would portray the Prophet in a rather beastly manner straightaway. Yet more connections would underscore this image, and so Muḥammad is said to have been illiterate like a common animal and craved sex like a beast. This rather un-human image, by contrast, placed Alvarus in all the more pleasing light.

Demonising Muslims

In order to solidify an image of Muslims as disgusting and abnormal, Alvarus would also seek to connect them with pagan deities and demonic forces. In this way, contributing to their image as revolting and un-human, Muslims would now also become other-worldly. So, Alvarus asserted that Muḥammad exhibited sexual prowess *à la* Aphrodite/Venus. Consequently, the potency of his “foul-smelling loins” (*olidi lumbi*) was not equalled by less than forty men. This in no way elevated the Prophet. Instead, as Alvarus notes, his “abundant fertility” (*pinguemque habundantjam*) was not given to him by God the Father, but by pagan deities. Thus, much like the many other crude references, this one debased Muḥammad and made all Muslims un-human and even pagan.¹⁴⁵ In turn, Alvarus’ connection to the true God was made all the more secure.

229-232; Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, 108-110; and Stephen Haliczer, *Sexuality in the Confessional: A Sacrament Profaned* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3.

¹⁴⁵ *Indiculus luminosus*, 23.

In the same way, comparisons of Muḥammad to Christ would inevitably leave the Prophet looking not just un-Christ-like, but rather anti-Christ as well. In this light, Muḥammad is continually referred to by Alvarus as the forerunner of the Antichrist. Comparisons of him to Job's Behemoth, a beast who preferred sleeping in the shade, suggest his connection to darkness. Like Job's Leviathan, he was a slithering, satanic deceiver. Eulogius even adds that he was demon-possessed and his alleged revelations were demonically induced.¹⁴⁶ References like these effectively demonised Muslims and characterised everything about them as devilish. They widened the barriers that had been erected by Eulogius and Alvarus between Christianity and Islam and helped to ensure their self-definition as pure *vis-à-vis* impure Muslims.

Summary

This image of Islam projected by Eulogius and Alvarus would be so complete that it would be difficult for readers not to grasp. In fact, this strategy of revulsion was likely more effective than a theological exposition may have been. For by reducing the enemy to filth, Eulogius and Alvarus translated theological condemnation into “images of physically disgusting people or behaviour” and thereby “created simplified categories of good and evil.”¹⁴⁷ In doing so, they created a paradigm of judgment that was easily grasped and deployed by their readers. Furthermore, by firmly planting this paradigm in the minds of their readers, they could unleash their strategy for erecting barriers of hatred and revulsion with greater and more wide-spread success. In turn, Eulogius' and Alvarus' self-image could become a communal identity with greater ease and effectiveness.

¹⁴⁶ See, for instance, *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 16 and *Indiculus luminosus*, 27.

¹⁴⁷ Cuffel, 7.

In the end, these symbolic barriers would act as boundaries between religious and/or cultural communities. Such boundaries would not only isolate Cordoban Christians, and thereby prevent inter-faith mixing, but they would also define them in rather bold terms. Thus, by drawing the two communities together in a comparative foil, Eulogius and Alvarus could ultimately drive the two apart in reality. If Muslims were repulsive in nearly every possible way, then Christians, defined as thoroughly and divinely undefiled, would be encouraged to avoid them in favour of maintaining their self-image of heavenly purity.¹⁴⁸

Eulogius and Alvarus as Unveilers of Authentic Islam

As a final strategy to define their community, Eulogius and Alvarus would frame large portions of their works around the task of revealing to their readers the elements of Islam that seemed to them to be unknown or ignored. If Cordoban Christians found elements of Islam and Muslim culture attractive and worthy of imitation, then they clearly must be ignorantly unaware of who Muslims really were and what they truly believed. Thus, Eulogius and Alvarus would expose for them the evil that lay beneath a veneer of cultural allure. In the same way, if various Cordobans were bold enough to assert elements of shared devotion between Christianity and Islam, then Eulogius and Alvarus would be keen to destroy any bridge that might serve to draw Christians and Muslims together. Thus, they purport to unveil the “real” Islam. In doing so, they gave Cordoban Christians reason to distance themselves from Muslims and define themselves by their isolation from them.

¹⁴⁸ The emphasis on heavenly purity as a definition of Christian identity is suggestive of Wolf’s discussion of the Cordoban martyrs’ motives. As Wolf argues, the martyrs did what they did out of penitential angst. Many of them had already withdrawn from the defiling effects of society by entering monasteries. Their martyrdoms might then be seen as a culmination of their desire for heavenly purity and distance from the degradation stemming from earthly-living, Islamic or otherwise. See Wolf, 43, 108-119.

Unveiling Islam's Evil Underbelly

In more than one way, the many strategies Eulogius and Alvarus deployed can be recast as a means by which to unveil Islam's true identity to Christians. In this way, Islam and its culture were hardly attractive. Once exposed, it could be seen to be a self-condemnation, a judgment for sin, or a refining test from God. Islam's genealogy of heresy could also be further demonstrated and Eulogius and Alvarus could reveal the place Muslims held within Christian Scripture. In all of this, Cordoban Christians would be made to feel uncomfortable with the elements of Islamic and Arabic culture that they thought were attractive. By having Islam turned over and being made to view its evil underbelly, Cordoban Christians would theoretically have all the reasons they needed to avoid it. In like manner, it would be difficult for them to convert to or acculturate that which, once exposed, was in fact repugnant. It would be difficult to be attracted to something that was ultimately beneath them as humans and nearer to Satan.

For all Eulogius does towards this end, it is Alvarus' efforts that remain as a quintessential force designed to reveal the true Islam. The very structure of the *Indiculus luminosus* as a shining example suggests that it is his intent to enlighten that which remained unseen and unknown. In this way, through his work Alvarus is able to expose Islam as a persecuting force. He is able to reveal how criticising the Cordoban martyrs made one an enemy of God and very much like that which was revealed to be abhorrent.

This strategy was, in essence, quite like Alvarus placing Cordoban Christians in front of a mirror. It was in vogue for many Cordobans to adorn themselves with elements of Islamic and Arabic culture that they assumed would enhance their lives if not their appearance as well. Yet, once in front of this mirror, they would see themselves as identical to the evil underbelly of Islam that was now unveiled. In this light, exposing Islam was to expose a

definition for Christian identity. Cordoban Christians could either be defined by what they were looking more and more like or they could be defined as what they should be – something completely separate from Islam.

Destroying Bridges

In a similar way, Eulogius is keen to attack alleged points of common ground between Christianity and Islam and expose them as unfounded. For instance, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is revered by both Christians and Muslims alike. Furthermore, her story, the virgin birth of Christ in particular, is remarkably similar in both Christian and Muslim accounts.¹⁴⁹

Even so, Eulogius destroys this bridge with an extraordinary claim:

I will not repeat the outrageous sacrilege . . . that the impure dog [Muḥammad] dared to say about Mary, Blessed Virgin, Queen of the World, holy mother of our venerable Lord and Saviour. In effect he declared – I speak with respect for so great a Virgin – that in the world to come he would violate her virginity.¹⁵⁰

Eulogius' respect for Mary remains intact, but he asserts that Muḥammad claimed he would deflower her in paradise. This makes of Islam a complete abomination and tarnishes any claim Muslims might have of honouring Mary. Moreover, it diminishes the respect Muslims can claim to have of Jesus, for it not only defiles his mother, but claims Muḥammad would do so in heaven. Such unprecedented lies¹⁵¹ would shock Eulogius' readers, but more importantly, they completely mar points of shared devotion between Christians and Muslims. Thus, a barrier dividing Christianity and Islam is made to exist where a bridge once stood.

¹⁴⁹ Cf., for instance, Matthew 1:18-25 or Luke 1:26-38 and Qur'ān *Maryam* (19):16-22.

¹⁵⁰ "*Taceam sacrilegum illud et totis catholicorum auditibus immane facinus respuendum, quod de beatissima uirgine mundi regina, sancta et uenerabili Domini et Saluatoris nostri genitrice Maria canis impurus dicere ausus est. Protestatus enim est – salua loquor reuerentia tantae uirginis – quod eius foret in saeculo uenturo ab se uiolanda uirginitas.*" *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.7.

¹⁵¹ As Tolan observes, this gross claim seems to be "Eulogius' invention." See Tolan, *Saracens*, 93.

The same destruction occurs when Eulogius hears the assertion that Muslims worship God and follow a revealed law. This can hardly be so, and thus Eulogius utilises an obscure biography of Muḥammad that demonstrates the falsity of such claims. Accordingly, Muslims' law is said to be inspired by demons. At points they are even said to worship Muḥammad.¹⁵² At other times they are said to worship *Cobar*, but throughout the works of Eulogius and Alvarus there is clearly no shared conception of God between Christianity and Islam. At best, Muslims worship a “corporeal” (not “incorporeal”) God – a subtle divergence, but one that would make a world of difference and be enough to destroy another bridge between Christians and Muslims.

Summary

In the end, as Alvarus declares, anything not “based on [Christian] faith in Christ will be found empty Without Christ all virtue is depraved.”¹⁵³ Such was the case for Islam. Its admirable qualities and elements that it appeared to share with Christianity were ultimately meaningless. So, in their efforts to expose Islam's evil underbelly, Eulogius and Alvarus were keen to eliminate any reason to admire Islam or Muslims. In their minds, any motivation to convert to Islam or absorb bits of its culture would be tempered if Corodban Christians were aware of its hidden realities.

On display before their eyes, perhaps they would be quick to reassert their identity as separate from Islam. Further, if Muslims were utterly deplorable, as Eulogius and Alvarus claimed they were, then the notion that Christians shared with them various common traits would be unthinkable. Thus, Eulogius and Alvarus destroy any bridges that might connect the two communities. They offer themselves as the ideal unveilers of Islam's true identity,

¹⁵² See *Documentum martyriale*, 18.

¹⁵³ “. . . in [Christi] fide non manet fundata, uacua inueniantur Sine [Christo] enim omnis uirtus in uitio est.” *Indiculus luminosus*, 29.

and in so doing, define themselves and their community as separate and isolated from Muslims.

Conclusion

The central premise of this chapter is that within the claims Eulogius and Alvarus make about Islam there can be found a definition for their Christian identity amid Islam. Thus, from their attack of Muslims it seems that Eulogius and Alvarus ultimately defined their religious identity by their isolation from Muslims. Safely behind their barriers of disdain, they would be impervious to anything that might influence them. They might only venture beyond these barriers to engage Islam with the goal of ensuring its elimination.

This over-arching strategy of isolation would also join much more intricate tactics that supported Eulogius' and Alvarus' definition of Christian identity. To that end, Eulogius and Alvarus were irretrievably opposed to Islam as a direct result of their efforts to create enemies out of Muslims. By deploying the language of war and sanctioning a pursuit of martyrdom, they further substantiated their definition of a match between two opponents. In this zero-sum game, Eulogius' and Alvarus' success came with Islam's failure.

Once an enemy has been identified, it will often be responded to in one of two ways: either by avoiding it or by attacking it. In the case of Eulogius and Alvarus, they intended to do both. As a result, Cordoban Christians are urged to engage Islam in martyrdom or to at least support those who did. In this way, by emphasising Islam's anti-Gospel predisposition, by dispensing of any need for mission (i.e., by proclaiming it complete), and by calling for "holy cruelty," Eulogius and Alvarus asserted their religious identity as having a mission, not to secure Muslims' salvation, but to ensure their damnation. It is only in this sense that they engaged Muslims, but even in this case, it is their ultimate isolation from Islam that is desired.

And so it is with this in mind that Eulogius' and Alvarus' remaining strategies conform to the manners in which they might avoid Islam. Thus, in order to create distance, Christians and Muslims become new characters in an old story. By using biblical and historical precedents to explain Islam, Muslims are set out as God's loving chastisement. Like their earlier forebears, Cordoban Christians were meant to repent of their sin and distance themselves from heresy, which in their case was Islam. Only then would God rise up on behalf of his people just as he had done in times past.

If this line of argumentation proved too complicated for Eulogius' and Alvarus' readers, then their efforts to utterly degrade Muslims would work with reliable precision. Consequently, Muslims are portrayed as the quintessential revulsion. Eulogius and Alvarus place themselves on the other side of this barrier of disgust, defined by their heavenly purity. They could be nothing less after their thorough campaign of dehumanising and demonising Muslims.

Readers from Eulogius' and Alvarus' community who remained sceptical would see the authors become the ideal unveilers of authentic Islam. By exposing its so-called evil and destroying any bridges that might connect common ground, Eulogius and Alvarus ensured separation from Muslims.

What is most subtle in their overall strategy to isolate themselves from Islam is the awareness Eulogius and Alvarus may have had of their Hispano-Gothic heritage. Eulogius and Alvarus make clear connections between – indeed, equate – culture and religion. Placing their distaste for Arabic and Islamic culture within the context of an awareness of Hispano-Gothic heritage makes this equation all the more understandable. After all, to look, act, or sound like a Muslim seemed to them a departure from Christianity and its ties to Hispano-Gothic culture. In this light, whilst the absorption of Islamic and/or Arabic culture, as

distasteful as it was, did not necessarily contaminate Christianity in general, it did contaminate Christian religious identity *in Spain*.

In their lament for the loss of their culture and heritage, Eulogius and Alvarus can hardly be blamed. Indeed, that they sought to maintain a sense of their identity as Hispano-Goths and the connection that had to Christianity might even be considered understandable in a context of rising conversions to Islam. But was it the only option? What of the Arabised Christian communities whom Eulogius and Alvarus so vehemently railed against? Put another way, if there were those who defined Christianity by isolating it like Eulogius and Alvarus, then what of the Arabised Christians whom they placed alongside Muslims in their vehement assaults? There might surely be such Christians who wished to maintain and strengthen Christian identity and define the religious borders that distinguished their community, but would do so whilst also using Arabic and various elements of Islamic culture. Such Christians would likely see Eulogius' boundaries as more akin to prison walls, Alvarus' shining example a guard tower's light restricting its prisoners within. The boundaries for various Arabised Christians might be much more flexible, allowing for some embrace of other culture and language. In their minds, this might even support the preservation of Christian identity in the face of a growing system of differing belief and governance. It is to these latter perspectives that we turn in the following chapters.

PART II

CHAPTER 4

CHRISTIANS IN MEDIEVAL TOLEDO AND THE MAKING OF A MOZARAB CENTRE

If there were those who defined Christianity in medieval Spain by its isolation from Muslims, then as we have suggested, there might surely be those whose definition of Christian identity amid Islam looked quite different. Whilst such Christian communities surely resided in different eras throughout Islamic Spain, no explicit written evidence like we have from Eulogius and Alvarus presently exists from third/ninth century Córdoba. Instead, we must turn to the city of Toledo. For this reason, we must introduce here some new historical context relevant to important anti-Muslim treatises coming from or near this city.

This historical context begins with Elipandus, the second/eighth century archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain. His role in a doctrinal dispute informs the perspective of various Christians like him who felt that their absorption of Arabic and Islamic culture could invigorate their ability to maintain a Christian identity amid Muslims. With this in mind, we will demonstrate how Elipandus' response to Islam reveals both a different approach to defining religious identity and a Christian community tenaciously insistent upon theological and ecclesiological independence from Rome.

Elipandus' approach to Islam and his community's sense of ecclesiological self-sufficiency are important to understand because they form the underpinnings of how wider Christendom viewed Christians in Spain. To this end, we will discuss how ecclesiological independence, and especially Christological preferences, represents a new approach to Christian identity amid Islam. But it also forced many to conclude that Christians in Spain

were much too heavily influenced by Islam. This assessment, in turn, provided an impetus for the *Reconquista*, the sack of Toledo in particular.

The urge to return the Iberian Peninsula to the orthodox fold of Rome would also be enabled by pervasive Muslim disunity throughout Islamic Spain. This, too, is relevant to the historical context discussed below. These divisions would in fact be a harbinger for Toledo's downfall. Its defeat by Christian armies would prefigure the population shifts that made the city a centre for Mozarabs and their activity in the late-fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries. The Mozarab activity that concerns us most in Part II focuses on the various Christians who would carry forward Elipandus' approach to Christian identity on behalf of a community that was already at home in the cultural and linguistic milieu of Arabic and Islam.

Thus, the events discussed in the present chapter form the background of a small corpus of polemic written by Christians in or near fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth century Toledo. These texts, moreover, help to illustrate that Spain, Toledo in particular, had become by this time a hub of polemical exchange between Christians and Muslims.¹ As a result, understanding the medieval history of this city is tantamount to a fuller understanding of the texts analysed in the remainder of Part II.

Elipandus, Islam, and Ecclesiological Independence in Spain

Once the political capital of Spain, Toledo was also the primatial see for its Church.² By 92/711, Christians no longer controlled the city, symbolising the shift of power in the majority of the peninsula to Muslims.³ Under Muslim rule, Toledo was not held in the same

¹ Tolan, *Saracens*, 148.

² Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 205 and Peter Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 91.

³ Ṭāriq b. Ziyād was the first to arrive in Toledo in 92/711. Finding the city in disarray, he left a garrison there and continued north. Hearing of the Muslim army's swift success, Mūsā b. Nuṣayr and his army crossed the Mediterranean Sea into Spain in 93/712 to engage in his own exploits. Ibn Ziyād returned to Toledo

high regard as it was by Christians. ‘Abd al-Rahman I made Córdoba, not Toledo, his capital early on and this city remained a cultural centre for over three centuries.⁴ Yet even though Toledo’s political importance was diminished under Muslim rule, it retained its significance for many Christians in Spain, if only as a theological and ecclesiastical centre.⁵

The Church of Spain flexed its spiritual muscle from this centre not only through the rigorous reflection of theologians like Leander (c. 550-600), Isidore (560-15/636), Ildefonsus (c. 607-46/667), and Julian (d. 70-71/690), but also through frequent ecclesiastical councils.⁶ This theological aptitude produced a Church that was “not only better [organised] and more influential in contemporary society than other [medieval European] churches but also considerably more articulate theologically.”⁷ Further, this theological capacity gave it a unique ability to withstand heretical influence. The Church in Spain had done so, after all, amid its Arian rulers.⁸

What is more, many Christian communities in Spain displayed this theological vigour in almost complete isolation from Rome. This was not only a matter of practicality, as far west as they were, but even became a matter of pride insofar as they consistently asserted their independence from Rome.⁹ On more than one occasion, bishops responded to papal

and met Ibn Nuṣayr there in 94/713 whereupon control of the city was solidified. See Reilly, *The Medieval Spains*, 52 and Christys, 18.

⁴ Córdoba ceased to be the capital in 422/1031 and Islamic Spain was subsequently broken up into “party” (*tā’ifa*) states. See Wasserstein, 55.

⁵ The importance of Toledo would slowly diminish over time. Attempts would be made to return it to its former glory after its fifth/eleventh century reconquest (particularly in the seventh/thirteenth century), but such ideals would never be fully realised. See Linehan, 209.

⁶ J. McWilliam, “The Context of Spanish Adoptionism,” in *Conversion and Continuity*, ed. Gervers and Bikhazi, 76 and E. A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 278-279.

⁷ McWilliam, 76.

⁸ Spain was ruled by Arians (the belief that Christ was created and thereby not co-eternal with God the Father) until the conversion of King Reccared to Nicene orthodoxy in 589. See Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 58-86 and McWilliam, 76. For a brief treatment of this conversion see Thompson, 94-109.

⁹ McWilliam, 76, 82 and Christys, 25-26. Spain’s isolation leaves no indication of atrophy, but rather an insistence upon self-sufficiency. As Cavadini observes, “. . . one must not look at Spain as an isolated, hermetically sealed cultural environment, but rather as a political unity with a kind of cultural poise or sovereignty, preserving traditions from the past, open to influences from the contemporary world, but also able to resist them as it chose with relative impunity.” See also John C. Cavadini, *The Last Christology of the West*:

letters, few though they were, in order to defend their ecclesiastical actions. In so doing, they did not hesitate to take the offensive in attacking the Pope in expressions of their theological aptitude and ecclesiastical self-sufficiency.¹⁰ Thus, whilst much of Spain's Church recognised the authority of Rome and was aware of ecclesiastical developments outside the peninsula, it made little effort to interact beyond the ecclesiastical structure of its own realm.¹¹

Theological confidence and insistence upon a certain degree of ecclesiastical autonomy becomes most noticeable in a second/eighth century doctrinal dispute introduced in Chapter 1. The controversy began with two men we have already met: Elipandus and Migetius.¹² Our knowledge of their heated exchange comes almost entirely from Elipandus' letters condemning Migetius for his overly-rigorous and eventually heretical claims.

According to Elipandus, Migetius was concerned with what he perceived to be backsliding Christians, both in terms of their independence from Rome and their increased intermingling with pagans (i.e., Muslims). As to the former, Migetius made statements that suggested a hyper-elevation of Rome, over and against Toledo as the centre of the Church in Spain. In this light, Rome was the sinless New Jerusalem, the dwelling place of Christ, and held, by itself, the power of God.¹³ This, in essence, challenged Elipandus' authority as Spain's senior church leader. But more significant, regarding his view of Muslims, Migetius

Adoptionism in Spain and Gaul, 785-820 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 3 and 132, n. 11 and Colbert, 63 where he observes that distance between Spain and Rome had little effect on the ability of the two to communicate with each other.

¹⁰ Thompson, 185, 241. As Thompson summarises, “[The Church in Spain] is not known ever to have taken the initiative in corresponding with [the Pope]; and when [he] wrote to the bishops of Spain – and he rarely did so – he received on each occasion an arrogant and critical reply.” See *ibid.*, 279.

¹¹ As Collins observes, the Spanish Church “. . . busied itself with its own affairs and ignored the world outside Spain.” See Roger Collins, *The Arab Conquest of Spain, 710-797. A History of Spain*, ed. John Lynch (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 218-219. Thompson elaborates upon the Church's independence when he notes that after the crown's conversion from Arianism to Catholicism, its Church became a national one. Thus, the Church in Spain remained subordinate to its kings. This may account in part for the Church's tendencies towards relative autonomy from Rome. See Thompson, 281-282. See also, James M. Powell, “The Papacy and the Muslim Frontier,” in *Muslims under Latin Rule*, ed. Powell.

¹² Cf. our brief introduction to them in Chapter 1, pp. 36-37.

¹³ Cavadini, 11. Along with his elevation of Rome, Migetius accorded a position to priests that was exaggerated in terms of its holiness.

seems to have feared that many Christians in Spain were succumbing to unorthodoxy under their influence.¹⁴ In effect, Migetius felt that such Christians were compromising their sanctity and superiority with paganism.¹⁵ He even went so far as to advise against eating with Muslims or eating anything that might be associated with them.¹⁶

Migetius' general animosity towards Muslims seems to have been shared by various Christians in neighbouring Gaul (present-day France) as well as Rome. Consequently, they sought to extend their corrective influence into Spain. In approximately 173/790, Wilcarius, archbishop of Sens in Gaul, obtained the permission of Pope Hadrian I (d. 179/795) to consecrate a Christian named Egila as bishop and send him on a mission to the peninsula.¹⁷ As both a Frankish and papal envoy, Egila's mission was not aimed at converting Spain's Muslims, but was intended for the sole purpose of preaching orthodoxy to its Christians. Accordingly, Egila sought to curb the influence of Islam upon the Church in Spain. He even succeeded in urging Hadrian I to condemn mixed marriages between Muslims and Christians.¹⁸

Egila's mission would ultimately fail, however, as he joined the ranks of Migetius whose ever-expanding theological views eventually slipped into official heresy. According to Elipandus, Migetius asserted that there were three corporeal persons in the Trinity: David, Jesus, and Paul, each one corresponding to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit respectively. He did not say, for instance, that David *was* the Father, but only that he was the *persona* of the Father. And so it was that Jesus and Paul were also human representatives of the Son and the

¹⁴ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 207.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* and Cavadini, 12-13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁷ Kedar, 5 and Cavadini 13-14. For issues related to the consecration of Egila, see Cavadini, 138, nn. 31 and 32. See also, Collins, *The Arab Conquest of Spain*, 220-222.

¹⁸ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 207.

Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Of greatest concern, then, was the notion that Jesus was not the divine Son of God, but only a temporal representative of him. Such a view diminished the Trinity and the nature of Jesus and was, of course, heretical. Consequently, it elicited sharp condemnation from Elipandus.²⁰

Elipandus may have been less concerned, however, with the offence Migetius was to Christian doctrine and more keen to set his ideas out as dangerous in a context where many Christian communities were not only subject to Muslim rule, but also diminishing with conversions to Islam.²¹ If this was the case, as Dominique Urvoy suggests it may have been, then Migetius would inadvertently give Muslims an advantage with his views. In this way, his Trinitarian perspective would allow Muslims to “present [their] prophet as the fulfilment of the prediction of Jesus and as the ‘seal of prophecy.’”²² In other words, if a corporeal Jesus was only representative of God, then in an Islamic context it would not be too great of a leap to see Muḥammad as furthering this progression. In an Islamic sense, the Prophet would abrogate Christ and act as a more complete representative of God and his revealed message. Many Muslims already felt that Muḥammad was the coming Paraclete whom Jesus promised in the Gospels.²³ With Migetius, Muslims would then also have a ready-made argument to

¹⁹ Cavadini, 17-19. See also, Urvoy, “The Christological Consequences of Muslim-Christian Confrontation in Eighth-Century Spain,” 38 and 45 on how representative Elipandus’ remarks are of Migetius’ Trinitarian views.

²⁰ Urvoy wonders if Migetius’ views represented a resurgence of Sabellianism (the belief that each member of the Trinity was a different mode or aspect of God). Ibid., 39.

²¹ Ibid., 45.

²² Ibid.

²³ Christians understood Jesus’ promise to refer to the Holy Spirit (*paraklētos*; see, for instance, John 14:26). Many Muslims connected Aḥmad (which shares the same root as Muḥammad [*h-m-d*]), “the most glorious,” with the Gk. *periklutos*, “illustrious” or “renowned.” Here, they confused *paraklētos* (“advocate” or Paraclete) and *periklutos*. This was done with relative ease since there was little difference from a Semitic perspective where vowels affect vocalization, but not grammatical roots. A second argument asserts that *paraklētos* is translated as *al-munḥamannā* in Ibn Ishāq’s biography of the Prophet (*sīra*). *Al-munḥamannā*, it is commented, is Muḥammad in Syriac, or *al-baraqīlīs* (the Arabic rendering of the Gk. *paraklētos*). Christians from further east who were familiar with Arabic were able to easily dispel this argument. In western lands like Spain, however, the argument was often quite successful and is even used by the sixth/twelfth century Cordoban Muslim polemicist Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-Khazrajī (see Chapter 5). For a concise summary of these

add further support to this claim. Moreover, Christians convinced of Migetius' doctrine might be more easily swayed to convert to Islam as a result.

In his insistence upon separating Christians and Muslims, then, Migetius would thus unwittingly sacrifice doctrinal integrity for cultural purity. In this, however, he may not have safeguarded Christians, but left them vulnerable to other dangers. In essence, Migetius failed to properly distinguish Christianity in his choice to emphasise matters like purity laws, for his opponents (Muslims) shared a concern for these very issues. As Urvoy argues, "Migetius superbly ignored Muslim dogmas, but in doing so, he put himself in the hands of the adversary whom he disdained and failed to protect himself against the possible manipulation of what he said."²⁴ Thus, the doctrines he propounded may have only closed the gaps between Christian and Islamic theology and would have done so in very ironic fashion. Similarly, the interaction between Muslims and Christians that he proscribed (marriage and dietary restrictions) may have had the same result, for they would in reality only mimic aspects of Islamic law and perhaps only further dilute the differences between the two religions.²⁵ Convinced Christians, in Elipandus' mind, might be left confused; with fewer reasons to maintain their Christian faith, or with less understanding of how it was theologically distinct from Islam, they may have found it easier to join the increasing fold of Muslims.²⁶

Elipandus' response to Islam and concern for distinguishing Christianity were perhaps more sophisticated. He understood the risk Migetius took and responded with steps toward

arguments, see Urvoy, "The Christological Consequences of Muslim-Christian Confrontation in Eighth-Century Spain," 42-44.

²⁴ Ibid., 48.

²⁵ Ibid., 45.

²⁶ Even if Elipandus' description of Migetius' views was not entirely accurate, this would not detract from the danger he perceived Migetius to be.

eliminating it.²⁷ Unlike Migetius, he understood that Islamic rule was not a quickly-passing phase that could be withstood if it was avoided.²⁸ As a long-lasting entity on the peninsula, it demanded a robust response, one that told Christians how to live *amid* Islam, not simply without it. Elipandus was therefore content to be more lax in his critiques of what was or was not culturally acceptable and of those who incorporated elements of Islamic and Arabic culture. In fact, he was willing to take on aspects of Muslim culture, noting that doing so might support Christians' ability to maintain their religious identity. Instead of distinguishing themselves culturally, Elipandus would have Christians distinguish themselves from Muslims through their doctrinal integrity.

In this light, Elipandus roundly condemned Migetius' Trinitarian views in an effort that was not just designed to uphold Christian identity, but to safeguard his Christian community and strengthen it doctrinally in a context that was increasingly Arabic and Islamic. In the same way, he would distance himself from Migetius' moral restrictions, claiming that they were "a sort of rigoristic purism."²⁹ As we shall see, this approach is evident three centuries later in various texts written by Christians in or near Toledo. They, too, would be born out of theological rigour and an emphasis upon doctrinal distinctiveness rather than cultural difference.

Elipandus and Christological Preferences

Elipandus' condemnation of Migetius would not suppress the controversy because certain statements of his were cause for concern in Rome. Accordingly, when Elipandus

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 47.

²⁹ Cavadini, 10-11. Cavadini wonders if this claim might not be connected to various Donatist leanings, the leftovers of North African theological influence, namely that of Tyconius (fourth century), in the Iberian Peninsula. See also, Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 207 and Collins, *The Arab Conquest of Spain*, 222. The Council of Sevilla officially condemned Migetius in approximately 165/782. For problems related to the location of this council, see Cavadini, 12.

wrote to condemn Migetius' views he also insisted that "the *persona* of the Son is not that which you assert . . . rather it is that [*persona*] which was begotten by God the Father, without any beginning in time, which spoke through the prophet before its assumption of flesh."³⁰

Elipandus' statement was meant to reinstate Christ's divinity in light of Migetius' heresy, but it did not sufficiently clarify matters. Instead, it caused many of his readers to sense other types of heresy and the unorthodoxy that they already suspected to be present with many Christians in Spain. In this case, they sensed the makings of Nestorian Christology,³¹ for when Elipandus wrote of "assumption of flesh," many of his readers saw two separate persons in Christ – a divine person and an assumed person.³²

In a later, more formal condemnation of Migetius, Elipandus elucidated upon his Christological arguments concerning assumption. These newer statements were meant to clarify his position, but they only caused further confusion. In fact, these new statements drew attention away from the heresy of Migetius and introduced a Christology that became known as "adoptionism."³³ In essence, Elipandus' adoptionism was a one-person Christology in which the Son of God, came to the world and was born of a woman without leaving the substance of the Father. In so doing, he "received a birth which was not by nature from the

³⁰ Elipandus as quoted in *ibid.*, 17-18.

³¹ Attributed, perhaps wrongly, to Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople from 428-431. Nestorius was condemned at the councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) for propounding a Christology in which there were two persons in Christ (the human being and the divine Word). Whether or not this is indeed the doctrine he taught or whether it was merely the view taken up by those who followed him (Nestorians) is debated.

³² As Cavadini summarises, Elipandus stated that "there is no assumption of a *persona* by the Word, nor is there any *persona* to be assumed. Furthermore, that which is assumed becomes thereby the [adoptive] Son of God, and is not in and of itself the natural Son of God . . ." Cavadini, 19, 21.

³³ Note the difference between adoptionism in Spain, which we refer to here, and the historically unrelated doctrines of the same name found in earlier centuries or with Abelard and Gilbert de la Porrée of the sixth/twelfth century. See *ibid.*, 1. Cavadini's work is the most complete and in-depth study of the former adoptionism. See also McWilliam, 79 where she summarises Elipandus' distinction "between the Son of God by generation and nature and the Son of God by adoption and grace." See Cavadini, 21-22 for the historicity of the document containing Elipandus' clarification. Whether or not this text is indeed the earliest extant document of adoptionism is relatively inconsequential, for Elipandus expounded the doctrine in other later works. The significance of this early fragment, if it is indeed from Elipandus, is that he would be arguing for the doctrine *whilst at the same time* defending a one-person Christology over and against Migetius.

Father *but by adoption and grace.*³⁴ As the second person of the Trinity, Christ was the divine Son of God; as a man, he was God's adopted son. In this way, Christ became adoptive and did so by virtue of his "voluntary lowliness" and "self-emptying."³⁵

For Elipandus, this Christology was completely orthodox and sympathetic to indigenous forms propounded by those like Isidore and Ildefonsus and even found within the liturgy of the Church in Spain. It was, in short, a rebuke of Migetius' dangerous heresy that Elipandus wished to build upon historic, indigenous theology.³⁶ For many others, however, Elipandus' intention to explain the two natures of Christ's person was instead understood as giving way to two different and distinct persons. This further confirmed the notion of widespread and inherent unorthodoxy in Spain. It also verified to many that many Christians' stubborn independence on the peninsula was supported by their connection to pagan (Islamic) rulers. In this way, Islam's influence upon Christians' in Spain made them unable to think clearly enough to avoid a theology that, at least in critics' minds, smacked of heretical Nestorianism.

In this light, responses against Elipandus came from across the peninsula and beyond.³⁷ He was charged with devaluing the Son of God and mimicking pagan distortions (i.e., the Islamic notion of a completely human Jesus). In this regard, he was also accused of

³⁴ Ibid., 32; emphasis in original.

³⁵ McWilliam, 75 and Cavadini, 33. Here, Elipandus depends quite heavily on St. Paul's "Christ hymn" of Philippians 2, specifically verse 7 ("but he [Christ] emptied [*ekenōsen*] himself having taken the nature of a servant, having been made in the likeness of men . . ." [author's translation]). In this light, as Cavadini adds, "Elipandus' adoptionism can be thought of as an exegetical elaboration of this self-emptying, and usefully located within the context of older Latin traditions of reflection on Phil. 2:7." See *ibid.*

³⁶ McWilliam, 78-79 and Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 209. Collins clarifies that "the arguments of Elipandus involved a distortion of the sense of the original passages on which he relied, and earlier use of Adoptionist terminology in the peninsula, as for example in passages in the liturgy, had different and unimpeachable orthodox intent." It should also be noted that Elipandus also depended heavily on Theodore of Mopsuestia and Augustine. Cavadini uses this point, along with adoptionism's other indigenous traits, to bolster his argument that the doctrine was unique as a completely "Western" Christology without dependence on the Eastern councils. See Cavadini, 1-9 and McWilliam, 79.

³⁷ Cavadini, 45 and McWilliam, 79.

being too familiar with worldly (i.e., Islamic) learning.³⁸ Elipandus did find support among many of Spain's bishops, but such affirmation was isolated to Spain. As a result, adoptionists were condemned as living in a "land of pagans [i.e., Muslims] whose ideas [they] shared"³⁹ and fostering an unhealthy association with Jews and Muslims.⁴⁰ For these reasons, the desire to oust Islamic influence from Spain grew.

Adoptionism was officially denounced by Hadrian I and Pope Leo III (d. c. 203/818) and condemned at three councils called by Charlemagne (124/742-198/814), king of the Franks.⁴¹ As we have said, the earliest criticisms condemned adoptionism as a Nestorian Christology or a theology that logically led to Nestorianism.⁴² More recent supporters of this assessment point to the probability of Nestorian presence on the peninsula, such Christians having travelled west to Islamic Spain with Muslims.⁴³ Nestorian writings are even known to have been copied, circulated, and read in Islamic Spain.⁴⁴ But Nestorian presence on the peninsula need not demand a high degree of Nestorian influence there. The charge of Nestorianism, moreover, rested almost entirely on second-hand knowledge and represented

³⁸ Cavadini, 24 and 146, n. 7.

³⁹ Pope Leo III as quoted in McWilliam, 75. This accusation was specifically levelled at Felix (d. c. 203/818), bishop of Urgel in the Pyrenees. Facing resistance for his support of adoptionism, he fled to Islamic Spain. Felix would recant of his adoptionist views twice, but would re-embrace them each time. After his second condemnation and recantation, he was confined to a monastery in Lyon, outside the influence of Islamic Spain. He died there leaving among his last writings an exposition defending adoptionism. Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 208. Cavadini notes that this last exposition was an attempt to defend the doctrine in a non-offensive manner – one that made no use of condemned terms like "adoption," but stayed true to the doctrine nonetheless. Cavadini, 82-83.

⁴⁰ This latter accusation came from Hadrian I. In a letter to the bishops of Spain and specifically to those who might be disloyal to Rome, he wrote, "Although you say that you are not defiled by eating and drinking with those [Jews and Muslims] in error . . ." McWilliam., 85. See also, Urvoy, "The Christological Consequences of Muslim-Christian Confrontation in Eighth-Century Spain," 40.

⁴¹ Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 208 and Cavadini, 1, 73-80. These condemnations were largely built upon the criticisms of Alcuin (c. 116/735-189/804), theological advisor to Charlemagne (who, from 184/800, was also Holy Roman Emperor).

⁴² Cavadini, 38-39.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 159, n. 110. See also Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "A Nestorian Arabic Pentateuch Used in Western Lands," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. David Thomas. The History of Christian-Muslim Relations, vol. 6, ed. David Thomas, Tarif Khalidi, Gerrit Jan Reinink, and Mark Swanson (Leiden: Brill, 2007). For the westward movement of culture and knowledge from the East, including non-Nestorian sources, see Juan Zozaya, "Eastern Influences in al-Andalus," in *The Formation of al-Andalus. Part 1: History and Society*, ed. Manuela Marín.

perceptions of adoptionism instead of reactions to Elipandus' writings.⁴⁵ In the end, not only did Elipandus make his arguments whilst defending a one-person Christology, but little evidence exists to support a connection to Nestorianism.⁴⁶

Others posit that since adoptionism was born in an Islamic environment, it was a sort of Christological bow to Islam, either as an attempt to make the Christian view of Christ more palatable to Muslims or as a faltering apologetic that unwittingly slipped into heresy.⁴⁷ In this way, adoptionism is viewed as a Christology motivated by a desire to accommodate an Islamic view of Christ, a means of explaining Christology in a way that Muslims might find convincing. But in trying to accommodate Muslims, proponents of adoptionism stumbled into heresy by flirting with what effectively was Nestorianism. The result was a misunderstanding of Christ's two natures, a demotion of Christ's divinity, and a description of Christ that came dangerously close to the Islamic idea of Jesus as a completely human prophet.⁴⁸

In this regard, however, we must recall the now famous second/eighth century debate between the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I (d. 208/823) and the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Mahdī (d. 169/785).⁴⁹ When asked by the caliph what he thought about Christ,⁵⁰ Timothy's Nestorian response fails to convince him. From this perspective, Nestorian Christology had no advantage in Muslim eyes. Hence, proponents of adoptionism had little to gain in even a slight concession towards Islam, for neither adoptionism, correctly understood, nor

⁴⁵ Cavadini, 85.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 22, 38-44. As Cavadini notes, "It may or may not be true that from a logical point of view adoptionism as taught by Elipandus leads directly or necessarily to a two-person [Christology] that goes by the name of Nestorianism But this does not mean that in its own inherent shape and character, *historically* speaking, [Elipandus'] teaching was Nestorian" (ibid., 19; emphasis in original).

⁴⁷ Ibid., 39 and 159-160, n. 113. See also, Linehan, 91.

⁴⁸ Cf. Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 186.

⁴⁹ For the debate, which circulated in medieval Spain, see A. Mingana, "Patriarch Timothy I and Caliph Mahdi," in *Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, ed. Newman, 163-267.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 175.

Nestorianism was acceptable in an Islamic understanding of a completely and solely human Christ.⁵¹

Some helpful light might be shed upon adoptionism and its importance for Christians in Islamic Spain by examining Elipandus' claim to preserve a legacy of ecclesiological independence and a tradition of Christology indigenous to Spain.⁵² Both this independence and tradition can be seen in an unyielding loyalty to Chalcedonian (Council of Chalcedon 451) Christology among some of Spain's Christian communities. For Chalcedonian Christians, great care was taken in distinguishing between the words and actions that were attributed to either the human or divine natures of Christ. As a result, Chalcedonians, and many Christians in Spain in particular, were unwilling to attribute any suffering to Christ's divine nature.⁵³ For this reason, they rejected the "neo-Chalcedonian" modifications made in 553 at the second council of Constantinople.⁵⁴ These modifications were meant to uphold the rulings of Chalcedon whilst clarifying them at the same time. Thus, where Chalcedonian statements simply understood the human nature of Christ to have suffered, "neo-

⁵¹ Cavadini, 39.

⁵² McWilliam, 79.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 77-78 and Thompson, 164, 277. Consider the following Chalcedonian statements: "... the Son of God is said to have been crucified and buried, since he suffered these things not in the divinity . . . but in the weakness of the human nature" and "it expels from the assembly of the priests those who dare to say that the divinity of the Only-begotten is passible [capable of suffering]." See Norman P. Tanner, S.J., ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. I (*Nicaea I-Lateran V*) (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), 80 and 85-86. In essence, the Council of Chalcedon was concerned with maintaining the one person of Christ in two natures. Confusing these natures, or combining them into one, lead to the danger of ascribing passibility to Christ. Maintaining two natures in the one person of Christ safeguarded the impassibility of the divine nature. For more evidence, this time coming from seventh century Spain, see José Vives, *Concilios Visigóticos e Hispano-Romanos*. España Cristiana, Vol. 1, ed., José Vives and Tomás Marín (Barcelona-Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1963), 171-185.

⁵⁴ McWilliam, 77. For "neo-Chalcedonian," see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 3d ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1965), 343. Consider the "neo-Chalcedonian" statement of Constantinople II which was an elaboration upon its Chalcedonian predecessors: "If anyone declares that the [Word] of God who works miracles is not identical with the Christ who suffered . . . and that the miracles and the sufferings which he voluntarily underwent in the flesh were not of the same person: let him be anathema" (Tanner, 114).

Chalcedonian” Christology clarified that Jesus, the Son of God, did suffer on the cross, but only through his human nature.⁵⁵

It was a rather fine detail, but some Christian communities in Spain were unwilling to accept it. It was quite enough for many of them to say that only Christ’s human nature suffered on the cross and such Christians tenaciously held this view in Spain for centuries.⁵⁶ In this light, perhaps Elipandus’ concern over Migetius’ doctrine was meant to preserve and re-emphasise a Christology unique to Spain. Jesus was not a human representative of the Son of God as Migetius claimed. This description ascribed both temporality and corporeality to God. Elipandus denounced this and clarified the distinctions between the Son of God by generation and nature (divinity) and the Son of God by adoption and grace (humanity).⁵⁷ It was not Islam, then, but rather this insistence upon a carefully defined view of Christ that seems to form the underpinnings of this Christological tradition from which adoptionism may have grown.⁵⁸

In this light, adoptionism hardly seems to be a haphazard Christological concession to Islamic doctrine. Neither do Elipandus’ doctrinal foundations seem to have been made brittle by the Islamic environment in which he existed. Instead, frequent and consistent councils reveal a Church not prone to theological concession, but one committed to the vigorous

⁵⁵ For the transition in Christological understanding from Chalcedon to Constantinople II, the role played by the Theopaschite Formula (“One of the Trinity suffered for us”), and how this new understanding was meant to uphold the rulings of Chalcedon, see Leo Donald Davis, S.J., *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 170-253 and Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 254. Pope Hormisdas I (d. 523), among others, found the formula potentially misleading, and as a result, it eventually fell out of vogue. Leontius of Byzantium (fl. 532-544) defended the formula, but was more lucid in his explication of the idea behind it: “The Word is said to have suffered according to the hypostasis, for within his hypostasis he assumed a passible essence beside his own impassible essence, and what can be asserted of the passible essence can be asserted of the hypostasis.” Leontius as quoted in Davis, 232. In other words, the one person of Christ can be understood to have suffered, but only through his human nature.

⁵⁶ In connection to this rejection, the church councils in Spain only reference four ecumenical councils. Further, Spain was not even present at Constantinople II, the fifth ecumenical council. See McWilliam, 77 and Davis, 240, 248, and 252.

⁵⁷ McWilliam, 79.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 77-78. Thus, the Church in Spain had a “. . . distinctive Christology, the orthodoxy of which had been its pride for centuries.” *Ibid.*, 76.

pursuit of orthodoxy. Similarly, his Church's independence was rooted in theological rigour and a tendency to hold firmly to orthodoxy even amid heresy. It would thus seem entirely possible for him to maintain such a Christian identity under Islam.

In fact, it seems that certain Christians like Elipandus used their cultural flexibility to support their theological strength. Thus, according to Urvoy, adoptionism “simultaneously safeguard[ed] the Trinity against Muslim Unitarianism, the absolute transcendence of the Trinity against the historicism of Migeotius, and the unsurpassable character of the Gospels against the use that the first could make of the second.”⁵⁹ For Elipandus, doctrinal integrity was separate from and took precedence over more mundane matters of language and culture. In this light, adoptionism was not a doctrine haphazardly devised to make Trinitarian and Christological theology more palatable to an Islamic view of Christ. It was not a syncretistic effort meant to draw Christian and Islamic doctrine together in theological compromise. Rather, it was more likely born out of Elipandus' efforts to preserve the steadfast doctrine of his heritage and its distinctiveness amid the Islamic environment of his Christian community; an attempt to point out the uniqueness of Christian Christology in a context where different truth claims were in competition.

Nevertheless, even if Islam had no direct theological influence on Elipandus and others like him, it may have contributed indirect influence.⁶⁰ This manifested itself as political pressure which shaped the response to Spain's Christology by its critics. In this way, if Charlemagne and Hadrian I were to reform Spain's Christians and rid them of their fierce independence and perceived unorthodoxy, then they felt that they must then wrest control of Spain away from Muslim hands and into their own. As a result, Islamic influence is seen as a force shaping the response of Rome and Charlemagne such that their help against Islam was

⁵⁹ Urvoy, “The Christological Consequences of Muslim-Christian Confrontation in Eighth-Century Spain,” 47.

⁶⁰ McWilliam, 76-77.

contingent upon Spain's return to orthodoxy and the approved Christology of Rome.⁶¹ Until then, the desire to separate the wayward ecclesiastical see of Toledo from its Muslim rulers would continue to fester.

Post-Reconquista Toledo as a Mozarab Centre

The ecclesiastical and theological tensions emanating from Toledo that are described above would also have a political counterpart for Muslims in Toledo. Even if the city lacked intrinsic value for Islamic Spain (from the political perspective of Córdoba), persistent rebellion on the part of Toledan Muslims gave the city an almost continual peripheral significance. As the fourth/tenth century Andalusī historian Ibn al-Qūṭīyya remarked, Toledan Muslims “were such a rebellious and insubordinate people that they . . . never became subjects of any country.”⁶² Consequently, their city appears in histories often in the context of revolt against Córdoba.⁶³ At times, local Muslim rulers even joined forces with Christian kings against other Muslims.⁶⁴ With this in mind, the revolts stemming from Toledo made the Islamic city a “locus of mercurial shifts in allegiance.”⁶⁵

These shifts in allegiance, in addition to a growing *umma* of competing loyalties,⁶⁶ would anticipate further Islamic disunity. Consequently, the caliphate began to corrode in

⁶¹ Ibid., 86; Kedar, 6; and Cavadini, 14. See also, Collins, *The Arab Conquest of Spain*, 219.

⁶² Ibn al-Qūṭīyya as quoted in Christys, 19.

⁶³ Christys, 19.

⁶⁴ Ibid.; Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 188-189; Watt and Cachia, 36.

⁶⁵ Christys, 20. See also *Chroniques Asturiennes* as quoted in *ibid.*, 20 and Wasserstein, 32.

⁶⁶ Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, 128-129. This strife goes further to corroborate Bulliet's observation that intra-Muslim discord began to occur when conversions to Islam passed their mid-point, i.e., when the majority of those converting to Islam had done so. In the case of Islamic Spain, this mid-point occurred in the late-fourth/tenth century which was soon followed by the break-up of Islamic Spain into party states. For the significance of “divisive ethnicities” as a contributing factor to the weakness of Islamic Spain in this period see Hanna E. Kassis, “Muslim Revival in Spain in the fifth/eleventh Century: Causes and Ramifications.” *Der Islam* 67 (1990): 82. For an earlier version, see Hanna E. Kassis, “Roots of Conflict: Aspects of Christian-Muslim Confrontation in Eleventh-Century Spain,” in *Conversion and Continuity*, ed. Gervers and Bikhazi, 151-160. On ethnic disparities in Islamic Spain and the assimilation of converts to Islam see, Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, 210-216.

399/1009, crumbling entirely in 422/1031.⁶⁷ In its place emerged a series of disjointed petty, or “party” (*tā’ifa*), states.⁶⁸ But even these states could not boast of any unity. The ultimate result was a complete dissolution of the caliphate and unified authority such that Ibn Ḥazm (384/994-456/1064), the famous Cordoban thinker and writer, perhaps somewhat ruefully commented that “four [Muslims], within three days’ journey of each other, all claimed the titles of caliph and received homage and recognition as such, but held no power.”⁶⁹ There was in fact no longer true or unified Islamic authority to be found on the peninsula.⁷⁰

With Islamic Spain in relative disarray, party-states became increasingly vulnerable to northern, Christian armies who took advantage of their disunity by slowly reconquering them, forcing them into economic starvation. These events prefigured Alfonso VI’s (431/1065-502/1109) sack of Toledo on 10 *Muḥarram* 478/6 May 1085, a remarkable campaign that marked a watershed in the reconquest of Spain.⁷¹ By the end of the sixth/twelfth century, Christian kingdoms would control over one-half of the Iberian Peninsula.

⁶⁷ Watt and Cachia, 91.

⁶⁸ See Wasserstein, 82-160 for a discussion of the various party-states and their politics.

⁶⁹ Ibn Ḥazm as quoted in *ibid.*, 123, n. 16. For more on Ibn Ḥazm, see A. G. Chejne, *Ibn Hazm* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1982) and Miguel Asín Palacios, *Abenḥázam de Córdoba y su historia crítica de las ideas religiosas, tomo primero* (Madrid: Revista de Arch., Bibl., y Museos, 1927). Reilly notes that most rulers took the titles of *malik* (“king”), *ṣāḥib* (“companion;” originally given to companions of the Prophet, but later applied at various times to persons of advanced position; see *ET* VIII:830-831, s.v. “Ṣāḥib,” by W. P. Heinrichs), or *ḥājib* (“chamberlain”). These were qualitatively less than the title of caliph. Even so, rulers refused to acknowledge any other ruler as superior. Bernard F. Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain, 1031-1157*, A History of Spain, ed. John Lynch (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 12.

⁷⁰ Some semblance of authority and unity would be reinstated in 483/1090 by Yūsuf b. Tāshufīn (r. 453/1061-560/1106; in Islamic Spain from 483/1090) and the Almoravids (*al-Murābiṭūn*) – Berber Muslims ruling in northern Africa. Coming to Islamic Spain at the request of Andalusī Muslims, the Almoravids made an early victory against Christian armies in 479/1086, but they returned to Africa immediately afterwards. With persistent division in Islamic Spain, the Almoravids returned to engage Christian armies, but suffered defeat. They took advantage of Muslim disunity, however, and in 483/1090 they began to take control of Islamic Spain. See al-Maqqarī, II:294-295. Their successors, the Almohads (*al-Muwahḥidūn*), were led by Ibn Tūmart (c. 471/1078 – c. 524/1130) and continued the unified rule reinstated by Almoravids. Their rule would ultimately crumble as well, beginning in 619-20/1223. Granada remained the sole Islamic state in Spain under the Naṣrids, but would exist only as a pariah-state (from 643/1246). On 1 Rabī‘ I 897/2 January 1492, it too would completely surrender. See Watt and Cachia, 97-111 and Mahmoud Makki, “The Political History of al-Andalus (92/711-897/1492),” in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi, 77-84.

⁷¹ Wasserstein, 268-270. As Wasserstein explains, the ideology of reconquest was present within Spain and was later appropriated by others. The very term *Reconquista* represents this outside appropriation as it first occurs not within Spain, but externally as a French term. See *ibid.*, 272-273 and 273, n. 52. For the treatment of “*reconquista*” in recent history see Linehan, 205-209. See also R. A. Fletcher, “Reconquest and Crusade in

The loss of Toledo sent a shockwave rippling throughout Islamic Spain.⁷² The former capital was now once again in Christian hands and could now be governed by those unattached to any Islamic influence. Steps could now be taken to eliminate any remnants of Spain's wayward and preferential Christology.

Toledan Muslims would feel this shock as well, but for them the city's fall came with the increased shame of their terms of surrender. Although the terms were generous, they were a near match to various *dhimma* regulations.⁷³ Muslims who wished to stay in Toledo would be guaranteed their lives, the possession of their lands, and the freedom to retain their religion and religious leaders provided they paid a special tax.⁷⁴ The capitulation agreement also stipulated that Toledo's central mosque would be left for the use of the city's remaining Muslims. This portion of the agreement would be breached, however, when the mosque was later converted to a church.⁷⁵

Spain, c. 1050-1150," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 37 (1987): 31-47. For Alfonso VI, king of León-Castilla, see Bernard F. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VI, 1065-1109* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁷² Ibid., 161; Kassis, "Muslim Revival in Spain in the fifth/eleventh Century," 95-96; and Wasserstein, 256.

⁷³ Christian jurists would likely not claim any inspiration from Islamic *dhimma* regulations for their laws governing conquered Muslims. Doing so would simply make their stipulations a retributive copy of a legal precedent and give Muslims more credit than many Christians thought they deserved. See Burns, "Muslims in the Thirteenth-Century Realms of Aragon," 70 and Tolan, *Saracens*, 179.

⁷⁴ Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain*, 85. As David Raizman notes, these conditions seem to reflect Alfonso VI's desire for the Muslim population to remain in Toledo as an expression of his sovereignty even though external pressure on him to make civic policies harsher made remaining in the city increasingly unattractive to many Muslims. See David Raizman, "The Church of Santa Cruz and the Beginnings of Mudejar Architecture in Toledo," *Gesta* 38, no. 2 (1999): 136-137.

⁷⁵ See the description of the mosque in seventh/thirteenth century Toledan archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's *De rebus Hispaniae* trans. Smith, 88-91. According to the account, Alfonso's generosity was not shared by all, particularly various Franks living in Toledo. For these, the presence of the mosque was intolerable. With a new and less tolerant archbishop in place – one with the support of Alfonso VI's new Burgundian wife – the capitulation agreement was deliberately breached and the mosque was entered and "purged . . . of the filth of [Muhammad]." A Christian altar was erected and church bells – detestable to Muslims – were placed in the minaret, now the main tower of the mosque-turned-church. Upon hearing of the brutal conversion, Alfonso VI was incensed. Fearing eventual retribution, Toledan Muslims convinced the king not to punish the offenders. Other sources make Alfonso VI equally culpable in the conversion and thus some deem the details of the event legendary. Whatever the details, the mosque's conversion to a church remains a fact. See Reilly, *The Kingdom of León under Alfonso VI*, 181-182 and Kassis, "Muslim Revival in Spain in the fifth/eleventh Century," 97. See also, Julie A. Harris, "Mosque to Church Conversions in the Spanish Reconquest," *Medieval Encounters* 3, no. 2 (1997): 158-159. For the shift from the initial toleration of Toledan Muslims after the reconquest to less generous treatment, as seen in the mosque conversion, see Angus MacKay,

Reconquering Toledo did more than simply return the city to Christian hands. It would, in fact, have drastic effects on the city's population and the trajectory of its demographics as well. Toledo's existing Christian population consisted largely of Christians which had by the fifth/eleventh century come to be referred to as Mozarabs – Christians who were culturally and linguistically conversant in Islamic and Arabic culture.⁷⁶ To these Mozarabs, Mikel de Epalza adds “neo-Mozarabs” – Christians who were not indigenous to Islamic Spain, but who had migrated there to participate in its economic and cultural advantages.⁷⁷ Together, these Mozarabs would form a sizeable portion of Toledo's population, perhaps accounting for nearly 25% of the city at the time of its reconquest.⁷⁸ Adding to this number would be the various Toledan Muslims, or “new Mozarabs,” who converted *en masse* to Christianity when Christian armies took the city.⁷⁹ Contributing to the number of Christian converts in the city would be Toledan Jews as well. These converts

Spain in the Middle Ages: From Frontier to Empire, 1000-1500, New Studies in Medieval History, ed. Maurice Keen (London: MacMillan, 1977), 20-22.

⁷⁶ De Epalza, “Mozarabs: An Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic Al-Andalus,” 150-151 and H. D. Miller and Hanna E. Kassis, “The Mozarabs,” in *The Literature of Al-Andalus*, ed. Menocal et al., 420. For the complexity and background of the term “Mozarab,” see our discussion in the Introduction.

⁷⁷ De Epalza, “Mozarabs: An Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic Al-Andalus,” 150-151. These advantages refer to the blossoming of Islamic Spain's culture that culminated under al-Rahman III in the fourth/tenth century. De Epalza includes in this group neo-Mozarabs from northern Spain, areas north of the Pyrenees, and from the Maghrib (north-western Africa). What distinguished these neo-Mozarabs from other Christians coming from similar areas was their indigenous connection to Arab and Islamic culture and use of Arabic as a primary language. See also, Miller and Kassis, 420.

⁷⁸ Here, Reilly, depending on estimates by Josiah Cox Russell (*Medieval Regions and Their Cities* [Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1972], 178, 186-191), assumes a population of approximately 28,000 in 478/1085, yielding a Mozarab population of approximately 7,000 (or 25%). Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain*, 85 and Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VI*, 171-172. In addition to Mozarabs, the city's population consisted of a vibrant Jewish population. Reilly estimates their number at approximately 15% of the population, or 4,200 individuals (*The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain*, 85). Norman Roth gives higher estimates for the Jewish population of the period. See Norman Roth, “New Light on the Jews of Mozarabic Toledo,” *AJS Review* 11, no. 2 (Autumn 1986): 196-197, 219-220.

⁷⁹ According to de Epalza, “new Mozarabs” were “new” not only because their conversions were recent, but because their Muslim background distinguished them from other Mozarabs who could trace their heritage to pre-Islamic roots in Spain. Nevertheless, they are to be considered “Mozarab” given their obvious connections to Islamic and Arabic culture and language. See de Epalza, “Mozarabs: An Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic Al-Andalus,” 151. The most notable example of these conversions would be the *qāḍī* of Toledo who converted to Christianity after the city's fall. As de Epalza also notes, new Mozarabs are to be distinguished from *Mudéjares* (Muslims living in Christian Spain) and *Moriscos* (Muslims in Spain who later and more gradually converted to Christianity, often maintaining a nascent form of Islam, between the sixth/twelfth and eleventh/seventeenth centuries). Kassis observes that some “new Mozarabs” included converts from Judaism as well, though they are more correctly called *conversos*. See Miller and Kassis, 418, 420.

would be known as *conversos*, and whilst they were distinct from the various groups of Mozarabs, many shared with them a linguistic and cultural affinity towards Arabic.

Whilst many non-Christians in Toledo converted following their city's capture, others, particularly Muslims, left Toledo for what they hoped would be a safer and more dignified life in other predominantly Muslim party-states.⁸⁰ Perhaps ironically, there would be a number of Mozarabs who would leave Toledo with them.⁸¹ Such Mozarabs may have shared with Muslims the sense of a conquered community. At the very least, they felt more comfortable among, and perhaps loyal to the emigrating Muslims with whom they shared significant aspects of language and culture. Events in other portions of the peninsula would force further emigration from Toledo, most notably with Toledan Muslims fleeing increased marginalization in the wake of fifth/eleventh century Christian-Almoravid hostilities.⁸²

For all those that left the city after its conquest though, there would be many more choosing to migrate there. Beyond the already present Christian army, many such Christian immigrants came from the peninsula's northern regions and consisted of Castilians, Leonese, Asturians, and Galicians.⁸³ Perhaps most significantly, people from outside the peninsula would migrate to Toledo as well, and before long, the increased presence of Frankish immigrants, both soldiers and Cluniac monks, would be readily apparent.⁸⁴ Other immigrants would be Mozarabs from other portions of Islamic Spain who left their respective kingdoms

⁸⁰ According to Hitchcock, "[as] much subsequent legislation within the city concerned disputes relating to the ownership of vacant houses, it is reasonable to assume that there was a considerable exodus of Muslims." See Hitchcock, 77.

⁸¹ See Margarita López Gómez, "The Mozarabs: Worthy Bearers of Islamic Culture," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi, 173.

⁸² For the Almoravid's presence, specifically their defeat of Alfonso VI in 479/1086 which stimulated Muslim emigration southward towards Spanish land ruled by them, see n. 70 above and Raizman, 137. It was with this in mind that al-Mu'tamid, the poet-king of Sevilla who was largely responsible for seeking Almoravid assistance, remarked, "I would rather drive camels in Fez than tend pigs in [Castilla]." Quoted in Justin Wintle, *The Timeline History of Islam* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2005), 174. Cf. MacKay, 27.

⁸³ Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain*, 86.

⁸⁴ See Gómez, 174. Frankish knights helped the armies of northern Spain conquer Toledo and so were present in the city early on. Monks from the abbey of Cluny, also in Frankish territory, came to Spain as well in order to exert ecclesiastical pressure from Rome, along with political pressure from the Holy Roman Empire.

in favour of the newly Christian, and increasingly Mozarab, city.⁸⁵ Still other Mozarabs would come to Toledo in the years after its reconquest, many of them escaping the Almoravid presence mentioned above and their religiously repressive policies.⁸⁶

With Toledo's population in flux, the city's new residents would begin to experience both the long and short term effects of population shifts. In the long term, Christian immigrants from outside the peninsula would exert an increased measure of influence upon the city and its residents. Increased external influence, stemming most notably from Cluniac monks, Frankish soldiers, and Rome, resulted in mounting pressure to create harsher conditions for the city's Muslim population.⁸⁷ Accordingly, Toledo's central mosque, as we describe above, was converted to a cathedral and policies governing Toledan Muslims were made increasingly severe.⁸⁸

Other pressures were brought to bear against Toledo's Mozarabs in persistent efforts to bring the Christian communities of Islamic Spain under the over-arching authority of

⁸⁵ This process began long before Toledo's reconquest insofar as Mozarabs would be used to repopulate areas conquered by the Christian armies of the north. Some of these Mozarabs would come to conquered cities as immigrant refugees from Islamic kingdoms in southern Spain. In like manner, when Toledo was taken by Alfonso VI, various Mozarabs left their native cities in Islamic Spain and settled in Toledo. At times, whole Mozarab communities, including Church hierarchies, migrated to Toledo. See Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 22; Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain*, 17-21; and de Epalza 162.

⁸⁶ Miller and Kassis, 418, 429 and de Epalza, 162. Some of these Mozarabs would be exiled to Morocco by the Almoravids. See the sixth/twelfth century *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* 2:45, trans. Simon Barton and Richard Fletcher, *The World of El Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000). For issues relating to the text's authorship and date, see *ibid.*, 148. In a similar practice, Almohads also expelled Mozarabs in the later portions of the sixth/twelfth century. See Ramón González, "The Persistence of the Mozarabic Liturgy in Toledo after A.D. 1080," in *Santiago, Saint-Denis, and Saint Peter: The Reception of the Roman Liturgy in León-Castile in 1080*, ed. Bernard F. Reilly (New York: Fordham University Press, 1985), 165 and Maribel Fierro, "Christian Success and Muslim Fear in Andalusī Writings during the Almoravid and Almohad Periods," in *Dhimmi and Others*, ed., Rubin and Wasserstein, 155-156.

⁸⁷ As Kedar points out, the fifth/eleventh century also saw an increase in Christian efforts to convert Muslims in Spain. Kedar, 42-49. See also, Kassis, "Muslim Revival in Spain in the fifth/eleventh Century," 90-91 and D. M. Dunlop, "A Christian Mission to Muslim Spain in the 11th Century," *Al-Andalus* 17 (1952): 259-310.

⁸⁸ Toledo's bishop, Pascual, was perhaps conveniently killed during the city's siege and was replaced by the Cluniac monk Bernard de Sédillac who came to Spain in approximately 472/1080 to head the abbacy of Sahagún. He died as archbishop of Toledo in 519/1125. He, along with Constance, Alfonso VI's Burgundian wife, supervised the conversion of Toledo's central mosque. Fletcher, "Reconquest and Crusade in Spain," 39; Smith, 88-89; and Kassis, "Muslim Revival in Spain in the fifth/eleventh Century," 96-97. By the seventh/thirteenth century, Christian stipulations restricted Muslim's hair, beards, dress, and the colours that they could or could not wear. See Raizman, 137.

Rome. This began even before Toledo's siege when Rome pressed for the elimination of Spain's historic and indigenous liturgy. In light of the adoptionist controversy, the liturgy was thought to surely constitute unorthodoxy.⁸⁹ The suppression of this Toledan, or Mozarabic, rite was eventually achieved at the Council of Burgos in 472-3/1080.⁹⁰ Even so, Toledo's Mozarabs would be guaranteed the right to use their liturgy even after the city's siege and many would continue to make use of it, even maintaining churches dedicated to its use.⁹¹

As a result, however, this courtesy created a Mozarab population that seems to have faced questions as to its need to reform itself to meet the demands of new authorities. How was it to live in relation to its new Christian rulers? How was it to view its departing Muslim rulers or those who threatened an expanding Christian Spain from the south (i.e., the Almoravids)? They would spend much time in the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries striving to answer these questions. Even so, pressures to conform to external demands would

⁸⁹ Archdale A. King, *Liturgies of the Primatial Sees* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1957), 467, 496-497 and Monseñor Demetrio Mansilla, "El reino de Castilla y al papado en tiempos de Alfonso VI (1065-1109)," in *Estudios sobre Alfonso VI y la reconquista de Toledo: Actas del II Congreso Internacional de Estudios Mozárabes. (Toledo, 20-26 Mayo 1985)*. Serie Historica 4 (Toledo: Instituto de Estudios Visigótico-Mozárabes, 1987), 62.

⁹⁰ It seems clear that although Alfonso VI was at first reluctant to incorporate the Roman rite, he too was influential in its triumph over the Mozarabic liturgy as well as Spain's integration into greater Europe and Roman authority. See *Chronicon Regum Legionensium*, trans. Barton and Fletcher, 84 and Joseph F. O'Callaghan, "The Integration of Christian Spain into Europe: The Role of Alfonso VI of León-Castile," in *Santiago, Saint-Denis, and Saint Peter*, ed. Reilly. For the Council of Burgos, see Teofilo F. Ruiz, "Burgos and the Council of 1080," in *Santiago, Saint-Denis, and Saint Peter*, ed. Reilly. See also, Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain*, 85; Reilly, *The Kingdom of León under Alfonso VI*, 172; Gómez, 174; and *EF*² 7:249, s.v. "Mozarab," by P. Chalmeta. For the Mozarabic liturgy, see King, 457-631. The matter of correct liturgy would be put to the test in 470/1077 with a judicial duel between representatives of the two rites. This met with the unsatisfactory victory of the Mozarab representative, so Alfonso VI resorted to an ordeal by fire. However, when the Mozarab liturgical book was thrown into the fire it apparently leapt out of the flames. Alfonso VI is said to have kicked it back in, thus sealing its fate. See the treatment of González, but see also *EF*² 7:249, s.v. "Mozarab," by Chalmeta; Kedar, 45; Miller and Kassis, 418; and Walter Muir Whitehall, Jr., review of *El Canto Mozárabe. Estudio histórico-crítico de su antigüedad y estado actual*, by Casiano Rojo and Germán Prado, *Speculum* 7, no. 1 (January 1932): 154.

⁹¹ See González; Reilly, *The Contest of Muslim and Christian Spain*, 85; Christys, 20-21; and Raizman, 134-136. As Chalmeta notes, Alfonso VI succeeded in "suppressing the ancient Hispanic rite in his dominions in 1080 'for all those who were not Mozarabs or their descendants.'" See *EF*² 7:249, s.v. "Mozarab," by Chalmeta.

eventually result in Spain's ecclesial integration into Rome and the ultimate assimilation and near disappearance of Spain's Mozarab population.⁹²

In the short term, however, Mozarab assimilation would be relatively slow and they would remain a sizeable portion of Toledo for two full centuries.⁹³ In fact, Mozarabs would become concentrated in Toledo – the result of migration and the presence of both new and neo-Mozarabs.⁹⁴ Their presence in the city would even be significant enough in the fifth/eleventh and six/twelfth centuries to consider it a centre of Mozarabs. At the forefront of translation work in addition to the production of their own literature, Mozarabs would also make Toledo a centre for their activity as well.⁹⁵ As we shall see, they also produced a unique body of religious polemic built upon the standards of forbearers like Elipandus.

Conclusion

The story of Toledo, from the time Muslim armies entered the city in 92/711 to its

⁹² Their liturgy would be revived on a small scale in Toledo at the end of the eighth/fifteenth century by Cardinal Ximénez Cisneros (d. 923/1517). See *EF*² 7:249, s.v. "Mozarab," by Chalmeta. It is maintained by a minority number of Spanish Christians to this day in Toledo. See González, 179; Ruiz, 121; Miller and Kassis, 417; de Epalza, "Mozarabs: An Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic Al-Andalus," 162; Gómez, 174; and Raúl Gómez-Ruiz, *Mozarabs, Hispanics, and the Cross*, Studies in Latino/a Catholicism (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008). See also, Francisco Javier Hernández, "Language and Cultural Identity: The Mozarabs of Toledo," *Boletín Burriel* 1 (1989): 29-48.

⁹³ Gómez, 173, 174 and Reyna Pastor de Togneri, "Problemas de la asimilación de una minoría: Los mozárabes de Toledo," in *Conflictos sociales y estancamiento económico en la España medieval* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1973), 202. On the issues related to the size of the Mozarab population see Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 19-20, especially nn. 26 and 28. On the progress of assimilation of the Mozarabs into the Latin culture of Christian Spain, see Pastor de Togneri, 199-268, but cf. González's caution (175) regarding Pastor de Togneri's thesis that Toledan Mozarabs were primarily contained within the rural peasantry. On the process of Mozarab assimilation and re-incorporating Latin and Romance, over and against Arabic, see Consuelo López-Morillas, "Language," in *The Literature of Al-Andalus*, ed. Menocal et al., 51-52 and María Angeles Gallego, "The Languages of Medieval Iberia and Their Religious Dimension," *Medieval Encounters* 9, no. 1 (2003): 113-114.

⁹⁴ De Epalza, "Mozarabs: An Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic Al-Andalus," 162.

⁹⁵ See, for instance, Charles Burnett, "The Translating Activity in Medieval Spain," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi; Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Translations and Translators" in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable with Carol D. Lanham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Hanna Kassis, "Arabic-Speaking Christians in Al-Andalus in an Age of Turmoil," 401-422; Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*; and P. Sj. van Koningsveld, "Christian Arabic Literature from Medieval Spain: An Attempt at Periodization," in *Christian Arabic Apologetics During the Abbasid Period (750-1258)*, ed. Samir Khalil Samir and Jorgen S. Nielsen. Studies in the History of Religions, ed. H. P. Kippenburg and E. T. Lawson (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).

reconquest under Alfonso VI in the late-fifth/eleventh century, is one of external responses to internal discord. For Muslims, even though they controlled the city, it would be continually plagued by the rebellions that occurred within and emanated from it. Lack of harmony within Islamic Toledo was, in large part, responsible for further and more widespread disunity, resulting in the dissolution of Islamic Spain into independently ruled party-states. The external response to this internal and pervasive Muslim disunity is seen in Alfonso VI's exploitation of Toledo's weaknesses enabling him to take the city in 478/1085.

Insistence upon theological and ecclesiological independence also formed the basis of contention, this time emanating from Spain's Christian communities and from Toledo in particular. Viewed externally by Rome as pagan-influenced rebellion, Toledo's dogged adherence to indigenous Christology fuelled the desire of Rome to return these communities to its authority and to re-extend Christendom into the peninsula. This was achieved, in part, with the presence of Cluniac monks and, in part, with the victorious Alfonso VI. It was in the parting shadows of this turbulent history that Toledo's population began to radically change. As a result, the city became a centre for Mozarabs and their activity in the remainder of the fifth/eleventh century and the whole of the sixth/twelfth century.

These tumultuous events form the background and context for a handful of polemical texts written by Mozarabs and *conversos* living in or near Toledo in the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries. Their writings are significant, for they form some of the first approaches to Islam written in western lands by Christians who were comfortable in and appreciative of the Islamic cultural milieu. How would these authors, heavily influenced by Islamic culture, solidify their religious identity as both orthodox Christians and unique members of a newly Christian city? The following chapter will begin to answer this question in an effort to understand this new perspective for Christian identity in light of Islam.

CHAPTER 5

A DIFFERENT VIEW OF THE BOUNDARIES OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY:
POLEMIC IN FIFTH/ELEVENTH-SIXTH/TWELFTH CENTURY TOLEDO

Between the third/ninth century and Toledo's reconquest there exists very little evidence of Christian writing devoted to Islam in Spain. In the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries, perhaps in light of a context of *Reconquista*, changing rulers, and shifting populations, more of these works begin to surface. While not all of them remain extant, a small corpus has been preserved and transmitted. Many of these texts reflect the comfort their authors felt with their Arabic and Islamic milieu, and while they each have their own unique historical context and concerns, they share a number of features as well.

Among these features is the argument with which we begin our discussion, i.e., that our authors may have masked the primary audiences of their texts. Behind their attacks on Muslims and doctrinal expositions lay a message for their Christian communities. Thus, when they looked at Islam, they did so not primarily to propagate their own view of it, but as we argue below, so that they might shape Christian identity in light of it.

Moreover, the readers of these treatises were buffeted by waves of political change, war, and the seemingly conflicting currents of religion that vied for their religious allegiance. Consequently, much like Elipandus before them, these authors may have used their texts to stabilise and nourish beleaguered Christian communities by reminding them of what it meant to be a Christian *vis-à-vis* Islam. This does more than provide us with a lens in which to read these texts, for it alters their very purpose as well.

In this way, such reminders functioned as a different set of boundaries well-suited for readers in an environment that was increasingly Christian, but also influenced by Arabic and Islam. Consequently, these boundaries wound their way with precision through aspects of a Muslim culture that could be embraced, but around other religious aspects that should be avoided. By laying out these boundaries in their texts, the authors analysed below were thus able to suggest to their readers what their faith should look like in a multi-religious society.

In this light, the present chapter will elucidate the ways in which a text's primary audience might be discerned. It will also introduce the four treatises under analysis in Part II and trace the development of this polemic as a means for corresponding to Christian communities.

Reading an Audience

Before we begin our examination of these texts, it may be helpful to discuss the ways in which we can identify the audience and function of religious polemic. Since many of these treatises come to us detached from their specific historical contexts and purposes, they leave some questions as to whom they were meant to be read by and what they were meant to inspire their readers to do. We are only left with textual clues: the sources authors used, the languages they wrote in, or various self-proclamations. For example, if an author claimed to be a former Muslim, wrote in Arabic, and made extensive use of Islamic sources in order to highlight Islam's religious deficiencies, then we might assume that he hoped his text would be read by Muslims so that once convinced they would convert to superior faith. Such assumptions may, however, be arrived at too quickly. We must instead sift through textual clues, deciphering what may simply be literary flourishes meant to add credence to a text.¹

¹ Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, 56.

What is most helpful in this regard is to consider the relationship between textual sources and the interpretation of these sources. This is especially true for popular genres of polemical texts, as the first two treatises discussed below fall into. Here, though Christian authors may depend quite heavily upon Islamic sources, they often give little consideration to Muslim interpretations of these sources. As a result, many arguments within the texts would be unconvincing to Muslims. Of course, one can imagine the possibility of a sincere argument that failed in its execution. It is when various arguments are *hopelessly* unconvincing in the first place as a result of their detachment from Muslim interpretations that we must wonder about the author's real audience and intention.

Such hopelessly unconvincing arguments may indicate one of two possible features of the author and his text. In the first, we might conclude that the author's technique was simply sloppy. But as we shall see, the texts we discuss below demonstrate remarkable knowledge of Islam and its sources and there is a certain precision in the deployment of their author's arguments. As a result, the sloppiness associated with hopelessly unconvincing arguments is not well-matched to the precision of our author's knowledge.

The second possible feature, then, appears more probable. In this case, Muslim interpretations are ignored and arguments become hopelessly unconvincing to them because our authors have no intention of having Muslims read them. Instead, they wanted to be convincing to fellow-Christians; only needing to convince Christians, they had no need to consult Muslims about how Islamic sources might best be read.² Instead, using Islamic sources would give their texts an air of authority and be especially helpful for Christians in daily contact with Muslims; their arguments and examples are not fabricated and in this they appear realistic to Christians. Thus, they can comfortably ignore Muslim interpretations

² Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 121.

knowing that their relatively manipulative arguments will be sufficient and most effective to those who would read them.³

This becomes particularly apparent, for example, when Christians emphasised the humanity of Muḥammad.⁴ To Muslims, this was relatively unimpressive since neither they nor their revered texts made any claim to the contrary. To many Christians with limited knowledge of Islam, however, underscoring the Prophet's humanity highlighted his inferiority to the divine Christ. Such an argument would only bolster *their* religious confidence, but likely prove ineffective to Muslims.

The same might be said of Christian accusations of Islam that Muslims could easily turn back towards the Church.⁵ Faced with allegations of Islamic disunity or qur'ānic contradictions, Muslims might retort that the Church, too, was not fully unified; without respect to Christians' biblical interpretation, they could also point out various contradictions in the Gospels. The success of such an argument, then, would depend on the ignorance of one's readers. This suggests that these authors often had no mind to authentically debate Muslims. Rather, they simply wanted to convince Christian readers by the shrewdest and most effective means possible.

New issues are raised in this regard by texts of a more scholarly nature, as the final two treatises discussed below are. Such texts are often more formal, even academic, and as such, might easily engage both Muslims and Christians.⁶ They are meant, not so much to evoke a response from the reader or prompt him/her to a specific course of action (e.g. denounce Islam or repudiate Muslims), but through theological or philosophical

³ Ibid., 98-99 and Tolan, *Saracens*, 152.

⁴ See Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 295-296.

⁵ Tolan, *Saracens*, 52-53.

⁶ On this distinction, see Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, 101-102.

demonstration to convince readers – Muslim or Christian – of the truth of their claims.⁷ With this in mind, the fact that a text was written in Arabic, implored Muslims to convert, or *could* be read by Muslims, may not indicate that Muslims were the primary or only audience. Moreover, these characteristics give many polemical texts a decidedly apologetic function as well. Thus, even as authors attacked Muslim doctrine, they could defend Christian theology. This feature would make texts especially useful to Christians living in an Islamic environment.

This latter point shapes the purpose of both popular and scholarly polemic. If Christians were meant to find this sort of anti-Muslim polemic most helpful, then perhaps these texts could function as means for assuring readers of their self-identity. In this way, the texts we examine below act as markers for boundaries that would safeguard the religious identity of Christians who read them. Since these authors and a significant portion of their readers were conversant in Islamic culture, we can further suggest that these boundaries at times made their way towards Muslims, including them inside and allowing Christians to adopt various elements of Islamic culture, but lay at other times away in between Christians and Muslim, marking the two communities out as religiously distinct.

The *Liber denudationis*

Reminders of Religious Distinctiveness

The only extant manuscript of the *Liber denudationis* is accompanied by a number of textual ambiguities. Burman examines most of these issues in his *Religious Polemic*.⁸ Using

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 37-62 and 215-239. Other studies include Thomas Burman, "The Influence of the *Apology of Al-Kindī* and *Contrarietas Alfolica* on Ramon Lull's Late Religious Polemics, 1305-1313," *Mediaeval Studies* 53 (1991): 197-228; Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 22, 30; Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Deux traductions latines du Coran au Moyen Age," in *La connaissance de l'Islam dans l'Occident medieval*, ed. Charles Burnett. Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot, Hampshire: Variorum, 1994), 125-127;

his work and textual evidence we can suggest that the Latin of the *Liber denudationis*’ only available manuscript is very likely a translation from an Arabic original written in Spain between 400/1010 and 527/1132.⁹ Given the treatise’s blatant attacks upon Islam, we can further suggest that the author wrote in a post-*Reconquista* context when he could write his work with more freedom and less fear of Muslim retribution. Moreover, the likelihood that the author was a Mozarab, which we discuss below, makes Toledo, after its reconquest in 478/1085, a likely city of origin given its high concentration of Mozarabs.¹⁰

As for the author, he remarks early on that he is a convert from Islam,¹¹ an assertion supported by his clear familiarity with the Qur’ān, Ḥadīth, and other Islamic sources and the likelihood that he wrote his text in Arabic. Conversions from Islam to Christianity were not unheard of in Spain, especially in post-reconquest cities like Toledo. Such a convert may well have been motivated to write the *Liber denudationis* to other Muslims as a justification for

Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, “Marc de Tolède,” in *La connaissance de l’Islam dans l’Occident medieval*, ed. Burnett, 43-48; Charles H. Lohr, “Ramon Llull, Liber A lquindi and Liber Telif,” *Estudios Lulianos* 12 (1968): 153-158; and G. Vajda and Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, “Marc de Tolède, traducteur d’Ibn Tūmart,” in *La connaissance de l’Islam dans l’Occident medieval*, ed. Burnett, 124-132.

⁹ Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 47-49, 55-62, and 225-228. The manuscript, according to which the original was translated by Mark of Toledo (fl. 1193-1216), originates in Italy and is from the late-eleventh/sixteenth century. See Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 22. See also, Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 46, 215-218. The manuscript also has a eleventh/seventeenth century annotator. For more on the annotator and his annotations, see *ibid.*, 220-223. For the introduction of chapter headings in the *Liber denudationis*’ Latin manuscript see *ibid.*, 234. Burman also argues that the extant Latin manuscript is not only a translation, but an abridgement as well. In both cases, Burman deems the manuscript reliable and faithful to the original. Vajda and d’Alverny place the text in the same period, within the first quarter of the fifth/eleventh century and the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century. See Vajda and d’Alverny, 125-126. The date comes from *Liber denudationis*, 9.23 where the author states that “we are already in the fourth century” from Muhammad’s prediction that the earth’s living creatures would pass away before 100 years. Assuming that the Prophet said this within his prophetic career (c. 610-11/632) and adding his 100 years plus the author’s four centuries suggests a date between 400/1010 and 527/1132.

¹⁰ Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 50-53. ‘Abd al-Masīh b. Ishāq al-Kindī supposedly attacked Muslims within Islamic territory in a polemical work, though he only did so after being assured that he could by his interlocutor, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ismā‘il al-Hāshimī. See n. 109 below. Tolan warns that Burman may assign the text to Toledo too quickly and observes that there were “. . . plenty of other towns in Christian Spain where such a text could have been produced” (Tolan, *Saracens*, 323, n. 28). This caution is noteworthy, but Toledo remains the most likely candidate among a list of possible cities in Spain given its concentration of Mozarabs, one of whom may well have written the text as we argue below.

¹¹ *Liber denudationis* 1.2. The author reaffirms this in 11.6 when he describes his experiences as a pilgrim on the Ḥajj. If the author was indeed a convert, then he would be what de Epalza refers to as a “new Mozarab.” See Chapter 4, n. 79.

and demonstration of his conversion.¹² He may have even hoped to convince such readers to follow him in converting to a faith that he now thought was superior. The author might be further compelled to address Muslims in this way in the events following Toledo's reconquest. In a newly Christian city, he could have written his text with much less fear of Muslim reprisal. Further, Muslims at such a time may have been in a reasonably vulnerable position following a city's reconquest. Under such conditions, the author may have wished to seize the opportunity to engage Muslims at a time when they might be most likely to listen and convert.

Yet other details within the treatise suggest that the author's alleged conversion is simply a rhetorical device designed to add authority to the text itself.¹³ His description of events occurring during the *Hajj*, for example, is particularly unconvincing.¹⁴ The details he

¹² Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 53. At one point, Burman suggests a Muslim audience in light of abridgements made to certain verses from the Qur'an in the Latin translation of the *Liber denudationis*. Burman asserts that the full text would most likely have been included in the Arabic original since, "... quoting abridged and paraphrased verses in Arabic to a Muslim audience would be an ill-advised strategy for a Christian polemicist." Ibid., 61. See also, ibid. 154-155 where Burman is more explicit in his assumption that the *Liber denudationis* was written for a Muslim and Arabic-Speaking Christian audience. At times, the author of the text even seems to directly address a Muslim audience (e.g., 12.9). D'Alverny suggests in this regard that it was a missionary textbook. See d'Alverny, "Mark de Tolède," 50 and Lohr, "Ramon Llull, Liber Alquindi and Liber Telif," 156-157.

¹³ D'Alverny sees the author's claim as "... the apologetic fiction of a Mozarab refugee from Toledo after the Reconquest ..." (*la fiction apologetique d'un mozarabe réfugié à Tolède après la Reconquête*). She adds that it seems the author at least came from an area where educated Muslims were present with whom he could discuss related issues. D'Alverny, "Mark de Tolède," 47. See also Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "La connaissance de l'Islam en Occident du IX^e au milieu du XII^e siècle," in *La connaissance de l'Islam dans l'Occident medieval*, ed. Burnett, 591, n. 27; Vajda and d'Alverny, 126; and Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 30. Daniel has difficulty accepting the idea that a convert could so vehemently attack his previous faith, "however much he hated his old religion." However, though we agree with Daniel in doubting that the author was actually a convert, this particular assertion is unconvincing. In fact, the opposite of Daniel's conviction is just as plausible insofar as a convert, disillusioned with his or her former faith, might vehemently attack it. Indeed, the examples of 'Alī al-Ṭabarī (c. 165/781-250/864), al-Ḥasan b. Ayyūb (c. fourth/tenth century), and Bodo (c. early-third/ninth century) are cases in point. Al-Ṭabarī converted to Islam when he was approximately 70 years of age and later wrote two works against Christianity (*Kitāb al-Dīn wa 'l-dawla* and *al-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*). See *EF* 10:17-18, s.v. "al-Ṭabarī," by D. Thomas. Al-Ḥasan b. Ayyūb converted to Islam from Christianity and in the same evening wrote a refutation of Christianity that he addressed to his brother 'Alī b. Ayyūb. It is quoted at length in Ibn Taymiyya's (661/1263-728/1328) *Al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*. See ibid., 18. See also, Bayard Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 433. Bodo, a Frankish deacon, converted to Judaism in 224/839, changed his name to Eleazar, took a Jewish wife, and moved to Islamic Spain where he was unrelenting in his invective against Christians. See Colbert, 150-151.

¹⁴ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 30.

shares, supposedly observed whilst he was “a pilgrim [in Makka] in the time of [his] infidelity,”¹⁵ would not have required him to be present as a pilgrim, but could just as easily have been gleaned from the Ḥadīth. Moreover, the details he shares are distorted.¹⁶ The author’s awareness of Islamic thinkers appears limited as well. In particular, Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī (b. 255/868), the Zāhirī jurist, would likely be placed on the fringes of mainstream Islamic thought, yet the author describes him as “the greatest among [the jurists].”¹⁷ Though al-Iṣfahānī was favoured in Islamic Spain, most Muslims could likely mention with ease other Muslim thinkers and jurists who had greater and more widespread acclaim.¹⁸ This suggests that the author was aware of Andalusī Muslims’ preference for those like al-Iṣfahānī, but was perhaps unaware of the larger spectrum of Islamic thought. None of these details eliminates the possibility that the author’s claim to be a convert was true, but it could also be possible that he was a Mozarab posing as a convert from Islam. As a Mozarab he would have been fluent in Arabic, familiar with the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth, and able to converse with Muslims on topics related to his treatise, yet lacking a comprehensive understanding of Islamic history and spirituality.¹⁹

If the author of the *Liber denudationis* may not be who he claimed to be, then we must question his authentic purpose for writing the text as well. In this light, whilst he does

¹⁵ *Liber denudationis*, 11.6.

¹⁶ Pilgrims do gather for three days at al-Minā where animal sacrifices are made as the author claims, but they do not throw seventy stones at themselves. Instead, each pilgrim throws seven stones at walls (*jamra al-‘aqaba*). See *ibid.* and Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 369, n. 4.

¹⁷ *Liber denudationis*, 2.3.

¹⁸ Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 50. Urvoy observes that the presence of Zāhirism, shaped by al-Iṣfahānī, “. . . remained very sporadic . . .” and d’Alvemy notes the dominance of the Mālikite school in Islamic Spain. Dominique Urvoy, “The ‘Ulamā of al-Andalus,” in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi, 854 and d’Alvemy, “Marc of Tolède,” 44. Even so, it was under al-Iṣfahānī that the Zāhirī school of legal thought took shape and he would also have significant influence upon Ibn Ḥazm through whom the school was present in Islamic Spain. Thus, Spain in particular demonstrates a special connection to Zāhirism and al-Iṣfahānī.

¹⁹ Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 53-55. Burman’s clarification (though he, too, doubts that the author is a convert) is noteworthy: “. . . it is not impossible to imagine an Andalusī Muslim learned enough to read the Qur’ān, Ḥadīth, and [Qur’ānic] commentaries, but who remained rather hazy on the other areas of Islamic religious history, and who, having never been on the [Hajj], was unclear as to exactly what occurs at the holy places of Islam as well.”

deliberately depend upon and make use of Islamic sources, the author does so in ways which indicate that he is largely unconcerned with how Muslims themselves might interpret their texts and traditions. His lengthy discussion of petty inconsistencies in the Qurʾān, for instance, seems hardly convincing to a Muslim audience, though it may have persuaded Christian readers who would be largely unaware of such details.²⁰ The author's discussion of important Islamic events like Muḥammad's journey to Jerusalem and ascension to heaven (*mi'rāj*) – included in order to demonstrate the embarrassing absurdities in Islam – seem particularly ineffective for a Muslim audience and demonstrate a curious distrust of how Muslims themselves might interpret their faith.²¹

We must wonder, then, how an author so well-versed in his knowledge of Arabic and Islamic sources and so calculated in his attack on Islam could be so seemingly careless in the application of his arguments. Perhaps he was more familiar with written sources than he was with Muslims who interpreted them. But in his study of Islam, he must surely have learned how Muslims themselves read their texts and traditions. Indeed, the author seems to be shrewdly deliberate in the sources he uses and makes his readers aware of. Therefore, we must not assume that he was careful in his consultation of Islamic sources, yet careless and naïve in his interpretation of them. Instead, might we not suggest that he was equally shrewd in his application of these sources by deliberately choosing to disregard common Muslim

²⁰ These are most notable in *Liber denudationis*, 9.

²¹ For a discussion of how Christian polemicists deliberately ignored readily available and more accurate information about Islam or from Islamic sources in order to meet their polemical agenda and convince their Christian audiences, see Burman, "The Influence of the *Apology of Al-Kindī* and *Contrarietas Alfolica*, 227; Kedar, 35; and Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 260-261, 267, 271-276. While the tendency of Western polemicists to ignore Islamic sources and interpretations is well-argued by Daniel, Burman has shown that this was not necessarily the case when it came to Latin translations of the Qurʾān. See Thomas E. Burman, "Tafsīr and Translation: Traditional Arabic Qurʾān Exegesis and the Latin Qurʾāns of Robert of Ketton and Mark of Toledo," *Speculum* 73 (1998): 732 and Burman, *Reading the Qurʾān in Latin Christendom*. Likewise, the ignoring of various aspects of Islam may have been more deliberate than Daniel argued. See the text below and John V. Tolan, "Rhetoric, Polemics and the Art of Hostile Biography: Portraying Muḥammad in Thirteenth-Century Christian Spain," in *Pensamiento medieval Hispano: Homenaje a Horacio Santiago-Otero*, vol. II, ed. José María Soto Rábanos (Madrid: CSIC, 1998).

interpretations, knowing that it would be primarily Christians who would read his text?

If this was the case, then the author used his knowledge of Islam as a means for adding credence to his text. By doing so he could more easily convince a Christian audience of his authority and the strength of his arguments. Using this illusory method, the author would merely have erected a series of “straw men” that he could argumentatively destroy with ease, convincing a Christian audience of his assertions, regardless of how Muslims might counter his claims. After all, it was not his intention to help his readers understand Islam as much as it was to give them the lenses through which he wished them to view it.

Thus, it seems quite likely that the author of the *Liber denudationis* wrote with a Christian audience in mind perhaps to assure them of the inferiority and shortcomings of Islam. This would have been especially important in a post-reconquest city like Toledo whose population was in flux. Christians new to the city could read a demonstration of the superiority of their faith that coalesced with the superior military and political might that allowed Christian armies to reconquer cities.

It is tempting to wonder, then, why the author would write to Christians in Arabic, the text’s likely original language, and not in Latin. It must be recalled, however, that as a Mozarab author, as he most likely was, writing in Arabic to a Christian community in Spain would surely have meant writing to a Mozarab community. As Arabic speakers, many from such a community would have been able to read the Arabic text. Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that Mozarab communities produced an *expansive* body of literature, there is ample evidence of works produced by and for these communities in Arabic. Thus, a thoroughly Mozarab text would not be an anomaly. Perhaps the author simply built upon a tradition of Mozarab literature designed for a particular Mozarab audience.²²

²² For Mozarab literature, see a collection of Mozarab legal documents in Ángel González Palencia, *Los mozárabes de Toledo en los siglos XII y XIII*, 4 volumes (Madrid: Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan, 1926-

Readers of the *Liber denudationis*, then, may have most likely been part of a Mozarab community, perhaps living in a reconquered city like Toledo, who would read a demonstration of their superior faith in comparison to the religion of vanquished Muslims. The text may have also served as a timely reminder to Mozarabs of Christian identity and what it meant to live as Christians in a multi-religious environment. In this way, the *Liber denudationis* may have offered stability to a Mozarab population that faced the commotion following the *Reconquista*, the subsequent population shifts of northern and non-peninsular Christians, Mozarabs, and Muslims, and the later threats posed by Almoravids from the south.²³

More than this, however, the *Liber denudationis* may have addressed issues faced by Mozarabs caught in between a changing system of government. In a post-reconquest city such as Toledo, one set of rulers was exchanged for another, but this exchange would mean far more to the city itself than to its community of Mozarabs. As Reyna Pastor de Togneri

1930), but see especially Kassis, "Arabic-Speaking Christians in Al-Andalus in an Age of Turmoil," 402-403, 411-421. For matters of language, see Ignacio Ferrando, "The Arabic Language among the Mozarabs of Toledo during the 12th and 13th Centuries," in *Arabic as a Minority Language*, ed., Jonathan Owens. Contributions to the Sociology of Language, 83, ed., Joshua A. Fishman (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000). See also, Roger Collins, "Literacy and the Laity in Early Mediaeval Spain," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 113-114, 119, 120-122; Gallego, 114-115, 136; and López-Morillas, "Language," 49-50. It should be noted that Mozarab clergy would have used Latin in addition to their use of Arabic and Romance (d'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," 440). Arabic use by Mozarabs would, in fact, have ceased as the Mozarab population itself assimilated into Christian, Latin Spain by the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries (Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 28-29, 209). Arabic would nonetheless have been in predominant usage by Mozarabs well into the sixth/twelfth century even as they slowly began to incorporate Romance and Latin. For more on this transition, see P. Sj. van Koningsveld, *The Latin-Arabic Glossary of the Leiden University Library: A Contribution to the Study of Mozarabic Manuscripts and Literature* (Leiden: Labor Vincit, 1976). See also, Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "Unas notas sobre los 'textos Árabes Cristianos Andalusíes,'" *Asociación Española de Orientalistas XXXVIII* (2002): 155-168; P. Sj. Van Koningsveld, "Christian-Arabic Manuscripts from the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa: A Historical Interpretation," *Al-Qanṭara* 15, no. 2 (1994): 423-451; and van Koningsveld, "Christian Arabic Literature from Medieval Spain: An Attempt at Periodization."

²³ Cf. Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 154-155 and n. 12 above. Burman suggests an audience of Muslims and Arabic-speaking Christians and observes that a number of Arabic texts written by Christian authors, including some of the texts discussed below, were later rebutted by Muslim authors. That Muslims *could* read these texts and respond to them need not imply that they *must* be the intended audience, or at the very least, the primary audience. Cf. Tolán, *Saracens*, 152 and David Thomas, "Cultural and Religious Supremacy in the Fourteenth Century: *The Letter from Cyprus* as Interreligious Apologetic," *Parole de l'Orient* 30 (2005): 297-322. The latter source argues that a text written by a Christian in Cyprus to Muslims in Damascus and rebutted by Ibn Taymiyyah suggests a strong possibility of an underlying Christian audience as well.

observes, “. . . Mozarabs changed lords without leaving their land”²⁴ In other words, Mozarabs were viewed as outsiders by their former Muslim rulers because they were non-Muslims. But they were also viewed with suspicion by their new Christian rulers because they looked and sounded like Muslims; they were “ostensibly foreign” co-religionists who seemed very much like their defeated enemy.²⁵ As such, their community stood out as “an ‘island’ hardly integrated into the post-conquest order”²⁶

If indeed Toledo is the *Liber denudationis*’ city of origin, then adding to this problem was the favouritism shown to Mozarab communities there by Alfonso VI. As Gautier-Dalché deduces, “[it] was possible neither to get rid of [Mozarabs] (they were Christians) nor to impose upon them institutions which were foreign to them because of their numbers.”²⁷ And so they were given special privileges, not least of which was the use of their own liturgy. In the resentful eyes of other Christians, then, Mozarabs became a fifth column.²⁸ As a result, a tension may have surfaced for Mozarabs that would tug at the cultural and linguistic affinities they shared with defeated Muslims and the religious connections they had to their victorious Christian rulers. With whom should their allegiance lie?²⁹

The *Liber denudationis* would not answer this question for its Mozarab readers with arguments that shifted their political allegiance. Neither would it force them to compromise their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness. For the author of the *Liber denudationis*, these

²⁴ “*Los mozárabes toledanos cambiaron de señores sin abandonar sus tierras*” See Pastor de Togneri, 202.

²⁵ Hitchcock, 77.

²⁶ Diego Olstein, “The Arabic Origins of Romance Private Documents,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 17, no. 4 (October 2006): 434. See also, López Gómez, 173.

²⁷ “*No era posible ni deshacerse de ellos (eran cristianos) ni imponerles, a causa de su número, instituciones que les eran extrañas.*” Jean Gautier-Dalché, *Historia urbana de León y Castilla en la edad media (siglos IX-XIII)*, 2d ed. (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España Editores, SA, 1989), 116.

²⁸ Hitchcock, 77, 95.

²⁹ González observes that “. . . Mozarabs cannot be imagined as Christian partisans who yearned for their liberation Some Mozarabs who arrived in Toledo just after the conquest of the city seem to have been obliged to do so by force.” See González, 169. As we note in Chapter 4, some Mozarabs even left Toledo with defeated Muslims.

had little bearing on Christian religious identity. Consequently, he may have used his work to soften the tension for the Mozarab community by offering them a different set of boundaries that could help them realize who was a part of their community and who was not and how to navigate their new experience. These boundaries also underscored and reminded readers of the religious distinctions that were apparent between Christianity and Islam. Convinced readers would thus see the dangers of forsaking their commitment to Christian faith by siding with Muslims who shared with them language and culture. Reading the text in Arabic with its Islamic thought forms, however, may also have reminded readers of what made them distinct from the various other Christians who entered their city. In the end, those who read the author's treatise may have remained in the awkward position of minorities regardless of who ruled a post-*Reconquista* city like Toledo, but they would nevertheless have been assured and reminded of their religious loyalties without any cost to their identity as Mozarabs.

The Text of the *Liber denudationis*

The treatise begins with what is essentially a Christianised version of the Islamic *basmala*.³⁰ Continuing in this light, the author then gives thanks to God for his generosity and for his miracles, by which the author and those like him have come to believe and have been “made . . . to be among the best of men.”³¹ After asking for guidance and success for the work to come, the lengthy thanksgiving ends with the typical Arabic reference to God as “pious and compassionate.”³²

³⁰ “In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” (*bismi Allāhi al-rahmāni al-rahīmi*). The *Liber denudationis* 1.1 has “In the name of the Father, the Father of the ages, and of the Son, the Son of the resurrections, and of the Holy Spirit”

³¹ *Liber denudationis*, 1.1.

³² Here, “*pius et misericors*” is most likely a translation of the Arabic *al-rahmān al-rahīm* (“the Merciful the Compassionate”). See *ibid.*

The author then condemns his (alleged) past as a Muslim, claiming it to be the stamp of the devil upon his heart.³³ He further sets himself apart from Muslims by asserting that they have deliberately turned away from God. In so doing, they blasphemed Christianity, his chosen religion. Thus, turning from what held the author in disbelief – the Qur’ān, the Ḥadīth, and the “*elfolicha*” (*al-fuqahā*, or “religious jurists”) – the author now sets himself to the task of “denuding,” “exposing,” or “disclosing” the errors of Islam.³⁴ By doing so, he hopes to expose what he believes to be the true status of Muḥammad and to lay bare religious truth by disclosing (i.e., interpreting correctly) what the Prophet has misconstrued.³⁵ Thus, the author’s work serves a dual purpose: to expose the errors of Islam while at the same time revealing the truth found within it that supports Christianity. All of this the author will do using only those sources that previously kept him in bondage (the Qur’ān, Ḥadīth, and Islamic commentaries).³⁶

³³ Ibid., 1.2.

³⁴ Ibid. The author states here that his purpose also serves as the work’s title: “. . . this book which we have named [*The Book*] of *Denuding or Exposing, or The Discloser . . .*” ([*Liber*] *denudationis siue ostensionis, aut patefacientem*). Even so, the work has been previously known by other titles. For instance, Lull was aware of and used the *Liber denudationis*, but referred to it in his writings as *Telif*, possibly the Latin rendering of the Arabic *ta’lif* (“composition;” Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 38, n. 22). The text’s eleventh/seventeenth century annotator titled the work *Contrarietas alfolica* (the phrase “*contrarietate elfolicha*” appears in the text at 1.2). We cannot be completely sure what the annotator intended by this title (Burman suggests “*The Alfolic Opposition*” or “*The Mutual Contradictions of the Alfolica*” in *Religious Polemic*, 38), but d’Alverny asserts that *alfolica* is a corruption of the Arabic *al-fuqahā*, or “religious jurists.” The author’s clear familiarity with legal scholars such as al-Ḥafḥānī, Abū Ḥanīfa (c. 80/699-150/767), and others confirm that “*alfolica*” should indeed refer to religious jurists (d’Alverny, “*Deux traductions latines du Coran au Moyen Age*,” 126; see also, Vajda and d’Alverny, 125 and d’Alverny, “*Marc de Tolède*,” 44). In any case, the phrase occurs only early on in the context of the author’s reflections concerning what he sees as a state of religious ignorance brought to bear upon Muslims by the Qur’ān, the Ḥadīth, and the “contradictions of the *elfolicha*” (*Liber denudationis*, 1.2). Thus, the eleventh/seventeenth century annotator may have seen this phrase as an appropriate description of the work’s contents. Various modern studies follow suit (for a list, see Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 37 and 37-38, n. 18). The treatise concerns itself with more than mere contradictions of religious jurists, however, and as Burman posits, the Latin text seems to plainly suggest a title in 1.2 (ibid., 37, 38). Vajda and d’Alverny suggest that this phrase refers to elements which clarify the odd nature of the title that, in their opinion, remains *Contrarietas alfolica* (Vajda and d’Alverny, 124), but the reverse seems more accurate: the author exposes a number of errors that he feels are inherent in Islam, the contradictions of the *al-fuqahā*’ being among them. *Liber denudationis siue ostensionis, aut patefacientem*, then, seems most fitting.

³⁵ As Burman remarks, the author wishes to, “. . . lay bare the truth that is nevertheless contained in this muddled doctrine.” Burman, “The Influence of the *Apology of Al-Kindī* and *Contrarietas Alfolica*,” 211.

³⁶ For commentary on the author’s sources, which include various Eastern Christian sources such as al-Kindī in addition to Latin Christian theology, see Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 95-189.

The author moves on to describe the *umma* and its divisions. Of particular interest is his categorisation of Muslims, each of whom can be placed into one of four groups. Accordingly, there are some Muslims who converted to Islam (*Sarracenismum*)³⁷ out of fear (“because of the sword”) and who now refuse to apostatise out of fear. Others came to Islam through Satan’s deception. These converts, many of them simple, rural men, ignorantly believed the tenets of Islam. Various others are automatically considered Muslims because their parents were. Their devotion to Islam is rather thin because to them it is simply a lesser evil in comparison to the paganism of their ancestors. Still other Muslims convert to Islam for the worldly pleasures it affords over and against “the eternity of the other world.”³⁸ Beyond these categories, the author cites the divisions apparent within Islam, and does so by citing the first of many *ḥadīths* with its full chain of authority (*isnād*).³⁹ This division is merely the outworking of inherent contradictions evident between Islam’s scholars and within the Qur’ān itself.

For the author, it is as if Muslims have chosen their faith blindly and with little awareness of the full consequences of their actions. In his mind, their devotion is impure, void of logical reason, and is the result of fear, foolishness, unfortunate heritage, or temporal lusts. Yet Muslims have done this “baldly”⁴⁰ and for this reason he sets out, in the remainder of his work, to vehemently attack the status of Muḥammad and the Qur’ān, comparing both to the unique nature of Christ.

Exposing Muḥammad

Starting with Muḥammad, the author assails Muslims’ claim that the Bible foretells

³⁷ The translator uses “*Sarracenismum*” here to refer to the religion of those who followed Muḥammad (i.e., Saracens). *Liber denudationis*, 2.1. See also *ibid.*, 9.17

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.2. For the *ḥadīth*, see Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 247, n. 1.

⁴⁰ *Liber denudationis*, 3.1.

the Prophet's arrival.⁴¹ According to him, the Bible does indeed foretell true prophets, as is the case for Christ, but it does not mention Muḥammad. The author is aware of the popular Muslim belief that the Bible was corrupted in order to erase any mention of the Prophet, so he counters this claim by quoting the Qur'ān. In so doing, he observes that God told Muḥammad to consult the Scriptures sent down previously (i.e., the Bible) when in doubt concerning anything revealed to him. For the author, then, Christian Scripture interprets the Qur'ān, and in this light, he wonders how anyone can doubt the veracity of the Bible.⁴² Muḥammad stands on the other side of this veracity and the author claims that “. . . he *pretends* that God said to him . . .” what was supposedly revealed to him.⁴³ In the author's opinion, God did not reveal his words to Muḥammad – they were his own invention – and the Prophet is in fact “impersonating God” when he claims otherwise.⁴⁴

With further Qur'anic citations, the author concludes that the Bible was certainly not corrupted. In fact, its only references to Muḥammad appear when it speaks of false-prophets and “workers of iniquity.”⁴⁵ Christ, however, sent prophets before him so that they might herald his coming incarnation, virgin birth, death and resurrection, and ascension to heaven. These prophets also foretold his divine nature which worked the miracles that would validate their prophecy. The implication is not only that biblical prophecy points solely towards Christ, but that its silence regarding Muḥammad is matched by the absence of any miracles he may have performed that might authenticate his prophethood. Shortcomings like these, the author concludes, are befitting of neither a king nor a prophet, but of an impostor.⁴⁶

Not only are miracles and prophecies absent from Muḥammad's life, but the fact that

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 3.2. The author quotes *Yūnus* (10):94 in the Qur'ān.

⁴³ Ibid., 3.2 (emphasis added).

⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, 3.4, but the author uses this manner of phrasing throughout.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 3.5.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

his linguistic abilities were limited to Arabic calls the universality of his prophetic office into question as well. How could he be sent to all nations, as he so claimed, if he was unable to communicate in languages other than Arabic? The truly universal messengers were the disciples of Christ who were sent throughout the world and empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak in every necessary language.⁴⁷

According to the author, then, given Muḥammad's lack of scriptural, prophetic, and miraculous support, he resorts to the sword and deception, forcing "the nations" to follow him.⁴⁸ In this way, Muslims are characterised with a wanton disregard for their own lives as they ravage others in the name of their Prophet.⁴⁹ As for Muḥammad himself, the revelations he claims with authority are not only imaginary, as the author has previously asserted, but are also the result of epileptic seizures.⁵⁰ Muslims, therefore, convert out of fear or foolishly follow a prophet who tricks his people with would-be revelations from God. In order to substantiate these claims, the author cites evidence from both the Qur'ān and various *ḥadīths*, some of which are either deliberately fabricated or altered in order to support his arguments.⁵¹

If the author's citations were not proof enough of Muḥammad's illegitimacy, he then calls attention to the Prophet's supposed *mi'rāj* in which he claims to travel through the heavens and intercede for angels.⁵² The author's account here lacks the criticism and condemnation that characterises other sections of his work, yet as Burman notes, he

⁴⁷ Ibid., 8.3-8.5. The author here refers to Matthew 28:19 (the Great Commission) and Acts 2:1-11 (Pentecost).

⁴⁸ *Liber denudationis*, 4.1.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 4.2. The author states, "And the faithful were known in this way; they did not worry even if they were killed." Burman suggests that this admittedly difficult phrase is evidence of a lacuna ("gap" or "missing portion") in the text. To whom is the author referring when he writes of "the faithful"? There may indeed be a lacuna here, but a better explanation might be seen in the author's *ḥadīth* citation in 4.1. Here Muḥammad assures Abū al-Dardā', a companion, that Muslims are able to enter paradise in spite of certain sin. With this assurance, Muslims might embrace the violent conquest that resulted in forced conversions without regard to their own safety. Hence, the author claims in 4.2 that this disregard characterises all Muslims. Cf. Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 263, n. 4.

⁵⁰ *Liber denudationis*, 4.4, 4.7.

⁵¹ Ibid., 4.3. See also, Burman's notes in *Religious Polemic*, 263, n. 6 and 265, n. 2.

⁵² *Liber denudationis*, 4.7 and 12.1-6.

nevertheless “intended for this narrative to appear shocking and ridiculous *per se* to a Christian audience.”⁵³ This is likely implied when he claims that “sixty thousand men abandoned [Islam]” when Muḥammad told them of the journey.⁵⁴ In other words, such unthinkable claims were outlandish and turned reasonable followers away. Along with the portrayal of the Prophet’s behaviour as contradictory and shameful,⁵⁵ they secured Muḥammad’s place in the author’s mind as a “licentious impostor and pseudo-prophet”⁵⁶ whose inability to affect miracles leaves him with no choice, but to forcibly or deceitfully convince others of his authenticity.⁵⁷

Throughout, the author continues to cite passages from the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth in addition to relevant commentaries and Islamic thinkers. He also turns to the life (*sīra*) of the Prophet to show that a Nestorian monk taught Muḥammad.⁵⁸ The author further suggests that in addition to the Christian monk a Jewish and a Persian convert to Islam also advised Muḥammad. The Prophet is unable to convincingly deny this accusation even in spite of seizure-like revelations meant to support his authenticity.⁵⁹ The author’s intention here is clearly to demonstrate Muḥammad’s corruption; his so-called revelations were not from God, but were passed on to him by others. It is perhaps more than coincidence, though, that the alleged teachers the author mentions are Jewish and Persian converts, in addition to a former Nestorian monk. For in both their pre-conversion states (as Jews and heretics) and as

⁵³ Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 44.

⁵⁴ *Liber denudationis*, 12.7.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.1-3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.8-9.

⁵⁸ The monk is known as Baḥīrā or Sergius, depending on the source. On the use of the Baḥīrā legend by Christians, see Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 15, 109-110, 262-264, 268 and Barbara Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bahīrā*, *The History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 9, ed. Thomas, et al (Leiden: Brill, 2009). In Islamic sources, see A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishāq’s Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1978), 79-81.

⁵⁹ *Liber denudationis*, 5.2. The revelation here refers to *al-Nahl* (16):103 in the Qur’ān which the author quotes as “We know that these will say that a man instructed him. The language in which they speak to him is Persian, but this is clear Arabic.” Here, Muḥammad is countering the claim that he has been taught, stating that his supposed teachers speak only foreign languages and the revelations given to him are in Arabic. Thus, the revelations must be unique.

converts to Islam (pagans), they would themselves represent the outer-reaches of the non-Christian world.⁶⁰ At its best, then, Muḥammad’s knowledge was borrowed; at its worst, it was transmitted by pagans. As a result, Muḥammad and Islam were through-and-through corrupt.

The *Liber denudationis* is in fact unrelenting in its attempt to discredit the Prophet and in its use of Islamic sources to do so. Yet, its author departs from this practice only briefly in order to use science and Aristotelian physics. He does so to disprove the bizarre notion that Muḥammad split the moon in two and caused the halves to descend on two mountains in Makka.⁶¹ In so doing, the author believes that he has exposed Muḥammad’s insufficient learning and his deceitful tendency to hide his ignorance with fanciful imagery.

Exposing the Qur’ān

Having shown Muḥammad to be thoroughly fraudulent, the author shifts from a direct attack of the Prophet to an indirect criticism of him in light of the Qur’ān’s compilation. The author asserts that there were originally multiple versions of the Qur’ān, all disagreeing with each other. These versions were later burned, save one that was preserved and established as the sole authoritative text.⁶² Though the author cites *ḥadīths* as well as qur’ānic evidence to support this history, he considers the entire process to be highly dubious and fraught with shortcomings that, at the very least, call the veracity of the Qur’ān into question. The fact that Muḥammad himself reported that no one understood the Qur’ān only reinforces his opinion that it is a sham: “. . . in truth in this book there are many things so obscure, so mangled, that,

⁶⁰ As Colbert observes, Jews, gentiles (whether referring to pagans in general or specifically to Muslims), and heretics “embraced all non-Christians.” Colbert, 272. See also, Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 271, n. 1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 9.11-16. See also, Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 43.

⁶² *Liber denudationis*, 6.1-6.2. The author here correctly refers to Abū Bakr (c. 570-13/634), Islam’s first caliph, and the seven early Muslims who reportedly possessed the accepted versions of the Qur’ān. The author, however, places his own polemical twist on the events.

[whilst] making no sense, they rather conceal foolishness and lies.”⁶³ Muḥammad, then, buried his lies under ambiguity; he was a “rude messenger” incapable of handling the false message he brought.⁶⁴

The author moves on to focus more intently on the Qur’ān’s muddled content and highlights sections that he considers to be particularly repugnant. To this end, he cites various Qur’ānic passages and commentary concerning Muḥammad’s marital practices, namely his marriage to Māriyya al-Qubṭiyya, the result of which was division among his other wives;⁶⁵ his marriage to Zaynab, the wife of Zayd his companion, that he alleged to be divinely sanctioned,⁶⁶ and his repudiation of his wife Sawda bt. Zam‘a who had grown old.⁶⁷ These events are indeed shocking for the author, but the manner in which Muḥammad appears to conjure up revelations in order to conveniently justify his sordid affairs is especially distasteful to him. Books purported to be holy could not contain such filth.

If this were not enough, the author is also troubled by the relative ease in which Muslim men can divorce their wives and the rather uncouth process through which they can be remarried.⁶⁸ These laws governing marriage and divorce are prescribed by the Qur’ān, and so it is seen as a compilation of “vile things,”⁶⁹ that are “indebted not so much to men as to beasts.”⁷⁰

⁶³ Ibid., 6.4.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 7.1-7.2, 7.5, 7.8.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 7.9-7.10. While the author’s summary of this marriage is exaggerated at points to fit his polemic, it is based on relevant passages in the Qur’ān and the traditional Islamic explanation for the circumstances in which they were revealed. The revelations justified Zayd’s repudiation of his wife and Muḥammad’s subsequent marriage to her. It is in this light that the marriage is considered to be sanctioned by God.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 7.7.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 7.11. This passage refers to *ṭalāq* in which a Muslim man may divorce his wife by pronouncing it so three times. He may only remarry her if she has consummated another marriage beforehand, followed by a divorce.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 7.12.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 7.11.

Furthermore, the author observes that the Qur’ān borrows from others (e. g., Jews and Christians) and mixes into it material from the Old Testament and the Gospels. Portions that do originate with Muḥammad are contradictory and degraded, and in fact, the Qur’ān in its entirety is manipulated insofar as Muḥammad claimed it was revealed to him by God. Even the Arabic of the Qur’ān, the author claims, is flawed: it is unnecessarily repetitive and at times even completely incorrect.⁷¹ It is hardly miraculous, then, but even if the Qur’ān were a miracle, a notion the author deems as “false and horrible-to-hear boasting,”⁷² he asserts that there remain no signs in the Qur’ān that would point towards Muḥammad’s prophethood. For the author, this makes Muḥammad more than a licentious forger of a crude book; he is an “arrogant thief and dishonest plagiarist” as well.⁷³

Other concerns raised by the author include rather petty charges of inconsistencies, many of which purportedly demonstrate the Qur’ān’s plentiful contradictions. This internal evidence is meant to further undermine the credibility of both the Qur’ān and Muḥammad, exposing them as erroneous. The majority of the author’s examples – ranging from the order of creation⁷⁴ to the events and time of judgment day⁷⁵ – are relatively minor and depend on very literalist interpretations.

The author also goes to great lengths to demonstrate confusion in his discussion of the events and teachings concerning the *Hajj*. With an air of authority, he even claims to have participated in the pilgrimage as a Muslim.⁷⁶ As we observe above, however, the events he discusses are skewed, leaving the impression that he has merely misconstrued the details

⁷¹ Ibid., 8.2. The Qur’ān is repetitive, the author claims, in *al-Kāfirūn* (109):1-5 (unnecessary repetition of “worship”) and *al-Naba’* (78):9 (his use of “sleep” is tautologous) and mistaken in *Yūnus* (10):54 (states sinners “will hide their penitence” when “they will make manifest” is correct, according to the author).

⁷² Ibid., 8.1. The author cites here *al-Isrā’* (17):88 of the Qur’ān – evidence of its miraculous nature (*i jāz al-Qur’ān*).

⁷³ Ibid., 7.13.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 9.1-2.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 9.3.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 11.1-6.

given in his sources.⁷⁷ In addition to contradictions, the Islamic prohibition of alcohol⁷⁸ and qur'ānic references regarding the need to demonstrate God's omniscience⁷⁹ or the virgins and sexual license to be found in paradise⁸⁰ are cited in order to illustrate not only the absurdities and extreme vulgarities within the Qur'ān, but the earthly cravings of Muḥammad as well.

In all of this, the author hopes to convince his readers that the Qur'ān is the result of lies and evil tricks. The author will not be deceived, however, since he is keenly aware of its dubious compilation and the sordid details that lie hidden beneath its confused revelations. For this reason, he is able to expose Muḥammad and his severely flawed book for the rather un-miraculous counterfeits that they really are.

Disclosing the Nature and Uniqueness of Christ

Having set the Prophet out as a fool and the Qur'ān as an obscure forgery, the author launches into a comparative study of Christ and Muḥammad. According to the Qur'ān, Christ, on the one hand, is the word of God, and being sent by God, was supernaturally conceived within the sinless virgin, Mary.⁸¹ Muḥammad, on the other hand, was a former infidel.⁸² A descendent of Ishmael, he was only related to Abraham through a servant and as such was the heir not of blessing, but of enmity.⁸³ Unlike Christ, Muḥammad's life gives no evidence of miracles. Neither does it demonstrate that he was able to cast out demons. Had he done so, the author quips, “[Muḥammad] would have undoubtedly cast [one] from

⁷⁷ As Burman notes, the author depends both on the Ḥadīth and on source-material that is presently unknown. See Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 44. See also, *ibid.*, 365-371 and corresponding notes.

⁷⁸ *Liber denudationis*, 11.7-8.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.20-22.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 10.4.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 10.3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 10.5. The author departs here from referencing qur'anic passages and quotes from Genesis (17:18; 17:20; 16:12; and 22:18) in the Old Testament to show that Christ was a descendent of Isaac, through whom all nations were blessed.

himself.”⁸⁴ After additional comparisons in which Christ is shown to be superior, the author attempts to prove Christ’s divinity and concludes on the basis of the Qur’ān that he was indeed “the true son of God.”⁸⁵

In his attacks of Islam, the author has consistently sought to expose and demonstrate the contradictions and errors inherent in the Qur’ān. In his comparisons with Christ, however, though he does use some biblical material, he makes a notable shift by using the Qur’ān in support of his arguments, in spite of how jumbled it really is.⁸⁶ In this way, the author begins to disclose the Qur’an’s inherent truths that lay concealed beneath Muḥammad’s befuddlement and the confusion of later Muslim commentators. This is most apparent in the author’s disclosure of a divine, qur’ānic Christ who points to the truth of the biblical Christ.

Summary

With growing reconquests, perhaps even the sack of Toledo in 478/1085 in particular, and the emergence of the Almoravids as a new threat in the peninsula, the *Liber denudationis* may have offered its Mozarab readers spiritual assurance and stability in the midst of a tumultuous environment. More than this though, the *Liber denudationis* may have served as a reminder to Mozarab communities of their religious distinctiveness at a time when their allegiances may have swayed between their new Christian rulers with whom they shared a religion and the defeated Muslims with whom they shared culture and language. Convinced readers would not find that a commitment to Christian identity threatened their use of Arabic or their cultural preferences. Instead, they may have been re-assured that their absorption of Arabic and Islamic culture was not problematic.

⁸⁴ *Liber denudationis*, 10.6 and 10.7.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.13.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.8-13. See also, Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 347, n. 4.

Simultaneously, they would be reminded of what made them religiously distinct from the Muslims who left a city like Toledo in the wake of its reconquest and those that were a threat from further south. According to the text, these Muslims were the followers of a confused false prophet who pretended that God revealed his words to him. Their holy book was a puzzle hiding lies and vulgarity. Islam was a religion of the foolish and frightened whose Prophet simply could not measure-up to Christ. The author's readers may have shared significant aspects of culture and language with Muslims, but their religion remained distinct.

At the same time, as Mozarabs read this Arabic text dependent upon Islamic sources, they would surely have been aware of the various differences they had with their new Christian rulers. In this light, understanding the religious qualities that made them distinct from Muslims did not mean that they had to abandon what made them unique as Mozarab Christians regardless of the religious distinctions they shared with non-Mozarab Christians. Preserving Christian religious identity may not have meant clinging to one language or culture over and against another, but neither did it mean abandoning their Mozarab identity. Thus, in spite of all that lay unsettled around them, they could be assured of what it meant to be Mozarabs and of the place that had in Christian identity.

The *Dialogus*

Reminders of Religious Superiority

The *Dialogus* was written between 501/1108 and 504/1110⁸⁷ as a dialogue between Petrus Alfonsi and Moses, Alfonsi's former Jewish self.⁸⁸ Alfonsi was a *converso*, and as

⁸⁷ In 2:98 Alfonsi writes that the Jewish captivity (their exile from the time of the Second Temple's destruction) "has already lasted 1040 years." Depending on what year he understood the Second Temple to have been destroyed – either 68 or 70 – Alfonsi most certainly wrote in the early sixth/twelfth century. Resnick narrows this period further, noting that many Spanish Jews dated the Second Temple's destruction to 69, in which case Alfonsi wrote the *Dialogus* in 502-503/1109. See Tolán, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 13, 214, n. 1 and Resnick's comments in Alfonsi, 3, n. 2.

such, he received a “typical Jewish [Andalusī] education, with training in Arabic, Hebrew, Jewish religious texts, and secular studies.”⁸⁹ Alfonsi himself claims that as a Jew his religious zeal surpassed those of other Jews around him, that he opposed adversaries to his faith, and that he taught in the synagogue.⁹⁰ Yet in *Ramaḍān/Shawwāl* 499/June 1106 he was baptised a Christian by Stephen, bishop of Huesca in north-eastern Spain. As a Christian, he took the name Petrus in honour of the feast day on which he converted and Alfonsi in honour of Alfonso I, the king of Aragon (r. c. 497/1104-528/1134), of which Huesca was capital.⁹¹

Alfonsi’s conversion was not unique, nor was the circumstance in which it occurred. As we observe in Chapter 4, many Muslims and Jews converted to Christianity in the wake of their city’s reconquest. Similarly, Alfonsi’s conversion came just a decade after Huesca’s reconquest in 489/1096.⁹² Likewise, the very cathedral where Alfonsi was baptised was a former mosque.⁹³ The turmoil related to reconquest, shared by so many in the events of

⁸⁸ For more on Alfonsi see John Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers* and Irven Resnick’s introduction and bibliography in Alfonsi, xi-xxv, 3-36. For the possibility that Alfonsi was Peter of Toledo, the sixth/twelfth century *converso* translator from Toledo, see P. Sj. van Koningsveld, “La apología de Al-Kindī en la España del siglo XII. Heallas toledanas de un ‘animal disputax,’” in *Estudios sobre Alfonso VI y la Reconquista de Toledo. Actas del II Congreso Internacional de Estudios Mozárabes (Toledo, 20-26 Mayo 1985)*, 3. Series historica 5 (Toledo: Instituto de Estudios Visigótico-Mozárabes, 1989),” 107-129 and Charles Burnett, “The Works of Petrus Alfonsi: Questions of Authenticity,” *Medium Aevum* 66, no. 1 (1997): 42-79. Cf. Resnick’s comments in Alfonsi, 22-24. Alfonsi’s Jewish name is usually given as Moses Sefardi, Jews of Spanish origin being known as Sefardi Jews. See Lourdes María Álvarez, “Petrus Alfonsi,” in *The Literature of Al-Andalus*, ed. Menocal et al., 283.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 and *Dialogus*, Proemium and Prologue:39.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 43. Here Alfonsi’s alter-ego, Moses, tells him: “. . . you used to excel in the writings of the prophets and the sayings of our sages, and that from your youth you were more zealous for the law than all your contemporaries; that if there were any adversary, you opposed him with a shield of defense; that you preached to the Jews in the synagogues, lest any withdraw from the faith; that you taught your companions; [and] that you lead the learned to greater things.” This is very reminiscent of St. Paul’s self-proclamation of his Jewish credentials in Philippians 3:4-6.

⁹¹ *Dialogus*, Proemium and Prologue:40. Based on Alfonsi’s patronage to Alfonso I, Tolan deduces that he “may well have served in Alfonso’s court in some capacity.” See Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 10. See also Resnick’s comments in Alfonsi, 13.

⁹² Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VI*, 282-283.

⁹³ Tolan, *Saracens*, 148.

Toledo's experience, surely defined Alfonsi's early life, and in turn, may have even influenced his conversion.⁹⁴

These events may further inform the occasion of Alfonsi's writing the *Dialogus*. He writes at the beginning of the text that when he became a Christian his former Jewish community felt he had abandoned both God and the law. Others thought he merely misunderstood Jewish Scriptures. Some even claimed that he selfishly converted out of a lust for worldly gain that could only be brokered by a Christian kingdom that dominated all others.⁹⁵ For these reasons, Alfonsi purports to write the *Dialogus* as a demonstration of the superiority of Christianity – the reason why he left Judaism and rejected Islam – and the falsity of objections made by his new faith's adversaries (i.e., Jews and Muslims).⁹⁶

With this in mind, when Alfonsi states in his *Dialogus* that he has written “. . . so that all may know my intention and hear my argument . . . after which I concluded that the Christian law is superior to all others,”⁹⁷ he is essentially seeking to defend his conversion. In so doing, he may also have hoped to neutralise any related controversy within his former Jewish community.⁹⁸ Thus, his conversion was not the result of an intellectual lapse or a misunderstanding of Jewish Scriptures. Nor was it the result of insatiable materialism. Had it been, Alfonsi may have converted to Islam like many Christians had done in the past, but his invective against this religion makes such an option completely unpalatable for him. Rather, Christianity conformed to logic and reason, according to Alfonsi, and he is thus unable to resist its superior truth claims.

⁹⁴ Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 8; Resnick's comments in Alfonsi, 9-10; and Álvarez, 282.

⁹⁵ *Dialogus*, Proemium and Prologue:41. This final claim, in Tolan's view, may have followed as a result of the position Alfonsi may have come to have in the royal court of Alfonso I. See Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 10 and n. 91 above.

⁹⁶ *Dialogus*, Proemium and Prologue:41. See also Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 10, 33 and Resnick's comments in Alfonsi, 17.

⁹⁷ *Dialogus*, Proemium and Prologue:41.

⁹⁸ Resnick's comments in Alfonsi, 13, 17, and Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 13.

In this light, one might suppose that he intended for Jews to read his *Dialogus*, particularly those who criticised and doubted the authenticity of his conversion. Upon reading Alfonsi's work, they might be convinced of Christianity's superiority and convert as well. However, this suggestion makes Alfonsi's insertion of an entire section dedicated to Islam rather awkward. Of what importance would it have to Jews reading a defence of Christian conversion? Within the *Dialogus*, Alfonsi's invective against Islam follows what is a rather intentional shift when Moses, Alfonsi's pseudo-interlocuter, wonders, ". . . why, when you abandoned your paternal faith, you chose the faith of the Christians rather than the faith of the Saracens, with whom you were always associated and raised."⁹⁹ The dialogue that follows is calculated and detailed and suggests that Alfonsi wished to address issues beyond the suspicious concerns of a Jewish community.

Therefore, it seems quite unlikely that Jews were the intended audience for Alfonsi's *Dialogus*. In fact, Alfonsi would be hard-pressed to successfully justify his actions to other Jews. Instead, he would be more successful in proving the authenticity of his conversion to a Christian audience who had known more than a few Jews convert out of fear or compulsion only to abandon Christianity once any threat subsided. Furthermore, it seems that the suspicion with which Jews allegedly viewed Alfonsi's conversion might more likely reflect the general suspicion many Christians had of such conversions – Jews' "essential carnality" meant that they would only convert for possible "material gain."¹⁰⁰ Reading Alfonsi's *Dialogus* would not only assure such a Christian audience of his sincerity, but they would also be reassured of the superiority of their faith over and against Judaism.

Furthermore, in sixth/twelfth century Spain, a Christian argument for religious superiority would have to engage two opponents – both Jews and Muslims. Therefore,

⁹⁹ *Dialogus*, 5:146.

¹⁰⁰ Resnick in Alfonsi, 15.

Alfonsi's argument would not be complete if he did not demonstrate to his Christian readers the superiority their faith had over Islam as well. More importantly, however, Muslims were no more likely to be convinced by Alfonsi's attack of their religion than Jews would be of his attack of theirs. Once again, then, it seems most likely that it was Christians who were the intended readers of Alfonsi's *Dialogus*.¹⁰¹

The structure and nature of the work lends further support to this proposition. On the one hand, as a *converso* raised in an Arabic and Islamic environment, Alfonsi would have been well-suited to choose the arguments to include in his work – those he knew Jews and Muslims might raise and those he knew he needed to address if he was to successfully prove the superiority of Christianity. On the other hand, because Alfonsi's dialogue takes place between himself as a Christian (Petrus) and his former Jewish identity (Moses), as self-proclaimed participant and referee, he alone is able to moderate the discussion, control the arguments of Jew, Christian, and Muslim, and judge the outcome of the debate. Thus, Alfonsi need not fear how an authentic Jew or Muslim might respond to or interact with his work.¹⁰² His only real concern is to convince Christian readers of his arguments.

Moreover, Alfonsi writes that structuring his work as a dialogue in twelve headings was a deliberate choice “so that the reader may find whatever he desires in them more

¹⁰¹ As for why Alfonsi's Islamic polemic is shorter and less complex than his Jewish polemic, Tolan remarks, “Since he is attempting to convince a *Jew* [i.e., Moses] (not a Muslim) of the weakness of Islam, his arguments here are less developed than those of his anti-Jewish polemic. This, combined with the fact that a Christian need not have the respect for the [Qur'ān] that he has for the Torah, gives his anti-Islamic polemic a different [flavour]. For Alfonsi it is enough to impugn the morals of [Muḥammad], the origins of the cult of [Makka], and the textual transmission of the [Qur'ān], to prove that Islam is based on falsehood.” See Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 28.

¹⁰² Moses' remark at the close of the ninth heading may be an inadvertent indictment of many medieval Christian polemicists' tendency to interpret the tenets of their adversaries' faith in order to meet their own polemical means regardless of how these adversaries might interpret their texts and doctrines themselves. He says, “Why should I bring any further objection to you, when you explain all my authorities according to your own desire?” See *Dialogus*, 9:219.

quickly.”¹⁰³ This structure may have been designed to support the use of the *Dialogus* as a polemical sourcebook that readers could continually refer to with ease. If this was the case, then the *Dialogus* would be far better suited for Christian readers rather than Jews and Muslims.¹⁰⁴ The fact that Alfonsi wrote the *Dialogus* in Latin instead of Hebrew or Arabic adds support to this idea as well.¹⁰⁵

Consequently, it would be Christians who, in the end, would read Alfonsi’s treatise and see a demonstration of Christianity’s superiority. Having read the *Dialogus* in a multi-religious environment and in one experiencing the unrest following reconquest, they would surely be reminded of what it meant to be a Christian and assured of their faith’s strength over and against that of Jews and Muslims in their midst. Moreover, the nature of Alfonsi and his work – his background and its language and ease of use – would serve as reminders that Christian identity need not be irretrievably united to a specific culture.

If Alfonsi’s *Dialogus* attacked anything at all, it would be the doubt that might undermine a Christian reader’s devotion to his or her religious beliefs.¹⁰⁶ By directing his *Dialogus* at Christians, then, Alfonsi might hope his readers would affirm his demonstration of Christianity’s religious supremacy and cling to the doctrines that made it so. Reading

¹⁰³ Ibid., 41. Here and throughout, “headings” is used to translate *tituli* – “an unusual term with multiple meanings,” but one suited for this particular context. See Resnick’s comments in Alfonsi, 41, n. 8 and Burnett, “The Works of Petrus Alfonsi,” 43.

¹⁰⁴ Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 15. Tolan notes that whilst there is no certainty as to Alfonsi’s express intent for his work, it is known that medieval readers used the *Dialogus* “as a tool for Christian exegesis of the Old Testament” and “as a sourcebook for polemicists against Judaism and Islam.” Cf. Resnick in Alfonsi, 33-35 where he raises the possibility that Jacob ben Reuben, a sixth/twelfth century Spanish Jew who wrote anti-Christian polemic, may well have read Alfonsi’s *Dialogus* and used it as a model for his *Milhamot ha-Shem*. If this was true, Jews may have read his work and the *Dialogus* could be seen not just as “an attempted self-justification, but as part of a growing polemical antiphon of Jewish-Christian debate.” See *ibid.*, 35. While we cannot rule out the possibility that Jews, or even Muslims, knew and read Alfonsi’s *Dialogus*, it remains more than likely that Christians were the primary audience.

¹⁰⁵ Álvarez, 284. If this was indeed the case, such a notion need not conflict with the proposition above, i.e., that the Mozarab author of the *Liber denudationis* wrote in Arabic to a Mozarab audience. Alfonsi’s work may well have had a broader spectrum of Christians in mind, Christians that would largely read Latin. Such would have been the case for those like Alfonso I who sponsored his conversion.

¹⁰⁶ Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 15.

Alfonsi's work would thus safeguard his community against conversions and stabilise its commitment to Christian identity.

The Text of the *Dialogus*

In his prologue, Alfonsi lays out the ground rules for his ensuing debate with Moses and promises to make his arguments by virtue of the Hebrew text of the Bible. In other words, Alfonsi will debate using the preferred sources of his opponents. With this in mind, he exclaims early on, “. . . I desire greatly to slay you with your own sword”¹⁰⁷ and later reiterates this conviction when he writes, “I believe that I have revealed to you clearly and manifestly whatever I have proved by the authority of your books.”¹⁰⁸

In similar fashion, Alfonsi's refutation of Islam employs the same technique and his use of the Qur'ān is marked and consistent. Alfonsi also makes use of Eastern Christian material, the third/ninth century *Risāla* of Christian polemicist 'Abd al-Masīh b. Ishāq al-Kindī in particular. This latter text enjoyed wide distribution in medieval Spain and Alfonsi depends on it quite heavily.¹⁰⁹ Not only does Alfonsi borrow themes from al-Kindī, but his use of the Qur'ān comes directly from the *Risāla* as well.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 44.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 2:119

¹⁰⁹ For an English translation of the work see Tien, 381-545. For dating the work and the two writers (c. third/ninth century-fourth/tenth century), both of whom may be fictitious, see *EF*² V:120-121, s.v. “al-Kindī, 'Abd al-Masīh b. Ishāq,” by G. Troupeau. See also, Newman, 355-363 and Sir William Muir, “The Apology of Al-Kindī: An Essay on its Age and Authorship,” in Newman, 365-380. For more on the use and distribution of al-Kindī's *Risāla* in medieval Spain see P. Sj. van Koningsveld, “The Apology of Al-Kindī,” in *Religious Polemics in Context*, ed. T. L. Hetteema and A. van der Kooij. Studies in Theology and Religion, vol. 11, ed. Jan Willem van Henten (Assen, The Netherlands: Royal van Gorcum, 2004); van Koningsveld, “La apología de Al-Kindī en la España del siglo XII. Heallas toledanas de un ‘animal disputax;’” John Tolan, “Peter the Venerable on the ‘Diabolical Heresy of the Saracens;’” in *The Devil, Heresy and Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, ed. Alberto Ferreiro (Leiden: Brill, 1998); Kritzeck, 101-107; and Tolan, “Rhetoric, Polemics and the Art of Hostile Biography,” 1498, n. 6.

¹¹⁰ See Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 28 and Resnick's comments in Alfonsi, 22-23. See also, van Koningsveld, “La apología de Al-Kindī en la España del siglo XII. Heallas toledanas de un ‘animal disputax;’” 114-115, nn. 15 and 18.

The first four headings of the *Dialogus* focus on a refutation of Jewish beliefs: their understanding of the prophets, the reasons for their captivity and exile from Israel, the nature of their belief in the resurrection of the dead, and their truncated and perverse observance of the Torah. In all of this, Alfonsi incorporates exegesis and reason (i.e., logic and science) to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity.¹¹¹

Of particular interest to the present study is Alfonsi's fifth heading since it focuses directly upon Islam. Moses begins this heading wondering why Alfonsi became a Christian. Islam seems to him to have been just as tenable a choice. After all, Alfonsi had been raised among Muslims ("Saracens") and frequently associated with them. He spoke Arabic and even read Islamic books. Furthermore, Moses deems Islam a generous religion devoted to a generous God who allows Muslims to take part in worldly pleasures. For Moses, Islam is even "grounded on an unshakable foundation of reason."¹¹²

In an effort to support this latter assertion, Moses provides a short summary of Islamic beliefs.¹¹³ Accordingly, Islam, by the generosity of God, is built on few precepts. Muslims need only pray five times every day (*ṣalā*), being careful to cleanse themselves beforehand. They publicly proclaim the unique oneness of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad (*shahāda*). Moses is aware that Muslims fast (*ṣawm*) during the day for an entire month (*Ramaḍān*) and correctly notes that they may break the fast until a white thread can be distinguished from a black one at sunrise.¹¹⁴ If, due to circumstances such as illness, certain Muslims cannot participate in the fast, they can abstain provided they observe it at a time when they are able. Moses describes the obligatory pilgrimage (*Hajj*) and goes on to describe Islamic efforts to eradicate unbelievers, save those who convert to Islam or pay a tribute tax

¹¹¹ *Dialogus*, 1-4:48-145. For commentary, see Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 19-27.

¹¹² *Dialogus*, 5:146.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 5:147-150.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5:147-148. See Qur'ān *al-Baqara* (2):187.

(*jizya*), various Islamic dietary restrictions, regulations governing marriage and divorce, and other Islamic laws Moses deems “the principal commandments of the law, since it would take too long to tarry over individual ones.”¹¹⁵ Moses concludes his summary with what he knows of the afterlife according to Islam and reiterates his initial question to Alfonsi: “. . . why have you followed the Christian rather than the Muslim [*Muzalemitica*] religion? Will you better enjoy the felicity of the present life and equally enjoy that of the future life as well?”¹¹⁶

Though concise, Moses’ summary of Islam is surprisingly accurate, genuine, and full of Qur’ānic support (Alfonsi will provide his polemical interpretations later). The normal vices – mentioned in order to shock and disgust Christians – are absent from his description of paradise (*janna*). As a result, his portrayal rests on the Qur’ān and is honest to how Muslims may have described their faith. Likewise, when Moses asks Alfonsi why he chose Christianity instead of Islam, he departs from the usual pejorative descriptions for Muslims (e.g., Saracens, Hagarenes, or Ishmaelites) normally employed with typical Christian flair and used by many for their ethnic overtones and alleged connections with illegitimacy. Neither does Moses refer to Islam as “pagan” beliefs. Instead, he accurately calls Islam the “Muslim [*Muzalemitica*] religion,” and in so doing, seems to recognise it as a religion in its own right.¹¹⁷

Alfonsi acknowledges that Moses’ summary of Islam is indeed eloquent and would surely meet with the approval of Muḥammad himself. Nevertheless, whilst “those who

¹¹⁵ *Dialogus*, 5:149.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5:150. The latter portion of Moses’ question seems to rest on a common Christian assumption that Islam was a religion designed for worldly enjoyment. He wonders, then, if in choosing Christianity Alfonsi will be able to enjoy both his earthly and heavenly life as well. The juxtaposition is reminiscent of caliph Ma’ mūn’s (170/786-218/833) supposed response to al-Kindī’s *Risāla*: “[Caliph Ma’ mūn] added that there were two religions, one of them the religion for this world and the other for the next. The religion of this world was the religion of the Magians, and the religion of the next world was the Christian religion. But he added, the true religion is that of the unity as taught by [Muḥammad], that is the religion which reconciles this world and the next.” See Tien, 516. As Tien notes, however, these closing remarks occur as an appendage to an Egyptian manuscript of the *Risāla* (Tien, 515). Thus, Alfonsi, though he knew the *Risāla*, may or may not have known it to include these statements.

¹¹⁷ “Saracens” does, however, appear twice in *Dialogus*, 5:146, 155.

consider the delights of the body the highest good” may be convinced – a reference to Muslims and what Christians saw as their preference for earthly, temporal desires – Alfonsi will not be “deceived.” He counters that Muḥammad “falsely fashioned himself a prophet” and did so with help. Moreover, Alfonsi is fully aware who Muḥammad’s “advisor was in contriving [Islam],” an allusion to his coming discussion of the Prophet’s alleged heretical advisors.¹¹⁸ For Alfonsi, Islam was not built on sound reason, but was in fact a useless religion. He thus proceeds to revise Moses’ summary of Islam and launches into an attack on Muḥammad, his doctrines, and the Qur’ān.

Borrowing from al-Kindī’s biography of the Prophet, Alfonsi asserts that Muḥammad’s story was one of rags to riches. Inspired by wealth, Muḥammad arrogantly desired to be made king of the Arabs. Knowing his wish was unrealistic, “he chose to fashion himself a prophet.”¹¹⁹ Relying on his eloquence to persuade potential followers, Muḥammad’s role as prophet and missionary was eased by the fact that the majority of his followers were simple idolaters and heretics. Among the latter group, Alfonsi notes especially Jewish heretics (Samaritans) and Christian heretics (Nestorians and Jacobites).¹²⁰ The implication is that a large portion of Islam’s earliest followers were simpletons who lacked the mental capacity to withstand Muḥammad’s eloquence. As heretics, they had already drifted from one faith; it would take very little for them to drift even further under Muḥammad’s sly persuasion. Taken together, Muḥammad’s earliest converts would comprise the very essence of the non-Christian world.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 5:150. Other medieval writers used similar language in their assertions that it was ultimately Satan who advised Muḥammad and told him what to claim as revelations from God. It is possible that Alfonsi’s statement may be a veiled reference to Satan, as other medieval polemicists may have intended, but given the literary context it seems far more likely that Alfonsi means to hint at his discussion of Sergius (Baḥīrā), ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām, and Ka‘b al-Aḥbār that follows in *ibid.*, 5:152.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 5:151.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 5:151-152.

¹²¹ See n. 60 above.

Yet some heretics were more conniving and helped an ironically inept Muḥammad create his doctrine, the result being a mixture of beliefs that he was taught to proclaim as if from God. Among these heretical advisors was the Nestorian Sergius (a Jacobite in the *Dialogus*; also known as Baḥīrā) and two Jews named Abdias and Chabalahabar (‘Abd Allāh b. Salām and Ka‘b al-Aḥbār according to al-Kindī).¹²² By mentioning these individuals, Alfonsi is able to reveal the heretical nature of their backgrounds, and thus, the heretical underpinnings upon which Islam was founded.

Besides exposing the rather evil concoction that lay behind the Prophet’s lies, Alfonsi’s biographical sketch of Muḥammad demonstrates a career completely unbecoming a prophet. If the influence of heretics and Jews were not proof enough of Muḥammad’s lacking credentials, Alfonsi adds that his life evinces no miracles to substantiate his claims as a prophet.¹²³ Moses counters with examples from Ḥadīth literature that appear to give evidence of miraculous signs that would legitimise Muḥammad.¹²⁴ Alfonsi retorts that the Qur’ān – Islam’s highest source of authority – mentions no such miracles, conveniently failing to acknowledge the authority Muslims ascribe to the Ḥadīth.

Alfonsi thus reminds Moses of the qualifications of a true prophet: “probity of life, a display of miracles, and the firm truth of all [their] teachings.”¹²⁵ According to Alfonsi, Muḥammad’s life was hardly virtuous, but rather based on violence and ravenous sexual lust. To demonstrate the latter, Alfonsi employs the usual example of Muḥammad’s seemingly adulterous marriage to Zaynab and his subsequent revelations purported to justify and

¹²² Ibid., 5:152. For the confusion of names and heresies and Alfonsi’s use of al-Kindī as a source here, see Barbara Hurwitz Grant, “Ambivalence in Medieval Religious Polemic: The Influence of Multiculturalism on the *Dialogues* of Petrus Alphonsi,” in *Languages of Power in Islamic Spain*, ed. Brann and Owens, 167.

¹²³ *Dialogus*, 5:152.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 5:153. Among them, Moses recalls that a poisoned lamb shoulder, intended to kill Muḥammad when he ate it, spoke to him and warned him not to eat it. Cf. Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, 3.47.786 and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 26:5430, 5431; it also appears in al-Kindī’s work.

¹²⁵ *Dialogus*, 5:154.

divinely sanction it.¹²⁶ Alfonsi further notes that Muḥammad allegedly “praised God for the power of his own vice . . . because the power abounded in him forty times beyond human measure.”¹²⁷ Even more shocking, Muḥammad even praised God for his heaven-sent craving for women.¹²⁸ Alfonsi further suggests that Muḥammad’s life lacked divine protection as well, given the various injuries he sustained whilst in battle, here referring specifically to the battle of Uḥud.¹²⁹ If Muḥammad were a true prophet, Alfonsi asserts, God’s angels would surely have protected him, or at the very least, forewarned him of potential harm. In actual fact, then, Muḥammad displays all the necessary characteristics of a false prophet.

Having shown Muḥammad to be a shrewd counterfeit, Alfonsi examines Islamic doctrine in order to see if it stands up to reason. Beginning with prayer, Alfonsi suggests that the ritual cleansing performed before each prayer is unnecessary. “For prayer it is important to be cleansed inwardly, not outwardly,” Alfonsi remarks.¹³⁰ Moreover, Islam’s five daily prayers and their related ablutions are not based on sound reason, but on a devotion to Venus.¹³¹ This accusation, common among other medieval anti-Muslim polemicists like al-Kindī and Alvarus, arose because Muslims observe Friday (*dies Veneris*) as a holy day. This also explained Muslims’ uncontrollable sexual desires, which were linked with the Venus cult.¹³² The call to prayer, Alfonsi continues, is inappropriate because of its publicity and only serves as yet another trumped-up sign for Muḥammad. In like manner, the annual fast is ridiculous. The fact that Muslims observe it the entire day, only to break it in the evening in

¹²⁶ Ibid., 5:154-155. For the marriage to Zaynab, see n. 66 above.

¹²⁷ *Dialogus*, 5:154-155.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 5:155.

¹²⁹ Ibid. For this battle, see C. F. Robinson, s.v. “Uḥud,” *EP* 10:782.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 5:156. Daniel suggests that Alfonsi confuses here *wuḍūʿ*, the partial ablutions performed before prayer, with *ghuṣl*, the full ablutions. Daniel further suggests that this confusion formed the basis for the same with later Christian polemicists. See Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 235-236. Alfonsi was perhaps unaware of a third category of ritual cleansing – *tayammum* – the permission to perform dry ablutions with sand when no water is present.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² See Resnick’s comments in Alfonsi, 156, n. 38. See also Cuffel, 184, 186-187 and Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 395, n. 36.

order to give themselves to food and sex, makes the fast a ritual of selfish indulgence instead of spiritual sacrifice.¹³³

The pilgrimage to Makka and the history and events surrounding it are given special attention by Alfonsi. Contrary to Moses' brief description of the *Hajj*, Alfonsi argues that the *Ka'ba* was dedicated to the worship of two idols, Mercuricius and Chamos, and constructed in pre-Islamic times in honour of the planets Saturn and Mars. Twice a year, during periods coinciding with celestial seasons, pilgrims would gather to honour the planets. With Muḥammad, the structure became the *Ka'ba* and the biannual pilgrimage became the annual *Hajj*. Alfonsi adds that the pre-Islamic, pagan, and polytheistic customs associated with them were altered only slightly by Muḥammad.¹³⁴ So, whilst Alfonsi does not explicitly accuse Muslims of polytheism, he implies that their monotheism retains vestiges of their pagan and pre-Islamic heritage.¹³⁵

Alfonsi moves on to demonstrate that Muḥammad contradicts himself when he violently forces people to convert to Islam, whilst in the Qur'ān he consistently says "in the person of the Lord" that conversion should only be by the will of God.¹³⁶ When Moses claims that these contradictions are explained by the doctrine of abrogation (*naskh*),¹³⁷ Alfonsi dismisses the notion and argues that the non-sequential structure of the Qur'ān is due to its arbitrary compilation by the Prophet's companions, not Muḥammad himself. As a result, the true order of supposed revelations can never be truly known, abrogation is a useless

¹³³ *Dialogus*, 5:157.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5:157-158. For a discussion of Alfonsi's description here see Bernard Septimus, "Petrus Alfonsi on the Cult at Mecca," *Speculum* 56, no. 3 (July 1981): 517-533. Septimus argues that Alfonsi's account is largely dependent upon Jewish sources, and as such, is representative of a "Hispano-Jewish" tradition. Septimus further notes that Alfonsi's description and its frequent and at times confused astronomical references are striking given his reputation as an astronomer. Perhaps accurate information was sacrificed for effective polemic.

¹³⁵ Grant, 167 and Tolan, *Saracens*, 151.

¹³⁶ *Dialogus*, 5:159-160. Alfonsi here refers to *Yūnus* (10):99 in the Qur'ān where it is said that people convert by the will of God, not by human coercion.

¹³⁷ An exegetical device whereby a later revelation is said to supersede or modify an earlier one.

hermeneutical tool, and any pursuit of true doctrine is consequently hampered by inherent contradictions.¹³⁸

Alfonsi concludes his attack on Islam with Muḥammad’s alleged claim, again from al-Kindī’s work, that three days after his death he would be raised to heaven. When the stench of his rotting corpse demonstrated the contrary, his followers deemed him a liar and wished to “abandon his law.” They would have done so were it not for the efforts of ‘Alī, the son of Abū Tālib, one of Muḥammad’s companions. ‘Alī asserted that Muḥammad’s prediction was misunderstood and that his body being raised to heaven was contingent upon his immediate burial. Once again, then, Muḥammad’s followers prove to be rather inept, for ‘Alī cleverly “held the people a little while in their earlier error.”¹³⁹

With this, Alfonsi made yet another strike at the fallibility of Muḥammad (his un-Christ-like inability to be raised to heaven) and the foolishness of Muslims in general (their belief in ‘Alī’s lie). But he has also used this contrived (and borrowed) snippet from Muḥammad’s death to explain away some of Islam’s success.¹⁴⁰ Thus, despite it being a false and illogical religion, Islam spread from the mouths of deceivers to the ears of fools. As a result, conversion to Muḥammad’s religion remains for Alfonsi an unthinkable danger.¹⁴¹

Alfonsi shifts the arguments in his remaining headings to those in support of Christian doctrine. These are almost entirely in light of Judaism, but with some reference to Islam as well.¹⁴² The arguments concern matters related to Trinitarian doctrine and Christology (Christ’s virgin birth, incarnation, divine nature, and resurrection) and are largely made on the

¹³⁸ *Dialogus*, 5:159-161.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5:162-163.

¹⁴⁰ See Tolan, *Sons of Ishmael*, 25-26.

¹⁴¹ *Dialogus*, 5:163.

¹⁴² At several points Alfonsi turns to Hebrew grammar to make his arguments (e.g., *ibid.*, 6:166-172), but his reminder of what various terms are in Arabic (e.g., *ibid.*, 10:220-221) bring to mind a defence in light of Islam as well.

basis of science and reason.¹⁴³ Alfonsi does, however, make use of biblical material, other Christian polemic and theological works, and *kalām* (Islamic philosophical theology).¹⁴⁴ Just as he deliberately organised his work as a dialogue, so this structural shift would likely be intentional as well. Having completely discredited both Judaism and Islam, they would surely appear inferior to Christian readers who could now read of the strength and superiority of their own faith.¹⁴⁵

Summary

In the end, convinced readers of Alfonsi's *Dialogus* would be assured of the validity of his conversion. More importantly, though, they would be convinced of Christianity's religious superiority over Judaism and Islam and thus a religious boundary distinguishing their community. This would no doubt have strengthened the commitment Alfonsi's readers had to their faith, but the *Dialogus*, its fifth heading in particular, would also provide them with a user-friendly polemical sourcebook to consult in their interactions with Muslims; its remaining headings an apologetic guide on Christian doctrines that Muslims would find most difficult and shocking (the Trinity, Incarnation, Christ's divinity, etc.).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 34.

¹⁴⁴ See Resnick's comments in Alfonsi, 164, n. 1. For Alfonsi's use of *kalām*, see *Dialogus*, 6:164-167. For a discussion of *kalām* and its development, see D. B. Macdonald, s.v. "Kalām," *EF* 2:670-675. For the use of *kalām* by Christians in medieval Spain, see Thomas E. Burman, "Christian Kalām in Twelfth-Century Mozarabic Apologetic in Spain," in *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Robert I. Burns, S. J.*, vol. I, ed. Larry J. Simon (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

¹⁴⁵ Tolan, "Rhetoric, Polemics and the Art of Hostile Biography," 1508.

¹⁴⁶ For a similar structure and purpose, see Tolan's discussion of Pedro Pascual's seventh/thirteenth century *Sobre la seta Mahometana* in *ibid.*, 1508-1509. This idea presupposes that Christians were actually engaged in religious dialogue or debate with Muslims. If they were not, the *Dialogus* would at least give them something to consider when reflecting upon the Muslims in their midst. As our study of al-Qūṭī below demonstrates, though, the two communities did engage each other in this way in medieval Spain. See also, *ibid.*, 1509 and P. Sj. van Koningsveld and G. A. Wiegers, "The Polemical Works of Muḥammad al-Qaysī (fl. 1309) and Their Circulation in Arabic and Aljamiado among the Mudejars in the Fourteenth Century," *Al-Qanṭara* 15, no. 1 (1994): 179-183, 190, 193-196. For similar evidence from outside the peninsula, see Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, 63-64.

In all of this – his choice of topics, structure, and method – Alfonsi was deliberate. He was surely aware that his arguments would not necessarily be convincing to Muslims. Instead, he fashioned his treatise for a Christian audience that he knew would be unaware of the finer details of Islam, but would need to be informed of the general ways in which Muslims responded to Christian arguments, how to counter their responses, and the topics they chose to confront Christians with. This was the genius of Alfonsi's *Dialogus*, for it not only strengthened Christian reader's views of their faith in light of Islam, but it equipped them to confront Muslims and defend their faith as well.

For this sourcebook to function effectively it had to comprise accurate information. Indeed, even though it does exhibit various flaws and misinformation concerning Islam in addition to its characteristic attack of Muḥammad, the *Dialogus* represents some of the best informed knowledge available on Islam and written in Latin at the time.¹⁴⁷ As such, it also became one of the most important sources for information on Islam in medieval Europe.¹⁴⁸

Alfonsi, however, did more than just improve upon the accuracy of available information of Islam. He also improved the approach Christians took towards Muslims. As Kedar perceptively observes, the *Dialogus* demonstrates that it was possible to undemonise Islam and its Prophet and yet attack them at the same time.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, Alfonsi does not

¹⁴⁷ Septimus, 517 and Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, 28, 33.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, xiv, xv, 33, 95, 108, 109, 131. The wide distribution of manuscripts of the *Dialogus* testifies to its popularity. See *ibid.*, 98-103 and Resnick's comments in Alfonsi, 27-29.

¹⁴⁹ Kedar, 92. See also Resnick's comments in Alfonsi, 26. It is interesting to note that there is relatively no effort to demonise Islam by any of these authors. In *Liber denudationis*, 1.2 the author claims that Islam was "the infidelity which the Devil had stamped upon [Muslims'] hearts;" in *ibid.*, 2.1 he argues that some converts to Islam were "deceived by the Devil;" in *ibid.*, 10.7 he claims that if Muḥammad had been able to cast out demons, "he would have undoubtedly cast [one] from himself" and that he was "bewitched" by divination, a "Satanic work" (cf. *ibid.*, 9.25). Besides these four claims, demonising statements are absent, a remarkable difference between these texts and those in Part I where demonisation is a significant feature.

portray Muḥammad as a satanically-influenced madman.¹⁵⁰ In this light, Alfonsi seems to acknowledge Islam as a religion in its own right; he simply deems it “useless.”¹⁵¹

Put another way, Alfonsi seems to distinguish between what he abhors of Islam religiously and what he appreciates or makes use of culturally – the direct result of his immersion in an Arabic and Islamic environment.¹⁵² He thus makes it possible for his readers to embrace their superior faith and “flee from those that are contrary to salvation” irrespective of language and culture.¹⁵³ In this way, Alfonsi reminds his readers of a Christian identity that is built on its *religious* superiority to other faiths, and by making it superior he gives them reason to cling to that identity.

The *Tathlūth al-wahdāniyya*

Right Doctrine as Spiritual Nourishment

The two remaining texts are preserved within anti-Christian treatises written by Muslims. One of these was written by an Andalusī Muslim known only as al-Imām al-Qurṭubī (“the Cordoban Imām”).¹⁵⁴ Al-Qurṭubī’s work was meant to demonstrate the veracity of Islam over and against Christian claims. In particular, al-Qurṭubī hoped to refute the

¹⁵⁰ Cf. n. 118 above.

¹⁵¹ “For you are certain that it is not unknown to me who [Muḥammad] was One thing remains uncertain to you, I reckon: how useless I will judge that doctrine that they call [Muḥammad’s].” *Dialogus*, 5:150-151.

¹⁵² Grant, 157, 168-177. Grant writes that in order to “. . . [characterise Alfonsi’s] views of Jews and Muslims accurately, one must distinguish among his attitudes toward (1) their religious beliefs, (2) their personal character, and (3) their cultural achievements.” *Ibid.*, 157. Her distinctions here are noteworthy, but her argument that Alfonsi’s negative portrayal of Islam may have been directed at first/seventh century Muslims instead of his Muslim contemporaries of the sixth/twelfth century is unconvincing (she argues that Alfonsi refers in his *Dialogus* to Arabs of the “time of ignorance” [*jāhiliyya*]). It seems particularly unreasonable to think that sixth/twelfth century Muslims would not feel targeted by Alfonsi’s portrayal, though they may disagree with his assertions (as Grant suggests). On the contrary, Alfonsi discredits the religious roots of Islam in order to successfully discredit its contemporary manifestations in Islamic Spain. Cf. *ibid.*, 168-169. This does not, however, discount a more positive portrayal of Muslims in some of Alfonsi’s other works, such as the *Disciplina Clericalis*. See *ibid.*, 168.

¹⁵³ *Dialogus*, Proemium and Prologue:39.

¹⁵⁴ Imām al-Qurṭubī, *al-I‘lām bi-mā fi dīn al-naṣārā min al-fasād wa-awhām wa-iḥḥār maḥāsīn dīn al-islām wa-ithbāt nubūwa nabīyinā Muḥammad ‘alayhi al-ṣalā wa-al-salām*, ed. al-Saqqā.

assertions of one Christian whom he identified as “one of those who embraced the religion of the community of the Christians.”¹⁵⁵ Al-Qurṭubī also refers to him as both “a layman of the Christians” (*‘awāmm al-Masṭhiyyīn*) and a “priest” (*al-qiss*).¹⁵⁶

These scant details are all we know of the Christian author, but internal evidence allows us to speculate that he was a *converso*. Accordingly, though he wrote entirely in Arabic, he occasionally employs Hebrew and Aramaic to strengthen various arguments. This trilingual approach not only displays the author’s rhetorical skill, but suggests his Jewish background. It is most probable that only a *converso* could shift between these languages and know that doing so would bolster his arguments against Jewish doctrine.¹⁵⁷ Van Koningsveld has further argued that the author may even have been Petrus Alfonsi.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, both the *Dialogus* and this author’s text depend on reason and logic and employ *kalām* in their use of triads to describe the Trinity, but of anything more we cannot be sure.¹⁵⁹

The *converso*’s text is known as *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya*.¹⁶⁰ Al-Qurṭubī writes that it was sent from Toledo to Córdoba, where he subsequently found it.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, it was

¹⁵⁵ “*ba ‘d al-muntaḥilīn li-dīn al-milla al-Naṣrāniyya*.” Al-Qurṭubī, 42. See also Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 72.

¹⁵⁶ Al-Qurṭubī, 42, 166, 317. See also, Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 72 and 77, n. 141.

¹⁵⁷ See *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 185 where the author writes, “Notice that I have written down for you in the Hebrew language and the Aramaic language some of the scriptural evidences of the prophets sent by God . . .” (trans. Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 74). The verses are transliterated in Arabic script and translated into Arabic as well. He employs this method so that, “. . . the Jews are not able [therefore] to deny a word of them when I advance [these scriptural evidences] in argument with them in Hebrew and Aramaic.” *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 185 trans. Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 74. See also, Thomas E. Burman, “‘Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyyah’ and the Twelfth-Century Andalusian-Christian Approach to Islam,” in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed., Tolan, 112.

¹⁵⁸ Van Koningsveld, “La apología de Al-Kindī en la España del siglo XII. Heallas toledanas de un ‘animal disputax,’” 127-129.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. n. 144 above.

¹⁶⁰ As Burman notes, the title appears as a phrase in other Christian works written in Arabic, and as such, simply means “the Trinity” or “the triune nature of God” (*tathlīth* meaning “to make or call three”). The term, though its literal rendering is problematic from a Christian theological perspective, is used to denote the concept of Trinity. In this light, “Trinitising” is used for the title of the Christian author’s work. See Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 72, n. 121; Burman, “‘Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyyah,’” 122, n. 12; and Rachid Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens Arabes (750-1050)* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985), 206-207. The *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* appears in al-Qurṭubī, 47, 57, 71, 77, 91, 97, 105-106, 115-117, 163-165, 177, 181-185, 215-217.

¹⁶¹ This only informs readers that the text circulated in Spain, not necessarily that it originated there. But Burman states that both the language (“Arabic neologistic calques based on Latin”) and the theological

likely written after 513/1120, but at least before the end of the sixth/twelfth century.¹⁶² The nature of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* – the brand of *kalām* it employs in general and its rationalist argumentation in particular – allow us to further narrow this date. These textual elements are especially reminiscent of works written by Ibn Tūmart, the sixth/twelfth century founder and ruler of the Almohads.¹⁶³ The similarities between the two authors’ texts even go as far as the unique choice of vocabulary each one prefers.¹⁶⁴

That the texts would share common elements like these is not surprising. Following Ibn Tūmart’s death in c. 525/1130, the Almohads forcibly replaced the Almoravids in the Maghrib, introducing their rule and doctrine there. They entered Islamic Spain by 542/1147, in approximately the same period that the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* was written. Given the Almohad presence in Islamic Spain from this date and the similarities in content between Ibn Tūmart’s work and the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya*, we can suggest that the Christian author may have written with the works of Ibn Tūmart in mind between 542/1147 and the close of the sixth/twelfth century.¹⁶⁵

nature in which the Christian argued (“Augustinian elements of its Trinitarian argumentation”) confirm that the text was most likely written in Spain. See Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 76. See also, Burman, “‘Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyyah,’” 114, 118.

¹⁶² Al-Qurṭubī estimates that Islam was six hundred years old when he wrote his text. Using lunar years, this places his treatise at 600/1204, or at least quite early in the seventh/thirteenth century (al-Qurṭubī, 277). The Christian’s text was written prior to this date since al-Qurṭubī knew it. Moreover, when the Christian author explains the Trinity, he employs, in Arabic, a set of Latin triads attributed to the French theologian Peter Abelard (d. 537/1142; the Latin triad was *potentia* (“power”)-*scientia* (“knowledge”)-*voluntas* (“will”) or *qudra-ilm-irāda* in Arabic.). Thus, the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* was likely written after 513/1120, or at least before the end of the sixth/twelfth century. See Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 77-78, 177-178. Cf. Devillard, 1-2 and Mikel de Epalza, “Notes pour une histoire des polémiques anti-chrétiennes dans l’Occident Musulman,” *Arabica* 18 (1971): 104.

¹⁶³ See Chapter 4, n. 70. Among Ibn Tūmart’s writings are his *murshidas* (“short creedal statements”) and his *‘aqīda* (“creed”). For a translation of the Almohad Creed (*‘Aqīda*), though it is likely based upon a heavily edited manuscript of approximately 579/1183, see Jean Dominique Luciani, ed., *Le livre de Mohamad Ibn Toumert* (Algiers: Pierre Fontana, 1903), 229-239. See also, Madeleine Fletcher’s partial English translation in Constable, ed., 190-197; Madeleine Fletcher, “The Almohad Tawhīd: Theology which Relies on Logic,” *Numen* 38, no. 1 (June 1991): 110-127; and Madeleine Fletcher, “Al-Andalus and North Africa in the Almohad Ideology,” in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi.

¹⁶⁴ Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 79.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 78-80.

More importantly, the connections between Ibn Tūmart and the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* may tell us something about why the Christian author wrote his work. As the name of Ibn Tūmart's movement suggests, the Almohads (*al-Muwaḥḥidūn*, or “those who proclaim the oneness of God”) were formed principally around the Islamic doctrine of divine unity (*tawḥīd*). With this in mind, and in consideration of the remarkably similar content between Ibn Tūmart's work and the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya*, even the latter's title (i.e., *Trinitising the Unity [of God]*) is an audaciously succinct denial of the Almohad's fervent belief in God's absolute oneness.¹⁶⁶ Consequently, these overlaps in time and content suggest the possibility that the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* was written as a response to the Almohads and a refutation of Ibn Tūmart's brand of divine oneness.¹⁶⁷

This may further explain why the text was sent from Toledo to Córdoba. Perhaps the Christian author meant for his text to circulate in the remaining portions of Islamic Spain as an expression of his vision of superior and more rightly-defined doctrine. He may have been motivated to do so in order to encourage Muslims, Almohads in particular, to reconsider their commitment to Ibn Tūmart's vision of *tawḥīd* and convert to superior faith. His efforts to do so may even have been motivated by the on-going struggle between Christian *Reconquista* and Almohad expansion. In this way, the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* would go ahead of what may have been perceived to be Christianity's inevitable reconquest of the peninsula and Islam's ultimate failure in Spain.

That Muslims did read the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* we can be sure, for al-Qurṭubī responded to it and went to the trouble of preserving it. Even so, the notion that the Christian author meant for Muslims to submit to his arguments, take serious his estimation of Islam as crude and vile, and convert seems rather questionable. His failure to convince Muslims is

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 79.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 78-79.

fairly certain in light of al-Qurtubī's lengthy and calculated response to it and the re-emergence and embellishment of the *'Aqīda*, Ibn Tūmart's exposition of *tawḥīd*, in the latter portion of the sixth/twelfth century.¹⁶⁸

Given the unlikelihood of his success, then, is it possible that the author of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* had additional intentions for his treatise? We cannot be sure, but sending his text as he did would surely have given it an air of authority and make it more convincing. Perhaps as the treatise circulated in Islamic Spain (or at least in Córdoba) the author hoped that Christians would hear of it and read the text as well.¹⁶⁹ Christians remaining in these regions in the mid-sixth/twelfth century faced the more rigid rule of both Almoravids and Almohads. In the case of the latter, Christians would also be confronted with *tawḥīd* – a powerful symbol of what most Muslims felt was at the centre of the religious differences dividing Christians and Muslims.

These renewed pressures may have left Christians remaining in Islamic Spain beleaguered and vulnerable, wondering if conversion might not be a suitable alternative to the increasing strain of maintaining their Christian faith. If so, the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* would come as a nourishing reminder of the security and religious superiority to be found in the correct doctrine of Christianity. It may also have protected Christian communities against conversions to Islam by giving them a reason to remain steadfast in their faith and committed to Christianity. With this in mind, the Christian author would have his readers understand God to be a Trinity in unity, as the title of his work asserts, not the overly rigorous

¹⁶⁸ See n. 163 above.

¹⁶⁹ The possibility of this intention also exists in other Christian writings about Islam. For instance, see Thomas, "Cultural and Religious Supremacy in the Fourteenth Century: *The Letter from Cyprus* as Interreligious Apologetic." Here, the author posits that a letter sent by a Christian in Cyprus to Muslims in Damascus may have been intended for Damascene Christians and thus it would "... function as a reassurance and encouragement to beleaguered Christian communities in Syria to remain true to their faith." *Ibid.*, 321 and n. 23 above. For the full text of *The Letter from Cyprus*, see Rifaat Ebied and David Thomas, ed., *Muslim-Christian Polemic during the Crusades: The Letter from the People of Cyprus and Ibn Alī Tālib al-Dimashqī's Response*. *The History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 2, ed. David Thomas, Tarif Khalidi, Gerrit Jan Reinink, and Mark Swanson (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

understanding of divine *tawḥīd* that Almohads upheld.¹⁷⁰ Assured of this, readers of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* could thus be confident that the superiority of their faith and doctrine would prevail over the new Islamic threats that they faced.

The Text of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya*

The *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* can be divided into three parts. In each one, the author is intent on demonstrating that Christian doctrine is superior to others. As the author's title suggests, he is particularly keen to explain the triune nature of the one God. Building on his exposition here, he seeks to explain the incarnation Christ and set Christianity out as the one true religion over and against Judaism and Islam.

On the Triune Nature of the One God

The author opens his text with laudatory comments claiming that humanity is capable of praising God's essence and giving him glory, but falls short of "comprehending [his] essence or apprehending any part of."¹⁷¹ In other words, God is not completely knowable. Instead, we are only capable of knowing various aspects of God, i.e., the names of his creative and sustaining acts. If we are correct in supposing that the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* was a response to Ibn Tūmart, then this opening statement would be a caution to those like him whose strict and rational view of monotheism seemed overconfident.

Having warned his readers, the author finds it necessary to ask his audience, presumably Muslims, about the manner in which God created everything. The correct answer, for the author, has something to say about the Trinity. Here, he attempts to use

¹⁷⁰ Madeleine Fletcher discusses the importance with which Ibn Tūmart imbued his doctrine and observes that Almohad Muslims memorised the "essence of *tawḥīd* . . . under pain of death." See Madeleine Fletcher, "The Almohad Tawḥīd: Theology which Relies on Logic," 112.

¹⁷¹ For this first section, see *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 47, 57, 63, 71, and 77. See also Burman's English translation of this section in Constable, ed., 148-151.

reason and logic in order to prove the triune nature of God. In this, he demonstrates his most vigorous argumentation. It is also here that we also see his knowledge of both Arab Christian apologetics in his adaptation of *kalām* and Latin Christian theology in his use of particular triads that might explain the Trinity. In this way, the names describing God's creative acts are "power, knowledge, and will."¹⁷² Each of these, in turn, represents the three persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit respectively. "[God, therefore,] is the Powerful, the Knowing, and the Willing – names for the One who is not multiplied."¹⁷³

Muslims may object that, "if you believe in the Trinity [only] because it is [an expression] for the names of the actions of God, then [we object that] the names of His actions are more than three: so believe in them just as you believe in the Trinity."¹⁷⁴ In other words, for as many names as God has, so might be the number of his persons. Why, then, simply believe in a Trinity? All of the names of God, the author counters, can be incorporated into power, knowledge, and will. So, the Trinity remains and it does so as "one in God."¹⁷⁵

In a final objection, the author observes that some opponents might ask for proof of his claims regarding the Trinity. "... how is it possible," some might inquire, "that three things be one and one three . . . ?"¹⁷⁶ The author triumphantly retorts that the summary of Christian doctrine contained within such a question is painfully incorrect. As such, it does not necessitate the proof the author's opponent requests, though one might correctly declare that:

. . . [Christians] say that [God] is an eternal substance always existing in three eternal persons, whose substances do not differ among themselves and are

¹⁷² Ibid., 148.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 149.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 150.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. This construed summary of Christian doctrine may simply be the result of Muslim misunderstanding. But perhaps the Christian author is familiar with Muslim anti-Christian texts whose authors set aside their accurate knowledge of Christianity in order to attack it. In these cases, deliberately diluted forms of Christian doctrine became "straw men," making arguments for Islamic doctrine appear even more convincing. See David Thomas, "The Past and the Future in Christian-Muslim Relations," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 18, no. 1 (January 2007): 38-39, 41.

unseparated in the [one] eternal substance which is undivided and unpartitioned in itself and its perfection.¹⁷⁷

In this, the author of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* indirectly asserts that opponents of Christian doctrine misunderstand their claims concerning the Trinity. He may even imply that the basis for Islam is a misunderstanding of Christian doctrine; eliminating misapprehension could potentially eliminate the need for Islam. In any case, the author is not only able to explain Trinitarian doctrine, but is able to correct error as well. In turn, his opponents' own understanding of divine *tawḥīd* might be weakened, or at least if Christians read it, any temptation that might come with Islamic doctrine could be eliminated.

On the Incarnation of the Word

Building on his exposition in the first section, the author argues in the second portion of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* that the knowledge of God (i.e., his Son) was born as the Word and became incarnate on earth.¹⁷⁸ The author goes on to explain that “the Word was designated uniquely to become flesh”¹⁷⁹ on the basis of God’s will. According to his will, then, the temporal became God, an act likened to a lump of coal becoming fire. The incarnation is further illustrated by the story of Moses and the burning bush, which the author notes, is related in the Qur’ān.¹⁸⁰ Accordingly, God spoke to Moses through the burning bush and these words became an “intermediary between God and man.”¹⁸¹ Furthermore, Moses worshipped the bush as God himself just as he was commanded to. Therefore, since the voice

¹⁷⁷ *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 77 trans. Burman in Constable, ed., 151.

¹⁷⁸ For this second section, see *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 91, 97, 105-106, and 115-117.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 91 trans. Burman in “‘Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyyah,’” 124, n. 34.

¹⁸⁰ For instance, see Qur’ān *Ṭā’-Hā’* (20):9-97 (especially 9-12). Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 73.

¹⁸¹ Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 73.

in the fire asserted in truth, “I am God,” so the Word, Jesus Christ, proclaimed in truth, “I am God.”¹⁸²

These are the assertions that Christians believe, not, as the author claims others to have maintained, that the eternal God became temporal or that the Creator was created. Thus, the author of the *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* sets Christian doctrine against incorrect claims concerning Christian faith. Once again, then, not only is Christian doctrine explicated, but right doctrine is shown to be superior and true.

On the One True Faith

In the final section of the *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya*, the author attempts to prove that the foretold Messiah and the incarnate Christ are one and the same.¹⁸³ This argument is prefaced with a story – an illustrative method for identifying truth in which Jews, Christians, and Muslims proclaim the superior veracity of their respective religions. According to the story, the author suggests that if a pagan happened to encounter the contrasting proclamations of a Jew, a Christian, and a Muslim, confusion would ensue since each one claims that his religion is uniquely true. The pagan’s encounter would be further complicated when he learns that Christians believe the New Testament abrogates Jewish Scripture and Muslims believe that the Qur’ān abrogates Christian Scripture. Jews, for their part, claim that theirs is the only viable Scripture. A test for truth is thus in order. In the end, whoever can demonstrate that their Scripture abrogates the others will be the true believer.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 117.

¹⁸³ For this third and final section, see *ibid.*, 163-165, 181-185, and 215-217.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 163-165. The story is curiously similar to stories written by al-Ṭabarī, where a man encounters believers of various faiths in order to prove the truth of Islam, and Theodore Abū Qurra, a Christian theologian from Mesopotamia (c. 137/755-215/830), who claims to have descended a mountain and encountered men of various faiths in order to prove the superior truth of Christianity. See ‘Alī al-Ṭabarī, “The Book of Religion and Empire,” trans. and ed. by A. Mingana in *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, ed., Newman and Sidney H. Griffith, “Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām: Theodore Abū Qurrah on Discerning the True Religion,” in *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period (750-1258)*, ed. Samir and Nielsen. Marcel Poorthuis

Thus, the author proceeds to demonstrate the validity of Christianity's claims based on the Old Testament (i.e., Jewish Scripture). Accordingly, various Old Testament passages tell of Israel's fall from power and prophesy the coming of a new covenant. It is, in fact, Jesus Christ and his Church that fulfill this new covenant.¹⁸⁵ Christian belief, therefore, abrogates the Jewish understanding of their Scripture.

Having raised Christianity above Judaism, the author calls for Muslims to assert the superiority of their faith on the basis of Judaism and Christianity.¹⁸⁶ Such attempts, however, will not be acknowledged, for the author states that Christians do not accept the revelation of the Qur'ān given its crude and sexual references. In particular, the author is concerned with various Islamic laws governing divorce and remarriage. With this in mind, he claims to “. . . not accept on your behalf [anything] from the prophecies and tales as attested by Muslim in his book.”¹⁸⁷ He refers here to the highly-respected collection of Ḥadīth compiled by Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj Abu 'l-Ḥusain al-Qushairī al-Nīsābūrī (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim) and quotes the relevant passage:

Sufyān told us on the authority of al-Zuhrī on the authority of [Qatāda] on the authority of [‘A’isha that] the wife of [Rifā‘a] came to [Muḥammad], and she said to him, “I belonged to [Rifā‘a], but he divorced me, so I married ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Zubayr.” But the Apostle smiled and laughed and said, “Do you want to return to [Rifā‘a]? [You cannot] until you taste his sweetness (*tadhūqī ‘asīlatahu*) and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Zubayr tastes your sweetness [i.e., has sexual intercourse].”¹⁸⁸

This passage, along with others cited in similar fashion elsewhere in the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyyah*, demonstrates the author's clear familiarity with Islam and its sources; not only

discusses similar stories in his “The Three Rings: between Exclusivity and Tolerance,” in *The Three Rings: Textual Studies in the Historical Trialogue of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Barbara Roggema, Marcel Poorthuis, and Pim Valkenberg. Publications of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, New Series, vol. XI (Peeters: Leuven, 2005).

¹⁸⁵ *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 181-185.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 215-217.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 215, trans. Burman in “‘Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyyah,’” 112.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* The process described refers to *talāq*, the law governing divorce and remarriage. Cf. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 8:3354-3355, 3357, and 3359. Cf. Burman, “‘Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyyah,’” 112.

is he able to cite the *ḥadīth*, but he is also aware of its full *isnād* and the authority attached to Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.¹⁸⁹ More significant, however, this passage’s summary of remarriage law would surely be disgusting to Christian readers and discount any Muslims’ claims that their religion superseded Christianity. For Christians, Islam could not surpass their doctrine, for such revulsion made it inferior. As a result, Christianity would remain the superior and uniquely true faith.

The author goes on to observe that the Bible views Muslims, by virtue of their ancestors Ishmael (Ismā‘īl) and Hagar (Hājar), as distant and excluded from God’s covenant with Abraham (Ibrāhīm). According to this logic, the author seemingly suggests that this covenant was passed on through Abraham to his son Isaac. Having been grafted into this heritage, the Church was also heir to the Abrahamic covenant. As such, it remained solely salvific and bearer of unique and superior truth. If Muslims were excluded from the Abrahamic covenant, then by extension, their relationship to God might be questioned as well. Thus, the author of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* delegitimises Islam, not as a monotheistic religion, but as a salvific faith. For this reason, he concludes with a call for readers to “believe in the religious law of the Messiah” (*āmin bisharī‘ati al-Masīḥ*), the “true faith” (*ḥaqīqa al-īmān*).¹⁹⁰

Summary

That the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* may exist as a brash rebuttal of Ibn Tūmart is remarkable, but even more so is the notion that it may have proved more useful and effective to Mozarab readers. Of this we can never be certain, but to such an audience, the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* would surely have been a nourishing encouragement reminding them that their

¹⁸⁹ It also appears in similar form in the respected collections of Ibn Ḥanbal (6:37-38) and al-Bukhārī (52.3.2). See *ibid.*, 113.

¹⁹⁰ *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 217. Cf., *Liber denudationis*, 10.5.

faith was true and their doctrine correct. Thus, to unwaveringly commit to Christian doctrine – to a Trinity in unity – was to maintain a Christian identity at a time when their city was governed – and the expanding borders of Christian Spain were compromised – by Muslims whose strict interpretation of the oneness of God and control of Islamic Spain threatened their existence. They might also be assured that they were not foolish for adhering to their faith even though the presence of many around them might reinforce the opinion that Christians were mistaken in their theology and inferior in their beliefs. In fact, the *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* would subvert that opinion and turn it back on those who held it, for according to the author’s text, religious superiority was found in right doctrine, and it was only Christianity that could lay claim to this.

The Letter of al-Qūfī

An Inter-Religious Demonstration of Religious Superiority

Our final text was preserved by Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Šamad al-Khazrajī, a Muslim born in Córdoba in 519/1125 and a scholar of the Ḥadīth.¹⁹¹ When Córdoba temporarily fell into Christian hands in 540/1145,¹⁹² al-Khazrajī was imprisoned in Toledo and remained there between 540/1145 and 542/1147.¹⁹³ While in prison, he wrote his *Maqāmi ‘al-šulbān*, refuting the anti-Muslim attacks of a Christian writer.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Khalil Samir, review of *Maqāmi ‘al-šulbān*, by Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Šamad al-Khazrajī, ed. ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Sharfī, *Islamochristiana* 6 (1980): 242. For more on al-Khazrajī, see Fernando de la Granja, “Milagros Españoles en una obra polémica Musulmana (el ‘kitāb maqāmi ‘al-šulbān’ del Jazra’ī),” *Al-Andalus* 33, no. 2 (1968): 318-324 and Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 65.

¹⁹² Reilly, *The Medieval Spains*, 115, 131.

¹⁹³ De la Granja, 320-323 and Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 64.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 63. For al-Khazrajī’s work see Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Šamad al-Khazrajī, *Maqāmi ‘al-šulbān*, ed. al-Sharfī. For commentary, see Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 62-70; Robert Caspar, Abdelmajid Charfi, Adel Théodore Khoury and Khalil Samir, “Bibliographie du dialogue Islamo-Chrétien (XI^E-XII^E siècles),” *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976): 200-201 (22.15), 225 (22.16); and Samir, 242-254. For more on al-Khazrajī’s purpose in writing, see de la Granja, 326-329. As de la Granja notes, it may be that the al-Khazrajī’s text, as we have it presently, may be the result of some of his disciples since the author does not write in the first person. See, *ibid.*, 327.

Al-Khazrajī reveals very little regarding the Christian’s identity. He does recall that “there was in Toledo a priest of the Goths” (*wa-kān biṭulayṭula qasīs min al-qūṭ*).¹⁹⁵ This priest, whom we shall call al-Qūṭī (“the Goth”), made a practice of confronting certain Muslims and denouncing Islam as they entered the city.¹⁹⁶ Troubled by the attacks, these Muslims sought out al-Khazrajī for advice. Armed with his wisdom, they returned to al-Qūṭī to confront him. But the Toledan priest only refuted their claims, “knowing full well,” al-Khazrajī recounts, “that they were not intelligent people.”¹⁹⁷ He even sent a refutation of Islam and defense of Christianity to al-Khazrajī himself.¹⁹⁸ Though at first reluctant to do so, given the rather tenuous nature of his stay in Toledo, al-Khazrajī responded to al-Qūṭī’s letter in a much larger work that he left with Toledan Muslims after he was free to leave the city.¹⁹⁹ Within his text, he also preserved what we will refer to as *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*.²⁰⁰

From al-Khazrajī’s description, we can conclude that al-Qūṭī was a Mozarab priest who wrote his letter to al-Khazrajī between 540/1145 and 542/1147. Indeed, this was a period when Mozarabs thrived in the city of Toledo. Elements within *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*, however, leave some doubt as to the veracity of al-Khazrajī’s claim to have preserved it and make one wonder if he actually invented al-Qūṭī for rhetorical purposes. To begin with, the presence of misquotations of biblical passages, passages attributed to the Bible which are not even found there, and formulae of Christian doctrine that are incorrect raise questions as to

¹⁹⁵ Al-Khazrajī, 1:29.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. The text simply states that al-Qūṭī attacked “*al-dīn*” – “the religion” – of Muslims who entered the city. De la Granja translates this as “*la [verdadera] religión*” (“the [true] religion;” brackets in original). See de la Granja, 327.

¹⁹⁷ See de la Granja’s Spanish translation of al-Khazrajī, 1:30 in de la Granja, 328 (“... *a sabiendas de que no eran personas inteligentes*”).

¹⁹⁸ Al-Khazrajī, 1:30 and Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 64.

¹⁹⁹ Al-Khazrajī, 1:30 and de la Granja, 328.

²⁰⁰ For *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*, see al-Khazrajī, 2-10:30-39. For an abridgment of the treatise in English, see Burman’s translation in Constable, ed. 143-147.

the authenticity of the text.²⁰¹ While loose renderings of various biblical passages are not completely anomalous, these other errors would be entirely uncharacteristic of a Christian priest. With this in mind, some argue that *The Letter of al-Qūṭī* was quite possibly reworked by a Muslim author in order to fit the purposes of al-Khazrajī's polemic.²⁰² It may even be a forgery, written in its entirety by al-Khazrajī himself.²⁰³

But what would al-Khazrajī have to gain in forging *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*? Perhaps the very same thing lay at stake for both al-Khazrajī and Christian polemicists, i.e., the use of certain creative licenses and an unwillingness to include authentic Christian sources or actual Christians themselves in his religious treatise. Like some of the Christian authors discussed above, perhaps he was only comfortable employing rhetorical devices and manipulated sources that suited his polemical means. Further, by claiming that the alleged al-Qūṭī only engaged nominal Muslims, al-Khazrajī could suggest that the priest avoided authentic or possibly more rigorous theological debate by preying upon weak Muslims who were more apt to succumb to his attacks.²⁰⁴ For al-Khazrajī, revealing this underhanded strategy may have allowed him to undermine al-Qūṭī's entire argument.

He may further have wished to suggest that all Christian refutations of Islam were conniving and might only be persuasive to weak-minded Muslims. If successful, al-Khazrajī's readers might see al-Qūṭī's work and others like it as inherently faulty; any

²⁰¹ Samir, 244-246, 248. Samir also questions the work's authenticity based on the weakness of the author's argument, but a weak argument alone is not necessarily evidence of forgery. See *ibid.*, 246-248. See also Caspar et al., 225 (22.16). For other arguments both for and against the authenticity of *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*, see Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 66-70.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁰³ Samir, 248 and Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 69.

²⁰⁴ Such was the case for various third/ninth century Christians in Baghdād who, according to al-Jāhīz, "choose contradictory statements in Muslim traditions (as the targets for their attacks). (They select for disputations) the equivocal verses in the Qur'an and (hold us responsible for) Hadiths, the claims of guarantors of which are defective. Then they enter into private conversation with our weakminded, and question them concerning the texts which they have chosen to assail . . . they often appear innocent before our men of influence and people of learning; and thus they succeed in throwing dust in the eyes of the staunch believers and in bewildering the minds of those who are weak in faith." Finkel, 706-707.

effectiveness they might have otherwise have had would be thwarted as no truly devoted Muslim would take al-Qūṭī or others like him seriously. They need only to strengthen their faith in Islam to withstand such attacks. This reassurance would be especially important for Andalusī Muslims in the mid-sixth/twelfth century with Toledo firmly under Christian control, its armies continually threatening other Islamic areas, and even temporarily controlling the city of Córdoba.

Even so, it may also be the case that al-Khazrajī or later editors of his work simply misconstrued details of arguments utilised by a priest such as al-Qūṭī in his discussions with Muslims and in his discourse with al-Khazrajī. Likewise, it may be the case that al-Khazrajī haphazardly recalled the finer details of Christian theology in his refutation of Christianity. We have already seen the author of the *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* demonstrate errors in various Muslims' understanding of Christian doctrine. In similar fashion, as we suggest above, the author of the *Liber denudationis* misconstrued various details in his summary of the *Hajj*. Perhaps al-Khazrajī himself stumbled in his rehearsal of Christian theological formulae and implementation of biblical texts. In this case, al-Qūṭī may indeed have been an authentic Mozarab priest who engaged Toledan Muslims in religious debate. These same Muslims may have actually called upon the wiser and more religiously astute al-Khazrajī to respond to al-Qūṭī's accusations with a rebuttal that failed in its recollection of some of the finer points of Christianity. *The Letter of al-Qūṭī* may only be a farce, then, insofar as it may not have existed as an authentic Christian text in and of itself as we have it today. Instead, it may simply be an accurate summary of the Mozarab priest's line of argumentation that falters in some of its recollection and use of Christian Scripture and doctrine.

With this in mind, it would seem that if al-Khazrajī invented al-Qūṭī or merely misconstrued his arguments, then he did so with a sound knowledge of Mozarab apologetics

and anti-Islamic polemic.²⁰⁵ In this way, the text al-Khazrajī attributed to al-Qūṭī, as we shall see below, is very similar to other texts like the *Liber denudationis*, Alfonsi's *Dialogus*, and the *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* in its effort to defend Christian doctrine and demonstrate Christianity's superiority over and against Islam. For this reason, *The Letter of al-Qūṭī* remains a valuable resource for our study.

It is perhaps most significant that al-Khazrajī tells us something of the manner in which al-Qūṭī engaged Toledan Muslims. It is clear from the discussions that took place between the Mozarab priest and the Muslims entering Toledo that face-to-face interactions between Christians and Muslims did occur and that they were not always literary in nature. Furthermore, this occurred with the desire for Muslims to convert to what was set out as a superior faith. In the same way, whilst additional evidence like this may be sparse, al-Qūṭī's discussions demonstrate that religious debate did not always occur in an inter-religious vacuum where certain texts were largely intended to be read, used, and circulated among one's own religious community as those discussed above most likely were.

This interaction is noteworthy, but it seems to come at a rather devious price. As we note above, according to al-Khazrajī's account, al-Qūṭī simply targeted Muslims whom he knew would be incapable of defending their faith. For al-Qūṭī, weaker Muslims would provide him with the sense that his arguments were all the more impervious and successful.

The Text of *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*

Like other Mozarab texts, al-Qūṭī begins his treatise with a Christianised version of the *basmala*: "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God"²⁰⁶

Al-Qūṭī then settles into extended praise for the Son of God with Christological detail

²⁰⁵ Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 69-70 and Samir, 248.

²⁰⁶ "Bāsm al-Ab w-l-Ibn wa-l-Rūḥ al-Quds, Ilāh Wāḥid". Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 2:30.

sprinkled liberally throughout.²⁰⁷ He goes on to discuss the nature of Christianity as a superior faith, supporting his claims by revealing inherent errors in the Qur’ān and Islam in general.

Jesus as the Divine Son of God

Accordingly, Jesus is “the Crucified One” (*al-ṣalība*) and “the Messiah” (*al-Masīh*).²⁰⁸ Quoting the Qur’ān, al-Qūṭī asserts that it is this one, Jesus, “who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them.”²⁰⁹ Further, it is through Jesus’ holy blood that humanity was redeemed from the suffering of hell (*jahannam*).²¹⁰ In this light, if al-Qūṭī’s readers wish to be protected by God in this way and enter into his paradise (*janna*), then they need only confess that “the Messiah is the son of God who is God, and believe in the Holy Spirit: three persons yet one person”²¹¹ Here is the first of several indicators that *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*, as we have it presently, lacks authenticity or al-Khazrajī is simply confused in his Christian theology. A properly trained Christian priest would likely not use the formula “three persons yet one person.”²¹²

Having called for his readers to convert to the “rightly guided” (*tarshad*) faith,²¹³ al-Qūṭī then argues for the divinity of Christ according to the Qur’ān.²¹⁴ In this way, he asserts, that Jesus was the “spirit of God and his word” (*ruh Allāh wa kalimata*).²¹⁵ Moreover, Jesus

²⁰⁷ Cf. this introduction with that of the *Liber denudationis*.

²⁰⁸ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 2:30.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., trans. Burman in Constable, ed., 143. Cf., for instance, Qur’ān *Qāf* (50):38.

²¹⁰ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 2:30-31.

²¹¹ “*al-Masīh ibn Allāh ālladhī huwa Allāh wa bāl-Rūḥ al-Quds thalātha āqānīm āqnūm wa āḥad*”. Ibid., 2:31.

²¹² Cf. the author of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* and his clarification that God “. . . is an eternal substance always existing in three persons So He is not three things – since the three things are the persons – in the same sense that He is one” See Burman’s translation in Constable, ed., 151. God is more rightly thought of, then, as three persons in one substance. See Burman’s translation in Constable, ed., 151.

²¹³ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 2:31.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 3:31.

²¹⁵ Cf. Qur’ān *al-Nisā’* (4):171.

is revealed in the Qur'ān to be “eminent in this world and the next one” (*wajīhān fī al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirati*), a quality of eternal eminence only befitting divinity.²¹⁶ In this light, even the holy book of Islam affirms Jesus’ divinity. Muslims are left with little excuse, then, for not following the superior faith of Christians.

Further confirming Jesus’ divinity are his many miracles, most notably when the Qur’ān affirms that he gave life to the dead.²¹⁷ Additionally, al-Qūṭī writes that Christ sent his apostles throughout the entire world to proclaim his authority.²¹⁸ Though al-Qūṭī does not state so explicitly, in light of other anti-Muslim polemic, these statements may have been heard by Muslims as a subtle comparison to Muḥammad who, so polemicists claimed, produced no miracles and was only sent to Arabs. Again, then, Christ and his message are shown to be superior and to be so on the basis of the Qur’ān.

Al-Qūṭī goes on to discuss Christ’s incarnation, an act that left humankind without an excuse for their unbelief.²¹⁹ The purpose of Christ’s incarnation, according to al-Qūṭī, was to compensate for the sin of the children of Adam which he did by dying on the cross. At least the Jews affirm that they crucified Jesus; Muslims, al-Qūṭī reminds his readers, do not recognise this act. Their unbelief, for al-Qūṭī, is damning even though Muslims give a certain amount of honour to Jesus. If only Muslims would supplement their respect for Jesus with a full belief in his divine person and work, then their faith would be perfected; their use of portions of the Bible (al-Qūṭī mentions the Torah, the Psalms, and the Prophets) would not be in vain.²²⁰

With this in mind, al-Qūṭī has extended a significant amount of legitimacy to Islam as a religion. For him, Islam can function in a sort of preparatory role that might bring Muslims

²¹⁶ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 3:31. Cf. Qur’ān *āl-‘Imrān* (3):45.

²¹⁷ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 2:31. Cf., for instance, Qur’ān *āl-‘Imrān* (3):49.

²¹⁸ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 3:31-32.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3:32.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4:33-34.

to fully-developed faith. But like the author of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya*, al-Qūṭī stops short of granting it any salvific power. For all of its legitimacy, then, Islam fails to lead its followers by authentic truth to saving paradise, and in this, it remains inferior to Christianity.²²¹

Christianity as the Superior Faith

After quoting the Lord's Prayer al-Qūṭī discusses the authority given by God to Christian bishops to forgive sins.²²² What is more, through this granting of power, what bishops do on earth, God does in heaven. Some of these bishops even wrote refutations of Islamic law, al-Qūṭī remarks, and contend that it is void of truth, not adding anything to Judaism or Christianity. As al-Qūṭī goes on to assert, these refutations show that “. . . [Muslims] do not follow truth; but rather the truth is with us, and there is no [further] profit in your religious law”²²³

Al-Qūṭī's observation of heavenly power granted to bishops seems haphazardly out of place – an awkward break in between his religious legitimisation of Islam and his discussion of various bishops' refutations of it. Yet these details are more striking if al-Qūṭī uses them to suggest God's refutation and denouncement of Islam. If God performs in heaven what bishops do on earth, might al-Qūṭī mean to say that God gives the Church his stamp of

²²¹ Urvoy argues that al-Qūṭī's rather accommodating view of Islam is more evidence of the treatise's lack of authenticity. See Dominique Urvoy, “La pensée religieuse des Mozarabes face à l'islam,” *Traditio* 39 (1983): 422-423. But al-Qūṭī's rather “inclusive” view of Islam is also found in an anonymous eighth/fourteenth century letter written by a Christian in Cyprus. Here, Muḥammad and Islam were exclusive to the Arabs and brought them to a rudimentary form of monotheism. For this letter, see Ebied and Thomas, ed. Burman suggests that we have similar evidence in the dialogue of Timothy I and al-Mahdī. In this case, Timothy I had rather high regard for Muḥammad and Islam. See Burman, 67-68. Cf. also the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* which, as we note above, reveals a considerably high view of Islam as a monotheistic faith, even though, given its place in the Abrahamic covenant, it remains unable to save its adherents.

²²² Samir observes that al-Qūṭī's rendering of the Lord's Prayer is rather more qur'ānic in some of its language than other Christian Arabic forms. Samir uses this as evidence against the authenticity of *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*. See Samir, 246. For the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) in this treatise, see al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 5:34.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 6:34-35 trans. Burman in Constable, ed., 145-146.

approval by refuting in heaven what bishops denounce on earth? If this is the case, then al-Qūṭī suggests that God himself has renounced Islam as a path to him and Muslims might therefore have greater reason to perfect their faith by following Christ.

Islam contains no further truth, al-Qūṭī continues, because the essence of religious law is contained first within the Torah's command, "[w]hoever strikes you, strike him," and then within the Gospel's admonition, "[w]hoever strikes your right cheek, present him your left."²²⁴ For al-Qūṭī, the latter command abrogates the former, but Islam is unable to add anything further that is not already included in these. While al-Qūṭī closely paraphrases Matthew 5:38-39 here, his alleged citation from the Torah is in fact only an allusion to the Mosaic justice code (Exodus 21:23-25, Deuteronomy 19:21) where justice is served "... life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth," etc. Again, such a sloppy quotation seems uncharacteristic of a priest – more evidence for al-Khazrajī's confusion or the lack of authenticity in *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*. Nevertheless, it suggests that Islam is merely an inferior copy of Christianity, its superior forebear.

The Qur'ān as an Erroneous Book

Adding to Islam's inferiority, in al-Qūṭī's view, is the Qur'ān's allowance for polygamy and its laws governing divorce and remarriage.²²⁵ Al-Qūṭī refutes these with citations from the Gospels and the Torah, yet in both cases, while his quotations carry with them a sense of biblical nature, they occur nowhere in Christian Scripture.²²⁶

The Qur'ān's imperfection is perhaps most notable, however, in its confusion of biblical details. In the first case, al-Qūṭī asserts that the Qur'ān confuses Jesus' mother with

²²⁴ Ibid., 6:35.

²²⁵ Ibid. Al-Qūṭī quotes here Qur'ān *al-Nisā'* (4):4 and *al-Baqara* (2):229.

²²⁶ See al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 6:35.

the sister of Aaron (‘Imrān) and Moses (Hārūn).²²⁷ In the second, the Qur’ān is allegedly mistaken in the reason it gives for Satan’s (Iblīs) heavenly demise.²²⁸ Once again, it seems that al-Qūṭī has made some of his own errors, here mistakenly referring to a passage reminiscent of the Qur’ān in his effort to use the Torah to refute Islam’s claims concerning Satan.²²⁹ Even so, al-Qūṭī hopes to demonstrate the Qur’ān’s hopeless inferiority, for even in its attempt to mimic truth (the Bible) it slips in confusion.

Islam as a False and Inferior Faith

Al-Qūṭī acknowledges that for Muslims it is not the Qur’ān that is confused. Rather, it is the Christian and Jewish Scriptures that are corrupted. With this in mind, al-Qūṭī shifts from his attack on the Qur’ān in order to counter this false claim. He states that such accusations are unfounded and merely part of a Muslim’s unbelief. In fact, according to al-Qūṭī, Muslims can produce no evidence for their accusation, nor did Muḥammad make any such claims.²³⁰

The Letter of al-Qūṭī closes with a comparison of Islam and Christianity. In this light, the continuous miracles of the Church attest to its veracity. Comparatively, the carnality of Islam, seen most notably in its rather degraded vision of the after-life, only further attests to its lack of truth.²³¹ While Christianity spread peacefully and without pressure, Islam did so with violence and coercion. In like manner, Muḥammad, according to al-Qūṭī, was a violent leader who destroyed Christian cities and homes. In contrast, the divine Christ came in

²²⁷ Ibid., 7:36. Both women were named Mary (Maryam).

²²⁸ Ibid., 8:36-37.

²²⁹ Ibid. See Burman’s comments in Constable, ed., 147, n. 24.

²³⁰ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 8:37.

²³¹ Ibid., 9:37-38.

humility and in peace in order to forgive sins and mercifully protect.²³² For these reasons, al-Qūṭī calls his readers to follow the superior Christ.²³³

Summary

In the end, for all the religious legitimacy that al-Qūṭī attributes to Islam, its followers would still fail to attain paradise. Ultimately, Islam, its holy book, and its Prophet, were inferior. As a result, Islam lacked power to save. Following close behind such accusations were the inherent contradictions, confusion, and unseemly elements of Islam that al-Qūṭī exposed. Thus, Islam lacked credibility when compared with Christianity, and for this reason, Christianity remained the superior religion.

In his opinion and approach, al-Qūṭī varied little from his Christian counterparts. His remarks and assertions, the evidence he employs to support his claims, and the view of Islam that they result in, can all be found in other, entirely genuine works from relatively contemporary Mozarab (and *converso*) writers. What may be unique, though, if any of al-Khazrajī's account is credible, is that al-Qūṭī did all of this *in conversation* with Muslims. He intended that his arguments actually be heard by followers of Islam. In this, his primary goal was perhaps not only to strengthen Christian identity, but to add to his community's numbers those who were close in proximity by calling into question their own commitment to monotheism and make an appeal for their conversion.

Conclusion

It is perhaps Moses' remark concerning Alfonsi's relationship to Islam that best distinguishes these authors and the polemic they wrote: “. . . you were always, as I said,

²³² Ibid., 10:38.

²³³ Ibid., 10:38-39.

associated with [Muslims] and you were raised among them; you read [their] books, and you understand their language.”²³⁴ Indeed, our analysis of these four texts reveals that each of the authors, as Mozarabs and *conversos*, were firmly rooted in the Islamic soil of their day. As such, they were comfortable in their use of Arabic language and science. Additionally, the texts they wrote employ a range of Islamic sources, including the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* passages cited with complete *isnāds*. These characteristics make their texts both more rigorous and developed than many similar treatises from the region. As a result, they constitute some of the most accurate information about Islam available to Mozarabs and Latin Christians up to the sixth/twelfth century and would serve as important sources for later writing on Islam as well.

Yet these authors were ultimately concerned for the ways in which their communities upheld the tenets of Christianity in a multi-religious environment. For them, in the context of reconquest and shifting populations, they were eager to sustain and protect what made their faith secure and distinct especially in light of Islam. And it is precisely in their attacks upon Islam that we see these authors saying something about Christian identity. For though the texts they wrote may contain hints that they were intended to engage the Muslims they assailed, it seems more probable that these hints conceal their authors’ true intention. In all likelihood, many of their arguments would surely remain unconvincing to Muslims. This is particularly the case when these authors’ use of authentic Islamic material is paired with their remarkable disinterest in how Muslims themselves might interpret the Islamic sources that they used with relative ease.

This disinterest was hardly sloppy or the result of ignorance. Rather, it seems to have been the deliberate choice of skilled rhetoricians hoping that ignoring certain aspects of Islam

²³⁴ *Dialogus*, 5:146.

might make their polemic more effective. Thus, our authors' success depended on their ability to create a seemingly realistic image of Islam that was also repellent.²³⁵ In reality, such a technique would probably only be successful with a Christian audience.

In this sense, we can suggest that they intended their defamations of Muḥammad and Islam to act as a means for asserting a definition of Christian identity that would help distinguish their readers in light of Islam. Moreover, by being selective in their choice of topics and shrewd in the way they presented them, they could control how their audience would read their texts and view Islam. In only one case – one whose authenticity must be held in question – were Muslims actually engaged. Even so, this case does not seem entirely unique, for its main character, al-Qūṭī, seems equally deliberate in the Muslims he chose to confront – those he knew would be least able to defend themselves against his arguments. As their fellow Christians faced Islam in the changing context of *Reconquista*, then, these authors' works would reinforce a view of Islam as an inferior religion, regardless of the strengths Muslims had in language and culture. Thus, the boundaries they forged to mark their identity wound their way with precision through the cultural elements of Islam that could be appreciated, but away from its religious tenets in favour of the distinctiveness of Christianity.

Whereas the present chapter frames these texts and their assessments of Islam as means for discussing Christian identity in an Islamic context, the focus in the following chapter shifts to the definition of identity itself and the deployment of specific strategies to support it. In this we will focus less on the content and function of these texts and more on what their authors hoped their readers would look like amid Islam.

²³⁵ Tolán, *Saracens*, 152.

CHAPTER 6

A SELF-IMAGE OF RELIGIOUS DISTINCTIVENESS AND CULTURAL PROXIMITY:
FIFTH/ELEVENTH-SIXTH/TWELFTH CENTURY STRATEGIES FOR DEFINING
CHRISTIANITY IN LIGHT OF ISLAM

Near the close of the *Liber denudationis* the author remarks that his discussion of Christ in the Qur’ān (that he is a word and a spirit of God)¹ is markedly forceful against “the infidel.”² It is so, he notes parenthetically, because various Christians known to him have employed the same argument with Muslims, but “for the purpose of destroying the divinity of Christ.”³ The author’s side-note is important for two essential reasons. The first is that it brings to our eyes once again the central premise of what our study argues. By reading these texts through the lens of reflected self-image we see that rather poignant medieval descriptions of their authors are bound up within their claims concerning Islam. In this particular reference, the author tells us that some Christians made note of Christ in the Qur’ān perhaps so that they might make Christology more palatable to Muslims, i.e., that Jesus was from God, but not God. This was obviously disconcerting for the author, so he takes up, with force, the same line of argument. But this time he uses it in order to distinguish himself from Muslims on the grounds of Christ’s divinity.⁴ In both cases, Christians are using their discussion of Islam in order to achieve a specific identity for their own community.

¹ The author here has in mind portions of Qur’ān *al-Nisā’* (4):171: “Christ Jesus the son of Mary was [only] a messenger of Allah, and his word, which he bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from him” (*al-Masīḥu ‘Isā ibnu Maryam rasūlu Allāhi wa-kalimatuhu alqāhā ilā Maryama wa-rūḥun minhu*).

² *Liber denudationis*, 10.9.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Cf. Burman’s cautionary note in *Religious Polemic*, 349, n. 3. Given the absence of corroborating evidence we can only speculate that this is what the author meant by his parenthetical note. In any case, the author’s forceful argument would counteract such Christian claims whilst working against Muslim assertions against the divinity of Christ.

The author's statement concerning Christ in the Qur'ān and his distaste for certain Christians who used it to malign Christ's divinity is important for a second reason. In both cases it shows Christians in Spain turning to non-Christian (i.e., Islamic) sources and forms of communication so that they might offer their communities a definition of themselves in relation to Islam. With these new sources, Christian theology would be given a new voice with new language. As we shall see, this is just one feature that makes these treatises extraordinary in the context of medieval Spain.

Yet for all of their advancement, these authors make use of some of the same strategies that Eulogius and Alvarus employed two and three centuries before. These fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth century authors put their own twist on assailing and explaining Muḥammad and his religion for the purpose of defining Christian identity. Even with these similarities, however, differences remain in how each author chose to attack Islam and so we must consider their works and the definitions they offered to their Christian communities that arise from them in their own right. With this in mind, comparisons between the two eras of religious identity will be withheld from the present chapter and saved for the Conclusion.

What connects the strategies analysed below is an over-arching effort to assert religious distinctiveness in a multi-confessional society where the boundaries of religious identity drew Christians quite close, culturally speaking, to Muslims. This proximity allowed for Christian absorption of various elements of Islamic culture and language. Even so, our authors sought to retain their religious distinctiveness in light of Islam. With this in mind, we argued in the last chapter that our authors used their texts to answer the question of how they might confess Christianity as religiously distinct from Islam when certain of its followers looked and sounded very much like Muslims. It is the task in what follows to discover the

answers to this question offered in our texts and the ways these answers offer a religious identity for our fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth century authors *vis-à-vis* Islam.

A New Basis for Christian Identity in Spain

At the risk of overstatement, perhaps the most significant element of religious identity that our authors in Part II represent is their identity as Mozarabs and *conversos*. As such, they were closely associated with Muslims in matters of culture and language. In and of itself, this trait is a remarkable self-proclamation of their identity amid. It said that they could be assuredly Christian, and in this way religiously distinct, yet they could also be proximal to the culture that dominated them. Essentially, Mozarabs and *conversos* were signposts pointing towards a definition of Christian identity that was not formed on the basis of one specific culture over and against another.

We have made this point throughout, but perhaps we can now discuss this cultural proximity to Muslims as the resulting definition of a strategy of acculturation.⁵ This strategy was unique in medieval Spain because within it was a new starting point for asserting one's Christian identity: non-indigenous language and source material. With their knowledge of Arabic and Arabic sources, our authors could deploy new words and phrases, ones that were taken from the world of Islam (or transmitted from the world of Islam) for an audience that was very much at home there. This would give their Christian texts a decidedly Islamic flair.

⁵ Cf., van Ginkel, et al, *Redefining Christian Identity*, viii-ix. Here the authors note the presence of strategies of reinterpretation, isolation, and "inculturation" (acculturation), but an absence of any strategy of assimilation in the texts they analyse from the rise of Islam to the twelfth/eighteenth century Middle East. The reason for this, the authors claim, "almost certainly lays in the fact that [acculturation] and isolation strategies both implicitly reject assimilation, even when [acculturation] by its opponents often is viewed as just another form of assimilation" (Eulogius and Alvarus equated any cultural adaptation to full assimilation and thereby conversion). They continue, "... group survival appears to be the predominant aim. Such an aim is hardly served by assimilation, which tends to focus primarily on the survival and advance of the individual." The same might be said for the texts under analysis here. Their authors wished to suggest a unique identity, one that was very Christian at the same time that it made extensive use of various Muslim and Arabic elements. In this way, the authors were avoiding assimilation by not becoming *completely* like Muslims. For this reason, we must discuss their efforts as a strategy of acculturation. Cf., Chapter 1, n. 61 and Glick and Pi-Sunyer, 141, 153.

This new starting point for Christian identity in light of Islam in Spain would essentially function as the foundations for new and larger structures of meaning. With their ability to make use of new language and sources came an ability to conceptualise their Christian identity amid Islam in a new way as well. In other words, by elucidating Christian doctrine in an Islamic fashion, they embarked upon a new way of theologising. In this process, our authors are resolute in their effort to distinguish Christians from Muslims and solidify the religious identity of the former, but they follow an Islamic pattern of argumentation in doing so. Empowered with these abilities, a new kind of conversation could now take place between Christians and Muslims.

Deploying a New Starting Point for Christian Identity in Spain

The most apparent element of this new starting point was our authors' linguistic ability, for they were conversant in a language that was foreign in western Christian lands. As a result, three of our authors write their texts in Arabic. The other, Alfonsi, writes in Latin, but makes very clear his linguistic abilities and his connection to the pervading Islamic environment of his day. In this way, our authors demonstrate a cultural proximity to Muslims given their Arabic fluency. Likewise, this language preference represents a new starting point for the assertion of Christian identity since their texts are dependent upon the Arabic language and are communicated, in at least three of four cases, to an audience who read Arabic.

Since the Arabic language was now very much at their disposal, its literature also contributed to the Christian identity these authors put forth. This becomes primarily a matter of the sources they were now willing and able to consult. The four texts we examine here evince a dependence on a number of Arabic sources, a great many of them written by

Muslims.⁶ Most notable among these is our authors' extensive use of the Qur'ān and even the Ḥadīth, *Sīra*, and Islamic commentaries. In the same way, they would be keen to mine the source-material of Arabic-speaking Christians who had already asserted an identity influenced by Islam. These features add considerably to these authors' cultural proximity to Muslims: their willingness to employ unusual, non-indigenous source-material and their desire to assert an identity for their Christian communities that was imbued by Islam.

We will return to the matter of *how* our authors used these sources, with particular attention given to the Qur'ān, below, but not before examining the way this new starting point is manifest in the various Islamic and qur'ānic words and phrases employed by our authors in their texts. Taken together, these elements form the basis for a new way of speaking as Christians, and as a result, our authors are able to assert a new identity that is as much built upon Islam as it is intended to distinguish itself from Islam.

This new way of speaking is immediately noticeable with the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya*. Within its very title we see a way of referring to the Trinity (*al-Tathlīth*) that is rather curious, for it quite literally means “to make or call three.” In the same way, then, that Muslims express divine unity, i.e., *tawḥīd*, or “to make one,” so *al-Tathlīth* would be applied by Muslims to the Trinity.⁷ It is clearly problematic, for it is hardly an accurate expression of the doctrine. Nevertheless, Arabic-speaking Christians employed the term themselves as a starting point, foregoing linguistic precision in favour of pursuing more philosophical means of articulating *tathlīth* as a divine Trinity in unity. Many Mozarabs and *conversos* followed

⁶ For a discussion of these sources – in Arabic from Muslims and Christians and others from Christians in Latin – in the *Liber denudationis*, *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya*, and *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*, see Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 95-189. Burman does not include Alfonsi's *Dialogus* in his study, but the latter makes use of Eastern sources, al-Kindī in particular, as well. As for Islamic sources, Burman's study focuses in general on the former authors' use of the Ḥadīth.

⁷ On the use of *tathlīth*, see *EP* X:373, s.v. “Tathlīth,” by D. Thomas.

suit, and so acceptance of the term seems to have received almost wholesale approval by Arabic-speaking Christians.

The author of the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* likely gleaned the term from his use of Arabic sources or he simply learned it from discussions with Muslims or other Arabic-speaking Christians. In either case, he has altered his manner of speaking in order to accommodate new vocabulary that can express his identity as a Christian. In this sense, the author asserts his Christian identity in a very new and rather Islamic way by virtue of this shift in vocabulary.

The same shift is observable in the introductory remarks of *The Letter of al-Qūṭī*. Here the author begins his text with what can best be described as a Christianised version of the *basmala*: “In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God.”⁸ The *Liber denudationis* employs a similar, but extended version: “In the name of the Father . . . and of the Son . . . and of the Holy Spirit, the giver of life to those who are in tombs: a unity in Trinity, a Trinity in unity . . .”⁹ Laudatory remarks are common in texts of this nature, but in these cases the authors are introducing their treatises, *mutatis mutandis*, in much the same way Muslims would. The authors remain very much Christians – their *basmalas* reflect their belief in a Trinity in unity – but they have incorporated an Islamic ingredient in their elucidation of Christian doctrine.

Similarly, in more than one passage al-Qūṭī follows references to Christ with traditional honorifics normally reserved in Islam only for God. In this, al-Qūṭī goes beyond the expected honorific for prophets – “peace be upon him” (*‘alayhi al-salām*) – in order to make a bold, albeit succinct and implicit statement of Christ’s divinity, and in turn, Christian

⁸ “*Bāsm al-Ab w-l-Ibn wa-l-Rūḥ al-Quds, Ilāh Wāhid.*” Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 2:30. Cf. “In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” (*bismi Allāhi al-raḥmāni al-raḥīmi*) – common in the Qur’ān and other Muslim texts.

⁹ *Liber denudationis*, 1.1

identity. Thus we see in two passages concerning the divinity of Christ and the doctrine's religious supremacy, that al-Qūṭī follows Christ's name with "may he be exalted and sublime!" (*'aza wa jal*).¹⁰ In another passage, al-Qūṭī refers to Christ's incarnation and follows his name with "praise be upon him!" (*subhān*).¹¹ In Arabic, each of these examples would be clear statements of divinity that would constitute a unique starting point for Christian identity, for it would be voiced in the language (literally and figuratively) of the Qur'ān. As a result, readers could be affirmed in their religious doctrine – their Christology over and against Islam in particular – even as they retained their cultural proximity to Muslims.

Likewise, just after al-Qūṭī's *basmala* he says of Jesus "the Messiah our God" (*al-Masīh ilāhanā*) that it was he "who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them."¹² The author of the *Liber denudationis* employs the same expression in his exposition of Christ as the eternal Word of God.¹³ In and of themselves, references to Christ in this way are not theologically surprising, but the fact that this phrase is found in the Qur'ān (where the acts are God's and his alone) and applied to a divine Christ is remarkable. Moreover, this Christian use of the Qur'ān reflects a change in the way Christians in Spain could now speak of Christ. In essence, they have taken the language of the Qur'ān and made it speak for their Christian identity.

In very similar fashion, near the beginning of his work, al-Qūṭī says that Christ, the "Messiah son of Mary" (*al-Masīh ibn Maryam*) – in itself a very qur'ānic phrase – was "our God and our Creator and our Provider and the one who causes us to die and the one who gives

¹⁰ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 3:32 and 10:38.

¹¹ Ibid., 3:32.

¹² "alladhī khalaqa alssamāwāti wa-l-ārḍa wamā baynahumā." Ibid., 2:30. Cf., for instance, Qur'ān *al-Sajda* (32):4 or *Qāf* (50):38.

¹³ *Liber denudationis*, 10:10.

life to us.”¹⁴ The *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* echoes this statement in referring to God “in his creation and in his sustaining [of his creation] through his lordship.”¹⁵ In the *Liber denudationis*, it is the Holy Spirit who is “the giver of life.”¹⁶ Again, any shift in theology is absent, but in Islam, each of these descriptions represents one of God’s most beautiful names (*al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*). Accordingly, he is the Creator (*al-Khāliq*), the Provider (*al-Razzāq*), the Giver of Life (*al-Muḥyī*), and the Taker of Death (*al-Mumīt*). In this case, the Christian authors make the names their own and apply them to Christ as an assertion of his divinity, and concomitantly, an assertion of unique Christian identity.

In each of the examples noted above, we see a new starting point our authors use for their definition of Christian identity in Spain. No longer restricted to Latin, our authors’ identity is in part defined by their knowledge of Arabic, with three of them writing their treatises entirely in this language. Following on this, is our authors use of Arabic, and quite frequently Islamic, literature. Not only do they clearly consult these sources, but our authors are dependent upon them as well. They even go so far as to appropriate for themselves significant words and phrases from the Qur’ān to support their Christian identity *vis-à-vis* Islam. Placed alongside each other, these building blocks of identity give the authors religious distinctiveness even as they remained culturally proximal to Muslims.

Theologising in a New Way

Having used as their new starting point a foundation of Arabic language and sources, these authors could now construct newer and larger structures of meaning. In other words, they could now begin to conceptualise Christianity amid Islam in a new way. It should not be surprising that their new line of argumentation followed the same pattern as their movement

¹⁴ “*ilāhanā wa khāliqnā wa rāzziqnā wa mumītnā wa muḥyīnā.*” Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 10:38.

¹⁵ “*fi khāliqta wa tadbīra fi rabwabīta.*” *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 47.

¹⁶ *Liber denudationis*, 1.1.

towards Islamic and Arabic culture. The development of a new and distinctive argumentative methodology among Muslims beckoned, perhaps even forced, Arabic-speaking Christians to join them and find ways of conveying their theology and identity according to these new (Islamic) forms of discourse.¹⁷ So it was for various Mozarabs and *conversos* amid Islam in Spain. Thus, asserting their Christian identity became a matter of theologising in a new way, one that found itself following the same patterns and procedure as Muslim theologians.

This new way of theologising is perhaps most immediately noticeable in the use of *kalām*, or what we might call Islamic philosophical theology,¹⁸ in the *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* and Alfonsi's *Dialogus*. For Muslims, *kalām* became a matter of religious discourse meant to test doctrine by reason and rationality. In reference to religion, it became an effort in apology. By employing *kalām*, Muslims would defend their faith against other religious or theoretical discourse in general and Greek philosophy in particular.¹⁹ For this reason, among the most important issues addressed by scholars of *kalām* (*mutakallimūn*) pertained to the essence of God and how his attributes related to his essence.²⁰

In the same way, Christian use of *kalām* was almost entirely an exercise in defending the soundness of Christian doctrine against Muslim objections to it.²¹ In essence, the agenda for discussion and debate was set by the Qur'ān. In this light, Christian *mutakallimūn* strove to make their doctrine sensible to Muslims, and quite often, to assure Christians of the distinctiveness of their faith in an environment where Muslims hotly objected to it.²² As a

¹⁷ Cf. David Thomas, "Explanations of the Incarnation in Early 'Abbasid Islam," in *Redefining Christian Identity*, ed. van Ginkel et al., 132 and Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām," 3-4.

¹⁸ Griffith describes the *'ilm al-kalām* as "the intellectual discipline that is devoted to the reasoned justification of the truths of the divine revelation and to the exploration of the implications of revealed truth for human thought in general." See Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām," 1. Cf. *ibid.*, 1, n. 1 and our note in Chapter 5, n. 144.

¹⁹ Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām," 3 and Burman, "Christian Kalām in Twelfth-Century Mozarabic Apologetic in Spain," 39.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām," 3.

²² *Ibid.*, 3-4. Cf. our argument regarding our texts' audiences in Chapter 5.

result, though the forms of *kalām* varied, the essence of God in Christian eyes *vis-à-vis* Muslim objections became a primary concern for Christian *mutakallimūn* and it appears as such in the texts presently under discussion.

It is in this regard that we must consider the triads employed by the author of the *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* (power, knowledge, and will) and by Alfonsi in his *Dialogus* (substance, wisdom, and will), for they are very much dependent upon earlier, Arabic-Christian, and in turn, Islamic *kalām*. Both authors employ these triads in order to demonstrate how they, as attributes of God, show him to be a Trinity in unity. In the *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya*, God only created “by means of power, and knowledge, and will” (*biqudra, wa ‘ilm, wa irāda*). Any Muslim would agree that this is so, but if he suggested that these are names of God’s essence (*asmā’ li-dhātihī*), then he would be guilty of anthropomorphism. However, if he said that they were names of his acts (*asmā’ li-af‘ālihī*), because of which God is known as “the Powerful, the Knowing, and the Willing” (*qādir, ‘ālim, murīd*), then this would be nothing less than “the Trinity” (*al-Tathlīth*).²³

Alfonsi’s argument is similar: “I want to call the three persons [of the Trinity] ‘substance’, ‘wisdom’, and ‘will’. Moreover, I name the first person ‘substance’ for this reason: because wisdom and will are in it and come from it and it itself comes from nothing else. Although there are three persons, all are one substance.”²⁴ Thus, the triune nature of the one God is demonstrated, or at least it was thought to be, by means of Islamic methodology.

As Burman has already demonstrated, the use of *kalām* in fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth century Spain conforms very much to Islamic procedure, albeit with decidedly different

²³ *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 57.

²⁴ *Dialogus*, 6:164. Alfonsi’s argumentation is slightly awkward – wisdom and will being considered within substance – since divinity is generally understood in Christianity to be shared equally among the three persons of the Trinity.

results.²⁵ In essence, the Christian doctrine they defend remains essentially unchanged, but the way it is demonstrated is thoroughly altered in the hands of those needing to explicate Christian theology in a context influenced by Islam. Consequently, we see a new way of theologising for these authors, one that distinguished them from Muslims, but defined them as culturally proximal to them nevertheless.

The use of *kalām* and these triads in particular, though, is but one example of our authors acknowledging their need to adapt theological method to new contexts. In this light, it is our authors' willingness to turn to the Qur'ān as a source of Christian truth that deserves special attention here. In this way, though they are keen to disparage the Qur'ān, both al-Qūṭī and the author of the *Liber denudationis* use it to support their claims for Christ's divinity. Customarily, both note that the Qur'ān calls Jesus both a spirit and a word from God.²⁶ This observation is common in Christian texts concerning Islam; even Eulogius and Alvarus make note of it.²⁷ But in these fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth century texts such references occur with greater regularity and precision. The author of the *Liber denudationis* is able to quote the relevant passages with their *sūra* titles.²⁸ Al-Qūṭī is able to reference Christ's unsurpassed eminence and closeness to God – also quoting directly from the Qur'ān²⁹ – and the qur'ānic evidence of his miracles (e.g., *āl- 'Imrān* [3]:49 and *al-Mā 'ida* [5]:110).

²⁵ See, Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 168-184 in particular (this includes a bit on the influence of Latin triads as well), but also his “Christian Kalām in Twelfth-Century Mozarabic Apologetic in Spain” and “Tathlīth al-waḥdānīyah’ and the Twelfth-Century Andalusian-Christian Approach to Islam.”

²⁶ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 3:31 and *Liber denudationis*, 10.4, 8-10.

²⁷ “[Muḥammad] taught . . . that Christ is the word of God and his spirit . . .” (*docuit [Christum] Dei uerbum esse et spiritum . . .*). *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, 19. “. . . profess a word of God and a spirit, as [Muslims] affirm . . .” (*proferunt, uerbum dei et spiritum ut illi asserunt*). *Indiculus luminosus*, 9.

²⁸ Qur'an *āl- 'Imrān* (3):45: “God is giving news to you [Mary] of a word” (*Allāha yubashshiruki bikalimatīn*) and *al-Nisā* (4):171: “Jesus . . . is a word of [God], and . . . a spirit from [God]” (*'Isā ibnu Maryama . . . kalimatuhu . . . wa-rūḥun minhu*). The Latin manuscript has “*Elmaran*” and “*Elnessa*” for the *sūra* titles. See *Liber denudationis*, 10.4.

²⁹ *Āl- 'Imrān* (3):45: “[Christ] was ‘eminent in this world and the next one and one of those brought close to God’” (*wa-annahū ka-anna wajīhan fī al-ddunyā wa-l-ākhirati wamina al-muqarrabīna*). Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 3:31.

Other authors were content to cite these qur'ānic references as points of common ground on which to launch more complex arguments for Christian Christology dependent upon biblical material. It is most intriguing, then, that our authors continue their arguments for a divine Christ whilst remaining within qur'ānic boundaries. The author of the *Liber denudationis*, for instance, relies almost exclusively on the traditional qur'ānic passages noted above (*āl-Imrān* [3]:45 and *al-Nisā'* [4]:171), but explicates Christian Christology based upon them. In so doing, he insists that what is revealed in the Qur'ān remains true in an "exterior sense" (*exteriorius dicatur*), but that "interior unfaithfulness" (*interius infidelitas*) forced a "bad understanding [of what was revealed]." ³⁰ Presumably, this "interior unfaithfulness" described Muḥammad's failure to understand God's message followed by his unwarranted addition that "Jesus in the eyes of God is just like Adam whom he created from clay." ³¹ This misapprehension, in turn, formed the essential difference between Christian and Islamic Christology.

In other words, beneath a surface of truth lay the roots of confusion; misunderstanding of Christ's divinity led to incorrect doctrine and a completely human Christ. The author of the *Liber denudationis* thus purports to unravel the confusion by going to the root of the problem. By so doing, he claims to disclose the innate truth of a divine Christ in the Qur'ān. Confining his argument to the Qur'ān, the author suggests that the Islamic claim that Christ is a word and a spirit of God logically necessitates his divinity. If God is eternal, then his word and spirit must be eternal as well. To suggest that God's word and spirit were created like Adam or a piece of clay is to suggest that God himself is created. Since God is divine, his word must be divine, and therefore the divinity of Christ logically follows.

³⁰ *Liber denudationis*, 10.10.

³¹ The author here paraphrases *āl-Imrān* (3):59 from the Qur'an: "The likeness of Jesus before God is as that of Adam . . ." (*inna mathala 'Īsa 'inda Allāhi kamathali Ādama . . .*). *Liber denudationis*, 10.11.

In this way, the author seeks to clear away Muḥammad’s befuddlement (the “interior unfaithfulness”) whilst at the same time taking as his starting point for Christian identity the same texts a Muslim would employ. He simply re-directs the texts towards a Christian end. It is in this willingness to use non-Christian argumentation that we see the author’s cultural proximity to Muslims. What is remarkable is that this cultural proximity is made to support religious distinctiveness.

One final set of striking examples of Christian identity culled from the Qur’ān lies subtly nestled in the introductions of the *Liber denudationis*’ and al-Qūṭībī’s letter. In the *Liber denudationis*, after professing God’s triune nature the author asserts that it was this Trinity in unity who:

. . . created us from earth, and carried us forward through begettings and loins, and fashioned us in wombs and established for us senses . . . and made us to be among the best of men, when He showed us His miracles . . . (and on account of this we have believed with certainty), and taught us the paths of truth, and displayed to us the signs of His power and the occasions of His wisdom.³²

In essence, it was through a triune God that Christians were created and evolved (*transtulit*).

Through his miracles they firmly believed in Christian faith and were thus made “to be among the best of men.”³³

This introductory comment is a robust statement of Christian belief and identity, but it is also curiously similar to *āl-‘Imrān* (3):110 in the Qur’ān. It might even be said to be an amplified paraphrase of the *āya* (verse) turned on its head so that it might communicate Christian identity. Indeed, the author of the *Liber denudationis* seems merely to take the qur’ānic text and expound upon it, for the *āya* more succinctly asserts that it is Muslims (*muslimūn*) who:

. . . are the best of peoples evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in God.³⁴

³² Ibid., 1.1.

³³ Ibid.

In both cases, it is those who believe in God and correctly follow him who are raised above and brought beyond the rest of humanity. By virtue of their belief, they are better than non-believers; indeed, they are the best of all people. In one sense, then, what seems to clearly be the author's use of the Qur'ān here is very nearly a taunt of Muslim readers, for the very words intended to make Muslims unique become in the mouth of this Christian author the markers of Christian identity and religious distinctiveness. In another sense, to Mozarabs, his more-than-likely audience, he has simply appropriated the Qur'ānic notion of divine favour from a source that at least some of them would have been familiar with. By "correcting" it, he might even be suggesting to his readers the religious bankruptcy of Islam. In turn, the religious value of Christianity would increase. In this, the author asserts Christian identity *vis-à-vis* Islam, and does so in the language of the Qur'ān.

Al-Qūṭī makes a very similar assertion in his introduction when he praises a triune God who "guided us to his religion and helped us with his right hand and favoured us with . . . the Messiah our God . . ." ³⁵ By this grace of God, al-Qūṭī believes that Christians were "rightly guided" (*tarshad*). ³⁶ Here, al-Qūṭī takes three very Qur'ānic concepts and weaves them together to form a tightly-compacted assertion of Christian identity in the language of Islam. In the Qur'ān, it is Muslims whom God has guided to his religion, i.e., Islam (*Ibrāhīm* [14]:12); as such, they are rightly guided (*al-An'ām* [6]:56) and in paradise will be among the companions of the right hand (*al-Balad* [90]:17-18). ³⁷ In all of this, it is Muslims who receive God's favour, for they are the best of all people (*āl-Imrān* [3]:110).

³⁴ "kuntum khayra ummatin ukhrijat li-l-nās ta'murūna bi-l-ma'rūfi wa-tanhawna 'an al-munkar wa-tu'minūna bi-llāh." Qur'ān *āl-Imrān* (3):110.

³⁵ "alladhī hadānā lidīnihi wa-aydnā biyamīnihi wa-khaṣṣanā . . . al-Masīḥ ilāhanā." Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 2:30.

³⁶ Ibid., 2:31.

³⁷ This is not necessarily isolated to Islam; cf. Matthew 25:31-46 where it is those placed on Christ's right that will enter heaven.

Al-Qūṭī repositions these statements, pointing them towards an identity for Christians. For him, Christianity was, in reality, what the Qur’ān claimed Islam to be. In this, cultural proximity is made to serve religious distinctiveness. By paralleling their arguments, *mutatis mutandis*, to Muslim ones they are able to assert a Christian identity “in the very Arabic idiom that on Muslim tongues seemed to call it into question.”³⁸

Summary

For our fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth century authors, their Christian identity was defined in part by their cultural proximity to Muslims. Such a definition was immediately supported by our authors’ use of Arabic language and source-material. Quite naturally, then, our authors’ assertion of Christian identity is often coupled with the look and sound of Islam: Arabic texts, Islamic language, and Qur’ānic phrases.

Yet despite the many ways our authors’ culture, language, sources, and vocabulary impinge on Islamic and Qur’ānic thought-forms, they are hardly religious accommodationists. By taking an Islamic starting point for their assertion of Christian identity, they attempted to explain their beliefs to Muslims and assure their Christian community of them with the language and methodology that was most appropriate. In this way, their theological elucidations function as both apologetic – a defence of Christian doctrine in an Islamic context – and innovation – the result of making Christian doctrine translatable to new contexts so that its adherents might cling to it with fresh and lasting vigour.³⁹ In short, by conforming to the dominant cultural context surrounding them, they were able to maintain and assert a

³⁸ Griffith, “Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām, 4. See also Sidney H. Griffith, “The First *Summa Theologiae* in Arabic: Christian *Kalām* in Ninth-Century Palestine,” in *Conversion and Continuity*, ed. Gervers and Bikhazi.

³⁹ Cf. Thomas, “Explanations of the Incarnation in Early ‘Abbasid Islam,” 133.

distinct religious, i.e., Christian, identity and even assert its superiority. In this way, cultural proximity had for these authors a religious advantage.

With this in mind, this strategy of acculturation can also be described as the means by which our authors differentiated between condemning Islam as a religion on the one hand and celebrating its culture and language on the other. For them, the latter elements were no longer exclusive to Muslims or subservient to Muslims' application of them. In our authors' hands, Arabic language and culture were made to serve their doctrinal discussions and religious distinctiveness. As a result, much of the Qur'ān is made to do an about-turn. It no longer looked towards the *umma*, describing Muslims and Islam; now it could be made to look towards Christians, describing their identity and faith.

In this way, this strategy of acculturation is at the very same time a strategy of religious distinctiveness. For only Christians who were culturally proximal to Muslims could deploy a strategy that would take the latter's ideals and make them describe Christian religious identity. And it is here where we see that the starting point for Christian identity had changed. These Christians do not entirely depend on the Bible and the normal modes of Christian theologising to religiously distinguish themselves from Muslims. They complete this task with the Qur'ān and Muslim ways of asserting religious identity.

Deploying Old Starting Points for Christian Identity

Even so, some of our authors do occasionally turn to more traditional modes of articulating Christian doctrine as a means for asserting their identity in light of Islam. As we shall see, the evidence that exists for this suggestion conforms to the notion we have argued thus far: that these Christian authors preferred that their theology distinguish them over and against their culture. In this, they could be defined by their theological tenacity so that they

might withstand the religious and cultural tests of time. They could therefore be distinguished religiously, even if they conformed in various ways culturally.

Theologising in Traditional Ways

Appended to the *Liber denudationis* are refutations of two common Islamic objections to the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ that demonstrate the author's nod to traditional theologising. In the first objection, Muslims question the possibility of restricting God – “the one whom heaven and earth are not able to contain” – in the womb of Mary.⁴⁰ In response, the author asserts:

. . . the boundless God united to flesh in the womb of the Virgin was circumscribed by [*per*] flesh alone, the infinity of His own divinity in no way having been diminished.⁴¹

With this answer, the author avoids the Muslim allegation that in some way God was implicated in human confinement with all of its suffering and degradation. According to the author, this did not affect his divinity. But the first portion of the response is ambiguous, especially if the author intends to say that *only* the flesh of Mary's womb, as opposed to any other matter, circumscribed God. It would seem more likely that he is trying to isolate the circumscription that did occur in the womb to Christ's human nature, i.e., the boundless God was contained only according to his humanity (he was circumscribed as flesh alone), but not according to his divinity. In this case, the author would, like various other authors who

⁴⁰ *Liber denudationis*, 10.14-17.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10.14; emphasis added. The author reiterates “by flesh alone” and “according to the flesh” in 10.15 and 10.19 respectively. He attempts to strengthen his argument in 10.16 with qur'anic references describing God as seated on a throne (e.g., *Yūnus* [10]:3; *al-Ra'd* [13]:2; *Ṭā'-Hā'* [20]:5), the width of which spans the heavens and the earth (*al-Baqara* [2]:255). In 10.16, the author adds Hadīth passages in which God is said to reach into hell in order to save some who were sent there. Curiously, the former argument follows Abū Qurra, whom we discuss more below. See Constantin Bacha, *Les oeuvres arabes de Théodore Aboucara* (Beyrouth: n.p., 1904), 181.5-7 (the entire tract appears in *ibid.*, 180-186 and translated into German by Georg Graf, *Die arabischen Schriften des Theodor Abu Qurra, Bischofs von Harran [ca 740-820]: Literarhistorische untersuchungen und übersetzung* [Paderborn: n.p., 1910], 178-184). See also, Thomas, “Explanations of the Incarnation in Early ‘Abbasid Islam,” 135.

fielded this question from Muslims, be eager to keep separate those actions which are attributed to the divine and human natures of Christ. For example, he would not be unlike Theodore Abū Qurra, the third/ninth century Melkite Bishop of Ḥarrān, whose answer to the very same objection is a near match to the one given in the *Liber denudationis*. According to Abū Qurra,

We recognise that the eternal Son is in every place without limit . . . but that in his compassion for the need in us humans of salvation, the blessed one became located in the body which he took from Mary the pure virgin, and exposed it [the body, i.e., the human nature] to the sufferings and pain⁴²

Abū Qurra is also careful to restrict Christ's sufferings to his human nature alone. By doing so, he overcomes the Muslim charge that the divine Son suffers or is subject to the confinement of the human body. At the same time, Abū Qurra presumably retains his Chalcedonian allegiance.⁴³

The author of the *Liber denudationis* responds similarly in his reply to the second Muslim objection. In this one, Muslims ask how it might be possible that God “deign to be mocked or . . . crucified or die . . . ?”⁴⁴ The author remarks straightaway:

. . . Christ in suffering and death redeemed [his followers] from eternal death, and [his] *divinity did not sustain any of the injury* which lay hidden in the flesh.”⁴⁵

Again, the author takes care in distinguishing between which actions are attributed to Christ's two natures. In this case, only Christ's human nature suffered and died, certainly not his divine nature. Earlier on in the text he very nearly goes out of his way to emphasise that it was Christ's “divine nature which worked miracles.”⁴⁶ In both cases, great care is taken to

⁴² Bacha, 182.15-20. See also, Thomas, “Explanations of the Incarnation in Early ‘Abbasid Islam,” 137.

⁴³ See also, *ibid.* and Bacha, 180.14-19. Cf. John of Damascus and a similar discussion concerning Christ's natures and impassibility in his *Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani* (Sahas, 150-153).

⁴⁴ *Liber denudationis*, 10.18.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; emphasis added.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.5.

distinguish between which nature does what action – the human nature alone suffered and died, the divine nature alone worked miracles.

Though responding to a slightly different objection, the same sentiment seems apparent in Alfonsi's *Dialogus*. In his discussion of Christ's prophethood and divinity, Alfonsi refers to the prophet Isaiah and writes that Christ "will not falter nor flee" before bringing judgment.⁴⁷ According to Alfonsi, it seemed clear that Isaiah "wanted Christ's death to be understood by 'falter', whereas by 'flee' he wanted his Ascension into heaven to be understood," i.e., Christ will not die or return to heaven before giving his law.⁴⁸ Alfonsi adds that Christ's death was "according to the flesh," and so he, too, seems careful to distinguish between the functions of Christ's human nature and his divine nature.

What is intriguing about these statements is that they show Alfonsi and the author of the *Liber denudationis* reaching back into history for Christological explanations for the incarnation of Christ. These explanations are hardly innovative; they are answers to Christological dilemmas from well before the fifth/eleventh or sixth/twelfth century. In this way, Alfonsi and the author of the *Liber denudationis* are quite comfortable to theologise in traditional ways even as they, along with our other authors, are keen to develop new means of articulating their Christian identity. In this, traditional modes of explaining Christian theological distinctions are re-deployed as a means for asserting the distinctiveness of Christian identity *vis-à-vis* Islam.

Yet, not one of the responses offered in the *Liber denudationis* or by Alfonsi is satisfactory. They are instead rather short-sighted solutions that would seem to only briefly satisfy Muslim objections. Consequently, since the *Liber denudationis* leaves the impression

⁴⁷ *Dialogus*, 9:201-202. See Resnick's n. 16 in Alfonsi, 201 where he observes that Alfonsi's "He will not falter nor flee" (*non deficiet aut effugiet*) does not match the Vulgate's "He will not be sad or troublesome" (*non erit tristis neque turbulentus*).

⁴⁸ *Dialogus*, 9:203.

that only one of Christ's natures endured human confinement and suffering, Muslims could seize the opportunity to retort that if Christ's two natures did not endure these experiences equally, then his divine nature must surely have ceased to exist.⁴⁹

Alfonsi is perhaps also a bit careless when he goes on to say that Christ's death "was not really a death but was instead a relocation and a faltering."⁵⁰ To any Muslims who came across the *Dialogus*, this could easily be used to support various Islamic interpretations concerning the Qur'ān's treatment of the crucifixion, i.e., Christ did not die, but was instead raised to heaven.⁵¹ The author of the *Liber denudationis* was perhaps more precise, but even so, by isolating death to Christ's human nature he, too, leaves a door open for later Muslim attacks. Yet these authors seem unconcerned at this point to relinquish traditional modes of explaining Christ's incarnation so that they might formulate more suitable explanations that would be capable of meeting the demands of their new religious opponents.⁵²

How might we explain this sudden bout of short-sightedness when our authors demonstrated such remarkable innovation in their creative theologising described in the section above? In many other areas our authors showed fresh thinking in their efforts to reassess arguments for a new audience. When it came to Muslim objections to Christ's

⁴⁹ E.g., the free-thinking Shi'i Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Warrāq (d. c. 250/864) made this very argument. See paragraphs 63-65 in E. Platti, ed., *Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī: de l'Incarnation*. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 490 (Louvain: Peeters, 1987); Platti's French translation in *Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq, Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī: de l'Incarnation*. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 491 (Louvain: Peeters, 1987); and an English translation by David Thomas in *Early Muslim Polemic against Christianity: Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq's 'Against the Incarnation'*. Oriental Publications, 59 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁵⁰ *Dialogus*, 9:203.

⁵¹ See Qur'ān *al-Nisā'* (4):156-159 and Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 106-141, 171-172. See also, A. H. Mathias Zahniser, *The Mission and Death of Jesus in Islam and Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008) and Todd Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qur'an: A Study in the History of Muslim Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009).

⁵² We must wonder in this regard if Elipandus' adoptionism was in some way an attempt to explain the incarnation in a new way to meet new circumstances. See our discussion of Elipandus in Chapter 4. We might also wonder about the Chalcedonian preferences evident in Spain in the sixth, first/seventh, and second/eighth centuries (also discussed in Chapter 4). Are the Christological statements given by Alfonsi and the author of the *Liber denudationis* – which do appear rather Chalcedonian in nature – evidence for the preservation of such a preference?

incarnation, however, Christians in general were forced to take a step backwards. Muslims were not concerned with the manner in which God became incarnate, the usual focus of intra-Christian debate, because in their minds Christ was only ever a human prophet. Furthermore, Muslim objections to the doctrine operated from a completely different basis since for them such an act never occurred in the first place. The incarnation was not, then, primarily a Christological dilemma, for it compromised more than anything else the essence of God's unity (*tawḥīd*).⁵³ On this latter level, not the former, lay the problem for Muslims, and for this reason, Christian responses like the ones we see in the *Liber denudationis* and in Alfonsi's *Dialogus* spoke past Muslims' primary concerns.

In the same way, the incarnation was unnecessary in Muslim minds and so they questioned its theological value. For Christians, such an act spoke rather clearly towards the biblical concept of redemptive suffering and God's love for and intimacy with humanity. Yet for Muslims, any such notion violated the qur'ānic concept of God's justice, his consistent triumph over evil, and his magisterial transcendence. In the incarnation, then, Muslims did not see an act of divine love, but an insult to divine omnipotence.⁵⁴ In Muslim objections, the Christian doctrine was thus marginalized and emptied of its significance. This scenario should have forced Christians to find new ways of defending the basis for their doctrine rather than a preferred means in which to articulate it.

Many Christian authors were in this way seemingly unaware that such a central theological point as the incarnation had a very different history and basis of understanding for Muslims.⁵⁵ Perhaps unaware of the new basis upon which Muslims made their objections,

⁵³ Cf. a similar argument in Gabriel Reynolds, "Saint Thomas' Islamic Challenge: Reflections on the Antiochene Questions," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 12, no. 2 (April 2001): 167.

⁵⁴ For a similar line of argument, see the seventh/thirteenth century Egyptian jurist Aḥmad b. Idrīs al-Qarāfi's *Al-ajwiba al-fākhira 'an al-as'ila al-fājira*, ed. Bakr Zakī Arad (Cairo: Kulliyā uṣūl al-dīn, 1986), 293, 346 and the discussion in Reynolds, 174, 176.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 180.

many Christians felt little need to reformulate their arguments for the incarnation.⁵⁶ As a result, Alfonsi and the author of the *Liber denudationis* deploy the usual defense for the doctrine – one that previously answered the questions of historical Christian concern. And in the case of the latter author, he forces a series of provocative, yet ultimately inadequate metaphors to support the rest of his argument for the incarnation.⁵⁷ In essence, these authors are providing answers to different questions. Standing on the same basis of Church fathers who formulated earlier Christological thinking, these authors deploy the solutions to much earlier Christian problems perhaps not fully realizing the extent to which their fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth century Islamic context differed.⁵⁸ In this way, our authors have seemingly missed the theological adjustments they needed to make when their defense for Christian doctrine moved from an intra-Christian battlefield to that of Muslims, their new interlocutors.⁵⁹ In any case, doctrine remained, above all, the means these authors used to define their Christian identity in light of Islam.

Summary

Perhaps the author of the *Liber denudationis* included in his sources a Christian apology for the incarnation like Abū Qurra's that conveniently matched his inter-religious context.⁶⁰ Perhaps he, along with Alfonsi, was simply content responding to Muslim doctrinal objections with solutions that only *seemed* best fit to satisfy their concerns. Or

⁵⁶ See the very similar phenomenon and analysis in Thomas, "Explanations of the Incarnation in Early 'Abbasid Islam," 133-140.

⁵⁷ *Liber denudationis*, 10.18-19. The author likens the incarnation to a pearl in its shell and a fire unable to injure an angelic being, reminiscent of Daniel 3:19-27 (Vul. – 3:19-23, 91-94). Cf. Thomas, "Explanations of the Incarnation in Early 'Abbasid Islam," 128.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 133-140.

⁵⁹ Cf. our similar discussion of how Christian arguments failed in not acknowledging that their arguments were taking place on their opponents' battlefield in Chapter 2, p. 103 (in reference to Eulogius) and Chapter 4, p. 169 (in reference to Migetius).

⁶⁰ This is an especially provocative suggestion given the similarities of their arguments (consider also the similarity described in n. 41). Indeed, Abū Qurra's work was well-known even in Muslim circles. See Thomas, "Explanations of the Incarnation in Early 'Abbasid Islam," 139.

perhaps these authors were simply beginning to succumb to the pressure created by the tension between traditional theologising and a demand for new explanations of the incarnation.⁶¹ In any case, these modes of expression stand as a means for their authors to relinquish the ties their Christian identity had to one specific culture. These authors instead chose to strengthen their religious distinctiveness via doctrine. Thus, to be a Christian amid Islam in Spain was for these authors to distinguish oneself theologically regardless of how culture made him look or sound.⁶²

Christianity without Religious Competition

The strategies that remain are far more blatant and accusatory in the ways they assert Christian religious distinctiveness *vis-à-vis* Islam. The first of these was in the hands of our authors a means of re-shaping the trajectory of Islam's history and origination; a way of reassessing its religious make-up and value so that these authors appeared uniquely effective and religious superior.

It seems clear that these authors held a solid understanding of Islam – among the best medieval Europe could boast of – and acknowledged it as a religion. Empowered by this knowledge, however, they dismantled Islam and re-constructed it as an illegitimate religion. By delegitimising Islam, they made it rather impotent; with its deficiencies meticulously highlighted and put on display by our authors, Islam fell below the ideal standards of true religion.

With every swipe they took at Islam's religious legitimacy, Christianity appeared to rise higher as a religion of superior truth and efficacy. This strategy would be a far easier and

⁶¹ Cf., *ibid.*, 137.

⁶² If this was the case, then this strategy and definition would ultimately not endure beyond the seventh/thirteenth century. Mozarabs were eventually absorbed by the wider population of Christians in Spain and greater Christendom; Muslims and much of their influence disappeared as they converted or were eventually expelled (see Chapter 4, pp. 183-184).

more convincing tactic than direct attempts to demonstrate the superiority of Christians in Spain. Instead of proving their own worth, our authors could simply eliminate their religious competition. In the end, Islam would crumble under the weight of accusations, and when it did, these authors' faith would be left standing high above the Islamic rubble below it.

Delegitimising Islam's History

The most immediate strategy for eliminating Islam as a religious competitor was to chip away at its historic foundations. Once made brittle, our authors, Alfonsi and the author of the *Liber denudationis* in particular, could deem its history and origins as unbecomingly true religion. By contrast, Christianity's foundations would appear all the more sturdy. In this light, Alfonsi points out that the "entire race of [pre-Islamic] Arabs" worshipped idols.⁶³ Even Muḥammad devoted himself to pagan idolatry prior to his propagation of Islam.⁶⁴ His forefathers, so the author of the *Liber denudationis* writes, were in hell and he is even made to lament the unawareness he had of his pagan heritage.⁶⁵

To make this argument, the author quotes from the Qur'ān and writes, "God said, 'Do not inquire regarding those who are in hell', that is, regarding the forefathers of the first Muslims. Whence [Muḥammad] is reported to have said about [his] father and mother: 'Would that I knew what their work is [i.e., their pagan heritage].'" Yet the author misquotes the Qur'ān here which actually states, "Those are a people who have passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did, and you of what you do! You will not be asked about what they used to do."⁶⁶ In this case, "those who have passed away" becomes in the *Liber denudationis* "those who are in hell;" not being able to claim the merits of others on Judgment

⁶³ *Dialogus*, 5:151. John of Damascus makes the same point in his *De Haeresibus* (Sahas, 133).

⁶⁴ *Dialogus*, 5:151.

⁶⁵ *Liber denudationis*, 10.1.

⁶⁶ *Al-Baqara* (2):134 and 141 are identical: "tilka ummatun qad khalat lahā mā kasabat walakum mā kasabtum walā tus'alūna 'ammā kānū ya'malūna." See also, Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 339, n. 3.

Day is made to suggest the sin of Muḥammad's parents. The author's paraphrase perhaps intentionally suppresses qur'ānic intent, but the result of his interpretation is a religion with unsecure pagan foundations, one whose roots are in hell. For the author of the *Liber denudationis*, Islam would thus lack the stability of historic monotheism; its crumbling foundations would suggest their religious strength.

In no place would Islam's pagan heritage be better illustrated for Alfonsi than in the history behind the *Ka'ba* and the *Hajj*.⁶⁷ According to Alfonsi, two idols were worshipped at the *Ka'ba* – a black rock and a white rock – each one devoted to pagan deities. Their worshippers travelled to the *Ka'ba* twice each year to honour them. Once there, like India's polytheists, they shaved their heads, disrobed, and burned incense. Alfonsi suggests that Muḥammad changed these rituals very little when he appropriated them for Islam. Thus, Alfonsi makes Muslims followers of a pre-Islamic astrological cult whose alleged underpinnings were pagan, foreign, and crude. Now, when Muslims on *Hajj* approached the *Ka'ba*, they kissed these same stones and, “with their shorn heads bowed . . . throw rocks backwards from between their legs . . . bowing down, [they] bare their backsides, which is a sign of the ancient law.”⁶⁸ Islam, then, retained the markings of ancient paganism and looked rather foolish in doing so. This made any subsequent claim to true religion doubtful. As a result, Islam was born of religious illegitimacy and Christianity appeared that much more pure.

The account in the *Liber denudationis* differs slightly from Alfonsi's, but draws the same conclusions.⁶⁹ Accordingly, Abraham and Ishmael built the *Ka'ba* within which Muḥammad placed a black stone so that his followers might worship the one God. Yet he ordered them to kiss the stone – a concept the author feels is hardly different from idolatry.

⁶⁷ *Dialogus*, 5:157-159. Alfonsi's account here follows al-Kindī quite closely.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 5:158.

⁶⁹ *Liber denudationis*, 11.

He goes on to cite a number of Islamic explanations regarding the stone, the last of which states that the angel Gabriel brought a very white stone from paradise to Abraham and Ishmael. The touch of infidels turned the stone black. Since it remains black, the author concludes, Muslims, by virtue of the limits of their faith, are unable to make it white again. In short, regardless of whatever advances they made towards monotheism, Muslims remained infidels and the object of their affection bore the blackness of their sin.⁷⁰ Much like Alfonsi, then, the author of the *Liber denudationis* uses this history to delegitimise Islam. As a result, he could assert Christianity as uniquely true, and in this way distinguish himself religiously.

If Islam's foundations were riddled with pagan deficiencies, then its first converts would necessarily be of pagan stock as well. One would then wonder if they had not simply perpetuated their idolatry. Accordingly, Alfonsi notes that Islam's first generation of converts were former pagans and heretics.⁷¹ As idolaters and those that represented the worst of their former faiths (i.e., Samaritans [Jewish heretics], Nestorians, and Jacobites [Christian heretics]), they added to Islam's historic brittleness – the misunderstanding of their own faith would form a volatile mixture of religious bewilderment as they entered Islam. Many of these first converts were not only heretics and pagans, but simpletons as well,⁷² adding an element of foolishness to the mixture of religious confusion. The final product was religion born in illegitimacy. By contrast, Christians eschewed such deviant adherents from their midst, strengthening their Church, emphasising its legitimacy, and solidifying its role as unique bearer of truth.

Perhaps the most damaging means of delegitimising Islam's history was to suggest that Muḥammad received help in devising his religion. Like his earliest converts, these advisors were also heretics. With this information, readers could judge Muḥammad to be a

⁷⁰ Ibid., 11.5.

⁷¹ *Dialogus*, 5:151-152.

⁷² Ibid., 5:151.

plagiarising imposter, his teachers unorthodox, and his religion a mix of lies. With this goal in mind, Alfonsi suggests that two converts from Judaism (“heretics from Arabia”), Abdias and Chabalahabar, taught Muḥammad and thus contributed to what is in the Qur’ān.⁷³ There was also, Sergius (Baḥīrā), whom Alfonsi refers to as a Jacobite heretic condemned at a council in Antioch. He, too, advised the Prophet until each of the three “mixed together the law of [Muḥammad] . . . according to [their] own heresy”⁷⁴

For the author of the *Liber denudationis*, Muḥammad’s advisors included the heretic “Boheira” (Baḥīrā), “Salon the Persian,” a convert from Persia (Salmān al-Fārisī), and “Abdalla the Jew son of Selam” (‘Abd Allāh b. Salām).⁷⁵ In this account as well, then, Islam becomes a mixture of heretical and pagan thought that Muḥammad foolishly absorbs, copies, and propounds. As a result, it lacks the originality, and therefore unique legitimacy, of Christianity.

Of course, each of these characters is attested to in Islamic sources, most notably in the *sīra* of the Prophet.⁷⁶ Yet in each case, their status as former pagans and/or heretics is made to speak louder than their adherence to Islam. This in turn suggests that Islam’s origins and early formation was a mixture of all the ingredients needed to make it religiously illegitimate. In making this argument, our authors were not standing on the most solid ground, given the history and origins of their own faith. Yet, this fact seems unimportant, perhaps forgotten in the centuries since Christianity began and since the arrival of Islam. With pre-Christian history conveniently set aside, Islam appears as nothing more than a poor derivative of Christianity. Much more, it was parasitic, uncritically feeding off of what went

⁷³ Cf. Chapter 5, p. 220. Likely ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām and Ka’b al-Aḥbār since Alfonso follows al-Kindī here. *Dialogus*, 5:152.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ *Liber denudationis*, 5.1-2. Cf. Chapter 5, pp. 204-205.

⁷⁶ Guillame, 240-241, 262, 267 (‘Abd Allāh b. Salām); 79-81 (Baḥīrā); and 95-98, 452, 764, n. 700 (Salmān al-Fārisī).

before it. With Islam's foundations made brittle by pagan heritage and its history completely delegitimised, Christianity remains steadfast and stands alone as the uniquely legitimate religion.

Delegitimising Islam's Unity, Universality, and Age

If Islam's foundations were brittle, then its trajectory – its path from infant to developed religion – would be made to look twisted and malformed so that our Christian authors appeared all the more stable. For this attack, they give focus to Islam's disunity. To that end, the author of the *Liber denudationis* cites a *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad is reported to say, “My people will be divided after me into seventy-three divisions, of which one division will be saved; the rest will be sent to the fire.”⁷⁷ The author adds that each of these divisions disagree as to which one of them will be saved.⁷⁸ Symbolic of this disunity are the Qur'ān's pervasive contradictions,⁷⁹ the more than forty Muslim commentators who completely disagree on its meaning,⁸⁰ and even the multiple versions of the Qur'ān that existed before they were destroyed, save one.⁸¹ Such division and disagreement emptied Islam of religious value which could in turn further strengthen the image of Christian communities.

Though left unstated, these emphases upon division would stand in stark contrast to a *projection* of Christian unity. Of course, the author neglects to mention the remaining portions of the *ḥadīth* concerning Islamic division, for it also refers to seventy-one Jewish

⁷⁷ *Liber denudationis*, 2.1. The cited *ḥadīth* is found in a number of collections (e.g., Abū Dāwūd 4579), though the *isnād* given is unknown. See Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 247, n. 1.

⁷⁸ *Liber denudationis*, 2.1.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* For a list of such contradictions, see *ibid.*, 9.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.1.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

sects and seventy-two Christian sects.⁸² This *ḥadīth* was perhaps unknown to readers of the *Liber denudationis*, and so the author's argument would be supported by his readers' ignorance – they may have been familiar with the *Ḥadīth* as a source, but perhaps unfamiliar with its details. But the author must also assume his reader's ignorance of division already present in the Church, at the very least between the Latin and non-Latin churches. Or perhaps his readers would be willing to dismiss such facts, preferring the comfort of Christian unity that Islam's disunity was made to reflect.

In like manner, then, the Qur'ān's alleged contradictions would point to the supposed agreement of the Bible and Christianity's holy men. Orthodoxy, after all, was characterised by its unity and ability to draw its adherents together; heresy plunged its followers into an abyss of disagreement and division.⁸³ With Islam representing disunity, our authors could herald their unique power by virtue of their supposed unity.

There is also special attention given to Islam as a young, parochial faith. With this in mind, the author of the *Liber denudationis* doubts the universal nature of Muḥammad's prophethood arguing that no person or book before him foretold his arrival or gave testimony of his coming. Instead, he rather dubiously appears without any notice. The only biblical references to him are generic warnings against false-prophets.⁸⁴ Thus, Islam is a recent arrival on the religious scene and lacks any notice from prophetic history. Conforming to the notion that age substantiates authority, Islam's relative youth would fall short of what this author could claim for the Church's antiquity, seniority, and prophetic witness.⁸⁵

⁸² Abū Dāwūd 4579.

⁸³ See Henderson, 11-13.

⁸⁴ *Liber denudationis*, 3.1. Of course, as the author goes on, Muslims claim Christian Scripture was altered to remove prophecies pointing to Muḥammad. The author seeks to disprove this in the remaining portions of the chapter. See also, *ibid.*, 3.5 and 8.3.

⁸⁵ Cf., van Ginkel, "History and Community," 72-73.

Alongside this, according to the *Liber denudationis*, are Muḥammad's linguistic shortcomings. A universal prophet is sent to all nations, and so must be gifted with the necessary linguistic abilities to communicate to all peoples. Yet Muḥammad spoke only Arabic and recited a message only in Arabic.⁸⁶ As a result, Islam seemed to be a parochial religion, rather limited in scope and concern, or at least unable to enlarge its scope and concern beyond Arabia. Conversely, both al-Qūṭī and the author of the *Liber denudationis* argue that Christ's disciples were given the gift of speaking in all languages. Further, they were sent to all nations.⁸⁷ As a result, the Christian message spread throughout the entire earth.⁸⁸ Christianity was therefore a universal faith, not a parochial one like Islam. With universality and time-tested antiquity, these authors rose above Islam as unique bearers of truth.

Delegitimising Islam's Spiritual Value

If Islam's history and development were characterised as illegitimate, immature, divided, and parochial, then our authors could also make its current spiritual value questionable as well. With this strategy, the value of Christian identity increased when Islam was exposed as salvifically ineffectual. As al-Qūṭī comments, Muslims honour Jesus; they read the Torah, the Psalms, and the Prophets; their beliefs are good; and there is much in Islam regarding justice and goodness.⁸⁹ Yet all of Islam's positive features were already present in Christianity.⁹⁰ Islam may have progressed beyond its pagan roots to monotheism, but it nevertheless stopped short of fully-developed truth. It failed to contribute anything of

⁸⁶ *Liber denudationis*, 8.4-6.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* and al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 3:31-32.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 10:38.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 4:33. Cf. *Liber denudationis*, 10.8-10. Cf. also, *ibid.*, 7.13 where the author makes a similar statement regarding Muslim use of the Bible, but uses it to demonstrate Muḥammad's thieving tendencies, i.e., he plagiarised the Bible.

⁹⁰ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 4:33-34. Cf. *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 181-185, 215-217.

unique religious value.⁹¹ Islam may claim, according to the *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya*, an Abrahamic heritage, and in this could be credited for its monotheism, but it ultimately lacked salvific value. Muslims missed the blessing of Isaac, and in this respect, Islam was as subordinate to Christianity as Hagar and her son.⁹²

Islam was also religiously under-developed; what good things it did contain might only act as a bridge to Christian truth. In this way, if only Muslims would take heed of the Christian texts they read, al-Qūṭī implores, then they might correctly honour Jesus as God and their faith would be perfected.⁹³ But Muslims refused to do so and Islam lost spiritual value as a result. It was simply a partial faith when compared to the comprehensiveness of Christianity. Thus, its efficacy was delegitimised and Christianity was left with unique power to save.

Furthermore, Islam was malformed because it had in the minds of our authors inherent earthly qualities. For instance, Muḥammad pandered to the laziness of those who might follow him by prescribing only five daily prayers. This number simply fell in between the Jews' three daily prayers and the Christians' seven.⁹⁴ In Alfonsi's mind, this made Christians more pious. The required pre-prayer ablutions, Alfonsi goes on, are of little importance to true, spiritual prayer; this requires inner cleansing, not outer washing.⁹⁵ Muslims' call to prayer is hardly of spiritual value, for it is merely a trumped-up sign and a poor attempt to validate their religion.⁹⁶ The monthly fast is meant to "restrain the flesh," yet Muslims' nightly breaking of it seems to enable wanton desires of the flesh.⁹⁷ On each count, Islam

⁹¹ *Liber denudationis*, 2.1.

⁹² *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 217 and *Liber denudationis* 10.5.

⁹³ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 4:33-34.

⁹⁴ *Dialogus*, 5:156.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5:156-157.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5:157.

appeared more religiously deformed. Thus, Islam lost religious legitimacy as Christianity made more pious gains.

In other ways, Islam was twisted and its spiritual value was illegitimate because of its Prophet. The author of the *Liber denudationis* is especially fond of saying that the recitations in the Qur'ān are the result of Muḥammad introducing God into the text.⁹⁸ In this way, Muḥammad is said to “pretend” that God revealed his words to him and that the Qur'ān is actually Muḥammad's impersonation of God.⁹⁹ Alfonsi echoes the same sentiment when he argues that Muḥammad speaks “in the person of the Lord” and invents his words “as if God were speaking to him.”¹⁰⁰

Of course, these claims leave the authenticity of the Qur'ān and Muḥammad's prophethood in serious doubt. Further discussion of Muḥammad as a liar and an epileptic and the falsity of Islam's authoritative sources go further to delegitimise Islam's value.¹⁰¹ Thus, regardless of Muḥammad's advancements beyond complete paganism, his prophethood and revelations were cloaked in serious doubt. Islam, as a result, fell in illegitimacy whilst our authors made Christianity rise in spiritual value and religious distinctiveness.

Christ *versus* Muḥammad

Perhaps the most focused and effective strategy for delegitimising Islam was to compare the lives of Christ and Muḥammad in a zero-sum game to determine religious supremacy. Where Muḥammad failed, Christ triumphed; when he did, Islam sunk lower in defeat and these Christian authors' role as unique bearers of truth was solidified. It is in this

⁹⁸ *Liber denudationis*, 9.1, 7, 9, 25.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.2, 8.4, 3.4.

¹⁰⁰ *Dialogus*, 5:159-160.

¹⁰¹ See, for instance, *ibid.*, 5:163; *Liber denudationis*, 1.2, 3.5, 4.4, 4.7, 9.15; al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 9:37-38; and *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 215-217.

context that we consistently read in our texts of Muḥammad’s failure to perform miracles.¹⁰² Christianity abounded with miraculous signs, for not just Jesus, but also his disciples and the Old Testament prophets performed miracles.¹⁰³

Some comparisons are more subtle. When al-Qūṭī remarks that Christ sent his disciples to all nations, it is difficult not to be reminded of Muḥammad’s alleged parochialism.¹⁰⁴ When al-Qūṭī describes the purpose of Christ’s incarnation – an act achieved so that a message might be clearly communicated by Christ, i.e., God *himself*, not merely a mediator between God and his people – it is difficult not to think of Muḥammad as just such a limited mediator.¹⁰⁵ When Alfonsi notes that Muḥammad failed to be resurrected to heaven after three days as he predicted he would, readers must surely have thought of Christ’s triumphant resurrection.¹⁰⁶ Muḥammad’s failure here was also followed, according to Alfonsi, by the loss of “the greater part [of his followers].”¹⁰⁷ Christians, it then logically follows, followed Christ because of his successful resurrection.

Finally, the image of Muḥammad’s stinking and rotting corpse would serve as a damning counterpoint to the image of Christ’s resurrected and heavenly body.¹⁰⁸ The image of his pure birth by which his mother’s body remained “clean and holy . . . [with] no filth or [uncleanliness]” brings further distinction between a miraculous Christ and a very human Muḥammad.¹⁰⁹ With each point Christ dealt a condemning blow to Muḥammad, edging Islam out as a religious competitor.

Other comparisons were more explicit and direct. Readers of al-Qūṭī can easily compare his discussion of the humility of Christ that elicited similar humility from his

¹⁰² *Dialogus*, 5:154; *Liber denudationis*, 9.12-16, 10.7, and 12.8-9.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3.5; al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 3:31-32; *Dialogus*, 5:152.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 3:31.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 3:32.

¹⁰⁶ *Dialogus*, 5:162.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Liber denudationis*, 10.4.

followers¹¹⁰ with his discussion of Islam's violent and aggressive spread.¹¹¹ Islam's increase "by the sword and coercion," (*bi-l-sayf wa al-qahr*) can be compared with the peaceful, worldwide spread of the "religion of the cross" (*dīn al-ṣalīb*).¹¹² The violence and destruction that Muḥammad brought to Christian cities is explicitly compared to the humility and peace that came with Christ.¹¹³ On the matter of peace and humility, Islam failed miserably, and each point lost was a point gained for Christianity.

The most direct comparisons between Christ and Muḥammad, however, come from the *Liber denudationis*. Early on in the work, the absence of Muḥammad's prophetic witness is compared with the veritable chorus of Old Testament witnesses foretelling Christ.¹¹⁴ Christ's background, moreover, was divine and heavenly; Muḥammad was from completely infidel stock.¹¹⁵ Christ's mother was a pure and holy virgin; Muḥammad's parents were unclean idolaters.¹¹⁶ Christ was sinless; Muḥammad was not.¹¹⁷ Christ knew his future; Muḥammad did not.¹¹⁸ Christ had a miraculous virgin birth and was the culmination of Abraham's inheritance, passed on through Isaac; Muḥammad, allegedly a descendent of Ishmael, was only connected to Abraham via Hagar, a maidservant. Through Christ, Abraham's blessing would continue to extend to all nations; Muḥammad would only extend Ishmael's legacy as a wild man who opposed all who were against him.¹¹⁹ As a result, not only was Christ shown to be superior to Muḥammad, but so, too, were Christ's followers when compared to Muslims. Thus, the authors of the *Liber denudationis* shared in Christ's

¹¹⁰ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 3:32.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 10:38.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ *Liber denudationis*, 3.1, 3.5, 10.6.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 10.1-4.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 10.5-6.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 10.6.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 10.7.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 10.5-6.

victory over Muḥammad. With Islam completely delegitimised, he could emerge as superior and without religious competition.

Summary

In reality, our fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth century authors acknowledged that Islam was much more than an ethnicity or a foreign political force. They understood that Muḥammad made religious advances by returning his followers to monotheism, and that as a result, his religion shared various qualities with their own. But these acknowledgments, left unsorted, could lead to dangerous religious absorption by Christians. In order to define the distinctive borders of their faith, then, our authors steer their readers away from the undesirable religious aspects of Islam by delegitimising its religious value. To do so, they forced their readers to re-examine Islam's history. In their eyes, Islam's foundations were dangerously brittle, for it was built on idolatry. Much more, its founder was heavily influenced by heretics and pagans. His religion was, as a result, a mixture of heresy, lies, and plagiarism. With these deficiencies in their past, Islam's present make-up was equally brittle. It was, for our authors, a relative new-comer on the religious scene, one that was horribly parochial and quickly disintegrated into disunity.

If this was not enough to crumble Islam's legitimacy, then our authors would also scrutinise its spiritual value. In this, Islam was only valuable to Muslims as a bridge to Christian truth. Islam's salvific value, no matter Muḥammad's call for monotheism, was worthless. Finally, our authors make Muḥammad and Christ players in a comparative match where the former could never live up to the standards of the latter. The result was a delegitimising blow to Islam. Sharing in Christ's victory over Muḥammad, these Christian authors could define themselves as bears of a superior religion without competition. As a

result, they were religiously distinct from Islam even as they remained culturally proximal to the Muslims around them.

Christianity beyond the Foolishness of Islam

If our authors were to emphasise their religious superiority and distinctiveness, then there would be no better way than to make a mockery of Muslims by highlighting the ways in which Islam tripped over itself. To that end, our authors deploy a strategy of revulsion that would prey upon Islam's most unseemly features. They highlight Islamic laws governing marriage that appear surprising and uncouth and they underscore Muslim self-indulgence, making them look rather dim-witted, disgusting, and overly concerned with earth-bound pleasures. In all of this, Muslims' foolishness would be a foil to our authors' sound reason and religious sensibility; Islam's depravity a foil to their purity. As a result, their faith appeared far beyond foolish Muslims and they were secure in their distinctiveness and superiority.

Though such a strategy is evident within these texts, it is not their most prominent feature. Instead, it appears rather peripheral, as if it is one last effort to solidify Christian identity amid Islam. Nevertheless, when points of revulsion do appear it is clear that they were intended to be read with surprise and a shake of the head. Such a strategy may not have prevented fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth century Christian readers from cultural mixing with Muslims, but it would ensure that Islam was looked upon with contempt, disgust, and perhaps even laughter.

Viewing Islamic Marriage with Christian Eyes

For many medieval Christians, and indeed for each of our authors, Islamic marriage

(*nikāh*), divorce (*talāq*), and remarriage were easy prey to attack with a strategy of revulsion. They stood in stark contrast to the Christian matrimonial ideal and have a near ubiquitous place in medieval anti-Muslim polemic.¹²⁰ For our authors, they were stumbling blocks over which Muslims could be made to look both foolish and horribly self-indulgent.

To begin with, Islam's relaxed restrictions on polygamy – specifically, polygyny, i.e., its allowance of up to four wives for Muslim men – were compared to what seemed to Christians to be a divine model of monogamy. For al-Qūṭī, there was no more convincing evidence for Islam's illegitimacy than this. He observes what the Qur'ān provides – “Marry those women who are agreeable to you, two and three and four”¹²¹ – and contrasts that allowance with the alleged provision in the Gospel (*al-Injīl*): “A man should not marry more than one woman, just as was [the case with] Adam and his wife.”¹²² Ironically, though al-Qūṭī's knowledge of Islamic marriage is accurate, the latter quotation is not to be found in the Gospels at all. From this error, we must recall the questions of authenticity that attend al-Qūṭī's letter.¹²³ A Christian priest, as he supposedly was, would not likely make such an error. Nevertheless, the Christian concept of marriage that underlies the erroneous quotation is indeed a biblical one from which the Christian preference for monogamy arose.¹²⁴ In this light, Islam's provision for polygyny is seen through a biblical lens where marriage was resolutely monogamous. As a result, al-Qūṭī defines his Christian community as morally superior in light of Muslims' excessive immorality.

¹²⁰ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 159.

¹²¹ From Qur'ān *al-Nisā'* (4):3: “*inkihū mā tāba lakum min al-nisā mathanā wa-thulātha wa-rubā'a*.” See Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 6:35. See also *Liber denudationis*, 2.3 where the author also cites *al-Nisā'* (4):3 along with the Zāhirite *faqīh* al-Iṣfahānī who, in typical literalist fashion, said up to nine wives were allowed (he added together “two and three and four”). For the author of the *Liber denudationis*, this had the direct benefit of proving Islam's inherent contradictions and perhaps an ancillary benefit of showing the gross absurdity of Islamic marriage.

¹²² *Ibid.*, trans. Burman in Constable, ed., 146.

¹²³ See Chapter Five, pp. 238-241.

¹²⁴ See, for instance, Ephesians 5:33 (a wife and husband in the singular is emphasised); 1 Timothy 3:2, 5:9; and Titus 1:6.

Alfonsi was no less accurate in his knowledge of Islamic marriage, for he, too, was aware that Muslims were “free to take four wives”¹²⁵ He was also seemingly aware that Islam permitted sexual relations with any number of slaves.¹²⁶ In this regard, Alfonsi writes that Muslims were “commanded to take a wife only for the purpose of begetting children . . . [but] can have as many captives and female slaves as they wish”¹²⁷ This provision amounted to adultery and Alfonsi goes on to describe the various ways in which it was disgusting.¹²⁸ The only purpose it served was to support Muslims’ unquenchable lust.¹²⁹

On these points, our authors really attack the ideal legal perspective of the Qur’ān – Muslim men *might* have up to four wives – at the expense of reality – not *all* Muslim men *did* have more than one wife. Likewise, they ignored Muslim explanations of their marriage laws, the matter of taking concubines from among slaves in particular.¹³⁰ As a result, whether Muslims had multiple wives and concubines or not, all Muslim men were uncontrollably lustful – why else would they need additional women – and their multiple wives were adulterous. What is more, it was the Qur’ān that sanctioned this over-indulgence. Islam, then, was both repulsive and complete foolishness. Christian monogamy, in contrast, stood as a model of godly self-restraint, far beyond Islamic debauchery.

If marriage in Islam proved difficult for Christians to accept, laws governing divorce and remarriage would only make matters worse. That Muslim men could divorce their wives by simply pronouncing it so three times is noted by each of our authors and further diminishes the sanctity of marriage in Islam.¹³¹ The process of remarriage draws even more attention.

¹²⁵ *Dialogus*, 5:161. Cf. *ibid.*, 5:148-149.

¹²⁶ See *EP* VIII:26, s.v. “Nikāḥ” by A. Layish and R. Shaham and also *EP* VII:757, s.v. “Mut‘a,” by W. Heffening.

¹²⁷ *Dialogus*, 5:161.

¹²⁸ E.g., a father might have sex with the same woman as his son. *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 163.

¹³¹ *Dialogus*, 5:148-149, 161; al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 6:35; *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyya* in al-Qurṭubī, 215-217; *Liber denudationis*, 7.11.

As al-Qūṭī notes, a husband is not free to remarry his former wife until she has first consummated a marriage with another man and then divorced him. This, too, is viewed with a biblical lens and al-Qūṭī compares Islamic divorce with another false quotation, this one from the Torah (*al-Tawrā*), where a divorced couple may remarry provided no one else has touched the wife.¹³²

Again, the erroneous quotation raises doubts as to the authenticity of al-Qūṭī's letter. Even so, it does support a biblical notion of sexual purity. In this way, the fact that a Muslim woman must have sexual relations with another man before she may remarry her former husband was shocking – “filthy and . . . irrational” according to the *Liber denudationis*, “a law indebted not so much to men as to beasts!”¹³³ It would be irreligious enough that Islam would be credited to men, not to God, but the author here asserts that by virtue of its marital regulations it cannot even claim this. It is essentially a law for animals. It mattered little what justification Muslims might have for such a law. Instead, much like Islamic marriage, divorce and remarriage were, for all intents and purposes, adultery. Compared to a Christian ideal, they were ungodly and a mockery to what God intended for marriage.

In much of medieval anti-Muslim polemic, the archetypal image of marital depravity and religious hypocrisy in Islam was Muḥammad's marriage to Zaynab.¹³⁴ In a way, their relationship was the billboard heralding Islam's inherent depravity and religious inferiority. It will be recalled that Zaynab was given in marriage by Muḥammad to Zayd, the Prophet's adopted son and former slave. Visiting Zayd's home one day, Muḥammad saw Zaynab alone and fell in love with her. Zayd subsequently divorced her, Muḥammad married her, and it

¹³² Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 6:35.

¹³³ *Liber denudationis*, 7.11.

¹³⁴ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 119-121.

was revealed that the marriage was sanctioned by God.¹³⁵ Thus, Zayd, Muḥammad, and those who looked on could be confident that the exchange met with God's approval.

To Christian ears, these details were abominable and proof of Muḥammad's wanton lust. Accordingly, our authors give the episode particular attention. In the *Liber denudationis*, the marriage illustrated Muḥammad's inherent lust, for he was obviously unable to contain his licentious joy when he learned that Zaynab was available for him to marry.¹³⁶ In the *Dialogus*, the arrangement was hardly a marriage and thus the Prophet "did not blush to be foul another man's bed in adultery."¹³⁷

The remaining details, seen through Christian eyes, must only have added to the sordidness of the affair. That Muḥammad would look upon another woman with lust (not to mention the fact that she was his son's wife), essentially force a divorce, and rush to sleep with her in an incestuous relationship were all surely unbearable details. Adding insult to injury would be the fact that Muḥammad, in one of his epileptic-like revelations, justified the entire arrangement by claiming it was sanctioned by God.¹³⁸ Thus, God was seemingly implicated in the affair as well.

Other examples are given that show Muḥammad justifying his lust with the Qur'ān. 'Ā'isha bt. Abī Bakr, Muḥammad's favourite wife, is acquitted of the charge of adultery by virtue of a revelation.¹³⁹ When the Prophet breaks his vow to abstain from having sex with his wife Māriya al-Qubṭiyya, it is subsequently revealed that he should not keep himself from her.¹⁴⁰ These, among other examples given with varying degrees of authoritative Islamic

¹³⁵ Qur'ān *al-Ahzāb* (33):36-38. See *EP* XI:484, s.v. "Zaynab bt. Djahsh b. Ri'āb al-Asadiyya" by C. E. Bosworth.

¹³⁶ *Liber denudationis*, 7.10.

¹³⁷ *Dialogus*, 5:154.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* and *Liber denudationis*, 7.10.

¹³⁹ *Dialogus*, 5:154. Cf. Qur'ān *al-Nūr* (24):11-14.

¹⁴⁰ *Liber denudationis*, 7.1-2. Two of Muḥammad's other wives, 'Ā'isha and Ḥaḥṣa bt. 'Umar, see the two having sex and become jealous. After confronting him, the Prophet vows to refrain from sexual contact with Māriyya, but is unable to keep his vow. See *ibid.*

references, make the Prophet's household look like an uncontrolled brothel. Whether or not any of the relationships are considered a marriage in Islam makes little difference to our authors. In their eyes, Muḥammad was an adulterer and they are keen to show the animal-like intensity of his sexual appetite.¹⁴¹

With these details, Islam appears to make a mockery of marriage. Consequently, Islam is made by our Christian authors to be a mockery itself. Much more, that Muḥammad would “depict the Qur’ān from which one prays and chants and the God of the Gospels as the patron [of these acts] is extreme dementia,” according to the *Liber denudationis*.¹⁴² To connect such depravity with a so-called book of prayer and with God himself pulled Muslims down to a level of shame that was far below the honour of Christianity.

Again, in all of this we must wonder to whom exactly the issues of marriage, divorce, and remarriage in Islam were stumbling blocks. For these authors, Islamic marriage was something Muslims tripped over in revolting humiliation before Christian onlookers. Yet there was surely some distance between what was allowed and what many Muslims actually did. In this way, perhaps our authors are themselves guilty of stumbling in not acknowledging this distance.¹⁴³ Regardless, the presence of such information in the Qur’ān, which our authors knew well, was enough. In their hands, it was made to characterise Islam and all Muslims in general. As a result, they characterised and distinguished themselves as religiously pure and above reproach. In turn, they assured Christian readers of their place far above the utter foolishness of Islam and the reckless lust of Muslims.

Christian Restraint in Light of Islamic Excess

Our authors also bring attention to other ways in which Muslims appeared to be

¹⁴¹ E.g., *ibid.*, 7.6.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 7.10.

¹⁴³ Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 159.

overtly sexual and gluttonous. It was Muḥammad, of course, who typified the inherent lustfulness and earthly materialism that defined those who followed him. According to Alfonsi, Muḥammad “praised God for the power of his own vices . . . because the power abounded in him forty times beyond human measure, and he gave thanks that the sweet [odour] and beauty of women attracted him a great deal, with God granting it.”¹⁴⁴ Christian readers might be struck here by the Prophet’s licentiousness, but also by the notion that it was god-given and that he thanked God for what amounted to an expert ability to sin with abundance. That Muḥammad apparently possessed the sexual powers of forty men was hardly admirable, but was instead rather animal-like.¹⁴⁵

Such features, according to the *Liber denudationis*, extended to all those who followed Muḥammad, for many of them “loved the laxer life among a multitude of women and among the other freedoms allowed [by Islam] more than the eternity of the other world.”¹⁴⁶ In this way, Muslims were characterised by disregard for the blessings of eternity in favour of the pleasures of a temporary world, e.g., sex and laid-back living. These rather earthly qualities defined Muslims to such a degree that Alfonsi claimed Muḥammad, in persuading Arabs to follow him, essentially pandered to their sexual cravings by creating a religion with enough pleasurable enticements to guarantee their happiness.¹⁴⁷

The author of the *Liber denudationis* even argues that Islam permitted or perhaps even encouraged homosexuality. To do so, he quotes the Qur’ān and writes, “Do not fornicate with participators [*participantibus*] – that is Christian women – ‘until they believe’; and do not have sex with male participators [*participantes*] until they believe, ‘for the believing

¹⁴⁴ *Dialogus*, 5:155. See also, *ibid.*, 5:161.

¹⁴⁵ As we note in Chapter 3, n. 154, these views of Islamic sexuality may have seemed all the more excessive in light of medieval Christian emphases on abstinence, sometimes even in the context of marriage. Even so, condemning illicit Muslim behaviour, to whatever degree it may or may not have existed, would mean turning a blind eye to examples of illicit Christian behaviour. See Tentler, 162ff, 229-232 and Haliczer, 3.

¹⁴⁶ *Liber denudationis*, 2.1.

¹⁴⁷ *Dialogus*, 5:161.

servants are better than participators [*participatoribus*].”¹⁴⁸ The author errs when he defines these participators as Christian women; the Qur’ān’s intent is polytheists in general (“associators” [*mushrikūn*] or polytheists). But an even graver error occurs when the author inserts into his quotation, “and do not have sex with male participators.” The phrase does not appear in the Qur’ān. The author has inserted it and is thus able to accuse Muslims of condoning homosexual behaviour.¹⁴⁹ His error appears intentional and allows him to characterise Muslims and Islamic morality in general as degredous.¹⁵⁰

As it concerns these texts, the most outlandish example of Islamic excessiveness comes from the *Liber denudationis*. Noting the beautiful women in paradise (*hūr*), the author quotes the Qur’ān: “. . . the lords of paradise are fruitful.”¹⁵¹ Deferring to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri (21/642-110/728), the author claims that the great Muslim preacher and mystic explains this Qur’ānic phrase as a sexual reference. Al-Baṣri went on to argue, so the author of the *Liber denudationis* maintains, that the length of a Muslim’s penis in heaven will be as long as a horse’s erection, and “because a Muslim will not be able to carry the burden, he will compel seventy from the Jews and seventy from the Christians to carry [it].”¹⁵²

From a Muslim’s perspective this might show Christians and Jews in a rather unseemly position of subservience. For the author of the *Liber denudationis*, this account confirmed notions of inherent Islamic debauchery and its extension into the afterlife. Thus, Muslims’ biological features reflected their shameless, animal-like depravity. Islam was an over-sexed religion void of piety and self-restraint. It was, on the one hand, disgusting and devoted to the temporary cravings of this world instead of fostering the self-control that

¹⁴⁸ *Liber denudationis*, 10.3. The quotation, part of which is accurate, comes from *al-Baqara* (2):221.

¹⁴⁹ On this insertion, see Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 165-166. On accusations of Islam’s condoning unnatural forms of sexual behaviour, see *ibid.*, 164-169.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁵¹ *Liber denudationis*, 9.20. Cf. the Qur’ān *Yā’-Sīn* (36):55: “Verily the companions of the garden shall that day have joy in all that they do” (*inna āṣḥāba al-jannati al-yawma fī shughulin fākihūna*).

¹⁵² *Liber denudationis*, 9.20.

would lead to the blessings of heaven. On the other hand, it extended its debauchery into heaven as an image of an eternal brothel.

By making these assertions our authors are able to question the eternal value of Islam and place it beneath Christianity. Thus, the author of the *Liber denudationis* rhetorically asks whether John the Baptist or any of the Old Testament prophets ever longed for a carnal eternity.¹⁵³ Likewise, al-Qūṭī wonders at the heavenly excesses in the Qur’ān. He denies their existence and writes of a heaven where earthly actions (including eating and drinking) will be absent.¹⁵⁴ Heaven, in his mind, should therefore be a perfection of Christian life on earth. That life was defined by self-restraint and abstention. Thus, these authors find their faith far beyond the value of Islam and could define themselves as piously restrained in light of Muslims’ unseemly excess.

Making a Mockery of Islam

Our authors are also keen to make Muslims look foolish. To that end, Alfonsi writes that Muḥammad’s earliest followers, besides those who were heretics, were simple-minded fools, so much so that the Prophet tricked them into following him. Their only real worth was found in “war and the plough.”¹⁵⁵ As a result of their simple-mindedness, then, Islam could only expand by trickery or force. This makes the whole of Islam’s followers rather foolish-looking and suggests that the religion lacked any qualities that a sensible person would follow. By contrast, the superiority of Christianity sold itself, for it garnered followers by logic and reason. As a result, it spread peacefully.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 9.20-21.

¹⁵⁴ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 9:38.

¹⁵⁵ *Dialogus*, 5:151, 161, 162. Cf. *Liber denudationis*, 9.8 where it is the simple-minded who are responsible for confusion regarding Christian doctrine and practice in the Qur’ān.

The author of the *Liber denudationis* is more specific in his delineation of Muslims. For him, all Muslims succumbed to Islam in fear, were tricked by Satan, chose Islam over paganism, or simply preferred the lax life it provided them on earth.¹⁵⁶ The *umma*, then, was comprised of gullible, fearful, and lazy fools. In all of this, Muslims can offer no real religious reason for following Islam and are trapped in their state of blind stupidity by their ever-contradictory Qur’ān, Ḥadīth, and scholars (*al-fuqahā’*).¹⁵⁷ They are either too stupid to know better or too lazy to choose wisely. By contrast, Christian readers might surely feel that they represented the best and the brightest of religious adherents. They made their choice with a sound mind and in favour of all that was good and eternal.

Furthermore, Muslims seem to have little support for the truth of their religion and must therefore resort to violence.¹⁵⁸ Consistent references to errors and contradictions in the Qur’ān, Ḥadīth, and commentaries are offered as evidence of their confusion and inferiority.¹⁵⁹ The author of the *Liber denudationis* is relentless in his attack in this regard. He devotes a rather lengthy chapter to the Qur’ān’s contradictions and another to its rather dubious compilation.¹⁶⁰ Without opportunity to respond or defend themselves, Muslims are made to look foolish. Along with Muḥammad, they are bloodthirsty fools devoted to a man-made book of errors. Christians, by virtue of the truth of their religion, could avoid all of these inadequacies.

Muḥammad was made to look like a buffoon in other ways as well. His trumped-up revelations – the “seduction of supposedly divine advice” in the *Liber denudationis* – are

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 2.1.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 1.2 and 2.3.

¹⁵⁸ Al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 10:38-39. See also, *Dialogus*, 5:152, 154, 159-160 and *Liber denudationis*, 2.1, 4, 12.8-9.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 9, 11.7-8; *Dialogus*, 5:160; al-Qūṭī in al-Khazrajī, 7:36-8:37.

¹⁶⁰ *Liber denudationis*, 9 and 6 respectively.

made to look like epileptic seizures.¹⁶¹ His propensity to be wounded in battle made him look rather un-prophet-like.¹⁶² Stories of the *Hajj*, told by Alfonsi and the author of the *Liber denudationis*, made Muslims look particularly silly – they shaved their heads, bared their backsides, and threw rocks between their legs.¹⁶³ The *mi'rāj*, Muḥammad's ascension to heaven, is especially unbelievable.¹⁶⁴ Christians must surely have read it whilst shaking their heads at the incredible details of Muḥammad riding a supernatural donkey to heaven where he interceded for angels. The story is so outlandish, according to the *Liber denudationis*, that sixty thousand Muslims had the good sense to leave Islam after hearing it.¹⁶⁵ This made a complete mockery of Islam, but it made the authors of these texts seem all the more assured of Christianity's superiority.

Summary

Analysing these fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth century texts in light of their strategy of revulsion leaves one with a deep impression of the blunt disgust that at least some Christians must have had for their Muslim neighbours. Yet we must recall that these texts, both in terms of what we can learn about their authors and what their authors reveal about their knowledge of Islam, elicit a high degree of appreciation for Muslims. How are we to explain the apparent mismatch between their disgust for Islam and an appreciation for Muslims' language, literature, and culture?

It is in this apparent imbalance that we see an essential function of the texts these authors wrote. The strategy of revulsion examined in this section would at first seem to contribute towards the breakdown of acculturation and enable the isolation of Christians from

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 4.4, 7.

¹⁶² Ibid., 8.7, 9.25 and *Dialogus*, 5:155, 162.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 5:159 and *Liber denudationis*, 11.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 4.6-7, 12.1-6.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 12.7.

Muslims. Indeed, this was the case when the strategy was deployed by certain authors. But we must remember that polemic could also be used to stabilise the relationship between Christians and Muslims by defining how each group was to relate to one another. In this way, these texts helped Christian readers to exist in a multi-religious society by guiding them through what was culturally permissible or even preferable, but around what was religiously and morally dangerous. Thus, clearly defining the borders of religious identity through polemic was one way to allow Christians to live alongside Muslims without blurring the lines that distinguished them religiously.¹⁶⁶

With this in mind, our authors' strategy of revulsion was likely a means by which they could strengthen other strategies that would distinguish Christians from Muslims, not culturally or linguistically, but religiously. Thus, Christians reading these texts need not turn away from Muslims, their literature, or their culture, but their cultural appreciation should not become religious conversion. For according to this strategy, Islam was a depraved religion causing Muslims to trip over stumbling blocks of foolishness. Christians, by contrast, were far beyond Muslims' excessive self-indulgence and were defined by their conformity to reason and logic, religious purity, and pious self-restraint.

Conclusion

What is most clear from these fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth century texts is that their authors were comfortable in their Islamic environment. As such, they spoke Arabic, read Arabic and Islamic texts, and enjoyed aspects of Muslim culture. From this we might say that they were culturally proximal to Muslims. At the same time, however, it is clear from their texts that they sought to distinguish their community religiously. So, whilst the texts they

¹⁶⁶ See our discussion of this point in the Introduction.

produced are very much offspring of an Islamic context, they retain the religious elements that make them Christian. Hence, these authors sought to define their Christian communities as culturally proximal to Muslims and religiously distinct in light of Islam. In this way, their familiarity with the Qur'ān gave them the language for articulating *their* status, not Muslims', as God's best men; their theological assertions allowed them to affirm *Christian*, not Islamic, Christology.

This over-arching strategy would be supported by a number of other tactics, each one designed to emphasise Christians' religious distinctiveness. Together, these remaining strategies can be thought of as ways to expose an allegedly authentic Islam to Christian readers. Indeed, the *Liber denudationis*' very title purports to denude, expose, and disclose the inherent errors and contradictions of Islam.¹⁶⁷ Likewise, even though Moses gives a fine summary of Islam in the *Dialogus*, Alfonsi destroys it point by point, showing that beneath each of Moses' statements concerning Islam was a sordid and questionable history. Of course, what these authors really do is expose their interpretation of Islam, but that would likely be enough for readers to avoid what they now saw as dangerous religion.

These efforts to expose Islam are seen individually as strategies to further distinguish Christianity from Islam. In this light, our authors deploy a strategy of religious delegitimation. Here, they are not unaware of Islam as more than a political entity. They understand it as a religion, but seek to dismantle what they know and reconstruct an image of Islam that had less value than Christianity. To do so, our authors attack Islam's history and origination, arguing that a foundation of paganism and heresy surely yields a twisted and questionable religion. They also point to what they see as Islam's failure to foster unity, its parochial presence, and its relative youth as a religion. Christianity stood in stark contrast,

¹⁶⁷ *Liber denudationis*, 1.2.

boasting unity, antiquity, and universal spread throughout the earth. The fact that Muḥammad moved beyond the paganism of his forbears by proclaiming monotheism mattered very little to our authors, for Islam remained salvifically ineffectual. This shortcoming was typified by Muḥammad's fantastic loss to Christ in our author's comparative match. In light of this preponderance of inadequacies, Islam became religiously illegitimate. As a result, our authors defined their Christian identity as being sole bearers of legitimate religion.

If other strategies were not completely successful in assuring Christians of their need for religious distinctiveness, then a strategy of revulsion would surely draw our authors closer to their goal. With this in mind, they include details in their works regarding Islam's inherent impurity and foolishness. By assailing Islamic marriage, divorce, and remarriage; by emphasising Muslims' excessive self-indulgence and lust; and by portraying Muslim beliefs and spirituality as quite silly, our authors propel Christianity far beyond Islamic foolishness and moral depravity. In this, Christian identity was defined in light of Islam as pious, holy, and appropriately self-restrained. In turn, Christians could be distinguished from Islam religiously, even as our authors continued to express their cultural proximity to Muslims. In this way, the religious borders these authors forged wound their way through Muslim culture, but around Islam as a religion.

Another layer of understanding is added to the definition of Christian identity that results from these strategies when they are considered alongside Eulogius and Alvarus. Their texts diverge from those analysed above, but they also share a number of features as well. With this mind, we turn to the Conclusion where we summarise our findings, make a few comparative observations of texts studied in both Parts I and II, and draw some wider conclusions from our study of medieval Christian identity in light of Islam in medieval Spain.

CONCLUSION

We began our study with the rather ominous metaphor that Eulogius applied to Cordoban Christians who thought it might be permissible to mix with Muslims. Christians who did so, Eulogius protested, “willingly abandon the line of sane doctrine . . . with their dim-witted rabbit trails.”¹ Underlying this metaphor are two different approaches to Christian identity amid Islam. The first was a straight and narrow line boldly marking the difference between Christianity and Islam and dividing Christians from Muslims. The second was to Eulogius a meandering trail for fools, but as our study suggests, may well have been for others a boundary maneuvering Christians with precision through certain aspects of Muslim culture which they could be a part of, but away from Islam as a religion.

Summary of Arguments and Conclusions

In the preceding chapters, anti-Muslim polemic provides the vehicle for understanding these two approaches that various medieval Christian authors in Spain used as means for defining their religious identity in light of Islam. Using these texts, our study set out to do a number of things. First, we suggest that the function of these texts might be most fully understood by applying to it a new hermeneutical tool, i.e., *reflected self-image*.

The most direct result of most medieval anti-Muslim polemic was a disparaging image of Islam. From this image we can learn much concerning medieval Christian knowledge of Islam and what sources they consulted in order to make their assertions. But to end our

¹ “. . . *per devios intelligentiae suae calles . . . lineam sanae doctrinae proprio electionis iudicio derelinquunt . . .*” *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.19.

analysis there, as valuable as it may be, would mean ignoring an essential function of polemic. In reality, the scripted disdain within much polemic may tell us more about a text's author than those he chooses to assail. That is why we re-directed the focus in our study away from Muslims and towards our texts' authors, for it is their religious self-image that is reflected most clearly. This self-image is further seen as a religious identity, a means of distinguishing between religious communities. In this way, we argue that our authors are offering definitions of Christian religious identity that would help to police the borders of their respective communities.² This means their religious identities were also *communal* identities; definitions for Christianity amid Islam were not only reflections of their authors, but were also offered to their readers.

With this in mind, it was often the case that a disparaging image of Islam was intended to inspire a specific reaction from readers just as it reflected a certain image of authors. If readers were Muslims, then perhaps the offense of Islam on display before their eyes would motivate them to abandon it and cling to what in contrast would be the preferable image of the author's religion, i.e., Christianity. If readers of anti-Muslim polemic were Christians, then an unsightly image of Islam would confirm in their minds a desirable image of Christianity, and thereby, their religion's superiority. In either case, a negative image of Islam can be made by Christian authors to reflect a positive image of Christianity, and in turn, this reflection could make clear the boundaries that distinguished religious communities. Or, to repeat a line from Akbari, Christian "depiction[s] of Muslims in . . . texts [are often] designed to hold up a mirror to medieval Christian practice, showing the readers of those texts what they are *not* so that they may understand what they *are*."³

² Cf. van Bekkum and Cobb, "Introduction: Strategies of Medieval Communal Identity," 9.

³ Akbari, 20.

This function makes polemic a rather potent tool for telling Christians about the things that distinguished them from Muslims. If they wanted, authors of polemic could make Islam reflect an image of Christianity that was so completely dissimilar that readers might feel compelled to keep their distance from Muslims. In this way, a line could be forged between Christians and Muslims that would proscribe their interaction. Other authors, however, could fashion their texts in ways that demonstrated appreciation for Muslims even though they might still express rejection for Islam as a religion, and by contrast, an assertion of Christianity's religious superiority. In this way, Christian-Muslim interaction was controlled by showing readers what aspects of Muslim culture could be embraced and what should be rejected so as to avoid conversion to Islam. Thus, by reading polemic with an eye towards reflected self-image, we gain an understanding for this function of texts and the ways in which Christians and Muslims interacted and/or avoided one another in specific contexts.

Using this method of reading Christian anti-Muslim polemic, the remaining goals of our study focused on answering two questions: how did Christians in medieval Spain define their religious identity *vis-à-vis* Islam and what written strategies were deployed to support those definitions?

To answer these questions, we analysed in Part I (Chapters 1-3) Christian anti-Muslim polemic written by Eulogius and Alvarus from mid-third/ninth century Córdoba. In Chapter 1 we examined the historical background of these texts. We discovered that the martyrs' movement occurring in this period was a bellwether for an ecclesiastical identity crisis. Whilst we cannot be sure what motivated the martyrs' actions, it does, however, seem clear that the martyrs only dramatised this identity crisis. In so doing, they uncovered the dividing lines between different segments within the Cordoban Christian community who could not agree on what they should look like in light of their Muslim rulers and Islamic surroundings.

In Chapter 2 we analysed Eulogius' and Alvarus' responses to this crisis and what they had to say about Islam – the force they felt was eroding the distinctions between Cordoban Christians and Muslims. We suggested that their polemic was not meant just to discredit Muslims or honour the martyrs. According to our argument, their texts' essential function was to outline for their readers the boundaries that should separate Christianity from Islam. In doing so, Eulogius mapped out a straight and narrow line that could help his readers avoid the corruption of Islam. His friend Alvarus followed by illuminating those boundaries, making it painfully clear what was to be avoided by the Christians.

In this process, Eulogius and Alvarus revealed something about themselves by saying something about Muslims; they defined their Christian identity *vis-à-vis* of Islam and offered their community in Córdoba a set of boundaries that distinguished it from others. In this light, Chapter 3, building on the previous two chapters, pinpointed the exact nature of Eulogius' and Alvarus' definition of Christian identity. We arrived at this definition by examining the textual strategies they deployed. The first of these strategies was to set Cordoban Christians in opposition to Islam by making Muslims religious enemies of God and using images of war to legitimate pursuits of martyrdom. By emphasising religious opposition, Eulogius and Alvarus pushed Christians and Muslims apart in enmity. *As a result, we concluded that they were defined by their isolation from Islam and the distance they kept from Muslims.*

We also examined Eulogius' and Alvarus' tendency to equate cultural distinctiveness with religious distinctiveness. We saw another layer to this equation in the light of an awareness of their Hispano-Gothic heritage. With this in mind, not only were religion and culture were equated, but more specifically for Eulogius and Alvarus, to be indigenous to Spain was to be both culturally Hispano-Gothic and religiously Christian. Consequently, enjoying Arabic or Islamic culture, as many Cordoban Christians did, was tantamount to

conversion. These equations underscored a Christian identity of distance from Muslims by making it clear that Eulogius' and Alvarus' proposed isolation from Islam should be both religious and cultural. Thus, Muslims became cultural enemies as well, and for Cordoban Christians like Eulogius and Alvarus, cultural absorption became just as evil as religious conversion. *Consequently, Eulogius and Alvarus defined their community by its religious and cultural isolation from Islam so that it might avoid any corrosive influence.*

In a third strategy, we discovered that this isolation could be temporarily set aside in cases where Cordoban Christians might secure Muslims' damnation. Because Islam, according to Eulogius, was a fore-ordained evil and Muslims were predisposed to reject the Gospel, they were excluded from God's mission to the world. By momentarily engaging them in a campaign of holy cruelty, Alvarus advocated, Christians could guarantee their condemnation, and more importantly, hasten Christ's second-coming. With Christ's return came Islam's final judgement. Following on this was Islam's elimination and Christians' permanent isolation from Muslims, whether in the third/ninth century or the hoped-for *eschaton*. *Thus, Eulogius would define Christian identity vis-à-vis Islam by the limits it kept on mission; Alvarus would have his community defined by a holy cruelty towards Muslims that would solidify its isolation from them.*

A fourth strategy re-interpreted Christian history by updating the roles of biblical victor and villain. In this strategy, the Cordoban Christian community was cast as one whose sin necessitated judgement. Islam became the latest in a long line of heresies, its only purpose meant to awaken Cordoban Christians from their sinful slumber. In this drama, Christians' happy ending came when they repented of their sin and turned away from the latest heresy in their midst. When they righted their wrongs, Islam would serve its purpose and pass away. *Thus, by emphasising a lineage of heresy, Eulogius sought to further isolate his community*

from Muslims. Through apocalyptic hermeneutics and inventive exegesis (Muhammad as fore-runner of Antichrist), Alvarus urged Cordoban Christians to distance themselves from Muslims. In both cases, Eulogius' and Alvarus' relationship vis-à-vis Islam was defined by isolation.

By dehumanising and demonising Muslims in a relentless strategy of revulsion, Eulogius and Alvarus could construct a foil to their own Christian piety. Defined by their purity and sanctity, Eulogius, Alvarus, and those sympathetic to their cause would distance themselves from Muslims who were offensive and evil. By unveiling “authentic” Islam, any bits of common ground that Christians and Muslims might have had were destroyed. Eulogius and Alvarus thus became the authoritative interpreters of what Islam really was and this revelation was disgusting. *As a result, Eulogius and Alvarus defined themselves by the distance they kept from Muslims and urged their Christian community to do the same.*

For Eulogius and Alvarus, successfully navigating Christian life in an inter-religious society meant that the line separating Christians and Muslims should be made as bold and impervious as possible. Cordoban Christians must keep as far away as they could from all things non-Christian and un-Christian, including Islam. They could only do this by recognizing Eulogius' and Alvarus' straight and narrow boundaries of Christian identity.

Of course, there was another side to this story, for various Christians saw Muslims in a way that Eulogius and Alvarus did not. In turn, their identity in light of Islam would be different. With this in mind, we shifted in Part II (Chapters 4-6) to a similar body of polemic produced by a handful of authors in or near fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth century Toledo. In Chapter 4 we looked at the historical background of these texts and concluded that they are informed in many ways by Elipandus, a bishop who tried to find ways that his Christian community could accept the reality of Islam as a long-standing entity on the peninsula and

remain religiously distinct as Christians at the same time. We saw how this became increasingly difficult for Mozarabs in the wake of *Reconquista*. Since they were religiously Christian, but culturally Muslim (so it appeared), they were ostensibly foreign to both non-Mozarab Christians and Muslims alike. We concluded that they grappled with what Christianity should look like in a context influenced by Islam and appreciative of its culture, but ruled by Christians.

In Chapter 5 we analysed four anti-Muslim texts written by these types of Christians, two Mozarabs and two *conversos*. We began by offering a few suggestions on how the audiences of these texts might be discerned. We argued that many texts looked and sounded very much like they were meant to be read by Muslims. By focusing on the way authors used and interpreted their source-material, however, we proposed that each text spoke, in one way or another, to specific Christian readers, offering them a means by which to religiously distinguish themselves from Muslims even as they absorbed elements of Islamic culture.

In their approaches to Islam, then, these texts also said something about how their authors define their religious identity, and in turn, the identity of their Christian communities. Hence, we delineated this identity in Chapter 6 by examining the strategies our authors deployed to distinguish themselves *vis-à-vis* Islam. The first strategy was apparent in our authors' dependence upon Arabic and Islamic language and literature. Their cultural proximity to Muslims gave them the tools they needed to freshly articulate the religious distinctions they had from Muslims. The relationship of cultural proximity and religious distinctiveness was supported by the emphasis our authors gave to traditional Christology even though their arguments at times failed to acknowledge the Islamic basis on which they were forced to take place. This latter feature reinforced our argument that doctrine, not culture, was one of the more significant markers of distinctiveness for these Christians

authors. *As a result, their identity amid Islam was defined by cultural proximity to Muslims on the one hand and religious distinctiveness with regards to Islam on the other.*

We also examined an apparent strategy of religious delegitimation. By forcing Islam's origins and spiritual value to crumble under the weight of criticism, our authors could strengthen the legitimacy of Christianity without reference to culture. This became most apparent when Muḥammad was made to stand next to Christ in a zero-sum comparative match. Here, the Prophet diminished in light of the person and work of Christ. With each of Muḥammad's failures, a point was scored for Christ; with each victory, Christianity was made by our authors to rise in legitimacy and salvific power. *As a result, our authors defined Christianity as the only legitimate religion in a context where other faiths offered competing truth claims.*

Finally, we noted the peripheral deployment of a strategy of revulsion whereby our authors sought to make Islam appear to sanction over-indulgence and decadence. By contrast, Christianity could appear piously self-restrained and humble, far beyond the depravity of Islam. Our authors appear to use this strategy as a means for controlling the ways in which they thought Christians and Muslims could relate to one another. So, whilst Christians might draw close to Muslims through various cultural means like literature and language, it was ultimately Muslim religion that was to be avoided as evidenced in Islamic marriage, religious over-indulgence, and spiritually foolish piety. *As a result, our authors asserted that Christians could be culturally proximal to Muslims, but Islam's repugnant morals would strengthen the definition of Christian identity as religiously distinct.*

For these authors, successfully navigating inter-religious living meant that Christians must acknowledge what they shared with Muslims and the religious boundaries that kept

them from being Muslims. By reading our authors' texts, Christians were shown what they could culturally embrace and what they must religiously avoid.

Comparing Two Approaches to Christian Identity in Medieval Spain

These conclusions anticipate some finer comparisons between the authors' definitions of Christian identity amid Islam. Most notably, both groups of authors essentially share a concern over Christian conversions to Islam. Consequently, they lay out in their texts borders that would help to demonstrate who was a part of their religious community and who was not. But if they intended to point out the distinctiveness of their faith in light of Islam, then why is it that doctrine is so peripheral in Eulogius' texts, so limited to apocalyptic hermeneutics in Alvarus', yet so central in the remaining authors' treatises? Could it be the result of a natural shift in focus over time? This seems unlikely since even within third/ninth century Córdoba there is evidence of different responses to Islam – Eulogius and Alvarus on the one hand and the Arabised Christians they condemned on the other (Migetius and Elipandus could even be a second/eighth century example). Perhaps this is so, then, because Eulogius and Alvarus were seemingly focused on equating culture with religion. Faced with the loss of what they knew, valued, and thought defined their Christianity, they fought to maintain a cultural expression of their faith. Thus, even the theology they do include – heresiology and apocalyptic hermeneutics – is best suited to support their desire for exclusion and distance from Muslims. This made both culture and religion immobile for them. As a result, they isolated themselves, hoping that what was unfamiliar would go away.

For our fifth/eleventh-sixth/twelfth century authors, culture seems to have been secondary to religion. They found that a mobile culture might invigorate the preservation of their faith. They accepted the lasting presence of Islam as a cultural and social reality, and so

they allowed the absorption of new language and culture, using them to form a new basis on which to assert and elucidate the doctrinal distinctiveness of their faith. The result is religious distinctiveness, but since their strategies are deployed on the basis of shared language and culture, they lack the cultural distance exhibited by Eulogius and Alvarus.

Further Considerations in the Study of Strategies for Inter-Religious Encounters

Bearing these conclusions in mind, we must wonder about the wider impact of the texts' examined in our study. To begin with, there is no manuscript evidence to suggest that Eulogius' and Alvarus' works were widely copied or read. Both men died soon after their texts were written, Alvarus in relative obscurity. All we know is simply what Eulogius and Alvarus tell us and so the resulting image, as we have said, is merely *their* self-image. We do know that under Muslim rule Córdoba went on to become a major cultural centre and one of the great cities of the medieval world. Arabic and Islamic culture remained attractive to many Christian communities there. Indeed, they were a part of helping Islamic Spain as a whole achieve great cultural heights before its ultimate demise.

Of course, with its downfall came the waning of Islamic influence and Muslims were expelled from the peninsula in the eleventh/seventeenth century. We cannot, however, connect this in any way to Eulogius and Alvarus. Studying the impact of their approach, then, is the job of another study, one that might ask whether or not similar strategies are evident in texts written when Christians dominated society and were thus in a better position to realise the goals of the identity they asserted.

In this light, the methodology applied in this study might be applied to texts written in other eras in medieval or early-modern Spain, especially from the eighth/fourteenth century onward. In these periods, the number of Christian texts concerning Islam begins to rise along

with the areas Christians controlled on the peninsula. Christian communities in these areas faced their own unique circumstances, e.g., encountering Muslims as an increasing minority, and beginning in the tenth/sixteenth century, an illegal community. How were these communities defined in light of Islam and what strategies were deployed in order to help these communities navigate inter-religious living? How did various authors control Christian-Muslim relations and to what degree did they attempt to isolate one community from the other?⁴

Since Mozarab communities were largely absorbed by the wider society in Spain from the eighth/fourteenth century, one can also wonder about the impact of the texts examined in Part II of our study. Other studies might examine the process by which members of such communities relinquished the connections their religious identity had to Arabic and Islamic culture. In this process, were there those who resisted such change?

Further studies might also consider the Muslim self-image in light of Christianity.⁵ Were the same varied opinions evinced by the authors examined in our study offered by Muslims? As the *Reconquista* gathered momentum, how did *Mudéjares*, and later, *Moriscos*, define Islamic identity in light of dominant Christian society?⁶ Do their discussions reflect a Muslim self-image?

⁴ Such studies could build off of works like that of Pick.

⁵ For instance, more could be added to what we know about the works of Ibn Ḥazm, relevant portions of his *Kitāb al-fiṣal fī 'l-mīlāl wa 'l-ahwā' wa 'l-niḥāl* in particular (of special interest would be his religious discussions with Mozarabs mentioned in 1:38-52 and 2:19-82; cf. Burman, “‘Tathlīth al-waḥdānīyah,’” 110). One might also refer to and expand upon Janina M. Safran’s “Identity and Differentiation in Ninth-Century al-Andalus,” “Rules of Purity and Confessional Boundaries” or “The Sacred and Profane in Islamic Cordoba” for studies in Andalusī Muslim self-definition.

⁶ E.g., Kathryn A. Miller examines ninth/fifteenth century legal texts in her *Guardians of Islam: Religious Authority and Muslim Communities of Late Medieval Spain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008) and Vincent Barletta studies *Morisco* literature in his *Covert Gestures: Crypto-Islamic Literature as Cultural Practice in Early Modern Spain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), but much more work can be done concerning the religious identity that these communities asserted. The same questions might be applied to Spain’s medieval Jewish communities. See, for instance, Ross Brann, *Power in the Portrayal: Representations of Jews and Muslims in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Islamic Spain* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Finally, there are surely lessons to be learned about religious identity and various strategies for inter-religious encounters by comparing Christian texts with Muslim texts written in Spain. One might even compare medieval texts written in a variety of geographical contexts. Such a comparative study seems to remain absent.⁷

For now, we have learned that we can discover something about medieval Christian identity in Spain by examining what a handful of Christians living there wrote about Islam. We have shown these very definitions and the strategies used to arrive at them. With our conclusions in mind, we can see that although significant advances were made between the third/ninth century and the sixth/twelfth century, definitions of Christian identity in light of Islam were forged at great cost to Muslims in Spain. Even with the marked improvements of the later texts, they still exhibit a tendency to manipulate Islamic sources and ignore Muslim interpretations of their texts and traditions. How might Christians define themselves in light of Islam by respecting religious distinctiveness, but emphasising loving and honest approaches to Muslims?

Unfortunately, each of the medieval texts we discuss has a modern legacy, for many of the assessments located within them can be found in current Christian writings on Islam. In turn, the same sorts of identities are likely active as well. Both Christians and Muslims must continue to overcome these deficiencies. Indeed, there is much potential for positive advancement in the ways Christians and Muslims navigate their interactions. Yet these improvements cannot be fully realised if we do not become more aware of one another and our religions and if our polemic does not give way to sincere relationship. Perhaps only then will our approach to one another be fully appropriate, our religious identities properly upheld, and the borders between our faiths be most respectfully laid out.

⁷ Kedar drew this same conclusion, calling the gap “a desideratum.” Kedar, 19, n. 37.

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