Christian Identity amid Islam in Medieval Spain

By Charles L. Tieszen

In *Christian Identity amid Islam in Medieval Spain* Charles L. Tieszen explores a small corpus of texts from medieval Spain in an effort to deduce how their authors defined their religious identity in light of Islam, and in turn, how they hoped their readers would distinguish themselves from the Muslims in their midst. It is argued 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. As such, polemic becomes a set of borders authors offered to their communities, helping them to successfully navigate inter-religious living.

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To the One, the Light of the heavens and the universe,
who illumines my path as a lamp on the way.
To Santiago and María, guides I met while walking,
whom I discovered already knew me.
And to Sarah, a beaming reflection of the Light,
who walks beside me on the way.

CONTENTS

PART TWO

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as Christian Mission in Ninth-Century Córdoba' " (*Al-Masāq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 24, no. 1 [April 2012]: 21–33).

It has become something of a cliché to thank one's partner in works of this nature. Nevertheless, I want to genuinely recognize my wife, Sarah. She is an expert in her own right, and as such, offered helpful advice and correction at many points. When she finished her research, she worked tirelessly so that I could have the time I needed to complete the project. As I revisited the manuscript for publication, we were joined by our first child, Brahm Patrício. He provided needed respite from research on many occasions and often played beside me as I made revisions. His presence, along with Sarah's, is a testimony to the presence of God.

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 analyzed in this study. In reviving them, may both Christians and Muslims be inspired to reconsider the borders between them so that we might foster better and more authentic relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Navigating Inter-Religious Life in Medieval Spain

As early as 851, Eulogius (d. 859), a priest from Cordova, Spain, began to reflect upon disagreement within his Christian community about its role in an Islamic environment. Were Christians to remain distant from Islam and its effects on the culture around them? Should they be allowed to 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 Cordovan priest fulminated that certain Christians in Cordova "willingly abandon the line of sound doctrine . . . with their dim-witted rabbit trails."[1]

For Eulogius, living as Christians amid Islam meant keeping within prescribed boundaries (*lineam*) that he felt, in effect, should separate Christians from Muslims and forbid inter-religious contact. By not venturing beyond these borders, Christians could avoid the Muslims that would otherwise entrap them. Wandering outside of Eulogius' borders, however, meant abandoning what marked one out as a Christian. In essence, by reflecting on such matters in his writing, Eulogius tried to help his readers navigate inter-religious living. By defining the differences between Christians and Muslims, he hoped to safeguard his Christian community in ninth century Cordova.

As Eulogius' angry remark implies, there were some Christians in the city who disagreed with him. They had their own sets of borders that distinguished Christians from Muslims in different ways. While these boundaries looked to Eulogius very much like "dim-witted rabbit trails," they could be just as precise as Eulogius' and could distinguish between Muslims and Christians in their own ways. At times, their borders might even be permeable, bringing Christians and Muslims together at intersections of common ground. What Eulogius leaves us with, then, may not just be his offering for a set of borders between Christians and Muslims, but also

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[1] "*. . . per deuios intelligentiae suae calles . . . lineam sanae doctrinae propio electionis iudicio derelinquunt. . . .*" *Memoriale sanctorum*, I.19.

hints as to what other ninth century Cordovan Christian communities felt should distinguish the two religions and their respective followers.

In the study that follows, we will examine these varying sets of religious borders by asking two questions: 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 put the matter 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 borders 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 or what set of markers identifies an individual as a part of one religious group and not 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 stabilize 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 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

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[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).

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 personal 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 specific Christian authors in medieval Spain tried to ensure that the borders 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, perhaps new light might be shed upon Christian-Muslim relations in medieval Spain.

Religious Polemic, Windows, and Mirrors

To help answer these questions, we will consult two sets of Christian anti-Muslim polemic,[7] the specifics of which we discuss further below. Such polemic often focuses on an author's (negative) treatment of an opponent, in this case, Islam. Readers of this kind of polemic could use an author's

[5] Ibid., 3.
[6] Cf. ibid., 4–5.
[7] 'Polemic' refers to religious treatises that attack another religion, employing varying degrees of apology as well.

work as a sort of window through which to view Islam. By doing so, they could learn what the author knew about the religion. Reading with greater care might further reveal not just the extent to which an author understood (or misunderstood) Islam, but how this knowledge was used in order to convince readers of a certain agenda. Indeed, previous scholarship has analyzed religious polemic in this way, using medieval religious polemic as windows through which to gauge Christian knowledge of Islam and/or the ways in which authors used this knowledge.[8]

Perhaps something fresh might be said about medieval anti-Muslim polemic by reorienting our focus and reading, using polemic not as a window, but as a mirror. By mirror-reading religious polemic we are particularly interested in *reflected self-image*. Reading texts in this way can help us discover not what Christian authors thought about Muslims in general, but more specifically, what they were saying about their Christian communities when they wrote about Islam. In other words, discussing who lay *outside* their religious borders (i.e., Muslims) allowed various Christian authors in Spain to describe those whom they welcomed *inside* of them.[9] As a result, religious polemic is not just a window through which to view Islam, but a mirror that reflects a self-image or an identity of the author in light of Islam. Since, as we note above, this self-image was a communal one, the identity reflected in an author's work is often one he/she hoped would be adopted by his/her community and those who read his/her text. And as we further note above, since these definitions were part of a "*negotiated* process," they ultimately help us to see what their authors were saying about the relationship between their communities and Islam. To mirror-read Christian anti-Muslim polemic, then, is to stand on the borders of religion being set up by authors between Christianity and Islam.

William Montgomery Watt very briefly touches on this notion of reflected self-image in a small chapter devoted to "Islam and European

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[8] 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* (Gainseville, 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.

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

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 while 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 community; the self-image of the author and his/her community can be located in the image he/she portrays of the opponent and it is often seen as an inverted reflection.

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

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[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.

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 Muslims' alleged weaknesses. In this case, the religious identity asserted by an author and 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 emphasizes the positive qualities of Christianity. Sometimes this is made explicit by authors. For example, when an author writes that Islam spread throughout the earth by the sword, but Christianity spread with neither violence nor coercion[15] 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 emphasize Christ's superiority (his miracles, the universality of his message, and his successful victory over

[15] See, for example, al-Qūṭī in Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Ḫazrağī, *Maqāmiʿ al-ṣulbān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Mağīd al-Šarfī (Tunis: n.p., 1975), 10:38.

death).[16] As Suzanne Akbari puts it, 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 more effective to assail Muslim impurity, and thereby allow a Christian reader to feel that his/her own piety was being emphasized 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 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, and in turn, draw a border between Christians and Muslims.

In the second question our methodology poses, 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 self-image for Christian communities. 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

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[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. . . ." Similar statements are sprinkled liberally throughout Akbari's more recent *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010). Cf. Tolan'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." Tolan, *Saracens*, xxiii.

[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

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 communities 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.

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 characterize 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]

These concerns are 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 (though certainly less about their individual personalities)

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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).

[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.

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 one author is convinced that different religious communities are no longer distinct, each community must be reminded of its unique identity; borders deemed inadequate from a particular author's perspective 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 Christian-Muslim mixing. Thus, there may be a story of interaction—and therefore alternative ways of drawing borders between religious communities—that corresponds 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 stabilizing 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] Reading polemic in this way allows such treatises to contribute to what we know of Christian-Muslim relations in general in a given context without characterizing 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 a specific 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.

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[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.

[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.

Religious Polemic in Medieval Spain

With this methodology in mind, the specific treatises detailed presently were chosen because medieval Spain—at times ruled predominantly by Christians while at other times predominantly by Muslims—offers a remarkable context in which to examine medieval Christian-Muslim relations and gauge Christian identity in light of Islam in particular. Moreover, as we intimate above, Christian communities in medieval Spain differed in their approach to Islam. Some Christians asserted sets of religious boundaries that allowed for varying degrees of inter-religious mixing. Other Christians looked upon such borders with disdain and sought to assert stricter boundaries that defined their communities in different ways. 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 analyze 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 analyze Christian anti-Muslim polemic from Spain in the mid-ninth century and from the eleventh-twelfth centuries.

The earliest extant treatises in this regard come from mid-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 851; the *Memoriale sanctorum* (*A Memorial of the Saints*), completed in 856; and the *Liber apologeticus martyrum* (*A Book in Defense of the Martyrs*), written in 857. The fourth and final text analyzed in Part I comes from Eulogius' friend and fellow-Cordovan, the layman Paulus Alvarus (d. c. 862): the *Indiculus luminosus* (*Shining*

[25] In the 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-ninth century written by a Cordovan 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 ninth century Christian Ḥafṣ b. Albar al-Qūṭī, very likely titled *Kitāb al-masā'il al-sabʿ wa-l-ḫamsīn*. Only portions of this work are preserved by a thirteenth century imām known as Imām al-Qurṭubī writing from Spain.

Example), written in 854. We cite from the Latin edition of these texts edited by Ioannes Gil in his *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*.[26]

As we have said, it is clear from Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts that there were other Christian communities in Spain, differing in their response to Islam and in the identities they asserted in order to distinguish themselves from Muslims. Yet evidence coming directly from these communities in ninth century Cordova, at least in the form of religious polemic that our study focuses on, does not exist. Eulogius and Alvarus do reveal some characteristics of these opposing communities. While we analyze this evidence, the information Eulogius and Alvarus offer is simply too meager to warrant a proper reconstruction of the Christian communities with whom they disagreed. Rather than reconstruct these communities' views from silence, or from what little we can gather from Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts, we turn in Part II (Chapters 4–6) to four texts written by various authors from or near Toledo in the eleventh and twelfth centuries who provide us with much more substantial information. 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-eleventh century or early-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 1109 by Petrus Alfonsi, a Jewish convert to Christianity (*converso*). We use Irven Resnick's English translation[28] and give particular attention to Alfonsi's fifth chapter devoted to Islam.

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[26] Ioannes Gil, ed., *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Instituto Antonio Nebrija, 1973). For Spanish translations, see 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).

The third text is the *Taṯlīṯ al-waḥdānīya* (*Trinitizing the Unity* [*of God*]), a mid-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-Iʿlām bi-mā fī dīn al-naṣārā min al-fasād wa-awhām wa-iẓhār maḥāsin dīn al-islām wa-iṯbāt nubūwat nabīyinā Muḥammad ʿalayhi 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 Our Muḥammad, upon Him Be Prayer and Peace*). Here we use Aḥmad Ḥiǧāzī al-Saqqā's modern Arabic edition.[29]

The fourth and final text is *The Letter of al-Qūṭī* written in the mid-twelfth century by an unknown Christian priest in Toledo. The text is preserved and refuted in the same century by Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Ḫazraǧī in his *Maqāmiʿ al-ṣulbān* (*Mallets for* [*Hammering*] *Crosses*). For this text we use the modern Arabic edition by ʿAbd al-Maǧīd al-Šarfī.[30]

A few texts remain in this period.[31] The same author who preserves the *Taṯlīṯ al-waḥdanīya* also preserves a text by a Christian known only as Aġushtīn titled *Maṣḥaf al-ʿālam al-kā'in*. The brief portions that are preserved are nearly identical to the arguments of the *Taṯlīṯ al-waḥdanīya*, and for this reason, Aġushtīn's treatise is not included in our study.[32] We might also have considered works that were treated in Peter the Venerable's twelfth century translation project[33] 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

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[29] Imām al-Qurṭubī, *al-Iʿlām bi-mā fī dīn al-naṣārā min al-fasād wa-awhām wa-iẓhār maḥāsin dīn al-islām wa-iṯbāt nubūwa nabīyinā Muḥammad ʿalayhi al-ṣalā wa-al-salām*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥiǧāzī al-Saqqā (Cairo: Dār al-Turāṯ al-ʿArabī, 1980). A partial English translation by Burman is found in Olivia Remie 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-Qurtubī." Thèse de troisieme cycle présenté 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-Masīḥīya: Kitāb Abā ʿAbīda al-Ḫazraǧī*, ed. Muḥammad Šāma (Cairo: n.p., 1979), but our references refer to al-Šarfī's edition. A partial English translation by Burman is found in Constable, ed., 143–147.

[31] Imām al-Qurṭubī mentions a treatise by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ĠṢN, 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 Aġushtīn'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).

our study with the texts noted above, and as will become clear, within the different definitions of Christian identity that their authors represent.

These texts are known to modern scholars and have been studied by them before. This is especially true of widely-read treatises like Alfonsi's *Dialogus*. In contrast, most of Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts are relatively obscure treatises with little manuscript witness. Adding great renown to their works, however, is the perplexing question of what drove nearly fifty Christians to pursue martyrdom in ninth century Cordova. Indeed, as we discuss in Chapter 1, modern scholars have spent much time analyzing Eulogius' and Alvarus' writing in an attempt to answer this question and/or address the historicity of the so-called martyrs movement.[34] Why, then, revisit these texts here?

As it concerns ninth century Cordova, we are not concerned with taking another look at its movement of martyrs. Instead, by re-reading the texts written about them, we hope to learn something new about how two authors sought to control a context of inter-religious encounter. Similarly, we are less concerned in each of our texts with what our authors knew about Islam than we are with how they used this knowledge to communicate something about the nature of their own faith. It is this perspective—reflected self-image as we call it here—that brings fresh focus to a collection of texts that have been examined before. By doing so, not only can we offer new information about inter-religious relations in medieval Spain, but we might also shed new light on Christian-Muslim interactions and the ways religious communities police their borders.[35]

With this in mind, we begin Part I of our study in Chapter 1 with a discussion of the historical context of the ninth century texts written in Cordova. We examine Islam's emergence in medieval Spain, the treatment of Christian communities under Islam in Spain up to the ninth century, and the martyrs movement of Cordova. Here we discover a whole range of Christian communities differing in their response to Islam. As

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[34] E.g., Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "Mitografía hagiomartirial. De nuevo sobre los supuestos mártires Cordobeses del siglo IX," in *De muerte violenta. Política, religión y violencia en Al-Andalus*, ed. Maribel Fierro. Estudios onomástico-biográficos de Al-Andalus, XIV (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2004).

[35] As we intimate above (cf. n. 18), authors like Akbari and Tolan, not to mention others like Barkai and Watt, have touched upon the idea of religious self-identity as a reflection of what an author might say about the religious other before. Yet their statements come as smaller conclusions within larger arguments. In our study, we use reflected self-image as a starting point, focusing almost entirely on the concept as a means for reading polemical texts.

such, each one potentially offered its own set of boundaries distinguishing Christians from Muslims, and in turn, unique Christian identities in light of Islam. Though these Christians cannot all fit into neat categories, we argue that Eulogius' and Alvarus' treatment of the alleged martyrs' movement exposed a rift in the Christian communities of ninth century Cordova. This rift brings special attention to two types of Christians in the city: 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 Cordovan Christians. 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 and perhaps even exaggerate the martyrs movement while honoring those who, in Eulogius' and Alvarus' opinions, gave their lives in an assault upon Islam. We argue, however, that while these texts did function as hagiography and as an apology for a martyrs movement, they also served as a means for re-clearing religious borders between Christians and Muslims, borders that had become for their authors increasingly blurred and indistinguishable. In this light, we argue that Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts, each in their own ways, 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 discernible in Eulogius' and Alvarus' texts and their deployment of strategies to support the self-image they asserted.[36] 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 offered a different set of boundaries. Unlike Eulogius and Alvarus, they did absorb Arabic and Islamic culture, not simply to denigrate Muslims with more precision, but as part of a larger effort to define their Christian identity amid Islam. In Chapter 4, we examine the historical background of the eleventh-twelfth century texts written from this perspective. Here we discover another identity crisis for various Christians.

[36] Cf. Tolan, *Saracens*, 172.

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 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 eleventh-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 analyze 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 definitions of these eleventh-twelfth century authors' Christian identities *vis-à-vis* Islam.

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.

A few key terms used throughout the study 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 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,"[37] and Richard Hitchcock's book, *Mozarabs in Medieval and*

[37] 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).

Early Modern Spain.[38] Suffice it to say here that the word is likely derived from the Arabic passive participle *musta'rab*, meaning 'Arabized'.[39] 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 Islamic or Arab influence, or even to Latin literature written in Islamic Spain. As just one example, many Christians in Islamic Spain resisted Arabization, 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 eleventh century.[40]

Keeping these difficulties in mind, we will not describe Christians in Spain prior to the eleventh century as 'Mozarabs', even though some Christian communities were indeed Arabized to various degrees by this point. When referring to members of such communities, we use the term 'Arabized Christians'. Of course, Arabization could at times give way to varying degrees of Islamicization, 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 'Islamicized'; otherwise, the term 'Arabized' is used in reference to Christians from these communities.[41] From the eleventh century onwards, when the term 'Mozarab' was employed, we will describe members of authentically Arabized Christian communities as 'Mozarabs', noting that they were Arabized and perhaps even Islamicized to varying extents in reference to language and culture, but not necessarily at any cost to their Christianity.[42]

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

[39] 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 Arabization.

[40] Ibid., xix, 69.

[41] The nuances between 'Arabization' and 'Islamicization' 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).

[42] As Hanna Kassis writes, with reference to Mozarabs or simply Arabized and/or Islamicized 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.

Transliteration of Arabic follows Brill's simple Arabic transliteration system.[43] Common Arabic words such as Muḥammad, Qurʾān, Ḥadīṯ, other proper names, and locations are transliterated according to this system, but are left unitalicized. 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 pluralized simply by adding an 's'; e.g., '*sūrah*s' (multiple qurʾānic chapters) is used instead of '*suwar*'.

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*^{2}.[44] Similarly, Gil's *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum* will appear in notes as *CSM*.

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.

See also, Hitchcock, *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, 75–97 and his treatment of Mozarabism as a phenomenon in eleventh-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.

[43] For details, consult www.brill.com/downloads/Simple_Arabic_transliteration.pdf.

[44] 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).