Christendom and Islam

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Given the great variety of Christian and Muslim cultures in the Middle Ages, it should not be surprising that relations between the two defy synthesis. The relationships to Islam of the many Christians who lived in Muslim lands, for example, were very different from those of Christians living in orthodox Christian Byzantium or Catholic Latin Europe. The word 'Christendom' in the title therefore reflects a sharp but necessary abridgement of the topic. This article will focus only on those lands that came to think of themselves as 'Christendom': that is, Catholic Western Europe, from the Iberian to the Hungarian kingdoms.[1] It will ask three interrelated questions. First, what did Christians know about Islam? Second, how did their thinking about Islam affect the formation of the concept of Christendom itself? And third, how did Islam experience Christendom? For throughout our period there were not only numerous Christian incursions into the lands of Islam (via pilgrimage, trade, crusade and mission), but also many Muslims living *within* Christendom.

The first two questions, of course, are quite different from the third, for they have less to do with the study of historical contacts and relations between Christianity and Islam in the Middle Ages, and more to do with the study of the role that Christian ideas about Islam play in the formation of Christian conceptualisations of the world and Christianity's place in it. The third question, on the other hand, is about historically specific encounters between Christians and Muslims. I will touch briefly upon the best-known forms of these encounters, namely trade and crusade. But I will give more space to the less well-known phenomenon of the practice of Islam in Christian lands. We tend to think of medieval Catholic Europe as a region largely 'Muslimrein'.

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1 Readers interested in Byzantium may turn to (among others) the work of Adel Théodore Khoury: *Polémique byzantine contre l'Islam (VIIIe-XIIIe s.)* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); *Les théologiens byzantins et l'Islam: Textes et auteurs (VIIIe-XIIIe s.)* (Louvain and Paris: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1969).

Even when we acknowledge the presence of Islam in Christendom, we rarely pause to think about how the Christian context might affect the type of Islam practised within it. But in fact throughout our period Europe contained Islamic communities whose experience of 'being Muslim' was quite different from the experience of Muslims living in more heavily Islamic lands.

I

My first question, 'What did medieval Christians know about Islam and when did they learn it?', is often asked by scholars, but is in at least one sense much less interesting than it seems. Christians knew most of what they felt they needed to know about Islam from the moment it began its muscular journey from the Arabian Peninsula in the mid-seventh century: Islam was not Christianity, and it was mighty in war. From a Christian point of view, the victories of these non-Christians could mean only two things. Either Christianity was an incorrect religion that should be abandoned in favour of Islam, or Christians were indeed correct in their religious choice, but were being punished by an angry God. The first option was taken by the countless Christians who chose to convert to the Islam of their conquerors. Christian writing about Islam, of course, was generally produced by those who opted for theodicy. Preaching on Christmas day 634 in the midst of the invasions, the patriarch of Jerusalem explained to his trembling flock that God had sent 'the godless Saracens' as punishment for 'countless sins and very serious faults'. 'Let us correct ourselves', he exhorted. 'If we constrain ourselves…we would see their final destruction.'[2]

The actual content of the Saracens' faith was irrelevant to Sophronios, who was interested only in elucidating the Muslims' role in Christian sacred history. Nor did penance's failure to stem the invasions incline him more seriously towards ethnography. As the Caliph 'Umar triumphantly entered Jerusalem, the patriarch is said to have proclaimed, 'Verily, this is the abomination of desolation standing in a holy place, as has been spoken through the prophet Daniel.'[3] Maximus the Confessor, writing from Alexandria at much the same time, put it more bluntly. The invaders were 'wild and untamed beasts who have merely the shape of human form'. They were, he added, Jews

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2 'Christmas Sermon', trans. Walter Kaegi, 'Initial Byzantine Reactions to the Arab Conquest', *Church History* 38 (1969), 139–49.

3 *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor*, trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 471.

and followers of the Antichrist.[4] Muslims, in short, were either Christ's scourge for the improvement of Christendom or the shock troops of apocalypse, related one way or another to other enemies of God (such as Jews, idol-worshippers and heretics). In either case, contemporaries saw no point in studying their religious beliefs or cultural practices except to condemn them or prove them wrong.

As a very general rule, this one holds true throughout the Middle Ages. From the seventh century to the end of the fifteenth, Christian understanding of Islam was predicated on two basic axioms. First, Islam was a false religion. Second, it was a carnal one, glorying in violence and sexuality. It is striking how early these positions crystallised. Already in 634, for example, a Christian author treated Islam's conquests as a sign of its falsity: 'Do prophets come with swords and chariots?'[5] (The same author would, of course, doubtless have interpreted Christian military victories as signs of that religion's truth.) Sexuality too rose immediately to the polemical forefront, with Christians asserting that the religion of Islam had been founded by Muhammad in order to help him satisfy his lusts, and that the afterlife he promised to those who died following him was entirely carnal.

Increasing familiarity with Islam did not alter the tone of these polemics, but only sharpened it. John of Damascus (Yuhanna b. Mansur b. Sarjun), for example, was fluent in Arabic (in fact Greek was for him a second language), and an important financial administrator at the court of the Umayyad caliphs 'Abd al-Malik and Walid I (685–715). His obvious knowledge of Islam did not, however, alter the general lines of the polemic he wrote against it. The Ishmaelites, he wrote, were precursors of the Antichrist. Worshippers of Aphrodite, they were seduced by 'a false prophet Mamed…who, having casually been exposed to the Old and the New Testament, and supposedly encountered an Arian monk, formed a heresy of his own'. According to John, Muhammad's motives were primarily sexual: hence he dwelt extensively on the Qur'anic treatment of polygamy and divorce, and on Muhammad's many wives.[6]

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4 Maximus the Confessor's complaint in *PG* 91, col. 540 is translated in John Lamoreaux, 'Early Christian Responses to Islam', in John Tolan, ed., *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays* (New York: Garland, 1996), 3–31, here pp. 14f. For some more positive early Christian appraisals of Islam, see John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia, 2002), 45–6.

5 'Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati' [The Doctrine of Jacob recently Baptized], trans. Kaegi, 'Initial Byzantine Reactions', 141.

6 John of Damascus, *Liber de haeresibus*, in P. Bonafatius Kotter, ed., *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* (5 vols.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969–81), vol. 4, 19–67, here p. 60. See

These are among the earliest Christian accounts of Islam. They predate our period and are from outside the borders of the region with which we are concerned. But they do not differ substantially from what Christians said about Islam centuries later and further west. All of these themes, from heretical monks to idol worship and rampant sexuality, can be found in Christian writings of every century from the eleventh to the sixteenth. This is not to say that available knowledge about Islam in the West was unchanging. On the contrary, if twelfth-century vernacular poets (like the author of the Song of Roland) and Latinate clerics (like the canon lawyers of the Decretals) alike continued to present Muslims as worshippers of Apollo or Aphrodite, it was not for lack of sources that knew better. But even in the best-informed sources, new learning was only intended to give well-worn polemics a sharper edge. For instance, the author of the *Liber denudationis*, a work written in Arabic by an Iberian Christian in the twelfth century, knew a great deal about Islam, and was clearly familiar with Arabic commentaries on the Qur'an. But he read these sources in order to solidify rather than challenge his prejudices, mining them for evidence to support the ancient topoi of Muslim materialism and hyper-sexuality. Thus he trumpeted with great glee a marginal and esoteric (not to say fantastic) Islamic tradition that in paradise each virtuous Muslim believer will be rewarded by the growth of his penis to such a length that he will need seventy Christians and seventy Jews to carry it before him.[7]

Engagement with Islamic texts did not alter Christian understandings of Islam because (like Islamic engagement with Christian and Jewish texts, or Jewish engagement with Islamic and Christian texts) this engagement was largely structured by polemic.[8] The marginal notes in medieval translations of

also Daniel Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The 'Heresy' of the Ishmaelites* (Leiden: Brill, 1972). Later Christian polemics against Islam written in Arabic, like the ninth-century *Risâlat al-Kindî*, display even greater knowledge both of Qur'an and Sirah (the biography of the Prophet), but deploy that greater knowledge to the same goals of characterising Islam as sexual, and as derivative of Judaism and heretical Christianity. On this polemical tradition, see Samir Khalil Samir and Jørgen S. Nielsen, eds., *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period: 750–1258* (Leiden: Brill, 1994). On the circulation of such polemics in Christian Spain, see P. Sjoerd van Koningsveld, 'La Apología de Al-Kindî en la España del siglo XII: Huellas toledanas de un "animal disputax"', in *Estudios sobre Alfonso VI y la reconquista de Toledo: Actas del II congreso internacional de estudios mozárabes* (Toledo: Instituto de Estudios, 1989), 107–29.

7 *Liber denudationis* §9.20, in Thomas Burman, ed., *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs* (Leiden: Brill, 1994). On Christian study of Islamic Qur'an exegesis in the Latin West, see also Thomas Burman, 'Tafsīr and Translation: Robert of Ketton, Mark of Toledo, and traditional Arabic Qur'ān Exegesis', *Speculum* 73 (1998), 703–32.

8 This is a sweeping statement, even if 'largely' does not mean 'completely'. The exceptions, however, were few. One of the most interesting comes from Maimonides: 'By no means are Muslims idolaters…they recognize God's unity. Just because they falsely accuse us…we cannot also lie by saying that they are idolaters… If someone were to

the Qur'an, for example, told Christian readers exactly what they should be taking from it, as in this example: 'Note that he everywhere promises a paradise of earthly delights, as other heresies had done before.'[9] Indeed these translations were undertaken, not to increase knowledge of Islam, but simply to reaffirm what every Christian already knew. Peter the Venerable of Cluny, the most powerful churchman of his age and the organiser in the mid-twelfth century of the first translation of the Qur'an and a number of other Arabic texts into Latin, put the point simply in his anti-Islamic manifesto: 'I translated from Arabic into Latin the whole of this sect, along with the execrable life of its evil inventor, and exposed it to scrutiny of our people, so that it be known what a filthy and frivolous heresy it is.'[10]

Modern historians often stress the importance of subtle differences in medieval Christian characterisations of Islam, and are very much on the look-out for evidence of real knowledge about Islamic practice, which they often valorise positively as a sign of cultural engagement and exchange. For the modern critic it makes a great deal of difference whether a medieval Christian author characterised the Muslims as idol-worshippers, as Judaisers, or as monotheistic heretics. (In fact most medieval commentators on Islam presented it as a blend of paganism, Judaism and Christian heresies such as Arianism). But these subtle distinctions miss a basic point: medieval Christians believed that Islam was a false and dangerous belief, and, with very few exceptions, their study of it was aimed entirely at its condemnation and defeat.

This did not stop them from developing a body of knowledge, a 'science of Islam' involving a great deal of gathering and translation of information. The science they developed remained standard until the end of our period, and even transmitted a little of its ideological content to the 'Orientalist' learning of French and British scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Yet the truth-value of this science was measured by the extent to which it

argue that the House [in Mecca] where they praise Him is an idolatrous temple that conceals inside the idol their ancestors worshipped [the Kaaba], [they should know that] those who bow to him now have only God in mind. The rabbis have already explained in Sanhedrin that if one bows in an idolatrous temple but believes it is a synagogue, his heart is dedicated to God.' Moses Maimonides, *Letters and Essays of Moses Maimonides*, ed. and trans. Isaac Shailat (Jerusalem: Maliyot Press of Yeshivat Birkat Moshe Maaleh Adumim, 1987), 238f.

9 John Tolan, 'Peter the Venerable, on the "Diabolical Heresy of the Saracens"', in Alberto Ferreiro, ed., *The Devil, Heresy, and Witchcraft in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey B. Russell* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 345–67; Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, 'Deux traductions latines du Coran au Moyen-Âge', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 16 (1947–8), 69–131.

10 *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum*, in Rheinhold Glei, ed., *Schriften zum Islam* (Corpus Islamo-Christianum, series latina 1; Alternberg: CIS-Verlag, 1985), §18.

conformed to and reinforced Christian theology, not by its consonance with the historical and religious experience of Muslims. When a medieval chronicler like Otto of Friesing points out that Muslims revere Muhammad as a prophet, not as a god, he is trying to show how well read he is, not trying to educate his readers about Islam or soften their antipathy toward it. There is no real point, he and his contemporaries would have agreed, in worrying too much about details when writing the history of an error. As Gautier de Compiègne put it in his twelfth-century life of Muhammad, 'One may safely speak ill of a man whose malignity transcends and surpasses whatever evil can be said about him.'[11]

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The sharp increase in the information about Islam available in Latin Europe across the period from 1000 to 1500 did not substantially redirect the polemical channels through which that knowledge flowed. One reason for this is the increasing importance of the work to which these channels were put over the course of the Middle Ages. Curiously enough, that importance is inversely proportional to the military threat posed by Islam to Latin Europe itself. Before the eleventh century, when the military reach of Islam was longest (the Muslims sacked Genoa as late as 993, for example, and captured Abbot Maiolus of Cluny in the Alps in 972), the polemic with Islam remained relatively unimportant in the core areas of Western Europe.[12] After the year 1000, at precisely the point that Latin Christian power began to extend itself once more into the Mediterranean, that polemic began to become ideologically central. We can see one important example of this centrality in the new role assigned to Islam in Christian thinking about violence and war. The same decades that saw the Christian conquest of southern Italy, Sardinia and Sicily, and of large parts of Muslim al-Andalus, produced the proclamation of Pope Alexander II that, although the shedding of human blood is forbidden to the Christian, it was 'just to fight' against the Saracens, 'who persecute Christians

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11 Recounted in Guibert of Nogent's account of the First Crusade, *Dei gesta per Francos*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (CCCM 127A; Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 94; trans. Robert Levine, *The Deeds of God through the Franks* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 32. See also Jean Flori, 'La caricature de l'Islam dans l'Occident médiéval: Origine et signification de quelques stéréotypes concernant l'Islam', *Aevum* 2 (1992), 245–56.

12 The episode involving Abbot Maiolus is particularly interesting. It is related in Syrus, *Vita Sancti Maioli* (PL 137, cols. 763D–768D), translated and discussed in Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches towards the Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 42–3.

and expel them from their towns and dwelling places'.[13] This is not a coincidence: in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, ideas about Islam played an important role in the creation of a muscular version of European Christianity, one that increasingly saw itself as united by a common destiny to conquer a wider world imagined as Muslim.[14]

What we today call the crusades are, of course, the most famous example of this process. Though western warriors, merchants and pilgrims had long been present in the Eastern Mediterranean, the unruly progress of French, Norman, Occitan, German and Italian crusaders on their long march to Jerusalem during the First Crusade in 1096 struck observers as something new. The Byzantine Princess Anna Comnena described it as the northern forests suddenly emptying themselves into the Mediterranean. For Muslim rulers in the East, the entry of the crusading armies into their domains was indeed the first significant intrusion of Western Europe into their political consciousness, and the shape of that first impression is interesting. Muslim rulers did not think of the first few crusades as part of a coherent and ongoing Christian attack on Islam: that consciousness took more than a century to emerge. But they did think of the heterogeneous crusading armies as a unified people, and this from the very beginning. Muslims would for centuries call all the members of these armies 'firandj', 'Franks', regardless of their actual provenance. The term came to signify 'European' in Arabic, Chinese, and a good many other languages of Asia and its subcontinent well into the modern age. If the people Columbus famously mistook for 'Indians' in 1492 had in fact been that, they would have doubtless called this Genoese sailing under the flag of Castile a 'Frank.'[15]

Though entirely the product of too crude an ethnography, the Muslim homogenisation of crusading Europe did parallel an explicit goal of the crusade's organisers themselves. For Pope Urban II, the first crusade was as much about establishing peace and unity in the West as it was about giving aid to Byzantium or conquering Jerusalem from Islam. Every report we have of

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13 *Epistolae et diplomata*, no. 101 (*PL* 146, cols. 1386–7).

14 Two recent studies of this role, from quite different but complementary points of view, are Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam (1000–1150)*, trans. G. R. Edwards (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002); and Tomaž Mastnak, *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

15 On Islamic reactions to the Crusades, see the works of Emmanuel Sivan, *L'Islam et la Croisade: Idéologie et propagande dans les réactions musulmanes aux Croisades* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1968); and *Interpretations of Islam Past and Present* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1985), ch. 1. See also under 'Crusades' in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edn. On the term 'Frank', see *ibid.*, under 'Ifrandj'.

his preaching stresses the same thing: war against Muslims was an antidote to civil war amongst Christians. The summary of Baldric of Bourgueil, arch-bishop of Dol, is representative:

> Listen and understand. You have strapped on the belt of soldiery and strut around with pride in your eye. You butcher your brothers and create factions amongst yourselves. This, which scatters the sheepfold of the Redeemer, is not the army of Christ… You must either cast off as quickly as possible the belt of this sort of soldiery or go forward boldly as soldiers of Christ, hurrying swiftly to defend the Eastern Church… You may restrain your murderous hands from the destruction of your brothers, and on behalf of your relatives in the faith oppose yourself to the Gentiles… You should shudder, brethren, you should shudder at raising a violent hand against Christians; it is less wicked to brandish your sword against Saracens. It is the only warfare that is righteous.[16]

Robert the Monk assigned to Urban slightly different words, but the same argument:

> This land which you inhabit is too narrow for your large population; nor does it abound in wealth; and it furnishes scarcely enough food for its cultivators. Hence it is that you murder one another, that you wage war, and that frequently you perish by mutual wounds… Let therefore hatred depart from among you, let your quarrels end, let wars cease, and let all dissensions and controversies slumber. Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulcher, wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves.[17]

The consequences of such preaching, according to Otto of Freising, were dramatic: 'And so, as countless peoples and nations…were moved to take the cross, suddenly almost the entire West became so still that not only the waging of war but even the carrying of arms in public was considered wrong.'[18] Urban, Bernard, Peter the Venerable, all were able students of Durkheim and Frederick Jackson Turner. They promoted peace and unity at home in Christendom by projecting discord outward towards the 'Gentile frontier': *Intus pax, foris terrores*, 'Peace inside, terror outside'.[19]

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16 Baldric of Dol, *Historia Jerosolimitana* I.iv, 14–15; trans. Edward Peters, *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 9. See also Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London: Athlone, 1993), 149.
17 *Roberti monachi historia Iherosolimitana* I.1–2, 727–29, trans. Peters, *The First Crusade*, 2–4.
18 Otto of Freising, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, trans. Ch. Mierow (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), vol.1, xliv.
19 Hence Joseph Strayer called the First Crusade 'a spectacular advance toward European peace and unity': see 'The First Western Union', in his *Medieval Statecraft and the Perspectives of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 334. On the

The crusades were designed to give Western Christendom a common project and a shared sense of purpose, as well as to pacify it. They were not the task of just one king, noble, or nation, but a *negotium christianum*, a Christian business. The notion of *christianitas* was expanded through the crusade preaching of popes like Innocent III into the idea of a *populus christianus*, 'a Christian people', and thence into the concept of a 'Christendom' defined collectively by its struggle against all unfaithful foreign nations. Of course from the papal point of view a single entity needs a single leader, and that leader was to be the pope, the vicar of Christ. It is not a coincidence that the same theologians who championed crusade developed this title 'vicar of Christ' (rather than, for example, the older papal title 'vicar of Peter'). Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, was the first to apply it to the pope alone (as opposed to all bishops, or even lay princes), and Innocent III was the first pope to use the title publicly.[20]

In other words, Urban, Bernard, Innocent and other architects of papal power were political theorists as much as sociologists, readers of Carl Schmitt as well as of Durkheim. By emphasising the danger posed by an external enemy and declaring war upon it they sought not only to pacify Latin Europe, but also to strengthen a newly emerging form of sovereignty over it, the sovereignty of the papacy, known amongst medievalists as 'papal monarchy'. This sovereignty was not simply a matter of struggle over titles like 'vicar of Christ'. It was also a matter of building pan-European institutions and wielding pan-European power, and in this construction the crusade against the Muslim 'enemies of God and holy Christendom' played a vital role.[21]

Taxation provides a good example of this role. The need to raise money for crusades (and the possibility of using the crusade to justify the raising of

emergence of the terms 'christianitas' and 'christianissimus' in this period, see Jean Rupp, *L'idée de chrétienté dans la pensée pontificale des origines à Innocent III* (Paris: Les Presses Modernes, 1939); P. Rousset, 'La notion de chrétienté aux XIe et XIIe siècles', *Le Moyen Âge* 69 (1963), 195ff. 'Intus pax, foris terrores' is cited without attribution by Étienne Delaruelle, 'Paix de Dieu et croisade dans la chrétienté du XIIe siècle', in *Paix de Dieu et guerre sainte en Languedoc au XIIIe siècle* (Cahiers de Fanjeaux 4; Toulouse: Édouard Privat, 1969), 51–71, here 61.

20 On the development of these terms see Tomaž Mastnak, *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 91–9, 144–6; Agostino Paravicini-Bagliani, *The Pope's Body* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 58; Jane E. Sayers, *Innocent III: Leader of Europe (1198–1216)* (London: Longman, 1994), 16. Bernard's uses are in *On Consideration* II.viii.16, IV.vii.23.

21 *Gesta Francorum* VI.xiii: 'Turci inimici Dei et sanctae christianitatis.' As Alphonse Dupront put it in his conclusion to the volume of Paul Alphandéry's lectures that he edited, 'Crusade and Christendom were made together, in a reciprocal creation.' Paul Alphandéry, *La chrétienté et l'idée de croisade*, vol. 2, ed. Alphonse Dupront (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1959), 274.

money) put the papacy in the position of establishing the first regular taxation system in the West. Crusading taxes (or tithes) were raised at the level of the locality (parish church, bishopric, etc.), then passed on to the pope as leader of the crusading movement. The pope in turn distributed the money to those kings or nobles who had entered into an agreement with him to carry out a crusade. It was Innocent III who obtained at least theoretical consensus that all benefices should contribute a percentage of their revenues to the support of papally sanctioned crusades. Later popes refined the system. Gregory X (1271–76), for example, divided all of Christendom into a system of twenty-six collectorates, or tax districts, for the collection of a truly universal tithe. And of course once the system was in place its exactions became regular, so that taxes were collected even when no crusade was being fought, as preparation for the next one. (Indeed in Spain, the tax continued to be collected well into the modern period.)[22]

The tax is one example of what would today be called a 'transnational European institution'. The term is anachronistic for the Middle Ages. But the important point here is simply that the crusades furthered the project of creating pan-European institutions centred around papal authority and control. Another example of such an institution, perhaps the most important one in terms of its implications for the future of European expansion and colonisation, is the very idea of crusade itself, that is, of holy war authorised by papal sanction.

In all these ways, the idea of Christian war against Islam gave medieval Europe a much more unified and self-conscious sense of historical mission.[23] But it would be wrong to exaggerate the dependence of this awakening of an expansionary Western European notion of Christendom on a confrontation with Islam or on the creation of a 'Muslim enemy', although the tendency is understandable in the light of current events.[24] It is certainly true that the

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22 Sayers, *Innocent III*, 73–4, 188; Ludovico Gatto, *Il pontificato di Gregorio X (1271–1276)*, (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1959), 87–8 ; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (London: Athlone, 1992), 171, 176; William Chester Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), ch. 4.

23 For an example of this self-consciousness see *La chanson d'Antioche*, ed. Suzanne Duparc-Quioc (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1977), 26, IX, lines 170–82, where Jesus predicts on the cross the future birth of the people who will avenge his death, reconquer his land, and restore 'sainte Crestïentés'.

24 See, for an example of such exaggeration, Mastnak, *Crusading Peace*, 115: 'The fact that Latin Christians knew nothing (or next to nothing) about Islam did not prevent them from making Muslims *the* enemy of Christianity and Christendom' (Emphasis in the original).

Muslim strongholds in southern Italy particularly influenced early papal efforts to sanction or direct warfare, because they directly threatened papal territorial interests. It is also true that the earliest justifications of crusading did take aim against Islam. This had, however, as much to do with the geography of the sacred as with Islam. It was only because Muslims were occupying 'Christ's birthplace', 'the land in which his feet had stood', God's 'inheritance', that they needed to be defeated, a defeat that need not extend beyond the Holy Land.[25]

If the crusades began as a project to recuperate God's fief and birthplace in the Holy Land, they quickly came to be understood more generally, as 'God's war for the expansion of Christendom', 'bella Domini…ad dilationem Christianitatis'.[26] This broader expansionary ideology, however, was no longer particularly motivated by confrontation with Islam. It could take aim at any non-Christian or heretic, and was in fact (with significant exceptions) not aimed primarily at Muslim lands. Indeed many theological treatises on crusade do not even mention Islam. St Thomas Aquinas, for example, codified an influential justification of crusade in his *Summa Theologica*: 'Christ's faithful often wage war against the unbelievers, not indeed for the purpose of forcing them to believe (for even if they were to conquer them and take them prisoners, they should still leave them free to believe, if they will), but in order to prevent them from hindering the Christian faith' (II-IIae, Q. X, art. 8). He went on to argue that crusaders had the right to destroy non-Christian governments even when these were sanctioned by human law. Such governments could be 'justly done away with by the sentence or ordination of the Church that has the authority of God: since unbelievers in virtue of their unbelief deserve to forfeit power over the faithful who are converted into

25 On the use of these expressions, specific to the Holy Land, in the preaching of crusade, see Ursula Schwerin, *Die Aufrufe der Päpste zur Befreiung des Heiligen Landes von den Anfängen bis zum Ausgang Innozenz IV: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der kurialen Kreuzzugspropaganda und der päpstlichen Epistolographie* (Berlin: Ebering, 1937), 51–4. Though the importance of the destination for the early crusading movement is undeniable, some recent historians of the broader crusading movement prefer to stress papal *auctoritas principalis* as a defining principle, since it allows the incorporation into the concept of those many later crusades whose goal was not the Levant. See above all the introduction to Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades: From Lyons to Alcazar 1274–1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). See also Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'History, the Crusades, and the Latin East: A Personal View', in M. Shatzmiller, ed., *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-century Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 9–10, and more generally C. J. Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

26 For these phrases see P. Rousset, *Les origines et les characteres de la première croisade* (Neuchâtel: Baconnière, 1945), 100–1, and his 'La notion', 199; Mastnak, *Crusading Peace*, 123.

children of God' (art. 10). Arguments like these would be of tremendous utility to European expansionists precisely because they were not specifically concerned with Muslims, but spoke rather more generally of *gentiles* and *infideles*.

In short, Islam was only the first, and an increasingly infrequent, target of an expansionary Christendom. Far more land was added to Europe through the German conquests in Eastern Europe that began with the second crusade than in all the wars against Islam put together, Iberian 're-conquest' included. Indeed perhaps the most horrific achievement of the crusades took place not in the Old World but the New, where logic like that articulated by St Thomas justified the destruction of the Aztec, Inca and other native polities, and the subjugation and evangelisation of their peoples.

Nor did the crusades produce a monolithic image of the Muslim as 'enemy' in the Middle Ages. It is true, as Tomaž Mastnak points out, that crusade preaching and propaganda made 'Saracen' an important negative term in the Christian imagination, one that could sometimes be generically applied: Normans, Slavs, east Europeans in general, Saxons, Danes, Scots, Irishmen, Vikings, all are at one point or other in the twelfth century called 'Saraceni', 'Agareni' and so on.[27] Such usage was, however, rare. Unlike 'Jew', 'Saracen' did not become a common insult among medieval Christians. Nor, outside areas like the Iberian Peninsula or the short-lived Crusader States, can we really detect a widespread sense that Islam posed an existential threat to the Christian order itself. For that we must wait until the very end of our period, with the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the beginnings of westward Ottoman expansion.

Moreover, although crusade propaganda could present the Muslim as an almost inhuman foe to be destroyed (the *Song of Roland* provides a good example), such representations were scarcely hegemonic within Christendom. More pragmatically ethnographic views could be found in those regions where interaction with Muslim powers was a fact of life (compare the Song of the Cid to that of Roland). For Christians living in Iberia and the Crusader States, or for anyone desiring to participate in the vast economic

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27 On the Normans as 'Agareni', see Carl Erdmann, *Die Entstehung des Kreuzzugsgedankens* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), 110. For a few thirteenth-century Middle English sources that call Danes, Irish, Saxons and Scots 'Sarazins', see J. Hall, ed., *King Horn: A Middle English Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), 96–7; Diane Speed, 'The Saracens of King Horn', *Speculum* 65 (1990), 566–7. In 1149 Pope Eugenius III spoke of the unheard of and inhuman invasion of Christian territory in Eastern Europe by 'L. dux Poloniae, collecta sarracenorum multitudine…' See his letter to Bishop Henry of Moravia: *Epistolae et Privilegia* n. 351 (*PL* 180, col. 1385).

networks of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the point was not (or rather, not only) to demonise Islam and fantasise its destruction, but also and often simultaneously to engage with it in constructive and profitable ways.[28] For example, among the earliest compendia of Islamic law translated into European vernaculars is a Catalan handbook produced for a Christian lord so that he could maximise his judicial profits from his Muslim subjects, whose transgressions had to be judged by Muslim law.[29] The considerable knowledge produced by such endeavours had no perceptible effect on the representations of Islam articulated by polemicists or preachers of crusade because the two projects took place in different registers of a complex Christian culture.

Another example of a cultural register that yields very different views of Muslims from those of polemicists or preachers is that of the military élites themselves. Despite the harsh polarisation we find in a *chanson de geste* like the Song of Roland, already in the twelfth century new genres of lay literature were emerging in which the crusading ideal could coexist with and even foment the recognition of a common culture uniting Christian knights with their Muslim counterparts. Sometimes this sense of commonality was the product of direct military engagement: thirteenth-century crusaders like Joinville did not hesitate to note the dignity, courage and suffering of their rivals, as well as those of their own co-religionists. But even in regions very far from real Muslims, the image of the Muslim soldier was shaped by an emerging chivalric ideal whose valorisation of violence was predicated on the proper treatment of a worthy foe. The result was that, by the late twelfth century and far beyond the end of our period, readers throughout northern Europe expected to find Muslim knights roaming the landscapes of their courtly romances. In Parzival we even find one (Feirefiz Angevin) who is the piebald offspring of a Christian and a Muslim, his skin mottled white and brown. Such stories betray no real knowledge about Islam. But they do suggest that in courtly literature Islam was not a category of pure enmity,

28 There is an endless bibliography on the subject of diplomatic and economic connections between Christian polities and Islamic ones. An interesting recent study of institutions for trade and travel is Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). On diplomatic contacts see, inter alia, Michael A. Köhler, *Allianzen und Verträge zwischen fränkischen und islamischen Herrschern im Vorderen Orient: Eine Studie über das zwischenstaatliche Zusammenleben vom 12. bis ins 13. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991).

29 Carmen Barceló, ed., *Un tratado Catalán medieval de derecho islámico: El llibre de la çuna e xara de los moros* (Córdoba: University of Córdoba, 1989).

and posed no impediment to an imagined solidarity of military elites. It is this solidarity, both imagined and (in the late medieval world of mercenary armies) quite real, that Chaucer represents and criticises through the knight of his Canterbury Tales, a soldier of 'sovereign price' to Christian and Muslim employers alike.[30]

Even at the level of political ideology itself, medieval Christian Europe was capable of imagining pluralist polities: 'A kingdom of one people and one custom is weak and fragile', as a Hungarian cleric put it in the eleventh or twelfth century. In regions like Hungary or the Iberian peninsula, Christian kingship, and even Christendom itself, could be self-consciously understood as depending on the services of non-Christian peoples, and this despite papal objection. As King Béla IV wrote to Innocent IV c. 1250, 'For the good of Christendom…we defend our kingdom today by pagans…and we tread the enemies of the church underfoot with the aid of pagans.' Similarly, in 1266 King James the Conqueror of Aragon ignored (as his successors would do for centuries) the command of Clement IV that he expel all Jews and Muslims from his kingdoms: to have done otherwise would have meant the destruction of his prosperity and his realms.[31]

Such convictions obviously weakened over the course of our period, but they never disappeared, even with the conquest of Granada and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. In that very year, for example, an anonymous chronicler completed a 'brief summary' of the history of Spain's kings, beginning with Hercules, addressed to the king of Naples. The chronicler understands Spain's successive incorporation of many peoples as the basis of its strength. And though he everywhere stresses that the re-conquest of the Iberian peninsula from Islam is the most glorious task of a Christian monarch, he also insists that the mistreatment of Muslims or Jews weakens both kingdom and monarchy. The cruelty King Peter displayed toward his Muslim

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30 Wolfram of Eschenbach, *Parzival*, ed. Karl Lachmann (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1926), lines 57:15–22. Cf. Stephanie Cain van D'Elden, 'Black and White: Contact with the Mediterranean World in Medieval German Narrative', in Marilyn J. Chiat and Kathryn L. Reyerson, eds., *The Medieval Mediterranean: Cross-Cultural Contacts* (Medieval Studies at Minnesota 3; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 112–18. For Chaucer's knight, see *The Canterbury Tales*, the General Prologue, lines 64–7.

31 The cleric's claim is in the *Libellus de institutione morum*, ed. J Banogh (Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum 2; Budapest: Academia Litter. Hungarica, 1938), 625. King Béla's letter is discussed by Nora Berend, *At the Gates of Christendom: Jews, Muslims, and Pagans in Medieval Hungary, c. 1000–c. 1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 166ff. Chapter 5 provides an illuminating analysis of the conflict between papal and monarchical visions of what a Christian Hungarian kingdom should look like. For Clement's letter to James, see Santiago Dominguez Sánchez, *Documentos de Clemente IV (1265–1268) referentes a España* (León: Universidad de León, 1996), 224–7.

neighbours in the fourteenth century, for example, helps to explain his subsequent downfall in a bloody civil war. Similarly, the unprecedented expulsion of Jews in his own day, the chronicler implies, can only weaken the kingdom.[32] The point, in short, is that even in those regions most constantly engaged in armed conflict with Islam, and even at a culminating moment of Christian victory in that conflict, Christendom's relation to both Muslims and Islam remains much more than merely one of enmity. For all its current political importance, the critical study of these relations is still a young field. One of its greatest challenges, as it matures, will be to have its account of those relations reflect that complexity.

<div align="center">3</div>

The self-definition of Christendom vis-à-vis Islam that we have focused on thus far has little to do with the presence of real Islam in Latin Europe, though there were in fact populations of Muslims living within Christendom through-out the Middle Ages. Muslims constituted a minority in Hungary, a few parts of southern Italy, and above all in the Iberian peninsula. (There were no Muslims yet in the Balkans, since until the very end of our period Byzantium still stood between Islam and the West.) By far the largest of these communities, and the only one to survive throughout the entirety of our period, was the Iberian one, and its example can give us a sense of the peculiarities involved in being Muslim in medieval Europe.[33]

Iberian Muslims living under Christian rule are called 'Mudejars', and they represent a novel and important phenomenon in Islamic history: 'diaspora' communities of Muslims living willingly in the 'house of war', that is, in a non-Muslim polity. Today millions of Muslims live in non-Muslim countries. Some of these, like the Mudejars of old, live in areas 'reconquered' by Christians from their ancestors (e.g., the Muslims of the former Yugoslavia or the former Soviet Union). Others are emigrants to more prosperous lands. These are all very different historical contexts from the medieval Iberian one. Nevertheless, the questions of acculturation, assimilation and the maintenance of group identity that these Muslim populations face today bear more than a passing resemblance to those confronted by the Mudejars.

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32 *Breve compendio de las Crónicas de los Reyes de España*, B. N. Paris. Ms. Esp. 110, folios 4r, 21v, 30r–31v.

33 For other regions a good beginning can be made with James Powell, ed., *Muslims under Latin Rule, 1100–1300* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

Mudejars were Muslims *de pacis*, that is, Muslims who had agreed, or more usually whose ancestors had so agreed, to be at peace with Christians and subject to them. In this fundamental way they differed from Muslims *de guerra*, who remained at war with Christians and could therefore legally be killed or enslaved by them. In principle, the rights of Mudejars were stipulated by treaty signed at the time of conquest. Given that the conquest of the Iberian peninsula spanned half a millennium and a number of realms, it is not surprising that these treaties varied. The most important concessions, however, were fairly standard across time and are easily listed. In exchange for their labour and their taxes, Mudejars were to receive: (1) safety and confirmation of property rights; (2) guarantee of the free practice of religion, including the right to pray in their mosques, to teach Islam to their children, and to go on pilgrimage; (3) the right to rule themselves according to Muslim law (Shari-'a), to be judged under it in any case involving only Muslims, and to name their own religious and judicial officials; (4) the confirmation of existing pious endowments in perpetuity; (5) a limitation on taxes, which were to be roughly similar to those paid under Muslim rule.[34]

These privileges are the foundation stones of Mudejar existence, which is not to say that they could not be violated or ignored. Mudejars were not naive on this score: they were aware that, even when they wanted to, Christian kings could not always force their violent subjects to comply with the provisions of treaties they had signed. Nevertheless, these treaties articulated the contractual basis for the continued existence of Muslims in Christian Iberia in formal legal terms that were remarkably stable. The treaty signed at the surrender of Granada in 1492 would have been completely intelligible to those Muslims of Toledo who had surrendered their similarly magnificent city to the Christians some 400 years before.[35]

Such willing submission by Muslims to Christian jurisdiction was controversial among Islamic jurists, who associated it with cultural vulnerability, corruption and decline. The most often cited of these writers is the fifteenth-century North African jurist al-Wansharīsī, whose opinion of the Mudejar was not ambivalent: 'his residence is manifest proof of his vile and base spirit'.

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34 Compare, e.g., the treaty of Xivert (1234), in M. V. Febrer Romaguera, ed., *Cartas Pueblas de las Morerias Valencianas y documentacion complementaria*, vol. 1 (Zaragoza: Anubar, 1991), 10–16, and the treaty of Granada (1491) summarized in L. P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain, 1250–1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 314–23.

35 One fourteenth-century Andalusi imam, Ibn Rabīᶜ, wrote explicitly about this danger. See P. S. van Koningsveld and G. A. Wiegers, 'The Islamic Statute of the Mudejars in the Light of a New Source', *Al-Qanṭara* 17 (1996), 19–59.

'To exalt Christian and diminish Muslim authority is a great and disastrous ruination…and he who does this is on the border of infidelity'. The late fourteenth-century mufti (and emigrant from Christian Iberia?) Ibn Miqlash illustrated this cultural vulnerability in an unusual passage which depicts the fate of Islam under Christian rule in sexual terms. The Mudejar, he claimed, mingled with worshippers of idols and lost his zeal. His wife depended upon (and was therefore sexually vulnerable to) his Christian lord. What fate could be worse, he asked, than that of one without zeal, either for his religion or for his wife![36]

Most jurists were less vivid. They stressed, not the debasement of the Mudejar's wife, but of his religious and legal culture. By demonstrating that Mudejars were deficient in legal culture as defined by the Maliki scholars, these jurists argued that they were less than full Muslims. As early as the twelfth century no less an authority than Ibn Rushd (Averroes) ruled that Mudejars were of 'suspect credibility, their testimony in court cannot be accepted and they cannot be allowed to lead prayer'. The legal authority of the Mudejar scholars was doubtful, they asserted, because Mudejar judges were appointed by infidels and because they were ignorant, an ignorance which became something of a topos in the writings of North African and Granadan jurists.

There were, of course, less severe opinions on the Mudejar question among Maliki jurists than the ones just quoted, but these provide a clear example of how a jurisdictional classification could translate into a cultural identity.[37] The problem of Muslims who willingly and permanently resided in the lands of Christian enemies, and who by their labours directly supported these enemies in their long and successful war against Islamic polities, forced jurists to confront the question of what constituted a Muslim, and to use the ensuing characteristics, which they presented as normative, to distinguish the particular, corrupt nature of Islam under Christian rule.

These jurists approached the corrupting effects of mudejarism through two quite different logics. The first was strictly jurisdictional: the Islamic life could not be fulfilled under Christian rule. How could one follow Muslim law if the scholars, judges and officials were appointed by Christian authorities? How, without a Muslim head of state to pay it to, could one fulfil the

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36 H. Buzineb, 'Respuestas de jurisconsultos maghrebies en torno a la inmigración de musulmanes hispánicos', *Hespéris Tamuda* 26–7 (1988), 59, 63.
37 The Maliki school of law, dominant in the Maghreb and al-Andalus, was in fact the most severe on the issue of Muslim minorities living in non-Islamic polities. K. Abou el-Fadl, 'Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities', *Islamic Law and Society* 1.2 (1994), 141–87.

obligation to pay *zakāt*? The second approach was more explicitly cultural. As Al-Wansharīsī put it:

> One has to beware of the pervasive effect of their [the Christians'] way of life, their language, their dress, their objectionable habits, and influence on people living with them over a long period of time, as has occurred in the case of the inhabitants of Ávila and other places, for they have lost their Arabic, and when the Arabic language dies out, so does devotion to it, and there is a consequential neglect of worship as expressed in words in all its richness and outstanding virtues.[38]

According to this model, the vital Islamic nature of Mudejar culture could be evaluated by measuring it against certain cultural markers drawn from the normative Islam of more central Muslim lands: language, legal procedure, dress, ritual and custom. Ridicule of Mudejar Arabic was one very common strategy within this framework. Criticism of Mudejar legal knowledge was another, as when a Mudejar emigrant to Oran claimed, toward the end of the fourteenth century, that among Mudejars innovation (*al-bida'*) has 'extinguished the light of Muslim law'.[39] We might sum up by saying that for medieval Muslims living in Islamic lands, the idea of 'Islam within Christendom' was something of an oxymoron.

Medieval Muslims living in Christian lands, however, clearly felt otherwise. Certainly most Mudejar scholars felt that theirs was a culture in decline. 'Because of the distance of our dwelling places and our separation from our coreligionists, no one is studying or writing': such laments were common coin among Mudejar scholars, and marked an awareness of the gap they perceived between their textual practice and what they took to be normative. Nor was textual practice the only marker of Islamic identity that required defence and translation in a world ruled by Christians. We have already seen how the Maliki faqihs insisted that Christian domination led to the degradation of a number of specific and indispensable markers of Muslim identity: Arabic, adherence to Qur'anic punishments (*ḥudūd*), inaccessibility of Muslim women to non-Muslim men. To these we might add, as North African muftis did, the inability to identify the start of Ramaḍān, to leave Christian lands on pilgrimage, or to fulfil the obligation of paying *zakāt*, all crucial obligations of the believer according to Muslim law. Yet for all their strong sense of cultural decline, Mudejars worked constantly to maintain the boundaries they thought

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38 Harvey, *Islamic Spain*, 58.
39 Buzineb, 'Respuestas', 65, lines 1–2.

crucial to the expression of Muslim identity, and in the process forged what we today might call a diasporic Islam.

In the case of some obligations this work was relatively straightforward. Mudejars, for example, tended to replace *zakāt* (which required a Muslim polity) with *ṣadaqa*, charity, and specifically with alms for the redemption of enslaved or captive Muslims. By the Morisco period we even find some North African muftis advocating this solution. Other boundaries required more than reclassification to remain recognisable. Perhaps the one whose defence exacted the heaviest toll was that between Muslim women and non-Muslim men. The argument that under Christian lords Mudejars could not protect Muslim women from sexual advances by non-Muslims was often made by Granadan and North African jurists (like Ibn Miqlash above). Without the power to enforce Islamic legal prohibitions on intercourse between Muslim women and non-Muslim men, or to punish transgression with Qur'anic punishments, how could Muslims in the Diaspora maintain this essential boundary?

This was not a theoretical issue. Christian archives contain references to thousands of Muslim women engaged in sexual relations with Christians and Jews. But these references are the result, less of cultural erosion than of new ways of maintaining boundaries deemed essential. Again and again Mudejar communities purchased privileges allowing them to put to death Muslim women accused of adultery or interfaith sex, though the *ḥudūd* punishment was necessarily commuted to the social death of enslavement to the Crown. Again and again Mudejar fathers accused their own and their neighbours' wives and daughters with transgressing these boundaries, and delivered them up for punishment. The Christian nature of the records that document the legal consequences of these actions should not obscure the fact that behind them lie Muslim communities and Muslim individuals translating Islamic legal prescriptions into Mudejar idioms.[40]

Just as the risk to Muslim women in the House of War stimulated a heightened awareness of the boundary-marking role of women on the part of Mudejars, so the possibility of conversion prompted a heightened sensitivity to markers of religious identity. We might even say that, in the diaspora, the responsibility for recognising Islam and maintaining its boundaries devolved more heavily upon the individual Muslim. This process was crucial to the production of an identity that simultaneously recognised its 'decline' yet

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40 Cf. David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 139.

resolutely insisted on its Islam. Consider as an example the rise among Iberian Muslims of Aljamiado, that is, of romance languages written in Arabic characters. The increasing use of Aljamiado has often been cited as a sign of cultural decline, a consequence of the erosion of Arabic. But it could equally well be studied as an example of the expansion of Islamic learning among Mudejars as of its contraction. The fact that the peculiar conditions of Christian domination on the Iberian Peninsula made it possible for Muslims to justify an extensive practice of glossing and translation may have meant that knowledge which was increasingly restricted to the 'learned class', the *ulama*, in more central Islamic lands, penetrated further into the 'popular' or 'ignorant' classes in the peninsula.[41]

The point is movingly illustrated by a recently discovered fatwa written by al-Mawwaq, chief qadi of Granada in its final years. Responding to a question about how a Muslim should behave in the House of War, he replied by fusing, rather than opposing, the status of one learned in authoritative Islamic tradition with that of the individual struggling to make the discriminations necessary to maintain a Muslim identity among infidels. The individual Mudejar, he wrote, should 'be a faqih of himself' (*faqīh al-nafs*). 'He teaches himself, and he should distinguish the good deed which presents itself from the bad one which befalls.'[42] This devolution of the responsibility for the recognition of the boundaries between Islam and other faiths from the learned élite onto embattled individual believers is one of the more remarkable cultural consequences of the Islamic diaspora in medieval Christian Europe.

Judging from manuscript evidence, one of the more important ways in which this devolution was achieved was through religious polemic. Beginning with Ibn Ḥazm (994–1064), who wrote in the wake of the collapse of the Caliphate of Cordoba and the beginnings of Christian expansion, Iberian Muslims seem much more concerned with polemic against Christianity and Judaism than Muslims in more central lands, and this becomes increasingly true as the so-called reconquest continues. Mudejars came to depend on an expanding corpus of polemical texts that they produced, circulated, glossed, and translated. The case of the North African Muhammad al-Qaysī (MS 1557 in

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41 Here and in the following pages I am reiterating my argument in 'Varieties of Mudejar Experience: Muslims in Christian Iberia, 1000–1526', in P. Linehan and J. Nelson, eds., *The Medieval World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 60–76.

42 The fatwa was discovered by Kathryn Miller. See pp. 51 and 57 of her pathbreaking 'Guardians of Islam: Muslim Communities in Medieval Aragon' (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1998), many of whose insights inform my argument here and in 'Varieties of Mudejar Experience'; see Miller's *Religious Authority and Muslim Communities of Late Medieval Spain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 129.

the National Library of Algiers) provides a good example. A captive in the Crown of Aragon in the early fourteenth century, al-Qaysī offers a moving description of the cultural effects of living among Christians, including the claim that his soul had betrayed him, and his interior and exterior had become un-Arabic. But al-Qaysī also provides the text of what he claims was his disputation with a priest in the presence of the king of Aragon. Entitled 'the Key of Religion [*Kitāb Miftāḥ al-Dīn*], or the Disputation between Christians and Muslims', the text was promptly translated in the first half of the fourteenth century into versions which survive in some four Aljamiado manuscripts.[43]

Al-Qaysī is not unique, nor is the Muslim–Christian frontier the only one polemically policed. A mid-fourteenth-century Arabic polemic written by a Mudejar against the Jews, the 'Defence of the Faith' (*Ta'yīd al-millah*), exists in multiple Arabic manuscripts, some of which contain extensive interlinear glosses in Aljamiado, and others complete translations and adaptations.[44] The multiple survivals of these polemics are very unusual for so fragmentary a record, and attest to their popularity. Moreover, of all genres, these were among the first to be glossed and translated, a process that was well under way already in the early fourteenth century. These translations were not for the learned, but for the broader audience of Mudejars, enabling each to become, in this 'land of polytheism', a defender of his or her own faith.

The importance of polemics to Muslims living within Christendom reminds us of my earlier conclusions about Christian encounters with Islam. Contrary to the expectations of the more naively progressive strands of modernity, increased proximity to and knowledge of other religious communities is as capable of heightening the power of polemical forms as it is of effacing it. Like Mozarabic Christians living under Iberian Islam, Mudejar Muslims living in Christendom learned a great deal more about the religions against which they defined themselves than did their co-religionists in more homogenous lands. But as we saw already in the Christian cases we touched upon, that knowledge was (with very few exceptions) not oriented toward the understanding and accommodation of religious difference in heterogeneous societies. Rather, it was used to buttress the structures of one faith against the claims of others.

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43 P. S. 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 (1994), 163–99.

44 Nirenberg, *Communities*, 196–8.

THE CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY OF
CHRISTIANITY

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VOLUME 4
Christianity in Western Europe c. 1100–c. 1500

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Edited by
MIRI RUBIN
and
WALTER SIMONS